

# **LEARNING COMMUNITIES & LITERACY:**

**Roots, Rationales & Results  
for Reaching Adults Levels 1 & 2**

**Ron Faris Ph. D.**

**RESDAC-CLLN LEARNING COMMUNITY CONFERENCE**

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**<http://members.shaw.ca/rfaris>**

# Learning Journal

- Presentation of the Learning Journal
  - Its purpose (reflective practice)
  - Make your first entries in your Learning Journal now by answering the following questions :
- What do you hope to learn in this workshop?
  - How do you feel about what you hope to learn in this workshop?

## THE TENOR OF OUR TIMES

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times; it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness;

it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity; it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness;

it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair; we had everything before us, we had nothing before us ....”

*A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens

# KEY GLOBAL TRENDS

- Three inter-related drivers of change
  - Globalization - - - “glocalization”
    - market ideology (de-regulation/privatization): limits/failure
  - Technological change e.g. ICT, brain scan
  - Explosion of new knowledge and learning
- Knowledge-based economy
  - Human & social capital
  - New literacies e.g. computer & environmental
  - Learning technologies & social media

# KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY

- Constant change = Continuous learning
- Learning – Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes & Values
- Investment in education/training/learning results in significant returns to organizations, individuals, communities & society
- Social/human capital synergy: Social capital the cradle of human capital

# LEARNING COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

- **EUROPE**

- OECD Learning Regions - Spain, France, Denmark-Sweden & UK
- Learning Communities Networks: UK & Italy
- Finland: Sami villages, Espoo & “The Joy of Learning”

- **AUSTRALASIA**

- Australian Learning Communities Network
- South Korean Learning Cities Strategy
- Japan & China

- **CANADA**

- Learning Community projects from St. John’s to Victoria

# LEARNING COMMUNITIES: AN OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

Neighbourhoods, villages, towns, cities or regions that **explicitly** use lifelong learning as an organizing principle and social/cultural goal in order to promote collaboration of all sectors to enhance social, economic and environmental conditions on a sustainable, inclusive basis

## Question

When do you think learning communities began and in what context?

# HISTORIC ROOTS: ANCIENT LEARNING CITIES

+ **ATHENS:** 6<sup>th</sup> Century B.C.

Civic Literacy and “idiots”

+ **ARAB WORLD:** 9<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.

Seven great universities from Baghdad to Cordoba  
and Fes

# COMMUNITARIAN ROOTS

## + Judeo-Christian values

Hebrew prophets - social justice

Jesus - social gospel/social action

- 1753 - Swedish Lutheran literacy

- Paolo Friere - consciousness-raising &  
learners naming their own world

## + Aboriginal world view

Bolivian “Law of Mother Nature”

***THIS WE KNOW,  
ALL THINGS ARE CONNECTED LIKE  
THE BLOOD WHICH UNITES ONE  
FAMILY .***

***WHATEVER BEFALLS THE EARTH,  
BEFALLS THE SONS AND DAUGHTERS  
OF THE EARTH.***

***MAN DID NOT WEAVE THE WEB OF LIFE;  
HE IS MERELY A STRAND IN IT.  
WHATEVER HE DOES TO THE WEB,  
HE DOES TO HIMSELF.***

Ted Perry, inspired by Chief Seattle



# CANADA: LITERACY IMPERATIVES

- + Canada: A Permanent Underclass?
  - HRDC (1995 Research Bulletin): chronic poverty among the most vulnerable
- + CCL - Projection to 2030
- + Other Nations are Not Waiting for Canada
  - International surveys: 1993 & 2003
  - World Economic Forum & Conference Board - declining productivity & innovation
  - C D Howe study

# ADULT LITERACY: AN INVESTMENT

A one percent rise in adult literacy scores is associated with an eventual 2.5 percent relative rise in labour productivity and a **1.5 percent rise in GDP per head** (over C\$18 billion)

*Three times greater effect than investment in physical capital*

“...more important to economic growth than producing highly skilled graduates”

C. D. HOWE INSTITUTE (2005) Coulombe & Tremblay

## **SENGE:** *Creating Quality Communities*

“Building learning organizations is not an individual task. It demands a shift that goes all the way to the core of our culture. We have drifted into a culture that fragments our thoughts, that detaches the world from the self and the self from the community. We are so focused on our security that we don't see the price we pay: living in bureaucratic organizations where the wonder and joy of learning have no place. Thus, we are losing the spaces to dance with the ever-changing patterns of life. We need to invent a new learning model for business, education, health care, government and the family. This invention will come from the patient, concerted efforts of communities of people invoking aspiration and wonder. As these communities manage to produce fundamental changes, we will regain our memory - the memory of the community nature of the self and the poetic nature of language and the world - the memory of the whole.”

