



Prepared for Heritage Saskatchewan – June 2015

Living Heritage, Quality of Life and Community Development: five approaches to planning for growth in Saskatchewan

There are several models currently being used to guide sustainable community development in Saskatchewan. This article will introduce five models that reveal an intuitive understanding of the role of *Living Heritage*; the values, beliefs and ways of living that shape the choices we make, not only for ourselves but others as well. To begin, however, the concept of *Living Heritage* will be explained and connected to quality of life issues and community development.

Although the concept of *Living Heritage* is not new, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, (UNESCO) Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) established a definition in 2003 that reflects the lived experience of heritage. In part, the declaration states:

The “intangible cultural heritage” means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.

Living Heritage shapes our landscapes, our sense of identity, belonging and place in the world. The quality of life we enjoy depends on building strong relationships: with ourselves, within our families, and with others. In addition, all learning occurs within a cultural context, therefore, all human development and subsequently all community development are connected; both shape our quality of life and wellbeing.

Living Heritage & Quality of Life

Governments, healthcare providers and care-givers agree; health and wellbeing is about more than just treating disease. The 'Population Health' approach to healthcare in Saskatchewan recognizes that many factors influence lifestyle and individual behaviour. Our values, beliefs and ways of life, in other words, our *Living Heritage*, shape both individual and collective life choices.

Governments, law enforcement agencies, human rights advocates, social workers and others who work with marginalized groups, know from first-hand experience that context matters. Social cohesion depends on reciprocity; the give and take that occurs when values and ways of living are negotiated within a community. In other words, an understanding of our own *Living Heritage* is where understanding the 'other' begins. Social cohesion depends on an active citizenry willing to negotiate a set of values, beliefs and ways of living that recognizes common ground and respects differences at the same time.

Governments, educators and students; business leaders and entrepreneurs, understand the benefits of culturally sensitive learning environments and workplaces. Preparing youth for the workplace is a complex challenge inherently linked to human development. Confidence to contribute in a meaningful way comes from a strong sense of identity, belonging and place in addition to the development of specific skills and abilities and specific subject knowledge and understanding. There is a growing body of evidence that culture sensitive learning environments provide the social context necessary for learning to occur. This extends to life-long learning experiences and success in the workplace as well. Businesses that value creative thinking and innovative solutions value difference: of perspective, of ideas, of options. Many employers and certainly front-line workers face day to day situations where an understanding of the intangible cultural heritage of those they work with and those they hope to serve enables them to do their job more effectively and efficiently.

Any model for sustainable community development needs to address quality of life issues related to health and wellbeing; citizenship and social cohesion; and education and employment. Each of the models introduced below are based on an intuitive understanding of *Living Heritage* and the power of the past to shape individual and collective choices.

Saskatchewan Main Street Program

The Main Street Program was introduced in 1979 by the National Trust of Canada to *"use a community's 'heritage' (in its broadest sense) as a revitalization tool . . . It is about people working together to revitalize the economic health of their communities, while preserving the character of their downtowns."*

In 2011 the Government of Saskatchewan launched the Saskatchewan Main Street program selecting four communities to participate in demonstration projects. The program's Four-Point Approach focusses on: community organization (bringing residents, property owners,

merchants and other stakeholders together to work toward a common goal); economic restructuring (working with other economic development organizations to recruit new businesses; support, nurture, and retain existing businesses; develop initiatives and programs that respond to consumer needs); design/heritage conservation (creating an inviting pedestrian oriented downtown, rehabilitating historic buildings, encouraging new construction sensitive to the area's heritage character) and promotion (to create and enhance the perception of the commercial district as a hub of commercial and cultural activity; a viable place for consumer and business investment).

Guided by a governing board, a key component of the program is hiring a Coordinator to organize community activities and build momentum for various projects. Community consultations throughout the process reveal the value of *living heritage*; the cultural and natural heritage resources, both tangible and intangible, that gives residents a sense of identity, belonging and place.

