

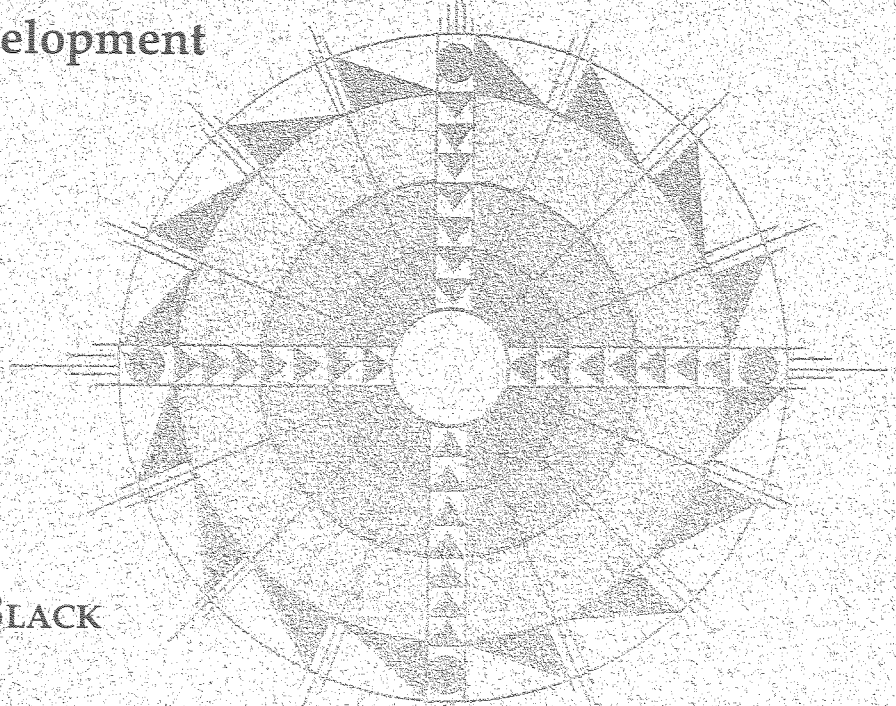
THE 1994

RICHARD SCHRAMM PAPER ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

# *Redefining Success in Community Development*

A New Approach for Determining and Measuring  
the Impact of Development

BY SHERRY SALWAY BLACK



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The Richard Schramm Paper on Community Development was established by the Lincoln Filene Center to honor Richard Schramm's contribution to the field of Community Development. Each year the Filene Center selects a practitioner to write a paper about a topic in community development. The paper is delivered at the LFC's annual Management and Community Development Institute.

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# Overview

There is a development crisis in this country and the world. Women, minorities, and poor communities will attest to it. The fact that the field of community development exists, is growing and cannot meet demand, is evidence of this crisis. The crisis is rooted in a development paradigm that “assumes human welfare to be merely the sum of gross economic values.” The conventional economic growth and development paradigm is not working in our communities or in most countries, and is widening gaps between the rich and poor, increasing poverty, degrading the environment, destroying societies and cultures, and sapping the human spirit.

Over the 1980s and early 1990s there has been substantial growth in community-based development organizations of differing types and strategies. These efforts seek to address increasing community problems, to mitigate the increasing inequalities and injustice in the current system, to find local resources to replace decreased federal resources, to find local solutions to local problems, and to gain local control over development. Many of these programs promote a more comprehensive and integrated approach to community economic development, recognizing that fragmented, issue or problem-specific strategies dissipate scarce resources.

Community development practitioners theorize about new development strategies and models, and may even implement pieces of a new model. Yet too often we continue to measure our success and impact by only economic indicators —jobs created, incomes increased, businesses started, loans made, people trained, houses built, goods and services produced. Even if our programs are a mix of comprehensive intervention and development strategies, the easiest and most quantifiable measures of impact, are eco-

nomic. This is not to say economic indicators are not necessary; rather, they are only a small part of the development picture.

New development paradigms are evolving and work is currently being done at the local, national and international levels to make these paradigms operational by changing and improving how individuals, organizations and governments measure progress.

## SEEING THE LARGER PICTURE: NEW ASSESSMENT TOOLS ARE NECESSARY

Without the tools to measure or assess a new development paradigm and our progress in a more comprehensive manner, we not only miss seeing the larger picture but we cannot see the people. And development is about people and an improved quality of life.

The goal of this paper is twofold: to challenge community development practitioners to learn about new development paradigms and efforts to define more inclusive measurements of human, societal and environmental welfare; and to stimulate new thinking and practice in the field to better measure what our communities value, and our success as community development practitioners.

The “**Elements of Development**” are presented as a newly evolving framework to define, plan for and measure development. This framework has grown out of the work of First Nations Development Institute. First Nations is a national Native American economic development organization working with tribes and Native people to change the economic environment of reservations to one that builds on local resources, recognizes Native knowledge and culture, and supports development from within. First Nations defines its work as culturally-appropriate,

values-based development. We work at both the local community level and the national level to develop models and strategies which enhance Native peoples' control of their economic resources.

The "Elements of Development" is based on the Native American world view, historic problems, and processes and principles of development. The "Elements" form a circle (see page 15) with the two main axes representing significant relationships in development as defined by *Assets*, *Kinship*, *Personal Efficacy*, and *Spirituality*. Within the four quadrants are 12 other referencing elements in development. It is along these 16 elements that goals or standards can be articulated and indicators and measures formulated which reflect the values and priorities of the people. First Nations is working to assess the applicability and adaptability of this framework as a planning and evaluation tool for Native American Development.

This paper is divided into four major sections. The first section discusses in more detail the need for new measurement tools, starting from the global perspective of a new paradigm for development. The next section presents the context of this work through a brief historical overview of reservation development, a background on First Nations' work and the genesis of the "Elements" paradigm.

The third section presents a full description of the "Elements" framework. This section demonstrates our process for using the framework. The final section describes the broader implications and possible uses of both the "Elements" and an approach to developing similar frameworks for differing cultures and communities.

# *The Need for a New Development Model*

There is a development crisis in this country and the world. Women and minorities have been saying it for years, and we know the results. Poor communities in the United States will attest to it as will poor communities in countries around the globe, regardless of which political or economic dogma they subscribe. Its manifestations are:

- The persistence and growth of poverty and the marginalization of whole classes of people—rural populations, ethnic minorities, women and children.
- The irretrievable destruction of natural resources and the deterioration of environments.
- The persistence of social conflict breaking out in racism, crime, violence, open warfare, and civil wars in communities, countries and regions of the world.<sup>1</sup>

According to the 1989 Caracas Report on Alternative Development Indicators, *Redefining Wealth and Progress: New Ways to Measure Economic, Social and Environmental Change*, the “crisis is rooted in a development paradigm that assumes human welfare to be merely the sum of gross economic values.” The report further states that, “Solutions are no longer possible within the terms of the very paradigm that produced the crisis. This demands a new development paradigm to bring about a development process which is:

- a) **People-centered** - that is able to truly meet basic needs, including ensuring the exercise of people’s primary role in the formulation and execution of development programs.

- b) **Sustainable** - meaning socially just and equitable as well as ecologically sound.
- c) **Self-reliant** - meaning the use, to the maximum extent possible, of the countries’ [read: communities’] own capabilities.”<sup>2</sup>

The report refers to the “development paradigm that produced the crisis.” This paradigm is the economic growth model and the macroeconomic measurement tool of the National Systems of Accounts, neither of which are adequate to meet the needs of a changing world. One may wonder what this has to do with community economic development and measurements of its impact. Taken to the micro level of communities, are we working to develop a new paradigm or are we preparing people to participate in the mainstream economy? How is community economic development measured? (almost exclusively in easily quantifiable economic units—jobs created, incomes increased, houses constructed, goods and services produced). Where are the quality of life indicators? The indicators to measure the unpaid work of women and other informal sector activities? The indicators that value community empowerment or a pristine forest or clean water? The indicators that value future generations?