# **Present the Guide to developing a Learning Community and Literacy Action Plan**

- Presentation of the Guide.
- In the next days of the workshop, you'll be asked to work in small groups at the end of the day, to see how this Guide can be used within your community context.

# Learning Journal

- Tonight after this session, take time to reflect on this evening's presentation and make your entries in your Learning Journal.

# A COPERNICAN LEARNING REVOLUTION

- UNESCO & OECD
  - Delors “Learning: The Treasure Within”
  - 1996 - *European Year of Lifelong Learning*
- Lifelong Learning NOT Lifelong Education
- Lifelong Learning as an Organizing Principle & Social/Cultural Goal
- Lifelong Learning is rooted in democratic values

*Learning & Learners NOT Teaching & Teachers at the Centre*

# FOUR SETTINGS OF LIFE-LONG LEARNING

- Home
  - School
  - Workplace
  - Wider Community
- 
- Life-span & Life-wide Learning
  - Non-formal/Informal and Formal Learning

*“Education & Training Float Upon a Sea of Learning” - A. Thomas*

# **HEALTH SCIENCES (including neuroscience & biochemistry)**

- **Nurture: “mirror neurons” may be basis of empathy**
- **Nutrition: UN Preliminary Report on the Right to Food (2012)**
- **Role of the Endocrine (hormonal) System on Learning and Community**
  - **Dopamine: (the reward chemical) helps memory, attention and problem solving**
  - **Serotonin: improves mood, memory and learning**
  - **Adrenaline: helps improve performance**
  - **Oxytocin: affects our willingness to trust each other**

# SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

## Socio-economic Conditions/Gradients (differences/inequalities)

### - Education Level/Performance

The Spirit Level: Why Equality is Better for Everyone, Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010

*“The kind of communities that we develop is a more important determinant of health status of the population than the kind of health care system we construct.”*

