

Cornhusker Economics

COMMUNITY CAPITALS FRAMEWORK AS A MEASURE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Market Report	Year Ago	4 Wks Ago	8/28/15
Livestock and Products,			
Weekly Average			
Nebraska Slaughter Steers, 35-65% Choice, Live Weight.	*	148.00	147.00
Nebraska Feeder Steers, Med. & Large Frame, 550-600 lb.	265.00	275.55	247.40
Nebraska Feeder Steers, Med. & Large Frame 750-800 lb.	223.37	224.88	215.83
Choice Boxed Beef, 600-750 lb. Carcass.	247.75	232.73	243.97
Western Corn Belt Base Hog Price Carcass, Negotiated.	90.46	75.12	71.55
Pork Carcass Cutout, 185 lb. Carcass 51-52% Lean.	100.66	85.67	85.74
Slaughter Lambs, woolled and shorn, 135-165 lb. National.	155.75	156.44	156.09
National Carcass Lamb Cutout FOB.	366.46	352.47	358.76
Crops,			
Daily Spot Prices			
Wheat, No. 1, H.W. Imperial, bu.	5.58	4.35	4.03
Corn, No. 2, Yellow Nebraska City, bu.	3.48	3.48	3.51
Soybeans, No. 1, Yellow Nebraska City, bu.	12.54	9.50	9.01
Grain Sorghum, No.2, Yellow Dorchester, cwt.	5.91	6.18	5.75
Oats, No. 2, Heavy Minneapolis, Mn, bu.	3.85	2.72	2.69
Feed			
Alfalfa, Large Square Bales, Good to Premium, RFV 160-185 Northeast Nebraska, ton.	203.00	195.00	183.00
Alfalfa, Large Rounds, Good Platte Valley, ton.	100.00	85.00	85.00
Grass Hay, Large Rounds, Good Nebraska, ton.	87.50	95.00	87.50
Dried Distillers Grains, 10% Moisture Nebraska Average.	111.00	135.00	142.50
Wet Distillers Grains, 65-70% Moisture Nebraska Average.	38.00	41.00	45.50
* No Market			

Social and economic changes are transforming rural and regional communities, making critical the understanding of the dynamics of community change. Community development practitioners and researchers share the interest in the study and design of policies and programs intended to change rural communities positively. Community Capitals Framework (CCF) has become one of the primary research approaches in community analysis and development. This framework was first developed by Cornelia and Jan Flora (2013) as an alternative strategic planning and measurement approach, and has been used by groups such as the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development, Great Plains IDEA Community Development, Extension across the U.S., NGO's, and also by individual researchers.

The Framework

CCF is an approach to analyze communities and community development efforts from a systems perspective. During Jan and Cornelia Flora's analyses of entrepreneurial communities, they found that the communities that were effective in supporting economic development focused on seven types of capital:

- **Natural capital:** this includes a community's environment, rivers, lakes, forests, wildlife, soil, weather, and natural beauty.

- **Cultural capital:** this includes ethnic festivals, multi-lingual population, traditions, heritage, or a strong work ethic. Cultural capital influences what voices are heard and listened to, which voices have influence in what areas, and how creativity, innovation, and influence emerge and are nurtured.
- **Human capital:** this includes the skills and abilities of residents as well as the capacity to access outside resources and knowledge in order to increase understanding and to identify promising practices (education, health, skills, and youth). Human capital also addresses leadership's ability to "lead across differences," to focus on assets, to be inclusive and participatory, and to be proactive in shaping the future of the community or group.
- **Social capital:** this reflects the connections among people and organizations or the social glue that makes things happen.
 - ◊ **Bonding social capital** refers to those close ties that build community cohesion.
 - ◊ **Bridging social capital** involves weak ties that create and maintain bridges among organizations and communities.
- **Political capital:** this is the ability to influence standards, rules, regulations and their enforcement. It reflects access to power and power brokers, including government officials and leverage with a regional company.
- **Financial capital:** This includes the financial resources available to invest in community capacity building, underwrite businesses development, support civic and social entrepreneurship, and accumulate wealth for future community development.
- **Built capital:** This is the infrastructure that supports the community, including telecommunications, industrial parks, main streets, water and sewer systems, roads, etc. Built capital is often a focus of community development efforts.

