



Social Prosperity

WOOD BUFFALO

2014 PROCESS REPORT

ENABLING SYSTEMS CHANGE IN
WOOD BUFFALO'S SOCIAL PROFIT
SECTOR

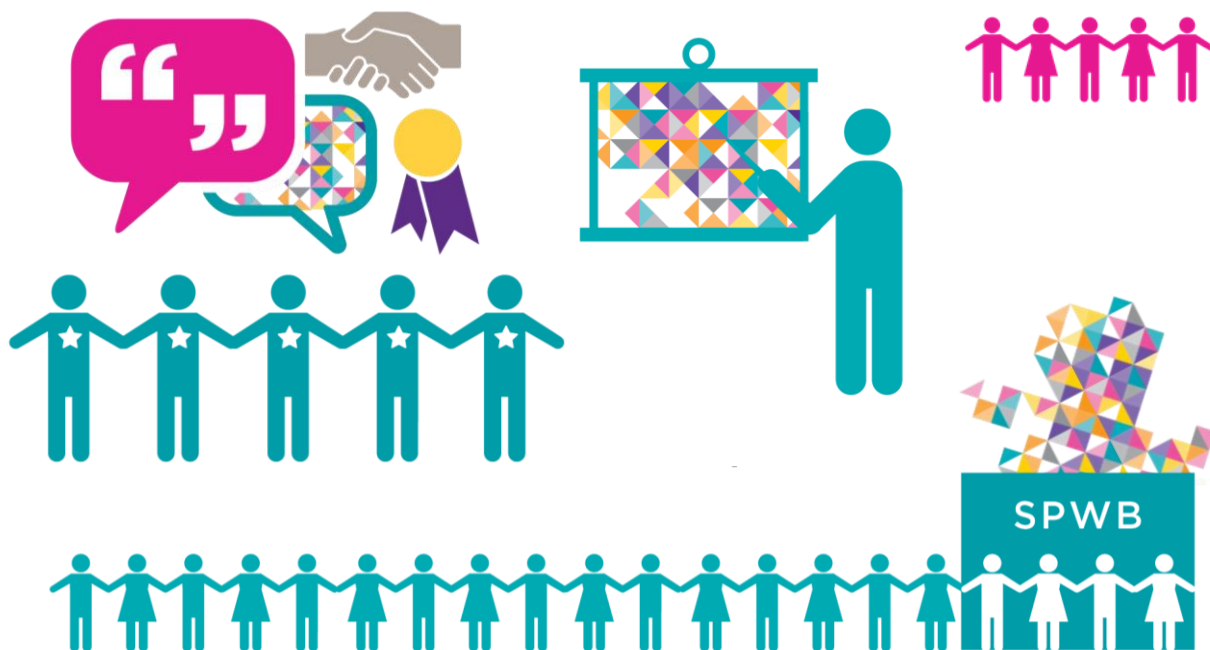


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	3
Activities.....	3
Outcomes.....	4
Challenges and Tensions.....	4
Lessons Learned	4
1.0 Introduction	6
1.1 How Did SPWB Begin?.....	6
1.2 What Did SPWB Do?.....	8
1.3 What Happens Next?	9
1.4 Structure of the Report.....	10
SPWB Timeline	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.0 SBWB Activities and Their Significance	13
2.1 Building Capacity.....	13
Capacity Building Workshops.....	15
Board Governance and Strategic Planning Sessions for Full Boards.....	16
Accreditation Preparation Workshop Series	16
Creating Tools and Resources	17
Strategic Learning Workshops.....	18
2.2 Cultivating Social Innovation.....	18
Incorporating Social Innovation Theories into the SPWB Process	19
Teaching and Applying Social Innovation Tools and Concepts.....	20
Researching Social Innovation in Practice.....	21
2.3 Enabling Collective Impact	21
Modelling Collaboration and Partnership.....	22
“Look into Wood Buffalo” Community Wellbeing Survey Collaboration.....	23
Teaching Collective Impact.....	23
Collective Impact Workshop Series for Youth-Related Issues.....	24
2.4 Stewarding the SPWB Process.....	25
Participating in Shared Learning.....	25
Modeling Shared Leadership.....	26
Building Relationships.....	32
Ongoing Communication.....	33
Designing Strategies to Meet Community Needs.....	33
Responding to Emergence.....	34
Convening Conversations.....	35

Reflecting Back	35
Conducting Developmental Evaluation	36
3.0 Outcomes of the SPWB Process	39
3.1 Increased Organizational Capacity	39
3.2 Enhanced Skills and Knowledge	40
3.3 Elevated Profile of the Social Profit Sector.....	40
3.4 Stronger Relationships and Networks	41
3.5 Increased Collaboration	42
3.6 Stronger Collective Voice.....	43
3.7 Space for New Conversations.....	44
3.8 Expanded Systems-Level Thinking.....	45
4.0 Challenges and Tensions.....	47
4.1 Engaging Stakeholders	47
4.2 Ensuring Adequate Understanding of the SPWB Process.....	49
4.3 Building Trust	50
4.4 Balancing Dialogue and Action.....	51
4.5 Having a Backbone Team Located Outside the Community.....	52
4.6 Navigating Institutional Cultures	53
4.7 Defining Roles and Responsibilities.....	54
4.8 Negotiating Politics and Unspoken Agendas.....	55
5.0 Lessons Learned	56
5.1 The Importance of Having Dedicated Resources to Support Systems Change..	56
5.2 The Importance of Relationship Building.....	57
5.3 The Importance of Trusting the Process	58
5.4 The Value of Systems Thinking	59
5.5 The Value of Documenting the Journey.....	60
6.0 Conclusion	61
Appendix A: SPWB Reports	63
Appendix B: SPWB Tools and Resources	68

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2011, Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo (SPWB) began facilitating a process to build resilience in Wood Buffalo's social profit sector in order to increase its capacity to address complex social problems and enhance quality of life in the region. This report shares the highlights of the SPWB process. It summarizes SPWB's activities, presents its most important outcomes, considers challenges and tensions, and discusses what we learned along the way. In telling the SPWB story, we hope to contribute to the momentum generated by SPWB's work as the process transitions to a new phase in Wood Buffalo. We also hope that reflecting on what has happened so far will help others apply the learning from the SPWB process as they build capacity, enable social innovation, and support collective impact in their own communities.

ACTIVITIES

Between 2011 and 2014, SPWB's work involved four primary streams of activity:



1. **Building Capacity:** capacity building workshops, board governance and strategic planning sessions for full boards, accreditation preparation workshop series, creating tools and resources, strategic learning workshops.
2. **Cultivating Social Innovation:** incorporating social innovation theories into the SPWB process, teaching and applying social innovation tools and concepts, researching social innovation in practice.
3. **Enabling Collective Impact:** modelling collaboration and partnership, "Look into Wood Buffalo" Community Wellbeing Survey collaboration, teaching collective impact, collective impact workshop series for youth-related issues.
4. **Stewarding the SPWB Process:** participating in shared learning, modelling shared leadership, building relationships, ongoing communication, designing strategies to meet community needs, responding to emergence, convening conversations, reflecting back, conducting developmental evaluation.

OUTCOMES

Outcomes generated by the SPWB process include increased capacity, confidence, and collaboration in the social profit sector, as well as the beginning of systems-level changes in Wood Buffalo. Some of the most important outcomes of the SPWB process include:

- 1 Increased Organizational Capacity
- 2 Enhanced Skills and Knowledge
- 3 Elevated Profile of the Social Profit Sector
- 4 Stronger Relationships and Networks
- 5 Increased Collaboration
- 6 Stronger Collective Voice
- 7 Space for New Conversations
- 8 Expanded Systems-Level Thinking



CHALLENGES AND TENSIONS

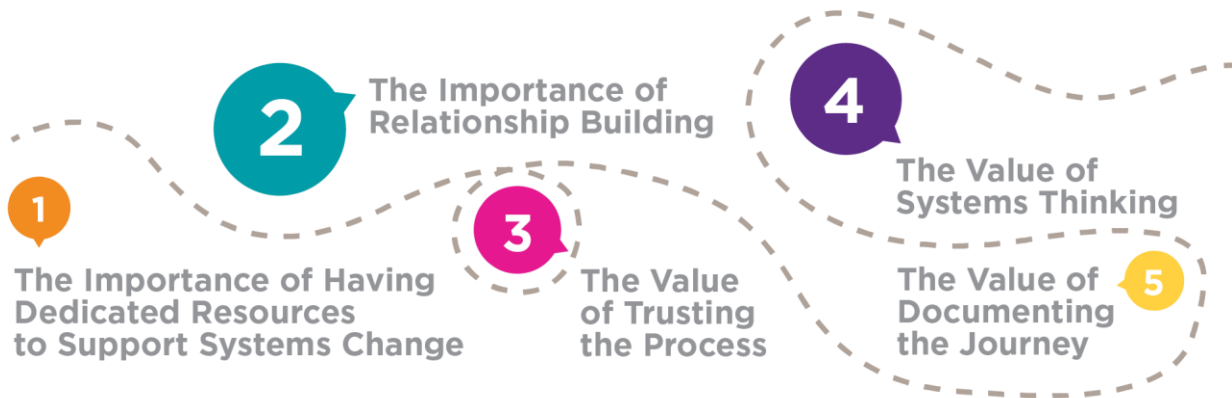
As a multi-stakeholder collaboration with a bold vision for change, the SPWB process also encountered challenges and tensions along the way. These challenges and tensions involved:

- 1 Engaging Stakeholders
- 2 Ensuring Adequate Understanding of the Process
- 3 Building Trust
- 4 Balancing Dialogue and Action
- 5 Having a Backbone Team Located Outside the Community
- 6 Navigating Institutional Cultures
- 7 Defining Roles and Responsibilities
- 8 Negotiating Politics and Unspoken Agendas



LESSONS LEARNED

SPWB inspired new insights about collaboration and what it means to support social change processes. Central learnings emerging from SPWB's work include:



1.0 INTRODUCTION

Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo (SPWB) is a community-driven collaborative process designed to build capacity and enable social innovation in Wood Buffalo's social profit sector¹. SPWB is a partnership between the Suncor Energy Foundation, the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, social profit agencies in Wood Buffalo, and the University of Waterloo. Since 2011, the SPWB process has strengthened social profit organizations and networks, introduced new ideas about how to do things differently, and created opportunities to explore collective impact.

This report presents the story of SPWB between its inception and the fall of 2014. It details what has been done, what the most important outcomes have been, what has been challenging, and what has been learned along the way. Although this is the final report that will be generated about SPWB in its current form, the past five years are only the beginning of a longer-term process that is building a culture of social innovation in Wood Buffalo. As steering committee member and Executive Director of Some Other Solutions Bonnah Carey explains, "You never know what seeds have fallen that have been planted by SPWB. You might not know for years."

In presenting this report at this point in the process, we hope to capture what has been achieved so far and share what has been learned with the community leaders who will carry the SPWB process forward past April 2015. We also hope this report will provide valuable insights for other communities engaging in similar social change processes.

1.1 HOW DID SPWB BEGIN?

"I have always thought this community is unique in its size, its ability to be creative, to bring people in from all over the world. We don't have to do things the way they've always been done, and we can't afford to. To address complex problems in a new way, we need to be willing to think differently. Now is the time to bring people together to try to address systemic issues." – Cathy Glover, Suncor Energy Foundation; SPWB Steering Committee Member

The inspiration for SPWB began with the Suncor Energy Foundation's (SEF) decision to change the way they invest in communities. As part of their tenth anniversary celebrations, SEF took stock of the contributions they had made in their home community of Wood Buffalo, Alberta, realizing that although they had invested

¹ The term "social profit sector" will be used throughout this report to refer to charities and nonprofit organizations. This new terminology has been widely adopted in Wood Buffalo and reflects a shared identity centered around the purpose and value of the sector.

nearly 100 million dollars in local charities and nonprofits over a ten year period, they had not seen significant improvements to the community's most pressing social issues. Wanting to move the needle to increase quality of life outcomes for Wood Buffalo residents, SEF decided to try a new approach informed by emerging theories of social innovation and shifting understandings of the role of corporate philanthropy. The book *Getting to Maybe*², which describes what philanthropic foundations can do to support social innovation, became what Cathy Glover, SEF



Director of Community Investments, calls their new “playbook.”

To enable social innovation in Wood Buffalo, SEF recognized the need to take a more active role in building community, to become an engaged funder and a full partner in the work. At the same time, conditions in Wood Buffalo's social profit sector primed the ground for an intervention that would build the capacity of community organizations. Facing extremely high turnover, difficulty recruiting qualified staff, and challenges obtaining sustainable funding, social profit organizations encountered multiple barriers to mission achievement.

Seeing the community as a system in which charities and nonprofits provide essential services, SEF identified nonprofit capacity as an area of high leverage for increasing quality of life in the region. Successful attempts to apply their new learning, such as working with the United Way of Fort McMurray to create the Redpoll Centre, a shared space for social profit organizations, helped SEF explore how they could begin to do things differently.

When SEF approached the University of Waterloo's Faculty of Arts, which at the time housed Social Innovation Generation, home to thought-leaders working to understand and cultivate social innovation in Canada, former Dean of Arts Professor Ken Coates³ saw the opportunity for a generative partnership. The Faculty of Arts was looking to expand its national presence and impact, and recognized the

² Westley, F., Zimmerman, B., & Patton, M. (2007). *Getting to Maybe: How the World is Changed*. Toronto: Vintage Canada.

³ Dr. Ken Coates is now the Canada Research Chair in Regional Innovation at the University of Saskatchewan. Upon his departure, the current Dean of Arts Dr. Douglas Peers took on the role of supervising the Director of the SPWB project at the University of Waterloo.

potential for a collaboration with Wood Buffalo to connect two of Canada's leading economic drivers in the technological and resource sectors, enabling them to learn from and strengthen one another by working together to build community.

After spending several months developing a shared vision for the work, the Suncor Energy Foundation, Tamarack, An Institute for Community Engagement⁴, community stakeholders in Wood Buffalo, and the University of Waterloo began to design the process that became SPWB. Intended to build capacity in the social profit sector, the project had the ultimate goal of increasing quality of life outcomes for Wood Buffalo residents.

1.2 WHAT DID SPWB DO?

SPWB is a social change process that is shifting culture in Wood Buffalo, creating an environment in which the social profit sector is better positioned to enhance quality of life throughout the region. To enable these systems-level changes, SPWB's activities focused on building capacity, cultivating social innovation, fostering collective impact, and stewarding the process (see section 2).