Understanding the Social Determinants of Health, VIHA, May 2006

# **SOCIAL SCIENCES**

- **ASSET-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

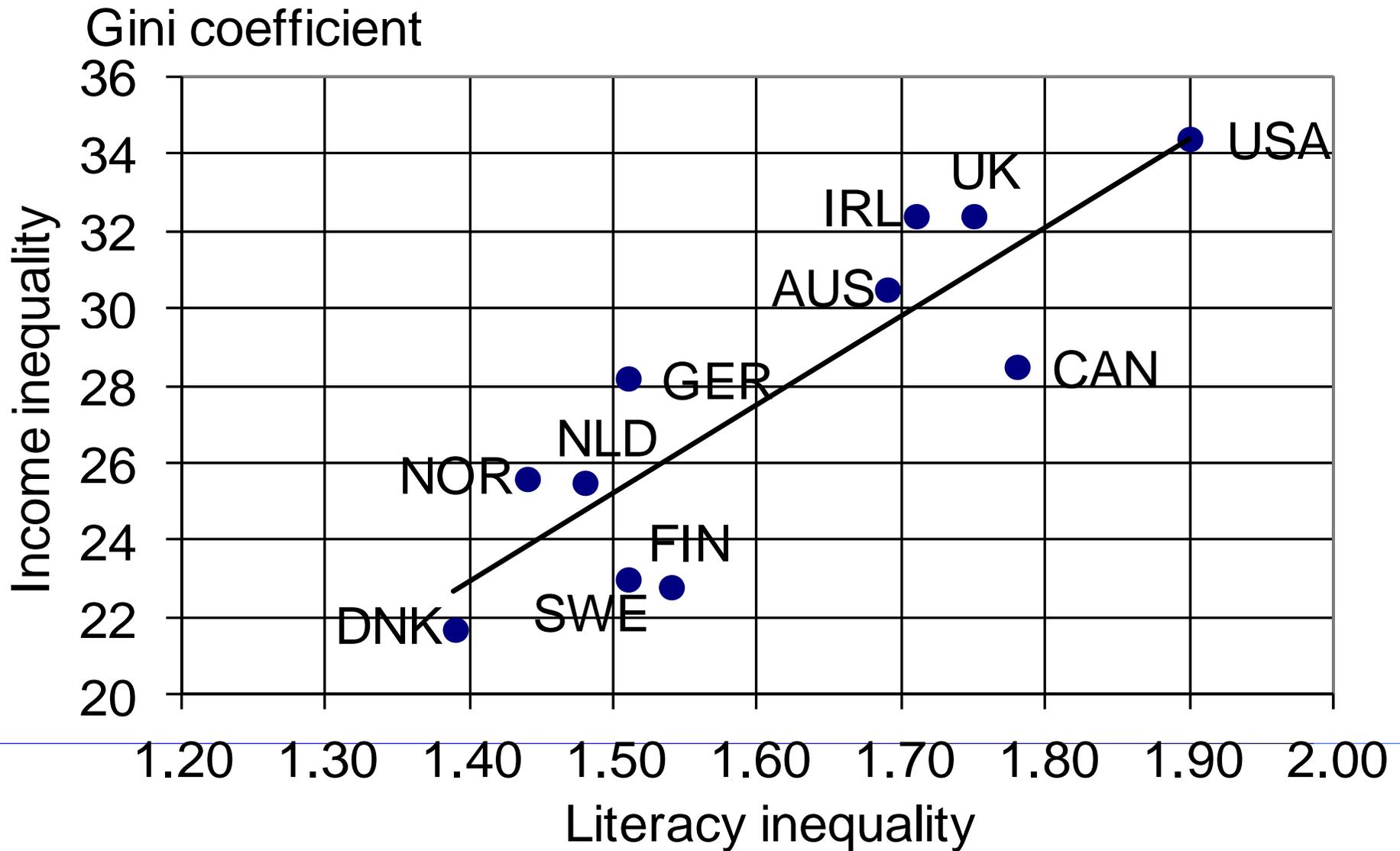
- Community Profiles & Learning Resource Inventories (community assets include individual's capacities, citizen's associations & local institutions: Kretzmann & McKnight)
- Community Service-Learning

- **POLITICAL ECONOMY**

- Human Capital (Formal Learning)
- Social Capital (Non-formal/Informal Learning)
- Gini-coefficient analysis - wealth gap

