



Social Enterprises  
Knowledgeable Economies  
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# Building a Federal Policy Framework and Program in Support of Community Economic Development

Kirsten Bernas and Brendan Reimer

**A research report prepared for the Northern Ontario, Manitoba,  
and Saskatchewan Regional Node of the Social Economy Suite**

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Entreprises sociales  
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## BUILDING A FEDERAL POLICY FRAMEWORK

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KIRSTEN BERNAS AND BRENDAN REIMER



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Centre for the Study of Co-operatives  
101 Diefenbaker Place  
University of Saskatchewan  
Saskatoon SK Canada S7N 5B8  
Phone: (306) 966-8509  
Fax: (306) 966-8517  
E-mail: [coop.studies@usask.ca](mailto:coop.studies@usask.ca)  
Website: [www.usaskstudies.coop](http://www.usaskstudies.coop)

Institute of Urban Studies  
University of Winnipeg  
#103 – 520 Portage Avenue  
Winnipeg MB Canada R3C 0G2  
Phone: (204) 982-1140  
Fax: (204) 943-4695  
E-mail: [j.golby@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:j.golby@uwinnipeg.ca)  
Website: [www.uwinnipeg.ca/index/ius-index](http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/index/ius-index)

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

API — Aboriginal Procurement Initiative

BEEP — Brandon Energy Efficiency Program

BUILD — Building Urban Industries for Local Development

CBO — Community-Based Organization

CCPP — Cabinet Committee on Priorities and Planning

CDS — Co-operative Development Strategy

CED — Community Economic Development

CEDC — Community and Economic Development Committee of Cabinet

NA — Neighbourhoods Alive!

NDAP — Neighbourhood Development Assistance Program

NRC — Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation

NRF — Neighbourhood Renewal Fund

NRP — Neighbourhood Revitalization Program

WPA — Winnipeg Partnership Agreement





## INTRODUCTION

CANADIAN COMMUNITIES CONTINUE TO FACE COMPLEX CHALLENGES including unemployment, urban and rural decline, income inequality, poverty, social exclusion, and environmental degradation (Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry 2008; Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology 2009; Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities 2010). These complex challenges can only be effectively addressed with comprehensive strategies that include a multifaceted and integrated approach. The community economic development (CED) model provides that approach. CED is community-led strategic action that creates economic opportunities while enhancing social and environmental conditions. Complex community challenges require comprehensive responses, and those responses have proven to be most effective and sustainable when they are community-led (Infanti and Toye 2004; Gorman 2007). The CED model is not narrowly prescriptive; it enables each community to pursue comprehensive strategic actions that respond to its unique needs, priorities, and opportunities (CCEDNet 2010).

Canadians have a long history of taking innovative and strategic action to respond to complex community challenges in order to improve the quality of life in their communities. Through social enterprises, co-operatives, and other CED organizations, Canadians are working together to strengthen local economies, simultaneously providing access to child-care services, housing, local food, capital, training, skill development opportunities, and much needed services that enable marginalized persons to overcome barriers and develop capacity (Markell 2004; Enterprising Non-Profits 2010). These CED organizations foster local leadership, ownership of resources, labour market development, economic revitalization, poverty reduction, social inclusion, and environmental stewardship.

Despite the proven impact of the CED model, community economic development organizations across Canada continue to lack the support they need to take innovative, sustained, and strategic action through a comprehensive approach (Notwell et al. 2010). There is no short-term solution for transforming social, economic, and environmental conditions in struggling Canadian communities. Therefore, CED organizations undertaking long-term strategic action correspondingly require multi-year funding. Unfortunate interruptions in funding undermine the ability for organizations to ensure their actions are well managed and efficiently executed.

Furthermore, multi-year funding for core organizational costs is required to supplement project-based funding to ensure CED organizations have the ongoing capacity to effectively fulfil their mandates (Independent Blue Ribbon Panel 2006, 26–28). A good example of a multi-year core funding model is the federal government’s support for the Community Futures Development Corporations in rural communities, which are provided with multi-year core and project-based funding through the Community Futures Program administered by federal regional development agencies. CED organizations in urban communities across Canada do not have access to similar funding, except in Quebec, where urban-based community economic development corporations are provided with multi-year core and project-based funding through Canada Economic Development for Quebec Region’s Community Diversification Program (Interview 5; Government of Canada 2011).

Communities working together are the primary drivers of CED initiatives. However, governments have an important role to play in supporting CED given the significant resources, capacities, and policy levers at their disposal as well as their mandate to ensure the well-being of their citizens and the communities they live in.

The federal government can play a lead role in supporting CED, addressing complex community challenges, and improving the quality of life for all Canadians by developing and implementing a federal CED Policy Framework along with a Neighbourhood Revitalization Program (NRP). The objective of the framework would be to ensure that government initiatives more effectively respond to the complex economic, social, and environmental needs of local communities, particularly those that are vulnerable. By maximizing multiple economic, social, and environmental benefits for these communities, a federal policy framework would promote strong, fair, sustainable, and resilient local economies and communities across Canada. Furthermore, a federal policy would demonstrate good governance because dollars spent on initiatives that employ the CED model generate greater economic, social, and environmental returns than traditional approaches (Chamberlain 2008; Emery and Ferrer 2010).

The federal government can address the lack of support to CED organizations by developing and implementing a federal NRP that commits multi-year core and project-based funding to organizations that employ the CED model in designated urban communities across Canada. The program would provide CED organizations with the multi-year financial support they require to strengthen and sustain their activities and the results they are achieving in those communities. The Neighbourhood Revitalization Program can be developed within the context of a federal CED Policy Framework.

Fortunately, there is existing policy in Canada to build upon. These models have already been developed, implemented, and evaluated at the provincial government level in Manitoba for over a decade. An effective federal policy can be modeled after Manitoba's CED Policy Framework. Successful government initiatives influenced by Manitoba's framework include the Neighbourhoods Alive! (NA) program.

Neighbourhoods Alive! supports urban communities across Manitoba in taking a long-term, comprehensive, community-led approach to neighbourhood revitalization; it includes multi-year core and project-based funding (Province of Manitoba n.d.). Manitoba's plan can provide the basis for a successful federal program. Independent evaluations reveal that the Neighbourhoods Alive! model has provided an effective means for government funding and locally organized and determined efforts to contribute to positive neighbourhood change and to achieving community-based objectives (EKOS Research Associates Inc. 2010; Institute of Urban Studies 2005, 6). They have also concluded that the model has enhanced housing quality, perceptions of safety, neighbourhood stability, resident empowerment, resident engagement in the community, and overall neighbourhood well-being in the communities under study (Ekos Research Associates Inc. 2010, vii–viii).

This report will provide an overview and analysis of the Province of Manitoba's CED Policy Framework and Neighbourhoods Alive! program. The report will conclude by recommending, based on the Manitoba experience, how a CED Policy Framework and accompanying Neighbourhood Revitalization Program might be developed and implemented at the federal government level.

## THE PROVINCE OF MANITOBA'S CED POLICY FRAMEWORK

**I**N 2001, THE MANITOBA CABINET ENDORSED THE CROSS-GOVERNMENT CED Policy Framework, which articulates the province's commitment to integrating CED principles into government initiatives and supporting CED initiatives within the community (Reimer et al. 2009). The framework defines CED as a community-led process that combines social, economic, and environmental goals to build healthy and economically viable communities (Province of Manitoba 2005a). The Cabinet's endorsement established a central policy direction to consider CED as an important component of Manitoba's economic strategy (Loewen 2004, 27). It also acknowledged the potential for CED to contribute towards a stronger and more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable provincial economy. Furthermore, it recognized the important role that community-based organizations, businesses, and governments play in improving the economic, social, and environmental well-being of Manitoba communities.

### **Community Economic Development**

The Province of Manitoba defines CED as a community-driven process that combines social, economic, and environmental goals to build healthy and economically viable communities. CED is a way of fostering economic development that is responsive to locally defined priorities. CED strategies aim to revitalize and renew local economies by developing community resources for community benefit. CED focusses on local ownership and control of resources and strives to increase community self-reliance.

Fundamental to CED is that processes and strategies must be owned and driven by communities. They must be directed towards fostering economic, social, ecological, and cultural well-being. Within this context, CED can have an important role in developing local economies and communities in a way that maximizes opportunities for people to work collectively in addressing community problems. CED attempts to ensure that social welfare, equity, economic development, and environmental sustainability are not left to chance but, rather, are facilitated by a flexible process guided by a strategic vision.

Source: Province of Manitoba n.d. (f).

## **Government Structures**

Manitoba's CED Policy Framework is co-ordinated by the Community and Economic Development Committee of Cabinet (CEDC), created in 1999 — two years before the policy framework was adopted — to develop policy and co-ordinate all major government initiatives relating to community and economic development. The creation of the CEDC reflected the government's desire to “broaden the focus” of provincial economic development initiatives (Amyot et al. 2010, 41). The committee is comprised of ministers responsible for departments most relevant to CED. It meets regularly and has staff support from the CEDC Secretariat, which is comprised of appointed project managers, each responsible for particular project areas, including one dedicated to CED.

The secretariat co-ordinated an interdepartmental CED Working Group chaired by the project manager responsible for CED and comprised of policy and program analysts from relevant departments. The working group was charged with developing a CED Policy Framework through community consultation, as well as with facilitating its implementation across government (Interview 1).