CCF focuses mainly on the assets of a community rather than on community needs and deficits. These assets may be unused or they can be invested to generate more assets. Community resources when unused tend to deteriorate, likely leading to a decline of the community unless there is stimulus to change course.

A community capitals approach allows us to view the various elements, resources, and relationships within a community and their contribution to the overall functioning of the community. Once the community capitals are identified, they can be used as a tool for planning for the future. This way community resources can be evaluated and needs can be identified as well as partnerships created to develop lacking community capitals. In addition to identifying the capitals and the role each plays in community economic development separately, this approach also focuses on the interaction among these seven capitals and the subsequent impacts across them. The intended outcomes of investing in the community's various forms of capital are to attain a vital local/regional economy, social well-being, and a healthy ecosystem as seen in Figure 1.

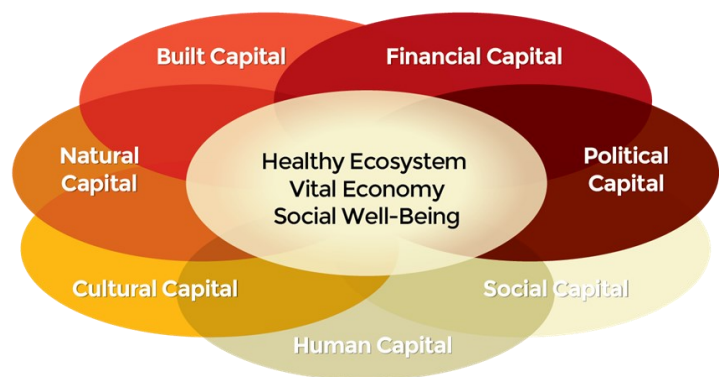


Figure1: Community Capitals Framework.

Applying CCF to Communities

Rural communities, in the United States and elsewhere, invest their community resources in a number of diverse ways to achieve community economic, social, and environmental sustainability. These investments yield diverse impacts and outputs. The research model described in Figure 2 describes the capitals (assets) that are part of the initial community conditions, investments in community change, and the outputs and outcomes of the investments. By analyzing the investments in each of the capitals and the impacts generated by that investment, the framework provides a means by which community researchers and practitioners begin to understand the impact of community development policies/strategies on rural people and

places. A careful description of strategies and outcomes using the Community Capitals Framework provides solid evidence of asset development and re-

veals the interaction among the capitals that can cause an upward spiral of positive community change.

