Asset based community development, Community Organising and community resilience in the face of disaster: journeys to Nova Scotia, Chicago and New Orleans.

Sue Shaw

Winston Churchill Fellow 2009

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**Asset Based Community Development and Rural Ageing: My journey around Nova Scotia on a Winston Churchill Travel Fellowship: Sue Shaw**

**Introduction**
I travelled to Nova Scotia [NS] between 22.8.09 and 12.9.09. The first week was spent in Halifax, the capital city, visiting government departments and universities. The second week I was based in a regional town, Wolfville on the Fundy Shore, and explored the surrounding agricultural area, Acadian settlements and Acadia University. The third week I was based on the Northumberland Shore in a small rural settlement, River John, and visited Cape Breton, St Francis Xavier University, the Coady International Institute, St Andrews community and Mount Allison University in Sackville New Brunswick.

The objective was to investigate asset based community development in rural areas and positive attitudes to ageing, and to find any transferable good practice to inform my work in the UK.

The idea was prompted by finding a paper on Asset Based Community Development [abcd]* from Acadia University in Wolfville, NS by Chris Pelham. He had visited some disadvantaged communities in County Durham in 2003, whilst piloting the programme, and this set me on the trail of why so many universities in Nova Scotia [NS] had abcd programmes as a way of working with communities and underpinning their outreach programmes in the very rural and sparsely settled areas of the province.

**Summary**
[*Asset based community development [abcd] is a way of working with and within communities that focuses on personal and communal assets - the vision, enthusiasms, skills and experiences of individuals within a community and not on its needs, deficits or wants. It is “bottom up” - that is, led by the community and not “top down” - led by government or policy makers.*]

1. Three weeks travelling around Nova Scotia produced a wide range of ideas, case studies and information that I am happy to share through this report and the resources listed in section 8 and 9.
2. The first section outlines the historical geography of Nova Scotia [NS] – a fascinating rural area whose issues have many parallels with the UK. It includes some thoughts on the influence of the natural environment and its settlement on the Province’s character, together with some solutions to rural problems developed by both the Provincial and Federal government.

3. Next, nine place based case studies illustrate the key rural issues and give some human stories and inspirational examples of communal self reliance and activity. River, John, St Andrews, Tatamagouche, Musquoidoibit Harbour, Lunenburg, Peggy’s Cove, Wolfville and Kentville demonstrate Provincial government attitudes to communal self help and determination, the workings of abcd and social capital.

4. Section 4 describes ageing programmes and attitudes to Seniors [65+] in NS, where viewing older people as assets colours both the work undertaken and solutions found for positive ageing. The successful partnership between government and universities is outlined together with current priorities and the various community and voluntary organisations that work with Seniors.

5. Section 5 describes abcd work in rural NS, and its understanding and implementation from policy makers and at a strategic level. The visionary work of Moses Coady and the Antigonish Movement are discussed. Also the work of the Acadia Centre for Social and Business Entrepreneurship [ACSBE], the work of the Nova Scotia Community Colleges and the Genuine Progress Index [GPI]. The Just Us! Coffee cooperative in Wolfville and St Andrews community near Antigonish are given as examples of abcd in practice.

6. Section 6 lists transferable lessons for application in the UK.

7. Section 7 gives my itinerary.

8. My personal reflections on the Fellowship, Sources and Resources are given in sections 8, 9 and 10 and finally acknowledgements and thanks in section 11.
I found that I could not write this report without giving an outline of Nova Scotia’s development and historical geography. It forms the setting against which the asset based community development and Seniors’ policy has developed, and in my opinion explains much of the NS character. Nova Scotia is a jigsaw - segmented geographically, ethnically and by religious denomination. Its historical geography is a fundamental underpinning to understanding the present Nova Scotia. It is peripheral to mainland Canada where many regard it as the poor, rural outlier.

The semi nomadic Mi’qmaq, First Nation people were the first inhabitants. Then, from the late 16th c, Nova Scotia experienced waves of settlers from Europe. First were the French and English. Then came Planters from New England. After the 2nd world war, emigrants came from Holland, Germany, Austria and elsewhere. Each wave has in its turn contributed particular and characteristic cultural and religious traditions, farming methods, business and community cultures.
As an illustration of the ethnic diversity, a Belonging Quilt project in 2005 by Esther Bryan found over 640 First Nation groups in Canada as a whole, and 280 nationalities represented within Canada's population.

The culture of the Native Indians has left few physical signs in the modern landscape, but is reflected in many place names. In contrast, remnants and influences of the 17th and 18th C Basque and Breton settlers from Europe, and from Empire Loyalists escaping New England during the American War of Independence can still be clearly seen. Townships were laid out on a standard gridiron pattern of lots. Each lot contained some agricultural land and woodland to support the settler. Land was granted in standard sized lots - one in town for housing and one outside for wood and agriculture. To this day house numbers still jump in uneven steps that reflect the original number of lots per householder numbered from the centre of the township outwards along roads and tracks, rather than in numerical sequence from house to house.

Towns also usually had one or two open spaces or "parades", used for town meetings and militia exercises", reflecting the 18th C need for order and the New Englander requirement for an open space for public assembly. Settlements were all on the "frontier" at the start, and even current townscapes exhibit the elements of the typical frontages of the American west - many buildings showing dates from the late 19th to early 20th c.

Common land surrounded each township and was used for grazing and subsistence crops, still seen in Halifax today, in the North Common. 19thc settlement was less tidily organised than in the 18thc, as land was bought up and lots amalgamated and divided.

Port Royal was first settled by the French in 1605, but was razed by Virginian raiders in 1613. It became the seat of the French government in the 1630s and the surrounding area was settled and called "Acadie". In 1627 the Company of New France was established. The Acadians settled, drained and dyked the fen lands bordering the Bay of Fundy, establishing an economy of fishing, hunting, growing pears, apples, wheat, cattle, flax and hemp.

NS fell to the English in 1710. The Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 agreed that the French would keep Prince Edward Island and Cape Breton but cede NS
to the British. In 1715 George 1st acceded to the throne and required the Acadians to swear allegiance to the Crown. They refused, but signed a qualified oath of allegiance in 1730 that released them from bearing arms in the struggle between the French and English. This affirmed their neutrality. In 1748 peace arrived via the Treaty of Aix le Chapelle, but in 1755 the French Acadians were violently expelled.

In 1749, the British General Edward Cornwallis, newly appointed Governor General of NS, established the citadel in Halifax to counter the French base in Louisbourg in Cape Breton. St Paul’s church built in 1750 is the oldest building in Halifax and the first protestant church in Canada. The Citadel which dominates downtown Halifax to this day is the second most visited tourist attraction in Canada - after the Niagara Falls. In 1760 Horton and Cornwallis and their Planters arrived from New England and started settling NS.

“Le Grande Derangement” in which the British expelled the original French settlers in a violent and cruel manner was a major and is still an emotive event in the settlement of NS. There are parallels with the Highland Clearances of the late 18th and early 19th C that in fact provided many of the Scottish settlers who came to NS to find a new home.

Longfellow’s epic poem Evangeline records the dramatic and cruel expulsion of the Acadians. The iconic “Evangeline“ faithfully seeking her husband over the decades after their abrupt separation recurs in literature, art and folklore. The Grand Pre historical site near Wolfville commemorates the expulsion. It is interesting that the opening of the epic focuses on the natural environment of huge expanses of untouched native forest which still characterise much of NS:

“This is the forest primeval,
The murmering pines and the hemlocks,
Bearded with moss...”

Influence of the natural environment
Without being determinist, the natural landscape of NS has shaped and still colours many elements of the Province’s character. Much of NS is wilderness and it endures harsh winters and hot summers. As the UK’s recent snowy winter has demonstrated, isolated rural communities learn to be self-reliant.
The long winters in NS have contributed to the growth of a high degree of communality. The eastern coastal area of NS is “Shield” - the pre Cambrian granites and gneiss, and unsuitable for agriculture and settlement. These ancient rocks have little soil, and the dense native forest is littered with myriad scattered lakes and bogs. Therefore, any settlements were based on fishing along the fiercely indented coastline.

The legacy of peripheral settlement along the coast and some highways means there are long distances to services, many of which are centralized in Halifax where nearly half the population of NS lives. Secondary level services are provided in regional hubs such as Truro, New Glasgow, Sydney, Amhurst, Kentville, Bridgewater and Yarmouth. It is these centres that are considered to have potential for development with investment.

NS is also huge. Distances between settlements are far greater than they appear on the map. Rural transit challenges are therefore even greater than in UK, although there are parallels with our more rural areas. The main highways are good, so that commuters from Wolfville can reach Halifax in an hour and a half. Secondary roads are crumbling, exacerbated by severe winter weather. Tertiary roads are often very poor. There is a general lack of public transport and the private car dominates. Buses and trains are relatively expensive and limited. Train lines were axed in the 1970’s and although Halifax is the airline hub, some regional airports have closed or are marginal. This limits economic development possibilities.

Rurality and rural problems.
Rural Problems are similar to the UK. The loss of primary employment in fishing, mining, forestry and agriculture has been ongoing since the 1930’s. Fishing is still an important industry and is as important as farming in rural areas. Although, as in the UK, the number of fishing licenses is decreasing, rising in price and fish stocks are becoming depleted. Fishing boats are now so expensive that sons wanting to follow fathers into fishing find it increasingly difficult. Lobster and crab are now being over-fished, as was cod, and there is significant doubt about whether stocks will ever come back. Lobster, tuna and crab are lucrative and flown live to the US and Japan daily from NS. “Fake crab” and Pollock are currently growing markets.
Less than 10% of the area farmed in the 1890s is now in agricultural production, as it is cheaper to import food from elsewhere. NS could easily be self sufficient in food production if required, the issue being that there is no demand for the produce despite a few isolated communities and individuals trying to develop local and community supported agriculture. It is cheaper to import feed grains from Ontario than use home grown. It is unlikely that the proportion of land farmed will ever return to the extent seen during the era of self-sufficient settlers.

There is also a mismatch of population and skills - the large rural population is not easily employable and government initiatives have in the past focussed on retaining young people. Initiatives have and continue to focus on supporting volunteerism, retaining and developing older workers, attracting immigration and making the population more employable through skills development and retraining. The current government Gateway Initiative focuses development on Halifax port as the major development and distribution centre for all of NS. The port is huge and impressive, housing the 2nd World War North Atlantic fleet with room to spare.

Smaller farms of 50 acres or less still work well; as do larger, amalgamated holdings. It is the medium sized, family farms that are finding it most difficult to survive at the moment, and the whole of NS shows signs of holdings falling into wasteland - covered in golden rod and scrubland.

Some of the most successful farmers have been the Dutch and Scots settlers, and there are some large family concerns which own considerable holdings that specialise in growing fruit, potatoes, vines, soya or maize. The Grand Pre Winery in Wolfville for instance has been developed on the Californian model and the German run Jost wineries are very successful. Wolfville has an extremely successful Saturday morning farmers market to which community members bring home produced food, clothes, wine and crafts. Local bands launch their music and children have entertainment. Stall-holders barter produce between each other at what is a very vibrant coming together of community members from the surrounding rural area.

On the Northumberland shore there are several examples of developing tourism as a means of economic growth. Around Tatamagouche there is a successful community development model where residents have bought into
tourism and agricultural production as a means of surviving and the population has been boosted by retirees and tourists.

There are too many schools, yet people are very attached to them and the debate on possible closures and the effect on communities is similar to that held in the last 20 years in the UK. Scattered and isolated settlements with a relatively small business base means that there is a small tax base to fund initiatives, and the government bases tax on residence. Therefore there is an insufficient return to support meaningful infrastructure development.

**Foreign ownership.**
The foreign ownership of property, land and companies is a major concern in NS, emphasising an underlying suspicion and antipathy to the USA - their large, powerful neighbour. Land use planning and the management of natural resources are a continuous challenge, with tensions over what to do and how to control. For instance, there was a proposal for a large American firm to buy land in the Annapolis district at Digby Neck and ship out the gravel. Few jobs would be created and there was huge resistance locally to potential environmental effects. The plan was not granted permission to proceed. Current thinking is that in the past too much land was “given away”, to produce too few jobs and at an unacceptable cost to the environment.

Pulp and paper mills in NS are increasingly in the control of large US companies. If they close because demand is decreasing, such as the threatened Bowater mill in Liverpool that supplies the New York Times, then being the sole employer for wide rural area means that there are big problems ahead. All the big pulp mills are American owed. This situation is replicated with the call centres that were developed by the Federal Government in Cheticamp and Canso - a situation very similar to that in the NE of England after the demise of heavy industry and coal mining. Whilst I was in NS, the closure of both these centres was announced. There is little alternative employment. Some form of “managed retreat” may be the next economic strategy for these remote settlements, counterbalanced by support for innovation and tapping potential elsewhere, although no one would be quoted on that.

Most sawmills are locally owned and much of the sawmill timber goes to the US for housing - although currently there is difficulty over the North
American Free Trade Agreement as the NS government subsidises stumpage fees. The US sees this as unfair competition. After Hurricane Katrina for instance, there was no plywood available in NS as all supplies went direct to New Orleans and the USA needs all the timber that NS can produce.

