

# Evaluating the Evaluation: Assessing the use of Program Evaluation for Capacity Building in a Nonprofit Organisation

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Environmental Design for acceptance, a Master's Degree Project entitled Evaluating the Evaluation: Assessing the Use of Program Evaluation For Capacity Building in a Nonprofit Organization submitted by Denise Won Hey Cheng in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Environmental Design.



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## Abstract

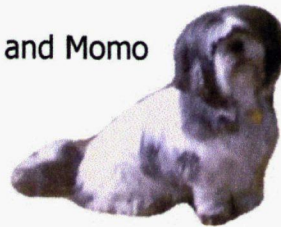
The Duck Soup program was selected for this project as an example of a working group trying to build capacity in the community. Moreover, the program evaluations were also examined to determine if they had an impact on the program's ability to develop capacity. Through participant observation, key informant interviews and a review of the archival documents it was found that the working group was successful in building capacity within the partners and program evaluation had been a useful tool for program development. Based on SWOT analysis, a theoretical model was also developed that linked the weaknesses, threats and opportunities of the program to the working group's strengths and their use of program evaluation. The theoretical model was then used in a general application for other nonprofit organisations attempting to build capacity. It was determined that a working group has to have a strategy for program planning, strong leadership and utilize program evaluation to analyse and determine their course of program development. There also has to be an acknowledgment that most programs will encounter some limitations, which may or may not have plausible solutions.

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- My roommates: Two guys, who like me, also keep bizarre hours. Thanks for not complaining when I could not get around to cleaning because I was a slave to my computer.
- Feeding Calgary's Children and their partners: Thank you for welcoming me into your group and helping me with my key informant interviews.
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- God: My salvation

To Mom, Dad, Karen and Momo



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## **Chapter 1**

## **Research Methods and Design**

### **1.1 Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this project was to determine if and how capacity could be built in a nonprofit organisation by a program evaluation approach or intervention. "Capacity building allows an organisation to understand and deal with its developmental needs in a broad context and in a sustainable manner" (Briar-Lawson, 1998). Learning how to build capacity is more important to nonprofit organisations that are currently involved in community development and for those who wish to use it in planning new programs related to community awareness and social development. In this project, a specific program (Duck Soup) was analysed to determine the impact of its evaluations on current program. Knowledge generated from this project might have future implications for the way capacity building could be implemented or integrated and evaluated within the program planning function of this and other nonprofit organisations.

### **1.2 Objectives**

The objectives of this project were:

- To define and understand the role of capacity building within nonprofit organisations;
- To apply program evaluation to capacity building at the nonprofit level;
- To identify the differences in objectives between service providers and the user group within a nonprofit organization; and
- To develop the process of capacity building and program planning for the nonprofit sector. These might include specific process recommendations for the selected organisation as well as general proposals that could apply to all nonprofit groups.

### 1.3 Concept Analysis of Capacity Building

In this section, I will outline the process leading to the research design and methods. A concept analysis of capacity building was done prior to outlining the criteria for selecting a nonprofit organisation. The method of doing a concept analysis assisted in “clarifying the concept of interest and it also presented a better conception of the methods” that best suited this project (Rodgers, 1989). This analysis attempted to identify the surrogate terms of capacity building and an appropriate realm for data collection. It also established the attributes, references, antecedents, consequences of capacity building, which will be discussed in Chapter 8.

#### 1.3.1 Surrogate Terms of Capacity Building from the Concept Analysis

Capacity building can be defined based upon its surrogate terms and relevant uses of the concept. “These surrogate terms serve as manifestations of the concept of interest” (Rodger, 1988). The surrogate terms that I used were: community capacity, community building, community development social capital and asset building.

*“Community capacity* is characterised by a community’s ability to identify, mobilize, and address social problems” (Poole, 1997). It fosters the conditions that strengthen the characteristics of communities enabling them to plan, develop, implement and maintain effective community programs. The term has been used interchangeably with “community competence and empowerment” (Parker et al, 1999). However, these concepts tend to differ from one other. A

*competent community* is defined as one in which the various parts of the community are able to collaborate effectively in identifying the problems and needs of the community. "They can also achieve a working consensus on goals and priorities and can agree on ways and means to implement the agreed-on goal, thus collaborating effectively in the required actions" (Parker et al, 1999).

*Empowerment* refers to the individuals and the community collectively using their skills and resources to meet their respective needs.

Another related term is *community building*, which refers to "activities, practices and policies that support and foster positive connections among individuals, groups, organisations, neighbourhoods, geographics and functional communities" (Weil, 1996). It is the ongoing comprehensive effort that strengthens the norms and supports the problem-solving resources of the community.

*Community development* is a surrogate term, which "highlights self-help, mutual aid, and education within a community setting" (Karabanow, 1999). This term is also enmeshed with social justice alternatives to foster social change. Community development is used in local development leading to social action strategies.

"*Social action* aims to create change by building powerful organisations at the community level" (Checkoway, 1995). Every community has the capacity for social action and it requires no natural resources or machines; it is "invisible." "Social capital is a feature of the social structure, not the individual actors within the social structure; it is an ecological characteristic" (Lochner et al., 1999). It

lends legitimacy to the idea that each person is not alone in a community but rather in constant relation to one another. "The successful community is a network of individuals-in-community" (Wilson, 1997). Social capital is also linked to economic development in that it can increase a community's productive potential in several ways. It promotes "business networking, shared leads, equipment and services, joint ventures, faster information flows and more agile transactions" (Wilson, 1997). An atmosphere conducive to economic activity results in a culture that will solve community problems collaboratively.

Social capital has several related constructs including: "collective efficacy, psychological sense of community, neighbourhood cohesion and community competence" (Lochner et al., 1999). "*Collective efficacy* is the social cohesion among neighbours combined with their willingness to intervene on behalf of the common good" (ibid). It can be measured in two subscales: social cohesion and informal social control. Social cohesion can be measured by asking respondents questions based upon their trust and reliance of their neighbours. Whereas, informal social control asks neighbours about the likelihood that they will intervene in certain situations that have a negative impact on their neighbourhood. "*Psychological sense of community* is the collective characteristic, not to individual relationships and behaviours; and that, being an aggregate variable; it is most usefully measured and studied at the community level" (ibid). To measure the psychological sense of community a researcher might consider questions concerning the level of involvement of the respondents in their neighbourhood organisations and activities. "*Neighbourhood cohesion*

refers to the social interactions, by which residents establish social connections that are either personal or at the neighbourhood level" (ibid). In analysing the instrumental and social support within a community, a researcher attempts to measure the networks and interactions within a neighbourhood.

*Asset building* is related to community revitalization and broadly encompasses all potential resources in a community. This refers not only to "financial resources but also to the talents and skills of individuals, organisational capacity and political connections and so on" (Page-Adams & Sherraden, 1997). Asset building is helping impoverished families save for education, home ownership and micro-enterprise. These community development programs are built in part on the idea that assets have multiple positive effects on well-being.

### 1.3.2 Conclusions from the Concept Analysis of Capacity Building

The "act" of capacity building is dependent on the specific needs of a community and it thrives in a community atmosphere. Capacity building is not something that results from one person working alone. It requires the vision and the support of many people to be successful. Thus to build capacity successfully we must understand the people whom it serves. The question that should be asked is: Who are the people of the community and what do they need? Understandably there may be multiple needs and meeting them all may take considerable resources. Nevertheless, if the needs can be met then presumably their capacity will have been achieved. Therefore, capacity building is a means to potentially satisfying the needs of the clients or user group.

Capacity building is not structured and it can be tailored for a community.

"It is a response to the multi-dimensional processes of change, not a set of discrete or pre-packaged technical interventions intended to bring about a pre-defined outcome" (Maton, 2000). A community can borrow on the techniques of other communities. For example, two communities may have similar problems but only one community implements a capacity building initiative, which is successful. The other community could then implement a similar program but alter some aspects to meet their own needs. Capacity building then becomes an experience that can be studied to teach and assist others.

#### 1.4 Study Variables for this Project

In this project, I was interested in the outcomes when program evaluation is applied to capacity building in a nonprofit organisation. Therefore, one of the study variables was capacity building. This variable can be defined separately: the term "capacity" refers to the ability to receive or the ability to perform some function and "building" refers to producing gradually or developing to establish a foundation or a base. A generic definition of capacity building, therefore, would be the gradual production and establishment of a foundation or base to enable a function. Capacity building is an approach to development and not something separate from it. The interventions must address the unique needs of an organisation in its particular stage of development at a specific time. There is no single way to build capacity.

Program evaluation is the other variable in this project. "Evaluation is a useful for the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics and outcomes of programs, personnel and products for use by specific people to reduce uncertainties, improve effectiveness and make decisions with regard to what those programs, personnel or products are doing" (Dehar et al., 1993). Depending on the stage of development, evaluations can vary and are tailored to fit the program.

### 1.5 Criteria for the Selection of the Nonprofit Organization

The nonprofit agency that was selected for this project was primarily involved with capacity building. Some of the other inclusion criteria that were required involved social equity, collective responsibility, problem-solving, increasing options and improving the health of their respective clients. The organisation was analysed for its policy and program impact to develop a clear notion of what it does and what it accomplishes. This project also required that a program evaluation be completed on the program of interest within the agency. The partners of the selected organisation had the opportunity to discuss their opinions on the program planning and the delivery of services within the organisation. This allows for a thorough evaluation of the linkages between the nonprofit organisation's goals, objectives and activities. In addition, the relationship between the service providers and the user groups of the organisation were addressed. The program was analysed to determine if there



were any discrepancies among the stakeholders with regard to the capacity building efforts of the organisation.

#### 1.5.1 Program Description

For this project, the Duck Soup program was selected out of four programs that had recently undergone a program evaluation which were identified through a contact person at the United Way. It was through this individual that I contacted the Director of Feeding Calgary's Children and was able to gain access to the partners of the program and the school lunchroom supervisors. I was able to gather data on their organisation and began determining whom I would interview and how I would proceed in my data collection methods.

The program was started in September of 2000 and is "a pilot project of Feeding Calgary's Children and was developed in response to the number of children who were found to be malnourished by a City of Calgary study" (McLean, 2002). Feeding Calgary's Children and their partners came together to provide hot soup to some of Calgary's neediest children at their schools. The partners include Meals on Wheels, Community Kitchens, and Food and Nutrition at School (FANS), which is a division of the Boys and Girls Clubs. Feeding Calgary's Children oversees and coordinates the program, Meals on Wheels cooks the soup, FANS provides the delivery service and Community Kitchens provides the buns and, occasionally dessert. Canadian Pacific initially provided funding for this program. It was the opinion of one of my key informants, that this program

was unique because it involved the not-for-profit, governmental and the business sectors. The soup is served to children at four schools in the city located in areas that were identified as having lower socio-economic backgrounds. A logic model illustrating the activities, objectives and goals of the Duck Soup program is located in Appendix A. The model was developed based upon McLean's (2002) strategic action plan for the Feeding Calgary's Children initiative.

#### 1.5.2 The Three Phases of the Duck Soup program

Phase 1 of the program began in September 2000 and ran until December 2000. Meals on Wheels made the soup and froze it in ice cream pails to be kept in storage at Meals on Wheels and Community Kitchens. The schools would order the soup as their supplies were depleted but they had to be able to store, thaw and re-heat the soup for each lunch hour. This format allowed the schools to serve the soup any day of the week and there was a variety in the soup selection. However, many problems arose from this initial attempt at feeding the children and the program was discontinued. Phase 2 was a brief attempt to use canned soup but this method was also unsuccessful. However, it was during discussions regarding the evaluation for the funder, Canadian Pacific that the partners examined alternate ways to deliver the soup. In Phase 3, the soup was delivered hot to the schools beginning again in November 2001. The process of making the soup had to change. Meals on Wheels now had to make the soup on Tuesday and Thursday mornings and put it in the thermos containers just prior to the driver's arrival. Duck Soup was then delivered to each of the schools and

was ready to be ladled out and served to the students. At the time of writing, the students were out of school for the summer holidays and the program was on hold. A timeline of the program and the evaluations can be found in Fig. 1

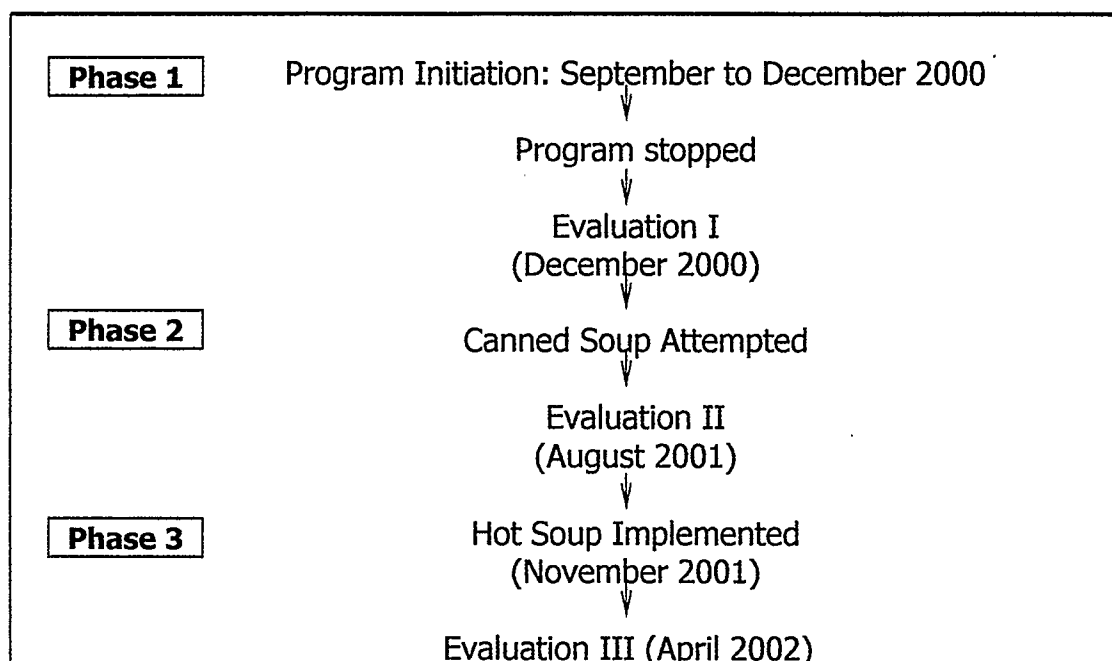


Fig. 1 The timeline of the Duck Soup Program

### 1.5.3 The Duck Soup Program Evaluations

The Duck Soup program has undergone three program evaluations. The first was a small internal evaluation completed when the program ended its initial twelve-week run in December 2000. This evaluation was a process evaluation done internally and for the working group to assess Phase 1. A second evaluation was carried out as a requirement for the funder in August 2001 to assess the outcomes of the program. After the program was reinstated in November 2001, a third evaluation was done as a program assessment to

determine the working group's progress, the level of satisfaction among the lunchroom staff and the students and to identify any problems that might exist.