## **The CED Policy Framework — Objectives, Principles, and Lens**

There are three main components of the policy framework: CED objectives, CED principles, and a CED Lens.

The province is committed to helping communities achieve five objectives by integrating CED principles into government initiatives and by supporting CED projects within the community.

1. Build greater community capacity.
2. Nurture individual and community pride, self-reliance, and leadership.
3. Enhance knowledge and skills.
4. Develop businesses that are responsive to social, economic, and environmental needs.
5. Foster balanced, equitable, and sustainable economic development.

Source: Province of Manitoba 2004

### CED Objectives

1. **Build greater community capacity.** Building community capacity involves people working together to develop programs and services that support CED. Capacity building requires education, communication, organizational development, and strategic development.
2. **Nurture individual and community pride, self-reliance, and leadership.** The ability to lead has a great deal to do with one's feelings of self-respect and confidence. The same factors affect people's ability to share and to act with a sense of community. Great care must be taken to ensure that CED policies and programs are designed to encourage and support grassroots innovation and leadership.
3. **Enhance knowledge and skills.** CED requires that community members have access to education and training opportunities. Education and training contribute to enhanced employability, greater productive capability, and social and economic innovation, making them critical to building strong economies and allowing people to live purposeful lives. Education and training enable individuals and communities to adjust to changing circumstances and thus continuously meet new needs.
4. **Encourage the development of businesses that are responsive to social, economic, and environmental needs.** When business investment is narrowly focussed on commercial profit, there is no guarantee that business development will have a desirable impact on people or the environment. CED principles can be used to re-focus attention on social, environmental, and broad economic needs.
5. **Foster balanced, equitable, and sustainable economic development.** A strong economy needs diversity. Balance among different economic sectors will ensure that local and regional economies are not vulnerable to being destabilized by the inevitable ups and downs of the market. This balance implies strong linkages between industries and businesses at the community and regional level. Balance also implies reinvesting profit in the economy.

Source: Province of Manitoba 2004.

Manitoba's CED Policy Framework also identifies ten CED principles. Government departments can support CED initiatives within communities and help them achieve the five CED objectives by integrating these principles into new and existing initiatives (policies, programs, and processes). While it may not be possible to apply all principles to every undertaking, the principles are mutually reinforcing and are intended to be adopted collectively whenever possible.

1. Enable local employment.
2. Encourage local ownership and decision making.
3. Build local economic linkages.

4. Reinvest profits in communities.
5. Develop local knowledge and skills.
6. Ensure a positive environmental impact.
7. Focus on health and well-being.
8. Foster neighbourhood stability and community cohesion.
9. Value human dignity.
10. Encourage interdepartmental and intergovernmental collaboration.

These principles are heavily based on those developed in 1993 by the worker-owners of Neechi Foods grocery store, a Winnipeg-based Aboriginal worker co-operative (Reimer et al. 2009, 8). They have been widely adopted by the CED sector both inside and outside of Manitoba (Fernandez 2005, 152). The identification of CED principles helps government departments understand how to support community economic development, while knowledge of CED objectives will help them recognize what they will achieve by integrating these principles into government initiatives.

The principles form the basis of the CED Lens, a tool created to help government departments understand and implement the Federal Policy Framework. The lens poses a series of questions that encourages departments to consider whether the CED principles are being integrated into new and existing initiatives, to examine the potential barriers to their integration, and to explore the actions required to overcome those barriers. Ultimately, the lens helps to ensure that departmental undertakings contribute to achieving the province's CED objectives (Province of Manitoba 2001). If necessary, departments can redirect resources and apply for additional funding to carry out programs that have been modified by incorporating the CED principles (Fernandez 2005, 152).

The lens can be applied to all government initiatives, including those related to employment development, business development, rural and urban revitalization, housing, homelessness, immigration, child care, food security, poverty reduction, sustainable development, and procurement. It can also be applied to legislative reform, funding, eligibility criteria, administrative procedures, client accessibility, community consultation, impact assessments, pilot programs or projects, education and awareness initiatives, research, program evaluations, staffing, and training (Province of Manitoba 2001).

Implementing the lens not only assists in achieving the province's CED objectives, but also maximizes multiple social, economic, and environmental benefits for communities across Manitoba.



### CED Principles

1. **Enable local employment.** Local employment means that local residents have opportunities for long-term employment. It creates opportunities for building personal and community self-esteem and self-sufficiency. And it means that incomes are spent in the local economy.
2. **Encourage local ownership and decision making.** Local ownership and decision making gives community members increased ownership and control over local assets. It also allows them to use democratic, consensus-building approaches to decision making.
3. **Build local economic linkages.** Economic linkages within and beyond a community result in economic diversity and balance. Initiatives fostering economic linkages include priorities to purchase locally produced goods and services, and to produce goods and services for local use and benefit.
4. **Reinvest profits in communities.** Profits are re-invested in the community to expand local economic activity and strengthen community self-reliance.
5. **Develop local knowledge and skills.** Education and training opportunities must be accessible, relevant, and affordable for community members. Lifelong learning experiences enable the community to adjust to changing circumstances and continuously meet local needs. They also enhance employability, increase productive capacity, and promote innovation.
6. **Ensure a positive environmental impact.** This principle emphasizes the positive environmental impact that can be achieved by building green, clean, and safe communities. It also encourages communities to generate innovative ways to conserve resources and improve the physical environment.
7. **Focus on health and well-being.** The physical, mental, and emotional health and well-being of community members should be promoted at home, in the workplace, and throughout the community, providing stimulating opportunities for positive social interaction and healthy physical activity.
8. **Foster neighbourhood stability and community cohesion.** Communities need to create conditions that encourage residents to live and work in their community on a long-term basis. They should promote a strong sense of community based on shared interests, experiences, and collective initiative so that everyone feels they have a place in the community and a stake in its future.
9. **Value human dignity.** Relationships and interactions should build individual and community pride, self-respect, and leadership, recognizing that community members are the most important resource for CED.
10. **Encourage interdepartmental and intergovernmental collaboration.** Interdepartmental and intergovernmental communication, joint planning, and co-operative program delivery should be improved to provide Manitobans with the best services possible.

Source: Province of Manitoba 2004, 3.

## **Implementing the CED Policy Framework**

In addition to developing the policy framework, the CED Working Group is charged with facilitating its implementation across government. Each department has a representative on the working group who is responsible for educating his or her unit about the framework and explaining how to use the CED Lens to achieve the government's CED objectives. Working group members are also encouraged to participate in other interdepartmental initiatives to ensure CED principles are integrated into them wherever possible. Finally, the working group stays in direct contact with community members to learn about their CED undertakings, the challenges they may be facing, and the role government can play in overcoming them. To fulfil these responsibilities, working group members need a solid grasp of the policy framework and their departmental programs, priorities, and relationships with the community. They must also have the skill to communicate effectively with their department to stay on top of its efforts to support CED (Interview 1).

The working group provides a structure to bring together CED champions from across Manitoba's government, and to house collective knowledge of the efforts underway to support CED (Sheldrick and Warkentin 2007, 213). Its meetings offer a forum where members can identify opportunities for interdepartmental collaboration on the development and implementation of plans and programs that integrate the CED principles (Interview 1). Collaboration is encouraged to ensure that the government takes a comprehensive approach to supporting community economic development.

The working group developed an internal communication and education strategy to raise awareness and understanding of the framework and to facilitate its implementation across government. It included a series of educational presentations from the ministerial level down to departmental staff. The group developed a toolkit that included a CED video and a CED Lens exercise to assist members in educating their departments (Interview 1).

Initially, departments were encouraged to report annually on their progress towards implementation of the policy framework (Kostyra 2006, 24). They were also expected to develop and submit action plans to the working group that articulated how CED principles were being integrated into their units (Interview 1). There is no formal enforcement mechanism to hold departments accountable for their contributions to community economic development.

## EVALUATING THE CED POLICY FRAMEWORK — KEY STRENGTHS

THE CED POLICY FRAMEWORK OFFERS A RATIONALE FOR, AND A clearly articulated and detailed description of, the province's approach to supporting communities, thus providing a strong basis upon which thinking and discourse around CED can emerge. By articulating CED objectives and the strategies to achieve them, the policy framework itself has become a tool for increasing the understanding and value of community economic development within government. The process of developing the framework engaged government officials and staff from various departments and levels of authority. For many, participation in this process deepened their understanding of community economic development and the province's role in achieving the CED objectives. As a result, there are individuals across government who now value CED and actively explore ways to support it by integrating its principles into government activities. This has strengthened the province's capacity to develop and implement programs that promote strong, fair, sustainable, and resilient local economies and communities across Manitoba.

Another clear strength of the framework is that it provides tools, such as the CED Lens, that enable government departments to develop and implement programs that better respond to the economic, social, and environmental needs of communities, thus promoting good governance and effective public policy in support of stronger communities across the province. The CED Lens provides a consistent message regarding how to support community economic development. It also provides a template for facilitating a reliable and methodical means of ensuring that government initiatives support CED. It is effective because it is based on the CED sector's own experience, understanding, and expertise regarding good practice, and uses principles that have been widely adopted by the sector. The lens thus aligns the government with the sector regarding what it takes to maximize multiple economic, social, and environmental benefits for communities (MacKinnon 2006, 28).