Regional differences.
The Annapolis valley in the south and west is the fertile agricultural breadbasket of NS on the deeper soils from the Old Red Sandstone and reclaimed silts - sheltered by the North and South Mountains from the colder winds and fogs from the Bay of Fundy. The Fundy shore is in itself quite remarkable. It has the highest tidal range in the world - the waters swirling through the funnel shaped bay twice a day equal to all the water flowing from all the world’s rivers.

Cape Breton - a peninsula in northeast NS - is mountainous, beautiful, peripheral and remote. Initially settled by French, Irish and Scottish Highlanders it increasingly relies on tourism as its economic basis. A varied set of migrants also came to Sydney area in the 1880s to work in the coal mines and steel mills, and this area suffers from the same post industrial disadvantage as parts of Durham in NE England. The Cabot Trail circles the northern part of the peninsula and is considered to be one of the outstanding tourists experiences of North America.

NS is not as peripheral to the main landmass of Canada as Newfoundland, but does have a similarly characteristic independence of spirit and community. It is also characteristicly more “laid back” than other Provinces. NS has a population of just less than 1 million and was the first independent Province to separate from the Crown in 1867. When the Maritime Provinces joined the Dominion they had prosperous wooden shipbuilding, fishing and timber industries. But, they were unable to compete against the new and protected industries of Ontario and Quebec.

By the 1890’s NS was in a state of economic collapse reliant on trade in wood and fish. Tourism was developed to keep the economy afloat. It is extremely well organised and successful, providing the major economic support to many communities. Educational provision is also an important element in supporting development.
Educational Provision
NS has 13 universities - 6 in Halifax alone. All the universities started off as religious institutions. In Halifax - Dalhousie was Methodist; St Mary's was for Roman Catholic boys; Mount St Vincent was for Roman Catholic girls and King’s College was Anglican. Acadia in Wolfville was Baptist and St Francis Xavier in Antigonish was Roman Catholic. They were incorporated during the 1960’s and 1970’s and most have benefited from very substantial benefactions from alumni and businesses. 40% of the NS population have tertiary level education [47% overall in Canada.]

The size of the student population relative to their settlements is also notable. Wolfville has a population of 3700, with 3000 students. Sackville in New Brunswick has 5500 population with 2200 students - and awarded the first degree to a woman in the British Empire in 1874. Antigonish has 5000 population and 3000 students. In UK terms, it is as if universities had been developed within small market towns.

Apart from Community Colleges in the main hubs, several universities have also developed successful community and outreach working to serve the isolated and rural communities that make up the bulk of NS. They have a strong emphasis on social justice, fair trade and entrepreneurial development. The particular emphasis of courses has changed over time in line with Federal and Provincial Government initiatives and priorities dealing with rural unemployment, aging demography and depopulation. The influence of visionary individuals - like Moses Coady - has been formative, with outreach working developing from the 1930s onwards, and with partnerships between Federal, Provincial Government and universities playing a key role.

Pugwash on the Northumberland Shore is home to the important Nobel Prize winning international conferences on Peace, its quiet isolation and seclusion being ideal for such conferences. Tim Horton’s summer camp near Wallace is another headline development. Tim Horton’s ubiquitous “drive-thru” coffee shops offering endless doughnuts donate one day’s profit per year to fund the holiday camps for disadvantaged young people. Fox Harb’r near by [is owned by the former owner and co founder of Tim Horton’s, Ron Joyce] has seen a huge, multi-million investment in a high-end golf resort built for New York high rollers. It has its own airstrip.
Future problems
Future challenges are similar to those facing the UK - climate change, developing local food networks, community sustainability, globalisation of trade, world commodity prices and the ownership of companies.

In 20 to 30 years time, when globalisation and climate change may alter attitudes, NS has the capacity to be self sufficient in food - but capital and expertise may not be available to restart agriculture. New models of rural development will no doubt be found, probably around web based rural businesses.

A really contentious issue facing government is that remote areas may need palliative care for the communities without a viable economic future. Some of the most remote settlements may eventually fade away. There are also difficulties negotiating change between County and Municipality authorities. New approaches to service delivery will also needed - perhaps cutting the 5 day school and working week to 3 days to cut down travel or remote health care provision via web-based diagnostic, monitoring and treatment systems.

The key rural issues in NS echo those in the UK. Women’s pensions and poverty are a problem, where older women who may not have worked for long are left with no transport, employment or pension and pension reform is considered a key priority as the national pension is about $900 per month which is well below the poverty line. Transport is a major concern, as are the low salaries, part time and seasonal working in non-career jobs typical of rural areas. Lack of access to opportunities, training or alternatives echoes the UK’s problems.

In contrast to UK, rural housing is generally easily and cheaply available, with houses available for $50k. Some houses and barns in the more remote areas have been abandoned and previously cleared farmland is available for $100 per acre. Much abandoned land is now covered with scrub and golden rod, which is not considered as a garden flower in NS like it is in the UK. But, prices are rising in some coastal areas and in the commuting zone around Halifax that is developing fast, reaching Wolfville, Truro and Kentville.

An interesting aside - the standard house has a stone built basement which used to house the huge wood boiler or furnace, and must be at least 4 feet
deep to avoid the effect of frost heave in the winters. On top of this is laid the concrete slab and then the wooden house, with outside deck, wood shed and porch/veranda. Country houses can still be built within 2 weeks once the slab is poured and many country people still build their own house.

"Come from aways" [as incomers are called in NS] often use modern "kit" houses rather than the traditional designs. There is also an educated, niche, minority going off grid and attempting sustainable living - as in the UK. But in contrast to the UK, getting land and planning permission is not a problem and is affordable in NS.

Non Resident Land Ownership is also beginning to emerge as a problem in some coastal areas, especially on the Eastern and South shores where Americans, Germans and some English people are buying up land plots and building new houses. Regulations allow residency if they are away for one week per 6 months. By fencing off water frontages they shut out locals. Their larger houses increase the local tax rates, which puts pressure on locals’ ability to both pay or to buy. This is relatively new trend in NS, but has been evident in the UK for decades, leading to rural house prices that are out of reach of local people and young people in particular.

All terrain vehicles are also a new issue in rural areas linked to property rights. Where land is not "legally improved" anyone can access it. Land has to be fenced and signposted to stop trespassing - as anyone can legally hunt or fish anywhere in NS. Urban recreation seekers are causing irritation and problems in some areas - again similar to the problematic use of green lanes in some parts of the UK.

Native Americans are now mainly housed on reserves, rationalised in the 1950’s and 60’s when the Federal Government amalgamated them into a small number of larger reserves. Half are in Cape Breton where there are 2000 people in the largest reserve. Reserve Indians are given a range of free benefits including free higher education if they wish to take it up - but few do, as they value community and family more highly than the benefits of leaving. There is also a small Metis population [mixed Acadian French male settlers and native Mi’kmaq women] around Lahave on the south shore. This, and the treatment of Native Americans, is very little spoken about.
Solutions
The Federal and Provincial Governments have already invested strongly to ensure rural availability of free WiFi, providing training and education in Community Access Points in libraries, developing Tourist Information offices and local Community Economic Development offices as part of the necessary facilitating infrastructure.

What hit me very strongly whilst in NS, is that it is likely that this positive approach to developing the untapped potential in remote and rural areas through facilitating and investing in innovation, developing outreach from universities and high end business development is the way forward. It is a model that could be transferred to UK.

Rather than the UK's current focus on disadvantage and rural proofing, policy could be turned around to positive support for innovation. It would represent a definite conceptual change. [Some examples in section three - Just Us! Coffee, the communities of St Andrews, Tatamagouche and River John - describe settlements that prompted these thoughts.]

Developments might be based on a low carbon economy, facilitated through university research and outreach, with local and national government support and rely on highly educated or entrepreneurial individuals, as well as high speed and quality broadband. Community Access Programme sites in NS are providing free internet access and parts are investing in fibre optic connections. This will be the internet of the future, and is the means by which rural areas will be able to compete with urban. The quality divide between rural and urban connectivity will determine the ability of individuals, firms and nations to create future prosperity, as the Said Business School in Oxford has recently reported, in which Canada ranks 17th in Broadband Leadership and the UK 25th.

3. Place Case Studies

3.1 River John
Established in the 1750’s where the river runs into the Tatamagouche Bay where Mi'kmak Indians had had a campsite, by the 1820’s it had one main street along the waterfront, 2 large properties in the centre and 2 groups
of smaller houses as well as 2 shipyards, a town hall, a Presbyterian Church, Sunday School hall, Glebe lot and manse.

It now has 2 Presbyterian, 2 Anglican, 1 RC, 1 Union and 2 United Churches as well as 10 local community groups including the Lions Organisation, Colonel Dan Sutherland Memorial Baseball Park, 4 Memorial Gardens, Health centre, Consolidated school - and a Public Library and Innovations Centre with WiFi hotspot and Community Access Programme [CAP] funded by provincial and Federal Government.

Set up in 1996, community members formed a volunteer Community Access Committee to promote the use of technology in River John and its area. It is now one of the most successful rural CAP sites. A new library was opened in 2001 to house the computers, a meeting room, space for various programmes to create employment opportunities. It runs Seniors Night for instance, which provides buddy based training in IT, runs the community website, completed the Digital Collections Project outlining the local history of the settlement and created a website about the American Lobster. It is a free access point for the Nova Scotia Community College distance and virtual learning courses. The Fire Hall is supported by voluntary effort and the Seniors Housing is part Federal, part Provincial and part volunteer funded. There is also a Butterflies and Blooms project organising a garden based operation for disabled people in the community.

Population today is 2399. But in the mid 19thc there were 6 shipyards here, and between 1828 and 1918 a total of 203 ships were launched from here. In 1881 there were 620 farmers, 22 teachers, 5 doctors, 5 clergymen, 121 carpenters, 15 miners, 41 blacksmiths and 42 timber mill workers listed in the census. 1885 saw the two largest ships launched from River John, which was then at the height of its prosperity. A new steel bridge, a hotel, Town Hall and railway and lobster canneries were built.

Today it is a scattered, small settlement but calls itself “A small community with a BIG spirit” - an assertion that the community web site would support. Staying nearby on Cape John I could not help but compare the degree of clearly evident facilities and community action with similar sized settlements in the UK.
River John is on the “Sunrise Trail” which is supported by the provincial government to encourage tourism. It has 3 all weather, all season webcams as well as copious information available online. The Nova Scotia Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage provides an excellent and accessible website, publishes guides which are posted free on request to the UK, and numerous leaflets, trails and maps. The “Doers and Dreamers Guide”, published annually, provided me with all the information and contacts needed to plan my trip.

Interestingly, the River John community website lists local government officials and also outlines the main issues currently concerning the community. These are typical for much of rural NS: the condition of the roads, decreased enrolment in the school as the population ages, business closures and poor quality water supply for some inhabitants.

River John is in Pictou County, where there are 5 small towns with Municipal governments as well as a County Government - all for a population of 45,000. Three of the municipalities are bankrupt but won’t cede control or amalgamate. Much of rural Nova Scotia is like this - independent, self reliant, strong on volunteer effort and with a lasting “frontier” or newly settled ethos. It faces the same problems as rural UK - an ageing population, declining primary production, centralisation of facilities, fewer business and employment opportunities, a reliance on tourism, poor transport links and insufficient funds available to provide solutions to all these problems.

### 3.2 St Andrews

Winner of the Lieutenant Governor’s Community Spirit Award 2009, St Andrews is a remarkable settlement that exhibits the most positive aspects of that frontier or settler self determination. The settlement is closely associated with and supported by the Coady Institute at St Francis Xavier University - which has facilitated development based on the legacy of the pioneering Scottish and Dutch immigrants.

Known as a “Can Do” community, this small settlement of only 1,100, people has built on a tradition of self-help, self-sufficiency, community spirit and care for others. In the 20\(^{th}\)c it built by voluntary effort its own curling rink in 1991, a fire hall and community centre in 1994. Its first church was built
in 1822. This was rebuilt in 1842 when a larger church was needed. The present church was built in 1941.

The corner stone of the community hall dated 1993 reads: “Community Spirit built this hall”. Money is raised through lottery schemes, pledges, community meals and events, and most construction is undertaken by volunteers, using professional help only when necessary. The seniors housing complex was built in 2006, extended in 2008 - with 25% Federal, 25% Provincial, 25% local and 25% Municipal funding, on land donated by the Credit Union. The community also raises money for others. The “Wishing Well” project has funded 8 wells in India and 1 in Haiti, and developed after a Catholic priest from India stayed with a village family during his 5 month course at the Coady Institute - another example of partnership between the community and university.

St Andrews started in 1801, when 8 Highlanders [including 5 brothers] from Fort William arrived, set to clearing the land and forming a settlement. The new families achieved this through cooperative work, without any outside support, establishing farms, a cheese factory, a tannery, lumber and shingle mills, flour mills, carding mills, schools, churches, barns, roads and bridges.

The St Andrews Grammar School established in 1838 was the foundation of what was to become St Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, even though municipal government did not arrive in the town until 1879. The “long depression” between 1873 ad 1896 caused many young people to leave. Led by Dr Hugh Macpherson, the community established a wool cooperative in 1914 and the first coop store in eastern Canada in 1917, a creamery and a marketing system for lambs. Throughout, the Catholic Womens’ League has been very active in the community, and still is today. Community endeavour rather than government intervention has generated most of its development.