First, let us take a closer look at the economic growth model, the development paradigm which has driven the United States as well as most of the countries of the Northern Hemisphere to our current situation in crisis and in transition. This economic model, developed to meet the needs of a flourishing industrial economy, promotes the maximization of production and consumption supported by nonrenewable resources.

HOW IS  
COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT  
MEASURED?

WHERE ARE THE  
QUALITY OF LIFE  
INDICATORS?

THE INDICATORS  
TO MEASURE THE  
UNPAID WORK OF  
WOMEN  
ACTIVITIES?

THE INDICATORS  
THAT VALUE  
COMMUNITY  
EMPOWERMENT, A  
PRISTINE FOREST,  
OR CLEAR  
WATER?

THE INDICATORS  
THAT VALUE  
FUTURE  
GENERATIONS?

## INADEQUATE SYSTEM OF MEASURING VALUE

The problems with this model are twofold: it "equates society's total socioeconomic productivity with that portion of it that is based on competitive, market-based cash transactions and the flows of money they create" and it does not recognize that economies are in transition to ones that "minimize waste, recycle, maximize renewable resources, and are managed for sustained-yield productivity."<sup>3</sup>

This model is measured by a System of National Accounts, called the Gross Domestic Product in the United States and Gross National Product in the world economy. Initially developed to justify paying for wars, the System of National Accounts was "expanded to determine a country's cash generating activities, not their productive capabilities." As Marilyn Waring in *If Women Counted* states, the System of National Accounts is a "system that attributes little or no 'value' to peace, to the labor of women, to the preservation of natural resources, and to the unpaid work of reproducing human life itself." The System of National Accounts is based on the values inherent in war and in an economic growth model. She states, "The system cannot respond to values it refuses to recognize."<sup>4</sup>

Yet, this system of measurement of progress, the GDP and GNP, has far-reaching effects. It is used to: "analyze past and current developments in the national economy; make projections of the possible effects of changes in policy or other economic changes; to quantify all areas of what is considered the national economy so that resource allocation decisions can be made accordingly; and, to project public service investment and revenue requirements for the nation."<sup>5</sup> The GNP is the measure of the total output of goods and services by an economy and therefore is inadequate and deceptive as to whether people are better off. The GNP not only completely ignores the

destruction of the environment but the costs of such things as toxic spills contribute to an increase in the GNP.

The economic growth model is in transition, as is the "entire belief system that undergirded the Industrial Revolution, as we approach some as yet ill-defined 'post-industrial future.'" This is a transition (described by Hazel Henderson in both *Politics of the Solar Age* and *Paradigms in Progress*) from an industrial to a solar age, based on renewable resources and systems theory, with a concern for the quality of life, human potential and the search for ecological balance, social justice and global citizenship.<sup>6</sup>

## A REDUCTIONIST WORLD VIEW

Much of the new paradigm thinking has its roots in systems theory. The earth and its inhabitants are parts of complex systems which western science has reduced to their simplest parts: a reductionist world view. This scientific world view has become the foundation for many disciplines, including economics. The inherent flaw in using the scientific model to explain pieces of complex systems and make applications based only on parts of a whole, is that significant relationships and connections are missed. Willis Harmon of the Institute of Noetic Sciences puts forth a "science of wholeness" which would be more inclusive, emphasizing more participatory methodologies.<sup>7</sup> He recognizes a growing dissatisfaction with the scientific orthodoxy and a respiritualization of modern society, with changes in basic values and priorities. This movement will create major changes in institutions, including economic and financial institutions.

A myriad of terms have emerged to describe these new paradigms. The Solar Age. Green Economics. Ecological or Environmental Economics. Goalistics. Human-centered Development. Alternative Economics. Feminist Economics. Indigenous Economics. All fundamentally agree that economics, in both theory and practice, is inadequate to help the world through this

**EITHER SOCIETY'S GOALS, VALUES AND PRIORITIES HAVE CHANGED AND ECONOMICS HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO INCORPORATE THIS CHANGE IN ITS THEORY AND PRACTICE, OR, AS IS THE CASE WITH NATIVE AMERICAN SOCIETY, OUR GOALS, VALUES AND PRIORITIES NEVER WERE REFLECTED IN THE ECONOMIC RULES.**

transition and to improve the quality of life; to explain the complex nature of human beings and their environment; and to measure anything beyond a narrow scope of change. Economics is a set of rules based on a society's goals, values and public priorities. Either society's goals, values and priorities have changed and economics has not been able to incorporate this change in its theory and practice; or, as is the case with Native American society, our goals, values and priorities never were reflected in the economic rules.

As far back as the 1950s, there was recognition that the System of National Accounts, GNP, GDP, and other "leading economic indicators" did not capture the entire picture of human welfare and that the industrial economic growth model was beginning to show signs of inadequacy. Since that time numerous alternative and supplementary indicators of progress have been developed and proposed.

In the 1950s, the United Nations first proposed its "International Definitions and Measurements of Standards of Living." In the 1960s, the Measure of Welfare and Japan's Net National Welfare attempted to deduct costs related to social problems from the GNP. Most of the early indicators tried to fit within the existing economic framework.<sup>8</sup>

### **QUALITY OF LIFE INDICATORS**

The U. S. Government and accounting industry also attempted in the late 1960s and early 1970s, to develop methods to measure social factors, including the value of unpaid and household production. These recommendations were never implemented. Also in the 1970s, the Society for International Development produced a Physical Quality of Life Indicator (PQLI) which added new measures of success in maintaining the quality of life environments, housing, health care, and education. Recently, the PQLI was combined with a human rights index produced by *The Economist* magazine, to generate an Authentic Socioeconomic Development Index.<sup>9</sup>

Herman Daly, Senior Economist at the World Bank, proposed the Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare (ISEW), in his book *Toward the Common Good*, coauthored with John Cobb, a theologian. This index takes an economic view, but includes such things as valuing infrastructure, human capital, household labor, and environmental assets. The ISEW peaked in 1979, providing graphic evidence that the benefits of an increasing GNP are being offset by a variety of factors. As Daly and Cobb say, "Economic welfare has been deteriorating for a decade, largely as a result of growing income inequality, the exhaustion of resources and the failure to invest adequately to sustain the economy of the future." The World Bank has not adopted this index.<sup>10</sup>

As social, economic, and environmental concerns grew and technology threatened workers, the late 1970s saw a proliferation of "post-economic" policy tools such as environmental impact statements, social impact assessments, technology assessments, and employment impact assessments. As the national and global economies worsened in the 1980s, budget deficits, high interest rates, unemployment and trade balances became the real indicators, and people realized that these indicators were not so much economic as political. New quality of life indicators were sought to determine how real communities were doing, and to hold politicians more accountable for their actions.<sup>11</sup>

### **ENVIRONMENTAL AND HUMAN FACTORS**

The United Nations has consistently made attempts to create and institute alternative indicators for development. In the 1970s, the United Nations developed the Basic Human Needs indicator, through the Environmental Program, which focused on all people and on how well nations were meeting the needs of their poorest citizens. The United Nations' Development Program produced the Human Development Index in 1990 which focused

on literacy, life expectancy, infant mortality, and purchasing power. A second edition, produced in 1991, progressed to new indicators that measured environmental damage and human freedom. While this tool has not yet achieved the stature and regular use of the GNP, it is gaining prominence as a more inclusive indicator of progress.<sup>12</sup> The 1993 revised *Handbook of National Accounts* from the U.N. Statistical Office includes a broad array of indicators including Environmentally Adjusted New Domestic Product; Environmentally Adjusted National Income; Sustainable National Income and Framework for Indicators of Sustainable Development as well as the Human Development Index.<sup>13</sup>