# INEQUALITY, LITERACY & INCOME

Kjell Rubenson, Intl Literacy Survey, 2000

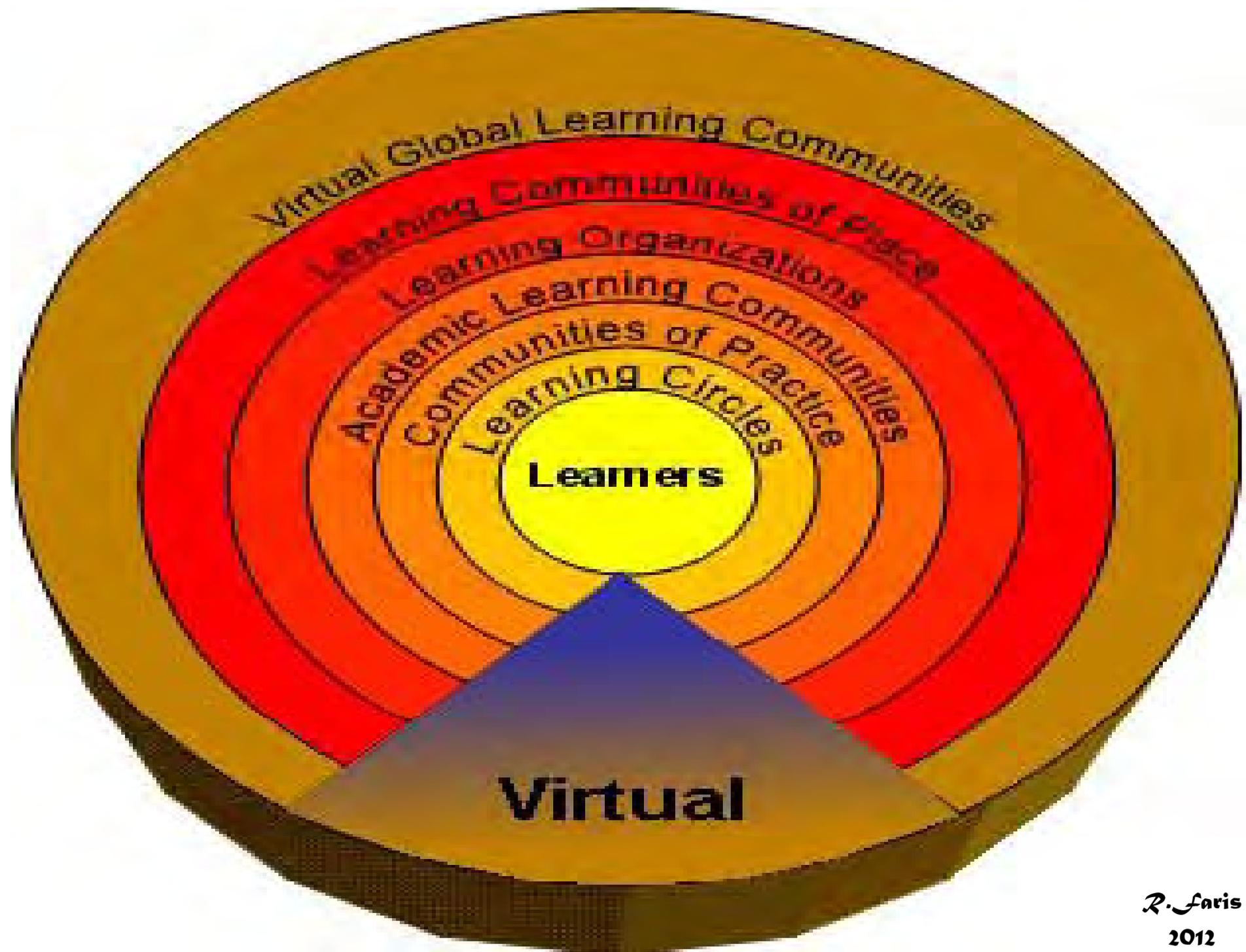


# ROI: FAMILY LITERACY

- Perry pre-school study (2006)
  - 40+ year study of 129 Michigan pre-schoolers
  - Return on Investment (Approx. savings for every dollar invested)
    - **Year 10 - 5 dollars**
    - **Year 20 - 7 dollars**
    - **Year 30 - 10 dollars**
    - **Year 40 - 16 dollars**

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# LEARNING COMMUNITIES: A NESTED CONCEPT

- **LEARNING COMMUNITIES OF PLACE**
  - **Learning Organizations**
    - Peter Senge
  - **Academic Learning Communities**
    - Alexander Meiklejohn
  - **Communities of Practice**
    - Etienne Wenger
  - **Learning Circles**
    - Miles Horton & Kurt Lewin

# PURPOSES

- **SUSTAINABLE TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE**

- Economic
- Environmental
- Social/cultural

- **SOCIAL INCLUSION**

- Building Bridges between Linguistic/Ethnic Communities
- Celebrating Learning, including the Heritage of Others

- **COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING**

- Human capital - Individual educational attainment
- Social capital - Trust, networks, shared values

# LEARNING COMMUNITIES: A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE



# **BIRMINGHAM LEARNING CITY**

- **CIVIC LEADERSHIP**

- **Core Skills Development Partnership** (incorporated)

- **LITERACY TARGETS (2000: 10-20years)**

- Reducing the number of adults with poor basic skills by 25% by 2005; and by 50% by 2010
- Ensuring, by the end of 2003, that all basic skills provision meets (at least) minimum quality standards (e.g. adult curriculum, resources & tutors/teachers).