The Credit Union was established in 1933 and the water pipeline was dug by volunteer labour in 1941. Electricity arrived in Antigonish in 1931 and St Andrews provided volunteer labour to run the poles 20 miles to their village. It set up a mutual telephone system typical of many rural communities, whereby each household wanting a phone contributed money and volunteered labour to string the wire. The telephone operator was provided with a house in lieu of fees. Today, all telephone and electricity cables are still overhead - a legacy of this self help model. Although it is the cause of the many power
outages in winter and when hurricanes strike, the system is too extensive and expensive to replace underground.

Such an ethos, with a close relationship between rights and responsibilities within a community, characterised most rural communities in the past both in NS and the UK. It is still extant in some UK communities, but seems to have been weakened in the past 30 years by, centralised government intervention.

St Andrews acted as a "laboratory" for a group of professor priests at St Francis Xavier University who promoted the Antigonish movement, and continues to be involved with the Coady Institute today.

I met some of the Dutch immigrants who arrived after the 2nd World War. They waited 2 or 3 days on board ship in Halifax harbour until a sponsor was found. They settled in St Andrews, rescuing old farms, revitalising agriculture through hard work, cooperative effort and developing innovative and profitable dairy farming. Communal barn-raising was still common into the 1950’s and 60’s.

Before some local residents went on the Mobilising Assets course at the Coady Institute in 2006, community activity had been in their words, more "ad hoc". Using the skills learned on the course, they organised two community development sessions at which they shared ideas. 200 community members attended, and 6 key projects were chosen. There are still four Study Groups held in people’s kitchens and the community hall that discuss potential new projects - following the Coady method. Investigations currently include developing Local Food; Energy and transportation; a Fitness, day care and cultural centre and a Funeral Coop. The Community Partnership "hires" two summer students [via a Government scheme] to assist them and keeps them busy all summer on project work.

The video and website about the village were developed as a means publicising the communities achievements and to share information. They vividly illustrate the cooperative spirit still so alive in St Andrews. They are inspirational. [www.standrewscommunity.com]

Serendipitously, my visit to St Andrews coincided with a study visit by 40 students on the development course at the Coady Institute. They came from
all over the world - including South Africa, Ethiopia, India, Brazil, Australia, St Lucia, Barbados, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, Kenya and Malawi. Modern, confident and with the latest phones, fashions and business cards these are the leaders of the future. They come to Antigonish ready to be challenged, to study how to stimulate asset based community development and to re-energise indigenous community leadership and mobilise local assets.

The following Sunday, a village celebration was planned for the prize giving ceremony by the Lieutenant Governor. Including a communal village meal, fun activities, sports, music and general merrymaking, I wished I could have taken up the invitation to be there!

3.3 Tatamagouche
There is a burial ground for both native Mi'kmaq and early 18th c french settlers here. The village name comes from the Mi' maq for “meeting of the waters”. The rich estuarine silt lands alongside the rivers were dyked by Acadians in 1715 and this is the site of one of the earliest Acadian expulsions of French settlers in 1755. Strangely, after the expulsion, the British Board of Trade gave the land grant to a French cartographer. He, in turn, refused to sell land to new Scottish arrivals. They moved to River John and New Annan, where they were able to purchase land settled.

A Highland Scot was hired and supervised Tatamagouche’s development. French settlers eventually arrived - their family names still extant today. Shipbuilding, lumbering, farming and fishing formed the local economy. The village was incorporated in 1953 following two major fires in 1950 an 1953. This disaster destroyed houses and businesses but forced communal action to which is still attributed the determined, close knit community spirit exhibited today.

Now, there are 11 churches of different faiths that easily co-exist and work together. Visiting on a Sunday, every church car park was full. Then many went for a late, typically huge Canadian breakfast at the Chowder House that felt more like a community get together. The following day, September 7th, was Labour Day. A huge parade was led by the Volunteer Fire Force who had their 4 highly polished engines on proud display, and there were a communal celebrations and activities.
There is good seniors accommodation and active seniors organisations. 15 community organisations, a range of alternative health practitioners and 80 volunteer groups all take obvious and enormous pride in the community and its environment. The North Shore Community Development Association supports economic, social and heritage development in the village and there is also a big thrust on tourism development.

Another illustration of the ability of this village of fewer than 1000 people was its response to a challenge by the Provincial government to raise $500k for the hospital extension and repairs. They reached the target in one year.

On the Sunrise Trail and the Trans-Canada Trail on the old railway track, tourism is a strong element in the modern development of this small settlement with 17,000 visitors in 2007. There is a new Farmers Market building. A new Performing Arts Centre is planned for 2010. A young, local entrepreneur bought up the station and old rolling stock from Canada Rail. The carriages are now used as part restaurant, part accommodation and the station building as part museum and the Train Station Inn. 25 km of the rail track was upgraded and is maintained by volunteers, and along it are bird watching, barbecue and picnic sites.

One of these, Patterson Wharf Park, was chosen as the Men’s Community Project by CBCTV recently. A commercial wharf till the 1950’s, it is now used for communal waterfront access. 3 or 4 volunteers started work on it and in 2008 CTV chose to film the work - donating $10k. The County of Colchester matched that, followed by the Provincial Government - raising $30k to fund the work and with significant donations of materials and finance from local businesses. Now valued at $83k, showing the multiplier of voluntary and community effort, it was completed on 17.9.08.

This seems to me to demonstrate the higher value placed on community initiative and spirit by the state in NS than in the UK. It also demonstrates the working of abcd: using what is there - personal attributes and skills, ideas and money and energy, resulting in a greater sense of ownership and achievement.

The renovated Creamery Building opened this year as an interactive Heritage centre - and demonstrates much of the development in Tatamagouche:
"Creamery Square demonstrates creative partnerships between heritage, culture, entertainment, education and business leading to economic growth, enhanced quality of life and opportunities for new investments."

The Government gave support of $1.7m and local people $700k, but ultimately the success of this project is a direct result of community initiative, enthusiasm and commitment.

Most of this development has been supported by the North Shore Community Development Association. Tatamagouche won one of the first Lieutenant Governor's Community Spirit Awards, and is now one of the two areas of largest population growth in NS outside Halifax. Long term residents have been joined by returning baby boomers and a varied array of newcomers. The diversity, attitude and talents of local people have created such a high level of activity in a small settlement.

Like everywhere I went in Nova Scotia - including Halifax - the people are very open, tolerant to diversity, welcoming, unpretentious and without the stratification by class still visible in the UK. It seems that religion in its many denominations may underpin this attitude. Certainly here, as in America where churches are seen to have been “social capital factories” - taking in the waves of immigrants and moulding them into belonging citizens. In Tatamagouche, for instance, the Atlantic Christian Training Centre opened in 1955 [now renamed the Tatamagouche Centre]. This not for profit education and retreat centre is sited on the same land used by First Nation peoples at a gathering place and later by the Acadians. It is explicitly inclusive in its operation. Church based intergenerational work and social events abound in this community, and the level of volunteering is very high.

3.4 Asset based community development and social capital
Undoubtedly, traditional forms of social capital building like church attendance have begun to decline in Nova Scotia, as it already has in many countries including the US and the UK. But it is not yet at the same scale that seems to be associated with the highly individualised and disengaged communities that are appearing those countries. Increased personal wealth is used to ensure that we do what we want, when we want, and often alone. This is reinforced by the declining synchronisation of working and recreational hours as the 24 hour service economy develops.
Parts of rural and small town Nova Scotia seem to be following the alternative pattern - so called “solidaristic individualism” - that characterises Norway, Sweden and Finland according to the sociologist Bo Rothstein. Here, increased wealth is used to see more of one another, such as going out with friends or joining in small interest groups. Another factor is that Nova Scotia has only recently entered the post-industrial development phase characterised by the US in the 1980’s. The introduction of commercial television, two career families and urban sprawl and centralisation of services are key factors to which Robert Putnam attributes the decline in traditional social capital in his book “Bowling Alone”.

New forms of social capital are fluid, personal and informal - based on the internet and new social movements - but they seem to be less conducive to achieving collective goals. Some commentators see this as “privatising” social capital - a move parallel to the financial world. There is also concern that the more traditional forms of social capital like union membership, electoral turnout, party membership and church attendance were disproportionately concentrated in the working class, who are therefore more affected as social capital declines. Inequality is then reinforced as younger generations build their social capital through the newer, more informal means.

As with Antigonish, local visionaries and activists are central. Tim Horton was a professional hockey player and co founded the nation wide coffee shop chain, which founded four Tim Horton Childrens Camps after his death - one of which is just along the coast at Wallace. The founder of Fitness Depot, the second largest specialist in fitness retailing in the world, also came from the village.

The 2008 Lieutenant Governor’s citation sums up the village and also exactly mirrors the value base described by Valerie White in the Province’s Department of Seniors - the first person I interviewed:

“The Community Spirit Awards are meant to celebrate the best in Nova Scotia’s communities. Caring for one another, demonstrating citizen engagement and working together to overcome obstacles are all qualities that we need to encourage among one another. These are all values put into action by the people of Tatamagouche and you shine as an example of the positive things that can happen, regardless of the size of your city, town or village.”
The Festival of the Arts is another instance. It ran successfully from 1956 to 1962, when it moved to Halifax because it had grown so large. But it failed there due to the lack of volunteer help. The OktoberFest now held in Tatamagouche is second in size to that in Kitchener-Waterloo in Ontario.

These awards also illustrate the process whereby much of the development investment is gathered together in NS - be it for a University or for these awards. Corporate sponsors are key. In this case, Transcontinental Media and Nova Scotia Power are sponsors, enthused by a retired NSP district supervisor and community activist, Bill Cameron, who was instrumental in the company understanding the power of communities. Added to this was the CEO of United Way in Halifax, instrumental in her understanding of how the power of communities could work and should be recognised by these awards.

Understanding of this positive, asset based attitude is also very evident at senior strategy and political level in NS. The Lieutenant Governor Mayann Francis herself grew up in Whitney Pier - a close knit, poor community in Cape Breton. Its response to the challenges it faced was, “to care for each other, band together, show compassion for each other and never despair”.

This may sound too positive to be true, and no community is without problems. Talking to people individually always raises the usual levels of dissatisfaction with some politicians, services, taxes or policies. The curator described an act of “mindless vandalism” when I went to see the Creamery - someone had broken the glass entrance door overnight, but not stolen anything. There had been a spate of such petty incidents over the summer, which was described as “unusual” and “unexplained”. “Yet these small, cohesive communities do seem to be positive places.

3.5 Musquodoboit Harbour
Typical of the Eastern shore, within commuting distance of Halifax Regional Municipality [HRM], this area still feels very rural, with sparsely scattered wooden houses on land lots and Mi’kmaq place names. A very beautiful and peaceful area of wooded inlets is now attracting Americans and Germans buyers. By building houses costing upwards of $1 million, and making their water frontages private, they are changing the nature of the area, by putting it out of reach of locals and causing resentment. It echoes some of the problems that our rural areas have been suffering for some time.
There are also some returning younger Nova Scotians who are moving back from the high wage, high pressure economy of Alberta to run tourist based enterprises. Some English buyers are building holiday houses here whilst retaining property in England. They cannot live here full time, as regulations require they that live away a minimum of one week every six months.

3.6 Lunenburg
A picturesque town of brightly painted, Victorian wooden houses, Lunenburg was settled by German and Swiss Protestants in 1753. It represents another piece of the ethnic jigsaw of Nova Scotia’s settlement. The County is known as the Christmas tree capital of the world, its original trade centred on trawlers and scallop draggers. The whole coastline here has a feel of New England. Indeed, the original framework of St John’s Anglican Church, imported from Boston in 1754, has elaborate gothic black and white architecture and is a prominent feature of the townscape.

Its harbour is still the central focus of the steep streets arranged on the standard gridiron pattern. The moored schooners from the early 20th c, include the Bluenose - so named after the 18th c colonists ability to withstand the harsh winters of NS. The fisherman and sailor’s memorial lists the names of “those who did not come back” on eight black granite fingers, representing the points of the compass at which they were lost. The Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic plays a central role in the tourist trade, which is now the mainstay of the town.

3.7 Peggy’s Cove
Peggy’s Cove is the classic, small Nova Scotian fishing hamlet, clustered around a small harbour and facing the sea - but with an iconic lighthouse attached. Standing on the bare, ice scoured, white granite rocks of the 380 million year old Canadian Shield, the lighthouse is much visited and evocative. On the Lighthouse Trail, it is the classic image that represents Nova Scotia on its stamps and on much of its tourist related literature.

Used as a sheltered inlet to land their fish for several years, six fishermen petitioned the government to the right to settle there and in 1811 the first land grant of 800 acres was issued, and the community was born. Population peaked at about 300 by 1900. Self sufficient, the families raised livestock, found enough pockets of soil among the bare rocks to grow crops and lived in
the traditional shingle clad wooden houses clustered around the fishing
wharves - very similar to Stromness on Orkney. They traded cod by sea and
later by road. Four families can still trace their roots back to the original
fishermen, but most residents now work in the tourist trade, though a few
do still fish for mackerel, blue fin tuna and lobster.

