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## **PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE: EDUCATING FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGE AT THE COADY INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE**

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**Past, Present and Future: Educating for Social and Economic Change at the Coady International Institute**  
June, 2001

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**Abstract**

This paper is a retrospective view of the evolution of the diploma program at the Coady International Institute. Inspired by the teachings of Moses Coady and Jimmy Tompkins, and the Antigonish Movement that they led in the 1930s, the Coady Institute was established in 1959 to meet demand from the South for training in the formation of co-operatives. Since then, the content of its program has changed to reflect changing training needs, but it continues to this day to remain true to the principles of the Movement. Two examples of contemporary practice are presented to illustrate community-based development that is relevant to the current social and economic environment, and to illustrate some of the more recent additions to the content of the diploma program.

**Past, Present and Future: Educating for Social and Economic Change at the Coady International Institute**

The Coady International Institute was established in 1959 to meet international demand for training in the adult education methods and co-operative practices, which people in many countries began to associate with the Antigonish Movement. During the past 41 years, 4,000 development workers, primarily from the South, have come to the Coady Institute to share ideas and to learn new strategies for social leadership and community-based development. In the same period, 22,000 have participated in the Coady Institute's short courses held overseas. Graduates throughout the world are connected on the strength of this shared experience.

Over these 4 decades, the content of the Coady Institute's programs has been influenced by global political and economic conditions, trends in development theory and practice, and new challenges faced by the participants in their day-to-day experience of community-based development. In this paper, we trace the origins of the Coady International Institute form its roots in the Antigonish Movement, trace the evolution of the Diploma Program, and then present two examples of contemporary strategies for discussion: community-based resource management and asset-based community development. Each of these two strategies emphasizes people organizing at the local level for change. Each shows promise as a means of community renewal and prosperity, and each draws on many of the essential principles that guided the Antigonish Movement. The learning from the field-based experience of these people in the North and South, locally and globally, will be integrated back into the Diploma Program as it continues to evolve and to stay relevant.

**Origins of the Coady International Institute**

The Coady Institute takes pride in its roots, but its continued legitimacy depends on its response to current priorities of the South, rather than on the reputation of the Antigonish Movement. The evolution of the Diploma Program should therefore be assessed on its contemporary relevance, rather than its fidelity to a development model appropriate in a particular historical context.

***Reasons for Current Interest in Its Origins***

Participants in the current Diploma Program are keen to learn about the Coady Institute's origins, and are curious about its impact in present day Nova Scotia. Visits are arranged to some of the places where the Movement was strongest—small fishing communities that organized themselves into producer and consumer co-operatives; and rural and urban communities where adult education took place through kitchen meetings and study clubs. Films about the Movement are shown and visits are arranged to the homes of the Movement's leaders: Fr. Jimmy Tompkins and Fr. Moses Coady.

Exposure to this history prompts participants to ask the question: Where is the Movement now? The truth is that, in general, the small community-based co-operatives and credit unions that resulted from the Movement are now less vibrant, for various reasons. The mainstays of the traditional Nova Scotia economy have been shaken; the cod fishery has collapsed, farming and forestry have been consolidated into larger

units, and a contraction of government services has further threatened rural community viability. With some notable rural exceptions, successful co-operatives and credit unions are now more urban in character, oriented to consumers rather than producers, and more anonymous in their membership. This situation is very different from the close social ties among users or members that characterised the co-operatives of the Antigonish Movement.

However, we believe that the basic tenets of Coady and Tompkins' philosophy are as relevant today as they were in the 1930s, and that these need to be reflected in the Coady Institute's educational programs. The forces of globalization—such as the centralization of capital in monopolistic enterprises and the vulnerability of producers to the vagaries of world trade—existed then just as they do now. Locally and internationally, individuals and communities continue to resist the pressures to yield control over their economic fate. Thus, strategies for economic and political empowerment are core elements of the Diploma Program, even though the institutional form of these strategies may be more diverse than the initial focus on co-operatives and credit unions.