- **WORKPLACE LITERACY**

- Single largest adult target group (often factory classrooms)

# HUME LEARNING CITY

- **CIVIC SOCIAL JUSTICE CHARTER**
  - Foundation for the learning community initiative & incorporates a Citizen's Bill of Rights
- **MULTI-YEAR PLANNING**
  - Rolling 3-year plans within a 20-year strategy
  - Formative evaluations: e.g. Library membership & use doubled in first two years
- **LEARNING CHAMPIONS**
  - welfare recipients who are natural leaders are coached as community/literacy animators

# HISTORIC CANADIAN LEARNING COMMUNITIES

- **ANTIGONISH REGION, NS**
  - Study Clubs/Circles
  - Educational Radio & Listening Groups
  - Co-operative enterprises
- **EVANGELINE REGION, PEI**
  - Antigonish Influence
  - Co-operative enterprises from birth to death

# PURPOSES: ANTIGONISH MOVEMENT

“We want our men to look into the sun, and into the depths of the sea. We want them to explore the hearts of flowers and the hearts of their fellow men....We want them to be men, whole men eager to explore all the avenues of life and to obtain perfection in all their faculties. Life for them shall not be in terms of merchandising but in terms of all that is good and beautiful, be it economic, political, social, cultural, or spiritual. They are the heirs of all the ages and all the riches yet concealed. All the findings of science and philosophy are theirs. All the creations of art and literature are for them. If they are wise they will create the instruments to obtain them. They will usher in the new day by attending to the blessings of the old. They will use what they have to secure what they have not.”

*Masters of Their Own Destiny, 1939, Moses Coady*

# VICTORIA LEARNING CITY

## CIVIC LEADERSHIP

- Downtown Business Assn
- Council Declaration
- Youth Council - including street youth
- CCL ranking

## SOUTH ISLAND LEARNING COMMUNITY(SILC)

- Partner capacity-building
- Individual E-portfolios & learning plans
- Public Library membership/literacy change

# Panel presentation on identifying and meeting needs & assets

- Donald Lurette, Consultant, CAP, Hawkesbury, Ontario
- Karen Geraci, PTP Adult Learning and Employment Programs, Toronto, Ontario
- Ross Grandel, Saskatchewan Aboriginal Literacy Network (SALN), Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

# IDENTIFYING & MEETING NEEDS OF LEVELS 1 & 2 LEARNERS

- Identifying

- Places where disadvantaged people gather
  - Laundromats, food banks, social & health services

- Meeting

- Disadvantaged communities - Community champions
- Youth - Internet use; Youth Councils
- Single Parents - support services
- New Canadian women - home place learning
- Seniors - Internet use

# Guide to developing a Learning Community and Literacy Action Plan

With what you've learned today, in small groups (5-8 persons per group), take this time to look at the Guide to developing a Learning Community and Literacy Action Plan and see how you could apply certain steps to your community context.

# Learning Journal

Tonight take time to reflect on today's presentation and complete your Learning Journal.