The Country Futures Indicators (CFI), developed by Hazel Henderson, are self-described as "open-ended to encourage multi-cultural debate about definitions of development and progress." There are two main groupings of indicators: 1) those that focus on reformulating the GNP to include such things as community-based accounting, capital asset accounts, and informal sector production; and 2) complementary indicators such as population, education, health, biodiversity, and environmental areas. The CFI, as do many other indicators, also include the status of women and minorities, human rights, and democratic participation.<sup>14</sup>

## STATE AND LOCAL EFFORTS

Moving from the global and national level to state and localities, Jacksonville, Florida developed its Quality-of-Life Indicators for Progress which includes nine broad areas: the economy, public safety, health, education, natural environment, mobility, government, social environment and culture/recreation.<sup>15</sup> In 1991, a volunteer group formed the Sustainable Seattle Civic Panel to begin to answer the question of what is overlooked if we pay too much attention to short-term economic statistics. They formulated key indicators that reflect the long-term economic, social, and environmental health of their community. Indicators include such things as air quality, percentage of children living in poverty, wild salmon runs, biodiversity, renewable energy generated, and percentage of the population that used the library or donates blood. "Simply by publishing the list, the Sustainable Seattle Civic Group has altered that community's dialogue."<sup>16</sup>

As the above examples illustrate, there are better, more inclusive measurement tools available to assess society's progress. These indicators try to incorporate a multidimensional perspective based on newly evolving development paradigms which expand human welfare beyond gross economic values.

There is no one correct way to measure the impact of development. The indicators used in a particular community, culture or society should be tailor-made by each group to reflect the group's values, goals and priorities. Hazel Henderson uses the term "cultural DNA."<sup>17</sup> New development paradigms and indicators of social and economic welfare should be based on the decoded patterns, ideals, and goals in very different societies.

# *Native American Development - Building a New Model*

The "Elements of Development" are First Nations Development Institute's attempt to conceptualize a paradigm that more accurately depicts a Native American world view, thereby offering an alternative approach to reservation and tribal development. This framework presents a more holistic, comprehensive approach for use in both planning development and measuring its impact.

First Nations is a Native American economic development organization working with tribes and Native people to change the economic environment of reservations to one that builds on local resources, is sustainable, recognizes Native knowledge and culture, and supports development from within.

The methodology for creating a new development paradigm has been an evolutionary process and will continue to evolve. It is a process based on First Nations' work over the past 14 years at the local reservation level helping groups trying to gain control of their own economies; learning about the local resources and needs firsthand; assessing the historical processes of tribal and reservation development; building these lessons into our work; researching and analyzing other development strategies and lessons; and networking with other development practitioners.

The current state of tribal and reservation economies has its basis in historical events and processes. This is a critical piece of the "cultural DNA" that gives context to the present and offers a departure for the future.

## **THE PROBLEMS WITH DEVELOPMENT<sup>18</sup>**

Our premise is that reservation development provides a unique and powerful vantage point from which to examine the effects of development programs and strategies. Tribes' experience has significance not only to underdeveloped countries but also to poor and rural communities within the United States. What tribal experience brings to bear is the need to question in a more fundamental way the underlying processes of development.

Indian reservations face an uphill struggle. They are essentially underdeveloped economies, possessing characteristics which describe Less Developed Countries. A conventional economic recitation would present four main problems:

- inadequate infrastructures;
- an unskilled labor force;
- a lack of capital (compounded by state, tribal and federal jurisdictional concerns, plus no collateral to speak of for accessing credit); and
- political instability, resulting in high turnover in administrations.

From the tribes' point of view, the main problems have been:

- lack of local control and federal programs that are inflexible and piecemeal;
- no cultural relevance, and many times, actual cultural and social disruption; and

- a “no-win” mentality that permeates so much of reservation life and brings corruption, alcoholism, wife abuse, child abuse, etc.

As of the 1990 census, American Indians and Alaska Native people number almost two million, or less than one percent of the U. S. population, yet we constitute over 50 percent of the cultural diversity in this country representing 580 tribes and speaking over 200 languages. Of the total Native population, almost 40 percent live on the over 380 reservations, or within other Native communities.

Native Americans are the fastest growing minority in the U. S. (once immigration is removed), with a birth rate almost double that of the general population. Native Americans are also younger than the general population, with a median age of 23 years versus 30 years. Unfortunately, by current measurements and standards, Native Americans are the fastest growing underclass. Those living on reservations face unemployment rates nationally of 52 percent. The rates on many reservations exceed 80 percent.

Of the 48 percent employed, only about one-fourth, or 12 percent, earn over \$7,000 a year. Ten percent of the nation’s general population is at or below the poverty level of \$14,000. Since only 12 percent of the Native American population earn more than \$7,000 a year, this means that the Native American poverty rate is almost an inversion of that of the general population.

Yet, ironically, this same poor one percent of the population collectively own five percent of the land (excluding Alaska), which includes:

- 15 percent nationwide and 11 percent worldwide of the low sulfur, surface-minable coal;
- nearly 40 percent of the privately-held uranium;
- four percent of the oil and natural gas produced annually;

- 5.3 million acres of commercial forest producing 38 million board feet of lumber annually; and
- substantial quantities of oil shale and geothermal power.

A closer look at Native Americans and their histories reveal reasons why this dichotomy exists—a population rich in land and natural resources, (which typically define wealth and prosperity) yet who are suffering from extreme poverty and all of the companion social ills.

Since first contact with western society, Native Americans have been expected to subsume their cultures and life-styles to those of western society. This duality of cultures has created internal conflict both on an individual level and a tribal level. It has wreaked havoc on a once healthy people. Since the 1960s, Native American tribes have received intense economic attention. In fact, over the past two and a half decades, billions of dollars of federal assistance have been directed to reservations yet, the economies remain fragile and vulnerable. Given the relatively small population and dispersed but geographically confined locations, the huge infusions of federal economic development funding, (to say nothing of the education, health and social funding) should have made dramatic improvements in people’s lives. Instead, unemployment is over 50 percent; the majority of jobs for those who are employed is through federal programs; health and social indicators show a population experiencing much higher rates of disease and other social problems; and the control of the tribes’ futures is most often still in the hands of the federal government.

Tribal societies have less cohesion now than before they received all of the development attention. Their governments are sometimes soft or corrupt. And the costs of growth in terms of sacrificed values, tradition and social organization have often been much higher than expected. The two most common

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approaches to reservation development offer insight into what may be the problems and what may lead to the cure.

### **THE INDIAN ENTREPRENEUR MODEL OF DEVELOPMENT**

First, there is the Indian (minority) entrepreneur model. The goal is to prepare a select group of Indian entrepreneurs who will take advantage of economic opportunities. Whatever goods and services are profitable are produced. The problem is this model does not encourage a spin-off or complementary relationship among Indian entrepreneurs. Consequently, there is no basis for the infrastructures or interconnections that a reservation-based economic system needs. In fact, under this method, Indian entrepreneurs may be encouraged to move off the reservations, into a more hospitable business environment.

### **THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MODEL OF DEVELOPMENT**

Second, is the "chamber of commerce" model. This sees reservation development as a matter of attracting outside industry and business to create new jobs and increase incomes. The problem with this arrangement is the industries' very limited responsibility and accountability to the reservation communities. This model promotes the belief that resources must come from outside the tribe. It actually belies true development principles and perpetuates a dependency upon outside benefactors.