The structures created to co-ordinate the development and implementation of the policy framework are also considered key strengths. The interdepartmental nature of the Community and Economic Development Committee of Cabinet, the secretariat, and the working

group reflect the complex nature of community challenges and the need to address them with comprehensive strategies. These structures provide a space where wide-ranging cross-departmental initiatives that support CED can be explored, developed, and implemented, as well as an opportunity to identify and address policy barriers that obstruct government support for CED. All too often, new strategic initiatives become buried within one office or department, which can limit the potential to apply them across government. The nature of the structures responsible for co-ordinating the policy framework in Manitoba creates greater potential for it to be understood and broadly put into practice.

The CED Policy Framework has led to many initiatives that support CED, building community capacity and infrastructure, promoting education, training, and enterprise development for marginalized individuals, and supporting innovative CED undertakings in a number of different sectors (Province of Manitoba 2006, F3–F14).

### **Province of Manitoba Initiatives That Support CED**

**Hydro Northern Training and Employment Initiative.** Federal and provincial governments are partnering with Manitoba Hydro to support a CED training initiative around northern hydro developments that are expected to provide up to twenty years of employment for northern Aboriginal Manitobans. More than one thousand Aboriginal residents are projected to benefit from adult education upgrading as well as training in both designated and non-designated trades in order to work on the new jobsites. Aboriginal partners are building their own capacity by planning and delivering community-based training, and northern businesses are benefiting by providing products and services to planned projects. Along with meeting the objectives of the CED Policy Framework, the undertaking is helping to achieve the education and training goals of the province's Northern Development Strategy, which include a better alignment of training with northern labour market opportunities and an attempt to ensure that northerners can get jobs in their own communities (Province of Manitoba n.d. (g)).

**Aboriginal Procurement Initiative (API).** The API directs government departments to increase the number of Aboriginal businesses providing goods and services to the province, recognizing that they are under-represented in government procurement opportunities. Four mechanisms assist departments to implement the policy. The first is Aboriginal business sourcing — Aboriginal businesses register with the government and are contacted when bidding opportunities arise. The second is Aboriginal business content, which requires that a specific percentage of certain government contracts be fulfilled by or subcontracted to Aboriginal businesses. The third is setting aside, which sees procurement contracts initially open only to bidding from Aboriginal businesses. And the fourth is scoping, which breaks down contracts to make them more attainable by Aboriginal businesses (Reimer et al. 2009, 10). The API has resulted in \$54

million in contracts being awarded to Aboriginal businesses as part of the Red River Floodway Expansion Project (Province of Manitoba 2010, D5). Implementation of these policies has resulted in a 28 percent increase in Aboriginal businesses providing goods and services to the province (Province of Manitoba 2009, 8).

**Winnipeg Partnership Agreement (WPA).** The WPA was a five-year, tripartite, \$75 million agreement to promote the long-term sustainable community and economic development of the City of Winnipeg. It focussed on four issues, two of which were particularly relevant to CED — encouraging Aboriginal participation and building sustainable neighbourhoods. These two program areas received funding of about \$25 million (Loxley and Simpson 2007). Community-based projects and programs funded through these components have helped build capacity, enhance social and economic development opportunities for all citizens, particularly Aboriginal people, and have helped support the revitalization of marginalized neighbourhoods in Winnipeg (Government of Canada 2005).

**Community Enterprise Development Tax Credit.** This 30 percent tax credit was created in 2004 to encourage Manitobans to invest equity capital in local community-based enterprises and co-operatives. No one person can hold more than 10 percent of an issue, which means that all eligible enterprises are collectively owned by local individuals. By 2008, 565 people had earned tax credits by investing \$1.9 million in six approved community enterprises, including a restaurant, bio-diesel and hay compaction plants, a community store, a hotel, and a food manufacturer (Chernoff 2008, 53). Since that time, an inner-city hardware store and two more rural restaurants have been approved.

**Co-operative Development Strategy (CDS).** The Government of Manitoba launched the CDS in partnership with the Manitoba Co-operative Association and the Conseil de développement économique des municipalités bilingues du Manitoba to support the development of new and existing co-operatives in the province. The CDS is overseen by a steering committee and supported by three working groups (policy, marketing and education, and capacity building) consisting of representatives from both the provincial government and the co-op community. The CDS includes a Co-operative Development Tax Credit for co-operatives and credit unions that make a financial contribution to co-operative development in Manitoba. Contributions are made to a fund managed by the Manitoba Co-operative Association and will be used to provide strategic investments, grants, and technical assistance in support of co-operative development in the province. In the first three months of the program, twenty-nine co-operatives and credit unions contributed \$72,000 to the fund. From this, three co-operatives have already been approved for development grants totalling \$14,000 (Province of Manitoba 2010a).

**Building Urban Industries for Local Development (BUILD) and the Brandon Energy Efficiency Program (BEEP).** BUILD and BEEP provide supportive training and employment opportunities for low-income people, while performing energy and water efficiency retrofits on both private and public low-income housing units in Manitoba. These initiatives reduce utility bills for low-income households and the agencies that support them. They also support the construction industry by developing skilled labourers and by providing a gateway to trades-related appren-

ticeship programming in Manitoba (Province of Manitoba 2010b). Almost two hundred trainees have entered BUILD or BEEP since the programs began in 2006 and 2007 respectively.

**Ethnocultural Social Enterprise.** For the past six years, the Manitoba Department of Labour and Immigration has supported education, training, pilot projects, and social enterprise start-ups in ethnocultural communities in partnership with the Canadian CED Network and SEED Winnipeg. As a strategy for increasing employment and reducing poverty in Winnipeg, the provincial government continues to support SEED Winnipeg's ongoing role in enterprise development for those facing barriers to economic participation.

## EVALUATING THE CED POLICY FRAMEWORK — KEY LIMITATIONS

WHILE THE CED POLICY FRAMEWORK HOLDS THE PROMISE OF greatly stimulating CED through government initiatives, adopting the framework is only the first of many steps in the achievement of the province's CED objectives (Fernandez 2005, 155). To be effective, the framework needs to be implemented by the civil service in the development and evaluation of government initiatives on a day-to-day basis (Fernandez 177; Reimer et al. 2009, 12).

Unfortunately the framework has not been implemented as broadly or as deeply as was intended, and the integration of CED principles into government initiatives has been slow. As a result, the framework has not led to the level of government support for CED in Manitoban communities that many had originally hoped (MacKinnon 2006, 28). The factors that have contributed to this are explored below.

### Leadership

As mentioned, the CED Policy Framework is housed in the Community and Economic Development Committee of Cabinet (CEDC), which has significant influence over changes in government policy related to community and economic development (Interview 1). Housing the framework within a Cabinet committee was intended to help ensure cross-departmental responsibility for supporting CED (Kostyra 2006, 23). Ministers

on the committee would be responsible for ensuring their department understood and applied the framework to both departmental and interdepartmental initiatives. However, while collective leadership makes good sense in theory, there has not been a single identified leader at or above the ministerial level responsible for the policy framework and for holding the rest of the CEDC accountable for prioritizing its implementation across government departments (MacKinnon 2006, 28). Cross-departmental implementation has depended, instead, on whether or not individual ministers have been inclined to make the framework a priority within their departments. As a result, the policy framework has not been applied across government, and where it has, the depth of implementation has varied greatly (MacKinnon 2006, 28).

Another limitation of the committee with regard to leadership can be found in its origin and mandate. The CEDC came into being before the framework was developed, not as a result of it, and it is important to note that CEDC stands for *Community and Economic Development Committee of Cabinet*, as distinct from the *CED Committee of Cabinet*. So rather than being exclusively responsible for taking the lead on initiatives that support CED, the committee is in charge of undertakings relating to both *community and economic development*, a group of endeavours in which the policy framework is included. As a result, CED objectives often lose priority to other government goals, including more traditional economic development projects (Sheldrick and Warkentin 2007, 213, 216–17). This can be attributed, in part, to the lack of a leader who could motivate the committee to prioritize CED objectives.

Implementation of the policy framework has occurred more frequently at the level of the CED Secretariat, although it suffers from the same shortcomings as the CEDC due to its parallel origin and mandate. The secretariat has one project manager responsible for the CED file and for ensuring that CED principles are integrated into government initiatives (Sheldrick and Warkentin 2007, 213, 216–17). Other project managers oversee a number of strategic files, all of which could be implemented using the policy framework. Regrettably, they have not been consistent in their application (Sheldrick and Warkentin 2007). While singling out one person for the CED file creates an identifiable leader, it can also suggest that programs in support of CED stand alone from other government undertakings and that other project managers need not be concerned about them. This directly contradicts the underlying message of the policy framework, which suggests that CED principles should be integrated into all government initiatives. However, even this scenario requires a leader to motivate others to fulfil their responsibilities.

Another issue is the capacity and authority of the secretariat project managers to demonstrate leadership by advising on and directing the activities of government departments. The first person responsible for the CED file and for chairing the CED Working Group had extensive experience in community economic development, which allowed her to take a leadership role in developing the policy framework and in facilitating its implementation across government. However, it is an onerous task for one person to acquire the knowledge and expertise needed to advise numerous departments on how CED principles might be integrated into *their* initiatives. Furthermore, she had no authority to direct departmental activities (Interview 1).

Finally, there have been difficulties at the working group level, where members have often been unable to champion CED principles unless they have been given explicit authority to direct departmental activities to that end (Interview 1). With a mandate to implement the policy framework across government, but with no authority to do so, the effectiveness of the group has been limited.