The lighthouse was built in 1868 - replaced in 1914 by the present one which
is fully automated. The first chapel was built in 1850, rebuilt by the
community and consecrated in 1885. There is no cemetery here as there is
so little soil and the hard granite bedrock makes burial impossible.

The Preservation Area surrounding Peggy's Cove was set up in 1962 to
conserve the unique and sensitive environment, and represents one of the
government's methods of maintaining and encouraging rural economic
development - through tourism, environment and heritage in a tiny
settlement not quite 200 years old.

3.8 Wolfville
The town was called Mud Creek originally but was renamed after the mayor
Justice DeWolf when his daughter considered the name unseemly. It had
the smallest registered harbour in the world in the mid 19th c, scoured by the
huge tides of the Minas basin. Acres of red brown silt are exposed at low
tide, fostering distinctive wildlife. It is home to thousands of wild birds, and
especially palmated sandpipers in August en route to their arctic breeding
grounds. In summer, Chimney swifts pour into a specially constructed
chimney at the town centre nature reserve.

Wolfville is a small town whose development has centred on educational
establishments. Its current population is 3700 and Acadia University has
3000 students resident in the town from September to April.

This is another area where the contrast with the UK is considerable. Such
student domination can be the cause of antagonism, and is certainly so in
some areas of Durham City for instance. All alcohol in NS is available only
from NSLC stores. Supermarkets do not sell it. The official drinking age is
18, and any signs of a binge drinking culture appears to be centred in Halifax
where a thriving bar culture caters for tourists as much as for students.
The original school, Horton Academy, was established in 1829. It had 285 students by 1912. The Baptist College for the training and education of boys that was the beginnings of the university was established in 1838.

A Senior citizens housing project arose from survey done in 1970 by InterChurch Council, itself founded in that year. The survey showed the need for 9 housing units for families and 32 for senior citizens. 20 units opened on Sherwood Drive in first phase, with funding 50% from Federal Government, Provincial Government 25% and Town Council 25%.

The United Church of Canada was formed from the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational Churches in 1925, and Acadia University and the Baptist Church are closely linked. The University was incorporated in 1964. The Irving Corporation has been its major benefactor, building the Irving Building in 1999 and the Botanic Gardens, which are open to the public.

The weekly newsletter - The Grapevine - lists events and local news, including a regular section “Random Acts of Kindness”. It is produced by ex Acadia students who now have a portfolio of jobs in Wolfville, where they want to settle. There is a Green recycling local business and a highly successful weekly farmer's market.

The 1930's cinema has been developed by a local partnership as a Cooperative cultural institution, family friendly gathering place and cultural tourism destination. Adjacent is a Just Us Coffee shop [a fair trade, social enterprise]. The Al Whittle Theatre was developed with help from Provincial and municipal money and an ACOA grant. It is seen as a pivotal place for King's County, and has a history of investment from the Wolfville Business Development Corporation spanning 30 years. The town exemplifies the culture of cooperation and independence supported by the state in NS.

3.9 Kentville and Kings County Community Economic Development Agency
The Regional Development Agency based in Kentville is one of 13 in NS and is addressing many of the rural and Seniors' problems. It is focussing on getting over 55 year olds back into work to counteract the labour and skills shortages as young people leave. Targetted work on retaining young people is characterised as now in “panic mode”. The CEDA also works to encourage volunteerism, developing business mentorship programmes in which retired
people share their knowledge. It is concerned about succession, as young people are not getting into volunteering. A Youth Council was set up in 2008

Transportation is also a key issue. The Kings Transit project has operated for 20 years, running between towns, shops and hospitals with some Provincial and Municipal funding. It has to battle to achieve enough fees and fares ["ridership"] to keep going. Ridership and convenience are the two big problems. The journey times and distances are huge. 100km takes two hours. The buses have no toilets on board - of particular concern to older users. Public transport is expensive compared to the private car, and although there is Kings Para Transit for disabled and seniors with higher needs, the lack of sidewalks [pavements] in rural areas means they cannot be picked up easily - especially if in wheelchairs. Neither is there a comprehensive coverage over the area.

Shanex, a commercial company, is developing a large number of assisted care facilities in the area - up to 300 more beds in the next year. Providing a progressive or graduated care system, there is a big demand for these facilities but 300 more Community Care Assistants [CCAs] are needed locally to staff them. The Community College runs courses and encourages young people to train as CCAs. Although the wage is $14 per hour, above the minimum of $8 per hour, the work not seen as “glamourous”, so shortages remain.

It is becoming increasingly difficult registere with a doctor in rural areas and emergency hours are being cut. The CEDA is looking at Elliot Lake in Ontario as a possible way forward. A settlement of about 3000 people lost its single industry, mining, 15 years ago. It then recreated itself as a retirement destination catering solely for seniors. Nearly 70% of the population is over 55 years old, and some have returned to work part time.

Recognising that the area will need to tap into seniors as never before to keep rural communities going, policies will have to change. Universities offer courses free to over 60’s, subsidised Federally. The CEDA has sponsored immigrants, cutting the process to 9 months as opposed to the 48 months it can take at Federal level. It has visited skilled worker fairs in the UK and Holland in connection with this drive. It also organises trade missions to Scotland, and some staff were off to Glasgow on the day I visited.
Another key drive is the bid to get the Grand Pre site registered with UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. The layout of the land plots is still recognisable from the 18th century maps and farmed by the same families. Acadians around the world still see it as a great symbol of their homeland and visits are a very solemn experience for them. Local partnerships and community groups have been very involved in developing the bid, but some locals worry that, if successful, the increased tourism that results might raise property prices and thence taxes in the area. This is not yet significant, but some Americans and Europeans have built summer house havens along the coast.

Another factor is the development of farmland. Large farms over 5000 acres or small family concerns under 50 acres are viable. Those in between are not, and farmers wanting to sell land for development are creating divisions in the community. Planning is granted at County level. Each tends to operate slightly different zoning regulations, resulting in some developments sited at the boundary of the adjacent more lenient Annapolis County.

New Minas, adjacent to Kentville, is one of the few strip mall developments I saw in NS. It is a real contrast to the characteristic small town landscape. All the big supermarkets, furniture chains, convenience food outlets are represented here, spread out for several kilometers along the road to Wolfville.

The Valley Community Fibre Network which gives high speed internet access is a key driver for economic development - a 186 kilometre long, community owned fibre optic cable between Dalhousie University in Halifax and the NS Community College in Middleton along Highway 1. The recent Integrated Community Sustainability Plan is seen as a potentially positive and proactive way ahead, with the development of alternative energy sources, tourism packages, local food, farmers markets and waste management to protect the environment as key priorities.

The Executive Director Erin Beaudin, graduated in geography from Mount Allison University in Sackville and works closely with and sits on the board of ACSBE in Acadia University. The CEDA operates with community development principles, and helped fund the International Community Development Conference in Wolfville in 2008. Organised by Horizons CD Associates based in Wolfville, it drew CD practitioners from around the
world to learn about abcd. The concept is gaining in credibility at the moment.

4. Older People as assets: Ageing Programmes and attitudes to Seniors in NS.

NS has the oldest population in Canada, and the highest proportion of centenarians in North America. An article in Time Magazine in 2004 attributed this fact to the strong sense of community support as one of the reasons so many Nova Scotians reach this milestone. Six towns had over 25% of their residents in the senior category - Mahone Bay 29%, Lunenburg and Annapolis Royal 27%, Lockeport 26%, Berwick and and Digby 25%.

The rural population is rapidly aging in NS, through a declining birth rate and the out-migration of young people into Halifax and beyond. Halifax is the youngest county with only 11.3% of seniors; Guysborough county the oldest with 20%. 14.1% of the population in 2005 were seniors and it is estimated that this section of the population will grow by 80% between 2005 and 2026, when 25% of the population will be seniors. Similar to the UK, there is also a reverse trend where people move back and settle on retirement or in middle age.

This aging population is reshaping communities, but it is seen in a more positive light than in the UK. In Nova Scotia:

"More older people means more mentors, more caregivers, more volunteers and more giving back to the community. A fully engaged senior population will, in turn, enable Nova Scotia to sustain the kind of supportive communities that have garnered world-wide attention, and give rightful pride of place and satisfaction to seniors. “Age Friendly Rural and Remote Communities Initiative p26]

Land use planning is a big issue for the future - where do the old go? Those who settled in the last 10 years and were allowed to build large properties in rural parts of municipalities where they owned land lots, are beginning to need services. The significant numbers of seniors in small towns and rural areas are 3rd and 4th generation still living in the family home and often single occupiers.
Families are now more dispersed, and the Catholic Church for instance has started closing and selling off rural churches as congregations dwindle now that the younger generation are not so involved. [A contributory factor is the cost of insurance cover up to modern standards for wooden churches.] There has also been a decline in volunteering in the under 40's who tend to get involved in short term, value added work experience as opposed to the concept of long term community service still prevalent in seniors.

Governance is also a big challenge in small rural towns. Too many elected officials have been office for decades, as the younger generation are not interested in what is seen as a difficult job with too much work. The role of decision-making and leading policy is not sufficiently understood. Effective local governance is therefore a current research issue in NS universities - as it is in the UK.

Nevertheless, seniors in NS are seen as the backbone of communities, volunteering and maintaining the structure, fund raising and essential for economic sustainability. They are respected and supported at government level, which ensures that they sit at the policy table from the start, and not as an afterthought. The Seniors Secretariat was established in 1980, so there is 30 years of experience working with seniors, testing ideas and developing the mindset of respect.

**Solutions.**

The vision of the Strategy for Positive Aging is:

"*Nova Scotia is an inclusive society of caring communities that supports the well being of seniors and values their contributions.*"

"Positive Aging" has seven guiding principles: dignity, independence and self-determination, participation, fairness, safety and security, self-fulfilment and recognition. It has 9 goals for its work, and programmes have been developed targeted on these goals:

- **Celebrating Seniors by valueing and celebrating their contributions.**
- **Financial Security:** having a secure and sufficient income
- **Health and wellbeing:** opportunities to be as healthy and independent as possible.
• **Supported living:** assistance to maintain independence.
• **Housing:** affordable accessible, safe and supportive housing options.
• **Transportation:** affordable, safe and accessible transit options.
• **Valuing diversity.**
• **Employment and life transitions:** competence and choice are the primary determinants for participation in work, community service, learning and leisure.
• **Supportive Communities:** communities support and protect seniors and provide them with opportunities for personal growth, lifelong learning and community participation.

NS lags slightly behind the UK in the development cycle. It has not advanced so far along the road to centralised government, individualism, globalised trade and commercialisation - beneficially so. The settlers’ attitude of “I am my brother’s keeper”, reinforced by religious observance and good family relationships has created a society that feels like that in the UK in the 1950’s. A visionary Minister, Jack MacIsaac, established a Seniors Cabinet Committee and Dr Fred McKennon was the first director of the Seniors Secretariat, and they both helped to instil this positive attitude to seniors. It still pervades at Cabinet level at both Federal and Provincial levels of government. There are monthly teleconferences between Federal, Provincial and territorial levels, as well as working groups, which feed into annual meetings at Ministerial level.

There are widely published Goals and a “Manifesto for Aging”. There is a toll free telephone line for any questions - staffed by 3 people - who guarantee to answer queries as soon as possible and guarantee to call back with correct information. Consultations are held regularly and there is a “Group of 9” to represent seniors for quick short notice meetings as well as monthly meetings. This keeps the department’s finger on the pulse of current issues. There are no politically appointed members or gatekeepers. Any contentious issues are dealt with by bringing people into the department and this model is now respected and used to advise the Provincial government.

*Age Friendly* work has developed following from the work done by the WHO’s International Federation on Aging. Canada, Sweden and Switzerland have been leading on this work, and Halifax was one of the 33 cities worldwide developing ideas. Guysborough County in NS was chosen as a rural
area pilot as it had the highest percentage of seniors. Many parts of health services are still medically oriented, hierarchical and bureaucratic and the value of volunteers’ perspective, using local knowledge and people to increase effectiveness is being increasingly recognised. This year, the Seniors Conference was held in Sydney [Cape Breton] to which participants came from around the world. Previous meetings have been in London, and Denmark.

**Government and University Partnerships.**
Federal government works with Mount St Vincent University Centre for Aging in Halifax and Health Canada. Undertaking research and compiling statistics, all work is based on the abcd model. Principles of openness, good communication and consultation are embedded, producing an Age Friendly checklist for rural and remote areas amongst other Age Friendly work.

Another interesting piece of work combines participatory research methods and community development principles to approach health promotion research. Resulting in the Participatory Food Costing Model and the Nova Scotia Food Security network the three elements of research, mutual learning and capacity building and action opened up a national dialogue on food security and policy. It led to policy changes aimed to ensure social justice and food security for all.

A case study in Parrsboro examined how changes in population size alters a community’s ability to offer health services. The Community Hospital was lost in 1980 but the community rose to the challenge themselves by developing palliative care, foot care, drop in clinics. Community leaders lobbied government and connected to the Department of Health. There is a very active Seniors group, and a nurse [Dora Fuller] who retired and came back home did a great deal to keep the project developing.