## 1.6 Design for Data Collection

The data collection methods selected for this case study were archival data analysis, participant observation and key informant interview. The archival data analysis was performed prior to the participant observation and key informant interviews which were completed in conjunction with each other. Most of the information was collected from sustained contact with the subjects in their normal surroundings. The collected data was narrative in nature, that is, rich in description of people, places and conversations. Therefore, I decided to analyse the data by using a qualitative process.

### 1.6.1 Participant Observation

Participant observation is a means for investigating a social setting. This methodology helps us "experience daily life firsthand and have a better understanding of local practices that might otherwise remain obscure or strange to the passive observer" (Cohen, 2000). Participant observation is a method that relies on watching, listening, asking questions and collecting information. The initial visits of a study should not be rigidly focused on preconceptions. A researcher may enter a study expecting to find things that do not exist. Thus researchers should be willing to modify expectations and be responsive in their strategies. "The role of the participant observer is to become a functional group

member, directly experiencing the social process and system controlling member behaviour" (Glancy, 1986). Therefore, the data gathered could include the participant's subjective experience, observational data and interview responses.

No covert research methods were used in this project and there is always the concern over the objectivity of the participant in the process of observation. Depending on the stage of the research, the amount of participation will vary. However, the questions of how much, with whom, and how to participate will emerge as the research gains a focus. According to Adler & Adler (1994): "The nature of the researcher's observations will inevitably shift in range and character from the early stages of an observational project". A researcher may begin "unfocused" with observations that are mostly descriptive in nature. They may choose to ask broad questions. However, "after the observers become more familiar with their settings and grasp the key social groups and processes in operation, they may distinguish features of the scenes that most interest them" (ibid). The research is likely to shift to more purposeful observations and emerging research questions. "The observers focus on establishing and refining characteristics of relations among the elements they have previously selected as objects of study" (ibid). Through the stages of observation there is a "funnelling" effect, where the researcher progressively narrows and directs the research deeper into the emerging theoretical elements within the research setting. The data gathering will reach saturation when the generic features of their new findings consistently replicate earlier ones.

"Participant observers have the dual task of entering into membership of this system of knowledge and assumption and observing it so as to be able to describe it and theorize about it to the scientific community" (Ashworth, 1995). The fieldwork of a qualitative researcher allows him/her to join the participants' world but in other ways s/he must stay detached. The researcher should be unobtrusively keeping a written record of what happens as well as collecting other forms of descriptive data. S/he is expected to be empathetic with the participants but at the same time the researcher must also be reflexive. "A researcher attempts to learn from the subjects but not necessarily be like the subjects" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

The issues that might arise from entry into an unfamiliar organisation are whether they are accepted into the organisation and whether they can maintain sufficient distance to make proper observations for further interpretation. Participant observers may often find themselves in situations where information is "stock knowledge." This type of knowledge may be common knowledge amongst the members of the organisation but may not be available to the researcher. Thus the understanding of the group and their organisation would take time to establish and any early interpretation of the group's activities may prove to be inadequate or inaccurate. "The researcher requires the skill to suspend earlier assumptions of the organisation and enter into the foreign world as a participant" (Ashworth, 1995). Participant observation was initially carried out at the four elementary schools that received the soup. Forty-five to fifty minutes were spent at each school during the lunch periods. This method

involved observing the children and staff in the lunchrooms and participating by assisting the staff to serve the soup to the students. Immediately afterwards, the observations were documented as field data for further analysis. The first series of participant observation took place in March 2002 and the second series was one month later. During the second series of participant observation, a fifth school was included. Participant observation was also used at the staff meetings of the working group and when assisting with delivery.

#### 1.6.2 Key Informant Interviews

During a key informant interview, the researcher should not display too much knowledge to the participants. A researcher should put aside personal biases that could affect the data collection. This allows the participants freedom to speak openly without any reservations about how their insights will be viewed. It is also important to avoid discussing the information from one participant with anybody else. However, since analysis is done on one before moving to the next, insights generated can be used as probes in subsequent interviews. Key informant interviews were selected by purposive sampling. "Purposive sampling is the strategic selection of participants who reflected an understanding of the phenomenon of interest" (Palys, 1997). The people chosen for an interview have a direct interest in the organisation and the delivery of services. Since qualitative research "usually involves a small number of participants" (Miles & Huberman, 2000), saturation usually occurs when no new data is gathered.

Qualitative interviews vary in the degree to which they are structured. Some interviews, although relatively open-ended, are “focused around particular topics or may be guided by some general questions” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). For this project, the key informant interviews used a semi-structured question format. This type of interview prevents the informant from “wandering” and places some restrictions on the way the subjects’ structure their responses. The interview guide was developed from the literature review and concept analysis of capacity building and is located in Appendix B. The purpose of the questions was to identify and discuss factors pertaining to the program evaluation and the effect it had on the program under scrutiny. Each interview took approximately an hour to complete. There were ten key informant interviews completed for this project; six of the interviews were with members of the nonprofit organisations and four were with lunchroom supervisors at the schools. Each participant signed an informed consent located in Appendix C and the interviews were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

### 1.6.3 Archival Document Analysis

The archival documents of an organisation are an additional source of information. Documents are the material manifestation of the beliefs and behaviours that constitute the culture of an organisation. “Archival documents could give a good indication of people’s sensations, experiences, knowledge, opinions and values” (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). These data are collected in the



form of minutes from meetings, memos and correspondence, records, textbooks, pamphlets and handbooks or government documents.

The main archival documents used in this project were the program evaluations. These documents were reviewed and analysed for the construction of a program logic model prior to data collection. Analysis of archival documents continued throughout the project and supplemented the findings from the participant observation and key informant interviews.

### 1.7 Data Analysis

During the analysis phase, "the data were triangulated to support the findings by showing that independent measures of "it" agree with "it" or at least do not contradict "it" (Miles & Huberman, 2000). The results of triangulation are derived from seeing and hearing multiple instances of a finding from different sources and by using different methods.

Data analysis was performed in iterative cycles throughout the data collection. "The key informant interviews were transcribed, coded and the data were displayed for the generation of conclusions" (Miles & Huberman, 2000). Key informants were asked five questions (see Appendix B) and the answers to each of the questions were then combined and analysed for similar patterns and ideas. The common themes and significant findings for each question were identified and immediately followed by a discussion. An analysis and discussion for each question can be found in Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, respectively.

Chapter 7 gathers the results of each of the discussions and identified the significance of the findings for capacity building and the use of program evaluation for Duck Soup. This chapter places emphasis on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the working group and their program. I also developed a model that summarizes the use of program evaluation to assist in capacity building. More general applications of this model are identified in Chapter 8 for other nonprofit organisations. They include developing an effective strategy for program planning, good leadership, learning from past lessons and knowing the limitations of the program. Chapter 8 also has a discussion on the antecedents, mechanisms and consequences of capacity building.

## **Chapter 2**

## **It's a Pioneering Process**

The former Mayor, Al Duerr and Meals on Wheels were concerned that a number of children in the City of Calgary were malnourished. The Duck Soup pilot project was developed as a possible solution to this problem. Each of the school lunchroom supervisors and the staff at the nonprofit organisations involved with the Duck Soup program were asked how the program was started and how they became part of the working group. The nonprofit organisations included Feeding Calgary's Children, Food and Nutrition at School, Meals on Wheels and Community Kitchens. They discussed many aspects of the program's initiation but mostly they discussed how Duck Soup was developed and why the program was necessary.

### **2.1 Working Together**

An initiative began in September 1998 to examine the state of child hunger in Calgary; the staff members of the City of Calgary Community, the Neighbourhood Services portfolio and Meals on Wheels, organized a symposium called Synergy. The goal was to "develop a community-based action agenda that would lead the city forward toward a vision that ensures that all of Calgary's children are nourished properly" (Synergy Report, 2001). The forum brought together many different people from different backgrounds to discuss child hunger:

We got together a group of people to see what we could do. First of all, we wanted to analyse what was already being done. We wanted to make sure we knew what was

happening. So, we brought these people together and then said, 'Was there anybody that should be at the table that isn't?' And it was a very large group.....It's a pioneering process that you need to do. (G:25-32)

Some of the topics discussed included educating parents and children, community development, feeding programs and partnerships and collaborations. They also considered raising the profile of child hunger through social advocacy, public awareness and education, networking and information technology. Research, planning and evaluation were also important elements of the discussion. For each topic, the group analysed what they were doing right, what was being done incorrectly and where they could improve in each area. The consensus was that more should be done to assist children and more research was needed to determine how many children were not receiving sufficient nutrition. The Feed the Children Report was released in April 1999 and estimated there were 6,600 children in Calgary who had persistent hunger needs and another 9,500 who had intermittent hunger needs.

The Feeding Calgary Children's initiative was then formed and a mandate was developed to have all of Calgary's children, youth and families adequately nourished. Their mission was to develop and support immediate and long-term sustainable solutions to meet, with dignity, the nutritional needs of children, youth and families. Since then, Feeding Calgary's Children has "initiated pilot programs that fill service gaps, provide research to the community regarding child hunger and communicate with the private, public and nonprofit sectors about issues related to child hunger" (McLean, 2002). However, it is not the

intention of Feeding Calgary's Children to build a new bureaucracy; the initiative will end in March 2003 and the programs, which they started, will be given back to the community.

At the Synergy conference there were different fractions within the discussion group who offered different types of help:

We had a group that just wanted to feed kids, that's all they wanted to do. So, we called them our "program group." Then we had a group of people who wanted to communicate.....and then we needed an evaluation group. (G:45-50)

One area of the concern was the lack of a hot lunch program in Calgary, so the group who wanted to feed children came together to develop the pilot project with Feeding Calgary's Children. The partners were brought together to form a steering committee in an effort to provide a hot meal to children in needy schools through a collaboration of existing services. However, there was some resistance from the board of one of the partners for this program because it was not directly related to their service group. Nevertheless, the project went ahead with their unique partnership.

In the beginning, there was a need for the partners to be sensitive to each other's needs. They had to identify what each partner could contribute as an agency, as I was told:

When you are dealing with partners, you have to be pretty broad-minded and try to work to get the project working the best way that was going to suit whatever stakeholders you have. So, we ended up trying to improve upon the programs that already existed. We tried to duplicate them if they were best-practice models. One area that we felt was a good area was the schools. (G:76-82)

The high needs schools were examined. In the Feed the Children report, "the Calgary Board of Education identified 600 children in ten high needs schools who had observable hunger needs which were not being addressed" (McLean, 2002). The ten schools selected were comprised of eight elementary and two junior high schools. These schools were located in the areas such as the "Forest Lawn area, Thornhill, Huntington Hills and Ogden and in the downtown core where the deepest areas of child poverty are prevalent" (Baxendale, 2000). The families living in these areas often have lower incomes and may also have language and cultural barriers.

## 2.2 The People

The nonprofit members involved in this program were representatives of their agencies. When I asked how they came to be a part of the program, I found that some were part of this program because it was part of their job description and others chose to be part of the program of their own accord.

The lunchroom supervisors were having difficulty remembering how the programs began at their schools. They could not recall how Duck Soup was introduced or by whom. There was confusion over the way the program started and they also had difficulty remembering the first program evaluation. Generally, they knew very little of the historical background prior to experiencing problems with the frozen soup. Some of the supervisors did discuss the effort that went into deciding how the children would be served. One supervisor described the different methods they tried:

We've tried a variety of processes, where we've initially in the beginning, soup would come in, we would put it in bowls with spoons and they would kind of pick it up as they go by if they wanted it. Then we had had somebody standing there and ladling it out into bowls. If the weather's bad, we set it up in the hallway and the kids help themselves. It does kind of have to be self-monitoring with an adult checking it every now and then. (C:9-15)

One of the staff members also commented on the community affected by this program. When asked to define this community she said:

The community would be the schools, the principals, the lunchroom supervisors who oversee the program and even the children. (I:136-137)

This staff member felt that the children benefited from this program and the rest of this community held roles as facilitators and partners in this program.

However, in order to build capacity, the other people in the community should also benefit from the program. They can be contributors to the program but to have community capacity all parties involved should be affected, this may be a tangible result where an individual benefits financially or in some other psychosocial manner.

### 2.3 The Program Development

Other feeding programs in North America were studied to determine the type of program that could be used in Calgary. One staff member commented:

We did a broad search of all North America. Now, that search was done in the initial stage and nobody was doing anything quite like Duck Soup; most are full feeding lunchroom programs. But we looked at some, there was one in Winnipeg and there was one down in California. We were trying to look at things to do. (G:256-260)

This research led to the development of the Duck Soup program and the use of the frozen soup in Phase 1 but it proved to be unsuccessful. After this initial attempt, there was a Phase 2 with canned soup several months later. However, some of the staff members took issue to the fact that canned soup was reducing the nutritional aspect of the program:

We've done a (nutritional) analysis of canned soups as opposed to the kind of soup that we serve, we serve a hearty soup, and it's really thick. And so, from a nutritional component, Campbell's can't touch our soup. (F:178-181)

The final decision was to have the soup delivered hot to the schools in Phase 3.

## 2.4 Discussion

### 2.4.1 Establishing the Common Ground

"Common ground had to be established to assess potential collaborations and to increase knowledge about the mandate of each organisation, its clientele and the structures that have been established to respond to specific community needs" (Moyer et al., 1999). An example of this was the Synergy meeting that was held to address the topic of child hunger in the city of Calgary. The participants reviewed the current programs in the city as well as the areas that were lacking in services. The group was "trying to identify potential points of intervention or targets of change" (Poole, 1997). It was during these discussions that a hot lunch program was suggested. According to one of the nonprofit staff members, Calgary does not provide any students with a hot lunch and it was a specific community need that has never been addressed properly. The Duck



Soup program is attempting to alleviate this problem by providing a hot soup as a supplement to the lunches that students were bringing to school. The staff members at the nonprofit organisations all agreed that a hot lunch program was the ultimate goal but realized that the costs for such a program would be very high.

"Since they are more complex, multi-agency projects require the strength and resources of a number of partners and therefore have greater potential for involvement" (Moyer et al., 1999). Moreover, when a community is trying to build capacity, there is a need to identify and utilise the available assets. The potential resources of a community can include the talents and skills of individuals as well as, organisational and political resources. The discussions helped to generate the partnerships that currently exist for the program and the organisations also discussed what they could contribute in terms of community assets. It was through "organisational contacts that potential partners were identified and a base in the community was established" (Moyer et al., 1999). Thus the process involved trying to match organisations with a similar interest in feeding children and identifying their assets. "The inventory of resources, including networks, offers a means of assessing the current level of community capacity" (Moyer et al., 1999). Some of the agencies were already working together in an informal manner and were ready to work together immediately. Others in the working group had never worked with the other partners, so those relationships had to be built. The partners had to learn to work together on this project and, according to Weil (1996): "one of the ingredients of community

building involves caring, trust, participation and teamwork". This was best demonstrated during my participant observation when I attended the staff meetings and saw the interaction between the different members of the working group. It was also evident during the times when I rode along to pick up the soup and buns for delivery to the schools and also in the lunchrooms where I assisted in serving the soup.