### ***Inspiration for the Antigonish Movement***

The Antigonish Movement was a unique combination of adult education and activities of economic co-operation that mobilized producers and consumers in impoverished communities throughout the Maritime Provinces of Canada from the 1920s through to the 1950s. Its leaders were Jimmy Tompkins and Moses Coady, Catholic priests based at St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia. These were men of intellect and drive, inspired with a practical vision, and with complementary powers of provocation and oratory. When market prices for fish slumped in the 1920s Tompkins organized meetings to mobilize protest; these meetings drew public attention to the plight of fishing communities in the Maritimes. A Royal commission was appointed in 1928 that recommended the establishment of co-operatives. That same year, university authorities committed themselves to a role in this by establishing an Extension Department and appointing Moses Coady as its founding director. From this position he was able to spearhead the work of the Movement (see Lotz, 1975).

The Antigonish Movement drew inspiration from two main sources: Catholic social teaching stemming from the Church's response<sup>1</sup> to the condition of the poor under industrialisation and urbanization (see Alexander, 1997) and distributist socialism in Britain (which later influenced the highly successful Mondragon Co-operative Corporation in the Basque Region of Spain). Tompkins (1938) viewed distributism (through co-operative ownership) as a means of

restoring family and individual liberty in national life by a revival of agriculture, favouring small industries, attacking monopolies and trusts, opposing a servile press owned by the rich and denouncing the anonymous control of finance.

Echoing this theme of liberty and predicting the concerns about economic globalization and the weakened democratic state at the turn of the century, Coady in 1958 wrote:

Rural North America for some decades has been contributing millions of people to the proletariat. Surely we can diagnose this frightening evil - on the one side the proletarianism of workers and farmers, and on the other a subtle new type of feudalism, the dictatorship of business and finance. If we prize our freedom, we must not permit the peoples of the world to become proletarianised. (cited in Laidlaw, 1971, pp. 33-34)

Tompkins' and Coady's analysis of social and economic change have a striking contemporary resonance. Addressing the United Nations in 1949, with 30 years of the Antigonish Movement behind him, Coady could well have been a spokesperson for today's advocates of sustainable development. He presented the issues of land-ownership and environmental stewardship, and integrated them with concerns for social, economic, and environmental well-being:

The great masses of the people lacked interest in the conservation of natural resources: this is due to the fact that they lacked ownership. Tenancy, sharecropping, the emergence of the rural proletariat, and the landlordism that is still so widespread have all tended to make the masses of the world's people feel that they have no stake in the world. The good earth was not theirs; so why should they care? (cited in Laidlaw, 1971, p. 44)

### ***The Antigonish Movement Model***

In the 1920s, and 1930s, Tompkins and Coady discovered the powerful effect of combining adult education with group co-operative activity for social and economic change. Their strategy was similar to the application of what would now be called participatory development principles:

I called a dozen or so of the people of this rural community to a meeting [in July]. My speech was short, just two sentences. It was this "What should people do to get life in this community, and what should they think about and study to enable them to get it?" I sat down and listened to this small group of people. By the end of the year we had about 20 meetings of this little group and here emerged the technique of adult education known as the Antigonish Movement. It was a small study club, issuing in economic group action. (Coady, 1957, p. 5)

Study clubs, kitchen meetings, and mass meetings were essential elements of the educational approach of the Antigonish Movement. Adult education went to the community, rather than expecting the community to come to the educational facilities at the university. One result of this was that both men *and* women were drawn into the Movement. Another result was the sense of pride and ownership in the co-operatives and credit unions that issued from it. The numbers involved speak volumes about the Movement's impact. In the six years between 1932 and 1938, the number of study clubs increased from 179 to 1,100; the number of participants of these clubs from 1,500 to 10,000, the number of credit unions from 8 to 142; and the number of co-operative organizations from 2 to 78 (Mifflin, cited in Alexander, 1997, p. 88).