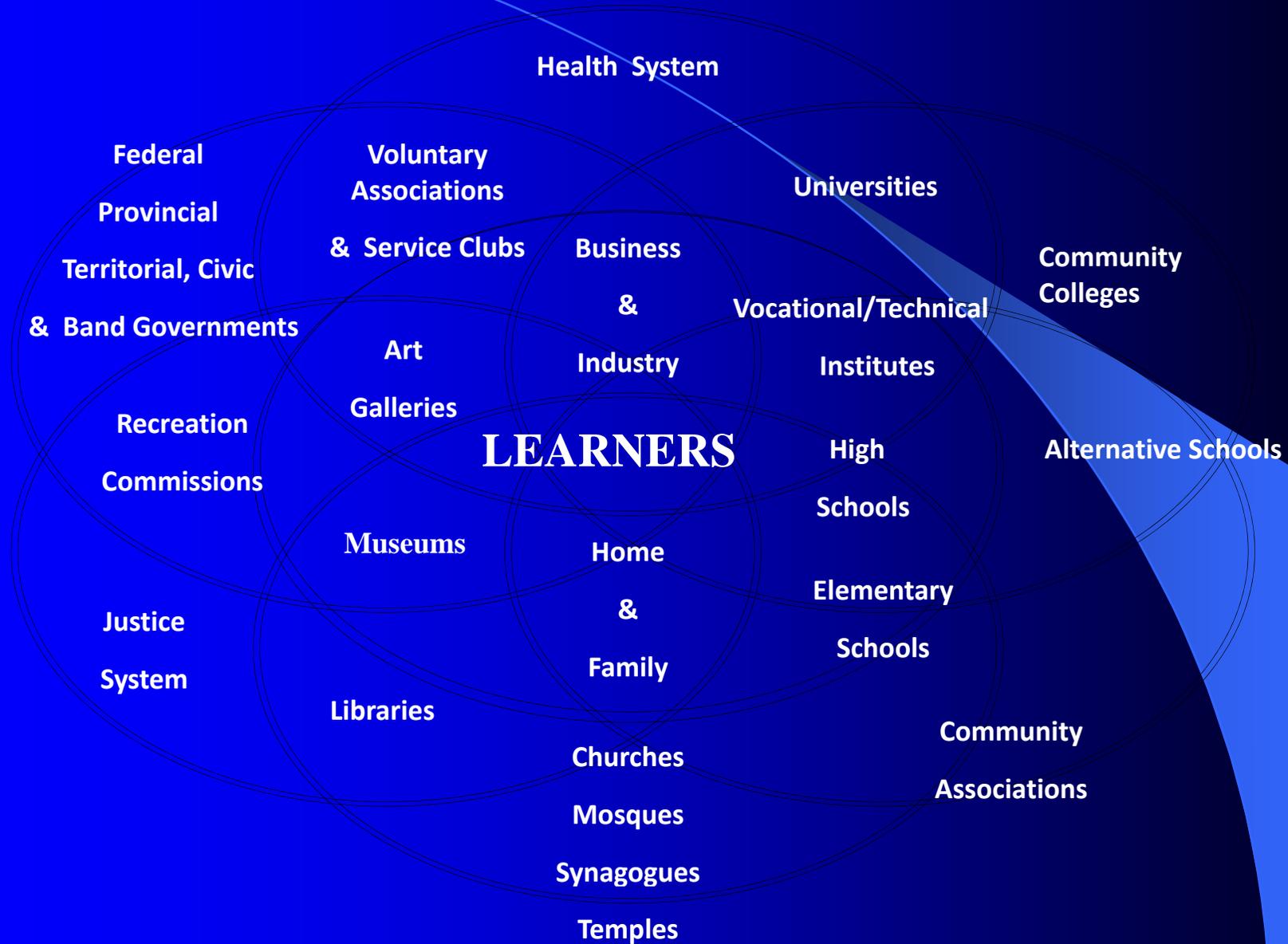
# Question

Can you begin to see elements of a model for the development of a learning community in your home community?

# LEARNING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS ACROSS SECTORS



# THE LEARNING COMMUNITY NETWORK



# LEARNING COMMUNITIES: DETERMINANTS OF SUCCESS AND READINESS

- **3 P's of success (and readiness)**
  - **Partnership** - learning to build links across all sectors and mobilize their shared resources
  - **Participation** - learning to foster participation of all learners and involve the public in the policy process
  - **Performance** - learning to assess progress and benchmark good practice

DfEE, 1998, Practice, Progress and Value – Learning Communities:  
Assessing the Value they Add.

# LAO TSU: 6<sup>th</sup> Century B.C.

Go to the people; Live among them;  
Love them; Learn from them.

Start from where they are; Work with them;  
Build on what they have.

But of the best leaders; When the task is  
accomplished; The work completed.

The people all remark:  
“We have done it ourselves”.