Projet du terroir

The concept of *terroir* is also grounded in a sense of identity, belonging and place. In 2005 UNESCO adopted the following definition:

A terroir is a determined geographical area, defined by a human community, which generates and accumulates along its history a set of distinctive cultural traits, knowledge and practices based on a system of interactions between the natural environment and human factors. The know-how involved carries originality, confers its typical nature, and enables recognition of the goods and services originating from this specific geographical area and thus of the people living within it. These areas are living and innovative spaces which are more than just about tradition.

Using this definition to inform discussions, the steering committee of the *Projet du terroir* recognized *Living Heritage* as a vital component of community development.

“The terroir program aims to revitalize rural communities by recognizing and reclaiming ancestral knowledge and skills. At the same time, it seeks to increase appreciation of the farmer’s role by ensuring the region’s sustainable development and protecting the cultural integrity of the communities who live on the land.”

Program partners include *L’Assemblée communautaire fransaskoise* (ACF), the *Fédération des aînés Fransaskois* and *L’Institut français*. Together with participating communities the project pursued four main themes: identity and a sense of belonging; demography and migration; intercultural dialogue; and collaborative economics and interdependence. Participants successfully implemented an educational program, an intergenerational garden, as well as, hosting an international symposium in 2009.

The *Projet de Terroir* clearly recognizes the connection between *Living Heritage* and sustainable community/regional development based on authentic cultural and social expressions, which in this case are related specifically to food production, preparation, and marketing. In other words, the economic value of the agricultural product is a spin-off benefit of the cultural, social, and environmental values of the community.

Saskatchewan Ecomuseum Initiative

Ecomuseums were first developed in France in the 1970's focussing on a holistic approach to heritage preservation and interpretation that combined an acknowledgment of the cultural, social and environmental values of the community. The Saskatchewan Ecomuseum Initiative steering committee Chaired by Glenn Sutter of the Royal Saskatchewan Museum includes representatives from Heritage Saskatchewan, Museums Association of Saskatchewan, SaskCulture and The National Trust of Canada. Their working definition of an ecomuseum is as follows:

An eco-museum is a community museum that provides a unique mechanism for community engagement, in which community members work to preserve and learn from tangible and intangible heritage in its living form. Through community consultations, stakeholders agree on natural and cultural assets that they value and create plans to ensure they are preserved and used to foster a culture of sustainability. . . . they enable communities to preserve valued objects, sites, and cultural practices where they exist, enhancing their visibility and the contributions they make to community development activities.

Several communities in Saskatchewan are using the Ecomuseum model to guide growth in a sustainable way. Learning about local history, connecting the past to the present, and developing community partnerships builds social capital. Although not the main purpose of an ecomuseum, tourism and economic development are usually spin-off benefits. The development process brings people together; providing a public space for discussion of different value systems and the negotiation of shared values.

Municipal Cultural Planning (MCP)

Municipal Cultural Planning (MCP) developed as a way of broadening the scope of municipal planning processes already in place. Proponents of MCP understand the intrinsic connection between *living heritage* and creating great places to live, work and play. It is based on "*inclusive community consultation and decision-making*" according to the Creative City Network and provides municipal governments with "*a clearer sense of a community's aspirations and values*" which in turn, "*informs policy-making and planning decisions for the whole community.*"

Many communities in Saskatchewan have developed Municipal Cultural Plans (MCP) or are in the process of doing so. SaskCulture supports MCP through the Municipal Cultural Engagement and Planning Grant Program (MCEP). Further, they identify five key steps in the MCP process: preparation; information gathering and research; analysis and drafting the plan; finalizing plans and building momentum; and ongoing updates and monitoring. Seeing a community through a cultural lens reveals assets, both tangible and intangible, that SaskCulture suggests *“can be used to inform sustainable, integrated and strategic planning for the community.”*

Age-Friendly Saskatchewan

The Age-Friendly Cities Project was introduced by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2006 following extensive consultations with seniors, senior-care providers and other groups and individuals from several countries including Canada, in order to establish a framework to help cities address the needs of an aging population. Eight key areas of community life were identified: outdoor spaces and buildings, transportation, housing, social participation, respect and social inclusion, civic participation and employment, communication and information, and community support and health services.