### **Training and Education at the Coady International Institute**

The success of the Extension Department's program in the 1930s and 1940s attracted an increasing number of leaders from the South to study the Movement (MacDonald, 1998). This growing interest, combined with the fact that the local extension courses could not effectively cater to these foreign students, were an incentive for the University to establish a training institute devoted to leaders from the South. As a memorial to Moses Coady, who had died earlier that year, the Coady International Institute was established in 1959, fulfilling a vision that he had expressed. Ironically, this new initiative came at a time when doubts were being cast about the sustainability of the Antigonish Movement because "The movement was no longer mobilizing people made captive to economic depression and lack of opportunities" (MacDonald, 1998).

### ***The Early Years, 1959-1970***

From the beginning, the Coady Institute's educational programs were influenced by the experience of the Antigonish Movement and the economic and social realities in the countries from which it drew its students. Modeled on the Extension Department's 9-month Diploma Program, the Coady Institute's diploma program focused on the Antigonish Movement's experience with co-operatives, credit unions, adult education, and community development. The teaching staff had worked in the Movement themselves, and they drew heavily on this experience.

Through efforts of the Extension Department, interest in applying the Antigonish Movement model internationally had had its initial impetus in Puerto Rico from the mid 1940s, and this interest was reinforced in Mexico from the 1950s. By the 1960s, the influence of the Antigonish Movement was also felt in Brazil, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Colombia as a result of a series of training and educational programs run in Latin America by staff and graduates of the Coady Institute. This Latin American experience was significant, because co-operative formation there was bound up in the promotion of land reform and indigenous rights, supported by the growing influence of liberation theology and a renewed commitment to Christianity's social justice mission. Lessons from this period of intense political and social upheaval in Latin America reverberated around other, newly independent countries of the South; by the 1970s this experience was significant in shaping the Coady Institute's educational programs in Canada.

One of the results of the early Canada-based training was the inspiration it gave to graduates to maintain collaborative networks overseas. Another result was the impetus it gave to the Coady Institute to form what then-director Monsignor Francis J. Smyth termed "satellite" Coady Institutes. Although development of satellite institutions was soon realised to be overambitious and inappropriate in some contexts, the South East Asia Rural Social Leadership Institute (SEARSOLIN) was established in 1964 to train rural leaders in the Philippines using an approach modeled on the Antigonish Movement. Like Coady, SEARSOLIN's programs have changed over the years, but it continues its work today.

### ***The Decade 1971-1980***

During the early 1970s, training in the formation of co-operatives and credit unions was the staple of the

Canada-based Diploma Program. This focus remained a significant thread during the decade, but some of the earlier successes of co-operatives in Canada and overseas were beginning to waver by the 1970s, and the program began to diversify its content as a result.<sup>2</sup> Also at this time, staff at the Coady Institute who had been directly associated with the Movement began to retire, and new staff were acquired who had professional international experience in both nongovernmental agencies (NGOs) and government agencies. Increasingly, the Coady Institute drew its participants from a more diverse pool of organizations. New development projects and programs, funded to a large extent through international aid focusing on a *basic needs approach*, led to a demand by agencies in the South for new skills in project management and research methods. During the same period there was a new emphasis on *bottom-up* approaches to social and economic development, in which involving the poor in decision-making was as important as reaching them with a basic needs agenda.<sup>3</sup> Reflecting these trends, the Coady Institute began to offer two programs concurrently, one on Social Development for participants with regional responsibilities, and one in Social Leadership, for participants working directly with the people (Quiennec, 1974). According to MacNeil (1986), who headed the Department of Adult Education at the time and subsequently was the Director of Extension, the program's critical voice was more muted. Quoting MacDonald, the Director of the Coady Institute from 1979-1991, the graduates of this period were characterised as "functionaries rather than visionaries" (p.8). Thus, although the new offerings were important developments in the program, the time was ripe for renewed emphasis on structural reasons for inequality and poverty and on the challenge of social justice.<sup>4</sup>

### ***The Decade 1981-1990***

Heralding the decade of the 1980s, in a speech marking the Extension Department's 50th anniversary in 1979, Dr. Gregory Baum<sup>5</sup> drew parallels between the adult education approach of the Antigonish Movement and that of Paolo Freire's conscientization in Latin America. Such, he said, was "The Relevance of the Antigonish Movement Today" (the title of his speech). By the 1980s, the field of international development had expanded to a point where clear divisions between mainstream and alternative approaches to development were evident, in full recognition of the failure of debt-led growth policies to eliminate poverty in the South. The Coady Institute identified with these alternative approaches, increasing its emphasis on "value-based and ethical approaches" (MacDonald, 1998), that were, influenced by Freire, Fals-Borda, Gandhi, and other social leaders of the South.