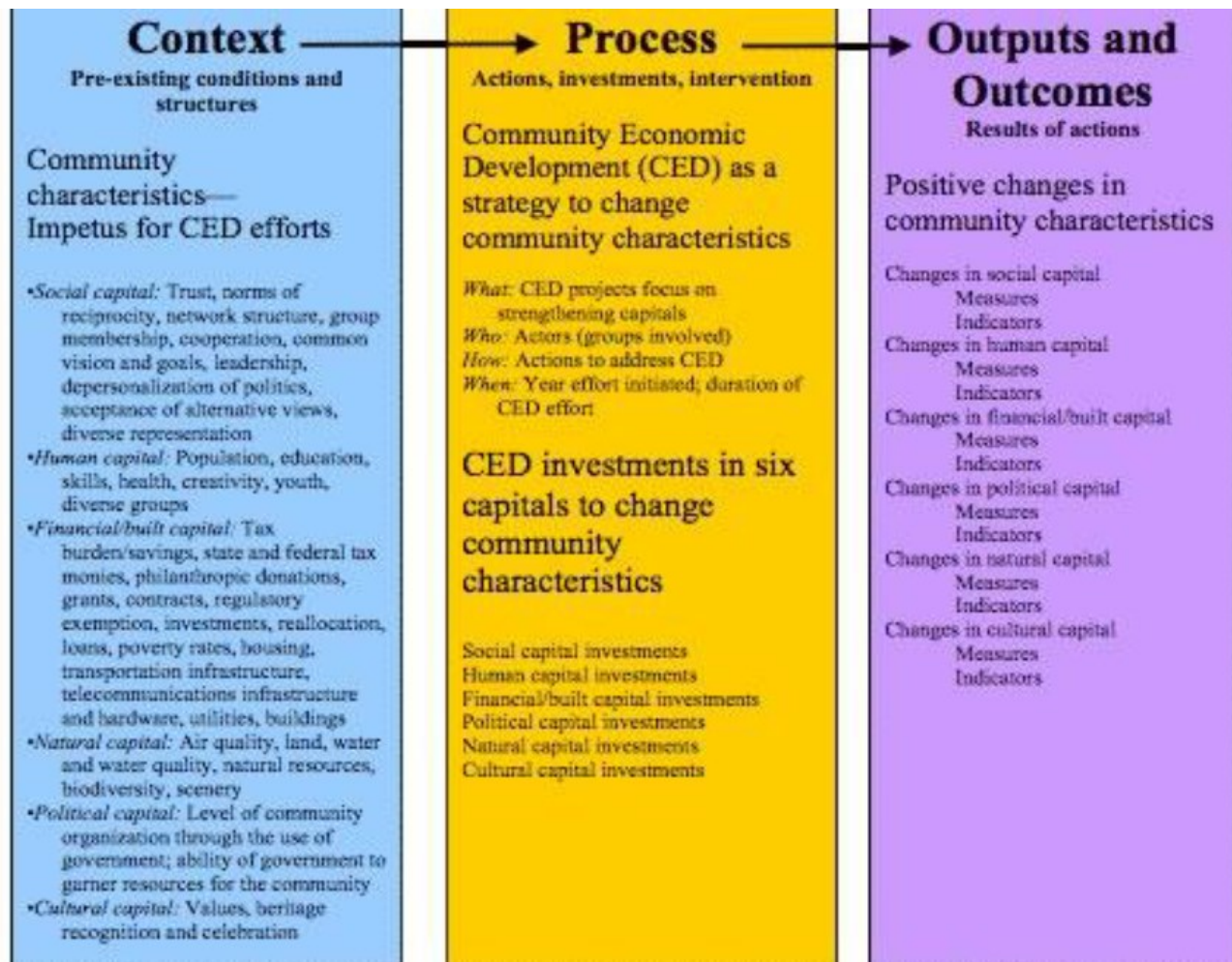


Figure 2: The Research Model

There are a few strategies identified in the literature for applying the Community Capitals Framework to community development efforts. In general they are associated with Appreciative Inquiry. Using Appreciative Inquiry in the planning process helps community members find the best strategies for investing existing assets to generate additional assets within the community. Interviews, focus groups, participant-observation, among other qualitative methods, are used for data collection. Tools frequently used for community analysis, such as asset mapping and, more recently, ripple effect mapping, are also used in combination with CCF.

Literature pertaining to the Community Capitals

Framework tells us that, though communities may not have an adequate supply of all the different capitals, the investment in key resources (human, social, and financial) can positively influence the other capitals (Emery and Flora 2006). Using CCF, community developers and evaluators can determine how an investment in a specific capital might affect other capitals. For example, a program to increase residents' computer skills (investment in human capital) might affect financial capital as residents use their new skills to find better/new jobs. Social capital is also affected as the members of the program develop ties among themselves and with the different groups with which they interact. The program might motivate the integration of repre-

sentatives of different groups of the community, thus expanding cultural capital. The remaining capitals may also be affected by the initial investment.

CCF has proved itself very useful to help community developers and funders better understand the strategic nature of the funded program and the impact on rural communities. Although Community Capitals framework is increasingly used by a number of community researchers and practitioners in their work, there is little empirical work published that details the interaction of the capitals as they may be utilized by community residents (Pigg et al. 2013). More investigation is needed to answer how investment in one capital may be related to others and better used to achieve changes in the community.

REFERENCES:

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- Flora, C.B. and J.L. Flora. 2013. *Rural Communities: Legacy and Change, 4th Edition*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
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