### **IGNORING INDIGENOUS DEVELOPMENT**

Why have these development programs failed, and in many cases, created or exacerbated problems? Essentially, there are two opposing views on why reservation development programs failed. One view holds that it failed because of "interference of social-

psychological variables." In other words, the social values of tribes were perceived as the main obstacles to the development process. Tribes were determined culturally too passive, or too noncompetitive to do business. Even today federal or tribal planners often see traditional culture as a negative force which has to be uprooted and replaced if meaningful development is to occur. This "vacuum" approach or "empty vessels fallacy" caused federal administrators to overlook the potential of using some traditional forms of sociocultural organization in their development programs.

The other view held that reservation economic development was a "technical problem" and that the key was to speed up the rate of capital formation, technological adaptation, and let the values, culture and traditions follow. The reservation developers often did not recognize that tribal institutions and organizations exist at all, much less that they provided important resources for the successful adoption of economic change.

Neither development view argued for approaches that would effectively build upon existing conditions and tribal cultural patterns. Yet, as far back as 1961, Niehoff and Anderson (1964) found, through a content analysis of over 200 case studies of Third World human development programs, that ignoring the influence of, or failing to use, indigenous cultural patterns and local environmental settings may lead to failure or rejection of development programs.

Throughout recent history, western industrialized models have been imposed upon reservation communities: social, political, and economic models that did not fit their social, political, or economic systems and, in many cases, were incompatible with their physical environment. And, measurements or evaluation of the success of development strategies that built on the western models necessarily indicate failure.

## EFFECTIVE DEVELOPMENT

For the process of development to be effective, it must involve the tribes' sociocultural forms and institutions. These forms and institutions are found in the:

- 1) traditional leadership roles;
- 2) indigenous knowledge systems;
- 3) traditional etiology;
- 4) traditional communication systems; and
- 5) tribal institutions and organizations.

In the case of tribal and reservation development, no attention was paid to existing systems, cultural norms and institutions. This is true for the economic development strategies as well as strategies in education, health, governance, religious, environment, housing and other social programs. In the case of economic development strategies developed from outside tribal communities, prevailing wisdom was based on an assumption that existing systems and activities needed to be modified to fit economic development goals based on western models.

Clearly, the past is very much with us today, both in terms of mistakes and opportunities. When outside development models are superimposed upon existing social, political and economic systems, an informal system continues to exist within the community to maintain valued knowledge, skills and values. Some aspects of traditional tribal life have disappeared altogether. Some significant aspects have changed completely, in both negative and positive ways. And many vital, healthy aspects quietly exist on an informal basis, going undetected by the casual observer.

One such vital aspect that still exists for Indian people is the quiet strength of respected and revered leadership. Long ignored, and at one time intentionally hidden, this leadership holds the key to the stimulation of the community's economic productivity, thereby ending the pernicious cycle of

federal dependency. This can be done through a development process that works directly with the tribes' indigenous leadership to developing their capacity to address the reservation needs as defined by Indian people themselves.

Another vital aspect that still exists in some form is the kinship systems. No applicable western model exists for the nature of extended families, clans and kinship networks common to tribal life, leaving tremendous incongruity between the tribe's social and informal political system and its economic organization. From the earliest encounter with western society, little was understood about this system. Consequently, it was not taken into consideration in federal programs and policies.

Tribal people also continue to maintain a world view that incorporates specific cultural beliefs and norms. This includes the belief that all things are related and interconnected; the entire world is alive and humans are not superior but an equal form of life; planning must consider the consequences on the seventh generation; sharing and reciprocity today assure that everyone will be taken care of in a time of need; living within the natural environment, not domination over it, is critical; leadership is non-hierarchical; and spirituality has a basis in all aspects of life.

This world view is totally incongruent with most of western thinking, particularly economic thinking. A western economic approach does not regard the world as alive but rather as a machine producing limitless resources which continue to be depleted. The time frame for economic development is very short, not taking into account the consequences of today's actions on the future. Individual accumulation of wealth and inequitable distribution of resources is inherent in western economic thinking.

Native beliefs and aspects of tribal life are making a resurgence today as Native people recognize that western economic and other development strategies not only have very little applicability to their situations, but are

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**NO APPLICABLE WESTERN MODEL EXISTS FOR THE NATURE OF EXTENDED FAMILIES, CLANS, AND KINSHIP NETWORKS COMMON TO TRIBAL LIFE**

based on fundamentally incorrect assumptions and are no longer working in most societies. A new development paradigm, one based on a tribal world view and knowledge, may help not only Native people, but others as well.

### **GENESIS OF A NEW MODEL<sup>19</sup>**

The "Elements of Development" framework grew out of a variety of efforts and sources. One source was our identification of problems which create dependency in reservation economies. Using these as a starting point for reservation development, we have drawn corresponding development processes needed to mitigate the dependency problem. These are shown on the chart on page 13.

These development processes are based on five principles which form our philosophy and guide our work. These principles are:

1. Within each Native community, there are household income generating activities, self-help efforts and other untapped and idle resources that can be mobilized for successful economic development.
2. An empowered Native economy can develop "win-win" partnerships with the surrounding economies; leverage resources; build strong networks for Native development; and enhance existing markets as well as develop new markets based on community knowledge of what people need.
3. Organizational or group activities, modified to generate revenues, can decrease dependency on federal funds and increase the capacity for planning, initiating, managing, and marketing development activities.
4. A diversified local economy decreases the flow of money out of the community, promoting local recirculation of money which enhances continued development.
5. Economic development must start with people. It is about leadership, vision and the right to a dignified livelihood for all people.

First Nations implements these processes and principles through a two-part strategy and six programs. The two part strategy involves working at the reservation level to help implement programs and to uncover systemic barriers to development. The systemic barriers, such as policy, legislation and regulations are addressed at a regional or national level. The six programs address critical areas in reservation development including: hands-on technical assistance; capital formation to support development; research to provide information to support local efforts and policy reform; policy and advocacy at a regional and national level; marketing expertise; and education in economic development.

All of our work is built around model reservation projects that demonstrate the processes and principles in practice. We work or have worked with: microenterprise loan funds and other development finance programs; health organizations; schools (including colleges and universities); housing programs; tribal investment programs; government agencies; forestry and natural resource management; subsistence hunters; food producers; artists and craftspeople. All of this work has led us to the development of the Elements.