Social transformation to eliminate injustice became the rationale for program content. Courses in adult education, participatory planning and evaluation, and the mobilization of people's organizations reflected this trend, as did the efforts to model the participatory democratic community in the educational approach employed to deliver the program. The emphasis on the economic was not forgotten: courses on savings and credit organizations and mobilizing member-based organizations for economic development continued to be central themes of the program. Co-operative ideology remained strong, but the institutional form of such economic democracy was a subject of debate rather than a prescription for development. In addition, by promoting people's organizations generally, the Coady Institute acknowledged that member-based organizations had a broader mandate than just the economic. In the same vein, at an international level, the burgeoning women's and human rights movements were pushing for legal and political empowerment as fundamental toward creating inclusive community economic development.

The gender issue was tackled with particular zeal at the Coady Institute, earning it a strong reputation for its work in gender training. By the mid-1980s, consultations with graduates overseas had taken place to discuss the most effective ways of mobilizing women in economic development activities. By the 1990s, increased emphasis was put on gender as a justice issue and on the intransigence of institutions—including the Church and the NGOs—to undergo their own social transformation in this regard. It is interesting to note that the Antigonish Movement encouraged and valued the prominent role that women played as adult educators; for example, Moses Coady had the foresight to appoint Sr. Marie Michael to organize women's study clubs in 1933 (Cameron, 2000) and to engage strong women in the extension team. Sr. Marie Michael described the spirit that he fostered as essential to the Movement:

Staff did not work for Coady. They worked WITH him ... He had complete confidence in us and made the most extravagant claims about us ... He gave us a confidence we should otherwise not have had ... One of his sayings was "You can do ten times more than you think you can". (cited in Neal, 1998, p. 146.)

In Latin America, the resonance of Moses Coady's teachings with the philosophy of Freire and liberation theology found practical expression in a number of educational initiatives, culminating in the establishment of a training program at the University of San Gil in Colombia. In a series of short courses, modeled on those that had been successful in Coady Institute's training programs in Venezuela, development workers from

throughout Colombia learned about co-operative activity in the context of *Realidad Nacional* (Fr. A. MacKinnon, Coady Institute's Registrar 1987-1994, personal communication, January, 2000). Without attention to such national and local realities, training would be irrelevant, yet Moses Coady's very practical vision of a just social and economic order "strikes a chord in the people ... [if] the economic and social instruments of co-operatives, community organizations, labor unions and political pressure groups are integrated into a coherent social movement" (Le Morvan, 1986).

### **The 1990s and Beyond**

*By the 1990s, the Coady Institute's Canada-based Diploma Program had evolved into one that promoted capacity-building and organizational strengthening among the disadvantaged. It was broader-based, both in scope (strengthening people's organizations, intermediary non-government organizations, and government agencies) and in substance (an integrated approach to sustainable rural development). Courses on NGO management, planning, and evaluation complemented courses on participatory approaches to working with and strengthening people's organizations based in the community.*

*By the end of the decade, training in micro-enterprise development and diverse micro-finance strategies complemented the earlier more restricted focus on co-operatives and credit unions. This reflected the expansion of overseas experience in this field during the period. Work with co-operatives and credit unions (in Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Uganda) continued, but with an increased emphasis on working with regional and national co-operative and credit union organizations, and organizations involved in training. Meanwhile, the reputation and experience of Coady Institute staff in member-based savings and credit institutions made it well-positioned to establish itself in the micro-finance sector. Promoted as the engine for sustainable economic growth for the poor, this sector has experienced rapid expansion in the last decade, and will continue to be a key element of Coady Institute's programming both overseas and in Canada. The evolution of the sector is reflected in the Coady Institute's shift in content focus from the international credit union system in 1969 to alternative approaches to savings and credit in the early 1990s, through to the role of micro-finance in community-economic development by the end of the decade.*