#### 2.4.2 How People Became Involved

Local service development was a process in which people provided their own services at the community level. It was neither a form of outside advocacy for local groups, nor a mandated participation in plans that originated elsewhere. Rather, "it was a process through which people strengthened themselves as well as their communities" (Checkoway, 1995). The people involved with the Duck Soup program came to the project as individuals through their respective organisations. They came together because they knew there was a solution and their organisation wanted to help. Some of the participants were part of the program because they chose specifically to be involved. Others became involved with the project after the Duck Soup program was established and were included because it was part of their job description.

#### 2.4.3 Reaching the Children

The children benefited from having the soup because they received a hot meal that they might not be getting at home. The simplest way to reach the

children was through the schools. This method allows the program to be universal and it would not require the parents' permission to feed the children. However, the schools still chose to inform the parents of the program when it began and some parents did refuse the soup for their children, due to dietary concerns.

The lunchroom supervisors and their staff were very accommodating with the hot soup and did not seem to mind serving it to the children. I found that they did not treat the task as a burden, even though it took a little extra work to get ready for the lunch hour. They made sure that all of the children who wanted soup got some and were able to convince some of the more reluctant ones to have the soup instead of an instant noodle cup. The overall attitude towards the hot soup format was positive and the students liked the soup.

#### 2.4.4 Developing for a Successful Program

Ultimately, to be effective, "community change requires a gradual, yet systematic approach" (Moyer et al., 1999). In developing the Duck Soup program, it went through three phases and each time the soup was delivered in a different format. The first two phases were not successful but the third phase has worked and the program will continue with this method. Throughout the process, there was a need for discussion and evaluation. As a result, through trial and error the program is now running successfully and meeting its goals. The purpose of capacity building is to "foster conditions that strengthen the

characteristics of communities and enable them to plan, develop, implement and maintain effective community programs” (Poole, 1997).

Building capacity should also increase community awareness of problems and root causes. One of the staff members told me that the Feeding Calgary’s Children study was shocking for the provincial government because Alberta is considered to be a fairly wealthy province and the findings were disappointing. However, programs like Duck Soup are bringing attention to the problem of child hunger and presenting a viable solution. Other schools have inquired about having the Duck Soup program, which demonstrates increased awareness in the Calgary’s school community. The program confirms that a hot lunch program is necessary and that there are ways to feed needy students.

## **Chapter 3**

## **There's Some Give and Take**

To gain a better understanding of the process of developing the Duck Soup program, I asked the working group to identify the barriers and facilitators they may have encountered in developing this program. A barrier was defined as a negative situation or circumstance that causes an obstruction of the development process, whereas a facilitator was defined as a situation or circumstance that assisted in development and was deemed to have a positive effect.

### **3.1 Barriers**

The staff discussed the difficulties encountered while developing the Duck Soup program. The common themes in the barriers encountered by the staff include time management, communication, funding, politics, technical and food safety issues and gatekeeping.

#### **3.1.1 Time management**

The time management issues were the most commonly mentioned of the barrier themes. The staff at the schools consistently commented on the issue of having to thaw and reheat the frozen soup at the beginning of the program. They had to coordinate this complex process in order to have the soup ready to serve every day. One school supervisor said:

So, if we were going to have soup tomorrow you would almost have to take it out a day or two in advance and then cook it up, you couldn't just do it up in 15 minutes. (C:79-81)

It was a work-intensive program when the soup came frozen. The school supervisors and their staff had to prepare by anticipating how much soup they would need, thaw the soup in advance, allow for re-heating to a specified temperature and then ensure that the soup was used up or thrown out at the end of the week. However, the general opinion was that the school staff was very busy and could not afford the time in the kitchen.

Another time issue involved getting people to attend meetings. One staff member mentioned that even for some of the lunchroom supervisors, trying to coordinate meetings was difficult:

Even with these supervisors, I know that Sara, even just trying to get her to a meeting, it's like she doesn't want to. She's got lots of meetings, she's busy; she does all this other stuff. She doesn't want to go to meetings. (H:50-53)

Another factor related to time for this program was the delivery process. The soup is currently being served hot and the FANS driver is doing the delivery on Tuesdays and Thursdays, taking two hours each day. This required the FANS program to be more flexible to accommodate the Duck Soup program. This can be frustrating because the delivery person may also be needed at the same time by the FANS program to run other errands.

### 3.1.2 Communication

The second barrier most often mentioned was communication. There was a general agreement that there was a lack of communication between the partners and the schools at the beginning. When the program was initially run

with the frozen soup, nobody was really sure if the schools were even consulted. The program was conceptualized and then presented to the schools. After the schools were selected, the confusion seemed to begin immediately as different staff members had conflicting information:

Karen never communicated with me, never phoned me up and somehow, with these schools and what Karen was telling the schools and what I was telling them was two different stories. What should have been done was Karen and I should have gone to the schools, talked to the principals so that the program was clear as to what their commitment was and what it was all about. That never happened and that was a very bad weakness, a very bad downfall. (D:396-404)

It was difficult to determine who was directly responsible for coordinating the Duck Soup program in the first year. The staff running the soup program had other jobs to which to attend and could not give more time to this program. As a consequence the on-going process was not monitored and there was no continuous involvement between the nonprofits and the user-group, as another staff member stated:

There was a lack of communication in the first year and I would say a lack of communication with the schools and also the Duck Soup working group because if we heard all of these concerns from schools and we came together then we could have been problem solving. Instead of going six months and then finding out that the program had lots of difficulties. (I:123-128)

As a result the new coordinator of Feeding Calgary's Children was aware of the communication problems and was able to meet each of the principals of the participating schools in the second year. She was able to outline exactly how the program would change and explain what the schools were expected to do. A

community development coordinator with a background in program development and community work was also hired to oversee the program. Thus an effort was now conscientiously made to have on-going communication in an effort to identify any additional difficulties. When the school supervisors were asked about their current lines of communication with the Feeding Calgary's Children, program staff they all agreed that it was easy to find someone if they needed but no one could think of a reason why they would need to talk to the coordinator.

A minor communication issue occurred with the schools that do not have a regular school schedule. Some of the schools were on modified schedules and their students may be on holiday when other schools have classes. Unfortunately, there have been incidents when the soup was delivered to school but there were no students present. Even with printouts of the schools' schedules it was difficult to coordinate which schools were in session and which were on holiday. The day I was doing participant observation with the driver, one of the schools was not in session but the soup was waiting for the school when we got to Meals on Wheels. A replacement school was selected from a list that received breakfast foods from the FANS program. Perhaps, the schools should call to remind the coordinator that they would not have students for a certain period of time and a replacement school could then be arranged ahead of time.



### 3.1.3 Funding

This program encountered funding barriers. Canadian Pacific provided the initial \$10,000 for the pilot project. Half of the funding was spent in the first year when the program ran for twelve weeks with the frozen soup. This left \$5000 for the second year, enough to take the program to April 2002. There were emergency funds provided by the Junior League to sustain the program through to the beginning of June 2002. If the program is to continue, however, it needs more continuous funding. One staff member suggested that:

What we need is something like a corporate sponsor to pick it up and run with it and not just for a two year period but for the long-term. (E:175-178)

The lack of funding was also the reason why a community developer was not hired in the beginning. Currently, Feeding Calgary's Children is negotiating for more funding from the Junior League, which has recently become interested in feeding programs.

### 3.1.4 Politics

Political issues also acted as a barrier at the time that Duck Soup was introduced to the schools; the lunchroom supervisors and the lunchroom workers were negotiating their union contract. The understanding was that although the lunchroom workers were paid to assist the children at lunch, the Duck Soup program considered them to be volunteers when serving the soup. Hence, when the program was implemented, staff members were asking volunteers to work during their labour dispute. The program staff did not want to put additional

pressure on the lunchroom workers and having to reheat the frozen soup was not helping. Yet, the decision to begin was definite, as one staff member remarked:

Unfortunately, we started this darned thing when they were negotiating with their contract. That was not the right time, except we did not want to delay it for the kids' benefit. (G:191-193)

Another point mentioned by a staff member that was politically related was the territorialism and turf guarding. With so many groups coming together there is going to be some cross over of services. She commented that:

Territorialism does not stand up.....We need to work together.....If you think that's a strong thing that you want to do as a partner, then you have to go and share that with the group and we got to work with them but you can't have territories. (G:283-288)

### 3.1.5 Technical and Safety Issues

Some school staff lacked the experience in the kitchen; they were not able to judge the coordination of the cooking and serving times. There were guidelines, which the staff had to follow. The soup had to be re-heated to a specific temperature before serving and it could not be kept over the weekends. Food safety was clearly linked to this problem. This issue was resolved with the ready-to-serve soup but as one staff member commented:

I was also a little worried at first with the Cambros, for the food risk as well because I don't know what the temperature is when it arrives at the school.....So, I gave them thermometers and food safety books so that technically what you should be doing is measuring the temperature when it arrives at the schools. I know they wouldn't even try or even think about it. (D:287-303)

The soup is supposed to stay the same temperature for three hours after being placed in the Cambro thermos containers. Therefore, it should be the correct temperature when it arrives at the schools. However, the soup has been blamed for one student who got sick. One of the school supervisors described the day the soup arrived with a green tinge:

The soup was green and I thought, no we can't serve this. I can't take the chance that even if one kid got the flu.....and how that would reflect poorly. (A:184-186)

The safety rules also dictate that the schools could not store the soup to be served again the next day and the leftovers have to be thrown out.

The attitudes of parents and children can be challenging. There are some parents who will not accept soup for their children one person explained to me:

Now the other difficulty is we had feedback where the moms have said, "No, my kid can't have that." And those kids have needed it and again I think it's that stigmatism that my child doesn't need that, even though they know that they do. These things are really tough barriers. I think it bothers them that they need it. (G:174-179)

Not all kids will eat the soup: there are picky eaters who cannot be convinced to try the soup; and students with dietary restrictions. There are two choices: beef or chicken soup. A vegetable soup was provided in the previous year to cater for children who were vegetarians. Some children have allergies or cultural restrictions with pork or beef. As a consequence, there are some students who are not being fed who would accept another menu choice. Moreover, not all the children stay for lunch and they have to be in the lunch program to get the soup. As I was told:

That's a really tough one because I was under the impression that any child who the school felt needed it was allowed to use that program. So, even if they didn't normally stay and I know we're crossing the line here because they don't want kids to be in a program when they live close to the school. They're trying to keep their costs down. (G:271-277)

There is the potential risk that these students who go home for lunch do not have anything appropriately nutritious to eat at home. There is currently no solution to this problem. They cannot have the soup unless they are enrolled in the lunch program. A suggestion was made by several of the staff members that they could probably get something from the FANS cupboard but they cannot take the soup with them. Once again, this was another issue related to food safety.

### 3.1.6 Gatekeeping

There was one barrier that was of particular interest. One of the schools that had participated with the frozen soup was not willing to start again with the hot soup. They were unwilling to meet and discuss the new concept. The principal, acting as a gatekeeper, decided that the school no longer wanted to receive the program. A program staff member said:

When I called the school, they weren't even willing to set up a meeting. They said that Duck Soup was not successful, and the school was not interested in having it again. That was a difficult conversation. I started to say that I knew it was time consuming so, this was what we were going to do. I tried to have the conversation on the phone and I think I got my major points in but still not interested. (I:254-260)

Another school was put on the recipient list for this year. As a result, another school had the opportunity to be involved in the program.

### 3.2 Facilitators

The program staff discussed the factors that assisted them in the development process for this program. Some of the facilitators included the staffs' ability to solve problems, their receptivity to change and an ability to share knowledge.

#### 3.2.1 Problem-solving and Receptivity to Change

A recent study of Calgary's children revealed that there were children in this city who go hungry every day. Many of the staff members at the nonprofit organisations involved wished that there were a hot lunch program at every school that needed one. However, they knew that something like that would be impossible to achieve right now. Nevertheless, they began to problem-solve; they asked themselves, "If we cannot have a fully fledged feeding program, what can we do instead?" A steering committee was brought together to decide an appropriate program design. They examined feeding programs in other cities and decided the solution was to bring soup to children in their school lunchrooms. However, Phase 1 of this program was not considered a success because as one staff member said:

We thought that we shouldn't even try again, that it was unsuccessful. And I think that there was a general sense in the community, when they heard about Duck Soup they

would say, "Oh, lots of problems with that program, yeah lots of problems." Basically, that program was absolutely dead. (I:299-304)

By the time they attempted Phase 2 (canned soup) there was a possibility that the Duck Soup program was not going to continue. However, during the second evaluation there was discussion among some of the partners as to how the program could change:

It wasn't until the final report was done with the assistance of Jane and Laura in the summer that we really looked at it and said, "There are things that we can do that weren't tried." (I:305-307)

After more discussions, the decision was to try delivering the soup hot. These changes meant that the schools would no longer be serving soup every day. Nevertheless, they felt that the hot soup on Tuesdays and Thursdays was better than abandoning the program entirely. In interviews with the lunchroom supervisors at the schools, all commented on how this solution has resulted in less work for their staff. Of the schools that participated in both the frozen and the hot soup phases, two of the schools prefer the hot soup. The third school would prefer a supply of frozen soup as well as the hot soup. Unfortunately, the current program only provides the soup in the hot format. The schools had to accept the fact that they were no longer able to serve soup every day, which had been possible with the frozen soup. However, as one supervisor explained:

We were afraid of totally losing the soup. So, when we looked at it going to two days a week or totally losing it we said, "OK then, two days a week is good for us." (A:59-61)

Another example of flexibility and problem solving involved one of the schools that decided that they did not want to have the beef soups delivered. They opted to receive only the chicken soups after discovering the beef soup was not popular with their students. This resulted in a batch of soup that was not being consumed. It was decided that they would give it to another school, as a staff member explained:

So, basically we went to School A because one day School B wasn't in. The driver showed up and there was nobody there and we had this soup.....So, I called School A and said, "We have however many servings of soup. It can be at your school in ten minutes, do you want it?" They're like yeah, we have the bowls. I went there and helped serve it and the kids just loved it. The feedback was right away, it wasn't a problem for them to serve the soup. So, when School B contacted me and said, "We just don't want the soup on Tuesdays." Well, we have it in our budget, it's already made, it's not a problem, let's take it to School A. (H:110-122)

As a result, the Duck Soup program was feeding five schools by the end of the school year.

Not all the problem solving was complicated. A rather simple problem involved the distribution of the buns that are delivered with the soup. The students were complaining that they were too dry. As one staff member said:

So, we brainstormed around it and thought there was extra time involved with stopping at Community Kitchens twice a week, that was adding to the driver's time. And the extra work for them to set out the buns and the schools were saying that they just didn't need that much. What we decided to do was just go on Tuesdays only and then anything they had leftover at the school would last to Thursdays. (H:146-151)

Thus the ability of the partners and the schools to recognize a need for change and to adapt has given the program a chance to continue with better results.