### **Education and Awareness of the CED Policy Framework within Government**

Limited application of the policy framework in Manitoba can also be attributed to how well it has been understood and valued by members of the Community and Economic Development Committee of Cabinet, the secretariat, the working group, and members of the government. It would be more effective if there were a clearer understanding of its relevance to departmental mandates, and of how to use the CED Lens to achieve the government's CED objectives. The working group is responsible for fostering this understanding, but its efforts have achieved limited results (Sheldrick and Warkentin 2007, 219).

As noted above, the working group is generated by asking each unit to appoint a representative who has a solid grasp of CED and the framework, as well as departmental initiatives, priorities, and relationships with the community (Interview 1). Generally, most members have been supportive of the lens, but many have needed a better understanding of the policy framework. Alternatively, some have understood the framework but have failed to recognize how it relates to their department's mandate. The working group needed to establish a clear understanding of the framework before it could effectively facilitate the implementation of its goals (Sheldrick and Warkentin 2007, 214).



The limited success of the group can also be understood by looking at its internal communication and education strategy. It did provide general information on CED, the framework, and on how to use the CED Lens to achieve the government's CED objectives (Sheldrick and Warkentin 2007, 214). As mentioned, the working group and its strategy influenced some important government initiatives. However, the strategy did not provide information tailored to each department explaining how the CED principles were relevant to, and could be integrated into, their particular mandate. Some departments thus failed to see how the policy framework related to their mandate, which limited their use of it. In addition, while the working group has attempted to develop a common understanding of CED, achieving consensus has been difficult because of the large number and varied interests of individual units. Most departments continue to approach CED from their own particular perspective, if at all, and many have applied widely varying definitions and understandings of it (Sheldrick and Warkentin 2007, 218).

### **Enforcement Mechanisms**

The most significant factor contributing to the limited implementation of the policy framework has been the lack of a formal enforcement mechanism to hold departments accountable for their contributions to CED (MacKinnon 2006, 28). Initially, departments were encouraged to report their progress annually, but with no means of enforcement, reporting occurred inconsistently, if at all. Units were also urged to develop and submit action plans to the working group that articulated how CED principles were being integrated into their programs. At first, most departments did submit action plans, some more comprehensive than others. In terms of general education and awareness, civil service members were not required to attend presentations on the policy framework offered as part of the working group's internal communication and education strategy. Without an enforcement procedure to hold departments accountable for implementing the CED Policy Framework, the civil service has lacked a sense of urgency to either understand or apply it (MacKinnon 2006, 28).

### **Looking Forward: Embedding the Framework in Government**

While some departments have been diligent about integrating CED principles into their work, many key units have not. Numerous policy and program areas still stand to

benefit from implementation of the framework. To be sure, Manitoba has made significant gains in creating an environment friendly to CED organizations and approaches, although there is clearly room for improvement (Reimer et al. 2009, 13).

To be effective, the policy framework, currently an internal document, needs to be implemented by the civil service as it develops and evaluates government initiatives on a day-to-day basis (Fernandez 2005, 177; Reimer et al. 2009, 12). However, embedding this kind of change in the culture of the civil service can be a difficult and lengthy process (Sheldrick and Warkentin 2007, 219). Putting it into legislation might help to accomplish this, particularly if it allows the framework to survive a change in government (Fernandez 2005, 177; Reimer et al. 2009, 33). Legislation alone, however, will not be enough as it can easily be amended or withdrawn by a new government.

The framework is more likely to become embedded in government if the civil service more fully understands and values the rationale for it. At the very least, members must understand how CED principles are relevant to, and can be integrated into, their particular departmental mandates. A communication strategy tailored to individual units would help achieve this. Furthermore, the civil service would be more motivated if it were clear that the framework is a government priority. Embedding the policy framework requires a leader with authority, such as the premier, to become its champion and to prioritize its implementation across government over several years (Reimer et al. 2009, 33). This would also contribute to a better understanding and acceptance of the framework at the level of the Community and Economic Development Committee of Cabinet and the secretariat.

The most useful tool for embedding the policy framework would likely be an enforcement mechanism that held departments accountable for implementing it (MacKinnon 2006, 28). For example, the Manitoba Treasury Board Secretariat and the CEDC Secretariat could work together to ensure that departments apply the CED Lens throughout their budgeting processes, including in their annual estimates and reporting (Interview 1).

Appropriate and effective implementation of the policy framework will require the ongoing participation of CED leaders and practitioners from multiple sectors outside of government. While the community was consulted in the development of the framework, it has had limited participation in its ongoing implementation. Some units have been better than others at involving the community in the process of creating and evaluating departmental initiatives. However, this has had less to do with the policy framework than with the fact that

some departments have precedents for engaging in community consultation processes (CCPA–MB 2006, 3). More effort could be made to involve the community in departmental attempts to integrate CED principles into their initiatives. This could include engaging in continuing dialogue and allowing community participation in decision-making processes. The policy framework currently lacks a mechanism to facilitate the ongoing co-construction of initiatives that support CED among key stakeholders (Amyot et al. 2010, 42).

## THE PROVINCE OF MANITOBA'S NEIGHBOURHOODS ALIVE! INITIATIVE

THE NEIGHBOURHOODS ALIVE! (NA) PROGRAM WAS LAUNCHED IN 2000 as a long-term, community-led, social and economic development strategy. It supports urban communities across Manitoba by providing tools and resources, and by co-ordinating supportive programs and services that enable communities to take a holistic, local approach to neighbourhood revitalization. NA supports neighbourhood renewal initiatives in a number of key areas: housing and physical improvements; employment and training; education and recreation; and safety and crime prevention. The government understands that it can improve the overall well-being of the province by acknowledging the challenges and supporting the revitalization efforts of vulnerable neighbourhoods (Province of Manitoba n.d.).

NA recognizes that each neighbourhood has its own unique needs, priorities, and opportunities, and that some of the most effective ideas for revitalization come directly from the community in need. Following this philosophy, NA offers planning assistance and flexible funding components that enable communities to identify the special needs of their neighbourhood, and then to develop and implement strategies to address them (Province of Manitoba n.d.).

### **Funding Programs**

NA funding is made accessible to communities through eight components. Four of these — the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, the Neighbourhood Development

### Neighbourhoods Alive! Funding Programs

**The Neighbourhood Renewal Fund** provides assistance to community organizations for capacity building, stability, economic development, and well-being in designated neighbourhoods.

**The Neighbourhood Development Assistance Program** enables CED in designated neighbourhoods by supporting the formation and operations of democratic, locally administered neighbourhood renewal corporations.

**Training Initiatives** offer a variety of training to targeted residents to provide them with new career opportunities in areas of labour market demand.

**Urban Art Centres** provide financial assistance to community-based, not-for-profit, arts and cultural organizations delivering annual and ongoing arts-based programming to targeted (underserved, underrepresented, high-need, or high-risk) communities in Manitoba.

**Community Initiatives** support programs that have a broad impact on Winnipeg's inner city or target specific groups of people across the inner city.

**Neighbourhood Housing Assistance** provides financial help to support community-based homeownership and renovation initiatives in designated neighbourhoods.

**The Lighthouses Program** works to enhance public safety by supporting local communities to provide after-school recreation activities for youth.

**Community Youth Recreation** works to support enhanced youth recreation programming in designated Neighbourhoods Alive! communities outside of Winnipeg.

Source: Province of Manitoba n.d.

Assistance Program, Community Initiatives, and Community Youth Recreation — can only be accessed for initiatives that benefit communities in designated NA neighbourhoods. The four remaining components — Training Initiatives, Urban Art Centres, Neighbourhood Housing Assistance, and Lighthouses — are available for programs both inside and outside of designated neighbourhoods.

Although these funding components are all critical to neighbourhood revitalization, this report will focus on the Neighbourhood Development Assistance Program (NDAP) and the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF), two of the most critical elements of Neighbourhoods Alive!. These two programs enable communities to take sustainable, community-led approaches to neighbourhood revitalization. The NDAP, for example, provides up to five years of core funding to support the creation and operation of locally governed and democratic neighbourhood renewal corporations in designated neighbourhoods. The funding enables

these corporations to plan and co-ordinate ongoing neighbourhood revitalization efforts through a CED approach. The NRF complements the NDAP by providing funds to community-based organizations, including neighbourhood renewal corporations, in designated neighbourhoods for projects that foster capacity building, stability, economic development, and well-being.

### **Designated Neighbourhoods**

When Neighbourhoods Alive! was launched in 2000, it focussed on Manitoba's three largest cities, where the need was most urgent and the challenges were most severe. Initially, it offered support to core residential neighbourhoods in Brandon, five inner-city neighbourhoods in Winnipeg, and neighbourhoods with pockets in decline in Thompson (Province of Manitoba n.d. (a)).

The Province of Manitoba marked Neighbourhoods Alive!'s five-year anniversary in 2005 by expanding support to seven more neighbourhoods in Winnipeg's inner city (Province of Manitoba 2005). Two years later, it extended funding to neighbourhoods in five urban centres outside of Winnipeg — Dauphin, Flin Flon, The Pas, Portage la Prairie, and Selkirk — considered to have the greatest revitalization needs based on socio-economic conditions, the housing situation, and population indicators (Province of Manitoba n.d. (a)). Finally, in 2010, a thirteenth Winnipeg neighbourhood became eligible for NA support.