*Moving into the new millennium, and 41 years after the Coady was established, a shorter 5-month Diploma Program in community-based development is now in place. (The Coady Institute's definition of community-based development is provided as an appendix.) It is oriented to senior staff of development organizations—especially those of secular NGOs who are involved in various aspects of capacity building at the community level. This represents a shift from the orientation in earlier years to church and government agencies that focused primarily on co-operatives, credit unions, and social welfare (Quiennec, 1974), but it retains the emphasis on people organizing for change. The current program is designed to offer participants an opportunity for critical analysis of (a) the political and economic dynamics that shape contemporary communities and (b) the strategies for change that engage those who have been marginalized in an active citizenship role at both local and global levels. In this context, skills in advocacy and networking take on particular importance in a global economy that puts democratic and protective rights at risk, yet offers the tools for global communication, protest, and action.*

*Of renewed importance is the need for the Coady Institute to be grounded locally. Although structurally, institutionally, and programmatically (reinforced by the sources of financial support) the Coady Institute and the Extension Department have drifted apart over the years, at no time has their cooperation more relevant than it is today. The "development project"—an effort that has been managed externally, with distinct physical and time boundaries—is unraveling (MacMichael, 2000). Moreover, the divisions between North and South, between local and global, are dangerously irrelevant. The importance of forging links between local community-based organizing and global networks of NGOs and social movements makes the linkages between the Coady Institute's international reach and the Extension Department's local work of renewed significance. In turn, those linkages provide legitimacy to the educational programs of the Coady Institute, both locally and internationally.*

### **Ways Forward: Applying the Principles of the Antigonish Movement to Contemporary Practice**

*In this section we focus on two examples of contemporary practice that may influence the content of Coady Institute's educational programs in the years to come. The first is community-based resource management, which is a joint initiative of the Coady Institute and the Extension Department. The second is assets-based community development, currently being researched by the Coady Institute. Both are international in scope yet locally based, and firmly in the tradition of the Antigonish Movement. These are by no means the only areas that the Coady Institute is exploring, but are illustrative of strategies that have the potential to integrate*

themes of empowerment and governance with economic and environmental sustainability, and thus serve an educational purpose well.

### **Community-Based Natural Resource Management**

During the past 2 years community-based natural resource management has emerged as a new emphasis in the work of both the Coady Institute and the Extension Department at St. Francis Xavier University. Interestingly, community-based management has evolved independently in the programs of these two institutions. On the one hand, the Extension Department has been involved in promoting and supporting efforts of fish harvester groups in moving toward community-based management in the Canadian Atlantic fishery in response to the cod crisis, government restructuring, and pressures towards privatization of the industry. On the other hand, participants in the Diploma Program of the Coady Institute are demanding training in community-based resource management because this approach is emerging in Southern nations as a response to the social and ecological disintegration resulting from the forces of globalization.

To aid in understanding the program implications of this development, we first define the key characteristics of community-based management: Community-based management is a democratic, transparent, and participatory process for organizing community-based groups at the local level, leading to greater control and eventually formal or legal jurisdiction by the community-based groups over natural resource management. It involves the establishment of an institutional and policy environment for the identification of problems, policy development, participatory and scientific research, and community-based education. As a management paradigm it emphasizes the maximization of benefits to the community with equitable distribution of resource benefits, inclusivity in decision-making, the use of local and traditional knowledge, as well as scientific knowledge, and an ecosystem approach to management.