As a systems-level intervention, SPWB developed new networks and relationships within the social profit sector, facilitated skill-building opportunities for social profit leaders and staff, and convened conversations to spark new ways of thinking about and acting on community issues. This involved continually checking in with stakeholders through feedback events, surveys, interviews, and informal

⁴ Paul Born, Executive Director of Tamarack, An Institute for Community Engagement, helped design SPWB's first community conversation in February 2011 and established the Action Learning Team process.

conversations to ensure that SPWB's strategies and activities were meeting community needs.

A steering committee composed of leaders from Wood Buffalo and Waterloo provided guidance and community context to support the direction of the work. The SPWB project team, based at the University of Waterloo and in Wood Buffalo, provided backbone support to SPWB's activities, conducting research, convening partners, designing strategies, and documenting the process (more about SPWB's shared leadership model is explored in section 2.4). The SPWB process was also an opportunity for SEF to participate in social change work in a new way, acting as an engaged partner by sitting on the steering committee and seconding a member of their staff to the role of Project Manager in Wood Buffalo.

1.3 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

SPWB is currently undergoing a transition as the formal involvement of the University of Waterloo comes to an end in April 2015. In anticipation of this change, the SPWB project team, steering committee, and the Suncor Energy Foundation are working together to ensure that the elements of the SPWB process that were most valued by the community continue to be fostered in Wood Buffalo.

Since 2011, SPWB has contributed to increasing organizational capacity, enhancing skills and knowledge, elevating the profile of the social profit sector, building stronger relationships and networks, increasing collaboration, developing a stronger collective voice, creating space for new conversations, and expanding systems-level thinking (see section 3). While many of these outcomes represent significant cultural shifts within the community, they will require ongoing work to be sustained. Community feedback events held in June 2014 as well as ongoing conversations with key stakeholders suggest that the sustainability of SPWB's work is top of mind for social profit and other community leaders who have witnessed the benefits of the SPWB process over the past five years.

The Suncor Energy Foundation along with the SPWB steering committee and project team are committed to seeing the SPWB process continue. As such, the leadership of SPWB activities including the Heart of Wood Buffalo Leadership Awards, the Accreditation Preparation Workshop Series, the Capacity Assessment Survey, and the "Look into Wood Buffalo" Community Wellbeing Survey have been or will be transitioned to local organizations including FuseSocial and the United Way of Fort McMurray. Other aspects of SPWB's work such as collective impact for youth-related issues and building a stronger collective voice will be sustained by collaborations of social profit organizations and by the ongoing efforts of the Suncor Energy Foundation and their team.

Social change takes time, and fostering a culture of social innovation, collaboration, and increased capacity is a long-term endeavor that requires sustained attention to continue moving forward. This report represents a milestone in this journey, a point in time to reflect on what we've done, to celebrate our accomplishments, and to consider what we've learned by engaging in the SPWB process.



1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

This report presents the SPWB journey up to the fall of 2014. It is organized into the following sections:

2.0 SPWB Activities and Their Significance. This section explores what SPWB has done in Wood Buffalo since 2011, discussing central streams of activity including capacity building, social innovation, collective impact, and stewarding the process.

3.0 SPWB Outcomes. Section 3 describes the key outcomes of the SPWB process so far.

4.0 SPWB Challenges and Tensions. This section presents an overview of some of the challenges and tensions faced by SPWB.

5.0 Lessons Learned. Section 5 details the most important learnings from the SPWB process as described by the community and the project team.

6.0 Conclusion. The conclusion summarizes the main findings presented in the report, explores how SPWB's work will be sustained moving forward, and considers how SPWB could be a model for other communities.

Appendix A: Articles and Reports. Appendix A presents an annotated bibliography of all reports generated by the SPWB project team and stakeholders between 2011 and 2014.

Appendix B: Tools and Resources. Appendix B presents an annotated bibliography of tools and resources created by the SPWB project team between 2011 and 2014.

SPWB Timeline

Since 2011, SPWB has been working to build capacity, develop a culture of social innovation, and enable collective impact in Wood Buffalo's social profit sector. Alongside these three streams of activity, the project team and steering committee have been actively stewarding the SPWB process by providing backbone support to the initiative.

INITIATIVES



EVENTS



STEWARDED THE PROCESS: MILESTONES



STEWARDED THE PROCESS: ONGOING ACTIVITIES

NOTES:

- 5 Action Learning Teams met a total of 29 times to explore themes including Capacity Building, Social Planning, Harnessing Great Ideas, Shared Space, and Arts and Culture.
- The Capacity Assessment Survey was also conducted in 2013 and 2014.
- This pilot project considered how Volunteer Wood Buffalo, Nonprofit Sector Link Wood Buffalo, and Leadership Wood Buffalo could collaborate to increase their collective technological capacity.
- In January 2012, SPWB hosted a shared space and services visioning session for the social profit sector. Following this, SPWB project Manager Kim Nordbye participated in a committee to inform the development of the social profit shared space at MacDonald Island Park.
- SPWB Project Manager Kim Nordbye provided project management support during the merger of Volunteer Wood Buffalo, Nonprofit Sector Link Wood Buffalo, and Leadership Wood Buffalo.
- A collaborative initiative to obtain a baseline on quality of life indicators in Wood Buffalo.
- Held in February 2011, this event brought together 75 community leaders to identify issues and priorities for action.
- The Heart of Wood Buffalo Awards have become an annual event organized by a collaboration of social profit organizations.
- Capacity building workshops included: continuous improvement, board governance, transformational leadership, branding, strategic planning, 2012 June Learning Conference, board governance and strategic planning for full boards.
- The Accreditation Preparation Workshop Series was transitioned to Nonprofit Sector Link Wood Buffalo (now FuseSocial) for a second series held in 2013-2014.
- Strategic learning workshops included: 2013 Capacity Assessment Results and Strategic Learning Workshop, Strategic Learning for Greater Impact.
- These events sought feedback from the SPWB steering committee and community stakeholders regarding experiences with the SPWB process, outcomes observed in the community, and the sustainability of the work.
- See section 2.4 for a diagram of the SPWB Theory of Change.

2.0 SBWB ACTIVITIES AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

“SPWB came down to different people from different sectors working together to build quality of life by using social innovation and collective impact. We did it by building the capacity of the sector, giving them tools and resources, and strengthening their networks. It really gave people the space to think and to change, to be comfortable and confident.” – Kim Nordbye, Suncor Energy Foundation; Former SPWB Project Manager; SPWB Steering Committee Member

SPWB convened a wide range of workshops, learning conferences, conversations, and collaborative processes between its inaugural event in February 2011 and the fall of 2014. These diverse activities can be divided into four central streams:



2.1 BUILDING CAPACITY

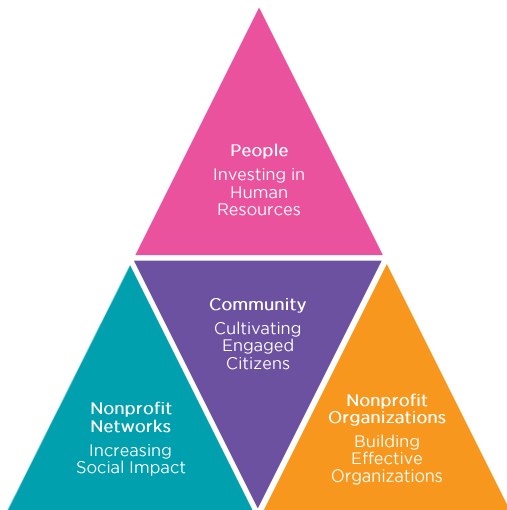
“You don’t just wake up in the middle of the night with a genius idea...Lasting social change is built on having your house in order. You have to be attending to some of the basics and the foundation before you build a skyscraper. If you’re always in crisis because you have all kinds of leaks and cracks in your basement, it’s hard to be innovative.” – Cathy Brothers, Capacity Canada; SPWB Steering Committee Member

Early on in the SPWB process, the Suncor Energy Foundation identified the social profit sector as a key leverage point for enhancing quality of life in Wood Buffalo. There are approximately 185 social profit organizations in Wood Buffalo that provide essential services including social supports, services for newcomers, arts and culture opportunities, recreation and leisure programs, health care services, and resources for children and families⁵.

⁵ Research to identify social profit organizations in Wood Buffalo conducted by FuseSocial.



At SPWB’s inaugural Community Conversation in February 2011, 75 community leaders came together to discuss priority issues, collectively identifying capacity building for the social profit sector as a crucial area of focus. Following this, Action Learning Teams composed of community leaders from Wood Buffalo and Waterloo met monthly to discuss five central themes including Arts and Culture, Capacity Building, Shared Space, Social Planning, and Harnessing Great Ideas. The capacity



building strategies identified during the Action Learning Team process were distilled into the Framework for Building Prosperous Communities, which was first shared with the community as a draft to review in January 2012 and then as a final version in June 2013.⁶ As a result of the Action Learning Team process, building the capacity of the social profit sector became a central component of SPWB’s ongoing activities.

Since 2011, SPWB has engaged nearly 500 social profit leaders, staff, board members, and other community leaders in capacity building activities. These activities were designed to build foundational skills in social profit organizations to increase their resilience in the face of high staff turnover and other disruptions, strengthen their

⁶ See appendix B for more information about the Framework for Building Prosperous Communities.

operations to enable greater mission achievement, enhance their ability to respond to emerging community needs, and prepare them to contribute to collaborations on priority issues. In providing opportunities for shared learning, SPWB’s capacity building workshops also acted as a venue for increased networking and trust-building among social profit organizations (see section 3.4).

SPWB’s capacity building activities included:

 **Capacity Building Workshops**

 **Accreditation Preparation Workshop Series**

 **Strategic Learning Workshops**

 **Board Governance and Strategic Planning Sessions for Full Boards**

 **Creating Tools and Resources**



Capacity Building Workshops

In 2011 and 2012, SPWB offered a series of capacity building workshops designed to build foundational skills in social profit organizations. These workshops focused on topics including continuous improvement, board governance, transformational leadership, branding, technology planning, strategic planning, and social innovation.



Workshops were offered to social profit sector leaders and staff free of charge in order to eliminate financial barriers to participation. SPWB also made an effort to be inclusive, inviting leaders from established and emerging social profit organizations from a range of sub-sectors including social services organizations, arts and culture, sports and recreation, and faith-based groups.

SPWB’s capacity building workshops were facilitated by experts in social profit operations including Cathy Brothers, Executive Director in Residence at Capacity Canada, Paul Born, Executive Director of Tamarack, An Institute for Community Engagement, and facilitator Brock Hart, Chief Executive Officer of Overlap Associates.

Board Governance and Strategic Planning Sessions for Full Boards

“A lot of organizations rely on volunteers who are keen and want to participate, but don’t necessarily have a lot of background in what boards do. SPWB really helped to define the role of the board.” – Chris Langmead, President of the Board of Directors, Noralta Skating Club

In 2012 and 2013, SPWB partnered with Capacity Canada (formerly Capacity Waterloo Region) to offer 12 board governance and strategic planning sessions for full boards. Facilitated by Executive Director in Residence Cathy Brothers, these sessions provided an opportunity for boards to think strategically about the future of their organizations and to learn more about governance in the social profit sector.

Accreditation Preparation Workshop Series

“It’s not even about getting the accreditation, it’s about having goals to work toward and understanding what the best organizations have in place.” – Social Profit Sector Executive Director

In 2012, SPWB began to see the limitations⁷ of offering one-off capacity building workshops and started looking for a more strategic way to develop operational excellence among social profit organizations. At the same time, Imagine Canada was launching its new Standards Program, which offers accreditation to charities and nonprofits that can demonstrate compliance to 72 foundational standards in the areas of board governance, financial accountability and transparency, fundraising, staff management, and volunteer involvement.

SPWB steering committee member and Executive Director in Residence at Capacity Canada Cathy Brothers suggested that the process of obtaining accreditation is one of the best ways to build capacity. As such, SPWB created a workshop series in 2012-2013 which offered coaching and peer mentoring to nine social profit organizations as they prepared their standards applications. The workshop series involved five day-long workshops facilitated by Cathy Brothers and attended by Imagine Canada staff, who answered questions and provided guidance regarding the application process. The workshops also included a significant peer learning component, with executive directors and board members working together to develop and share their policies and procedures.

⁷ Participants experienced difficulties applying the learning from one-off capacity building workshops to the daily work of their organizations.

Participants noted that whether or not their organizations applied for accreditation following the workshop series, the process itself built the capacity of their organizations by helping them to establish a more robust organizational infrastructure. Attending the workshop series with their peers also helped to establish a community of practice around capacity-building in the sector, promoting increased sharing and collaboration among organizations.

In 2013, the SPWB Accreditation Preparation Workshop Series was facilitated by Nonprofit Sector Link Wood Buffalo, and plans are in the works for FuseSocial to continue convening the series in 2014-2015.

Creating Tools and Resources

The SPWB project team also created tools and resources designed to build capacity in the social profit sector.⁸ These tools included the [Framework for Building Prosperous Communities](#), a compendium of strategies developed by the SPWB Action Learning Teams to build the capacity of social profit leaders, organizations, networks, and the community as a whole. The [Social Prosperity Toolkit](#) accompanied the Framework, providing an online database of tools and resources designed to build social profit capacity and spark community innovation.



As part of the SPWB Accreditation Preparation Workshop Series, the project team also developed an [Accreditation Preparation Workbook](#) to help nonprofit and charitable organizations prepare to apply for accreditation through Imagine Canada's Standards Program. The Workbook is organized into five sections corresponding to the five areas of the standards, with each section including explanations of the standards as well as tools and resources to assist organizations to come into compliance⁹.

In 2013, SPWB created a [Guide to Social Prosperity Tools](#) which presented an overview of the tools and techniques that had been introduced in over 20 previous learning events and workshops. The Guide to Social Prosperity Tools was intended to help individuals, organizations, and social profit networks apply the learning from SPWB events.

⁸ See Appendix B for a full description of all SPWB tools and resources.

⁹ Although the SPWB Accreditation Preparation Workbook is no longer available, Imagine Canada incorporated its explanations of the standards into their online resource, Sector Source, so that charities and nonprofits across Canada could benefit from the work done by SPWB.

Strategic Learning Workshops

In 2013 and 2014, SPWB continued to offer capacity building opportunities for social profit organizations in the form of strategic learning workshops. In November 2013, SPWB explored the results from the 2013 Capacity Assessment Survey, comparing them to the data collected in 2012. It also considered how the results of the Capacity Assessment Survey can be used to develop bold strategies for the social profit sector.