## From Dependency to Development

	DEPENDENCE	DEVELOPMENT
1	The Bureau of Indian Affairs dominates reservation life.	Tribal leaders must wrest control and exercise their ability to set priorities and plan for development across the spectrum of reservation concerns.
2	Without real economic development, tribal leaders will never have the material resources to design and implement strategies and programs which they determine will meet community needs.	Strategies for attaining lasting economic development must stimulate economic productivity in a way that demonstrates a diminishing of the dependency cycle.
3	Isolated physically and psychologically, with few extended contacts beyond federal agencies that regulate and administer programs for them, tribes and conventional developers perceive few opportunities, resources, and economic activities: Networking, leveraging, and mobilization skills lie dormant.	Development models must establish the process for learning to creatively recognize untapped resources, networking to increase and innovate opportunities, and negotiating to leverage additional assistance, support and resources.
4	Perceived lack of opportunities compounded by the federal government's "take it or leave it" array of ill-conceived development initiatives leave tribal leaders with no options, and therefore, no experience in analyzing benefits to costs, exploring alternatives, assessing risks and problem-solving. All of these are prerequisite skills for leadership.	The process of developing analytical abilities must be ongoing and integral to the development process, fitted to existing levels of decision-making and incrementally building expertise.
5	The federal agencies' legacy of failure has been projected onto the Indian people so that a "no-win" syndrome permeates the attitudes and actions of the reservation population, contributing to high levels of unemployment, alcohol and substance abuse, and a passive, dependent "welfare mentality."	To develop leaders in this environment, the process must achieve recognizable gains and objectives early on. Accomplishments are extended as people begin to believe in change and succeed again. Development processes must include self-esteem counseling, peer support, and techniques in dysfunctional and addictive behavior modification.
6	An extension of the federal agencies' legacy of failure is a set of policies, regulations, and practices that deny tribes meaningful involvement, or any avenues of redress. This leaves only one course of action — passivity.	Learning to become proactive and build active leadership requires a process of continual self-help. Internally, this includes organizing and re-organizing human resources, legitimizing existing skills, and incorporating indigenous knowledge and etiology. Externally, the process must systematically empower the reservation in all aspects of its relationships with surrounding economies and regional and national interests.
7	Tribes have been trapped by a highly insulated and paternal monolithic system that operates in isolation of other federal and state agencies. The paternalistic bureaucracy overshadows and discourages contacts, communications, and equal partnerships between tribes and the outside world.	Developing indigenous leadership requires a process that reveals the larger picture, exposing common and mutual causes, affiliated and associated interests, and instills a deeper understanding along with a practical utilization of movements, trends, and changes advantageous to Indians.
8	The poor quality of education compounded by inferior sources of information have resulted in a labor pool that lacks the technical skills and infrastructure that would allow the design and creation of alternative economic enterprise models fitted to cultural and community values.	The learning and development process must transfer technical expertise and technology in a manner that provides for the emergence and evolution of culturally appropriate business models that fit extended family, indigenous leadership, and existing societal structures.

# *The Elements of Development Model*

**BALANCE IS A  
NECESSARY  
COMPONENT OF  
NATIVE  
UNDERSTANDING  
OF THE WORLD.**

**DEVELOPMENT  
COMES FROM  
WITHIN. IT  
CANNOT BE  
DONE TO PEOPLE  
OR FOR PEOPLE  
BUT MUST COME  
FROM PEOPLE.**

First Nations' effort to develop impact measurement and assessment tools that incorporate social costs began four years ago as we celebrated a decade of work. Research indicated that the "state of the art" in evaluating economic development programs had little to do with social change, social or environmental costs, or specific cultural differences but rather focused on what could be definitively quantified. While these measurements are valid in a narrow definition of development, they completely ignore other important cultural, personal and spiritual aspects of life, allow little opportunity to incorporate participant's definitions of success and failure, and fail to include all of the costs associated with economic growth.

We also researched the new and emerging types of measurements mentioned in the earlier section. While some of these measurements provided a more holistic structure, we still felt that some elements were missing. The completion of the framework was drawn from our own work and, most importantly, the culture and value systems of the tribes with whom we were working. The "Elements" or Circle of Development framework (shown on Page 15) combines established indicators, contemporary barriers facing tribes, the traditional world view, the processes and principles of development and our own work.

## **BASIC ASSUMPTIONS**

In viewing this framework, it is important to keep in mind some basic assumptions. The first is that this view of development goes beyond economics to focus on the development of a people. Development that focuses

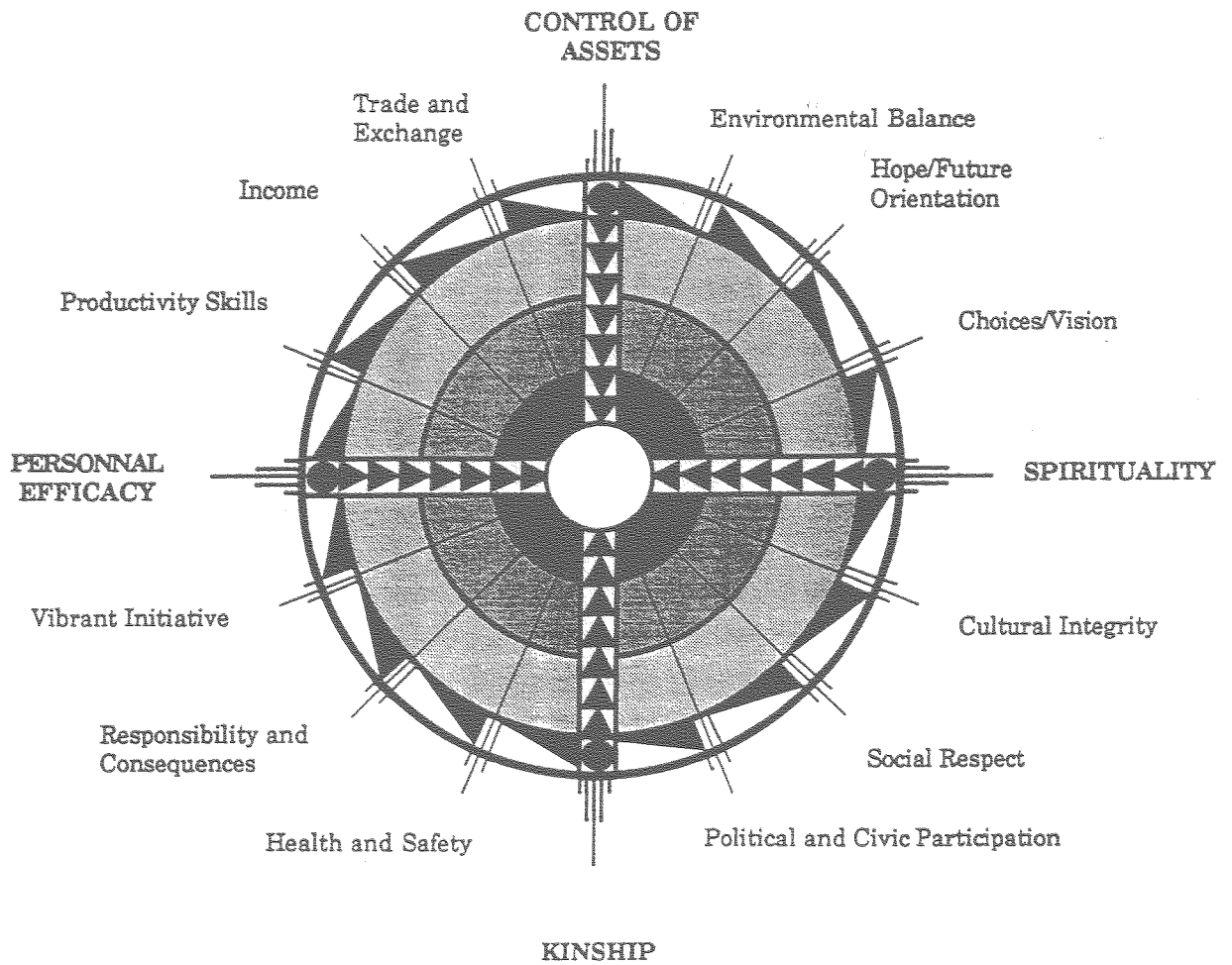
on one quadrant of the circle, say economics, and ignores other aspects of human existence, will never provide the balance necessary to improve the quality of life for all. Balance is a necessary component of Native understanding of the world.





The second assumption is that development comes from within. It cannot be done to people, or for people, but must come *from* people. In First Nations' role as an intermediary, this is a critical understanding. The "Elements" are therefore only a guide, a framework, which can be used by individuals and groups to develop their own measures and indicators of success and accomplishment. A first step in empowerment is recognizing that your values, belief system and traditional knowledge are valid and important.