The designated neighbourhoods in Winnipeg were classified as Major Improvement Areas based on a variety of indicators including significant social, economic, and environmental challenges such as high rates of poverty, unemployment, and crime, and a lack of adequate recreation, family support, affordable housing, and economic opportunities (Province of Manitoba n.d. (a)). Decisions regarding which neighbourhoods become eligible for NA support occur at the ministerial level of the provincial government.

### **Neighbourhood Renewal Corporations**

Each neighbourhood is required to establish a locally governed and democratic neighbourhood renewal corporation (NRC) with an accompanying board of directors in order to receive Neighbourhoods Alive! support from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund or the Neighbourhood Development Assistance Program. The corporations are responsible for

planning and co-ordinating ongoing revitalization efforts through a CED approach (EKOS Research Associates Inc. 2010, 5). While there are currently twelve NRCs, a single corporation can represent multiple designated neighbourhoods. For example, one Winnipeg-based NRC, the North End Community Renewal Corporation, represents five inner-city neighbourhoods. NRC activities are governed by a volunteer board of directors made up of, and elected by, neighbourhood residents, who represent the diverse interests of the community (Silver et al. 2009, 15–16). While possessing a deep knowledge of their community's needs, priorities, and opportunities, some boards require access to education and training opportunities in governance and planning in order to maximize their effect (Silver et al. 2009, 31).

Neighbourhood renewal corporations facilitate the creation of comprehensive, five-year, neighbourhood revitalization plans, which are developed through community consultation. These plans identify the needs and opportunities within the community, as well as its priorities and goals. They also outline a strategic action plan to guide efforts towards meeting collective aims and achieving a shared community vision. Each community is expected to demonstrate how its plan is consistent with the provincial government's CED principles (EKOS Research Associates Inc. 2010, 5). It must also explain how its plan fosters neighbourhood capacity building, stability, economic development, and well-being (Interview 4). Neighbourhoods Alive! provides a Neighbourhood Planning Guide to assist NRCs and communities to develop their plans and achieve collective goals (Province of Manitoba n.d. (b)).

In addition to facilitating the creation of neighbourhood revitalization plans, NRCs help other community-based organizations (CBOs) in their mandated neighbourhoods apply for NA funding and with administrative activities. Rather than duplicating the work already being done by other CBOs in the neighbourhood, NRCs play a convening and co-ordinating role while filling gaps by developing and implementing their own neighbourhood revitalization initiatives (Silver et al. 2009, 3–4).

Many of the initial designated neighbourhoods, particularly in Winnipeg's inner city, had existing community infrastructure with mandates and objectives similar to Neighbourhoods Alive!. In these cases, NA staff would work with the community to build on existing resources to create a neighbourhood renewal corporation. As NA evolved, new neighbourhoods began the process of creating an NRC with a volunteer interim advisory committee made up of local representatives. In some of these neighbourhoods, NA provided a designated staff person to work with the committee on community engagement, consultation, and planning to get the initiative off the ground. This included developing the five-year

revitalization plan. The advisory committee was also responsible for deciding how to coordinate ongoing revitalization efforts in the neighbourhood. In all cases, the committees decided to create a new organization based on the NRC structure in existing designated neighbourhoods. Once the revitalization plan was developed and the NRC structure put in place, these neighbourhoods became eligible for Neighbourhood Development Assistance Program funding (Interview 2).

### **The Neighbourhood Development Assistance Program**

Each neighbourhood renewal corporation is supported by the Neighbourhood Development Assistance Program funding component of Neighbourhoods Alive!, which provides up to \$25,000 in start-up funding and between \$75,000 and \$200,000 in core funding each year for up to five years (Province of Manitoba 2002). NDAP funding became available one year after Neighbourhoods Alive! was launched, when NA staff and the NRCs realized that project-based funding alone would not be sufficient to support the organizational capacity required for them to effectively fulfil their mandates (Interview 3). The amount of funding allocated to an NRC is determined at the ministerial level and can be influenced by the size of the neighbourhood within which it operates (Interview 4).

To be eligible for NDAP funding, NRCs must operate in a designated neighbourhood and represent its diversity. Eligible NRCs must also be democratic in structure and accountable to the neighbourhoods they serve. They must have developed a comprehensive, five-year, neighbourhood revitalization plan through community consultation. They must also be incorporated or in the process of becoming a non-share capital corporation (Province of Manitoba n.d. (c)). NDAP funding is not intended to be the only source of financial assistance available to NRCs. They are expected to cover the balance of their core organizational costs with volunteers, in-kind support, and by actively pursuing diversified funding sources (Province of Manitoba n.d. (c)). They must also submit a five-year projected budget to Neighbourhoods Alive! that identifies funding sources outside of the NA program. NRCs can reapply for up to five years of additional core funding if their reporting is in good order and if they have developed a new five-year neighbourhood revitalization plan building upon the last one.

NDAP funding helps NRCs with core organizational costs, including staff, facility, and office expenses (Province of Manitoba 2002a). It enables NRCs to set up administrative and

management structures to help develop and implement their own neighbourhood revitalization initiatives (Silver et al. 2009, 30). NDAP funding has covered core staff positions, including executive directors, accountants, bookkeepers, community development workers, and some program staff including housing and safety co-ordinators.

### **The Neighbourhood Renewal Fund**

In addition to the core funding provided by the Neighbourhood Development Assistance Program, NRCs are able to develop proposals and apply to several project-based funding components of Neighbourhoods Alive!, including the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF). Any incorporated, non-profit, community-based organization in a designated neighbourhood is also eligible to apply to the NRF semi-annually for revitalization projects supported by the local NRC. The NRF has allocated \$20,023,133 for community-led planning and programming since 2000 (EKOS Research Associates 2010, 35).

The NRF funds projects that fall under four categories: neighbourhood capacity building, neighbourhood stability, neighbourhood economic development, and neighbourhood well-being. These categories are broad enough to provide communities with the flexibility they need to pursue a broad range of projects based on their unique priorities, goals, and actions. NRCs and CBOs are encouraged to leverage local contributions of cash, labour, materials, services, and other in-kind support to complement what they receive from the NRF (Province of Manitoba n.d. (d)).

Proposals for financial assistance from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund must:

- demonstrate how the project is consistent with the priorities, goals, and actions identified in the neighbourhood revitalization plan
- involve local resources and the community in its development and implementation
- strengthen local capacity
- integrate the provincial government's CED principles

CBOs can seek assistance in developing proposals that meet these requirements from NA staff, from their local NRC, or by consulting the *Community Guide to Proposal Writing* provided by Neighbourhoods Alive! (Province of Manitoba n.d. (e)).

Funding proposals must be reviewed by the board or a board committee of the local NRC to confirm that they are consistent with the neighbourhood revitalization plan before



### **Neighbourhood Renewal Fund: Categories of Eligible Initiatives**

**Neighbourhood Capacity Building** supports projects that promote neighbourhood consultation, outreach, awareness and collaboration; enhance knowledge, skills, and leadership; nurture individual and community pride; and support the sustainability of programs.

**Neighbourhood Stability** complements housing improvements by supporting projects such as renovations to neighbourhood facilities; the development or reclamation of parks and open space for community use; the development of community gardens; improvements to local amenities; and contributions to neighbourhood beautification.

**Neighbourhood Economic Development** assists organizations to prepare CED strategies that foster balanced, equitable, and sustainable economic development, and to develop projects that provide local business opportunities, enhance employment and training for local residents; and promote local purchasing.

**Neighbourhood Well-Being** funds activities that support neighbourhood cohesion and well-being by enhancing neighbourhood safety and preventing crime; reducing at-risk behaviour (e.g., through recreation programs); contributing to better health practices; strengthening tenant-landlord relations; and improving neighbourhood co-operation.

Source: Province of Manitoba n.d. (d).

being submitted to NA with recommendations. Neighbourhoods Alive! staff then evaluate proposals to ensure they align with program guidelines before passing them on with their recommendations to an interdepartmental working group. NA staff partner with NRCs and CBOs to rework proposals when necessary and to make sure that they complement, and do not duplicate, existing initiatives within the neighbourhood (Province of Manitoba n.d. (a)).

The interdepartmental working group meets regularly to analyze proposals, monitor the progress of NA, and advise on NA policy. Its analysis and recommendations are passed on to the Neighbourhoods Alive! Steering Committee of Cabinet Ministers, which makes the final decisions regarding funding. The steering committee is comprised of ministers from key provincial departments that have included Housing and Community Development, Justice, Family Services and Consumer Affairs, Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, and Education (Province of Manitoba n.d. (a)).

### **The Small Grants Fund**

The Neighbourhood Renewal Fund also makes money available to NRCs to establish Small Grants Funds, which empower the NRCs to autonomously allocate funding for small community-led projects that foster social inclusion and that are consistent with the five-year neighbourhood revitalization plan. Small Grants Funds can range from \$25,000 to \$150,000 per NRC. Community groups can submit proposals for up to a maximum of \$5,000 per project (EKOS Research Associates Inc. 2010, 4), which are reviewed by an NRC board committee; final decisions on funding are ratified by the board. Grant recipients report on projects to their NRC, which in turn reports back to Neighbourhoods Alive!.

NA's various funding components are not intended to be sources of long-term financial assistance. Funding can be renewed, but NRCs and other CBOs are expected to develop financial sustainability plans. In some cases, Neighbourhoods Alive! has implemented declining funding agreements over a period of years to provide NRCs and CBOs with time to find other resources. In other cases, renewed funding is not provided until a financial sustainability plan is in place.