In 2007 the Public Health Agency of Canada partnered with the provinces and territories, to develop and promote the concept of Age-Friendly Communities across the country. The Saskatoon Council on Aging has led the way in Saskatchewan. The Age-friendly Saskatoon Initiative began with a community assessment involving over 500 older adults and older adult caregivers who shared their “lived” experience. Based on the results a number of recommendations were developed that, when implemented will enable the city to become an age-friendly community. In 2014 the Saskatchewan Seniors’ Mechanism launched the Age-Friendly Saskatchewan website joining several other provinces in promoting the concept of age-friendly communities to address quality of life issues not only for seniors but for all residents throughout the life cycle.

Conclusion

Regardless of the model adopted to guide the process, sustainable community development work is collaborative, multi-disciplinary, cross-cultural, inter-generational and ongoing. It begins in conversation with others and the sharing of lived experiences. It is measured in our quality of life and sense of wellbeing. The Canadian Index of Wellbeing defines wellbeing as:

The presence of the highest possible quality of life in its full breadth of expression focused on but not necessarily exclusive to: good living standards, robust health, a sustainable environment, vital communities, an educated populace, balanced time use, high levels of democratic participation, and access to and participation in leisure and culture.

The role of *Living Heritage* is reflected in the Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW) and the eight domains established to measure quality of life in Canada which include: Environment; Leisure and Culture; Education; Healthy Populations; Democratic Engagement; Living Standards; Time Use; and Community Vitality. Consider the similarities between the 8 domains of the CIW and the 8 key areas of community life addressed by Age-Friendly Communities, the Municipal Cultural Planning process and the development process of an Ecomuseum; or the 4 main themes of the *Projet de terroir* and the Main Street 4-Point Approach. They all share an intuitive understanding of *Living Heritage* as contemporary, traditional and living at the same time; inclusive (multiple voices, engaged citizens); representative (multiple stakeholders, collaborative); and community-based (grassroots, neighbourhoods, local identity). Recognizing the role of *Living Heritage* in our communities contributes in many positive ways to quality of life issues such as: healthy, active living for seniors and aging in place; developing welcoming communities for newcomers and visitors; building social cohesion and creating culture sensitive learning environments and workplaces, as well as, highlighting and conserving important wildlife areas and natural spaces.

What can you do? Talk to your neighbours, talk to local business owners, talk to your elected representatives. Ask them what the most valued aspects of the community are and why. What makes a community a great place to live, work and play? Start the conversation.

Sources:

Age-Friendly Communities Canada Hub: www.afc-hub.ca

Age-Friendly Saskatchewan: www.skseiorsmechanism.ca/age-friendly-communities.html

Baeker, Greg Baeker, "Beyond Garrets and Silos:" *Concepts, Trends and Developments in Cultural Planning*, April 2002.

Bougoin, Josée, *TERROIR: An alternative to Rural Development - Rural revitalization and sustainability through locally grown Value-added Products*, a slide presentation, downloaded June 2014 from www.seda.sk.ca/.../Josée-Bougoin-Rural-Revitalization-and-Sustainability, no date.

Canadian Index of Wellbeing web site: www.ciw.ca

Canadian Index of Wellbeing, *How are Canadians Really Doing?* The 2012 CIW Report. Waterloo, ON: Canadian Index of Wellbeing and University of Waterloo, 2012.

Creative City Network web site: www.creativecity.ca

Dupré, Frédéric and Ludivine Tatieu-Bilhère, *Saveurs et saviors: Grande région de Batoche / Greater Batoche region*. Fédération des aînés Fransaskois, Institut français, and Assemblée communautaire fransaskoise, 2012.