An additional workshop in June 2014 facilitated by Tanya Darisi, Director of The O'Halloran Group, explored how to incorporate learning into the planning cycle by using an Emergent Learning Table¹⁰ to translate insights into actions.

2.2 CULTIVATING SOCIAL INNOVATION¹¹

“Social prosperity has been introduced to Wood Buffalo at a crucial point in the history of our community. SPWB as a process allowed our community to start developing the type of culture which would enable new ways through which we could think and act. Our community is better positioned to address challenges in the years that come. It is a process that will help the community to become a sustainable community.” – Manny Makia, FuseSocial; SPWB Steering Committee Member

Finding ways to cultivate social innovation, particularly in the social profit sector, was always at the heart of the SPWB process. Inspired by *Getting to Maybe*, the Suncor

¹⁰ Emergent learning table adapted from Fourth Quadrant Partners, 2012.

<http://www.4qpartners.com/Tools.html>

¹¹ Post-Doctoral Fellow Dr. Katharine McGowan's research will explore SPWB's contribution to the theory and practice of social innovation in greater depth. This research will be available in the winter of 2014-2015.

Energy Foundation wanted to support a process that would strengthen an emerging culture of innovation in the Wood Buffalo region, enabling the community to address complex social issues in new ways in order to improve wellbeing for its residents.

SPWB fostered a culture of social innovation in Wood Buffalo by:

1

Incorporating Social Innovation Theories into the SPWB Process

2

Teaching and Applying Social Innovation Tools and Concepts

3

Researching Social Innovation in Practice



Incorporating Social Innovation Theories into the SPWB Process

Emerging understandings of how social innovation can be intentionally cultivated were embedded in the SPWB process. With the leadership of Suncor Energy Foundation staff, researchers from the University of Waterloo, and shared learning on behalf of the project team and steering committee, SPWB was able to embody the following aspects of social innovation practice as recommended in *Getting to Maybe*:¹²

- Cultivating a deep understanding of systems dynamics when designing strategies
- Establishing trust with a diverse group of collaborators
- Engaging unusual suspects
- Practicing adaptive leadership
- Being willing to fail
- Continually reflecting as a form of action
- Negotiating the tension between design and emergence

¹² See Westley, F., Zimmerman, B., & Patton, M. (2007). *Getting to Maybe: How the World is Changed*. Toronto: Vintage Canada. Dr. Katharine McGowan's research will explore how SPWB applied the concepts discussed in *Getting to Maybe* in greater depth.

Teaching and Applying Social Innovation Tools and Concepts

“To me social innovation means looking beyond the boundaries. Beyond the boundaries of who can be involved, what should be done, who can be connected locally, nationally, internationally. Being a risk-taker. Taking a risk is a big part of it because it shows you how to do things differently.” – Heather Evasiuk, Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo; SPWB Steering Committee Member

Since 2011, SPWB has offered a variety of venues for community leaders in Wood Buffalo to learn about social innovation concepts and practices, convening workshops on the topic and creating resources to share tools and assist in applying the learning.



In 2012-2013, SPWB engaged researchers from Social Innovation Generation at the University of Waterloo to lead a workshop series intended to deepen knowledge of the dynamics of social innovation and to allow participants to practice using social innovation tools to explore community issues. Designed to promote learning and to

build community capacity to address complex social problems, these four workshops explored social innovation and resilience, social innovation and youth, social finance, and cultural diversity and social innovation. Throughout the workshop series, social innovation tools, resources, and new theories were presented and applied.

As part of SPWB’s efforts to foster a culture of social innovation in Wood Buffalo, the SPWB project team also frequently used social innovation tools like systems mapping, the iceberg model, and design thinking in their workshops, design sessions, and community conversations. In early 2013, the project team created the Guide to Social Prosperity Tools to promote the use of these tools outside of SPWB events.

Researching Social Innovation in Practice

Dr. Katharine McGowan, Post-Doctoral Fellow in Social Prosperity with Social Innovation Generation at the University of Waterloo, joined the project team in 2013 to conduct research about the SPWB process. Supervised by Dr. Frances Westley, co-author of *Getting to Maybe*, Dr. McGowan's research focuses on the contribution of the SPWB process to understandings of the theory and practice of social innovation in Canada. This research will be published and presented broadly and will be available to the community of Wood Buffalo beginning in the winter of 2014-2015.

2.3 ENABLING COLLECTIVE IMPACT

“As a society we still haven't resolved world hunger, poverty, homelessness. We obviously haven't been getting it right. I think we have to constantly be looking at ways to innovate. What resonated for me was the idea of collective impact. It surprises me that we never thought of working together on some of these issues before.” – Kim Nordbye, Suncor Energy Foundation; Former SPWB Project Manager; SPWB Steering Committee Member

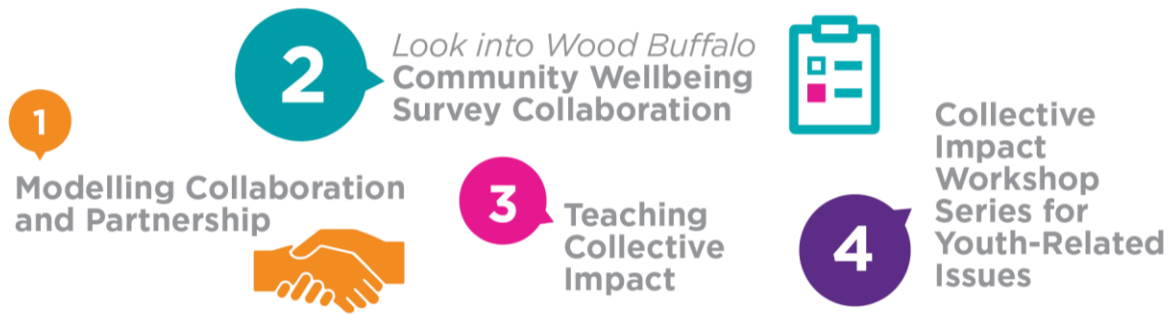
In 2011, John Kania and Mark Kramer coined the term “collective impact” to refer to “the commitment of a group of important actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem.”¹³ Collective impact initiatives are distinct from other forms of collaboration in that they engage players from multiple sectors and are structured according to five conditions, including a common agenda for the work, a shared measurement system to track progress, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication among collaborators, and a backbone organization to support the initiative.¹⁴

SPWB can be seen as a form of collective impact initiative with the ultimate goal of strengthening the social profit sector to increase quality of life throughout the Wood Buffalo region. The SPWB process engages stakeholders from across the community including industry, local government, and the social profit sector toward this common goal. It also relies on support from a backbone team, continuously communicates with its stakeholders, engages in mutually reinforcing activities with collaborators, and recently established a shared measurement system to track quality of life indicators in Wood Buffalo using the Canadian Index of Wellbeing's Community Wellbeing Survey.

¹³ “Collective Impact.” John Kania and Mark Kramer. Stanford Social Innovation Review, 2011, p. 36.

¹⁴ “Collective Impact.” John Kania and Mark Kramer. Stanford Social Innovation Review, 2011.

In addition to sharing many of the characteristics of collective impact initiatives itself, SPWB sought to foster collective impact within the social profit sector through activities including:



Modelling Collaboration and Partnership

“I could see that this is the right place to model new collaborative initiatives. Many people are from all over the world; there is a collaborative spirit here.” – Sana Elache, Syncrude; SPWB Steering Committee Member

SPWB consistently modelled collaboration and partnership in its activities, from the composition of its steering committee to the facilitation of workshops and the collection of data in both the Capacity Assessment Surveys and the “Look into Wood Buffalo” Community Wellbeing Survey. SPWB was not afraid to partner with unusual suspects, small organizations, or organizations in the process of being established. SPWB also consistently modeled transparency and openness, sharing resources, knowledge, and research data with the community through the SPWB website.

An early attempt to model collaboration included a workshop on rapid improvement co-facilitated by Raymond Floyd, Former Senior Vice President at Suncor Energy Inc. and Paul Born, Executive Director of Tamarack, An Institute for Community Engagement, which demonstrated how sharing knowledge across sector boundaries can generate new insights and approaches. The Action Learning Team process, which engaged community leaders from Wood Buffalo and Waterloo regions to develop strategies to address community issues, further reflects SPWB’s commitment to cross-sector and cross-community collaboration.

In 2012, SPWB partnered with Nonprofit Sector Link Wood Buffalo to conduct the Capacity Assessment Survey and in 2013 established a working group composed of representatives from industry, local government, and the social profit sector to conduct the “Look into Wood Buffalo” Community Wellbeing Survey. These

initiatives also modeled collaboration, creating the conditions in which new collective impact initiatives could emerge by shifting standards within the social profit sector toward increased sharing of resources and knowledge.

“Look into Wood Buffalo” Community Wellbeing Survey Collaboration



The “Look into Wood Buffalo” Community Wellbeing Survey measures quality of life indicators for Wood Buffalo residents. Conducted in the spring of 2014, the survey was implemented by a working group of stakeholders from industry, government, and the social profit sector, and provides baseline data for a shared

measurement system assessing quality of life in Wood Buffalo. By collaborating on its implementation, the organizations involved, including the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, OSCA, SPWB, the United Way of Fort McMurray, FuseSocial, Keyano College, Arts Council Wood Buffalo, and ONE Regional Recreation Corporation are seeking to create a culture of open data in Wood Buffalo by demonstrating what can be accomplished when information is shared across organizations and sectors.

Results from the Community Wellbeing Survey will be used to inform the strategies and approaches of organizations and collaborations seeking to move the needle on significant community issues. They will also contribute to monitoring progress towards improving quality of life outcomes for residents now and in the future as well as prioritizing strategies within active community plans such as the Strategy Roadmap.

Teaching Collective Impact

“I learned the value of connecting and moving away from the siloed approach to the collaborative approach.” – Russell Thomas, United Way of Fort McMurray; Birdsong Connections; SPWB Steering Committee Member

In May 2013, SPWB hosted the workshop “Collaborating for Collective Impact,” partnering with Manny Makia (Chief Social Innovator, FuseSocial and former Social



Planning Supervisor, RMWB) and Erika Ford (Community Engagement Coordinator, Total and former Executive Director, Volunteer Wood Buffalo). The workshop shared key concepts in collective impact with 40 social profit sector and community leaders, exploring the five conditions for collective impact with a focus on shared measurement. It was at this workshop that establishing a collective impact workshop series for youth-related issues was first suggested, although focusing on youth-related issues had been proposed earlier in the process at the January 2012 Community Feedback Lab.

Collective Impact Workshop Series for Youth-Related Issues

"The process in and of itself has really energized us, motivated us, and dared us to dream big." - Luana Bussieres, St. Aidan's Society

The Collective Impact Workshop Series for Youth-Related Issues, held in 2013-2014, was designed to prepare youth-serving organizations to implement a collective impact strategy in Wood Buffalo. Engaging organizations from across the youth sector, the workshop series included five sessions that explored the preconditions and conditions for collective impact. Using social innovation tools, participants generated knowledge about youth in Wood Buffalo and learned more about the system currently serving youth. The workshops also provided a venue for networking and resulted in a number of new program collaborations between participating organizations.












At the end of the workshop series, it was clear that more work needed to be done to enable youth-serving organizations to implement the collective impact initiative that was beginning to be envisioned during the workshops. As such, the process is ongoing with support from SPWB Project Manager Ifeatu Efu.

2.4 STEWARDING THE SPWB PROCESS

“SPWB is the catalyst we’re using as a community to help us ask questions, find the answers, and walk us through the process to help us figure out for ourselves what we want for our community.” – Bonnah Carey, Some Other Solutions; SPWB Steering Committee Member

In addition to building capacity, cultivating social innovation, and enabling collective impact, stewarding the SPWB process became one of the primary streams of activity for the project team and steering committee. While the activities, events, and initiatives convened by SPWB contributed to its ultimate goal of improving quality of life by strengthening the social profit sector, SPWB also needed to pay specific attention to the process itself in order to begin shifting culture in Wood Buffalo. The activities involved in stewarding the process often occurred behind the scenes, but required considerable time and effort on the part of the project team and steering committee.

Activities related to stewarding the SPWB process included:

-  **Participating in Shared Learning**
-  **Modelling Shared Leadership**
-  **Building Relationships**
-  **Ongoing Communication**
-  **Designing Strategies to Meet Community Needs**
-  **Responding to Emergence**
-  **Convening Conversations**
-  **Reflecting Back**
-  **Conducting Developmental Evaluation**



Participating in Shared Learning

Throughout the process, the SPWB project team, steering committee, and community stakeholders participated in shared learning and reflection, both about SPWB’s progress as well as developments in relevant fields. In 2010, steering committee and project team members were invited to attend Tamarack’s Communities Collaborating Institute (CCI), providing an opportunity to learn from leading practitioners about collaboration, social change, and community engagement. In subsequent years, new steering committee members, community

leaders, and the project team also attended the CCI, deepening their learning and forming stronger relationships during the week-long event.

The expert facilitators and thought-leaders brought to the community to lead capacity building workshops and learning events provided another venue for SPWB stakeholders to engage in shared learning. Experts including Cathy Brothers, Executive Director in Residence at Capacity Canada, Tanya Darisi, Director of the O'Halloran Group, Cheryl Rose, Director of Social Innovation Generation (SiG) at the University of Waterloo, Post-doctoral researchers from SiG, Brock Hart and Lisa Grogan of Overlap Associates, Anil Patel, former Executive Director of Framework and staff from Imagine Canada's Standards Program deepened community knowledge of capacity building, social innovation, and collaboration.

The SPWB project team also regularly conducted secondary research about social innovation, capacity building, and collective impact, as well as other priority areas such as shared space and services and staff recruitment and retention. This secondary research was shared with the steering committee and other working groups, and opportunities were created during meetings to reflect on the learning. Further, developmental evaluator Tanya Darisi's work on the SPWB evaluation was consistently shared with the project team and steering committee, facilitating shared learning that enabled SPWB leaders to develop new strategies and ensure that the process remained on course toward its intended outcomes. Participating in shared learning allowed SPWB leaders to grow their understanding of the process over time, enabling them to make more informed decisions about its strategic direction.

Modeling Shared Leadership

SPWB's leadership model is based on a full partnership between the Suncor Energy Foundation, community leaders in Wood Buffalo, and the University of Waterloo. The steering committee and project team practiced shared leadership throughout the process, collaborating on the design and implementation of strategies. The community itself, particularly social profit sector executive directors, board members, and staff also exercised leadership by providing continual input on proposed strategies during workshops and community feedback events.