### 3.2.2 Sharing Knowledge

The sharing of knowledge and resources also facilitated the program. Some of the nonprofit partners were aware of each other's needs and were already assisting each other prior to this collaboration. One staff member explained it:

Yes, a lot of sharing. Some of the products that Jane may get a hold of.....she knows that we don't need small cans of food. We need big cans of food just because of our volume and our equipment. It's really hard for us to open up a little can; the big 100 oz. cans suit us perfect. And there's some give and take there, if she can get her hands on the 48 oz. or the 100 oz. cans, she shares them with us because she knows that suits us.....It's the other side of the coin for her. The more domestic size, the 14 oz. or the 28 oz. cans are more user-friendly for her. (F:90-102)

Ultimately, this type of sharing was perpetuated when they came together to feed the children through the Duck Soup program. At the Duck Soup meetings, the partners often discuss the products and services that they hear about with the other members. Therefore, "links are strengthened between citizens and existing community networks and associations" (Bohach, 1997).

### 3.3 Discussion: The Barriers

The recognition that "everyone has a gift is the foundation for creating community" (Bohach, 1997). Using their gifts, a community's citizens can focus



on positive areas of strength rather than focusing on the negative areas of need. Elements of both negative and positive factors affected this program. In asking the staff members and the lunchroom supervisors about the things that helped or hindered their development of the program, there was a tendency to dwell on the negative aspects. There were many problems that they did not necessarily anticipate. However, this process was a learning experience and they could not have known exactly what they were going to do.

### 3.3.1 Resolving the Time Issues

Time and communication were the biggest barriers for this program and in some cases these barriers seemed to be linked together. The time factor was the biggest problem with the frozen soup because it was slow work to serve the soup. However, this was all part of the bigger learning process. They would not have tried the frozen soup format if they had known that it would be so difficult. Yet, there was no other program to use as an example. It was unique and so they had to experiment and discover that they would not be able to continue the program with the frozen soup. I asked if the program had been developed with any input from the schools as to whether or not they wanted the soup frozen because I was interested in whether the schools had any say in the first format. Although there were some memory lapses, it seemed that the Duck Soup program was developed independently by the working group and then presented to the schools. However, successful capacity building requires a conscious awareness of the problems that challenge the user group. It was possible that if

they had been consulted about the feasibility of the frozen soup, the schools would not have agreed to it.

The current program with the hot soup still involves a time factor. This factor involves the new delivery process and the use of the FANS driver. In having to do the Duck Soup program's deliveries, he has not been able to do the other errands for the FANS program. It was actually simpler and less time-consuming when the soup was delivered frozen because it was sporadic and the driver could go to the schools at any time. He must now be at Meals on Wheels at a certain time and have the soup delivered by lunch. So in changing the format, this inconvenience has since developed. Perhaps the solution to this barrier is to find another driver who can do the deliveries. The suggestion was made to have Meals on Wheels take over the delivery with one of their drivers.

### 3.3.2 Addressing Internal and External Communication

According to Weil (1996), "effective internal communication is recommended for community building". The communication with the schools should have been a crucial part of this program but it was not sufficient at the beginning. The staff members did not seem to be talking to each other and the schools were getting mixed messages. This may have been affected by the program's rush to start and therefore the lack of preparation may have led to communication problems. It was even difficult to get lunchroom supervisors to group meetings. Two of them stated that they weren't able to come to the meetings due to scheduling problems. Their not being at the meetings led to

further communication breakdowns. Once the program was started, the communication became even worse. It seemed as though no one bothered to check on the program because of a lack of time. One staff member said that if they had known about the problems they might have stopped sooner. The complaints slowly began to filter back to the working group and they eventually realized that there were problems and the program was stopped.

Communication was also a problem within the working group. "Formal and informal types of communication are vital to the success of a partnership. Indeed, the type of communication that takes place will directly or indirectly affect the partnership" (Scott & Thurston, 1997).

Besides not monitoring the program, the people running the program were busy doing other programs of their own. There was no one to be the champion of the Duck Soup program; it was a case where everyone wanted to help but no one had the time to run the program. A community developer was needed to oversee and direct Duck Soup to be the link between all the groups and especially between the working group and the schools. This person would have the time to go out to the schools to check up on their progress and hear their concerns and they should work only for Feeding Calgary's Children. When this person was hired, the communication with the schools and among the working group improved greatly. This process showed the need to cooperatively identify issues and constructively respond to problems in order to build capacity. Moreover, it "demonstrated the commitment of the community in sustaining and enhancing the community's ability to function effectively" (Coakes & Kelly, 1997).

There is concern that after Feeding Calgary's Children relinquishes the program to the community, the leadership provided by the community developer will no longer exist. The premise behind Feeding Calgary's Children was not to create new bureaucracies; a partnership was formed to create this program but ultimately the Duck Soup program should be able to run on its own and Feeding Calgary's Children will cease to exist. However, "capacity building rarely takes place without some form of facilitator a consultant, project officer or community developer who may be required to perform this role" (Chapman & Kirk, 2001). Given the problems with lack of time and communication, it will be interesting to see if the program is able to continue after Feeding Calgary's Children stops running the program. Can the program really be self-sustaining?

### 3.3.3 Overcoming the Funding Barrier

Other barriers had to be overcome. The issue of funding was always prominent in the discussions of the working group. According to Bohach (1997):

"Very little money is used for community development, to expand opportunities, or for prevention. Unfortunately, sponsoring locally-controlled initiatives is considered risky. As a result, communities have trouble attracting funds".

At the time I started this project, they were beginning to search for more money to keep the program running. In looking at the Duck Soup budget, this program was not costly. However, it was still necessary to have someone write up proposals for funding and meet with potential funders. Without secure funding, it will be hard to plan for the future of the Duck Soup program. Moreover, the

time and energy used to secure funding is taking away from the working group's ability to plan program activities. Nevertheless, adding more funding may not solve all of the problems that a service provider may have. There has to be consideration for the available funds and whether this money is being used properly. A program may need restructuring to be more efficient. Perhaps there are functions or parts of the system that can be altered or if necessary, components that could be cancelled to improve the proficiency of the program. However, in the case of the Duck Soup program these do not seem to be necessary.

#### 3.3.4 Being Unable to Avoid Political Issues

The political issues were unavoidable. The working group did not want to delay the delivery of the soup during a labour dispute; they wanted to begin serving the soup as soon as the program was developed and implemented. It was not clear if the issues with the lunchroom staff negotiating their union contract contributed to the problems of the frozen soup. Nevertheless, there was a consensus that it was bad timing but they wanted to start regardless of the political atmosphere at the schools. Other than choosing to delay the program, this was a barrier that they had no control over.

These political issues were unrelated to the Duck Soup program. The working group considers the distribution of the soup as a volunteer role and therefore, any of the lunchroom staff could refuse to help with the soup at any

time. However, this issue of different roles may not have been clearly stated to the lunchroom supervisors and their staff.

### 3.3.5 Food Safety Barriers

Food safety was a barrier. The soup had to be heated to a certain temperature when it came frozen and the staff remembered having to use the thermometers in Phase 1. With the new food containers, however, the soup is supposed to maintain its temperature for three hours when it goes into the Cambros. The soup is never put into the containers until just before the driver is to arrive. It is quickly delivered and the leftovers are discarded. No major incidents have occurred, with the exception of the one sick child and nothing ever came of this complaint. A complaint was made about the green soup but not all the schools complained about it. The lunchroom supervisors used their best judgment and presumably some of the schools served the soup despite the colour, while other schools chose to be cautious and threw it out instead. The soup was never tested for contaminants and there has not been a similar incident since. Perhaps the main concern was that the students who are malnourished will have a diminished immune system and would not be able to fight off any contamination of the soup. So food safety should always be taken seriously and the schools knew that rules had to be followed for liability reasons.

### 3.3.6 Cultural Barriers

Cultural barriers have been a bigger issue in preventing some students from having the soup and the soups that are currently served may not be appropriate. Unfortunately, this barrier has not been addressed and there has been no indication that the soup selection will be changing. Therefore, there will continue to be a group of children that the Duck Soup program will not be able to serve. Perhaps there may be an opportunity to increase community capacity by having the ethno cultural parents become involved with the Duck Soup program. These parents may be able to help find solutions so that all the children will be able to have soup.

### 3.3.7 Gatekeeper Barriers

The final barrier was perhaps the most unique. One of the schools would not participate again with the hot soup format. The principal refused to meet with the group to discuss the changes and were not willing to try again. I was told that the school was very unhappy with Phase 1 of the Duck Soup program. Despite the efforts of the staff at Feeding Calgary's Children, the principal wanted to sever ties with the program. This person was acting as the gatekeeper to the school and often the decision to accept or deny a program is the choice of the designated gatekeeper. Gatekeepers always have to be approached cautiously and treated as a barrier that can be very harmful to any service provider trying to build capacity. When entrance to the community is denied, the program might have to find alternate ways to reach the user group.

In this case, the school has never participated again and another school was added and other students are now benefiting from the program. Unfortunately, for the students at this gatekeeper's school, they have not had any soup and currently, there are no alternate ways to access the program.

### 3.4 Discussion: The Facilitators

There were far fewer facilitators but they have had a positive impact on the program. The facilitators were used effectively towards capacity building. There was a positive direction to change the program to better suit the needs of the user group in Phase 3 of the program. They required the working group to analyse the program and to understand the needs of the user group. In comparison to the barriers that hindered the progress of the working group, the facilitators enabled the staff at the nonprofits to develop a more effective program.

#### 3.4.1 Problem-solving

This group has demonstrated the ability to solve problems and the solution has proven to be more successful than the original format. "Joint problem solving ("power with") is the norm in community development work" (Maton, 2000). A part of the working group had come together to do the program evaluation and in the process they came up with an alternative format that eliminated the time required by the staff to prepare the soup. However, there are still children that are not receiving the program and the soup is only



available twice a week at the participating schools. This could be resolved if there was more funding and a readily available delivery person to bring soup to the schools more often. Nevertheless, the general agreement was that the program was greatly improved. The problems with the frozen soup format no longer existed.

### 3.4.2 Being Flexible and Responsive

One of the facilitators of capacity building was the ability to be flexible and responsive to the community's needs. Being flexible was a necessity for everyone in the Duck Soup program. The schools had to accept the fact that there would be less soup available but they were willing to participate as long as some soup was being delivered. Meals on Wheels had to make the soup on a different schedule but they were making a smaller variety of soups. FANS had to lend their driver to the program on a more regular basis. If any of the partners had not agreed to the changes, the program would probably not have continued. The issue with adding the fifth school was a simple decision. The soup was already being made and the fifth school was in close proximity to one of the other schools that got the soup regularly. So, it was convenient for the driver to go to this new school. Thus the problem was solved quickly and more students were benefiting from the program. This program has demonstrated that there is no predetermined method for capacity building. A developing program has to be able to adapt to the circumstances of the community. The inability to react to

the problems that the working group encountered would have been a major barrier for their ability to build capacity.

#### 3.4.3 Benefits to Being a Partner

There were other added benefits to being a partner with this working group. These groups were able to share information, resources and supplies with each other. This facilitates the sharing of social capital and other assets, which is necessary to develop a sense of community. It was a chance to learn about each other's programs and what was new in the nonprofit community. They understood each other's needs and were able to share with each other. There was no territorialism or turf guarding when it came to this group, or if there were, it has since been resolved. "Effective partnerships are those that developed partnership characteristics that break down professional territorial barriers" (Scott & Thurston, 1997). As a result, everyone was able to do what he or she did best and the Duck Soup program benefited.

## Chapter 4

## A Lesson in Learning

The participants were asked to discuss the effects of the current Duck Soup program. The responses were positive and generally related to the welfare of the students. Some of the lunchroom supervisors commented on the ease of implementing Phase 3 of the program. Staff members of the nonprofits also discussed the effect the program has had on their own organisations and on the community.

### 4.1 The Students

The school lunchroom supervisors tended to discuss the enthusiasm of the students for the soup. The most common remark from the supervisors was:

The kids love it. We had ordered enough for a 125 or 150 and I thought after a few weeks they would get tired of it but they have not. They look forward to it everyday. (B:23-26)

This program was very important because of the number of cold days that we have in Calgary. Some of the older children tended to be bigger eaters and were often very hungry. The staff knew that some of the students would be back for multiple refills. They could point out the students who would need to have more soup. Although I was at the schools only twice each, I recognized some of the students who were coming up to get soup several times in a lunch hour. Thus this program was helping to fill the hunger needs of the children. As one participant stated:

We learned the need that is out there for this kind of program.....the number of kids who go to school hungry.

They don't have the resources to provide for themselves or their families to be able to provide them with adequate nutrition. I've heard second-hand that the positive influence of that little bit of soup and a bun and how the students are better students. (F:66-70)

The Duck Soup program was also teaching the children the value of a nutritious meal. The participants felt the educational aspect of this program was an important reason to have the program in the schools. Some of the staff members discussed how their parents influenced the eating habits of children and the children were not taught healthy eating habits. However, as one staff member pointed out:

It's a very hearty soup that we do. If they're going to have soup we're going to want them to have good nutrients. So, they get the vitamins and minerals out of the vegetables and then they get the protein out of the meat. It's higher in protein than any anywhere, whether it's a tin or made by moms at home. (G:134-140)

The Duck Soup program was assisting the families of the students by providing them with a meal twice a week at school. While collecting data at the schools, I was informed by many of the volunteers that some of the kids never get hot meals at home and that lunches tend to get thinner prior to payday. I had one student tell me that she did not bring a lunch because it was Duck Soup day. Thus it was possible that this program can give families relief for several meals in their budget for that month.

#### 4.2 The Lunchroom Supervisors

The school lunchroom supervisors also commented on the change in format for the program. The hot soup no longer required a lot of work. It was a faster and quicker way to serve the soup. As one supervisor told me:

It's not a time-consuming thing. It's not like you have to prepare the soup at all. There's very little problems....We just scoop it into a bowl and hand it to the kids, that's it.  
(H:64-72)

Thus there was less involvement in the preparation process when compared to the beginning of the program and the frozen soup.

#### 4.3 The Nonprofit Organization Staff Members

The staff members of the nonprofits tended to discuss the process of coming together and being able to serve the children soup. The relationships that have been built through this program have been very important. The working group is able to communicate with each other and the partnerships are further strengthened. As one staff member said:

I think it is the relationships that are built. When we come together, yes, we are dealing with the Duck Soup issue and problem solving, that's great. But we're learning what other resources those different agencies have and we are building relationships with those individual agencies. So, we are sharing lots of information. (I:214-218)

Thus the groups have become more aware of one another. The general consensus was that this has been a good partnership.

The Duck Soup program has been a learning experience for the working group. With the changes made this year, the program has been very successful.

Some of the staff members discussed the process of taking different routes and being able to try again:

Everything's possible, it just takes time, it takes patience and it takes effort. If at first you don't succeed, you go and take another route. I think that's good because it's all learning experiences, you learn through doing things. Because things don't necessarily work out, I don't take it as a failure, I take it as a lesson in learning. (G:247-251)

They thought that the frozen soup would work because it had in other places in the country. However, with the failure of Phase 1 and 2, they chose to try again with the hot soup and have done very well. The Duck Soup program has taught the working group that there are limitations to what they can do for the students:

I guess we've learned our limitations. On any new program that we start up, you think you can do anything and then you kind of have to be reasonable about your time. (D:244-246)

Ultimately, the Duck Soup program has been through a process involving a trial and error period and the results have been far more positive with the hot soup.