### **Neighbourhoods Alive! Staff and Capacity-Building Opportunities**

Neighbourhoods Alive! staff are available to provide resources and supports to NRCs and other CBOs in designated neighbourhoods. Project officers work with the community on project proposals, monitoring, and reporting. They meet regularly with stakeholders, particularly NRCs, in an attempt to develop a partnership that can facilitate effective communication, problem solving, and the co-construction of policy between government and community. A community development worker is available to assist NRCs with community consultations, to assist with facilitating positive working relationships and effective policies between communities and NA, and sometimes to assist with the development of neighbourhood revitalization plans. When Neighbourhoods Alive! expanded outside of Winnipeg, new staff positions were created in Brandon and Thompson to provide these communities with enhanced access to resources and supports (Interview 3; Interview 2).

Neighbourhoods Alive! makes funding available to neighbourhood renewal corporations to build their organizational capacity. NRF funding can be used to provide NRC staff and board members with access to education, training, and other professional development opportunities, including those related to understanding and employing the CED model. NRCs have also been able to hire consultants to assist with strategic planning and financial and human resource management. Finally, Neighbourhoods Alive! regularly brings the executive directors of all the NRCs together to collectively discuss challenges, learn from each other, and solve problems (Interview 2).

### THE NEIGHBOURHOODS ALIVE! INITIATIVE — KEY STRENGTHS

NEIGHBOURHOODS ALIVE! IS ONE OF MANITOBA'S MOST SUCCESSFUL initiatives that support CED due to its effective integration of CED principles and significant contribution to achieving the government's CED objectives. The program embraces a CED approach to neighbourhood revitalization. It recognizes that complex community challenges require comprehensive responses, and that those responses will be most effective and sustainable when they are directed by the community. Consistent with the CED model, NA's approach to neighbourhood revitalization is long-term, comprehensive, community-led, and flexible. By investing in neighbourhoods with the greatest needs and by supporting their efforts to develop and implement wide-ranging responses to their social, economic, and environmental challenges, NA contributes to strong, fair, sustainable, and resilient local economies and communities across Manitoba.

One of NA's key strengths is that it encourages neighbourhood revitalization initiatives to be led by the community. As noted above, NA recognizes that some of the most effective ideas for neighbourhood revitalization come directly from the community in need (Province of Manitoba n.d.). When residents take ownership over decision making and actions to address neighbourhood revitalization, they become more invested in, and committed to, achieving successful results. Comprehensive visions and plans are more likely to be created when all of the sectors from a given community are involved. This will also encourage multi-sectoral collaborations to drive the implementation. Community-led processes help build skills in individuals as well as partnerships and capacity within the community, which en-

ables the community to become increasingly independent in its ongoing neighbourhood revitalization efforts (Kliewer 2010, 24).

A number of elements within Neighbourhoods Alive! encourage neighbourhood revitalization initiatives to be community-driven. First, these efforts must be co-ordinated by a local democratic organization governed by a board of directors made up of local volunteers who are elected by, and representative of, the community. Second, NRC boards are empowered to autonomously allocate money from their Small Grants Funds for small community-led projects. Third, to be eligible for NA funding, NRCs and CBOs must demonstrate how their plans involve the local community in development and implementation. Fourth, they must also demonstrate how their project is consistent with the revitalization plan that has been developed through community consultation (Province of Manitoba n.d. (e)).

Flexibility is a second key strength of Neighbourhoods Alive!, which recognizes that each community needs to be able to pursue a broad range of projects based on the unique priorities, goals, and actions identified in their neighbourhood revitalization plans. This requires a funding source flexible enough to support the great variety of undertakings that emerge out of the designated neighbourhoods. With four categories of eligible initiatives, the NRF is a particularly good example of a flexible funding source that has been able to accommodate a wide range of community-led projects.

A third key strength of NA is its requirement to take a comprehensive approach to funding neighbourhood revitalization plans (EKOS Research Associates 2010, 34). This is not to say that each project must aim to meet all the needs within a neighbourhood. Rather, it must fit within the broader plan and be developed and implemented in keeping with the government's CED principles (Province of Manitoba n.d. (e)).

A fourth key strength contributing to the success of Neighbourhoods Alive! is its long-term approach to neighbourhood revitalization. NA understands that there is no short-term solution for transforming social, economic, and environmental conditions. This is demonstrated in the five-year core funding provided to NRCs through the Neighbourhood Development Assistance Program to plan and co-ordinate ongoing efforts based on five-year revitalization programs. This multi-year funding brings a level of stability to the NRC that gives the organization the capacity to engage the community in the kind of broad-based, long-term strategic thinking and planning necessary to achieve lasting results.

Neighbourhoods Alive! also demonstrates its long-term approach through the Neigh-

bourhood Renewal Fund. While the NRF's project-based funding is generally short-term, some projects that have demonstrated successful outcomes have been given renewed funding for longer terms, in some cases up to three years. Neighbourhood revitalization initiatives will produce both short-term and long-term results and must be evaluated with these time frames in mind (Institute of Urban Studies 2005, 134). NA staff and decision makers recognize that some projects will take longer than others to demonstrate successful outcomes.

## THE NEIGHBOURHOODS ALIVE! INITIATIVE — KEY LIMITATIONS

### **Funding Limitations**

**T**HE FIVE-YEAR CORE FUNDING PROVIDED TO NRCs BY THE Neighbourhood Development Assistance Program is critical to the sustainability and effectiveness of these organizations. There are few, if any, other funding sources that will cover core organizational costs such as the salary of an executive director or bookkeeper, or rent or utility costs. However, the NDAP funding is not sufficient to cover all the core costs required for NRCs to effectively fulfil their mandates, particularly as they grow and mature. In addition to co-ordinating ongoing neighbourhood revitalization efforts, NRCs develop and implement their own programs to attend to community priorities that are not being addressed by existing organizations (Silver et al. 2009, 3-4). NDAP funding was not originally intended to cover program expenses or staff, although in some cases it has funded the latter. To cover these expenses, NRCs need to apply for project-based funding from various sources, which creates a number of challenges that are common to other CBOs operating within the current funding environment.

The pursuit and management of multiple sources of project-based funding, each with its own eligibility, reporting, and evaluation criteria, requires NRCs to have significant administrative capacity (Silver et al. 2009, 9). The level required to fulfil their mandates can vary, depending on the number of programs and projects they need to deliver, the number and quality of staff they need to hire, and the number of funding sources they need to seek out to cover costs. Some funders and foundations allow administrative fees to be charged for grants, although the allocation is not always adequate in relation to the real costs incurred. Unfortunately, administrative costs cannot be covered by the project-based funding from the

Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. Many NRCs receive insufficient core funding to build the administrative capacity to pursue and manage needed projects. Without the cumulative cost allocations from funded projects, they don't have sufficient resources to build their core administrative capacity, which creates a cyclical dilemma.

Insufficient core funding can place an enormous administrative burden on the NRC. Staff supported by project-based funding need to ensure that deliverables are met and are often not provided with the resources or time allocations in contribution agreements to carry out administrative tasks. With limited core funding coming from NDAP, some executive directors are forced to take on the administrative activities that would normally be handled by support staff, leaving them less time to engage the community in the thinking and planning needed to achieve long-term results. This creates a significant point of tension for both project staff and executive directors. It can, in turn, lead to burnout and turnover that diminishes organizational capacity and stability (Silver et al. 2009, 29–30).

Project-based funding creates another challenge for NRCs because it tends to provide insecure, low-paying jobs with inadequate benefits for staff. This makes it difficult to attract and retain qualified staff, which further reduces the strength of the organization (Silver et al. 2009, 9). Even when the core funding provided by Neighbourhoods Alive! is used to support NRC staff, it is often insufficient to provide the kind of remuneration that would positively affect administrative positions and the stability of the organization (EKOS Research Associates 2010, 19). Staff continuity within an NRC is critical to building the long-term capacity necessary to achieve its mandate.

## THE NEIGHBOURHOODS ALIVE! INITIATIVE — ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS

### **Decision-Making Structures**

**E**MPOWERING COMMUNITY-BASED BOARDS TO ALLOCATE FUNDING from the Small Grants Fund within the neighbourhood makes good sense because it gives decision-making authority to stakeholders with the greatest knowledge of the local context. However, the Small Grants Fund represents only a small proportion of the total funding delivered through Neighbourhoods Alive!. Most funding decisions are not

made by the NRCs or community-based bodies but rather by the Ministerial Steering Committee after considering the recommendations of the interdepartmental working group. While interdepartmental decision-making structures can create efficiencies, there is some concern that they may lack the local knowledge required to make informed decisions.

### **The Role of Neighbourhoods Alive! Staff**

Neighbourhoods Alive! project officers should be located close to the neighbourhoods with which they work. This will allow them to develop partnerships that link the community with government, which can open a line of communication for working together to meet program guidelines and address challenges. Ongoing communication between community and government will help to ensure the program meets the needs of all stakeholders (Interview 2). The strength and effectiveness of this partnership depends upon the ability of the stakeholders to work together, and to understand each other's capacities, limitations, realities, and priorities.

NA project officers with relevant expertise can help build capacity among neighbourhood renewal corporations. More often, NA provides funding for NRCs to access capacity-building resources for staff and the board, rather than offering them through NA officers (Interview 4), which may create a dynamic in which the community feels as if it is being directed by government rather than by the community. Furthermore, NRCs may not be comfortable discussing their shortcomings with a funder. As a result, NRCs may prefer to access community-based capacity building resources and supports.