Steering committee member Russell Thomas used his artistic talents to describe the leadership model of the SPWB process in the illustration below. This illustration shows the SPWB ship charting a course from the Island of Today toward the Island of Future Capacity. The boat itself belongs to the University of Waterloo, while the steering committee is in the helm, guiding the course with the community on board for the journey. Propelled by wind generated by the Suncor Energy Foundation, the

SPWB ship navigates through emerging issues and opportunities to achieve its goal of a stronger social profit sector and increased quality of life in Wood Buffalo.



SPWB’s steering committee and project team therefore modelled shared leadership, amplifying the impact of SPWB activities and providing backbone support to the process.

The Role of the Steering Committee: Systems Entrepreneurs

The SPWB steering committee includes community leaders from industry, the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, and social profit organizations. Throughout the process, steering committee members provided input and guidance to amplify the impact of SPWB activities.

The SPWB steering committee evolved over time, beginning with representatives from SEF, the University of Waterloo, and four community leaders who attended Tamarack’s Communities Collaborating Institute (CCI) in 2010. In the following years, efforts were made to expand the steering committee to be more inclusive of the community as a whole. In 2011 and 2012, additional community leaders from the social profit sector had the opportunity to attend the CCI alongside existing members and were then invited to join the steering committee. As the steering

committee grew, efforts were also made to include organizations that were not represented on the committee, such as the Oil Sands Community Alliance (OSCA).



SPWB steering committee members contributed to directing the development and implementation of the SPWB process, acting as systems entrepreneurs by providing community context, guiding the process, and engaging their networks.

1. Providing Community Context

With the project team based at the University of Waterloo, SPWB relied on steering committee members to provide community context in order to design strategies that would meet existing and emerging needs. The steering committee met approximately once per month, and meetings were an opportunity for members to suggest new initiatives and directions or to provide guidance on strategies designed by the project team. The steering committee was also able to advise the project team on issues such as the timing of events, who should be invited, and the likely take-up of learning opportunities and other initiatives. Steering committee members' extensive knowledge of community history, local politics, and the dynamics of personal and organizational relationships were instrumental to the development of SPWB's strategies and approaches.

2. Guiding the Process

The SPWB steering committee guided the process by working with the project team to design interventions and alter course in response to shifting community conditions. Multiple strategic planning sessions throughout the process engaged the steering committee to consider emerging opportunities and proposed changes to ongoing strategies. The steering committee also participated in the design of SPWB's Theory of Change, which charts a course toward systems transformation in Wood Buffalo.

3. Engaging Networks

Steering committee members also acted as systems entrepreneurs by engaging their networks to support SPWB's work. This involved connecting people to SPWB's learning events, initiatives, and materials, and inviting new partners to join the process. Steering committee members leveraged their positions as

respected leaders and funders to encourage social profit organizations to participate in SPWB, to understand its goals, and to see its value. Steering committee members engaged their networks in person and by using social media tools including twitter and Facebook to promote activities and events. Some steering committee members also provided funding and / or in kind donations to support initiatives like the “Look into Wood Buffalo” Community Wellbeing Survey.

The SPWB steering committee also helped identify leaders from across the community to attend external education and training opportunities such as the Tamarack CCI. In making their recommendations, steering committee members considered who could benefit from these opportunities not only as individuals or for their organizations, but for the community as a whole. In 2012, steering committee members and other community leaders attending the CCI in Ontario were also able to tour shared spaces in Toronto and Waterloo Region, returning with first-hand experience of innovative shared space and service designs that could apply in Wood Buffalo.



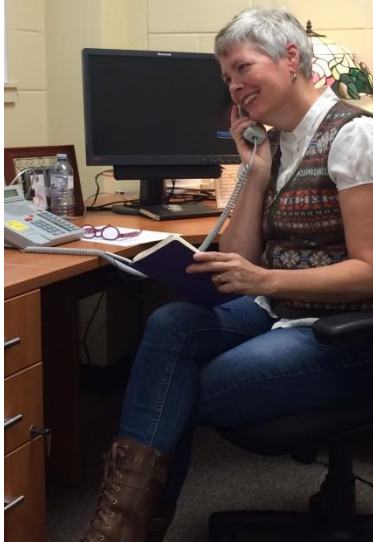
The Role of the Project Team: Backbone Support

The SPWB project team, consisting of the Director, Project Manager, Project Officer, Post-Doctoral Fellow, and Developmental Evaluator provided essential backbone support for the SPWB process. Research demonstrates that backbone organizations for collective impact initiatives often perform 5 central functions, including guiding vision and strategy, supporting aligned activities, establishing shared measurement practices, building public will, advancing policy, and mobilizing funding.¹⁵ As a backbone for the SPWB process, the project team performed many of these functions, in particular guiding vision and strategy, supporting aligned activities, establishing shared measurement, and building public will. In addition to this, the project team was instrumental in supporting each of the activities involved in stewarding the SPWB process, including participating in shared learning, modelling shared leadership, building relationships, ongoing communication, designing strategies to meet community needs, responding to emergence, convening conversations, reflecting back, and supporting the developmental evaluation.

¹⁵ [“Understanding the Value of Backbone Organizations in Collective Impact.”](#) Shiloh Turner, Kathy Merchant, John Kania and Ellen Martin, Stanford Social Innovation Review, July 18th 2012.

Specific roles of the project team included:

Director, Nancy Mattes



As Director of SPWB, Nancy Mattes was responsible for brokering project partners, designing strategies, and making decisions about the direction of the process based on input from the steering committee and the project team. The Director managed plans that had been established by the steering committee, developing the schedule of activities to be completed and overseeing the implementation of activities within established timelines. She brokered various components of the project (developmental evaluation, steering committee/community interface, research/reporting, communications), ensuring that information was shared between key stakeholders. The Director also acted as a systems entrepreneur, connecting SPWB activities to

emerging opportunities at the systems level. She had an instrumental role as a champion and advocate for SPWB, consistently communicating the value of the work to key stakeholders.

Project Manager, Kim Nordbye and Ifeatu Efu

The Project Manager, formerly Kim Nordbye and currently Ifeatu Efu, had her office at the Redpoll Centre in Wood Buffalo and acted as the local champion of the SPWB process. The Project Manager was responsible for building and maintaining relationships with community stakeholders, engaging new partners, providing backbone managerial support to SPWB activities, and consistently communicating about SPWB initiatives.



As Project Manager, Kim Nordbye participated in a shared space and services committee to assist in the development of the Shell Place Shared & Non-Profit Space. She also convened the Wood Buffalo Learning and Development Consortium (a group of capacity building organizations seeking to align their professional development efforts for social profit organizations), organized the Heart of Wood Buffalo Leadership Awards in 2012, and provided project management support



during the merger of Leadership Wood Buffalo, Volunteer Wood Buffalo, and Nonprofit Sector Link Wood Buffalo. Since joining the team in March 2014, Ifeatu Efu has supported the “Look into Wood Buffalo!” Community Wellbeing Survey process and is working with youth-serving organizations following the Collective Impact Workshop Series for Youth-Related Issues. She is also assisting with transitioning SPWB activities to local organizations.

Project Officer, Katharine Zywert

As Project Officer, Katharine Zywert wrote reports about the process, created tools and resources for social profit sector leaders, helped to design SPWB activities, and looked after administrative duties including travel booking, event planning, and monitoring the budget. The Project Officer also conducted secondary research about relevant topics such as capacity building, social innovation, and collective impact, provided support to facilitators during SPWB events, and supported the developmental evaluation by sending out workshop evaluations and tracking participation in events.



Post-Doctoral Fellow, Dr. Katharine McGowan



Post-Doctoral Fellow in Social Prosperity Dr. Katharine McGowan joined the team in June 2013 to conduct research about the SPWB process. This research, structured as a response to *Getting to Maybe*, will explore social innovation in practice. In addition to her role

as researcher, the Post-Doctoral Fellow has acted as a critical advocate for the project, has designed and facilitated workshops including the Collective Impact Workshop Series for Youth-Related Issues, and has shared her expertise in social innovation during steering committee and other working group meetings.

Developmental Evaluator, Tanya Darisi



As Developmental Evaluator for the SPWB process, Tanya Darisi, Director of The O'Halloran Group, conducted surveys, interviews, and participant observation to assess SPWB's contribution to emerging outcomes in Wood Buffalo. The Developmental Evaluator created SPWB's theory of change (see below), wrote yearly evaluation reports about the process, conducted the Capacity Assessment Survey, attended steering committee meetings and

multiple SPWB events, and met frequently with the project team. The developmental evaluator's insights into the dynamics of SPWB's ongoing work helped the project team and steering committee design strategies that were more likely to lead to intended outcomes.

Building Relationships

Building relationships was a key component of fostering trust in the SPWB process, helping stakeholders to understand its goals, and engaging new partners in SPWB initiatives. Building strong relationships involved being attuned to the goals, commitments, and interests of partners including the Suncor Energy Foundation, the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, the University of Waterloo, and social profit agencies in Wood Buffalo. As a multi-stakeholder process committed to the genuine engagement of its partners, this was an ongoing activity that required continual energy and attention.

Throughout the process, the SPWB project team and steering committee cultivated relationships among one another as well as with key community stakeholders and decision makers including social profit leaders and board members, municipal councilors and government administrators, community investment staff from industry, industry organizations, and stakeholders at the University of Waterloo. Project Manager Kim Nordbye played an especially significant role in building relationships within Wood Buffalo, meeting regularly with community stakeholders in the social profit and public sectors to establish and maintain trust in the SPWB process.

Ongoing Communication



Ongoing communication was essential to stewarding the SPWB process. Upcoming learning events, emerging strategies, and the progress of initiatives were shared regularly with community stakeholders in SPWB's monthly e-newsletter. Events were promoted through SPWB's website, Facebook (101 likes) and twitter accounts (658 followers). Notes from steering committee meetings and other working groups were recorded diligently and returned in a timely manner to maintain up-to-date records of important conversations, and email correspondence containing pre and post-event information was sent to participants in a timely fashion. Reports were also produced by the project team following SPWB events to reflect back the knowledge generated by community members, helping to establish openness and accountability with project stakeholders.¹⁶

As the representatives of the SPWB team located in Wood Buffalo, Project Managers Kim Nordbye and Ifeatu Efu were instrumental in ensuring that ongoing communication was maintained with community stakeholders.

Designing Strategies to Meet Community Needs

Synthesizing insights from the steering committee and community stakeholders, the SPWB project team designed interventions including workshops, learning events, and collaborative processes to meet existing and emerging community needs. Throughout the process, the project team and steering committee worked in partnership with the community, particularly social profit sector leaders, board members, and staff to define priorities for intervention.



¹⁶ For a list of all reports generated by SPWB, see appendix A.

In designing strategies to meet community needs, SPWB:

1. Provided opportunities for the community to explore what they wanted to achieve through the SPWB process (ex. February 2011 Community Conversation, Action Learning Teams, January 2012 Community Feedback Lab)
2. Consulted with social profit sector leaders, staff, and board members regarding their capacity building priorities (through an online survey, workshop evaluations, Capacity Assessment Survey)
3. Collected evaluations from all workshops and learning events and used the results to improve future offerings
4. Engaged the Project Manager and steering committee to assess conditions in the community and to anticipate emerging needs
5. Built on existing assets and followed energy and enthusiasm (ex. Convening the Collective Impact Workshop Series for Youth-Related Issues after a successful Youth and Social Innovation workshop in 2013)
6. Used design thinking and social innovation tools to develop and refine strategies
7. Responded to emergence, shifting plans as necessary to meet changing community needs (see below)

Responding to Emergence

Social innovations need to strike a balance between being designed intentionally to achieve particular goals and being flexible enough to respond to emergence. Social systems are not static, but are constantly shifting, and systems-level interventions must also embody this quality to remain relevant over time.¹⁷

As a responsive process, SPWB was always open to shifting its strategies and redesigning its work to address emerging community needs. This allowed SPWB to keep moving toward its goal of systems-level changes while remaining nimble enough to respond to new conditions and trends as they arose in Wood Buffalo. For example, while SPWB was a systems-level intervention, there were times when the project needed to focus more specifically on organizational issues. In 2012 and 2013, SPWB responded to capacity building priorities identified by social profit sector leaders and staff by offering a variety of workshops and learning opportunities to build foundational skills within social profit organizations.

¹⁷ Westley, F., Zimmerman, B., & Patton, M. (2007). *Getting to Maybe: How the World is Changed*. Toronto: Vintage Canada.

SPWB was able to maintain this responsiveness because both the steering committee and the project team understood the value of adaptive leadership within a social change process, recognizing the importance of allowing interventions to evolve over time based on input from the community. The developmental evaluation also enabled the process to remain flexible by providing real-time data on what was working and what wasn't to inform the design of emerging strategies and goals.

Convening Conversations

Since 2011, SPWB has taken a leadership role in convening conversations on issues of significance to social profit organizations including collaboration, social innovation, shared space and services, capacity building, shared measurement, and the strategic direction of the social profit sector.

SPWB cultivated conversations intentionally, such as discussions about shared space and services, the merger of three capacity building organizations, collective impact for youth-related issues, and the use of data collected through the “Look into Wood Buffalo”



Community Wellbeing Survey. In these conversations, SPWB often played a backbone support role, scheduling and chairing meetings, documenting proceedings, and managing the completion of action items.

The SPWB process also provided opportunities for participants to have new conversations, many of which arose spontaneously at SPWB events. By creating space for networking, shared learning, and relationship building, SPWB participants discussed their interests and aspirations and began developing new partnerships and collaborations (see section 3.5 for a description of new collaborations resulting from the SPWB process).

Reflecting Back

Throughout the process, the SPWB project team documented the journey and shared it with the community, reflecting back the knowledge generated during learning events, workshops, and other initiatives.

In producing written reports following its events, the SPWB project team helped to make sense of the process, capturing the meaning of activities as well as the learnings they inspired. Reflecting back also helped to build trust in the SPWB process and contributed to a culture of increased willingness to share resources, data, and strategies across organizational boundaries. SPWB research, reports, and resources were made available to all on the SPWB website so that community stakeholders could review them at their convenience.

So far, SPWB has created:¹⁸

- 3 dashboard (annual) reports
- 16 event and workshop reports
- 2 evaluation reports
- 2 capacity assessment reports¹⁹



Conducting Developmental Evaluation²⁰

“That ability to keep adapting, going between what the funders wanted, what the university wanted, what the community organizations wanted. I think that’s a sign of a generative project. That’s what Developmental Evaluation is about. We don’t measure whether we did what we set out to do, but how we continually adapted to suit the circumstances. I think it’s a sign of a really good leader.” – Cathy Brothers, Capacity Canada; SPWB Steering Committee Member

Researcher and evaluator Tanya Darisi, Director of The O’Halloran Group, conducted the developmental evaluation for the SPWB process. Developmental evaluation is especially suited to providing insight into the outcomes and challenges of social change processes that continually adapt to align their tactics with changes in the communities they serve. Throughout the SPWB process, the developmental evaluation provided crucial insights about what was working and what was not, sharing data that informed course corrections as well as the design of new strategies and initiatives.