There was also an increase in the awareness of child hunger. It is part of the Feeding Calgary's Children mandate to look at social policy. They wanted to have a program that could be successfully implemented to demonstrate the need to have lunch programs. One staff member commented:

We kind of see this program as a foot in the door regarding the importance of the provincial government to step up to the plate. OK, look we can implement this program, with all these positive outcomes. This is pie-in-the-sky but the province should be funding lunch programs. (I:228-233)

Another factor of increasing awareness was that this program had been discussed by word of mouth. The principals of the schools that have the soup could tell other principals who do not get it delivered. Thus through positive communication, the program is known and the need to feed kids becomes even more apparent. Other schools have inquired about the program and whether or not they can be included in the program.

#### 4.4 Discussion

##### 4.4.1 Children were the Primary Concern

This program is a group of people working together using their resources to feed children. When asked about the effects of program, the answers tend to relate to the students. They want to discuss how the children like the soup and how some are hungry enough that they can eat several bowls. Moreover, they want to talk about how much they like having the program and how the soup is so nutritious. The lunchroom supervisors introduced me to the children and many would come up to tell me that they enjoyed the soup. They were enthusiastic about how good the soup tasted and most of the time the containers were empty at the end of lunch.

##### 4.4.2 Educating on Nutrition

"Popular education aims to create change by raising critical consciousness of common concerns" (Checkoway, 1995). In bringing the soup to the children, the working group was trying to educate them about nutrition. Many of these

feeding programs are trying to teach children to eat more healthily and this program is no exception. Many of the staff members at the nonprofits were confident that most of these children would never get soup like this anywhere else. They want to break the cycle that parents could sometimes perpetuate by not teaching their children to eat properly. One staff member told me of parents who said that they had a soft drink and a chocolate bar every lunch hour and so this was what they were feeding their children. The parents could not understand why this was not a good idea. Other parents are too afraid to give children a lunch they would probably throw away, so they give them something unhealthy that they will eat. Therefore, this program could help children to recognize and select a nourishing meal, as well as providing variety in their lunches. The goal was to teach the students to eat properly and to make healthy choices in the future.

#### 4.4.3 Indirect Effects on the Families

There was also the indirect program effect for the families. If they could save on a meal or two because their children were having the soup, then they did not have to worry about providing lunches on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Many of the lunchroom staff told me that a lot of the parents have a hard time making ends meet. This program could be assisting them financially, which is an added benefit that leads to capacity building.



#### 4.4.4 Being Responsive to the Community's Needs

Another consequence of capacity building was the ability for the working group to improve upon the delivery of services by better understanding of the community's needs. "Progress depends on the responsiveness of the community to the proposed program, within the context of current service mandates and delivery systems" (Moyer et al., 1999). Thus the working group recognized that the frozen soup was not working for the staff and responded by changing the format. The working group took what they learned from Phase 1 of the program and developed the current program. Currently, the lunchroom supervisors are satisfied with the hot soup program and most of them prefer this method over the frozen soup.

"Capacity building draws individuals from diverse backgrounds into decision-making to tackle issues of common community concerns" (Bohach, 1997). This has been a learning process for all of the organisations involved. Moreover, they have been able to learn more about each other. The Duck Soup program brings together nonprofits that may not have a mandate to feed kids. However, the partners all have the resources and the ability to help this program. Agencies are coming together that would not necessarily work together and are expanding their community involvement. This results in a "complex, self-organising web of actors interrelating and creating power through relationships and acting in social networks as the key to change" (Wilson, 1997).

## **Chapter 5**

### **Do Some Investigating**

There were three program evaluations done for the Duck Soup program. The first evaluation was done when the program ended its initial twelve-week run of Phase 1 in December 2000. A second evaluation in August of 2001 reviewed the results of the program. The third evaluation was done in April 2002 to assess Phase 3 of the program.

The participants were asked to discuss the process and the results of the program evaluations. Some of the emerging themes were the concerns of the lunchroom supervisors, the selection of soup, the need to impose pre-evaluation guidelines, and the use of informal evaluation.

#### **5.1 Concerns of the Lunchroom Supervisors**

After starting with the frozen soup, there was a general agreement among the nonprofit staff that the lunchroom personnel were not happy. There was direct feedback and complaints over the thawing and re-heating problems. I asked if the change to hot soup was a result of this feedback or the result of the program evaluations. One staff member said:

There was recognition that there were changes needed simply because the schools weren't happy with the state the soup was coming in and it was too much work. So, to enable this program to continue we had to address that. Some of it came out of the evaluation but most of it just came out of what we knew was really happening. (E:107-113)

When the hot soup program was started the staff found that it was helpful to discuss the new format with the lunchroom supervisors. They recognized a need to communicate and sell the hot soup format. As one staff member told me:

Do some investigating and some talking and sort of build up the program a public relations kind of thing like this is what the program is about. What are your problems? Do you have anything that you need to know from us? And that kind of stuff. (D:384-387)

## 5.2 Selection of the Soup

When asked what changes came directly from the evaluation, the most common response was related to the soup selection. There was a wider selection of soup when the schools ordered it frozen. When the lunchroom supervisors were asked which soups the students preferred, they agreed that the barley soups and vegetable soups were not popular. As one staff member commented:

I think it had an effect on the variety of soup that we served because the kids definitely told us what soup they liked. So, we dropped a few soups and made it more child-friendly because of the survey. (E:120-122)

Therefore, the hot soup program now alternates the beef rice and beef noodle soups on Tuesdays and the chicken rice and chicken noodle soups on Thursdays.

## 5.3 The Use of Informal Program Evaluation

Informal evaluation was also used for the Duck Soup program. Staff members were sent into the schools to discuss with the lunchroom supervisors the problems that the program was experiencing and the changes that they needed to make. The results of the second evaluation led to more investigation:

Kristin went in and did the interviews after the evaluation because there were so many problems. We wanted to know what specifically, where were the problems? And what could we do? (D:378-381)

The informal evaluation was never documented but it had a significant impact on the decision to change the program, after which the hot soup format was introduced.

#### 5.4 Pre-impose Guidelines for Program Evaluation

It was suggested by some of the staff members that there should have been some pre-imposed guideline for evaluation even before the program began. They should have known what they were going to evaluate for and it should have been part of the program planning. In one staff member's opinion:

You should have a plan of how you're going to evaluate from the start. You need to set out your evaluation tasks, how you're going to do it. Then so you can be gathering.....how can you gather data at the end? You didn't gather data because you didn't think. You have to do that at the beginning. It has to be meaningful and it has to be goal-oriented. Did we meet our goals? So, whenever you start out on something, you have to look at the evaluation, what's it going to look like? (G:353-364)

No one mentioned that there were any such guidelines pre-imposed on the Duck Soup program.

The first evaluation looked at the process that the Duck Soup program took from its conception to the end of Phase 1. This evaluation noted how the soup was made, delivered and to whom it was served. It discussed the problems that were encountered and the possible solutions. The second evaluation was

obligatory because the funder, Canadian Pacific, required it. There was a specific guideline that was followed for that evaluation. Canadian Pacific wanted the program to account for the way the funding was spent and the outcomes of the program. The third evaluation looked at the process of the current hot soup format. There were no significant problems found. One minor issue was the Duck Soup name, which some respondents felt, was misleading. Some of the children thought that the soup actually contained duck meat. The working group considered making an effort to promote the name so that the children would have a clearer understanding of the program's menu.

## 5.5 Discussion

### 5.5.1 The Effect of the Evaluations

The first evaluation was a confirmation of what the working group already knew: the schools did not like having to thaw and reheat the frozen soup. The evaluator described the process of developing the program, gave a summary of the data collected from each school and made recommendations for the future of the program. The lunchroom staff comments were generally positive and related to how the students enjoyed the soup. Yet, the recommendations stated that there were problems. It simply said that the work for the schools took too long and perhaps canned soup could be used.

From the recommendation in the first evaluation, canned soup was briefly used in Phase 2. The second evaluation involved the working group and it encompassed the frozen and canned soup phases. There was a lot of discussion

with the other staff members of the nonprofits for this evaluation. The staff member who was evaluating the program was new to the program. In order to write the evaluation, she had to go to the working group to gather information. These discussions eventually developed the new hot soup format. They had intended to do the evaluation for the funder but it was during this time that they realized that there were other methods that they could try. A more informal evaluation was performed before and after the second evaluation.

#### 5.5.2 Changes that Resulted From the Evaluation

When I asked what changes came about because of the evaluation, the staff members often said that the selection of the soups was the biggest change. It was a matter of flexibility and realizing that they needed to make the soups that the kids would eat. However, they never directly credited the evaluations for the change in format from frozen to hot soup. This change in soup selection was a concrete outcome that the staff members were able to acknowledge. However, there were some less concrete outcomes such as the improvement of communication, increased efficiency for the lunchroom staff and a more effective overall program.

#### 5.5.3 The People Involved with Each Evaluation

For each evaluation, different people were involved. The first evaluation included the lunchroom supervisors and the principals. Each school answered a

questionnaire and the evaluation was written based on their responses. The second evaluation involved the staff members of the nonprofits but the views of the schools were also included. The third evaluation involved the most participants the lunchroom supervisors, their staff, the students and the parents. So, as the evaluations progressed, the number of people involved increased.

#### 5.5.4 The Use of Process Evaluation

The first and third evaluations were process evaluations. "The focus of process evaluation is the implementation of a program or a strategy" (Gredler, 1996). The main purpose is to provide feedback about needed modification if the implementation is inadequate. It can also "provide information to external audiences who wish to learn about the program and to assist program staff, evaluators and administrators in interpreting program outcomes" (Gredler, 1996). The first evaluation examined the process of the frozen soup from the perspective of the lunchroom supervisors, and the work they had to do to prepare the soup. This evaluation suggested that the implementation of the program was not working and that the program required changes. The third evaluation studied the process of the hot soup. This evaluation found that the program was well implemented and there was no need to modify the process.

#### 5.5.5 The Use of Outcome Evaluation

The second evaluation was an outcome evaluation and was most useful to the funder. An outcome evaluation focuses upon outcomes, matching them

against stated objectives. It also “focuses on the short- and long-term impacts of the program” (Whitehead & Avison, 1999). The outcomes examined can include measures of satisfaction, changes in rates or incidence of phenomena. Thus the second evaluation required the evaluator to provide data on the number of children served, the unexpected outcomes, the lessons learned and the budget that was needed to run the program. This evaluation looked at the short term-impacts of the program. The second evaluation restated the problems found during the first evaluation and also described the changes that the program would undergo to deliver the soup hot.

#### 5.5.6 Internal vs. External Evaluators

The matter of whether to use internal or external evaluators was a concern. Often, “accountability activities raise the issue of whether programs should undertake their own evaluations or contract with outsiders” (Rossi & Freeman, 1993). The risk of an evaluator who is part of the program staff being consciously or unconsciously influenced means that stakeholders outside the program may be suspicious of the authenticity of the evaluation. This problem could be avoided by using an external evaluator. However, an external evaluator may not know a great deal about the program and therefore may not be able to design and perform a thorough evaluation. The evaluations were completed by three different people and may account for some of the differences in the way the evaluations were done. An internal evaluator did the first and third Duck Soup evaluations, whereas the second evaluator was a newcomer to the working group and was more of an external evaluator at the time of this evaluation. In



the case of the three evaluations of the Duck Soup program, there did not seem to be any of the internal or external issues.

#### 5.5.7 Time Issues

Perhaps the only issue that one of the evaluators discussed was the lack of time to do their evaluation. They also mentioned that some of the information gathered for this evaluation was lost. In general, there was an understanding that more time should have been invested on this particular evaluation. However, it was not possible due to the evaluators' workload from other duties.

The suggestion was made that the evaluation should be included with the program planning. This would then depend on the ability of the program to be evaluated. In order to do a program evaluation, an evaluability assessment has to be done first. "The evaluability assessment is a set of procedures for planning evaluations so that stakeholders' interests are taken into account in order to maximize the utility of the evaluation" (Rossi & Freeman, 1993). This assessment attempts to identify the structure, resources, clients, partnerships, goals, objectives and activities of the program. The assessment determines if a program can be evaluated and the type of evaluation that should be done. There were no evaluability assessments done prior to any of the Duck Soup program evaluations. It may not be necessary to plan the program evaluation at the beginning as long as the working group concentrates on planning a well-defined program that can be evaluated. Ultimately, for a worthwhile evaluation to be undertaken, "program definitions such as goal statements must be refined and stated in terms that can be measured, that is, operationally defined" (Rossi & Freeman, 1993).

## **Chapter 6                    There's still a lot of Work to be Done**

The participants were asked about the future of the program. The common theme was expansion. However, some also discussed the sustainability of the program. Feeding Calgary's Children will dissolve in March of 2003. The expectations are that the program will be given back to the community and Duck Soup will continue to provide soup for the students.

### **6.1 Expansion**

The lunchroom supervisors simply wanted the program to continue and, if possible, they wanted the soup more often. The program was highly valued by the schools but they wanted to have the cultural barriers addressed. There was still a group of students whose needs were not being met. As one supervisor said:

When we had the frozen soup, the vegetable stuff didn't go over very well. There was kind of a tomato water with long strings of onion, it wasn't very appealing looking. So, the way they're making soup now, I can see that a vegetable soup would look very appealing. (A:88-92)

The staff members were also in favour of providing more soup for all of the high needs schools. Several participants also wanted the program to be a fully fledged feeding program. However, funding was a barrier that was again a concern for everyone. As one staff member stated:

Yeah, it's a struggle. But yes, ultimately it's the funding to be able to carry the project out and carry it out right. I would like to carry it on in the fashion that we are doing, just expand it. (F:163-165)

Funding has to be continually addressed. With the Junior League's emergency funding, the program was able to finish the school year. Moreover, by helping the Duck Soup program, the Junior League could also expand the number of partners involved with this program. If the organisation continues to fund the program, they will have to define their role within the Duck Soup program. As one staff member explained:

Junior League will give us our emergency funding to finish this year but what they said they are looking to really grab onto a small feeding program that they could support financially. So, we have to continue those discussions. They have all our financial reports and know everything there is to know about Duck Soup, but we don't know how involved they want to be. Do they want to provide us with funding for a year or a hundred percent of our funding for three years? So, we have to determine that but they have definitely stepped up to the plate so they want to be involved. (I:470-478)

During one interview, I noted that the program was a complex process of many organisations working together for one simple outcome. They feed children who are in need. The staff member agreed with me but also pointed out the need to simplify the program by:

I think for the program to grow, it's going to have to be very, very simplified. Meals on Wheels should get the money, Meals on Wheels should make the soup and even have a driver and then Community Kitchens could give the food to them when they can. (E:209-213)

However, there was the concern that Meals on Wheels would not be able to carry on with the program because feeding children was not their mandate. So, I asked if there were any other organisations that could make the soup and one

person suggested a hospital kitchen or a high school with a cooking program. The kitchen would have to be big enough to feed the current number of students and, if necessary, any additional schools in the future. Thus the expansion of this program also depends on the availability of cooking facilities.