The Community/University Research alliance partnership whereby University, government and community act together, typifies the approach. Individuals, community members, researchers and government officials meet each year to talk about their responsibilities. More to the point, the University now recognises the value of this type of research as opposed to the production of professional academic papers. It is now taken into consideration for tenure.
Research has also been undertaken through working with Veteran Affairs - a federal government department. The Royal Canadian Legion is a strong presence in most communities. Other key work areas include the role of older volunteers, dementia care, home support workers and the projection of disability into the future to assess supply and demand. The key underlying principle to all this work is that it is applied, collaborative, achieved through community consultation and engagement at all levels from individual, community, province and federal.

The Positive Aging program started in 2005 and was based on over 1000 consultations, and focus groups looking at health and legal issues. In 2006 the Federal Government decided to create a separate Department of Seniors and increased its funding, employed more people. It supported the Positive Aging Strategy, providing $10k in grants to any not for profit organisation working with seniors. The Age Friendly grants were provided for Municipalities and are the key to community development in provinces, giving $5k matching grants for projects such as lifts in swimming pools, extended walking trails, green gyms, interagency programmes for intergenerational work. It is generally recognised that real progress on Seniors work has been achieved over the past 5 years.

The United Way was started 40-50 years ago in the US. Its principle is that those who need support receive it from those who are willing to share what they have - principally via salary donations and business. This has been, and still is, a very successful fund raising movement to which the business community has donated $millions to agencies and groups. It works well with the abcd approach. It also does significant work with Shambala, a Buddhist organisation that runs leadership courses, particularly on local leadership. It also runs an annual conference in conjunction with Mount St Vincent University in Halifax, on authentic leadership - another concept gaining ground and credibility in NS.

Two current priorities are for more nursing homes and more independent seniors housing, together with transit issues. Commercial companies are beginning to develop chains of nursing homes and senior apartments, but affordability is a problem. Community based schemes are fewer and scattered but appear to be more successful. The Provincial government does fund some community transport schemes, but they cannot reach the
isolated, off secondary road inhabitants. Isolated rural seniors are a real problem yet to be solved – particularly as some do not drive and cannot afford taxis. The roads do not have sidewalks, which is a particular problem for wheelchair use and loading wheelchairs even into special senior transport can be almost insurmountable problem. Winter conditions are a real problem for drivers and pedestrians alike, and there is some evidence to show that some seniors spend the majority of the winter virtually housebound.

Most specialist health services are centred in Halifax, and this trend is likely to continue as regional hospitals are becoming too expensive to maintain. The Halifax hospitals have made provision in low cost “lodges” to accommodate family and friends, and the B&B in which I stayed advertised itself as close to these hospitals as part of its marketing.

Should there be a change in Federal government, it is considered that the positive attitude to seniors will be maintained. New programmes are being currently developed such as the Seniors Advocacy Group. There was a recent change in Provincial Government to the New Democratic Party, and the new Minister is very keen on seniors work. The latest work is on the silver Economy, recognising the economic contribution by and market for older people.

The Senior Secretariat in NS is the envy of other Provinces, and has is leading the way with the development of the first “Strategy for Positive Aging and Age Friendly Community”. Although NS is a poor Province and the required services are not all present, there is a plan and a will and a mechanism in government to work.

Bridgetown, west of Halifax, for example developed a pilot “feel safe and street smart” work with seniors. A coordinator makes home visits and acts to alert services to developing needs. Similar programmes are spreading to other counties. There is also a specific program on a First Nation Reserve, dealing with its particular problems of youth suicide, youth unemployment and trying to ease intergenerational tension. Elders are supported to understand these problems and to be able to support young people.

Elder abuse programs were developed from 2005 onwards and there are CDWs who work specifically on this, working at Federal, Provincial and
Municipal levels. A recent hard hitting TV ad got a lot of attention and stimulated awareness of both financial and physical abuse of Seniors in NS.

"People Schools" [Folkschule or basically the Coady method of study sessions in people’s kitchens] are organised for Seniors across the Province. There is always an element of fun and entertainment and folksiness in these meetings, in which information is provided together with training on leadership and policy engagement. Seniors are encouraged to get involved in public policy, updating the Positive Aging Strategy for example, and they are popular, successful and seniors are asking for more. Those in Shelburne and Kingston this summer had over 50 attending at each. A 2 day long Province wide one was held in Tatamagouche.

4.1 Voluntary Planning
For over 40 years, Voluntary Planning has been concerned with the inclusion of volunteers in strategic planning in NS. VP has 220 members across the Province, of which 200 are seniors or senior serving organisations that focus on seniors issues. They work within a community development perspective on health promotion - such as the current “Preventing Falls Together” programme and Community Based Transit programmes. 12 local coalitions develop local strategies and integrating policies and procedures.

Citizen stakeholder groups meet within communities, led by volunteers teams. There are only 6 permanent staff at Voluntary Planning who coordinate and facilitate, and pass on the information and intelligence to advise government departments. The Department of Natural Resources needed to know what people valued and VP facilitated the "What is in your heart" vision. A similar process on Heritage resulted in 50 recommendations from communities to which the Department reacted well - the resulting strategy links each action back to what citizens had said, explaining why action is being taken or not. This is another example of the deliberate use of small group work - well recognised as beneficial for creating trust and collaboration and engaging in discussion of common problems.

VP and St Mary’s University co-hosted a Chinese delegation recently to enable the visitors to learn about how civil servants can engage local citizens and how to deal with the huge rural influx into town and cities in China today.
4.2 Community Links
This Provincial voluntary organisation works to see that seniors in NS are informed, active and engaged in their communities as well as to ensure that they have a voice in public policy. One project is Seniors Growing Seniors Skills, in which free volunteer trainers and Community Links staff in the cooperative delivery of training to seniors groups on topics such as volunteering, member recruitment and getting the work done.

Key current projects include “Preventing Falls Together” [giving advice on exercise, winter walking and dangers in the home], mini People’s Schools and SAY! This brings young people and seniors together to discuss the environment, drugs, sexuality, ageism and the generations. It also coordinates the volunteer forum website. Community Links is also involved with the NS Community Based Transportation Association.

4.3 New Horizons for Seniors
This federal funding programme is for community based projects at local level to help seniors participate in social activities, to lead an active life and to contribute to their community. There are 3 strands – capital assistance, elder abuse awareness funding and community participation and leadership funding.

4.4 Housing
Nearly one third of seniors live alone. Low income seniors have a particularly difficult time, with 45% of seniors paying over 30% of their income on housing costs. 45% of unattached, older women live below the low income cut off. Policies are developing to allow seniors to “age in place”, including fall prevention, senior housing complexes with progressive levels of care, private apartments, shared living residences, home-sharing, property tax deferral, reverse mortgages, sale leaseback, life-hold estate and assisted living facilities. Many of these ideas could be usefully transferred to the UK.

Garden suites and accessory apartments are also becoming more common whereby seniors can retain their privacy and independence whilst living on the same property as their families. Another new idea is Campus Suites where an assisted living, nursing home and independent senior apartments are built on one site. Meal preparation, nursing care and emergency response are centralised, spouses needing different levels of care can live in adjacent
buildings, and residents get to know staff so that there is less trauma as they progress from independence to care. Capable residents are also on hand to provide voluntary help.

Cluster housing is created when seniors pool their resources to build a small number of self-contained suites attached to a common kitchen and living room. Seasonal supported housing has been developing in summer tourist destinations where motels and hotels offer special monthly rates for winter - keeping staff employed, providing housekeeping and company to avoid winter isolation.

Another idea that developed in the US is Alumni return to college towns for retirement. Started about 20 years ago, there are now over 50 such developments near campuses - including community colleges, which see them as an extension of their existing work with seniors and continuing education. Retirees are drawn in by the wide range of activities in college towns, the chance to continue learning and life alongside like-minded adults as well as the buzz of young people around. Interestingly, whilst in Wolfville I did meet several alumni who had deliberately chosen to settle in the town, although there is no housing development built or sponsored by Acadia University - as yet.

The Atlantic Seniors Housing Research Alliance [ASHRA] includes representatives from Mount St Vincent University, Dalhousie University, University of Prince Edward Island, government departments, housing developers, seniors’ organisations and service providers.

It has built a picture of needs over the next 20 years and some of the statistics are quite startling. By 2026, for instance, 16,416 Nova Scotians aged 50 or older will need “institutionalised care” - a 150% increase over current provision.

4.5 Health
During the 1990’s, the Canadian government made changes in the organisation and delivery of health services - prompted by the belief that demands from an aging population were not fundable. The emphasis changed to increased personal responsibility, home care and community based services together with a move from the medical to the social model.
This is ironic for rural families who often share the values originating from early settlers dealing with a harsh environment - self reliance, helping each other, hard work, family members supporting each other. It has been estimated that between 80 and 90% of long term care in rural areas is provided via family networks.

Rural seniors as a group are older, less educated, have lower incomes and tend to live in their own homes - but mostly in houses rather than apartments or lodges. 90% of rural seniors are also Canadian born. Widowed seniors and unattached senior women are the most disadvantaged. But the idea that small rural communities are more caring was supported by figures from the 1996 Census that showed that more people living in such communities had cared for a senior in the past year.

One particularly interesting resource is a CD "Dare to age well" - a collection of publications and photos presenting the many aspects of healthy aging, produced by Health Canada. On this one resources is collected a huge range of practical information - ranging from diet advice for particular medical conditions, to how to communicate with doctors, dealing with all aspects of violence and abuse and explaining how the health care system works.

4.6 Transport
This is the major problem for seniors in town and country - when you can't get around life gets limited. As society gets more mobile and dispersed, relying on family members declines.

Since 2001 the Community Transportation Assistance Program has developed projects in 9 counties in NS and the budget was increased in 2005/6.

5. Asset Based Community Development in rural NS.
In the 1960's Federal government work was very top down and Provincial government was hands off. Public investment was through regional development plans. In the 1970's General Development Agreements were developed between Federal and Provincial governments, using the growth pole concept where growth is concentrated on particular sites. The late 1970's and 1980's focussed in winning industries through Regional Industrial Expansion departments. This was not successful and Provincial governments increasingly wanted to do their own thing.
"Rural" is classified in 4 zones dependent on the degree of Metropolitan Influence - Strong, Moderate, Weak and no MIZ, and in 2001 rural and small town residents comprised 36.7% of the population compared to 20.6% in Canada as a whole. 44% of Nova Scotia's population lives in rural areas.

By the late 1990's, bottom up development and the Community Futures Program were in place, focussing on under-performing regions through grassroots community based NGOs. Money was lent out for job and business creation. 13 RDAs [Regional development Agencies] - a lot for a small population - were set up as the basic infrastructure to facilitate and enhance government and community relationships. ACOA [the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency] was set up. Both were infused with community economic development principles.

Indeed civil servants are trained on the community development values and working with community assets. Communities were consulted about what works, and the attitude of letting communities lead and government follow in collaboration has been instilled. 32 agencies sat down to draw up the community development policy, which is regularly updated and developed.

Posters in English, French, Gaelic and Mik Mak state:
"The Guiding Principles for community development in NS.

The government of Nova Scotia is committed to the values we share - our quality of life, the importance of volunteers, and the need for partnerships to keep our communities strong and sustainable.

1. Local leadership: the community plays the leadership role in its own development.
2. Government support: Government actively facilitates and supports community development through the provision of information, expertise, guidance and other resources, as appropriate.
3. Collaborative approach: Community development builds on cooperation, coordination and collaboration between Government and communities.
4. Balance: Community development builds on a balanced approach that addresses and integrates economic, social, environmental and cultural considerations.
5. **Respect for local values**: Government strives to understand and respect community values.

6. **Social Inclusion**: All community members, regardless of gender, age, disability, race, culture, language or social and economic status have the opportunity to become engaged in the community development process and are able to access its social and economic benefits.

7. **Transparency and accountability**: Government involvement in community development encourages transparency, accountability, participation and evidence based decision making.

8. **Partnerships and shared interests**: Community development engages the necessary partners at the community and Government levels.

9. **Common Vision**: Community members and Government define a common vision for the future.

10. **Focus on Community Assets**: Community development is built on existing community capacity and assets.

11. **Volunteerism**: Community development values, respects, nurtures and encourages volunteerism.

Every two years there is a Celebrating Communities Conference, to which each RDA can send 3 community representatives and all interest groups are represented. Currently, there is a trainee programme on Collaborative Strategies in community development and one on Appreciative Inquiry, through workshops run at all three levels of government.

In the 1990’s NS also had a change to a Liberal government under John Savage. This started out with 90 days of consultation, travelling the province listening to people, who were tired of top down initiatives. This led to the development of CED - the Community Economic Development Policy and abolition of the Industrial Commissions.

In 2004, the 13 NS Community Business Development Corporations started the Students into Business program, which provides students with community outreach and business support, interest free loans up to $5k to start or expand businesses and social economy projects. Students receive mentoring and counselling and if they repay their loans they become eligible for a rebate towards future educational or business activity. Key underlying principles are that youth are a responsible resource; local skills and
knowledge should be built; flexible programming and support for existing high school programmes.