Government of Saskatchewan website - www.pcs.gov.sk.ca/heritage

Government of Saskatchewan, *Main Street Coordinator's Manual* - available online

Heritage Canada National Trust website: <https://www.heritagecanada.org/en/resources/regeneration/main-street>

The Main Street Program: Past and Present, prepared by the Heritage Canada Foundation for Saskatchewan Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport, March 2009.

Hilchey, Duncan, *Gout de Terroir: Exploring the Boundaries of Specialty Agricultural Landscapes* in *Exploring the Boundaries of Historic Landscape Preservation*, downloaded June 2014 from www.clemson.edu/caah/cedp/cudp/pubs/alliance/05_hilchey.pdf.

Hume, Gord, *Cultural Planning for Creative Communities*. Municipal World Inc., 2009.

Public Health Agency of Canada: www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/seniors-aines/afc-cao-eng.php

Saskatchewan Ecomuseums Initiative Steering Committee, *The Ecomuseum Concept: A Saskatchewan View*, Working Paper, Nov. 20, 2013.

SaskCulture Inc., *Municipal Cultural Planning*, an informational pamphlet, no date.

UNESCO web site: www.unesco.org

Heritage Saskatchewan Alliance is the collective voice of all those who value heritage in Saskatchewan. Our vision is to see heritage as a valued and dynamic legacy that contributes to our sense of identity, creates an understanding of our past, is used to build communities in the present, and informs our choices for the future.

#200 – 2020 11th Avenue – Regina, Saskatchewan – S4P 0J3

Ph: 306.780.9191

Fax: 306.780.9190

www.heritagesask.ca



Connecting *Living Heritage* to five approaches to planning for growth in Saskatchewan

Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) <i>Living Heritage</i>	Traditional, contemporary and living at the same time	Inclusive: multiple voices, engaged citizens	Representative: multiple stakeholders, collaborative	Community-based: grassroots, neighbourhoods, local identity
<i>Saskatchewan Main Street</i>	Promotion to create and enhance perception of commercial district as hub of commercial and cultural activity; a viable place for consumer and business investment	Community Organization bringing residents, property owners, merchants and other stakeholders together to work toward a common goal	Economic Restructuring working with other economic development organizations to recruit new businesses; support, nurture, and retain existing businesses; develop initiatives and programs that respond to consumer needs	Design/Heritage Conservation creating an inviting pedestrian oriented downtown, rehabilitating historic buildings, encouraging new construction sensitive to the area's heritage character
<i>Projet du Terroir</i>	Living and innovative spaces that are more than just about tradition	Set of distinctive cultural traits, knowledge, practices based on system of interactions between natural environment and human factors	Know-how involved carries originality, confers its typical nature, enables recognition of goods and services originating from specific geographical area, thus of the people living within it	A determined geographical area, defined by a human community
<i>Ecomuseum</i>	Community members work to preserve and learn from tangible and intangible heritage in its living form	Provide ways of negotiating priorities, respecting diverse perspectives, engaging individuals in meaningful dialogue	Stakeholders agree on natural and cultural assets that they value and create plans to ensure they are preserved and used to foster a culture of sustainability	Enable communities to preserve valued objects, sites, cultural practices, where they exist, enhancing visibility and the contributions they make to community development activities
<i>Municipal Cultural Planning (MCP)</i>	Culture is understood as a resource for human development with a broader goal of societal development; expanded view of cultural resources / assets	Benefits-driven, emphasis on contributions to community development; focus on building soft infrastructure, networks, new media distribution strategy	Cultural sector representatives, local citizens, community organizations, local business, etc. ; cultural meaning is negotiated	Place-based; "whole systems" perspectives rooted in place; focus on public management enabling, supporting in combination with other community development approaches
<i>Age-Friendly Communities</i>	Older people are recognized by the community for their past as well as their present contributions	Promote inclusion of older adults in, and valuing their contribution to, all areas of community life, support better health, improved safety, and greater participation	Engage collaboratively with seniors, elected officials, municipal and business leaders, local experts, community partners, key service providers and residents of all ages	Provide opportunities to participate in suitable volunteer, civic and employment positions and to be socially active; support successful life-course transitions