



# Enterprising Rural Families™

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This newsletter is an instrument of the *Enterprising Rural Families: Making It Work* program of the University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service. For further information concerning the Enterprising Rural Families program or on-line course contact [information@eRuralFamilies.org](mailto:information@eRuralFamilies.org) or go to <http://eRuralFamilies.org/>.

## TIP OF THE MONTH:

### GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES

Generational differences can cause conflict in the workplace.

**Veterans or Traditionalists:** born early 1900's to end of World War II; want to build a legacy; expected to build a career with one employer or in a single field; want to make lasting contribution; want support and approval of employer in transitioning to retirement; strong, silent types that rarely give praise, but mean it when they do.

**Baby Boomers:** born 1946-1964; grew up in sixties and felt compelled to change society; question where they've been and where they're going; most hang on to idea of a stellar career; have realized there just isn't enough time for everything and want help attaining balance; forced traditionalist bosses to open up and provide more feedback.

**Generation X:** born 1965-1980; want a portable career, not strongly loyal to a particular employer; constantly reviewing and revising career plans; now have small children and demand time to spend with families and life issues; want instantaneous feedback on the job.

**Millennials:** born 1981-1999; just entering workforce; grew up multi-tasking and interested in parallel careers; over-programmed with concept of balance drummed in by Boomer parents; unknown what they expect of workplace feedback.

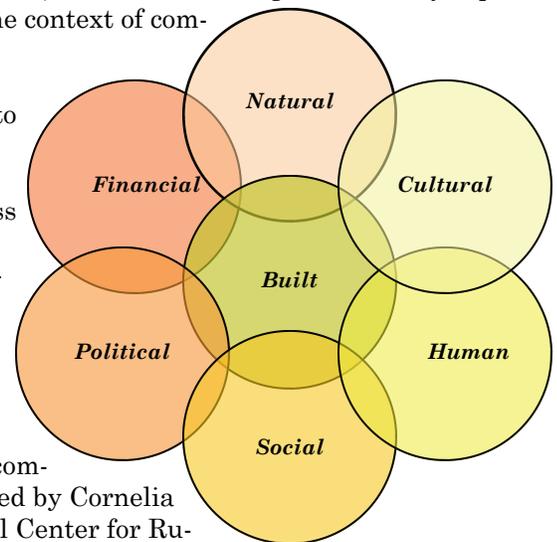
## Understanding How Communities Function Through Community Capitals\*

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Community can be defined in various ways, including communities of interest (i.e. single mothers, farmers and ranchers, Scandinavians in Minnesota, etc.) and communities of place (i.e. residents of a political subdivision, neighborhood, town, city, or even country). The concept of community of place is used in The Enterprising Rural Families (ERF) model, even though community capitals could be defined and used in the context of communities of interest also.

Community capital is a term used to categorize resources available to a community to sustain itself and grow and expand. Just as a business uses various resources to operate and/or grow (management, employees, physical inventory, money and credit, equipment, etc.), the resources communities need to function can be identified and categorized in various ways. One useful model for defining and measuring community resources has been developed by Cornelia Flora of the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development. Just as business resources can be measured and increased in various ways, so community capitals can be measured and affected.



Flora has categorized the resources used by communities into seven parts – natural, cultural, human, social, political, financial, and built. Even though they are interrelated, let's look at each of these capitals separately.

### Natural Capital

Some examples of natural capital would be items like air quality, wind, and sun; the quality and quantity of water; the amount and fertility of soil and how much is available for ecological uses, for agricultural use, for commercial and housing development. Other natural capitals might be the number and types of wildlife and plant life and the vistas of open space, sunsets, mountains, etc.

The amount and type of natural capital within a community provides opportunities for various lifestyles, vocations, and recreation. It also provides limits to what is practical and/or ecologically safe and sustainable.

The amount of natural capital within a community can be measured by



assessing various characteristics like landscape, scenery, outdoor recreation opportunities, soils, air and water quality, wildlife, types and amount of vegetation, and the land development policies which have been adopted. Investments into growing or strengthening this capital would be in such things as preserving, restoring, enhancing, and conserving the environmental and natural resource features of the area.