Developmental evaluator Tanya Darisi became an integral member of the project team, working to track SPWB’s contribution to changes being observed in Wood Buffalo, using the SPWB Theory of Change as a guide (see below). The SPWB project team supported developmental evaluation activities by sending out

¹⁸ See Appendix A for an annotated list of SPWB reports.

¹⁹ The 2014 Capacity Assessment Survey report will be available by December, 2014.

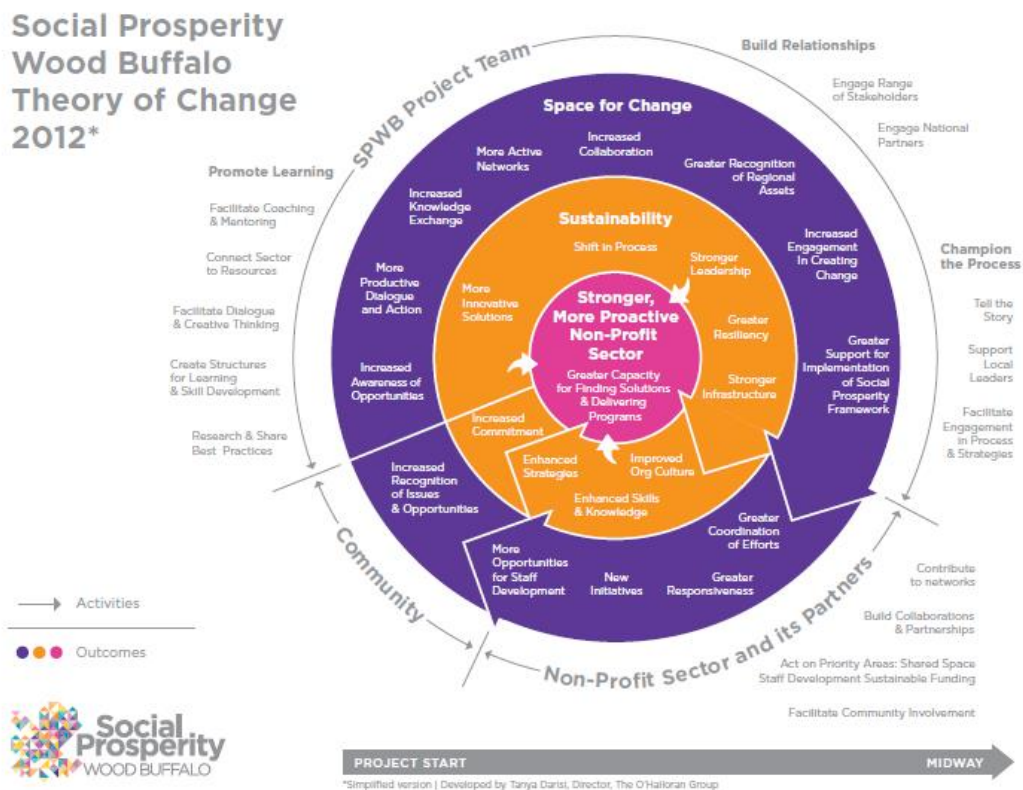
²⁰ SPWB’s final evaluation report will be available in the winter of 2015.

workshop evaluations, diligently tracking engagement in the process after each event, reflecting on the learning being generated, and using the Theory of Change to guide strategy development.

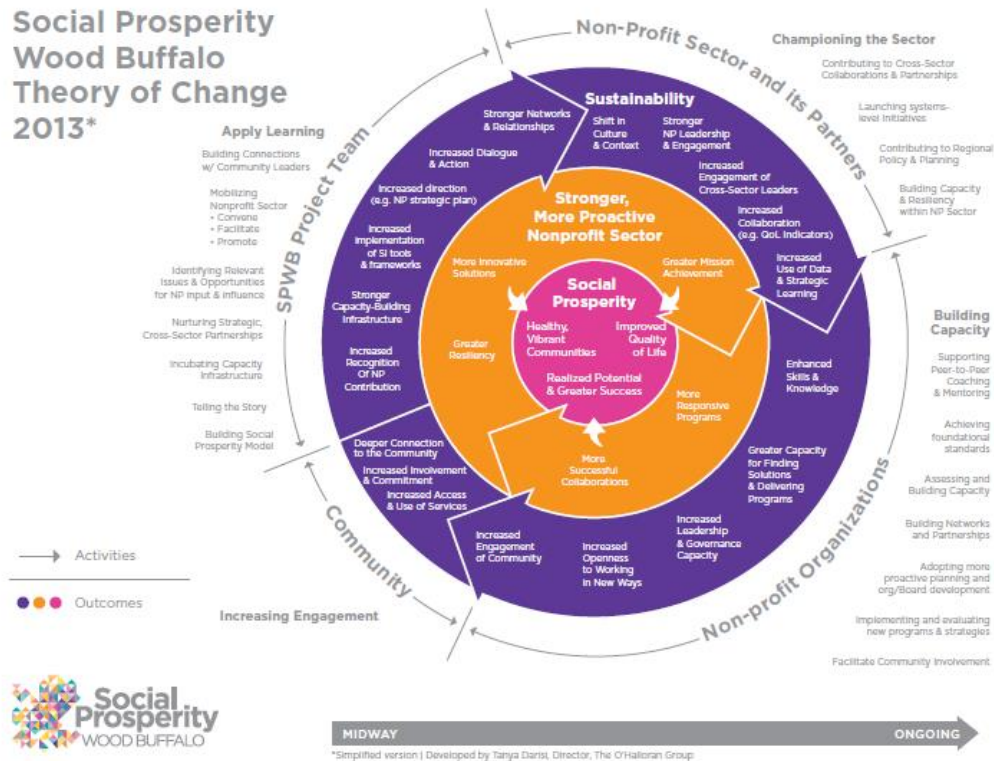
Theory of Change

Designed with input from the project team and steering committee, the Theory of Change describes the changes that SPWB hopes to facilitate in Wood Buffalo. In SPWB’s developmental evaluation, the Theory of Change was used as a process to support reflection and the evolution of SPWB. The model was intentionally dynamic, and continually refined to reflect and inspire change in activities and focus. It was used to help the steering committee and project team hold the various threads of SPWB’s contribution within a complex system.

Measuring emerging outcomes against an evolving Theory of Change represented a new way of working for many steering committee and project team members, who consistently returned to it when designing strategies and assessing how the SPWB process could best contribute to outcomes for social profit organizations, the social profit sector, and the community as a whole. SPWB’s final evaluation report to be completed by The O’Halloran Group in the winter of 2015 will explore SPWB’s Theory of Change in greater depth.



**Social Prosperity
 Wood Buffalo
 Theory of Change
 2013***



Capacity Assessment Surveys

The Capacity Assessment Survey was also part of SPWB’s developmental evaluation strategy. The Capacity Assessment Survey provides a snapshot of current capacity in the social profit sector, generating up-to-date data about the sector’s strengths and weaknesses. Measuring the capacity of the social profit sector over a three year period tracked changes in organizational capacity in Wood Buffalo, creating an opportunity to assess SPWB’s contribution to these changes (see section 3.1). It can also be used as a tool for individual social profit organizations, helping them to determine capacity building priorities in the areas of management and operations, leadership and governance, and adaptation and innovation.

Tanya Darisi, Director of The O’Halloran Group, conducted the first Capacity Assessment Survey for the social profit sector in collaboration with Nonprofit Sector Link Wood Buffalo in 2012.²¹ The SPWB Capacity Assessment Survey was then repeated by The O’Halloran Group in 2013 and 2014 (in collaboration with FuseSocial) to compare the state of the sector year-over-year.²²

²¹ In 2013, Nonprofit Sector Link Wood Buffalo merged with Leadership Wood Buffalo and Volunteer Wood Buffalo to form FuseSocial.
²² Results from the 2012 and 2013 Capacity Assessment Surveys are posted in the reports section of the SPWB website, www.socialprosperity.ca.

3.0 OUTCOMES OF THE SPWB PROCESS

So far, the SPWB process has contributed to a range of outcomes that are strengthening the social profit sector in Wood Buffalo, enabling organizations to achieve their missions and enhance quality of life in the region. In social change processes, no one initiative can claim full credit for outcomes that arise within a complex community system in which multiple actors are working toward common goals.²³ However, stakeholder interviews and community feedback events suggest that SPWB has made a significant contribution to the following outcomes currently emerging in Wood Buffalo's social profit sector:

- 1 Increased Organizational Capacity
- 2 Enhanced Skills and Knowledge
- 3 Elevated Profile of the Social Profit Sector
- 4 Stronger Relationships and Networks
- 5 Increased Collaboration
- 6 Stronger Collective Voice
- 7 Space for New Conversations
- 8 Expanded Systems-Level Thinking



3.1 INCREASED ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The SPWB Capacity Assessment Surveys conducted in 2012 and 2013²⁴ reveal an increase in organizational capacity in the social profit sector from one year to the next. This result reflects SPWB's early emphasis on capacity building workshops and learning events targeted at social profit sector leaders, staff, and boards. In particular, a comparison of results from the 2012 and 2013 Capacity Assessment Surveys reveals:

- A significant increase in capacity ratings in the areas of Leadership & Governance between 2012 and 2013.²⁵
- A significant increase in capacity ratings for Management & Operations, as well as a significant increase in the reported level of priority for these items between 2012 and 2013.²⁶
- A significant relationship between attendance at SPWB events and the perception that capacity building should be a priority for their organization.

²³ See 2012 Evaluation Report, T. Darisi, The O'Halloran Group, Spring 2013, p. 15-16.

²⁴ The 2014 SPWB Capacity Assessment Survey is still in progress. Results will be available by December 2014.

²⁵ Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo 2013 Evaluation Report, T. Darisi, The O'Halloran Group, 2014, p. 17.

²⁶ Ibid.

Organizations that prioritize capacity building also tend to report higher capacity in the areas they prioritize.²⁷

3.2 ENHANCED SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

In addition to increasing the organizational capacity of social profit agencies, SPWB has contributed to enhancing the skills and knowledge of social profit sector leaders and staff:

- In 2012, 78% of workshop evaluation respondents reported increased understanding and knowledge of relevant topics and issues as a result of their participation in SPWB events.²⁸
- Close to 75% of respondents in 2012 report being inspired by new ideas to do things differently.²⁹
- In 2013, 69% of respondents reported gaining new skills and knowledge through SPWB workshops and events.³⁰

3.3 ELEVATED PROFILE OF THE SOCIAL PROFIT SECTOR

“I think a lot of the leaders in this town have this vision now of connectivity, of social prosperity being an integral part of the community. I think we have a much better sense of our power and worth and I don’t think that’s going away. We can see the next steps toward where we need to go to attain our community vision.” – Michele Taylor, Fort McMurray Family Crisis Society; Former SPWB Steering Committee Member



Since 2011, the SPWB process has contributed to elevating the profile of the social profit sector in Wood Buffalo. Initiatives like the Heart of Wood Buffalo Leadership Awards³¹ helped to “raise the profile of the sector,” resulting in increased credibility and “greater recognition for staff” (Ed Kamps, Human Resources Director; former Project Manager, United Way of Fort McMurray Capacity-Building Project; former Chair of the Board of Directors, Nonprofit Sector Link Wood Buffalo). In turn, this has increased confidence within the sector and fueled the growing sense that social profit organizations have the right (as well as the

²⁷ Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo 2013 Evaluation Report, T. Darisi, The O’Halloran Group, 2014, p. 16, 17.

²⁸ Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo 2012 Evaluation Report, T. Darisi, The O’Halloran Group, Spring 2013, executive summary.

²⁹ Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo 2012 Evaluation Report, T. Darisi, The O’Halloran Group, Spring 2013, executive summary.

³⁰ Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo 2013 Evaluation Report, T. Darisi, The O’Halloran Group, 2014.

³¹ The annual Heart of Wood Buffalo Awards were created by SPWB in 2011 and are now organized by a collaboration of social profit organizations.

appropriate skills) to participate as full partners at community decision-making tables. As Steering Committee Member Brandi Gartner (OSCA) states,

“The social profit sector is beginning to celebrate their accomplishments and speak as a sector with pride. It’s important and allows for further action when people are proud of what they’re doing.”

The elevated profile of the social profit sector is also evident in the shift in language away from “nonprofit” terminology toward “social profit” and “community benefit” as accepted descriptors of the sector. SPWB developmental evaluator Tanya Darisi notes that it is extremely difficult to shift discourse. The ease and speed with which this new language has caught on therefore likely represents a deeper shift in values in Wood Buffalo. New “social profit” terminology reflects not only greater cohesion and collaboration within the sector, but is “about recognizing and celebrating the value of the sector” (Manny Makia, FuseSocial; SPWB Steering Committee Member).

3.4 STRONGER RELATIONSHIPS AND NETWORKS

“SPWB gave me so many avenues to connect with people. It elevated the conversations that I was having...I was able to sit at the table with others that I could not have without them.” – Erika Ford, Total; SPWB Steering Committee Member

Since 2011, SPWB has consistently provided opportunities for social profit sector leaders and staff to convene at learning events and workshops, enabling them to build stronger relationships and networks. Specifically:

- More than 80% of workshop evaluation respondents in 2012 and 2013 report that SPWB events helped them make new connections and strengthen their network.³²
- Social network mapping conducted in 2012 and 2013 reveals that SPWB events enable new connections between organizations.³³



³² Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo 2012 Evaluation Report, T. Darisi, The O’Halloran Group, Spring 2013, executive summary; Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo 2013 Evaluation Report, T. Darisi, The O’Halloran Group, 2014, p. 26-28.

3.5 INCREASED COLLABORATION

“At ConvergenceYMM there was a speaker and then an opportunity to network. The speaker had been talking about not sitting back and staying in our siloes, the importance of looking for opportunities to partner with each other. I started chatting with the president of an arts organization and the next thing we know we’re going to start an art program in collaboration with my organization. That never would have happened if the opportunity hadn’t been given to sit and talk with other nonprofits. Now we’re thinking for the next year, how can we work with other nonprofits?” – Social Profit Sector Executive Director

The SPWB process has also played a role in the emergence of a variety of new partnerships and collaborations within the social profit sector in Wood Buffalo. SPWB’s 2013 Evaluation Report notes that the process contributed to increased collaboration by “being able to bring like-minded organizations together.”³⁴ Providing venues for social profit organizations to network, SPWB served as “the launch pad for discussions about collaborative work across the sector” (Manny Makia, FuseSocial; SPWB Steering Committee Member). SPWB also contributed to shifting the culture of the social profit sector toward one in which collaboration is more



readily explored by organizations seeking to expand their social impact. The Executive Director of a social profit organization in Wood Buffalo states that “as a region, being innovative and collaborative are top of mind for those working in the sector. As a sector, that can only strengthen us.”