There has now been 20 years of bottom up policy via 13 RDAs in NS. RDAs are regularly evaluated, have Boards composed of Community Volunteers, business leaders and operate through 3 year Strategic plans. RDAs try a wide range of different initiatives - for instance in Colchester RDA in Truro, a specific programme to attract and retain immigrants to offset the challenges resulting from an aging population. A multi province project, federally funded, looked at youth engagement in rural communities. The PATH project in northeast Nova Scotia was a response to increasingly centralised health system, based on the belief that people know more about what keeps them healthy and they should be involved in decision making and health related planning. Chebucto West Community Health Board developed a tool to help cd workers evaluate potential or continued involvement in a community health project. Kings Community Economic Development Agency in Kentville has worked to get the Grand Pre site listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and in so doing, has had to work with and develop local partnerships with the local community associations and residents.

Much of the success is down to the quality of the Civil Service in the middle ranks that are willing to question and prepared to be "agitating insiders" to make things happen. Their level of commitment and dedication is generally noted and regarded as absolutely key to the retention of the philosophy of CED. Certain individuals such as Chris Bryant in the housing department are noted for really stirring things up and going to work for the people not the "authority".

St Andrews is a case in point. When the Municipality reneagued on the promised long term care provision for seniors, the community looked at how to develop something themselves. After working with the Credit Union, the church, banks and anyone who would get involved, it invited the civil servant back to visit and see what the community had already achieved. The long term employment of this particular civil servant meant that feeling guilty about letting the community down before, he facilitated the new model of financing seniors housing that has been copied elsewhere, with 25% Federal, 25% Provincial, 25% local and 25% Municipal funding in active communities that were prepared to do some work themselves.
The Federal Government funded the Rural and Small Towns Program from 1985 to 1995 at Mount Allison University, to research rural development and outreach work. It has since carried on the work as a consultancy agency, looking at community economic development, housing and population issues. Its philosophy is that any economic development work requires community engagement from the outset. Cumberland County for instance was developing and integrated community sustainability plan and engaged the university to do the work with them, which was community based via focus groups, interviews a Steering Committee with community members and debates.

The government heard the demand to make rural and remote communities stronger, and in response created the Canadian Rural Partnership in 1997. This has produced the Rural Action Plan, Community Access Program, Rural Revitalization Foundation and in 2005 assisted the development of the community development model and community capacity building in remote and rural communities. A Community Dialogue Toolkit was produced in 2001 to support the development of local solutions to local challenges, written by Community leaders. The Rural Secretariat has researched 21 models for rural development and community capacity building in nearly 300 communities, which highlight the importance of recognising the time and effort needed to build good partnerships and the readiness of specific communities to participate in community development programmes.

It is impressive that on top of the firm and explicit commitment to abcd, the evaluations of government are published and detailed. For instance the Collaborative Strategies in Community Development evaluated in Fall 2008 contains much interesting material. It outlines results and outcomes in summary form – for instance listing what makes communities strong:

1. Shared values and purpose: traditions, sense of belonging, common culture, distinctiveness.
2. Practices of community: storytelling, rituals of birth marriage and death; coming together around food - and all done over the long term.
3. Learning: both individual and collective learning strengthens a community.
4. Good communication: respectful communications, imbued with trust, appreciation, mentoring, friendship, creativity and support.
5. *Infrastructure: the need for a place away from home and work to gather in and be a community.*

Much of what I observed in NS would illustrate that this approach and level of understanding in policy makers is working.

5.1 Moses Coady and the Coady Institute, St Francis Xavier University, Antigonish.

Despite its place as a hub town, and the size and reputation of its University, Antigonish is still only a small town. I was surprised on visiting how small it felt in comparison to what I had heard about it. I felt sure that had must have missed a something as I walked around. But on checking with locals I was soundly reassured that I had not.

Incorporated as a town in 1889, its university was recognised and awarded degrees from 1865 – itself having its beginnings in St Andrews Grammar school, established in 1838. Antigonish had been settled in turn by the Irish in 1622, the French in 1650, Acadians in 1755 Highland Scots in 1770’s and in 1783 by some freed black US citizens. In fact, NS has the largest African population in Canada - many coming in the 18\textsuperscript{th}c, and were better treated here than in the US, although some were still slaves. [The current Lieutenant Governor is an African Nova Scotian.] This varied pedigree has evolved within a frontier town situation - the town only fully paved its streets in the 1950s, and was the first town to do so in NS. There are also memorials to the various Scottish clans to which immigrants belonged in the town opposite the University.

Priests committed to outreach started working with local farmers helping them grade and market their wool more effectively in order to overcome the difficulties of the late 19\textsuperscript{th}c agricultural depression. “People’s schools” were set up opening the university to men and women from impoverished fishing, farming and mining communities around Antigonish.

By the 1920’s Father Tompkins and Rev. Dr Moses Coady had begun pioneering a practice of popular education and community organising that enabled people to change their lives and futures. Coady became the first Director of the extension department in 1928, which continues to spread the way of working now known as the Antigonish movement across the world.
In 1930, Father Jimmy Tompkins from the Antigonish extension department started the "Atlantic Cooperator" - a bi-monthly newspaper. He was the mentor to his cousin, Moses Coady, a larger than life, driven, gifted, forthright catholic brought up on a Cape Breton farm, who attended the university before going to Rome to study for the priesthood. When he returned to NS he was determined to confront social injustice and to motivate communities to organise coops.

Coady himself worked first with fishermen across the Maritimes, visiting every fishing community in 10 months in 1930. Beginning with group meetings that he called "intellectual bombing" he attacked large companies and fish dealers and provoked the fishermen to take things into their own hands. He set up "study clubs" to bring people together to consider the potential of economic cooperation, and soon there were hundreds of coops.

He also worked for equal rights and roles for women, supported in this by the Sisters of St Martha from their base in the large convent in Antigonish. He famously said that "Give me 5 Marthas and we can change the world" - unusual at the time and particularly so for a Roman Catholic priest. Womens' craft workshops, consumer purchasing coops, farmers coops and mine workers coops were developed across the Maritime provinces and around the world. He laid the ground for Fair Trade movement of the 1980s.

It felt to me as I travelled around NS, that this visionary and the movement he started had become part of the collective memory of NS. Somehow it had been integrated as a strategic idea and way of operating, and possibly responsible for accentuating the positive, respectful manner that appeared to characterise much of the Province.

The 6 basic principles defining the Antigonish movement were outlined in a lecture by Professor Harry Jackson in 1944:

1. The primacy of the individual
2. Social reform must come through education
3. Education must begin with the economic
4. Education must be through group action
5. Effective social reform involves fundamental changes in social and economic institutions
6. The ultimate objective of the Movement is a full and abundant life for everyone in the community.

The Coady Institute still operates on these principles today - respecting the inherent dignity of every person, believing in participatory group process of development based on adult education and socio-economic cooperation to effect positive change in both local and global institutions and structures. People came from around the world, especially from Latin America, Africa and Asia - and they still do today.

I met new students on their 2nd day of the International Development Course at the Coady Institute, established in 1959 on Coady’s death and realising his dream of an international centre of excellence for community based development. Educators, community leaders and development workers still come from around the world for the 3 week or 6 month courses. Talking to people as I moved around NS, it was obvious that somehow Coady had had an impact on the psyche of NS - and several people actually expressed it in that way.

The combined forces of faith, extension and outreach education, group work and a visionary personality led to the "Antigonish Movement". It is still revered and inspires social justice and social enterprises today. Whilst I was in Halifax there were newspaper articles asking - "where are the modern visionaries to come from...where are the modern day Moses Coady's?"

[Globe and Mail, 22.8.09]

The Institute has links to the Carnegie Foundation and to NW University in Chicago, and has worked hard at establishing the credibility and value of the Rising Tide cooperative model. But it still uses the principles of community development, facilitated group work and social justice. Current work includes “Making death affordable” by developing funeral coops for rural seniors for instance.

The Development course is attended by students from 18 countries, with particularly strong links to South Africa and Vietnam. There are currently 13 organisations partnering Coady in South Africa to develop direct action research. Realising that a government cannot by itself deliver everything that people want, and that the power and influence of traditional community
leadership needs to be mobilised if progress is to be made and any dependency culture abandoned.

The focus is not on deficits, disadvantage or needs. Assets are emphasised, not income. Mobilising assets, not top down government intervention, is expressed in the mantras like, "When people care enough to act" and "You are poor enough to want it and smart enough to do it". The cooperative model is still strong in NS and St Mary's University, Halifax, for instance runs a Master’s degree in Cooperation and Credit Union Development to which student come from around the world.

The ABCD Conference was held in Antigonish between July 7th and 10th this year. Jody Kretzman, one of the originators of the concept with McKnight from the ABCD Institute in USA in the 1970's, noted the almost pandemic spread of the asset based virus. It appears to resonate strongly around a world tired with institutions, programmes, government departments and police forces to diagnose problems and deficiencies:

"The moment seems ripe for growing this international trend into a movement... Strategies developed around "appreciative enquiry", participatory rural appraisal, sustainable livelihoods approach, work which focuses on "resiliency" and the range of local economic development initiatives, especially those involving micro credit and micro enterprise development ....each of these approaches bring something powerful and unique to the development efforts and are flexible enough to be customized to each unique setting, whether North or South, urban or rural."

In all its work, the Coady Institue tries to learn from communities that achieve success on their own terms. If you consider two communities - one prospers, the other stagnates. The question is: Why? The one that prospers sees itself as the engine of its own success. The one that stagnates hold the view that it suffers because of external factors. This does not completely explain the difference. Studies of 13 communities around the world that were “successes” in that they were self mobilised and able to attract outside investment are published in their latest book “From clients to citizens: communities changing the course of their own development”. Written by Allison Mathie and Gord Cunningham, it looks at the dynamics of genuine community driven development.
5.2 Acadia Centre for Social and Business Entrepreneurship [ACSBE]

Set up in 1988 as a not for profit organisation to provide business start up counselling using students in the counselling role with faculty supervision to provide a resource for the community and students. Funded by ACOA and the government’s Community Entrepreneur Initiative, initial work was on the business development model. But this only suited 20% of the clients who wanted to start up a business. The abcd approach was developed to enable anyone who came on these outreach based courses to envisage what they could achieve and do, and to involve whole communities not just the individual. Successes have been greatest in the more marginalized communities where people have not been used to having their ideas, talents and visions validated by outside facilitators.

Acadia’s version of abcd looks at the interests, desires, emotions of individuals and their capacity to bring the personal and resources together over the short, medium and long term to develop within a community setting. There are outreach courses at Community Colleges in Bridgewater, Kentville Hubbards and Windsor, each with particular programmes tailored to specific needs. There is work with 55–64 year olds seeking to return to employment, with young people at risk, the poor black community in Halifax, and New Dawn Enterprises in Cape Breton where tough business concepts are used within a mining community. What characterises the approach is the respectful, long term trust based and individually tailored work on visioning.

Research is illustrating that unemployed have lower levels of volunteering, trust and community engagement - an impact greater than loss of earnings, as it causes people to withdraw from society and community interaction. ACSBE’s courses are designed to tackle this with confidence and skill building together with visioning positive ways forward that may include paid work, but also volunteer activity. It also scores highly on the respect and regard paid to individuals, which I witnessed first hand whilst waiting in reception at Bridgewater. An unemployed, older women called in “on spec” for advice, and was treated with consideration and informed respect even though the receptionist on duty was filling in for a colleague’s absence and had neither the information to hand nor the duty or expectation to perform in this way.
It is generally considered difficult to monitor and evaluate respect and regard, and even more difficult to cost it or get it recognised as a true output of government funded schemes. Yet realisation is growing that public policy that is built entirely on GDP or bottom line approaches is not fully effective. Acadia and ACSBE seem to have this inbuilt in all their operations.

Current successes are work with local food projects working with the local farming community, Pathways for Entrepreneurship Education in schools, and professional training for small business counsellors.

5.3 ACSBE, Bridgewater.
Initially ACSBE started with work to connect students to business with the government’s push on “entrepreneurialising” students in its bid to retain young people in NS. This evolved over 10 years or so into career navigators, who now act more as facilitators enabling people to make informed choices and decisions.

ACSBE also delivers The Age Advantage programme - which has a huge file of information, workshop materials and as well as a course. This has chapters on the challenges faced, companionship, share life experience, transition and change and has been taken into towns which have lost a major industry and staff laid off. For instance in Bridgewater a care facility closed an unqualified and unemployed staff were taken through how to handle these difficulties and to find alternative employment.

5.4 Centre for Rural Sustainability
This centre at Acadia University has done work to explore the unintended and intended consequences of building sustainable communities - working in partnership with the Town and using Wolfville itself as a study area. It identified the wide range of perspectives and attitudes to sustainability within the town and how to use the collective energy of the various stakeholders to make progress whilst respecting these various viewpoints.

5.5 Nova Scotia Community Colleges
Originally, these were trade based vocational schools, but are now community based offering a much broader curriculum. Each hub town has an outreach branch of the NS Community College [NSCC], some of which are doing extraordinary work, and they are flexible enough to respond to
current needs and trends. They are developing schemes to that course credits can be exchanged between College and University to assist employability.

NSCC was set up to build the economy of the province and enhance the quality of life through education and innovation, explicitly seen from the start as a community capacity builder.

The one in Kentville for instance has developed a voluntary leaders programme in response to current employment needs and works in conjunction with NASCAD and St Mary’s University. The Community University Research Alliance lobbies Community Partnerships on behalf of communities. Others are working with young people to enable them and encourage them to see becoming a Personal Care Workers as a worthwhile career. Nursing homes for seniors around the Province are in great need of more, and younger workers.