It must be stressed that "community-based management" differs from "community management" in that the former starts (or is based) in the community, but then scales up to the regional, national, and international levels. In other words, because natural resource management can seldom be conducted in isolation from other user groups or regions, the participatory and collaborative decision-making of community-based management must be scaled up to regional institutions. Often this regional form of decision-making will correspond to ecosystem boundaries, and is thus known as bioregional governance. Such bioregional bodies must then extend to inter-regional and national levels to the extent that policies and regulations are needed to govern trans-boundary issues, the interrelationships between regions, and the public interest for all citizens.

Hence community-based management is a bottom-up approach starting at the local level and scaling up to the national level. This contrasts with conventional resource management that has tended to be heavily top-down with policies emanating from centralized authorities and then filtering down and being imposed on local communities. However, our experience has shown that the scaling up of community-based management does not stop at the national level. Canadian fishers who have adopted community-based management, for example, have established an unprecedented level of contact with fisher-folk in the South. They soon come to realize that just as local decision-making is constrained by decisions and forces operating at the regional and national level, so too, global forces have a significant impact on their ability to implement principles maximizing community benefit and equity.

It is precisely here, at the level of scaling up of community-based management from the local to the international level, that it became apparent that the Extension Department and the Coady Institute had to combine their efforts. So obvious was this need that the Extension Department and the Coady Institute initiated a joint project in December of 1998 called the Centre for Community-Based Management. This centre not only promotes and supports community-based management at both the local and international levels but, more importantly, links these two levels of involvement. Thus, the activities of the Centre for Community-Based Management include:

- establishment of an international network of community-based management practitioners;
- establishment of working linkages with people's organizations and intermediary organizations involved with community-based management;
- field services in support of community-based management;
- collaborative research, analysis, and documentation of community-based management;
- dissemination and sharing of information through seminars, workshops, newsletters, reports, and internet technology; and

- courses on community-based management.

*This work in community-based management is both consistent with the principles of the Antigonish Movement (as rearticulated by A. A. MacDonald in Coady Institute's Education for Action Plan, 1990) and also brings two new elements to these principles.<sup>6</sup>*

*First, community-base management is consistent with the Antigonish Movement in its emphasis on organizing primary producers at the local level and doing this with the establishment of new local institutions. The original Extension Department workers helped to organize producers into co-operatives; now Extension Department workers help to organize producers into community management boards.*

*Second, it is consistent with the Antigonish Movement in its emphasis on community-based adult education. Here both the Extension Department and the Coady Institute have focused their work on capacity building for community-based management. The work stresses the need for the building of human capital by developing the knowledge base, participatory skills, and co-operative abilities of community-based management practitioners.*

*Third, it adds an emphasis on ecological principles. Whereas the Antigonish Movement originally emphasized the re-integration of community and economy in the face of capitalist forces, community-based management involves the reintegration of community, economy, and ecology in the face of the disintegrative forces of globalization.*

*Fourth, it innovately engages both co-operative and capitalist enterprise. Whereas the Antigonish Movement initially tried to carve out a space for an alternative co-operative economy within a capitalist economy, community-based management brings both co-operative and capitalist enterprises under the umbrella of community control over resource development and use. This control is based on a new notion of participatory and bio-regional governance, including legislated jurisdiction over natural resources. This emphasis on community-based governance, more than anything else, distinguishes it from other socio-economic development models. In essence, the promotion of community-based management requires advancing a global economic system governed primarily by community control—rather than market allocation—of the community's natural and social resources.*

### **Asset-Based Community Development**

*Another area of interest for the Coady Institute is assets-based community development (ABCD, a term coined by Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993 at the ABCD Institute at Northwestern University, Illinois). Diverging from the needs-based approach to community development, ABCD promotes social and economic recovery by building on existing (but often unrecognized) strengths and assets. Although primarily associated with economic recovery in particular US urban neighborhoods, similar recoveries or discoveries are evident elsewhere, both in the North and South. Well known in this regard is the example given by Putnam (1993) of how differences in regional prosperity in Italy could be attributed to "social capital"—the relative strengths of community networks and associations.*