## TOWARDS A FEDERAL CED POLICY FRAMEWORK

**T**HE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CAN PROMOTE THE CED MODEL, address complex community challenges, and improve quality of life for all Canadians by developing and implementing a federal CED Policy Framework. This would acknowledge the potential for CED to contribute towards strong, fair, sustainable, and resilient Canadian communities.

This report recommends that the basic content of a federal policy framework be modeled after that in Manitoba. This would include CED objectives, CED principles, and a CED lens. Establishing clear objectives will help the federal government assist communities to improve themselves through developing, implementing, and monitoring initiatives that respond to their economic, social, and environmental needs while also building local capacity. Establishing CED principles will help guide government efforts to develop programs that support CED and achieve its objectives. And establishing a CED lens will provide an effective tool to help government ensure CED principles are integrated into its initiatives in order to achieve the CED objectives.

### **Government Structures**

A co-ordinated, whole-of-government approach is required to achieve the objectives described above. The *Final Report of the Senate Subcommittee on Population Health* provides insight on how to accomplish this at the federal level. The report notes first that the highest levels of leadership, including the prime minister, must make the issue a government priority. This is consistent with the Manitoba experience, where limited cross-departmental implementation can be attributed, in part, to the lack of an identified leader with authority over ministers who could prioritize it. Second, based on examples from other jurisdictions, the report identifies the need to break down silos within government and proposes mechanisms to achieve this. These include the creation of a Cabinet committee chaired by a powerful minister, such as the prime minister or finance minister, to set direction on the issue across government departments and agencies (Senate Subcommittee 2009, 18).

The following proposals are based on the Manitoba experience and the analysis and recommendations in the *Final Report of the Senate Subcommittee on Population Health*.

**First**, the prime minister should take the lead in announcing and in ensuring the development and implementation of a federal CED Policy Framework.

**Second**, the development and implementation of the framework should be co-ordinated by a Cabinet committee chaired by a strong minister (the prime minister, his/her deputy, or the minister of finance). This report recommends housing the policy framework in the existing Cabinet Committee on Priorities and Planning (CCPP) based, in part, on the fact that the committee is chaired by the prime minister and made up almost entirely of ministers who either chair or act as vice-chairs of the other Cabinet committees (Parlinfo 2011).



If the prime minister makes the CED Policy Framework a government priority, then housing it within the CCPP would make good sense. First, ministers on this committee are in a position to ensure the framework is implemented within their departments. Second, they can also encourage its implementation within the Cabinet committees they chair, which will help ensure that the framework becomes horizontally integrated across government. Third, the CCPP provides strategic direction on government priorities and expenditure management, which includes ratifying committee recommendations (Parlinfo 2011, 2). It is not likely that the committee would ratify the recommendations of other committees unless they demonstrated a commitment to meeting CED objectives.

A potential challenge with housing the framework within an existing committee is that CED goals would have to compete with other committee objectives and might be neglected, which often occurred in Manitoba's Community and Economic Development Committee of Cabinet (Sheldrick and Warkentin 2007, 213). To mitigate this risk, someone in an influential leadership position must prioritize CED objectives, or at least ensure they receive the same consideration as other government objectives. In the case of the CCPP, that leadership would come from the prime minister.

**Third**, a CED Secretariat should be created within the Privy Council Office to assist the Committee on Priorities and Planning in co-ordinating the development and implementation of the policy framework across government. To effectively fulfil that responsibility, the secretariat would need to be comprised of staff with expert knowledge in CED and its relevance to the various policy issues that go to Cabinet (Interview 1). Further, the secretariat would need to be supported by a CED policy research unit with enough resources to explore existing barriers and innovative opportunities regarding government support for CED. The CED Secretariat would pull together staff from existing secretariats of Cabinet committees that consider policy issues relevant to CED. These would include the Economic and Regional Development Policy Secretariat and the Social Development Policy Secretariat. The CED Secretariat would also need sufficient resources to develop an internal communication and education strategy and deliver it across government. Finally, it would need the authority to direct departmental activities towards the development of initiatives that support CED (Interview 1).

**Fourth**, an interdepartmental CED Working Group should be created, comprised of CED Secretariat staff and senior management from all government departments that deal with concerns relevant to CED. The working group would meet regularly to discuss pro-

grams supportive of CED that are being pursued within departments and to identify opportunities for collaboration (Interview 1).

### **Implementing the Federal CED Policy Framework**

Cross-departmental implementation of the CED Policy Framework will require an effective internal communication and education strategy. The CED Secretariat would be responsible for developing this, in partnership with the CED Working Group. The strategy would include an education component that would ensure all government personnel had a basic, consistent understanding of the policy framework, the rationale behind it, their role in implementing it, and how they can fulfil their role by using the CED Lens. A good strategy would have two advantages: it would build awareness of the framework across government and also send a strong message that the prime minister has prioritized its implementation.

The CED Secretariat would deliver the communication and education strategy to the rest of the Privy Council Office. It would also be responsible for preparing ministers and senior management to oversee implementation of the policy framework within their respective departments. This would require specific education components tailored for ministers and senior management to ensure they understand how the CED principles are relevant to, and could be integrated into, their particular departmental mandates. Senior management would then be responsible for disseminating that knowledge and ensuring that the framework is implemented. CED Secretariat staff would be expected to provide ongoing expertise and advice (Interview 1).

### **Enforcement Mechanisms**

The Manitoba experience suggests that an enforcement mechanism to hold departments accountable for their contributions to CED is critical to ensuring implementation of the framework. This report recommends that the federal government make it mandatory for the CED Lens to be applied to any initiative submitted to the Cabinet and Treasury Board. Departments would be responsible for applying the CED Lens to their initiatives. The Privy Council Office, supported by the CED Secretariat, would ensure that departments apply the CED Lens when they review submissions going to Cabinet. Ministers on the Cabinet Committee on Priorities and Planning would advise other ministers on the com-

mittees they chair regarding the application of the CED Lens. The Treasury Board Secretariat would work with the CED Secretariat to ensure that departments apply the lens when they review Treasury Board submissions (Interview 1). Cabinet and Treasury Board submissions would be subjected to a cost-benefit analysis that accounts for economic, social, and environmental factors using the CED Lens as a framework. Submissions that do not adequately apply the lens would be returned to departments with recommendations from the Treasury Board Secretariat and/or CED Secretariat staff. Finally, this report recommends that all departments, as part of their annual reporting requirements, provide details on the integration of CED principles into their undertakings and on how this has contributed to achieving the CED objectives (Interview 1).

### **Ongoing Co-Construction of Public Policy**

Implementation of the CED Policy Framework will require a mechanism to coordinate a sustained dialogue among CED leaders and practitioners from multiple sectors on the development of a shared vision and an action plan for engaging in an ongoing dialogue with government. This report recommends that the federal government create and invest in that infrastructure to facilitate the ongoing co-construction of initiatives that support CED.

Second, this report recommends that the federal government create an ongoing roundtable that brings together representatives of the community and the government to engage in co-construction of initiatives that support CED. This would provide the infrastructure for involving the community in the development and evaluation of government programs, and in reshaping them to meet the government's CED objectives (Interview 5).

## TOWARDS A FEDERAL NEIGHBOURHOOD REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

**T**HE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CAN PLAY A CATALYTIC ROLE IN POVERTY reduction and community development across Canada by developing and implementing a federal Neighbourhood Revitalization Program (NRP) that commits multi-year, project-based, and core funding to organizations that employ the CED model in designated urban communities. A federal NRP can be modeled after that in Manitoba and de-

veloped within the context of a federal policy framework. Like the Manitoba program, it would take a long-term, comprehensive, community-led, and flexible approach to neighbourhood revitalization.

There are a number of ways to deliver a federal NRP. This report suggests two alternatives. The first would see a national community-based organization (CBO) funded by the federal government delivering the NRP across Canada (Interview 6). The second would see the federal government funding and delivering the program through regional development agencies across Canada. In either case, this report recommends that the federal government create a national roundtable to co-ordinate the design and delivery of the program. The roundtable would include representatives from relevant federal government departments and the community who have an expertise in community-led development initiatives that employ the CED model (Interview 6).

### **Designated Neighbourhoods**

Community-based organizations across the country could apply to the Neighbourhood Revitalization Program to have their neighbourhood designated for federal funding. This report recommends that the national roundtable be responsible for developing a set of eligibility criteria for prioritizing neighbourhoods. Criteria would include, but not be limited to, demonstration that the neighbourhood is in need of support based on existing socio-economic conditions. It would also require assurance that the community is ready to participate in developing and implementing a five-year neighbourhood revitalization plan. Finally, there must be a group of individuals representative of the community to act as an interim advisory committee.

The interim advisory committee in a designated neighbourhood would receive start-up funding to develop a comprehensive, five-year, neighbourhood revitalization plan through community consultation. The committee would be responsible for establishing a local, democratic structure governed by a board of directors who represent the interests of the community. The board would consist of, and be elected by, neighbourhood residents. That structure would act as a neighbourhood renewal corporation (NRC) and co-ordinate ongoing revitalization efforts in the neighbourhood. The advisory committee and the NRC would receive ongoing support from regional project officers hired by the local regional development agency or the local office of the national CBO, depending on how the plan is delivered.