## 6.2 Sustainability

The Duck Soup program was greatly improved when a community development coordinator was hired to oversee the program. The liaison between the working group and the schools was clearly needed to run this program. Feeding Calgary's Children is paying for this position. Therefore, when the organisation relinquishes its leadership role, the position will be eliminated. When Feeding Calgary's Children stops running this program, will the program survive? Theoretically, one of the other partners could take over the duties and the community would then be running Duck Soup. As one staff member said:

There's still a lot of work to be done and to build capacity in the community is a huge undertaking and because the whole of Feeding Calgary's Children was to primarily promote collaboration. When the facilitator goes, hopefully the community will still come together. However, there are realities. (I:536-540)

There was obviously some doubt if this program could be self-sustaining.

Despite the fact that Feeding Calgary's Children does not want to create more bureaucracy, it was also suggested that the organisation should continue for a little longer:

I think Feeding Calgary's Children should continue. I think there are a lot of things that we've learned in the two years

that we have been in place but it's a huge mandate and a lot of work to build capacity within all of these organisations and in just a matter of a couple years. And for us to just back out and know that all the work continues to be done because it won't. There were a lot of committed individuals who were involved in the child hunger issue before we got involved. I mean that's how we got started—grassroots community groups were saying that there is a problem and what can we do about it? I think that with Feeding Calgary's Children, there is still a need for them to lead for maybe one more year. (I:542-551)

They have collaborated for this program but could the program continue on its own from this point? The partners would have to decide which organisation would take the lead. The staff members had a tendency to volunteer each other's organisation for the job. Moreover, the time management barrier that hindered the working group in the beginning would have to be addressed. One participant mentioned that if the funding was available, a coordinator could still be paid to run Duck Soup.

## 6.3 Discussion

### 6.3.1 Expansion for the Future

"Capacity building requires a thoughtful approach to the future which is concerned with wider quality of life issues" (Murray & Dunn, 1995). The current format of the Duck Soup program has been highly successful and none of the participants wanted it to end. This program could continue with the hot soup. However, the goal of many of the staff members at the nonprofits was to see full meals served to the students. The next step for this program would be to

expand. The hot soup format could be brought to all the high needs schools and for more days of the week. An integration of other types of soup or full meals could proceed from there. Now that the process has become so simple for the lunchroom supervisors and the working group has found this "best practice" method, the program could begin to grow.

Meals on Wheels may not be able to continue with this program, in which case, an alternate kitchen will have to be found. The heart of this program is the partner who makes the food, so alternatives will have to be explored. The partner would need to be flexible and able to prepare the soup by delivery time. They would also have to provide the same nutrition that the students currently receive.

### 6.3.2 Leadership Issues

When Feeding Calgary's Children dissolves in March 2003, there has to be consideration as to who will take over the leadership of this program. One of the biggest problems for this group in the beginning was the lack of a champion. If this program were to expand then the job may become more intensive and a full-time person may be needed. Currently, the community development coordinator is only the .75 equivalent of a full-time position. A new community development coordinator could be established in time to take over the program from Feeding Calgary's Children. The working group needs to decide how to take this program back to the community without disturbing services to the schools. There is the distinct possibility that when Feeding Calgary's Children ends, this program could fall apart. Time is a barrier. One of the partners will have to make the time to

run this program and to do further evaluations. The program no longer has the problems that it had with the frozen soup. Perhaps this program is established enough to be given back to the community but we will not know until the community takes over the Duck Soup program.

### 6.3.3 Continuous Funding Issues

Funding is always going to be a major barrier. Increased funding is necessary to create stability and sustainability for this program. The best solution would be long-term funding from a new partner. This would mean the expansion of the working group. Yet, there were contradictory statements made by other staff members who felt that a few of the partners could continue the program on their own. So in this case, if Meals on Wheels were to stay on they could be responsible for preparing and delivering the soup. Community Kitchens could still share their buns on a regular basis. A third partner could be the fiscal agent the liaison between the kitchen and the schools and the evaluator, thus eliminating the need to have other partners. The working group could simplify rather than expanding. Moreover, if there were fewer partners, the lines of communication would be easier to maintain. This progression, however, would go against the building of capacity. "The formation of a multi-agency working group, coalition or partnership, would provide extensive links to community networks and a greater potential to draw on community resources" (Moyer et al., 1999). If the working group's partnerships were reduced rather than expanded, they could be missing out on assets and other opportunities to serve a greater number of people in the community.

## **Chapter 7    Implications for Capacity Building within Duck Soup**

The purpose of this project was to determine if and how capacity could be built in a nonprofit organisation by a program evaluation approach or intervention. The Duck Soup program, designed to feed a hot lunch to children at risk of hunger in five schools in the city, was studied as a case exemplar to address this purpose. The program has been in place for three years and has undergone three separate evaluations for three different purposes, at three different stages of the program.

"Community capacity is defined as the characteristics of communities that affect their ability to identify, mobilize and address social problems" (Poole, 1997). The purpose of capacity building is to foster conditions that strengthen the characteristics of communities that enable them to plan, develop, implement and maintain effective community programs. A community with capacity can be described as one in which the various parts of the community are able to collaborate effectively in identifying the problems and needs of the community. They can achieve a working consensus on goals and priorities and are able to agree on ways and means to implement the agreed-upon goal.

Using an evaluation process as a means to develop capacity has some merit, but it also offers a variety of challenges. Where opportunity for evaluation exists, there also exists a potentially threatening context as the program is reviewed. In this section, a SWOT analysis will be done to determine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the Duck Soup Program and their program evaluations. This analysis will be discussed insofar as evaluation as a means to creating capacity is concerned. It is important to note that none



of the evaluations done by the working group utilized a SWOT analysis approach. However, for the data collected in this project I have chosen a SWOT as the best method of analysis.

### 7.1 Strengths

The main strength of the program, according to the participants, is the number of children who receive the soup on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The Duck Soup program is a model of healthy eating for the students, teachers and volunteers. This is evidence of capacity being built while delivering the nourishment itself. It is the belief of the working group and the supervisors that this program is making a difference for the students in terms of increased awareness of Canada's healthy eating guidelines and knowledge of how soup can be a source of nutrition while also being tasty and convenient.

Another strength of the program was the ability of staff members to use program evaluation to build capacity. They used both process and outcome evaluations. The second evaluation was an outcome evaluation that was more useful to the funder to hold the working group accountable. It is usually used at the end of a program to assess its consequences and outcomes. However, "outcome evaluations tend to neglect the process of implementing an intervention, which may leave a worker with insufficient knowledge of why a project has succeeded or failed" (Billing, 2000). Thus the first and third evaluations, which were process evaluations, were more useful to the working group. These evaluations told the partners about the process of bringing the soup to the students. The first evaluation informed the working group about the

problems that the frozen soup was causing for the lunchroom supervisors and their staff, whereas the third evaluation was very positive and it demonstrated that the user-group was very satisfied with the process of the program.

Therefore, the process evaluations were more beneficial to the working group in assessing the progress of the program. It helped to develop the decision-making capacity of the working group.

A third strength of the working groups was the ability to solve problems in order to develop a better program. This program was very close to cancellation after Phase 1. However, the partners were able to improve their capacity to communicate with each other and with the schools, after a community development coordinator were hired. During discussions related to the second evaluation, they decided to seek other methods of bringing the soup to the students. Thus the working group's ability to make choices and to implement important changes for the program was another example of building capacity. There were also some changes in the production and delivery of the soup. Meals on Wheels could no longer make soup when it was convenient for them and the FANS program had to rearrange their own program needs to lend their driver to the Duck Soup program. However, the program is running smoothly and there are no longer complaints from the user group. The current program could be used as an example of a best practice model for other working groups who want to develop a feeding program for their local schools.

## 7.2 Weaknesses

This program has its weaknesses in terms of building capacity. The delivery system will have to be revised. If this program were to expand to more days and more schools, then someone who can take on this job more permanently would need to be hired. The working group needs to consider hiring a driver who works directly for the Duck Soup program.

The kitchen is also an issue. The partners need to consider where they will continue to cook the soup. If Meals on Wheels decides not to continue with Duck Soup, then a suitable kitchen will have to be found to replace them. They need to look for a kitchen with the potential to keep this program running at its current service levels. Moreover, the kitchen should also be able to accommodate any expansion of the program.

Another weakness is the number of children missing out on the soup at the schools currently involved with the Duck Soup program. There are some students who are not enrolled in the lunch programs in the schools and therefore, do not get the soup. The program will not be completely universal until this barrier can be addressed.

To address these weaknesses, the program will have to look to other sources of social capital to build upon their current assets. The working group can look to solve their community problem by networking and introducing other partners to restructure the current program. The hot soup format could stay the same but the people who make the soup and how it will be delivered to the students, may require the skills and talents of other people in the community.

### 7.3 Opportunities

The Duck Soup program has many opportunities to expand into a full fledged feeding program by continuing to build upon their current capacity. This program could develop into the other schools with high needs. Currently, the program is at four elementary schools but there are needy students at the junior and senior high schools. So, for the Duck Soup program to truly meet their program goals they would have to eventually feed every needy child in the city. The program could also do more than serve soup. Ultimately, it could be sending full meals to the students. As one key informant suggested, there is also the opportunity to solve the kitchen problem by using a school that has a cooking program to make the soup or any other meals for this program. Students and the lunchroom staff at the schools could expand upon their cooking skills by learning to make soup and doing the deliveries to the other students. This program could then be building capacity by working "with" and not "for" its participants.

Another opportunity is the ability to bring in other partners, as funders. A change in kitchens may also result in a partner. Another partner could be the parents who have no involvement with the current program. They were not consulted for this program and have been included in only one of the evaluations. The parents are an important part of the community and hypothetically, they could be advocates for this program. Including the parents would take this program to the grassroots level. This could become an asset-based community development, where the program operates from the "bottom-

up” or “inside-out” work. It presumes that “local citizens are better equipped to create a vision for their community and to plan for its fulfillment rather than outside experts” (Bohach, 1997). Therefore, the parents could be involved with the serving of the soup at each school on a rotational basis. They could perhaps also be involved in the kitchen, helping to make the soup. A representative from the parent group could be part of the working group and eventually the parents could be running the program themselves. Thus the people in the community could take back the program and, although the organisations may still have to provide monetary support, they would no longer have to run the program. The ability to take this program to the grassroots level would be similar to the capacity that has been built by Habitat for Humanity. This program would no longer be about “handouts” from the organisations but would be a group of parents working together to feed the children. By having students or parents cooking, delivering and serving to the other students in need, the Duck Soup program would be building capacity within the community. Nabben (1995) has stated that:

“Community development is to establish a situation where ordinary people can exercise more and more control over their own lives at both personal and collective levels. Central to community development work is the commitment to working with people and communities to achieve change rather than imposing solutions on people”.

It would be the parents and their children who generate the ideas to further this program, rather than having the organisations dictating the future of the program. At the grassroots level, the community would direct the program and the organisations would provide the financial support.

This program has also built capacity by being able to teach others how to feed students with a meal supplement at school. There are other organizations that would benefit from the lessons that this working group has experienced. They learned that there were certain reasons the frozen soup did not work. Other working groups could also learn from these setbacks and choose not to use this format. However, the frozen soup method could work in other settings. A different organisation might look at the frozen soup format and see it as something they might be successful at because they have a different feeding situation. The success of the hot soup could have the same impact. Another working group could look at it and decide that it would work for them, while others could see it as impractical for their purposes and reject it. Therefore, the working group would be sharing their capacity building skills by documenting their experiences to assist other organisations.

#### 7.4 Threats

The major threat is the lack of funding. Funding is necessary to keep this program running. The success of the hot soup format should be well received by any potential funder and work in the program's favour. However, "communities have trouble attracting funds because sponsoring locally controlled initiatives is considered unsophisticated and risky" (Bohach, 1997). The working group has spent a lot of time and energy trying to attract more money to their program. There has to be stable funding to allow this program to continue. Furthermore, if the program plans to expand, the amount of funding required will also

increase. So unless this threat is eliminated, the program will always be in the tenuous position of having to constantly apply for funding. To counteract this threat, the working group has to ensure that the available funding is being used properly and to continue to write effective proposals for funding. They also have to raise the profile of the program. When Duck Soup was first introduced, the local media was used to present the program to the city. However, this program could use their strengths and continue to market itself through advertising and media exposure. There is also the potential to increase the community capacity of the working group by incorporating a partner that has the skills to attract more funding. This strategy would keep the public aware of the hungry children and raise more support for the Duck Soup program.

The other threat to this program is the loss of leadership. Without Feeding Calgary's Children's staff members, this program could again experience some of the barriers that were found at the start of Duck Soup. Hypothetically, this program could have a "leader-in-training" before Feeding Calgary's Children dissolves. Moreover, this new leader could be incorporated into one of the other partner's organisation. Technically, Feeding Calgary's Children does not have to exist but the "strength in leadership" aspect does have to continue. The working group could appoint a member from the organizational partners and this person could provide the strength in leadership that the Duck Soup program requires.

In considering the time-management barriers, it is realistic to assume that the partners will still have insufficient time to oversee this program. The responsibility would have to be given to someone who has time to coordinate

and evaluate the program and to be responsible for getting funding. Community capacity could be built by networking and developing local leadership in the community. In theory, the solution to the leadership issue could come through a hypothetical partner such as the parents. Thus with the grassroots element the parents could become involved in this program. The parents could learn to manage and run the Duck Soup program. They may need assistance with fund-raising and evaluation but the other partners would be able to help in these areas. However, the day-to-day functioning and future expansion of the program could be the parents' responsibility.

A minor threat to this program is the gatekeepers. A possibility always exists that a school will refuse to have the soup program. A gatekeeper has the power to deny Duck Soup access to their students at any time and there is very little the program can do to solve this problem. There are other issues with gatekeepers. In other situations such as health promotion, the practitioners have found that there was a paradox when attempting to access a community setting through the gatekeepers. On one hand, "the approval of key gatekeepers may be required to gain entry and access; on the other hand, this may jeopardize the ability of the health promotion practitioner to gain the trust and support of those with whom s/he wishes to work in that setting" (Poland et al., 2000). Therefore, aligning with a gatekeeper may not always be helpful. In this case, the gatekeeper kept the program out of the school. A solution to this problem might have the working group trying to reach the children through other gatekeepers in other organisational settings. One solution might be trying to serve the children at a community centre or through a church. The community



would trust these gatekeepers and this could provide the access that the working group requires.

## 7.5 Developing a Theoretical Model

The SWOT analysis identified the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the case study of the Duck Soup program were identified and can be used as examples for the development and understanding of a capacity building model. "A SWOT analysis is an effective and simple planning technique, which helps to prioritize information and choices available in a given situation" (Casebeer, 1993). This model will demonstrate the linkages among the strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities during the development of a program intended to build capacity. Moreover, it demonstrates how program evaluation can be utilised to assist in program development.

I will discuss the model as it was developed, beginning with the relationship among the weaknesses, threats and opportunities that coexist for a developing program. The strengths and use of program evaluations are then introduced to the base of the model. These two elements assist the connection among the weaknesses, threats and opportunities. Lastly, the results, which lead to the building of capacity, will be discussed.