The NS Community College in Kentville also undertook a 3 year research project to start up a federal Understanding the Early Years initiative. The expected partners were involved - Resources and Social Development Canada, NS Community College, Annapolis Valley School Board, parents and guardians and community agencies as partners - the key difference being using community action planning and relating the results to community economic development and recreation planning.

5.6 Community Health Boards [CHBs]
7 CHBs provide funds and support for a wide range of health related activity - but operate with a volunteer based model to improve community health. Volunteers identify priority issues, review grant applications and allocate funds.

5.7 GPI
The Genuine Progress Index aims to build tools of analysis that properly value social, economic and environmental assets. GDP only counts the total value of goods and services that are exchanged for money. It does not count some of the greatest sources of wealth - unpaid household labour, volunteerism or a clean environment for instance.
The components of GPI in NS are:

- **Time Use** - value of civic and volunteering work; value of unpaid housework and child care, value of leisure time, paid work hours.
- **Living Standards** - income and its distribution, financial security [debts and assets], economic security index
- **Natural capital** - soils and agriculture, forests, fisheries and marine resources, energy, air, water
- **Human impact on the environment** - solid waste, ecological footprint, greenhouse gas emissions, transportation
- **Human and Social capital** - population health, costs of crime, educational attainment.

Although only a small not for profit organisation, GPR Atlantic is receiving quite a bit of attention and Ron Colman has visited the UK to talk about GPI to DCLG recently for example. All its materials are freely downloadable.

**5.8 Just Us! Coffee Roasters Coop, Wolfville.**

Driving into Wolfville, I was surprised to see a Fair trade coffee museum - attached to the Just Us! Coffee shop at Grand Pre. My interest was stimulated further when I found that the museum contained panels explaining and illustrating the work of Moses Coady. He is cited as a direct inspiration to this business. It is a particular illustration of how the influence of a visionary combined with principle can develop into a successful and innovative business in a very rural area, with the support of an educated and principled set of people in the vicinity of a university with a significant outreach operation.

Just Us! Is a worker owned cooperative that custom roasts fair trade organic coffee, as well as selling fair trade organic teas, sugar and chocolate. Its name is a deliberate play on the word “justice”. Canada’s first fair trade coffee roaster, established in 1996, its goal is to sell the best products at the best possible prices and also to promote global economic and social justice. It has cafes in Wolfville, Grand Pre and 3 in Halifax as well as supplying Acadia and St Francis Xavier Universities.

All its workers in Nova Scotia and its producers in Panama, Ethiopia, Mexico, Peru, Honduras Guatemala, Ecuador, Malawi, India, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and
Costa Rica are part of the profit sharing scheme. “People and planet before profits” has been its underpinning value since inception. Several of its producers are women’s coops - in Honduras, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Ethiopia. Having started with 2 men and 3 women, today there are 86 employees - 37 men and 49 women. From the start it broke the mould with women working as roasters and shippers and a women is in charge of its $200k packaging machine.

Part of the Atlantic Canada Sustainability Initiative, Just Us! has also founded the Just Us! Development and Education Society [Judes] as well as a L’Arche Homefires Community. Jeff and Debra Moore started Just Us! By mortgaging their house to buy 10 tonnes of beans after Jeff had found their first fair trade coffee coop by visiting Chiapas in Mexico in 1995.

I found Just Us! A vivid and inspiring example of abcd and social justice practice - as well as providing some of the best coffee I have ever tasted!

6. Summary of Transferable lessons for the UK
My journey has led me to conclude that:

• If policy makers, managers and civil servants have a real understanding of abcd, embrace its principles and apply it in all stages of their work; if individuals also stay in post long enough to develop practical experience of it working and real relationships with communities, then policy and government funding can work together with community resilience, self help and assets to achieve a better outcome than that achieved through centralised, bureaucratic top down approaches.

• University outreach works - through distance learning, working with older people, through efforts to achieve social justice and via long term working with communities. Using abcd approaches acts to mutual, reciprocal and practical benefit.

• Philanthropy and the long term involvement of alumni in novel ways assists in positive and innovative relationships between universities and their host communities, to mutual benefit.

• Positive attitudes and novel ideas focussed on older people continuing their contribution to society, when facilitated by university and government funded research and projects, achieve good results.
• Facilitating community self reliance and self help without the heavy hand of centralised government control, encourages social capital and a clearer understanding of individual rights and responsibilities.

• Measures other than GDP are needed to inform government practice in the face of globalisation, climate change and to encourage engagement in the democratic process.

7. Personal Reflections on the Fellowship

I applied to the WCMT to further my professional understanding of abcd and rural ageing, and also to create a personal challenge. It is too easy to slip into the comfort zone of habit and familiarity both professionally and personally.

How challenging it would be began to hit me before I left - nerves started a good 6 weeks before departure. I knew I did not like travelling alone and realised that driving abroad alone in a strange car and finding my way would be demanding. Arriving just before a hurricane closed the airport was a surprise. A second hurricane the next weekend added further frisson! At times I was stressed, tired, slept badly and wished that I was back home. These customary negatives of travel were counterbalanced by the fact that every appointment worked, people were very open, kind, willing to help and share their knowledge, and NS was fascinating.

Belief in my ability to cope and confidence grew with each challenge and difficulty surmounted. This is one of the major underlying benefits of the Fellowship. The value of travel was one of Churchill’s strong personal beliefs, which is why WCMT funds it. It provides the opportunity to rely on the kindness of strangers, to make new friends and colleagues, to jolt yourself out of geographical, emotional and physical comfort zones and be open to new experiences, ideas and learning.

As is always the case with fieldwork, serendipity plays a key role. I did not know about Just Us! Coffee before I drove in to the Coffee Museum to recuperate from the drive from Halifax. It turned out to be a revelation and a lead to a case study.
As the weeks pass by after returning, all the new experiences and information churn around in the brain and begin to form into new insights and ideas. I hope that those reading this report or listening to my presentations will be stimulated to thinking slightly differently about rural communities and the potential ways forward. To those reading and now considering applying to WCMT: give it a go!

8. Itinerary
22/8: flew to Halifax from Glasgow
24/8: Department of Seniors Provincial Government; Department of Aging Studies, Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax.
25/8: Community Links; Voluntary Planning, Halifax.
26/8: Acadia University Community, Social, Business and Entrepreneurship Outreach Centre [ACSBE] Bridgewater. Lunenburg; Peggy’s Cove.
27/8: St. Mary’s University, Department of Geography; Department of Rural and Economic Development, Halifax.
28/8: The Hub, Halifax.
29/8: Betty Maclean -Senior; Member of Group of 9; Clan Macleod; Eastern Passage; Shearwater; Musquodoboit Harbour.
30/8: Travel to Wolfville. “Just Us” Coffee Museum.
31/8: Acadia University, ACSBE. Wolfville.
1/9: Gaspereau Valley; Blomidon; Hall’s Harbour.
2/9: Acadia University, ACSBE. Fort Anne; Annapolis Royal.
5/9: Travel to CapeJohn.
6/9: Pugwash; Tatamagouche; Wallace.
7/9: Cape Breton and Cabot Trail.
8/9: Antigonish: Coady Institute; St Andrews Community.
9/9: Rural and Small Towns Programme, Geography department, Mount Allison University, Sackville, New Brunswick.
11/9: River St John; Tatamagouche.
12/9: Return to UK
9. Sources

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Mathie, Alison and Cunningham, Gord [eds 2009] From Clients to Citizens: Communities changing the course of their own development. Fernwood Press.


10. Resources
I collected a wide range of contacts and resources about abcd, ageing policy and programmes, which I am happy to share. If you contact any of the people mentioned below, please as a courtesy to them mention that you got their address via me or from this report. Thank you.

10.1 Rural and ABCD Programmes and information

ALIA: Authentic Leadership in Action: Susan Spozkowski Executive Director in Halifax: http://www.aliainstitute.org/institute/home.html
also Mike Green in Denver, Colorado: http://www.mike-green.org/

ROC: Resource Opportunities Centre, Terence Bay:
http://roc.prospectcommunities.com/

FOCO: Federation of Community Organisations of HRM, 7th Floor, 46 Portland Street, Dartmouth. NS. B2Y 1H4. info@foco.ca; www.foco.ca;

2009 Day Planner, Horizons Community Development Associates, Wolfville Outcome of IACD Conference

Rural and Small Towns Program: [http://www.mta.ca/rstp/ruraleconomy.htm](http://www.mta.ca/rstp/ruraleconomy.htm)

The Hub, Halifax: [www.thehubhalifax.ca](http://www.thehubhalifax.ca); [joanna.macrae@the-hub.net](mailto:joanna.macrae@the-hub.net);

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hugh.millward@smu.ca

David Bruce, Rural and small town programme, Mount Allison University, Main Street, Sackville, New Brunswick. E4L 1A7.
dwbruce@mta.ca

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Thanks to the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust for their generous financial and organisational support. My original proposal to WCMT in 2008 was to spend the second half of my Fellowship looking at village parliaments in Sweden and LEADER projects in Finland. Since my return from NS I have started to share my learning about extending university outreach, engaging communities and using abcd. The response of audiences has provoked a change in my plans. I shall now develop the ideas and experience gained in NS by attending the International Association of Community Development conference in New Orleans in July 2010 and visiting NW University in Chicago.

Two projects have already arisen directly from my presentations. Durham University’s Beacon NE and the Institute for Social Justice and Community Action are developing work to unleash untapped rural potential and there is a major international conference on September 7th –9th 2010 looking at University-Community Collaboration. Alison Mathie from the Coady Institute is to give the keynote address.

Finally, thanks to family and friends who told me I could do it - especially Tom, Simon and Kerry; Gill Boughton, Joanna Laverick and Frances Rowe.

Sue Shaw, Durham City. January 2010. sueshaw@globalnet.co.uk
Report of second stage trip to Chicago and New Orleans, July 2010.
Sue Shaw

Introduction
My trip to Nova Scotia in 2009 explored asset based community development and rural issues, and resulted in a long report on the Historical Geography of Nova Scotia.

The second stage of my Fellowship involved a week in Chicago investigating Community Organising followed by a week in New Orleans attending a conference on community resilience in the face of disaster.

Of the many opportunities I have already had to share the learning resulting from the Fellowship, one in particular was the visit of Alison Mathie from the Coady Institute at St Francis Xavier University in Antigonish. I met her last year and she came over as keynote speaker at a conference at Durham University in September 2010 on Community University Collaboration. [1]

Community Organising is currently a political hot potato. It is a major plank in the Coalition government’s Big Society policy. Since returning from the USA, I have been involved in 15 meetings and seminars discussing Community Organising, so the experience that WCMT facilitated is already being put to practical use. I have several training sessions and seminars planned for 2011 utilising the information on community organising and the theme of community resilience. An article debating whether Community Organising is the "way to go" was published by CDX in December 2010. [2]

Community resilience is also a key theme within current government thinking, especially so in a climate of financial cuts. The conference offered me the opportunity to learn from the experiences of a range of international communities, including the Gulf Coast of Louisianna, Haiti, New Orleans, Kinglake Australia and Indonesia. It has also confirmed my belief that community development and the building of social capital is absolutely vital in sustaining viable communities, especially in rural areas.

1. Chicago
From the 16th to 24th of July I was hosted by Greg Galuzzo, President of the Gamaliel Foundation. This organisation was established in 1968 and is a
grassroots network of non partisan faith based organisations in 19 US states, South Africa and the UK. It started by supporting the Contract Buyers League, which fought to protect African American housing on Chicago's west side from banks, loans and savings organisations. It is based on the ideas of Saul Alinsky, a cultural revolutionary. Graduating in archaeology from Chicago University, from 1939 Alinsky worked as a community organiser, starting in the Union Stock Yards and Chicago slums. He worked throughout America, returning to Chicago in 1950 to work with African American ghettos. [3]

The Gamaliel Foundation trained Barack Obama as a community organiser. He worked for Gamaliel in Chicago for 4 years in the mid 1980's and saw it as an important part of his political identity. Gerry Kellman from Gamaliel was seconded for a year to assist with the community organising within Obama's presidential campaign in 2008. [4]

1.1 Community Organising is a process where people come together into an organisation, funded by their annual subscriptions, to deal with local problems through their own self interest, efforts, protest and organising. It is a process that seeks to grow community leaders. A Community Organiser works with individuals on a one to one basis to learn what the major concerns are, and then the organisation decides democratically which issue to "cut" or concentrate on solving for themselves.

1.2 Alinsky's model is about power. It works with conflict and struggle to generate collective power, to challenge authorities and corporations, to influence key decision makers and to get a place at the tables where decisions are made. This can involve demonstrations, campaigns, sit ins, boycotts and petitions. His "rules" for radicals were:

1. Power is not only what you have, but what the enemy thinks you have.
2. Never go outside the experience of your own people.
3. Wherever possible go outside the experience of the enemy.
5. Ridicule is man's most potent weapon.
6. A good tactic is one that your people enjoy.
7. A tactic that drags on too long becomes a drag.
8. Keep the pressure on.
9. The threat is usually more terrifying than the thing itself.

10. The major premise for tactics is the development of operations that will maintain a constant pressure on the opposition.