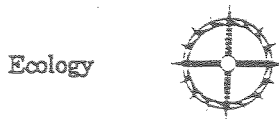
The "Elements of Development," must first be seen in its entirety. The circle is an important symbol in Native American society, demonstrating the interconnection of all things and the balance of life. The circle is useful to demonstrate a holistic model by visually indicating that we cannot look at parts of the whole, but must see the entire picture.

The interior circle, starting from the smallest outward, represents the individual, the project, the tribe or community, and national Native American interests. The circle exists within the Earth's ecology or natural systems—a part of it, not separate from it. The two main axes of the circle represent major significant relationships in development as defined by *Assets, Kinship, Personal Efficacy, and Spirituality*. Within the four quadrants formed are 12 other

# The Elements of Development



- Individual 
- Project 
- Tribe 
- National 



spokes referencing elements in the development process. It is within these 16 elements that goals can be articulated and indicators formulated which reflect the values and priorities of the people.

## ASSETS

Starting with the control of *Assets*, we can view the inherent barriers to reservation or tribal development, as well as traditional mechanisms and potential measurements. Today, tribes and Native American people are seeking control of their assets, their land base, natural resources and financial capital. Without that control, long-term development cannot occur. The principle of control of assets is applicable to any social and economic program for disenfranchised people. If you do not control assets, you do not have the ability to create wealth from them, and your life is always subject to someone else's control.

For individuals, assets can be land, a house, a savings account, an education and job skills, traditional rights to hunt and fish in particular areas, businesses, trust funds and access to credit. For a community, reservation or tribe, assets can be programs, land, indigenous institutions, environmental quality, trust funds, tribal hunting and fishing rights, access to credit, and natural and human resources. At the national level for tribes, assets are trust funds, federal programs, their own indigenous institutions, and tribal sovereignty.

## KINSHIP

In the traditional native system, assets and wealth were distributed through the kinship network. *Kinship* was the basis for circulation of goods and services. Individual accumulation of material goods was not valued in traditional societies; in fact, leadership principles involved sharing your wealth with your family, kinship network and tribe. Western models of distribution and federal programs designed to acculturate

tribes have been superimposed on the traditional kinship systems, deteriorating their effectiveness. But in many tribes and communities, a complex kinship system continues to serve as the basis of tribal life, the creation and circulation of assets, and the method by which generations share the culture and its values.

A barrier to continued and effective use of the kinship systems as a method to create assets includes the Dawes Allotment Act of 1887, which introduced the private property ownership concept to Native peoples. One hundred years later this act continues to wreak havoc on the ability of tribes and individuals to use the land and its resources effectively and protect it for future generations. The government welfare systems, superimposed on a complex and existing system of giving, sharing and reciprocity has facilitated the breakdown of the kinship system.

Today on the reservation, subsistence activities involving barter and trade can best be tracked through the kinship systems. Traditional redistribution mechanisms such as "giveaways" and "potlatches" continue to flourish in extended families. Basic services such as child care, car repair or personal grooming needs are met within the household and extended families. Recognition of these existing kinship systems and their role in an economic redistribution system can be a first step in a development strategy. An example of how this can work is the tribes that are revising the subsistence hunting and fishing codes to use the traditional kinship systems for distribution of resources to the community.

The relationship between control of *Assets* and *Kinship* connects the individual, the community and the tribe to their local resources. Measurements of self-employment can be developed that recognize, for example, a family unit that meets local needs with local resources. Intra- and intertribal trade can be developed to reinforce the larger family of tribal peoples' development.

IT IS WITHIN  
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## PERSONAL EFFICACY

To have a strong community and economy you must have people, or human capital, who have a strong sense of *Personal Efficacy*, a sense of confidence in their own ability. A judgement we often hear about the poverty and lack of economic development on reservations is that the people have no work ethic, they lack a competitive nature and are self-effacing. Traditionally, the value placed on individual achievements and accomplishments was critical to the very existence of the tribe, resulting in a respect for others that was misinterpreted to be self-effacement and non-competitiveness. Native American children were taught from an early age to "think for yourself and act for others." What could be a better starting point for developing entrepreneurs?

What does differ within traditional tribal societies is the *end goal* of personal accomplishments. In western society, individual achievements are typically for the good of the individual. In a tribal sense, individual achievements are valued in terms of their benefit to the extended family and to the tribe. Individual roles and responsibilities are taught by families and defined from an early age. Childraising teachings stress the importance of building confidence, risk taking, innovation and experience. This is necessary because traditional societies are not staid. Rather they continually improve, not for growth but for improved efficiency and effectiveness.

Indicators of improvements in personal efficacy on an individual level can be self-esteem, ability to problem solve, positive outlook, and increased knowledge and skills. On a community level, indicators can be improved tribal leadership, community cooperation, the formation of associations, teamwork, follow-up, and reliability. On a national level, indicators of success can be the sense that "we can do it," that we have pride in our people and in our achievements.

## SPIRITUALITY

Spirituality is the most difficult element to describe. It is from spirituality that you gain your sense of vision, your sense of yourself and your meaning within the community, and within the larger universe. From that vision, you gain an ability to see choices: where do you go, what do you do with your life, does what you do have meaning to you and the larger community? Included within this value system is understanding, tolerance, respect for the earth and all living things, dignity, future orientation, and an ability to see a place for Native people and our contributions within that future. Spirituality is a sense of inner-directedness, a basic value system, a cosmology of sorts. How do you build spirituality into a development framework and, even harder, how do you measure it?

For Native people, spirituality includes a return to, or rebirth of, traditional values and beliefs; a resurgence in ceremonial activities; a sense that "healing" of our souls must take place. On an individual level, indicators and measurements of spirituality can include instilling traditional teachings in the children, learning the language, practicing the values, creating visions for the future, recognizing and maintaining a balance in life. For the community and the tribes, spirituality can be measured by tribal institutions' cultural programs, traditional methods and teachings that both empower and develop people.

## ASSETS AND PERSONAL EFFICACY

Looking at the quadrant framed by *Assets* and *Personal Efficacy* you see the elements of trade and exchange, income and productivity. These elements would most directly equate with conventional economic measures, but would also include the highly active informal sector on reservations, such as informal household and subsistence activities. Measures of employment could include a culturally-specific definition which moves beyond formal wage labor and focuses on providing a dignified livelihood.

HOW DO YOU  
BUILD  
SPIRITUALITY  
INTO A  
DEVELOPMENT  
FRAMEWORK  
AND, EVEN  
HARDER, HOW  
DO YOU  
MEASURE IT?

Trade and exchange could focus on how, and from whom, basic and other needs are being met. If they are not being met locally, then the flow of money is off the reservation and not recirculating locally. The depth and magnitude of the informal sector can be measured for use by microenterprise programs. Measures of the income levels by source of income could detect a lack of savings or investments, in addition to the extent of welfare payments or wage-based employment.

### PERSONAL EFFICACY AND KINSHIP

The quadrant formed by *Personal Efficacy* and *Kinship* includes the elements of vibrant initiative, responsibilities and consequences, and health and safety. Vibrant initiative is entrepreneurship in all facets - not just starting businesses, but improving government, initiating new programs and new activities, or reviving traditional activities. It can include self-confidence, self-esteem, and creativity. For development to occur, people and communities must assume the responsibility and consequences of their actions. For tribal people, responsibility has for too long been in the hands of the federal government. If you had no control, you could not be held responsible or accountable. With control, comes responsibility and the consequences of actions—and accountability to yourself, family and the community. For example, a borrower in a microenterprise loan program recognizing payback responsibilities is significant for a population where a grant and welfare mentality prevail.

Health and safety indicators may seem straightforward but health care is, in most cases, controlled by the federal government. Indicators must reflect local priorities and can be tied to the family or kinship and can demonstrate partnerships with health practitioners. Critical to the development of goals and indicators is information about local health and safety needs as well as patterns of health care and care giving.