Collaborations that have their roots in conversations convened by SPWB include:³⁵

- Arts Council Wood Buffalo (an organization dedicated to supporting, enabling, and championing the arts in Wood Buffalo)

³³ Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo 2012 Evaluation Report, T. Darisi, The O’Halloran Group, Spring 2013, executive summary; Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo 2013 Evaluation Report, T. Darisi, The O’Halloran Group, 2014, p. 26-28.

³⁴ Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo 2013 Evaluation Report, T. Darisi, The O’Halloran Group, 2014, p. 29.

³⁵ While the seeds of many new collaborations were planted during conversations convened by SPWB, their continued growth is attributed to the hard work of the organizations involved.

- FuseSocial (resulting from the merger of Leadership Wood Buffalo, Nonprofit Sector Link Wood Buffalo, and Volunteer Wood Buffalo, FuseSocial has a mandate to enable social innovation for the Wood Buffalo community)
- ConvergenceYMM (an annual two-day summit addressing the nonprofit sector's role in the future development of Wood Buffalo and building relationships between industry, government, and social profit organizations)
- New collaborations on program and service delivery among youth-serving organizations involved in the Collective Impact Workshop Series for Youth-Related Issues
- New collaborations for program and service delivery among other social profit sector organizations

3.6 STRONGER COLLECTIVE VOICE

“Before in the social profit sector, there were a lot of individual voices. Now we’re starting to see a much more collective and integrated voice. The SPWB logo is a tapestry, the weaving together of the community and individual bits and pieces. We’re starting to see more of this now.”
– Bryan Jackson, Suncor Energy Inc.; SPWB Steering Committee Member

By creating opportunities for social profit sector leaders and staff to build relationships and strengthen their networks, a sense of collectivity is emerging within the social profit sector in Wood Buffalo. Organizations are recognizing that they share many strengths and challenges. They are also beginning to find venues to speak with a more unified voice about issues that affect the sector as a whole. For example, during the 2013 Municipal Election in Wood Buffalo, a group of social profit agencies met with Mayor Melissa Blake to discuss issues affecting the sector and to ask questions about how she planned to address them.

Manny Makia (FuseSocial; SPWB Steering Committee Member) describes the difference he perceives in the social profit sector prior to and after SPWB:

“Before SPWB, the social profit sector did not exist in our minds as a concept in our community. We were very familiar with certain organizations, but as a collective, the sector didn’t have an identity of its own. Now we are able to not only recognize that there is a sector that is much more than the sum of its parts, but that they are an important component of our social infrastructure.”

ConvergenceYMM 2013 identified cultivating a collective voice as a key priority for the social profit sector, and ConvergenceYMM 2014 focused on how this could be operationalized. Ongoing discussions continue to explore how the sector’s collective

voice can be structured in a way that is inclusive, representing the full spectrum of Wood Buffalo's social profit organizations.

3.7 SPACE FOR NEW CONVERSATIONS

"The general thinking is starting to shift. We're having different sorts of conversations than we had before." – Bryan Jackson, Suncor Energy Inc.; SPWB Steering Committee Member

Participants also describe the role of the SPWB process in creating space for new conversations within the social profit sector as well as in the broader community. These conversations involve the extent to which the social profit sector is integrated into community planning, the degree to which its needs and potential contributions are considered, and the ability of organizations to approach their work in new ways that emphasize social innovation and collaboration.



As a result of participating in these new conversations, social profit organizations are shifting the focus of their mandates, emphasizing the need to understand the issues as part of their programming. They are also taking bolder risks. For instance, Erika Ford, former Executive Director of Volunteer Wood Buffalo, suggests that her participation in SPWB activities inspired her to bring the Timeraiser, a silent art auction to raise volunteer time for social profit organizations, to Wood Buffalo. She explains, "Because of my participation in SPWB, I wasn't afraid to try something different."

SPWB's 2013 Evaluation Report also states that "SPWB has contributed to a learning culture in the sector by bringing together the right people and asking the right

questions.”³⁶ SPWB’s role as a convener of conversations has resulted in increased dialogue in the sector around key issues as well as an increase in actions inspired by the new ideas this dialogue has generated. As participant Bonnah Carey (Some Other Solutions; SPWB Steering Committee Member) describes,

“When my staff come back from the youth workshops, they’ll say, ‘we have to do this, I never thought of that.’ All of a sudden, their thinking is new. When you spark a person’s imagination, help them realize there is a whole different thing out there and they start to talk to each other, that’s the energy you want.”

3.8 EXPANDED SYSTEMS-LEVEL THINKING

“Social profit organizations are finding their voice, thinking about what is needed as a community. It has shifted from organizations only thinking about their own programs and services to being much more connected, thinking about the whole community.” – Cathy Glover, Suncor Energy Foundation; SPWB Steering Committee Member

The SPWB process also stimulated systems-level thinking, providing a context to shift the focus away from organizational issues toward greater concern about outcomes at the community level. Systems thinking is an essential component of a culture of social innovation, enabling people to understand the dynamics of the social issues they are seeking to shift, the forces that keep them entrenched, and potential areas for intervention. As Manny Makia (FuseSocial; SPWB Steering Committee Member) describes, “SPWB provided an opportunity for me to understand the culture of my community, to know who the players are, to know where the leverage points are.”

The shift toward expanded systems-level thinking is demonstrated by the proliferation of inter-agency collaborations that look beyond the needs of individual organizations toward the potential to increase community wellbeing by working together. For example, a new collaboration between Some Other Solutions and the Fort McMurray Family Crisis Society leverages the resources of both organizations to provide overnight staffing to a 24 hour crisis hotline.

³⁶ Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo 2013 Evaluation Report, T. Darisi, The O’Halloran Group, 2014, p. 28.



When considering the legacy of SPWB, Professor Ken Coates states that it will be “working and thinking at a community-wide level.” Similarly, Ed Kamps (former Chair of the Board of Directors, Nonprofit Sector Link Wood Buffalo) describes how;

“SPWB events were an opportunity to bring people together to talk about what we can do differently in the community. Otherwise people might have good intentions to do things differently, but it doesn’t go anywhere. SPWB has helped us to learn about what we’re doing at a systems level.”

4.0 CHALLENGES AND TENSIONS

While contributing to systems-level outcomes in Wood Buffalo, SPWB also encountered a number of challenges and tensions that needed to be negotiated to prevent them from derailing the process. This section discusses the central obstacles faced by SPWB, providing insight into how they were addressed by the project team and steering committee. Up to this point, SPWB's most persistent challenges and tensions have included:

- 1 Engaging Stakeholders
- 2 Ensuring Adequate Understanding of the Process
- 3 Building Trust
- 4 Balancing Dialogue and Action
- 5 Having a Backbone Team Located Outside the Community
- 6 Navigating Institutional Cultures
- 7 Defining Roles and Responsibilities
- 8 Negotiating Politics and Unspoken Agendas



4.1 ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS

"I think that we could have gone further faster if we didn't have to do so much work on the engagement piece. We spent a lot of time building those bridges." - Diane Shannon, United Way of Fort McMurray; SPWB Steering Committee Member

Throughout the SPWB process, engaging key stakeholders posed a challenge for the project team. At the same time, the community leaders who were involved struggled to participate in a process that required significant commitments of their time and energy to be effective.

Engaging leaders from industry, government, and certain segments of the social profit sector proved difficult for a variety of reasons. Central among them was the sense at the beginning of the process that SPWB's goals and the nature of its work were unclear. While leaving SPWB's intended outcomes open-ended during early stages was intentional, creating space for the community to define goals and priorities, the perception that the process lacked clarity detracted from people's

willingness to lend their credibility and social capital to the initiative. This challenge was evident during the Action Learning Team process, throughout which the project team struggled to engage leaders from Waterloo and Wood Buffalo in monthly teleconference meetings to explore community issues and generate innovative solutions. In addition, other early activities such as the February 1st Community Conversation did not resonate well with many community leaders, negatively influencing SPWB's ability to engage them until much further along in the process, if at all.

Aspects of the structure of the process further compounded challenges related to stakeholder engagement. With a backbone team located outside the community, multiple SPWB events were often held one right after another during a three or four-day period every few months. Hosting so many events in such close proximity limited people's ability to participate fully, as many were only able to attend one or two events while keeping up with their regular commitments.

As a process relying on genuine community collaboration, SPWB also inherently required a high degree of involvement from those most closely engaged, especially steering committee members. Nevertheless, the steering committee showed varying degrees of engagement across its membership and over time. In attempts to involve the steering committee in strategy development, decision-making, and reflection, there were often many materials shared (research, surveys, reports, and project updates), and much to be prepared in advance of meetings. Meetings themselves were usually short to accommodate busy schedules, and most often held over teleconference (although multiple longer steering committee meetings took place in person in Wood Buffalo). Due to their other time commitments, steering committee members frequently found it difficult to adequately prepare for meetings, limiting their ability to provide the direction and community context required by the project team to make informed decisions about the future direction of the process.

SPWB also struggled to establish a regional identity, and the project team and steering committee ultimately chose to focus on Fort McMurray as the primary site of SPWB's interventions. While attempts were made to engage leaders from rural communities in the inaugural February 2011 conversation, in community feedback events, and in the "Look into Wood Buffalo!" Community Wellbeing Survey, a different model was needed to effectively incorporate rural communities into the SPWB process. Dedicated resources and staff time would be necessary to achieve a truly regional scope for the work, and the SPWB project team lacked the capacity to focus on rural engagement alongside other initiatives.

The SPWB project team addressed many of the challenges related to stakeholder engagement by recognizing the need to put consistent effort into engaging

community leaders, both those already involved and those in leadership positions within industry, local government, and the social profit sector. The Project Manager(s) and Director worked to build relationships and to ensure that decision-makers were aware of new developments, emerging directions, and outcomes of the process, scheduling one-on-one meetings and hosting community events to share updates about SPWB.

4.2 ENSURING ADEQUATE UNDERSTANDING OF THE SPWB PROCESS

“You can communicate, spend all kinds of money on marketing, but until people are able to step back and work it through and come to clarity within themselves, it doesn’t matter how much you communicate. Some will come to it quickly, some will take a lot longer. With SPWB, you had laid out 5 years. Some organizations took 3 years just to come to the table and understand what you’re trying to accomplish.” – Brandi Gartner, OSCA; SPWB Steering Committee Member

Another challenge was ensuring that key stakeholders understood the goals and the nature of the SPWB process. SPWB introduced new concepts, a new vision of the role of the social profit sector, and new ways of thinking and working based on emerging theories of social innovation. Many community stakeholders were unfamiliar with the terminology used by SPWB and were uncertain about its practical application to their work. In addition, being co-led by the University of Waterloo, an academic institution outside of the community, raised questions for many community leaders who did not understand the backbone role that the University of Waterloo was playing in the process.



As a systems-level intervention that used new approaches and a new language to create change in Wood Buffalo, SPWB faced multiple barriers to widespread understanding of the process. Intentional social change projects are rare, and many community stakeholders had little previous experience participating in this kind of

process. As such, the fact that SPWB’s goals and proposed strategies continued to change in response to shifts in community context may have created the impression that the process was disorganized, or that it lacked accountability and follow-through in its activities. While SPWB communicated consistently and made many efforts to engage its stakeholders, the project team and steering committee

struggled to develop a simple message that effectively captured the overall purpose of the initiative's multiple streams of activity. Other stakeholders questioned the value of creating a simple message to engage the community as a whole, suggesting that it was more important to communicate and build relationships with strategic partners.

4.3 BUILDING TRUST

For SPWB, building trust among diverse community stakeholders was an essential component of establishing the open dialogue required to explore entrenched issues facing the social profit sector. However, building trust also posed a significant challenge, one that required the project team to act as negotiators, translators, and sense-makers in order to bridge the gap between community leaders from different institutional backgrounds, each with their own understanding of the issues and their own (at times competing) priorities.

Building trust was especially challenging in the early stages of the process. When SPWB began, it encountered resistance from community leaders who felt that similar things had already been tried and had proven ineffective. The question “Why Waterloo?” was also heard repeatedly throughout the first year, with community members expressing skepticism about the value of an academic institution's involvement in the community, having had negative experiences with fly-in, fly-out researchers in the past. In addition, because SPWB represented the flagship project of the Suncor Energy Foundation's new funding strategy, many community organizations were inherently distrustful of the process, fearing that their funding could be threatened if they openly discussed their issues and priorities for change with the SPWB team.



Over time, the project team and steering committee were able to build trust by demonstrating the extent to which SPWB's goals and activities were shaped by community input. This was achieved by modeling openness, inclusiveness, and collaboration, as well as by providing high-quality professional development opportunities to social profit leaders and staff. Project Manager Kim Nordbye's efforts to cultivate strong relationships in Wood Buffalo also shifted perceptions of the project and enhanced the community's trust in SPWB. However, the process of building trust is ongoing, requiring constant attention from the project team and steering committee who continue to meet with stakeholders individually and in broader community conversations to develop and maintain strong working relationships.

4.4 BALANCING DIALOGUE AND ACTION

“In Wood Buffalo, the resources and the will are there to make things happen, and ideas often move to action quickly. This can make it difficult for people to slow down, reflect, and take the time to go through a process. In the SPWB process, people often wanted to skip to the end, not realizing that dialogue itself is a form of action. It allows us to understand the systems we are working in so that we can act strategically, and also helps us build relationships and trust.” – Nancy Mattes, Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo

In seeking to co-design and implement systems-level strategies to strengthen the social profit sector, the SPWB project team often encountered a tension between dialogue and action. While social innovation theories emphasize the value of both reflection and action,³⁷ SPWB experienced resistance when seeking to explore community issues and engage in deep dialogue about potential strategies. As described above, Wood Buffalo has the resources, the will, and the entrepreneurial culture to make things happen. Wood Buffalo residents frequently describe themselves as pioneering, action-oriented, and willing to take risks. As such, while participants in the SPWB process frequently commented that it involved too much dialogue and not enough implementation, the SPWB project team continued to encourage participants to slow down, attempting to demonstrate that reflection is a form of action.