### 7.5.1 Linkage between the Weaknesses, Threats and Opportunities

The weaknesses, threats and opportunities are linked to each other and must be addressed together in order to build capacity. Fig. 2 is a diagram of the placement for these three factors at the base of the pyramid. Some examples of weaknesses found within the Duck Soup program included inadequate

communication, poor time management and insufficient technical skills and other safety issues. The SWOT analysis also identified the lack of funding, political issues and gatekeepers as possible threats. However, the chance to expand a program, sustainability, and the revisions and implementation of changes to a program were all possible opportunities found in this program's development.

I determined that these three factors had a constantly linked relationship. The weaknesses and threats coexist. There were situations where the weaknesses were a greater obstacle for program development than the threats and vice versa. However, when the weaknesses and threats are overcome it could lead to new opportunities for program planners. The developing of these opportunities may then lead to other weaknesses or threats that would have to be addressed and overcome. Thus this reinforces the connection among the weaknesses, threats and opportunities.

#### 7.5.2 Applying the Strengths Through Program Evaluations

The strength factor has been placed in the centre of the triangular base (see Fig. 2) to represent the role that this factor has on the mediation of the weaknesses, threats and opportunities. In utilising the strengths of a program, a working group can minimize a program's weaknesses and threats, and maximize opportunities.

In the Duck Soup case study, their program development strengths included the ability to problem solve, maintaining good leadership and being receptive to change. The working group could also draw strength from the use of networking to generate community involvement for their partnerships and

investing in their social capital. These strengths are the solutions that can counteract the negative affects of the threats and weaknesses.

A process evaluation is the best type of evaluation to establish the linkage from the weaknesses, threats and opportunities back to the strengths. In the case study, the working group at Feeding Calgary's Children was assisted the most by their process evaluations during the developmental stages of the Duck Soup program. Utilising a process evaluation would assist in determining the threats and weaknesses that are counterproductive to program development. The evaluation could also determine the strengths that could be applied back to the threats and weaknesses to overcome these factors. Another purpose of the process evaluation might also be used to determine new opportunities for planning and to evaluate the results of these endeavours. Once again, the corresponding strengths could be applied back to assist in developing upon all opportunities.

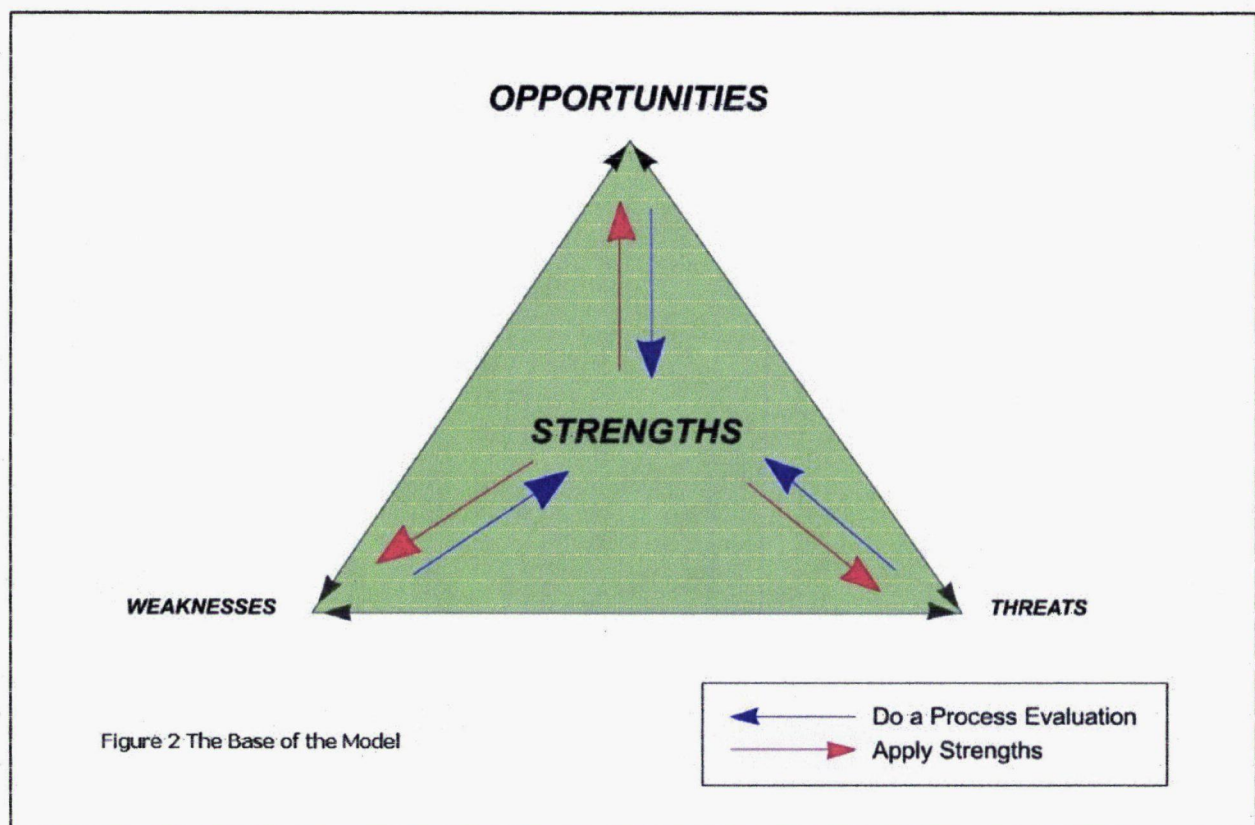
The Duck Soup program was able to use the results of their evaluations to determine the best course of action and develop a better program that expanded on their opportunities. However, the working group still has to consistently address their weaknesses and threats in order to continue building capacity.

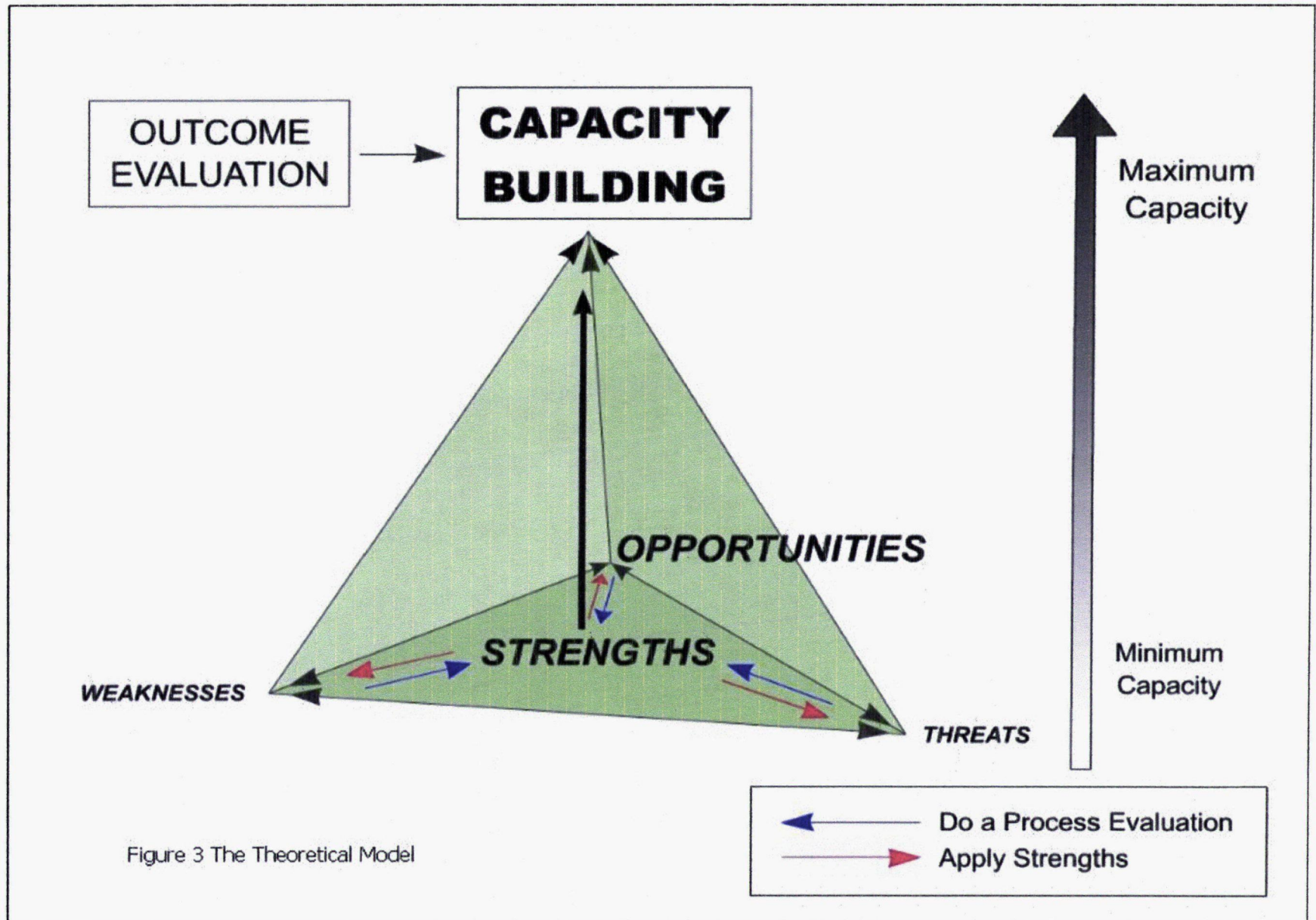
### 7.5.3 Leading to Capacity Building

In developing a program, weaknesses, threats and opportunities are to be expected. Yet, successful planning depends on the use of program evaluation to identify these issues and determine how the strengths can be applied properly. Fig. 3 demonstrates how capacity building occurs as the arrows rise towards

the peak of the pyramid. I think that capacity is a process of growing, learning and building upon the existing foundations that are available. Capacity building can exist in different degrees. Therefore, at the base of the pyramid capacity building would be minimal. However, as the weaknesses and threats are minimized and potential opportunities and strengths are maximized, capacity begins to increase. At the very tip, capacity building would be at its maximum effectiveness, where all the weaknesses and threats would be eliminated and every opportunity acted upon.

Currently, the Duck Soup program has begun the 'ascent to the peak' of the pyramid. However, there are still other opportunities left to explore and implement that would raise the program to the tip of the model and the peak of capacity building.





## 7.6 Implications for the Duck Soup program

The model demonstrates how the Duck Soup working group has integrated their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to develop a program to feed children. They have identified weaknesses and threats that have been addressed by their strengths and are now contemplating new opportunities. Program evaluation has also been a very useful tool to assist in this process of capacity building. Therefore, the Duck Soup program is now starting to build capacity.

Despite some disappointing results in the beginning, the use of their social capital and the collaborative efforts of the partners resulted in an effective program. They were able to plan and deliver a different program in their second year of service that eliminated all of the problems that existed with Phase 1. The general consensus from all the participants was that Duck Soup was now a successful program. However, the capacity building efforts of the working group could continue to expand to a more grassroots level. This program could accommodate the interests of the parents and their input would be valuable should the program decide to feed more students at more frequent intervals. In attempting to build capacity, the links between the citizens and existing community networks and associations should be strengthened (Bohach, 1997). Thus for this program to truly build capacity, they will have to continue generating their social capital by working on the hypothetical link to the parents and attempting to increase the capacity within this group of stakeholders. If the parents can be successfully incorporated into the working group and essentially

become responsible for the program, then the Duck Soup will be given back to the community and expanding upon their opportunities. This process would demonstrate that the parents have the ability to come together with local organisations to build community capacity and develop programs aimed at helping themselves.

According to Bohach (1997), "in spinning a web of citizen relationships within a community, new structures are developed that operate outside the existing institutions and often function independently of them". Other programs could evolve out of learning to operate a feeding program. Theoretically, the parents could be the ones to act as leaders in generating new ideas for programs that they could take to the organisations for financing. In the current situation, the organisations do the developing and delivering of programs and the user group receives the charity and is not involved in any other way. Thus the "community will develop the resources to negotiate with other partners from a position of strength rather than dependency" (Chapman & Kirk, 2001).

The use of program evaluation was crucial to the Duck Soup program's changes as demonstrated in the theoretical model. In evaluating, the working group was able to understand the weaknesses and threats that the program was encountering. The evaluations that were the most useful were the process evaluations because the group was able to see why the program was not working and what was being done wrong. Thus the results of the evaluations assisted in determining the strengths that were used to make program adjustments. The working group changed to hot soup and the delivery was able



to proceed without any more interruptions. Evaluation will be essential to the program if it should explore new opportunities such as expanding to feed more children. In the future, the Duck Soup program should continue to do process evaluations on an annual basis as a way to monitor the progress of the program and to expose and address any problems that may arise. Thus the working group will be consistently learning "about" as well as learning "from" its own program.

The limiting factors of the Duck Soup program also have to be addressed. The apparent weaknesses have multiple solutions but the working group will have to determine the appropriate responses that best fit the program through problem solving and evaluating. This working group has proven to be successful in their ability to analyse the problems they encountered and they had the strength to make the appropriate changes. Thus with persistence the hot soup program emerged. The threats to the program also have to be approached with a similar attitude where the working group will have to be persistent and willing to try different solutions to prevent these threats from ending the program. Facing the threats will be more of a challenge than dealing with the weaknesses. Some of the threats may have solutions while others may be beyond the control of the working group. If there is no funding, then the program will not be able to continue. However, the leadership can still be developed through the parents and other partners but it will take time. Other issues with gatekeepers will have to be handled delicately and in some cases they will prevent the program from moving further.



Ultimately, the future of the Duck Soup program and its ability to build long-term capacity will depend upon the working group's ability to maintain its strengths, capitalize on the opportunities, and attempt to find solutions for the weaknesses and the threats to the program.

## 7.7 Conclusions

"The purpose of capacity building is to enable people in a community to work together, make well-considered and collaborative decisions, develop a vision and strategy for the future and act over time to make these real" (Aspen Institute, 1996). The Duck Soup program was able to build capacity within their working group to provide a successful lunch supplement for children at four elementary schools around Calgary. Program evaluation proved to be a useful tool that assisted in building their capacity and it should continue to be used on a regular basis.

Duck Soup also gave insight into the components that are needed to build capacity. In applying their elements of strength to their weaknesses and threats, a working group could ensure their ability to explore new opportunities and build capacity within their communities.

## **Chapter 8      General Implications for Capacity Building**

Capacity building is currently gaining recognition as a goal of program planning for nonprofit organizations. It is no longer acceptable for service providers to simply help those in need with handouts. The alternative is to consider how these organizations can assist the clients by teaching them how to essentially help themselves as a community. Therefore, program planning that builds capacity should include representatives from all members of the community that will be affected by the program.

In this chapter I will discuss: the application of the theoretical model, the strategy for program planning, using the strength of leader, the lessons in learning, knowing your limitations and the use of critical thinking. Moreover, I will discuss the antecedents, mechanisms and consequences of capacity building.

### **8.1 Applying the Theoretical Model**

I believe that many organizations can build capacity if the principles of the theoretical model are applied to program development. Based on this model, there is a need for an effective strategy when program planning. A working group needs to identify and understand their strengths and opportunities. Another requirement is the ability to learn from past lessons and feedback from all the parties involved through evaluation. Moreover, there has to be recognition that all programs will have limitations that may impede upon the success of any working group. There will always be the presence of weaknesses and threats that may or may not have a solution. However, a combination of

strengths and the use of program evaluation will allow nonprofit organizations and other working groups and their clients to incrementally develop programs that will provide effective capacity building.