### KINSHIP AND SPIRITUALITY

The quadrant formed by *Kinship* and *Spirituality* includes the elements of political and civic participation, social respect, and cultural integrity. This quadrant is symbolized by how people participate to demonstrate empowerment, and how that is perceived by themselves and others. Political and civic participation can be demonstrated by involvement in community activities, such as children's schools or other reservation institutions and government. It can go beyond the reservation to a person's or tribe's involvement with county, state, special interest or federal groups. Social respect can be represented by the capacity to work with banks and other mainstream institutions in order to develop better policies and relationships with Native Americans. Another example of social respect could be improved media presentation of a balanced view of reservation and tribe life. Cultural integrity can be demonstrated through traditional activities and institutions, including teaching the language and culture to new generations.

### SPIRITUALITY AND ASSETS

The final quadrant formed by *Spirituality* and *Assets* can be symbolized as the future. It includes choices and options, hope and future orientation or vision, and ecological balance or environmental management. Choices and options are critical for Native people. A simple indicator is the perception of Native people of whether they feel they have choices and options, and then to list the possibilities. Native people have a world view that stresses considering today's actions on future generations. Vision, hope and a future orientation has been affected by years of outside control. Yet many tribes are developing vision statements with their people to guide their development. An indicator could be the presence of such a statement or philosophy. At a personal level, indicators can be plans for the future, an education, career goals. The ecological indicators can include such things as water,

air and soil quality, development of better waste management systems, and integrated resource management programs based on traditional practices.

The final and critical conceptual piece of the diagram is that it must operate within the limits of the earth, not separate from it or dominant over it. Therefore the model is shown within the ecology.

The "Elements of Development" is not a staid model but an evolving process. As our work proceeds and we continue to learn, so will the model evolve. To date, we are integrating this model in four areas, including:

- 1) discussion about the model and development process with various Native American groups and individuals;
- 2) use of the Elements to set standards for First Nations' organization and employees;
- 3) development of the process and methods for grant recipients of our new program, the Eagle Staff Fund, to define their own standards and measurements of success; and
- 4) dissemination of our work on an on-going basis to other development practitioners.

Work in the first area has been on-going for three years. As we work with Native American groups and individuals throughout the country, we present the Elements as a way to stimulate discussion and thinking, not only about the model itself but how Native values and strengths can form the basis for development. Through this process, people begin to see the possibilities, develop options and conceptualize a different future. This thinking and discussion has had an impact in the work we do with specific groups and in the Native American community more broadly. For example, the concept of control of assets allows people to begin to define assets not by the conventional economic definition, but by what is important and

valuable to them in an individual and a cultural sense. Use of a graphic visual to demonstrate that economics is only one piece of development validates their long-standing cultural understanding of the interconnections and relationships that exist.

This area of operationalizing the Elements models is critical. It continues to stimulate our thinking and learning about what is important to Native people and is reintegrated into our work. By continually sharing the Elements, Native people will innovate, develop new approaches, and adapt what fits in their specific circumstances. In this way, we are facilitating a process by which Native knowledge can be integrated into development. We do not expect that the Elements is the one and only paradigm, model, or framework that represents a Native world view. But perhaps it can stimulate development of many ideas and approaches.

The second area in which we are operationalizing the Elements is within First Nations. We feel it is important to apply this model to ourselves as well as to groups with whom we work. Starting in early 1994, a staff working group began a process to develop employee performance standards. Research about other organization's methods and tools left the staff dissatisfied with existing performance measurement systems. This work group also felt that using an outside model would not truly represent the organization nor would it provide ownership of the model or performance evaluation system.

The group felt it was critical to tie the performance standards to First Nations' mission and organizational culture. Hence, they decided to use the Elements of Development. A list of 117 standards were developed and placed within the four quadrants of the circle, linked with the two main axes. This first list was reduced to 43 by eliminating duplications and combining others. A sample set of standards by each axis is presented below.

## CONTROL OF ASSETS

First Nations' assets are its people, financial resources and professional reputation. Effective and efficient control of First Nations' assets will assure our sustainability into the future. Consistent control of assets will accommodate our collective abilities to recognize, manage and comprehend our resources, ultimately facilitating our mission to be a resource for Native people.

### Standards:

- 1) Recognize your work as part of First Nations' capital.
- 2) Know the limitations of resources: our time and resources are valuable.
- 3) Know who does what and utilize those people appropriately and effectively.
- 4) Know how to share your expertise internally and externally.

## KINSHIP

Appreciating a strong internal kinship network is critical to the successful circulation and dissemination of First Nations' assets as resources. The relationship between control of assets and kinship is dependent on the staff's practice of sharing, appreciating, and respecting each other, as well as those external to the organization with whom we work.

### Standards:

- 1) Share and celebrate successes.
- 2) Understand your role, and that of your colleagues.
- 3) View First Nations as a whole, not as individual departments or parts.
- 4) Respect and be courteous to colleagues, and those we work with (staff and board) and for (Native people).

## PERSONAL EFFICACY

Control of assets and kinship are necessary to extend First Nations' resources (people, money, and materials) throughout Indian

Country. To accomplish this, First Nations' colleagues must have confidence and pride in their work, as well as an anticipatory, forward thinking approach to their work. Strong personal efficacy within individuals will promote the overall success of First Nations.

### Standards:

- 1) Anticipation and follow-up: foresight, acting as opposed to reacting, making things happen without waiting for them to happen.
- 2) Be confident that you are doing the best that you can: select, do not settle.
- 3) Take pride in your work; be reliable; get to know your job on an intimate level.
- 4) Accept criticism as it relates to your performance as opposed to your personality.

## SPIRITUALITY

It is our inherent spirituality which allows us to make choices and decisions and prepare for our future. It is our common understanding that we are privileged to be involved with work helping Native people to become economically self-sufficient. Also intermingled within our culture is the desire to strive for a balance.

### Standards:

- 1) Take a sense of ownership in First Nations, appreciating the need to support the mission while being true to yourself.
- 2) Have a balance in your life; do not bring home problems to work or work problems to your home.
- 3) Appreciate the unique privilege of working for Native people.

The staff group is now working on indicators for these standards, some of which will vary for each person depending on their position, level of responsibility and tasks. Each person will be integrally involved in setting their own indicators of successful

performance as well as the measures of success for the organization.

The staff group held seven meetings to develop the standards. The process of developing the standards is an iterative one which includes:

- establishing a need for a measurement system (in this case for performance);
- defining the goals and objectives of what the group is trying to do;
- brainstorming about the standards;
- distilling the standards and placing them in the appropriate quadrants; and
- developing the indicators for measuring against the standards.

The third area in which we are integrating the “Elements” is a new program initiative, the Eagle Staff Fund. The Fund is a three year grantmaking and technical assistance program designed to fund culturally-relevant and sustainable reservation and tribal development efforts. Grantees will use the framework to develop their own goals and measures of success. This data will provide additional information about the progress of

individual projects. It will also identify where future research and policy efforts may be necessary. The data will also help us further define what our communities’ value—our “cultural DNA” and allow us to work with grantees to develop specific community indicators of socioeconomic well being. The process will be on-going for at least the next three years.

The fourth area is best exemplified by this paper. We seek to broadly disseminate our work on the “Elements” to other development practitioners. To date, articles on the “Elements” have appeared in five development publications. Numerous people have called regarding the “Elements”, either to share their work in this area or to find out more information on implementation. As with the Sustainable Seattle Civic Panel mentioned in the first section, just publishing their list of alternative indicators, changed the dialogue. Through dissemination we hope to contribute to, and change, the dialogue about community development.