*ABCD begins with the identification of assets—individual skills and strengths or public and private resources on which the community can draw. Using success stories from the past, community members identify formal and informal associations that have mobilized self-sustaining social and economic change, and ways of building on such social strengths are discussed. ABCD focuses on the power of such associations (or federations of associations) and, most importantly, rests squarely on the notion of active citizenship rather than passive clientelism. The role of the outside agency is as catalyst or facilitator; the development process is community-driven; and the outcome is a community aware of its potential as well as its limitations. This gives them the leverage to pull in external resources from the public and private sector as needed.*

*In Nova Scotia, the potential for such community initiatives is evident in former fishing communities, where people are trying to turn their economies around and attract the return of the younger generation; in First Nations communities, where community leaders are trying to instil in young people a sense of confidence in the social and economic viability of their communities; or in neglected working class neighbourhoods, where citizens once supplied skilled labour to industries that have since declined. In a recent concept paper, Cunningham and Mathie (2000) identify the underlying principles that the Antigonish Movement and asset-based community development share. The expression of these principles is shown in Table 1.*

**Table 1. Expression of Underlying Principles\***

<b>Antigonish Movement</b>	<b>Asset Based Community Development</b>
The primacy of the individual	Every person has capacities, abilities and gifts.
Social reform must come through education.	Social reform can only come about when people have a good understanding of the communities in which they live. This means discovering the community's assets as well as being aware of its deficiencies.
Education must begin with the economic.	It is easiest to begin this process by uncovering the economic assets and capacities of local residents.
Education must be through group action.	Local residents become active citizens through their membership in associations. These associations (and their federations) are the key to understanding and mobilizing the community's assets.
Effective social reform involves fundamental changes in social and economic institutions.	Social reform occurs when citizens and their associations 'capture' local institutions, ensuring that the community development process is truly endogenous
The ultimate objective of the movement is a full and abundant life for everyone in the community.	The ultimate objective of asset based community development is sustained community development by active citizens.

\* The underlying principles for the Antigonish Movement are as articulated in 2000.

*The significance of this approach is two-fold. First, it is a counterpoint to the dis-empowering effects of a needs-based approach to development, which has focused on community problems and deficiencies. Until now the pervasiveness of the "development project" locally and internationally has required communities and individuals to define themselves as needy or lacking in order to benefit from services. Furthermore, an asset-based approach challenges the status quo in terms of agency (or responsibility for action). If development is to be internally driven by associations of actors in the community, with communities capturing local institutions, the role for the NGO and the external funding machinery that is premised on the problem-focused project-delivery model has to change. In the current climate of government decentralization and the democratization of governance, the legitimacy of NGOs is being challenged. In turn, NGOs are redefining their role, moving away from direct project implementation into a role as catalysts and facilitators for indigenous institutions, or as advocates in national and international arenas. ABCD is, we believe, an approach that complements these trends.*

### **Conclusion: Into the Future**

*As an educational institution, the Coady Institute's function is to provide appropriate analytical and practical tools for sustainable community development. In these economically volatile times, there is less confidence now in the protection of the State, and an increased vulnerability to market forces. Communities are often torn apart by conflicting influences. Those communities that prosper are those that mobilise their resources and protect the rights that are theirs by virtue of citizenship; they secure protection of these resources and rights for future generations; and members of these communities forge links with other communities, in the spirit of international citizenship, to ensure a sustainable global environment. The principles of the Antigonish Movement ring as true as ever: start with an appreciation of each individual's capacities, realize the potential of group education and action, and use this awareness to reform social and economic institutions that otherwise divert resources away from the general good. The local institutional character of this community-based action will differ, as will the legal and regulatory environment to enable such local initiatives to take place and to scale up as required. How this can be done most effectively requires thorough exploration in a wide variety of cultural and political contexts.*

*Throughout its history, the Diploma Program has balanced critical analysis with practical tools. Each year, participants come with fresh experiences of the challenges faced in their communities. This fuels the passion for positive (often radical) social change, and challenges the way the Coady Institute practices development education. The Diploma Program (and the Coady Institute itself) can only benefit from the*

*injection of practical, first-hand experience with community-based development strategies, such as community-based resource management and asset-based community development. Is either approach an enduring innovation or just a passing phase? In the years to come, Coady participants will be the best judges of that.*