## 8.2 Strategy for Program Planning

Generally, when trying to build capacity a nonprofit should consider the strategy that is involved and their available strengths. A working group has to “gather information about the circumstances and available resources, analyse the situation, prioritise actions they wish to pursue, join with other organisations or groups and work out the means of implementing these actions” (Chapman & Kirk, 2001). Therefore, the time should be taken to be in touch with the people that the program intends to serve. It would be wrong for a working group to assume that they know what is best for the community and plan a program based on those assumptions. The planning has to begin strengthening communication by asking the user group what they require for an effective program. There also needs to be a conscious awareness of weaknesses and threats and their root causes. Program development begins with reaching out and consulting, analyzing the needs and then trying to develop the methods into a plan of action. This plan may include an analysis of the “skills and tools” that will be needed to develop the program. As one informant explained, the best solution is to let everyone do what they do best and do not to overlap services.

In considering the amount of preparatory work that is necessary, it is obvious that capacity building can begin with more ease from grassroots. At this

level, the people developing the program are those living within the community. They usually are all too aware of what they require and can develop to fit their own needs. "The people of the community understand the community history, which can provide an important backdrop in planning solutions to social problems and, as such, are a key component of community capacity" (Goodman et al., 1998).

### 8.3 Finding Strength in Leadership

There is a definite need for leadership to build capacity and this is a major strength factor. This person would be the champion that would make a service program his/her main priority. They could be doing other tasks but this program would be their main initiative. The leader would have to be the anchor for the working group. There is a need for someone to delegate duties to other members of the working group and ensure that all necessary tasks are done properly, allowing for better time management. The weaknesses in communication could be improved with a leader who understands the program and is able to answer any relevant questions. A leader will also be the mediator between the partners, ensuring that accurate information is being shared within the working group and with the user group. Therefore, there would be effective information management.

Leadership can be transferable, especially if a program is to be given back to the community. The champion may begin as a member of an organisation but eventually relinquish this role to a member of the community. No matter who is

looking after the program, however, a leader has to ensure that the program is doing what it intended.

#### 8.4 Lessons in Learning

A program will constantly be learning in its beginning stages, especially if the program is unique and there are no other programs that can be used as a model. One aspect of capacity building is that there is no set formula on how to ensure a successful program. A project may be successful in one city but not in another, so there may be instances of trial and error in implementing a program. It is important that a working group is able to learn from all the experiences and to utilise it as strength in order to improve and build upon any service program. Part of this learning will include the use of problem-solving skills. A negative situation might require a working group to take a second look at the procedures or services being provided in order to find a solution that is better suited for the user group. Thus there are two benefits: the program will be improved for the clients and the problem-solving skills of the working group will also be enhanced.

Program evaluations are a major part of learning for any organisation. The evaluations provide insights into a program, which may not be obvious. Moreover, in doing an evaluation, the user group is included and they can have a voice in the development of the program. Thus "evaluation allows an organisation to collect and provide information, identify attitudes and opinions, generate new ideas and build constituency support" (Checkoway, 1995). To determine whether the goals of a program are being met, an evaluation is the

best tool that a working group can utilise. A process evaluation would be the best type of evaluation to determine how well a program is running. The results of such an evaluation would identify the positive and negative aspects of the program's services. The weaknesses, threats and opportunities could then be identified and the corresponding strengths could be applied to the given situation. Positive aspects could then be enhanced and negative aspects could be addressed and appropriate changes could be implemented. Capacity building programs should do evaluations routinely to ensure that there are no major problems and allow the working group to keep in touch with the program.

### 8.5 Know your Limitations

There is a need for critical reflection when building capacity. It is defined as the "ability to reflect on the assumptions underlying our and the others' ideas and actions and to contemplate alternative ways of thinking and living" (Goodman et al., 1998). It involves reflecting upon the community's actions for the purpose of creating change and testing assumptions. Goodman et al. (1998) supports "emancipatory learning where the members gain an understanding of their environment to enable them to act to promote both individual and social change".

A part of critical reflection is acknowledging that there will always be limitations to any program and that every working group has to be realistic. There will always be the presence of weaknesses and threats, which will have to be identified and will probably never be completely eliminated. However, "critical

reflection can be used as a lived activity of action and reflection within one's community for the purpose of challenging assumptions and creating change" (Goodman et al., 1998). One of the participants I interviewed said that the Duck Soup program had some very lofty goals in the beginning, where they were going to feed so many hundreds or thousands of children in twelve weeks. However, it became evident upon review that they would have to limit themselves to twice a week in the four schools. This is an example of how communities can "create mechanisms for self-reflection, for constructing their own identity and for analyzing social conditions that will have an impact on building community capacity" (Goodman et al., 1998).

One of the major areas that would create limitations for any working group would have to be funding. According to Chapman and Kirk (2001):

Funding for community capacity building can be accessed from a variety of sources including charitable trusts, voluntary sector organisations and the private sector. However, to improve local service delivery and coordinate the expenditure available, there is strong argument in favour of resources, especially at the city-wide level, to be integrated strategically to promote capacity building".

Nevertheless, funding will always be an issue for many organisations and they will have to be continuously fund-raising to keep their programs afloat. It would be a luxury for any organisation to be able to focus on the delivery of services and learning to work together as partners, rather than having to concentrate on getting the funding to pay for those services. "Short programming periods and funding time-scales often act as a barrier to the development of trust amongst

partners” (Chapman and Kirk, 2001). The best type of funding would be a long-term commitment from a private funder. However, the working group also has to know how to spend properly and ensure that the available funding is not being wasted.

Working group should also take into careful consideration when approaching gatekeepers to gain access to the user group. The gatekeeper should be someone that the clients trust, allowing for easier entry into the community. However, there will always be the threat of a gatekeeper choosing to refuse a working group access to the user group.

A new program may start off small but in order to continue the capacity building process; the program may have to extend the services. Expansion may also be a necessity for successful service programs, especially if there are clients, which are not being served properly. However, expanding may again lead to funding issues. This is an example of how developing a new opportunity can create more threats for a program, requiring more critical reflection.

Nevertheless, the best solution for this limitation may again be the addition of more partners to a working group. New partners can be useful in many ways and this limitation could be used to build upon the capacity of any working group as well as the capacity of the community. In a community where capacity is being built, “an ever-increasing number of people participate in all types of activities and decisions” (Aspen Institute, 1996). These people can represent all the different parts of the community and also represent its diversity. Thus new



partners could provide more funding or add different areas of expertise to the working group.

## 8.6 The Antecedents, Mechanisms and Consequences of Capacity Building

The concept analysis of capacity building, as discussed in Chapter 1, illustrated that there are certain antecedents, mechanisms and consequences of capacity building.

Some of the antecedents include: "participation and leadership, access to and prudent application of resources, social and interorganisational networks, sense of community, community history of collective action, community power, shared core values and capacity to engage in critical reflection" (Poole, 1997). Many of these antecedents are strengths that can be utilised in the theoretical model to counteract the threats and weaknesses, while assisting in developing new opportunities.

There are several strategies that mechanize capacity building: "mass mobilization, social action, citizen participation, public advocacy, popular education and local service development" (Checkoway, 1995). *Mass mobilization* includes mass protests through public processions, non-cooperation through boycotts, strikes and other acts of civil disobedience. *Social action* involves organizing a community campaign. It may include forming small groups to win victories on initial issues before expanding to major issues. *Citizen participation* is a strategy that aims to involve citizens in the policy planning and program implementation of government agencies. *Public advocacy* is the process of

representing group interests in legislative, administrative, or other established institutional arenas. *Popular education* aims to create change by raising critical consciousness of common concerns. *Local services development* is a process whereby people provide their own services at the community level.

The consequences of successfully building capacity are often very positive. The ultimate benefits of capacity building for the individual may be financial because many capacity building programs have a monetary purpose, where the user group benefits from learning to save or utilise money more effectively. However, positive psychosocial effects can also occur. Communities can strengthen their problem-solving skills and improve their delivery of services by being more responsive to the community's needs. It can also increase the accessibility, acceptability and availability of services, therefore having a positive impact on the quality of life for the individuals in the community.

## 8.7 Conclusions

In considering the theoretical model, all programs will have their share of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. However, in applying program evaluation through this model these elements can be identified and addressed. Program evaluation becomes the "mechanism for self-reflection, which assists in constructing a program's identity and for analysing social conditions that will have a greater community capacity to maintain change efforts" (Goodman et al., 1998). The theoretical model can be applied to any developing program trying to build capacity. The process of capacity building has no set "formula" or

“recipe” for success because different working groups will encounter differing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. However, the absence or presence of the indicators of capacity building can assist in determining if a program is working properly. A program can become a model for other communities or expand community capacity to provide other services. Capacity building becomes a growth process that enables the members of a community to become increasingly involved with developing local programs that best responds to the community’s needs.

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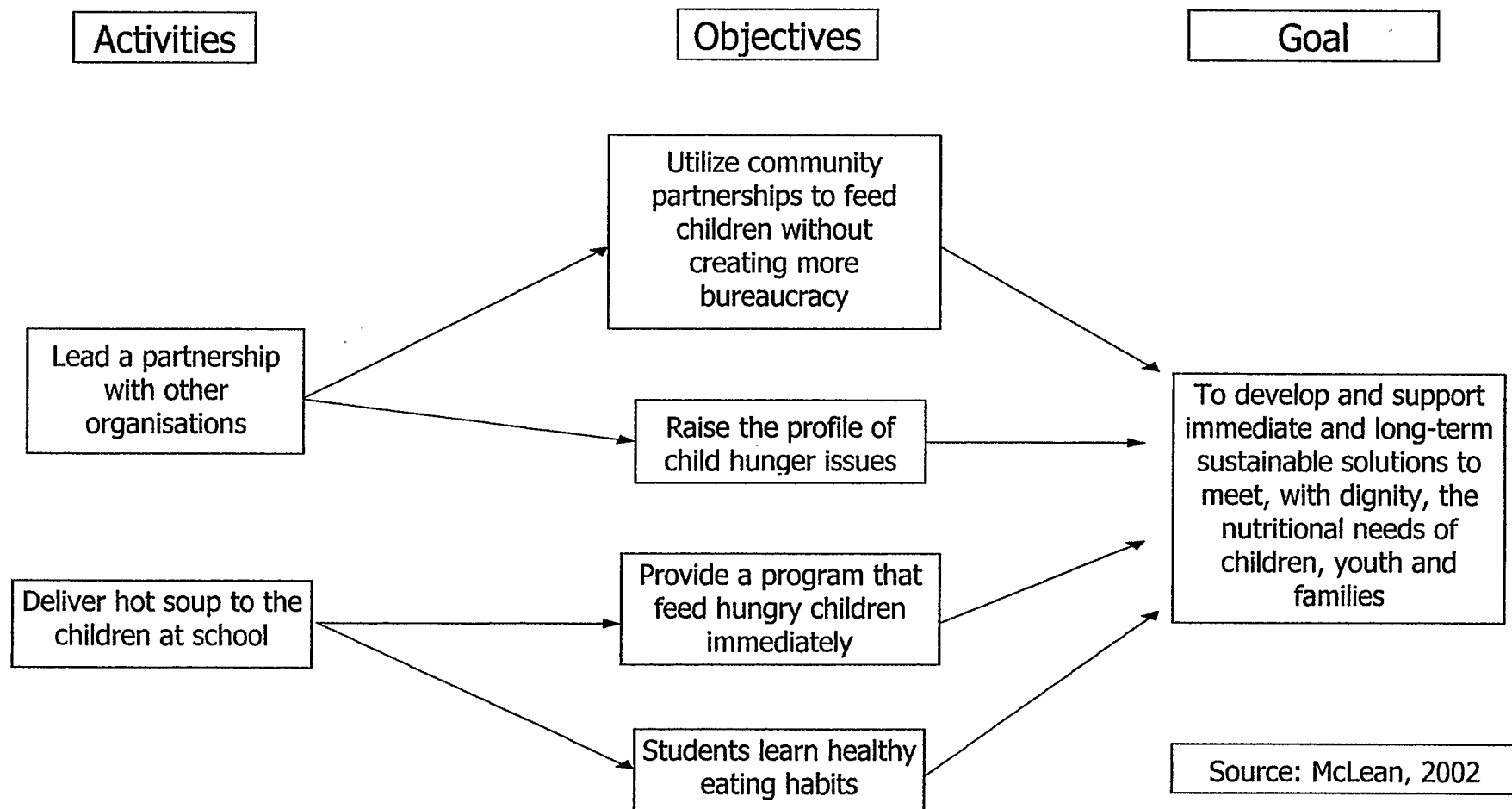
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## Appendix A

## Logic Model for the Duck Soup Program



**Appendix B**      Questionnaire for the Key Informant Interviews

1. How did you come to be part of the Duck Soup program?
2. What were the barriers and facilitators that affected the Duck Soup program?
3. How has this program effected your organisation? What have been the outcomes?
4. What was the affect of the program evaluation?
5. What is the future of the Duck Soup program?



## **Appendix C**

### **University of Calgary – Faculty of Environmental Design Informed Consent Agreement**

**Research Project Title:** Evaluating the Evaluation: Assessing the use Program Evaluation for Capacity Building in a Nonprofit Organisation

**Investigator:** Denise Cheng

I am a master's student in the Faculty of Environmental Design and am carrying out a study on the affect that program evaluation has on capacity building. The purpose of the project is to determine if and how capacity can be built in a nonprofit organisation while being facilitated by a program evaluation approach/intervention. The objectives are: 1) to better define and understand the role of capacity building within nonprofit organisations, 2) to better understand the relationship between program evaluation and capacity building at the nonprofit level, and 3) to further develop the process of capacity building and program planning for the nonprofit sector.

This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

I wish to interview you because of your professional knowledge of this issue as a member of this nonprofit organisation.

I do not expect any risk to you in participating in this study. Your participation would involve answering questionnaire, which would require about one hour. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time, in which case your responses would not be used.

All responses to these questions will be kept confidential. The questionnaires will be identified by number and only I will have the key linking participants to specific questionnaires. The identity of participants will be excluded from all published materials related to this study. If you choose to withdraw from this study at any point, the data you have provided will be destroyed.

I will keep the completed questionnaires in a locked filing cabinet. After the study is finished, they will be kept by my supervisor for two years as is required

by our Faculty ethics guidelines. After that, the questionnaires will be destroyed.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. If you have further questions concerning matters related to this research, please contact:

Denise Cheng	256-9187	dwcheng@ucalgary.ca
Prof: Ardene Vollman	239-3180	avollman@home.com
Prof: Ron Wardell	220-2717	rwardell@telusplanet.net

If you have any questions or issues concerning this project that are not related to the specifics of the research, you may also contact the Research Services Office at 220-3782 and ask for Mrs. Patricia Evans.

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Participant's Signature

Date

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Investigator and/or Delegate's Signature

Date

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Witness' Signature

Date

A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.