### Cultural Capital

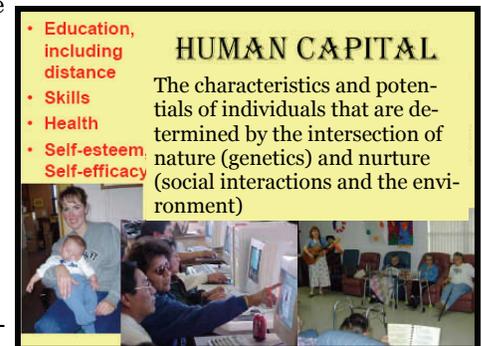
Culture is an aggregation of the traditions, values, experiences and expectations of a group of people. Communities develop a generalized culture the same as families and people groups. Usually the culture of a community becomes more pronounced as it matures in age and has little interaction with, or influx of, population from outside. Culture gives community members a sense of belonging to a place and an understanding of what to expect within the community, as well as influences how the outside world is viewed. It helps them know their place within the community structure and what is valued and discouraged.

Cultural capital can be measured by the amount and type of community activities, festivals, endeavors, etc. which represent various interests and groups within the community. The presence or absence of these cultural occasions indicate the degree and/or type of cultural capital within the community.

### Human Capital

The sum of such things as the skills, health, self-esteem, self-sufficiency, creativity, diversity, and education of the people within the community comprises the human capital that is available to the community to perform and support internal functions and external connections. The combination of people, their experience, and internal resources are unique to each community.

The potential of community individuals is determined by the genetics (nature) and social interaction and environment (nurture) to which they are exposed. The human capital is expanded by improving work expertise through increased use of the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the local people. This capital can be measured by new skills acquired; new training programs established; health, child care and workforce improvements; community population and age changes.



### Social Capital

Social capital is defined as the relationships that occur between individuals within the community with a certain degree of frequency and comfort. The more people relate and the more comfortable they are with each other the more social resource the community has to work with. The amount and depth of relationships formed is influenced by such factors as mutual trust, group memberships, collective identity, a sense of a shared future with common vision and goals, working together, and local leadership. Social capital is increased if members of the community can accept alternative views and embrace diversity of race, experience, religion, etc. Social capital can be lost if local politics create polarization and division among individuals and/or groups within the population.

Social capital can be either “bonding” or “bridging.” Bonding creates tight, exclusive social groups with a strong distinction between insiders and outsiders. This type of relationship base often restricts communities to focus on a single accepted answer to an issue. On the other hand, generation of various validated alternatives tends to be generated by a “bridging” mentality, which encourages more open and flexible networks and less strict boundaries, allowing new members and ideas to influence the group.

Strong social capital provides for improved regional initiative, responsibility and adaptability due to a shared vision, building on internal resources and looking for ways to respond to constant change. This strength causes communities to leave behind the mental attitude that they are the victims of circumstances and helps them function with the sense that they control their own destiny.

The amount and strength of social capital within a community is indicated by such things as new groups formed and partners involved in dealing with local issues. These groups and partnerships have an increased amount of local and non-local participation within the community. Increased and diverse participation within the community allows for new strategic planning with new and more effective leadership. Investments in social capital are indicated by the risks taken to express differences of opinion, and the number of organizations involved in community issues and activities. The number of youth and general public involved in civic and community issues and the

amount of input secured through links to outside sources influences the growth of social capital. Encouraging a diversity of representation and membership on appointed and decision-making boards grows the social capital available to a community.

### Political Capital

The ability of a group to influence standards, regulations and the enforcement of those regulations which determine the distribution of other resources and the way they are used within the community is political capital. Political capital is reflected by the organization, connections, voice, power, level of governmental organization, and the ability of government to garner resources for the use of the community.

A community with strong political capital shares a vision for a sustainable future and organizes themselves to work together toward that end. They feel comfortable around and working with powerful people and use those connections to garner support for their causes.

New community and governmental connections, developed at various levels, and increasing the ability to secure resources for the community through elected officials, are measures of the amount of political capital present within a community. A community can invest in political capital by strengthening the nature and amount of relationships between local boards and elected and appointed local, county, state, regional, tribal, and federal governmental entities.

### Financial Capital

Financial capital is often measured in the amount of dollars available, but also includes such things as savings, debt and investment capital, taxes, grants, charitable donations, contracts generated, exemption from regulations and poverty rates. Strong financial capital is indicated by an appropriately diverse and healthy economy, reducing poverty, increasing efficiency and economic diversity, and increasing the average amount of assets possessed by those who live in the community.