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### **Biographical Notes**

**Alison Mathie** has taught at the Coady International Institute since 1997 in the areas of participatory approaches to development and gender analysis for policy and planning. She worked for 10 years overseas in West Africa and Melanesia in formal and non-formal education, and with women's organizations, and has since spent time in Melanesia, Asia, East Africa, and the USA conducting program evaluation and training in

evaluation for the NGO sector. Her current overseas work includes training, program evaluation, and researching the potential of one approach outlined in this paper: asset-based community development. Publications include papers on participatory evaluation, mixing methods in evaluation, and a compendium of poverty targeting methodologies for the micro-finance sector.

**John Kearney** has 20 years of experience as a researcher, organizer, and policy advisor for fishermen's organizations. He has worked extensively throughout Atlantic Canada, with the Canadian Council of Professional Fish Harvesters, as well as South America. Since 1998, he has taught courses in the area of community-based resource management at the Coady Institute. In 1999 Dr. Kearney was appointed manager of the Centre for Community Based Management (CCBM)-a joint initiative of the Coady International Institute and the StFX Extension Department. In this role, he oversees the ongoing development of CCBM, strengthens its linkages with various constituencies, and engages in overseas activities of the Centre.

### **Appendix A: Defining Community-Based Development**

*Drawing on the principles of the Antigonish movement, the Coady International Institute works towards social and economic justice by strengthening the collective power of the disadvantaged and by drawing on the strengths of the larger community of which they are a part. Community-based development is therefore grounded in the belief that the common good is best served by opportunities for all to live well and responsibly, within the bounds of environmental sustainability.*

*Fundamental to a community-based approach is people organizing for change in their communities. Local organizing provides a voice for people who have been excluded, and a mechanism for them to exercise control over their own well-being. In the contemporary context, the possibilities for the combined efforts of local organizing to have a global reach are growing exponentially, thanks to advances in communications technology.*

*A program for action for community-based development is therefore one that:*

- A. employs community-based adult education to address the economic and social conditions of people's lives*
- B. initiates and strengthens the various institutional forms people organizing for change, so that people who have been marginalized can effectively control and manage their own livelihood*
- C. links such local initiatives to regional, national and global institutions that further those interests*
- D. leads to a restructuring of economic and social systems that prejudice those interests.*

### **Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup>Rerum Novarum, Pope Leo XIII's encyclical, 1891.

<sup>2</sup>According to the Coady Institute Newsletter, 1971, vol 4, p. 2, this period was designated the Co-operative Development Decade by the International Co-operative Alliance (by then 75 years old, having been founded in London in 1895). There is some irony, therefore, in the fact that during this decade the emphasis on co-operatives in the Coady Institute's educational programs lessened.

<sup>3</sup>Eric Amit (personal communication, January 2001) notes that this trend was inspired by the Cocoyoc Declaration, 1974.

<sup>4</sup>Ironically, while the 1970s was a period during which the Canadian Government earned a reputation for its generosity as a donor to international development, its Canada-based training branch was closed down in 1978 on the strength of the argument that training was more appropriately conducted overseas. Given the Coady Institute's dependence on Canadian Government funding, this move spelled disaster. However, following an evaluation by CIDA of the Coady Institute and a consultation with Coady participants, funding was restored (Eric Amit, Coady Institute Director 1991-1994, personal communication, January, 2001).

<sup>5</sup>At the time Dr. Baum was Professor of Theology and Religious Studies at St. Michael's College, University of Toronto.

<sup>6</sup>The principles of the Antigonish Movement have been rearticulated since they were first presented by Harry Johnston to Dr. Coady in the 1940s. For example, Dr. A.A. MacDonald, Director of the Coady Institute from 1979 to 1991, rearticulated the principles as "putting people first in development planning, the use of adult

*education as methods of change, the importance of initiating change with the basic needs of people, the necessity of structural and cultural transformation for sustainable development, and finally, the necessity of achieving sustainable use of ecological resources" (p. i).*