11. If you push the negative hard and deep enough it will break through into its counterside.

12. The price of a successful attack is a constructive alternative.

13. Pick the target, freeze it, personalise it and polarise it.

1.3 Community Organisers are not paid, but earn their keep through the organisation's subscriptions. Community organising refuses on principle to take government funding. Most community organising in the USA has been within faith groups and trade unions. They tend to be single issue organisations, and have tackled civil rights, health care, poor teaching in state schools, poor public housing conditions, waste dumping, poor working practices, racial and ethnic inequalities and campaigns for a living wage.

1.4 This approach has influenced David Cameron's drive for Big Society, which includes plans for an army of 5000 Community Organisers. Interest in Community Organising in Britain began in the 1990s. There are several people's organisations - in Bristol, London, Manchester and Stockton on Tees - often based in faith based organisations. It is a very different approach to community development, which is much more facilitative.

1.5 Leadership: Whilst I was in Chicago there was an article in the Chicago Post and Tribune on 17.7.2010 by a Danish immigrant, Henrick F Rasmussen, citing the optimism of the immigrant, the feeling of freedom and sense of rebirth in a new country full of opportunities. Community Organising reflects its American roots in its ease with Leaders emerging from out of a community and the role of migrants and settlers generating a culture that is particularly accepting of personal drive and energy.

In America it is seen as “okay” for anyone to aspire to become a leader. The American view is that this contrasts with the UK's cultural traits of deference, long established hierarchies and class structure. Churches and trade unions in the UK are nowhere near as prominent as in the USA and far less dynamic and radical, focussed on retaining power and not challenging the establishment.
This is reflected in Greg Galluzo’s analysis of Obama’s rise and eventual election to President - “it could never happen in the UK.” Not because he is black, but because a political party would have taken 20 years to listen to him and take him seriously. Civil participation is allowed in the USA, so that Obama worked without endorsement from the Democrats until he was nominated.

1.6 Whilst staying with Greg, I also attended the local Fiesta da Sol in Pilsen on July 22\textsuperscript{nd}. He was involved in the development of this celebration in 1972 - which acknowledges the culture of the immigrant Mexican American population. I also visited the Museum of Mexican Fine Arts established 1982 and the largest Mexican arts institution in the US.

The Pilsen Neighbors Community Council is a 54 year old grassroots leadership driven empowerment organisation serving the social, economic and educational needs of Chicago’s Pilsen Little Village community. Supported by independent donors and sponsorship, it has supported the building of a new school, the Mexican Fine arts museum and helps to sustain the characteristic cultural life among the 150 000 residents. The Fiesta involved local food, traditional music and dancing and presentation of scholarships that enabled 8 local young people to attend college.

1.7 "Translators": I also spoke with Cynthia Barnes Boyd of the University of Illinois at Chicago who runs the Neighbourhood Initiatives Project and University/Community outreach. Since the 1970’s, the university has employed a large workforce of community development workers as "translators". Specially trained, they provide education within surrounding communities and “translate” or diffuse the latest, cutting edge academic research in medicine and health care.

Local people from neighbourhoods are hired and trained to facilitate dialogue to “speak normally and act normally”. Some academics are eager to work respectfully within communities but many find it uncomfortable and can in themselves be intimidating. The Healthy Cities website of the University translates new research into lay language to make it accessible and for use in church bulletins and educational sessions. It is now a condition of research grants that educational sessions of one day per quarter are run to share findings with communities. This continues the tradition of university outreach that was a feature from its inception.
1.8 The University of Illinois in Chicago is known as a prestigious university winning a large number of Nobel prizes and at which Barack Obama lectured in law. It was established as a Land Grant University after the Morrill Act in 1862, receiving government support and a grant of land to develop agricultural and technical education through outreach methods. And outreach into local communities continues today. It houses the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum – celebrating her work in social justice and advocacy for which she received the Nobel Prize in 1931. Her pioneering work for women’s rights, for the poor fighting child labour laws, for a minimum wage and better public sanitation was a forerunner of current work and the work of the Gamaliel Foundation.

Because of the great ethnic and political diversity of Chicago, each neighbourhood has its own local leadership at local, federal and national level that are vocal and powerful around certain issues. Therefore, working within these complex dynamics demands specialist skills, and Cynthia Barnes Bond spoke of how she is also now employing anthropology students as community translators and observers.

1.9 Chicago is a diverse, ethnically varied, powerful, dynamic city with world famous cultural and educational institutions. Built on swamp land alongside the huge Lake Michigan, the city has solved problems with great technical ingenuity and reinvention. It has and is still characterised by a strong thread of social and political innovation into which the ideas of Community Organising fit quite easily.

1.10 Although there are elements of community organising that could serve to enliven and politicise community development in the UK, like many transplants from America to the UK, there are some features which do not translate easily and straightforwardly. That debate is currently ongoing in the UK, and it will be very interesting to see how it develops over the next 2 to 3 years. [2]

2. New Orleans
The conference on Community Resilience in the Face of Disaster was organised by the International Association for Community Development and the American Community Development Society, from 25th to 30th July 2010.
Participants came from around the world to share their experiences of community development and community resilience. It included a tour of the Gulf Coast, that was devastated by hurricane Katrina in 2005 and undergoing the effects of the Gulf Coast oil spill at the time of my visit.

2.1 If there was one key, underlying theme to emerge from the wide range of countries and disasters that were presented at the conference, it was that the rate of recovery and degree of resilience was correlated to the depth and longevity of the social capital which pre dated the disaster. Local networks of contacts and local knowledge of people and their particular needs influence the effectiveness of crisis response and intervention. The conclusion of discussions was that disaster aid works best when community development methods are used, and works alongside pre existing community development infrastructure and social networks.

Participants also concluded that crisis prevention through community development is vital. The individual and communal self confidence it develops, reduces risk through encouraging resilience. It also supports recovery by investing in education, which is often neglected by external crisis intervention but is considered absolutely vital by the indigenous population. Local budgets, businesses, escape plans, disaster awareness and safety nets create a resilience when developed through a familiar organisation and focus to go to when there is trouble. The experiences presented at the conference demonstrated that community leaders who know how to communicate with those in power are not always politicians or law enforcers, but are teachers or clergy, and are often women - with strong links to families and communities that they want to protect and preserve.

What works locally is working around the rules, using local discretion to implement the true intent of policy corrupted by the bureaucracy created to implement it. [5] There was a consistent theme running through the presentations that there is a real difference in effectiveness between the local, personal, emotional level of response and recovery and that of the centralised bureaucracy of disaster response - which can override local leaders and be impersonal. The facts that reconstruction is still incomplete one year on in Haiti and 5 years on in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast, illustrates that we may need new models of crisis response.
There is an army of NGOs and an “aid industry” that often rides roughshod over local populations. It tends to lack accountability, coordination and can offer a “tsunami of philanthropy rather than expertise”. The difference between Haiti and Chile, both struck by earthquakes in 2009 illustrates the point. Haiti had little preparation, effective governance or resilience and is still a mess one year on. It demonstrates the old model of disaster response. Chile had less aid, less press attention, better recovery, was richer, had a stable government and had prepared disaster plans and capacity. It represents the disaster preparedness and resilient response of the future.

2.2 Although disasters strike everyone, the poor, the less educated, ethnic minorities, older people, single female households with young children and those with mental or physical challenges have limited capacity to prepare, respond and survive natural disasters. This holds equally true of hurricane Katrina, the tsunami in Indonesia, the earthquake in Haiti, the floods in Pakistan or the bush fires in Victoria.

Rural communities are particularly vulnerable because of their relative isolation, limited resources and distance from sources of support and are usually the last areas to receive help and support. Interestingly several presentations highlighted the fact that leadership in rural North and South American countries is increasingly female not male. [6,7,8,9]

2.3 Presentations from North Argentina, Haiti and Kinglake in Victoria gave very moving, personal insights into the effects of disaster and the ways in which government and local efforts interacted and sometimes clashed. The firestorm that hit Kinglake, Victoria on February 7th 2009 killed 173, destroyed 2500 houses and killed 1 million wild animals. Daryl Taylor vividly described the contrast between local efforts in the rural areas and the more bureaucratic approach from the urban authorities that has resulted in a change of consciousness. He described how the deep psychology of the area has altered. The grief of personal loss was compounded by the loss of environment - where the fire’s heat was so great that the soil is still today sterilised to a depth of 18 inches. Nostalgia for what was lost is balanced by the renewed sense of community and self-reliance resulting from people having to rely on each other in the crisis. He contrasted this to the banality
and normality of everyday life dependent on external provision, learned helplessness and the resulting lassitude. [10]

2.4 Tour of the Gulf Coast.
On 27th July I went on a tour of the Gulf Coast to see the damage done by Hurricane Katrina on August 29th 2005. We stopped at Waveland to hear from Sue Wright of the Hancock County Development Commission and Tish Williams, Director of the Hancock Chamber of Commerce.

En route we passed the wrecked causeway over Lake Pontchartrain where the concrete slabs of the roadway had been flipped like a row of dominoes. We saw RV campgrounds for displaced people, still occupied 5 years on, and large rural areas that were completely devastated by the hurricane and yet had been ignored by the media, which focussed its attention on New Orleans.

2.5 Biloxi was completely immersed. 6000 people left Waveland and have not returned. Chamber of Commerce directors were often the people who led efforts for reconstruction, setting up a business support centre within 2 weeks of the disaster. Hancock County in which it is situated was the last County to get search and rescue. Downtown is only just being rebuilt - there were 1600 businesses before Katrina struck; now there are 40. The seawall, harbour and coast road have yet to be rebuilt. Of the 200 plus Antebellum houses, only 40 survived along the coast road.

2.6 The Roman Catholic church was opened the week before our visit, It had been meeting in a tent for the intervening 5 years. Waveland only got their first shop opened recently - a Wallmart store - as it was the only business able to get insurance. Indeed, insurance is the prime issue preventing rebuilding, and the fight for a national insurance solution continues. Premiums have risen by 300 to 600%. Consequently there are many plots for sale, house sites yet to be cleared, and advertisements for house raising opportunities. What is required is a seamless water/wind insurance policy so that insurance companies cannot separate damage from one or the other and use it as a means to avoid paying compensation.

2.7 The bridge linking Waveland to the rest of the County took a year to rebuild, reconnecting the community at last. The oil spill is a further emotional drain on people and businesses. Yet local people reported that
relationships and community links are now stronger than before, as they have learned to rely on each other and have developed key skills in dealing with disaster, government departments and cutting through red tape.

2.8 The final stop was at the Coastal Research and Extension Center of Mississippi State University. Here we heard from experts with long experience of local conditions and who were advising the Federal Government on the effects of the current Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

3. Conclusion

3.1 New Orleans is a city of great contrasts. Wealth and poverty exist very obviously cheek by jowl. Some of the areas wrecked by Katrina still await clearance and redevelopment. Over half the city is below sea level dependent on pumps to lower the water table, which is why cemeteries have the distinctive above ground tombs. The effects of rising sea level are already visible in places. Much of the damage from the tidal surge that hit the city resulted from ill advised building in low lying empty land susceptible to flooding and came via the Industrial Canal, whose cost and corner cutting construction allowed it to break open and flood the poor and largely black Lower Ninth ward. [11]

Rescue work should have come immediately from the National Guard - a state and national level function. But it was delayed and the federal, state and city efforts as well as those of the local, civil-business establishments all under-performed. Reconstruction has not been centrally planned and funded. Individual efforts, many still waiting for reconstruction funds to come through, mean that many areas still await reconstruction and some even still wait to have wreckage cleared. The contrast to the strenuous and immediate efforts to rebuild San Francisco and Chicago after their disastrous fires is frequently cited locally as evidence of how New Orleans has been neglected.

Similarly, the Gulf of Mexico has been exploited and polluted for decades, and Federal funds for reconstruction have not been readily forthcoming, despite the fact that oil and gas tax revenues go not to the State of Louisianna, but directly to the Federal government.
The heritage of immense wealth and priviledge is contrasted to extreme poverty. There is also a dynamic architectural and musical heritage. Alongside the huge Mississippi that drains half of the US, and situated in a hot humid climate amidst swamps and bayous, New Orleans is intrinsically inhospitable to human habitation. Yet somehow ingenuity and trial and error have created this real, "one off" city that has an almost Caribbean economy dependent on plantation agriculture - sugar and rice, natural resource extraction - oil, gas and sulphur, and of course - tourism.

3.2 New Orleans and Chicago could not be more different, even though they are both major American cities. This trip has been one of fascinating contrasts, and even more so when compared to the rural self-determination of Nova Scotia that I visited last year. Yet there is a link between Nova Scotia and New Orleans, whose Cajun heritage arose from the settlement of Acadians in Louisiana from 1764 onwards. Driven out from Nova Scotia by the British, their characteristic culture and history is preserved and displayed at the Acadian Cultural Center in Lafayette.

3.3 Overall, both trips combined to sharpen and deepen my understanding of the role and potential of community development. They have provided a range of ideas that I can continue to share with colleagues in the UK and assist in developing both policy and practice.

3.4 The trips were both a personal and a professional challenge. I am indebted to the Winston Churchill Memorial Foundation for the learning opportunity it offered me.

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Sue Shaw Durham City January 2011