## *Implications and Uses*

The modern community development movement has its roots in the early 1960s when the inadequacies of the economic growth model were beginning to be recognized. Since then, community development efforts have proliferated, with significant growth in the 1980s. Is it a coincidence—as economic disparities and social injustice grow—that community development efforts increase to meet this need?

The field of community development is growing—in numbers, in strength, in stature, in recognition, in technical expertise and innovation. The field responds to increasing

unmet needs in our communities and to the economic and social injustice we see and experience. We respond to poverty, to violence, to homelessness, to joblessness, to environmental concerns. We seek to mitigate a lack of health care, child care, education, employment, civil rights and justice. We need look no further than our own communities to recognize that the current economic growth paradigm is not working.

What are we doing, as community development practitioners, to mitigate the effects of these growing needs? Responses range from single issue or strategy-oriented efforts

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such as housing or job training, to multi-disciplinary comprehensive approaches integrating social, economic, political and environmental factors. New and evolving strategies include self-employment programs, making credit accessible to the poor and other marginalized groups, holistic education, sustainable development, integrated resource management, multicultural programs, innovative environmental protection and service programs, and development finance institutions. Some efforts are attempting to meet basic needs, to react to critical issues, or to help people survive, while others are combining basic service programs with more comprehensive development efforts.

Community development efforts define new development paths and build new development models and frameworks which can help us all better address society's problems. However, what are we measuring to whether we are doing a good job? What indicators are we using to demonstrate change, improvement, what works or doesn't work? Are we measuring or trying to measure what our communities value?

Measurements or indicators of impact and change are the catalysts for social change. And community development is about social change. To quote Hazel Henderson, "We measure what we treasure." Measurements are not value-free, but focus on the goals that various societies and communities deem important. What is important to community development? For the most part, community development practitioners measure easily quantifiable indicators and ones that are predominantly economic in nature—houses built, jobs created, incomes increased, businesses started, loans made, people trained or educated, services provided. Although we know these indicators do not show the full picture, we implicitly accept them due to time and funding constraints.

Efforts must be made to develop comprehensive economic and non-economic measurements and indicators that truly reflect local values and needs; otherwise, practi-

tioners are not seeing the whole picture of our communities. As has been the case with the economic growth model, we are responding with inadequate and short term strategies. If we continue to have outside interests define what we measure, we cannot begin to build in what our communities truly value.

## **VALUING MORE THAN ECONOMICS**

Another important aspect to consider is that some community development efforts are informed by the economic growth model and are geared to moving people into the economic mainstream, to be a part of the system from which they have been disenfranchised or marginalized. In that scenario, perhaps the current measurements are adequate to describe progress. I would argue, however, that even if this is the end result of some strategies, that it is inadequate. Communities value more than economics, although they may be most immediately concerned with meeting basic needs. Human beings and the communities in which we live are complex systems and our development strategies and measurements must evolve to address a more holistic view.

One area meriting closer study is the emerging field of self-employment and microenterprise development. Practitioners in the field formed an organization, Association for Enterprise Opportunity, and are pushing for closer examination of their impact. They are seeing real differences in their communities as both a direct and indirect result of their work. They understand that the impact of this strategy goes beyond loans made, clients served, businesses started, and incomes increased, but the indicators to more accurately gauge the change in people have not been available.

The three year Self-Employment Learning Project at the Aspen Institute is attempting to assess the impact of seven community development organizations working in this area. "This study will document and assess the work of these agencies in order to pro-

duce new information and encourage dialogue on the field of self-employment and microenterprise as a poverty alleviation and employment creation strategy.”<sup>20</sup> The indicators used in the study include measuring personal changes as demonstrated through goals and visions, self-confidence, critical thinking, and involvement in community activities, to name a few. This is but one effort to begin to change the development dialogue on new, more comprehensive measurements. First Nations’ Elements of Development is another model.

### WHY DEVELOP NEW INDICATORS?

What are the reasons for developing new and alternative measurements or indicators of what our communities value?

- 1) To involve local community members in the development process through which they can, along with practitioners, gain feedback needed to address problems, needs and to develop new strategies;
- 2) to serve as a catalyst for social change at the local, state, regional, national and international level;
- 3) to define our own indicators based on locally determined values, goals and priorities;
- 4) to better document impact to support continued resources;
- 5) to bring focus to the whole community rather than just pieces of it;
- 6) to better plan for the future; and
- 7) to provide practical and operational tools which can help to define a new development paradigm.

There is no one correct way to measure the impact of development. The indicators used in a particular community, culture or society should be tailor-made by each group to reflect what is important, and the group’s values, goals and priorities. New development paradigms and indicators of social and economic welfare should be based on the

decoded specific patterns, ideals, and goals in very different societies.

I recently had the opportunity to hear a speech given by Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Henry Cisneros. As I sat there listening, I began to realize that he was using the “Elements of Development” terms to describe what was needed in development programs. He was obviously focusing on the HUD area but also talked about the need to recognize the complexity and interrelationships in peoples’ lives and the need for government programs to develop more integrated and comprehensive approaches. In total he mentioned 15 of the 16 elements, using the concept of family in place of kinship and personal initiative in place of efficacy. He did not mention spirituality. Rarely do people recognize spirituality in people’s lives, (especially government officials) let alone in development programs. Spirituality is often confused with religion, and government and religion are, of course, separate. But when it came time for questions after Cisneros’ speech, the first one dealt with spirituality.

Although I already felt that the “Elements” framework had broader implications, my sense was validated. People are concerned about the individual’s commitment to, and involvement with, the family and community, the equitable allocation of resources focused on the family and communities, and in spirituality. The “Elements” are but one vision of how our communities can be conceptualized, as complex, multifaceted groups of people and families trying to improve their quality of life.

### DECODING CULTURAL DNA

Decoding the specific “cultural DNA” is the place to start. This means a communities’ perception and understanding of what is important, as determined by their culture and historical experience. From these goals, indicators of progress can be developed and outcomes measured. This is an evolutionary

process. Our framework may only be a departure point for other communities' unique circumstances, but there is relevance in this framework.

Just considering the two main axes, there are implications for broader use. Michael Sherraden in his book *Assets and the Poor* makes the case for an assets-based welfare policy rather than income maintenance. He uses assets to refer to the stock of wealth in a household, based on savings, investment and asset accumulation. He states, "With assets, people begin to think in the long term and pursue long term goals. In other words, while incomes feed people's stomachs, assets change their heads."<sup>21</sup>

The household or family unit would replace kinship in our framework. Many development practitioners, alternative economic thinkers, and politicians believe the family unit is key to development and improvement in the quality of life. The household or family unit can be a focus for social change; a unit for not just consumption but also production.

The Pulitzer Prize winning journalist, William Raspberry, in a recent *Washington Post* editorial titled "The Power of Spirituality" reports on a community leader who came to the realization that successful programs almost always have a spiritual base. "But it doesn't get mentioned in the surveys and evaluations and requests for funding. There are no blanks on the forms for spirituality—only for technique and resources and credentials.... We don't yet have the scales to weigh the ability some people have to provide the spiritual element."<sup>22</sup> Here is an emerging recognition of the need for a spiritual base, not only in our individual lives, but also in our work and in our communities.

The "Elements" framework also conceptualizes the critical relationship between people, communities and their environment. We are not separate from, but exist within the environment. Our development programs, at

whatever level and with whatever strategy, need to recognize and incorporate this into programs. This is critical to any type of long term sustainability.

The "Elements of Development" are evolving. They are a starting point or departure point for others, stimulating interest and discussion about a more comprehensive view of development which seeks not only to include all people but all living things.

# Footnotes

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