³⁷ See Westley, F., Zimmerman, B., & Patton, M. (2007). *Getting to Maybe: How the World is Changed*. Toronto: Vintage Canada.

SPWB’s 2013 Evaluation Report further identified “translating learning into action” as a key challenge for the project.³⁸ While SPWB workshops and learning conferences introduced new concepts about social innovation, capacity building, and collective impact, participants struggled to apply these concepts to their work outside the classroom. This challenge of balancing theory and practice when teaching new skills represents another aspect of the tension that emerged between dialogue and action throughout the SPWB process.

4.5 HAVING A BACKBONE TEAM LOCATED OUTSIDE THE COMMUNITY



With the University of Waterloo providing backbone support to the SPWB process, the Director, Project Officer, and academic champions had their offices in Waterloo, travelling to Wood Buffalo regularly to

meet with stakeholders, host learning events, and attend planning meetings with the steering committee. Having the project team located outside the community created both challenges and opportunities for the SPWB process. For instance, not residing in the community made it more difficult for the backbone team to build relationships, meet informally with project stakeholders, and develop a full picture of existing and emerging community dynamics. To address this, SEF hired a local Project Manager, significantly improving its visibility in the community and increasing general understanding of and buy-in to the process.

At the same time, being located outside the community enabled the SPWB project team to “stay out of the weeds,” focusing on strategic issues and avoiding becoming embroiled in local organizational politics. One social profit leader noted that more so than other capacity building organizations, SPWB included smaller and less established social profit organizations in conversations about community issues and sector-wide priorities. Erica Ford (Total; SPWB Steering Committee Member) also saw the value of SPWB’s status as a neutral third-party:

“I really think that being a third party without an agenda, SPWB was able to tear down some blockades. Working in the community, you

³⁸ Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo 2013 Evaluation Report, T. Darisi, The O’Halloran Group, 2014.

would want to tear them down but you didn't have the trust. The things SPWB was able to do in four years would have taken us 20 years to do!"

4.6 NAVIGATING INSTITUTIONAL CULTURES

As a multisectoral collaboration, SPWB needed to become adept at navigating across institutional boundaries in order to build relationships and buy-in among private sector, government, social profit, and academic stakeholders. This involved becoming fluent in the different languages, incentive structures, and underlying drivers of each sector while maintaining SPWB's unique perspective and approach. The need to navigate institutional cultures created challenges related to communicating about the process, engaging stakeholders, and enacting shared leadership.

In designing communications about the SPWB process, the project team tried to engage diverse stakeholders by presenting SPWB's goals and activities in clear language that would resonate with different audiences. However, the social profit sector remained the target audience of most of SPWB's reports and updates, and the way in which the process was described did not always create a compelling value proposition for industry, government, or academic leaders.



Differences in institutional cultures also made it difficult to engage a range of potential stakeholders in the SPWB process. For instance, being perceived as a Suncor initiative, other funders were reluctant to get involved, perhaps due to a tendency to want to sponsor activities that are more likely to provide significant community exposure. Incentive structures within academic institutions also created barriers to engaging University of Waterloo researchers in the SPWB process. While

the project was envisioned by former Dean of Arts Professor Ken Coates in collaboration with the Suncor Energy Foundation and community partners, Professor Coates' departure from the University of Waterloo in 2011 left SPWB without an academic champion.

Hiring Dr. Katharine McGowan as a Post-Doctoral Fellow facilitated a stronger connection to thought-leaders in Social Innovation at the University of Waterloo. Dr. McGowan's skills in teaching and facilitation as well as her knowledge of social innovation theories also shifted the way the project team was able to design and implement various strategies including the collective impact workshop series. However, despite this success, a stronger connection between the SPWB process and University of Waterloo faculty remains a missed opportunity.³⁹

The need to effectively navigate diverse institutional cultures also posed challenges for enacting shared leadership in the SPWB process. In taking a new systems-level approach to community investment, the Suncor Energy Foundation became a more engaged partner in the work, sitting on the steering committee and seconding a member of their staff, Kim Nordbye, to act as Project Manager. Within this new role, they at times acted as a participant in the process and at other times acted as its funder, holding greater sway over its direction. Social profit agencies and members of the project team were entrenched within cultures that perceive funders as authority figures rather than full partners in the work. Community stakeholders also tended to give Suncor's views greater weight as a funder in Wood Buffalo. As such, there were times when tensions surfaced as a result of this uncertainty around SEF's role. However, as SPWB represented a new way of working for SEF and project stakeholders, the process was a valuable learning opportunity for all involved.

4.7 DEFINING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In multisectoral collaboration, understanding one's role and responsibilities in relation to those of other partners is necessary to effectively move forward toward shared goals. In the SPWB process, the roles and responsibilities of the project team, steering committee, the Suncor Energy Foundation, and the University of Waterloo were not clearly defined at the outset of the project. This allowed for adaptability and responsiveness, enabling activities and roles to develop over time as the goals of the process developed. However, it also made SPWB vulnerable to operating based on assumptions of what was expected as opposed to mutually understood objectives. This challenge was exacerbated by the diversity of professional backgrounds represented in the project team and steering committee, increasing tensions associated with navigating different institutional cultures.

³⁹ See also Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo 2012 Evaluation Report, T. Darisi, The O'Halloran Group, Spring 2013, p. 37-38.

The SPWB project team and steering committee also needed to continually negotiate a balance between pushing initiatives forward and encouraging community ownership of the work. While the project team acted as a backbone organization for systems-level strategies in the social profit sector, they also sought to build this capacity within local social profit organizations. At times this meant actively leading initiatives such as the Heart Awards in 2011 or the Accreditation Preparation Workshop Series in 2012-2013, while at other times it meant stepping back to enable the community to take on greater leadership of the process. This tension is particularly pronounced as the project team and steering committee consider how to transition elements of SPWB's work to local champions.

4.8 NEGOTIATING POLITICS AND UNSPOKEN AGENDAS

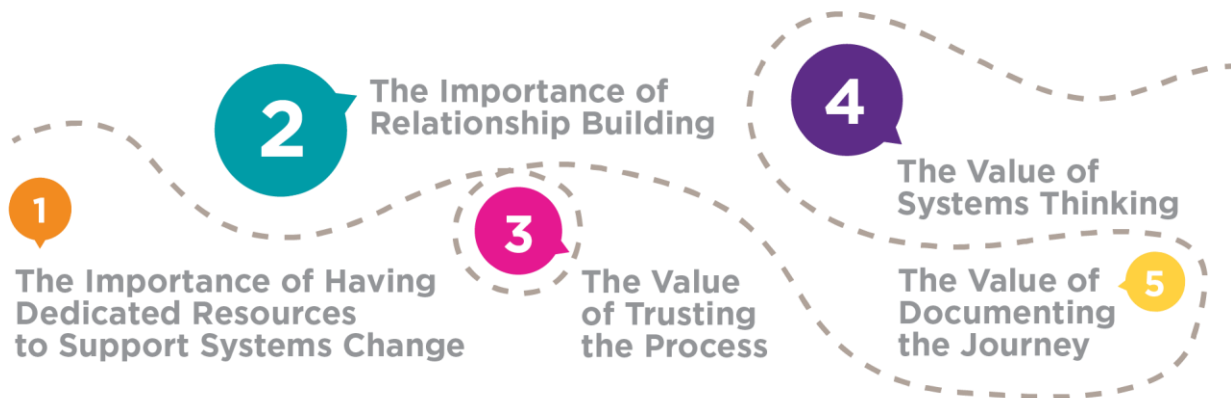
Throughout the SPWB process, the project team and steering committee were confronted with the need to negotiate SPWB's role in a context of existing community politics and unspoken agendas. Like all new initiatives, SPWB entered a community system with established relationships and dynamics between local government, industry, and social profit organizations. These preexisting dynamics influenced perceptions of the project from the outset and had an impact on the information shared by key stakeholders to inform SPWB's strategies.

Over time, building trust among steering committee members and other community leaders helped the SPWB project team to learn more about community history and the interests and perceptions of various groups. This allowed SPWB to situate itself as a neutral player with a goal of strengthening the social profit sector to enhance quality of life in Wood Buffalo. Nevertheless, many nuances of community politics and organizational and individual agendas remained unspoken throughout the process, at times limiting the project team from fully comprehending systems dynamics within the community. Being located outside of Wood Buffalo further diminished the capacity of backbone staff to detect competing agendas and emerging issues, reducing their ability to design strategies to address community needs and resulting in missed opportunities.

5.0 LESSONS LEARNED

Above all, SPWB was a learning journey for the steering committee, project team, and community leaders who engaged in the process as participants and champions. Cultivating shared learning was one of the central activities supported by SPWB in its efforts to steward the process. In many ways, the learnings gleaned from SPWB are outcomes in and of themselves, providing insight into how future social change initiatives could be approached and structured.

In supporting the SPWB process, the Suncor Energy Foundation took a risk, not knowing exactly what would emerge, but knowing that they would learn about the practice of social innovation along the way. The University of Waterloo and community stakeholders in Wood Buffalo also took a risk on SPWB, engaging in a process whose outcomes, opportunities, and challenges were uncertain, hoping to learn something new about how social change can be deliberately fostered in communities. Some of the key learnings from the SPWB process to date include:



5.1 THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING DEDICATED RESOURCES TO SUPPORT SYSTEMS CHANGE

“I have great hope for FuseSocial and other entities that really understand how important it is to put resources behind that backbone work. I think it’s a huge learning for our community to understand this. I hope it also helps funders to see how important it is to support backbone organizations so that we can continue to do some really innovative things in our community.” – Diane Shannon, United Way of Fort McMurray; SPWB Steering Committee Member

One of the lessons learned from the SPWB process is how essential it is to have dedicated resources to support systems-level interventions. For SPWB, the Suncor

Energy Foundation's grant to the University of Waterloo covered operational costs for the backbone team, which included a Director, Nancy Mattes, a Project Officer, Katharine Zywert and, for the final two years, a full-time researcher, Dr. Katharine McGowan. Suncor also seconded Kim Nordbye into the role of Project Manager in Wood Buffalo for eighteen months, continuing to support the position part-time when it transitioned to Ifeatu Efu in early 2014.⁴⁰

The project team played an essential role in the SPWB process, co-designing strategies, assessing community context and changing course as necessary, conducting secondary research, brokering stakeholders, engaging community leaders, conducting primary research about the SPWB process, facilitating learning events, convening conversations, communicating (website, newsletters, correspondence, twitter/Facebook), reporting back to the community, and supporting the developmental evaluation.

Despite their commitment to SPWB, it would have been exceedingly difficult for steering committee members (all of whom lead active community lives and hold important positions in industry, local government, and the social profit sector) to steward the social change process on their own. SPWB's experience demonstrates the value of having dedicated resources to support the process, enabling the project team to take ownership of a range of essential backbone tasks, engaging community leaders as needed to make more effective use of their time and energy.

5.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF RELATIONSHIP BUILDING



The importance of relationship building also emerged as a key learning from the SPWB process. As described in section 3.4, building strong relationships was a central component of stewarding the process. As former Project Manager Kim Nordbye insists, this work requires a considerable

investment of time, and is an ongoing activity; "You don't just do it once and then you're done." On the contrary, implementing systems-level interventions requires

⁴⁰ Suncor seconded a staff person into this role in response to challenges encountered when attempting to hire a Project Manager through the University of Waterloo. When the Project Manager position was assessed by Human Resources at the University of Waterloo, the salary grade and educational requirements for the role erected barriers to recruiting a qualified candidate in Wood Buffalo.

social change agents to forge and then maintain strong working relationships with stakeholders in strategic positions in the systems they are trying to shift, negotiating tensions and conflicts as they arise.

For SPWB, cultivating strong relationships involved building enough trust that participants were able to openly share relevant interests with the group and discuss their priorities, barriers, knowledge of upcoming events or initiatives, and insight into systems dynamics. Building relationships among participants from business, government, and the social profit sector enabled community leaders to work toward common goals, develop shared understandings of issues, and collaborate to create innovative solutions.

5.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF TRUSTING THE PROCESS

“This was less about quick wins or identifiable successes, and more about the process. I am guilty of pushing for tangible and saleable outcomes, but I can see now that I was wrong - though I keenly remember the compelling driver to convince the naysayers. Almost four years along, and we can clearly see how the process has facilitated organic strengthening of organizations, created meaningful partnerships, and in one case, inspired an amazing merger of three organizations.” - Russell Thomas, United Way of Fort McMurray; Birdsong Connections; SPWB Steering Committee Member, from his Blog Middle Age Bulge, June 4th 2014

A social change process like SPWB can inspire changes that are difficult to see or that cannot be fully attributed to one initiative, at times creating the impression that the process is moving too slowly or that it has drifted off course. Achieving systems level changes requires constant reevaluation of strategies and direction, repeated check-ins with community



stakeholders, and a willingness to try things without knowing whether they will succeed or fail. Of course, the ability to trust in the process is strongly connected to one's trust of the project's co-designers, co-leaders, and participants, further emphasizing the importance of building strong relationships for social change work. For SPWB, the value of trusting the process was one of the most important lessons

learned, one that manifested differently for different stakeholder groups. For the SPWB project team, trusting the process involved building skills for adaptive leadership. This meant learning to listen to community leaders as they shared their insights about conditions and trends in the community, learning to value discomfort and ambiguity, and finding ways to act strategically to move the process forward. It also meant consistently working with the steering committee, the Suncor Energy Foundation, and the University of Waterloo to redefine and clarify roles and responsibilities, particularly related to the leadership of the process.

As discussed in Section 4, the responsiveness of systems level interventions to shifting community conditions can create the impression that the work is disorganized and lacks accountability. In addition, the amount of dialogue required to understand the issues well enough to develop strategies for systems change can often feel overwhelming and unnecessary, especially in a community with a pioneering, action-oriented culture. For the community, learning to trust the SPWB process therefore involved becoming more comfortable with dialogue as a form of action and with changing strategies in response to community needs in order to achieve long-term goals. Carole Bouchard, Director of Community Services states that for the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, one of the biggest learnings about the SPWB process was “Having patience. Allowing process to happen. Recognizing that process changes outcomes.”