New financial instruments established and bond issues passed, as well as the amount of outside funding obtained to improve local infrastructure and the business community, are measurements of financial capital. Also a reduction in the poverty level of the community indicates an improved financial capital. Communities can invest in financial capital by the types of materials supplied for building infrastructure and the source and size of financial support for local needs, as well as various mechanisms put in place to leverage (increase the affect of) the financial support supplied to the community.

### Built Capital

This includes the human constructed infrastructure within the community used as tools for support and production of the other six capitals. Built capital includes the physical items put in place to enhance other capitals by serving multiple users, being locally maintained and improved. It links local people together in some equitable fashion as well as linking the local people, institutions and businesses to the outside world.

You can measure built capital by gaining an understanding of the amount and type of physical infrastructure in place and/or improved or strengthened. This infrastructure would include such items as telecommunications, educational facilities, governmental and community buildings, transportation, business and health care districts, industrial parks, indoor recreational and cultural facilities, housing, churches, and city and energy services. Investment into this capital takes the form of spending and/or obtaining funds, partnerships, sponsorships, etc. to add to or improve and expand the existence, type, and amount of various infrastructure facilities, such as those mentioned above.

### A Spiraling of Capital Assets

Growth or decline of capitals within a community tend to spiral up or down depending on an interaction of numerous factors.

A decline in the amount and strength of community capitals is indicated first by a loss of jobs which leads to a decline in population within the community. This causes a decrease in the average per capita income which translates to less real wealth for community members to pass on to the next generation.



Improving and strengthening of community capitals and assets is brought about by a bridging of social capital with outside expertise, used together with internal wisdom, involving youth and supporting entrepreneurship and capturing a portion of the wealth transfer between generations within the community. This leads to increased cultural capital which encourages local philanthropy (giving) to provide for ongoing funding needs within the community.

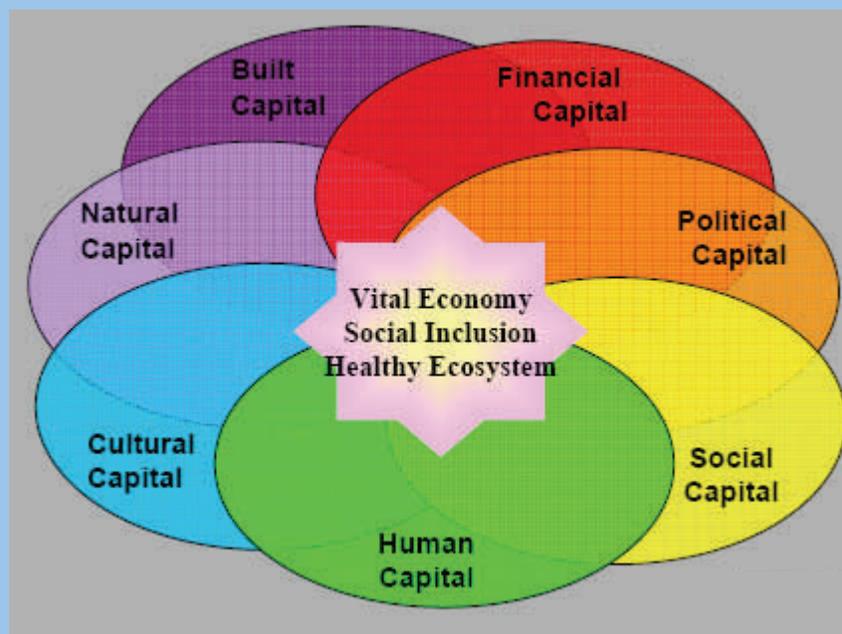
### Using Community Capitals

Using an example of leadership development training, one can see how the community capitals interact. If a community initiates a leadership development institute, this investment in human capital might impact financial capital as leaders use their skills to acquire new funds and better manage existing funds. Social capital may then be impacted as members of the leadership program develop new networks among themselves and new bridges among the groups with whom they interact. The same leadership course might expand political capital by providing information about how the political system works and how to access resources with the community; it could also help participants develop key linkages to other sources of political power. Finally, the interaction with representatives from different community groups may expand their cultural capital in the community as people learn the value the voices and heritages of others.

\*Written with permission from:

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**Communities work best when all these sectors are engaged.**



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