Support might include assisting with community consultation processes, helping with the development of the five-year plan, and/or supporting the establishment of an NRC. It might also include providing NRC staff and board members with access to education, training, and other professional development opportunities, including those related to understanding and employing the CED model. Once a designated neighbourhood has its five-year plan and a co-ordinating structure approved by the national roundtable, it would become eligible for accessing all the other funding components of the Neighbourhood Revitalization Program.

### **Funding Programs**

The Manitoba experience suggests that CED organizations need access to multi-year, project-based, and core funding to effectively fulfil their mandates. This report recommends that the federal government create a fund modeled after the Neighbourhood Development Assistance Program offered by Neighbourhoods Alive! to provide NRCs in designated neighbourhoods with flexible and renewable five-year core funding. All NRCs would be eligible for a base level of core funding each year to cover their facility and office expenses. This funding would also cover the cost of conducting evaluations and hiring an executive director and an administrator. Remuneration for these positions would need to be sufficient to attract and retain qualified individuals. Wherever possible, NRCs would be encouraged to leverage additional funding from other sources. The fund would need to be flexible enough to allow the national roundtable to allocate more than the base level of core funding to individual NRCs, depending on their unique contexts and needs. Regional project officers would be expected to pass on core funding recommendations to the national roundtable based on their inside knowledge of the local neighbourhoods they oversee.

This report also recommends that the federal government create a second pool of money modeled after Neighbourhoods Alive!'s Neighbourhood Renewal Fund to provide organizations in designated neighbourhoods with project-based funding that would allow them to pursue a broad range of projects based on the unique priorities, goals, and actions identified in their neighbourhood plans. The fund should allow for multi-year support for projects, with a minimum of three years (Independent Blue Ribbon Panel 2006, 26–28). The national roundtable would establish broad categories under which projects would need to fall to be considered for project-based funding. It would also set other eligibility criteria that would include, but not be limited to, demonstrating that the project is consistent with the five-year

neighbourhood plan; that it involves local resources and the local community in its development and implementation; and that it integrates the CED principles. Applicants would be encouraged to demonstrate leveraged funding from other sources. Regional project officers would assist NRCs and other CBOs with developing their proposals, monitoring their projects, and reporting.

Proposals would be reviewed by local NRCs and regional project officers and then passed on with their recommendations to a local steering committee for a final decision. The committee would be comprised of local stakeholders and established by the national roundtable with the advice of the local regional development agency or the local office of the national CBO, depending on who is delivering the NRP.

In addition, this report recommends that the federal government provide neighbourhood renewal corporations with a Small Grants Fund, modeled after that offered by Neighbourhoods Alive!. Each board of directors would allocate project-based financial support from the fund to CBOs in their neighbourhoods. This approach gives decision-making authority to stakeholders with the greatest knowledge of the local context and is likely to lead to a more effective allocation of funding throughout the neighbourhood (Interview 5).

The federal government could make its funding through the Neighbourhood Revitalization Program conditional on applicants demonstrating that they have commitments (financial or in-kind) from provincial and/or municipal governments. This could encourage them to contribute support when they might not otherwise have done so and could create greater potential for ongoing engagement by provincial and/or municipal governments in neighbourhood revitalization. The risk with this arrangement is that neighbourhoods with the greatest needs might not receive any funding if their provincial and/or municipal governments are unable to contribute. This report recommends that the federal government encourage applicants to demonstrate leveraged funding when they apply to the program, rather than make it a condition for funding. Local regional development agencies or local offices of the national community-based organization could be responsible for assisting communities in their efforts to leverage funding from other sources (Interview 6).

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Federal CED Policy Framework**

1. The prime minister should take the lead in announcing and in ensuring the development and implementation of a federal CED Policy Framework modeled after that in Manitoba.
2. The development and implementation of this policy framework should be co-ordinated by the existing Cabinet Committee on Priorities and Planning. The prime minister should prioritize CED objectives, or at least ensure that they are given the same consideration as other government objectives within that committee.
3. The federal government should create a CED Secretariat within the Privy Council Office to assist the Committee on Priorities and Planning to co-ordinate the development and implementation of the policy framework across government. It should be comprised of staff with expert knowledge in CED and its relevance to the policy issues that go to Cabinet. Staff should come from existing secretariats that support Cabinet committees concerned with policy issues relevant to CED, including the Economic and Regional Development Policy Secretariat and the Social Development Policy Secretariat.
4. The CED Secretariat should have sufficient resources to develop and take the lead in delivering an internal communication and education strategy on the policy framework across government. The secretariat should be supported by a CED policy research unit with enough resources to explore existing barriers and innovative opportunities regarding government support for CED. Finally, the secretariat should have the authority to direct activities towards the development of initiatives supportive of CED and to co-ordinate programs that support it.
5. The CED Secretariat should create and co-ordinate an interdepartmental CED Working Group comprised of secretariat staff and senior management from all government departments relevant to CED. The group should meet regularly to discuss initiatives supportive of CED being pursued within departments, and to identify opportunities for collaboration on the development and implementation of programs that take the CED approach.
6. The federal government should make it mandatory for the CED Lens to be applied to any

initiatives submitted to the Cabinet and Treasury Board. In particular, the Privy Council Office, supported by the CED Secretariat, should ensure that departments have applied the CED Lens when they review submissions going to Cabinet. Likewise, the Treasury Board Secretariat should work with the CED Secretariat to make certain that departments have applied the CED Lens when they review Treasury Board submissions. Ministers on the Cabinet Committee on Priorities and Planning should advise other ministers on committees they chair regarding the application of the CED Lens before Cabinet decisions are taken.

7. The federal government should mandate all departments, as part of their annual reporting requirements, to provide details on the integration of CED principles into their undertakings and how this has contributed to achieving the CED objectives.
8. The federal government should create and invest in infrastructure that can co-ordinate a sustained dialogue among CED leaders and practitioners from multiple sectors towards the development of a shared vision and action plan for engaging in an ongoing dialogue with government.
9. The federal government should create and invest in an ongoing roundtable that brings together community and government representatives to engage in co-constructing initiatives.

### **Federal Neighbourhood Revitalization Program**

1. The federal government should develop and implement a national Neighbourhood Revitalization Program (NRP) that commits multi-year, project-based, and core funding to organizations that employ the CED model in designated urban communities.
2. The federal government should ensure that the delivery of the NRP is carried out in one of two ways — either fund a national community-based organization (CBO) to deliver it across Canada, or fund and deliver it through regional development agencies across the country. In either case, the federal government should ensure that sufficient resources are available to enable regional project officers to carry out their mandate. This should include, but not be limited to:
  - providing ongoing support to interim advisory committees, neighbourhood renewal corporations, and other CBOs



- providing core funding recommendations to the national roundtable based on their unique knowledge of the neighbourhoods they oversee
  - reviewing project-based funding proposals and providing funding recommendations to local steering committees
  - assisting communities in their efforts to leverage funding from other sources, including provincial and municipal governments
3. A national roundtable should be created to co-ordinate the design and delivery of the Neighbourhood Revitalization Program. It should include representatives from relevant government departments as well as community members with an expertise in community-led development initiatives that employ the CED model.
  4. The roundtable should be mandated to develop a set of eligibility criteria for prioritizing neighbourhoods to be designated for funding. Eligibility criteria should include, but not be limited to, a demonstration that the neighbourhood is in need of support based on existing socio-economic conditions. The community must also be ready to participate in developing and implementing a five-year neighbourhood revitalization plan. And it must identify a group of individuals representative of the community to act as an interim advisory committee.
  5. The federal government should create a fund modeled after Neighbourhoods Alive!'s Neighbourhood Development Assistance Program to provide neighbourhood renewal corporations in designated areas with flexible and renewable five-year core funding. All NRCs should be eligible for at least a base level of core funding annually to cover their facility and office expenses. This would also need to cover the costs of conducting evaluations and hiring an executive director and an administrator. Remuneration for these positions would need to be sufficient to attract and retain qualified individuals. The national roundtable should be mandated to allocate more than the base level of core funding to individual NRCs, depending on their unique contexts and needs.
  6. The federal government should create a second fund modeled after Neighbourhoods Alive!'s Neighbourhood Renewal Fund to provide NRCs and other community-based organizations in designated neighbourhoods with project-based funding that allows them to pursue a broad range of activities based on the unique priorities, goals, and actions identified in their neighbourhood plans. The fund should allow for multi-year funding, for a minimum of three years, where projects are multi-year in nature. Eligibility criteria should be developed by the national roundtable and include, but not be limited to, demonstrat-

ing that the project is consistent with the five-year neighbourhood plan, that it involves local resources and the local community in its development and implementation, and that it integrates the CED principles.

7. The federal government should facilitate the creation of local steering committees comprised of community stakeholders. These should be established by the national roundtable in consultation with the regional development agency in the area or the local office of the national CBO, depending on who is delivering the program. Project-based funding proposals should be reviewed by local NRCs and regional project officers, and then passed on with their recommendations to the local steering committee for a final funding decision.
8. The federal government should provide neighbourhood renewal corporations with a Small Grants Fund, modeled after that offered by Neighbourhoods Alive!. Each board of directors would be responsible for allocating project-based support from the fund to community-based organizations in their neighbourhoods.
9. The federal government should encourage applicants to demonstrate leveraged funding when they apply to the Neighbourhood Revitalization Program, rather than make it a condition for funding. Local regional development agencies or local offices of the national CBO should assist communities in their efforts to leverage funding from other sources, including provincial and municipal governments.

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