5.4 THE VALUE OF SYSTEMS THINKING

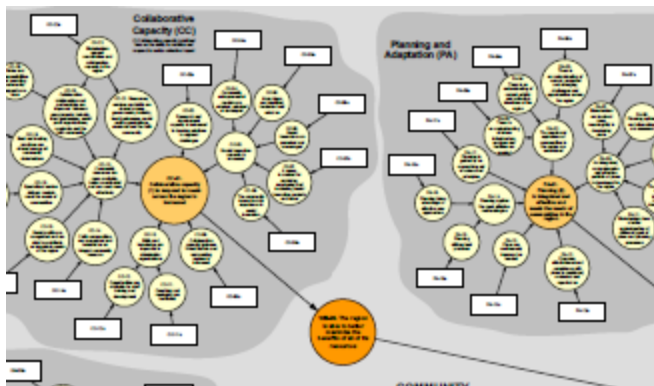
“There are different ways of doing things, and it doesn’t have to be how it used to be. That’s important for Wood Buffalo to understand. As good as we are, we can be better.” – TJ Carabeo, Some Other Solutions; Participant in the Collective Impact Workshop Series for Youth-Related Issues

Community feedback events conducted in June 2014 as well as interviews with project stakeholders revealed that one of the most important learnings related to the SPWB process is the value of systems thinking. Participants described how SPWB activities helped them to perceive the community as a system with multiple, interrelated actors, each with their own role to play in increasing quality of life throughout the region.



Social profit organizations also reported that the concepts and approaches introduced by SPWB helped them to think beyond their own organizational priorities toward what would be best for the community as a whole. Developing a culture of system-thinking in Wood Buffalo’s social profit sector has already begun to inspire increased sharing of knowledge and resources between organizations as well as new collaborations on key issues (See section 3). Diane Shannon, Executive Director of the United Way of Fort McMurray and SPWB Steering Committee Member, states;

I think SPWB has helped people learn how important it is to work toward something that’s stronger and better overall.



For instance, the Wood Buffalo Strategy Roadmap highlights a wide range of outcomes required to achieve community resilience in the face of rapid regional growth, and represents a new way of working toward collective community goals. Stewarded by FuseSocial, the Strategy Roadmap incorporates outcomes from community strategies including the

Social Plan, Municipal Development Plan, Envision, Convergence, Rural Service Delivery Plan, Diversity Plan, Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo strategies, Economic Development Strategy, Nexus North Design Lab – Followup Report, and the Oil Sands Community Alliance.⁴¹

5.5 THE VALUE OF DOCUMENTING THE JOURNEY

The SPWB process also demonstrated the value that documenting the journey can have for systems-level interventions. As discussed in section 2.4, SPWB consistently collected the knowledge generated by participants during conversations and events and reflected it back to the community in the form of meeting notes, reports, monthly newsletters, and the SPWB website. These communications helped to maintain the engagement of key stakeholders throughout the process and contributed to building relationships and trust among project partners. In addition, participants noted the value of being able to return to the learnings generated by the SPWB process later when seeking to apply new concepts and tools to their work. Documenting the journey also provided a way to capture the learning for the Suncor Energy Foundation, assisting them to initiate similar processes in other communities.

⁴¹ <http://fusesocial.ca/cause-view/strategy-roadmap/>

6.0 CONCLUSION

Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo (SPWB) was the beginning of a process designed to build capacity in the social profit sector and to create an environment in which a culture of social innovation could emerge. Community leaders in Wood Buffalo, the Suncor Energy Foundation, and the University of Waterloo stewarded the SPWB process, collaborating on the development of interventions that built capacity, cultivated social innovation, and enabled collective impact.

Between 2011 and the fall of 2014, SPWB has contributed to outcomes in Wood Buffalo including increased organizational capacity, enhanced skills and knowledge, an elevated profile for the social profit sector, stronger relationships and networks, increased collaboration, stronger collective voice, space for new conversations, and expanded systems-level thinking. At the same time, the process has encountered significant challenges and tensions such as engaging stakeholders, ensuring adequate understanding of the process, building trust, balancing dialogue and action, having a backbone team located outside the community, navigating institutional cultures, defining roles and responsibilities, and negotiating politics and unspoken agendas.

SPWB was also an opportunity for deep learning about the practice of social innovation. While each outcome, challenge, and tension reflects its own lesson about the SPWB process, other central learnings include the importance of having dedicated resources to support systems change, the importance of relationship building, the value of trusting the process, the value of systems thinking, and the value of documenting the process.

While this report summarizes what SPWB has accomplished so far for the benefit of community stakeholders in Wood Buffalo, the SPWB project team and steering committee also hope that this learning will have even broader implications, informing similar social change processes in other communities. In seeking to apply the learning from the SPWB process, social change leaders are invited to reflect on the activities, outcomes, challenges, and lessons learned from the SPWB process, considering how these compare to their own work.

Although it may be impossible to create a model that would apply to every community, the ways in which the SPWB project team and steering committee stewarded the process (by participating in shared learning, modelling shared leadership, building relationships, ensuring ongoing communication, designing strategies to meet community needs, responding to emergence, convening conversations, reflecting back, and conducting developmental evaluation) illustrate

the kinds of activities that are required to support systems change work during its early stages.

As SPWB transitions to a new phase with the end of the involvement of the University of Waterloo in April 2015, the sustainability of the process is top of mind for the SPWB steering committee and project team. Together, they are working to ensure that what was most valued about the SPWB process continues in Wood Buffalo, and are gathering input from the community to inform these strategies. As Bryan Jackson (Suncor Energy Inc., SPWB Steering Committee Member) notes, SPWB is not a one-off project, but will require continual effort to be sustained;

“You have to have enough people working on it to keep it going. If you stop working on it, the system starts to revert back to what it was. I think it’s just one of those things, it requires constant feeding, constant injection of new thoughts and effort.”

APPENDIX A: SPWB REPORTS⁴²

EVENT AND PROJECT REPORTS

1. Developing a Collective Impact Strategy for Youth-Related Issues Reports

a. Meeting 1

This report presents the proceedings from the first workshop in the series. The report reviews key concepts in collective impact and summarizes the knowledge generated by participants during the meeting. It concludes with results from the workshop evaluation.

b. Meeting 2

The Meeting 2 report reviews the lectures and discussions that took place on Thursday, November 7th and summarizes the knowledge generated during the asset mapping exercise.

c. Meeting 3

This report reviews the exercises, presentations and conversations that took place on February 10th, 2014 and summarizes the initiative's progress toward creating a common agenda for change.

d. Meeting 4

This report reviews new developments related to the common agenda, summarizes discussions about shared measurement and mutually reinforcing activities, and introduces the theory of change for this initiative.

e. Meeting 5

This report presents the updated theory of change, reviews information about backbone organizations, and outlines options for next steps.

⁴² All reports listed in Appendix A are available on SPWB's website, www.socialprosperity.ca/reports-1

2. 2013 Capacity Assessment Survey Results & Strategic Learning Workshop Report

This report summarizes the proceedings from the 2013 Capacity Assessment Survey Results and Strategic Learning Workshop held on November 6th, 2013. At this full day event, Tanya Darisi, Director at the O'Halloran Group, presented findings from Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo's 2013 Capacity Assessment Survey and answered questions about the data. Dr. Katharine McGowan, Post-Doctoral Fellow in Social Prosperity at the University of Waterloo, then led participants to dig deeper into key issues using a social innovation tool. In the afternoon, Cathy Brothers, Executive Director in Residence at Capacity Waterloo Region, worked with attendees to develop big, bold strategies for the social profit sector. This report includes the slide deck from Tanya Darisi's 2013 Capacity Assessment Survey Results Presentation as well as participant evaluations of the workshop.

3. Staff Recruitment and Retention Report

On November 5th, 2013, Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo (SPWB) convened a conversation to explore how all sectors in Wood Buffalo can work together to improve staff recruitment and retention and to reduce the negative impacts of high turnover in the community.

The goal of this meeting was to begin developing strategies that will help improve recruitment, retention, and succession planning in the social profit sector. Strong social profit organizations improve community resilience and offer programs and services that reinforce the ability of other sectors to attract and retain talented employees.

The report also includes a summary of key facts and trends related to staff recruitment and retention in Canada's social profit sector with a focus on Alberta.

4. Collaborating for Collective Impact Report

This report presents the proceedings from Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo's Collaborating for Collective Impact workshop, held on May 24th 2013 in Fort McMurray, Alberta. The morning session explored the essential elements of collective impact initiatives and offered an opportunity for small multisectoral groups to discuss how collective impact could be implemented in Wood Buffalo. In the afternoon, the focus shifted to shared measurement, delving deeper into this important component of collective impact.

5. Accreditation Preparation Workshop Series, 2012-2013 Report

This report details the creation of the Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo Accreditation Preparation Workshop Series from development to delivery, presenting workshop evaluations and reflections from the project team. It concludes with key learnings and recommendations for future initiatives.

6. Shifting the Social Benefit Sector

This report examines the nature of Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo's unique contribution to the changes it has observed within the social benefit sector and concludes by introducing priority areas for action in 2013-2014.

7. Social Innovation Workshop Series Report

This report details the creation of the Social Innovation Workshop Series from development to delivery, presenting workshop evaluations and reflections from the project team. It concludes with key learnings and recommendations for future initiatives.

8. June 2012 Update Report & Action Plan

This report presents an update on Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo's activities and plans. Learn how the project works, how it will achieve its goals, what SPWB will be doing in 2012-2013, what has been done so far, and how you can take action.

9. SPWB January 2012 Report*

* This report was prepared by [Overlap Associates Inc.](#)

In January 2012, SPWB events in Fort McMurray provided opportunities for community members to provide feedback on the interim Social Prosperity Framework, shared space initiative and help design a sustainable funding model. Read all the details in this report.

10. Leading Canada in Building Prosperous Communities

The Suncor Energy Foundation has played a major role in the development of Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo. This article discusses the initiative's history and its ambitious plans.

11. February 2011 Community Conversation Report

The first multisectoral conversation organized by SPWB was held on February 1, 2011. Community leaders from business, government and the nonprofit sector met to identify issues within the nonprofit sector and to develop a plan to identify transformational solutions.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT SURVEY REPORTS*

*Capacity Assessment Survey Reports completed by [The O'Halloran Group](#)

1. SPWB 2013 Capacity Assessment Brief

This brief presents a summary of the findings from the 2013 Capacity Assessment Report that was prepared by Tanya Darisi, Director of The O'Halloran Group.

2. November 2012 Capacity Assessment Survey Results

This report presents the complete results of the 2012 Capacity Assessment Survey.

3. September 2012 Nonprofit Capacity Assessment Survey Results

This report summarizes baseline data from the 2012 Capacity Assessment Survey.

SOCIAL PROSPERITY WOOD BUFFALO ANNUAL REPORTS

1. Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo 2013 Dashboard Report

This report presents the highlights of Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo's work in 2013.

2. Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo 2012 Dashboard Report

This report presents the highlights of Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo's work in 2012.

3. Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo 2011 Dashboard Report

This report presents the highlights of Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo's work in 2011.

SOCIAL PROSPERITY WOOD BUFFALO EVALUATION REPORTS*

*SPWB Evaluation Reports completed by [The O'Halloran Group](#).

1. Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo 2013 Evaluation Report

This report summarizes findings from the 2013 developmental evaluation conducted by The O'Halloran Group. It reviews evaluation methods, presents the results of the 2013 Capacity Assessment Survey, discusses SPWB's contribution to the social profit sector, and explores how the process can move into its concluding transition.

2. Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo 2012 Evaluation Report

This report summarizes findings from the 2012 developmental evaluation, conducted by The O'Halloran Group. It explores the context of the SPWB process and the concepts underlying the work, describes the methodology used in the evaluation, presents the 2012 Theory of Change, and discusses the evaluation findings, including an overview of activities, positive outcomes, and challenges encountered. It also explores learnings so far and proposes opportunities and directions for 2013.

3. June 2012 Interim Evaluation Report

The Interim Evaluation Report was prepared for the SPWB steering committee in June 2012 to provide a snapshot of SPWB's activities, emerging outcomes, and areas where tension and challenges were arising. It also presented pressing issues and opportunities identified by key stakeholders to inform strategy development.

APPENDIX B: SPWB TOOLS AND RESOURCES

A GUIDE TO SOCIAL PROSPERITY TOOLS

This Guide to Social Prosperity Tools brings together many of the tools that have been introduced at Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo learning events since 2011, providing useful tips on how they might be used in Wood Buffalo. The Guide is intended to help networks, organizations, and individuals apply the learning from Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo workshops.

SOCIAL PROSPERITY WOOD BUFFALO'S ACCREDITATION PREPARATION WORKBOOK

Accreditation builds the capacity of nonprofits and charities by encouraging them to develop strong policies and processes that contribute to increased organizational resilience and impact. Becoming accredited through [Imagine Canada's Standards Program](#) demonstrates to funders and community members that an organization is meeting national standards of excellence.

The Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo Accreditation Preparation Workbook is designed to help nonprofit and charitable organizations prepare to apply for accreditation through Imagine Canada's [Standards Program](#). The Workbook is organized into five sections corresponding to the five areas of the standards: Board Governance, Financial Accountability and Transparency, Fundraising, Staff Management, and Volunteer Involvement. Each section includes explanations of the standards and provides tools and resources to assist organizations to come into compliance.

Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo developed this workbook in partnership with [Imagine Canada](#). It was used for the 2012-2013 Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo Accreditation Preparation Workshop Series. The workbook is no longer active, but explanations of the standards have been incorporated into Imagine Canada's online resource Sector Source.

THE FRAMEWORK FOR BUILDING PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES

Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo's Framework for Building Prosperous Communities presents strategies designed to increase social prosperity by building capacity in the nonprofit sector. The Framework's strategies emerged from extensive conversations between community, business, academic, and government leaders in Wood Buffalo and Waterloo Region. The Framework is informed by best practices and the guidance of community leaders who have generously donated their time and expertise to this project.

THE SOCIAL PROSPERITY TOOLKIT

The Social Prosperity Toolkit is a free online database of high-quality tools and resources designed to build nonprofit capacity and spark community innovation.

The toolkit is organized according to the four areas of focus in the *Framework for Building Prosperous Communities*: people working in the nonprofit sector, nonprofit organizations, nonprofit networks, and the community as a whole. The *Framework for Building Prosperous Communities* emerged out of a year of multisectoral conversations between community leaders in Wood Buffalo and Waterloo Region and is informed by best practices and current scholarship. The Social Prosperity Toolkit supports local priorities, providing tools and resources that address the most pressing needs of community organizations in Wood Buffalo.



This report was written by: Katharine Zywert, Project Officer for Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo with significant input from Nancy Mattes, Director, Dr. Katharine McGowan, Post-Doctoral Fellow, and Tanya Darisi, Director of The O'Halloran Group. A special thanks also goes to Kim Nordbye, Community Investment, Suncor Energy Inc. and Ifeatu Efu, Project Manager for Social Prosperity Wood Buffalo, who reviewed the report.

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