# SUSTAINABLE TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE

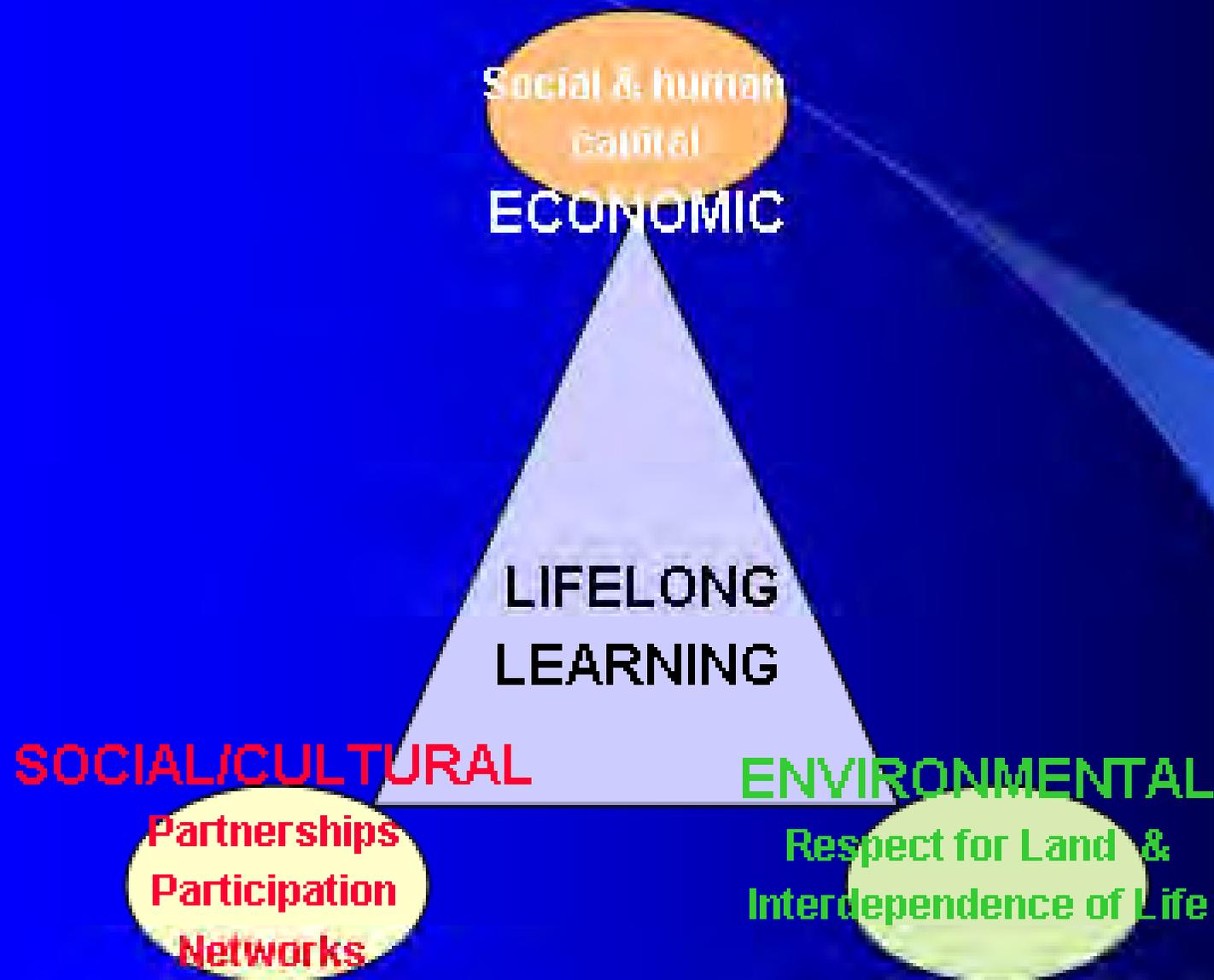
ECONOMIC



SOCIAL/CULTURAL

ENVIRONMENTAL

# TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE OF LEARNING



# FORMATIVE EVALUATION: LEARNING COMMUNITIES

- **From Awareness to Involvement**
  - Change drivers, community profile & learning resource inventory (shared database) & priority needs
  - Partnership building
- **From Involvement to Understanding**
  - Experiential learning & reflection
- **From Understanding to Commitment**
  - Partner capacity-building & resource-sharing

# A LEARNING COMMUNITIES MODEL

**Organizing Principle and Social Goal**

**LIFELONG LEARNING**

- Foster life-span + life-wide learning
- Promote formal + non-formal learning
  - Cultivate democratic values
- Use/build human + social capital including Aboriginal value + knowledge base

**Interdisciplinary/ Whole of Government Approach**



**Community Development Purposes**



**Community Learning Technologies/Methods**

**Networking** within and among communities  
**Service-learning** bridging formal + non-formal sectors

**Determinants of Success: 3Ps**

**Communities learning to:**

- Build **Partnerships** among all 5 sectors
- Foster **Participation** of all
- Assess **Performance** and progress

**Outcomes/ Learning Targets**



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