

resources, organizational capacity, and challenges of the sector. Survey results also report on the level of collaboration amongst groups, and the motivations and barriers to collaboration.

Following the survey, a series of focus groups were conducted throughout the region focused on better understanding what is working well, ideas to strengthen the social sector, and how groups can better work together. Findings are highlighted in the **Community Conversations** Research Brief. The research also included interviews with leaders in the non-profit sector, exploring innovation - what makes it successful and how a culture of innovation can be fostered. Results apply to the non-profit sector but are relevant for all areas of society. The **Innovation in Action** Research Brief provides examples of innovation in our region and resources on other Canadian social innovation organizations. [Learn more.](#)

Community Conversations:
Improving Social Well-being & Social Sector Health



RESEARCH BRIEF

INTRODUCTION
The non-profit social sector in the Columbia Basin-Boundary plays a significant role in the socio-economic well-being of residents, communities, and the region as a whole. Sustaining non-profits, however, has become increasingly challenging, and is demanding new ways of thinking and working. The *Exploring Characteristics and Capacity of the Non-Profit Social Sector in the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region* research project was designed to explore organizational capacity, collaboration, and innovation within the region's non-profit social sector. This research is a critical first step towards enabling evidence-based decision-making by our region's colleges, funders, and non-profits in efforts related to strengthening this important sector.

METHODOLOGY
This research project was developed and implemented in consultation with the RDI's Social Research Advisory Committee, a group of representatives from the social sector across the Columbia Basin-Boundary region. Following the survey of social non-profits in spring/summer 2015, advisory committee members reviewed survey results. The advisory committee stressed the importance of sharing survey results with the region, and strongly suggested that RDI provide an opportunity for social non-profits and other community development organizations to discuss the research findings and explore some critical questions related to improving social well-being and the health of the social sector.

RESULTS
The Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute (CBRI) conducted research on social non-profits across our region including a survey of 88 organizations which highlights the characteristics, capacity, and challenges these groups face. Follow up key informant interviews were conducted to explore social innovation, and a series of focus groups solicited ideas to strengthen the social sector and improve social well-being in our communities and region. This research brief provides a summary of the results from the five focus groups conducted. Visit the [non-profit social sector research page](#) for other research results and information related to this project.

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Upcoming...

- November 17 - **LEARNING EVENT:** GIS Day and Open Data @ Selkirk in Castlegar
- November 23 - **WEBINAR:** Youth Entrepreneurship: Raising Businesses in you Community
- December 5 - **LEARNING EVENT:** Forging Metal Tech Alley @ MIDAS in Trail
- June 19-20, 2017 - **LEARNING EVENT:** Learning Region Symposium in Nelson
- September 20-24, 2017 - **NATIONAL CONFERENCE:** Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation Conference in Nelson

Did you know?

- Nelson was named one of the world's **SMART21 Communities** of 2017
- Apply to become a **Rural Policy Fellow** with the Rural Policy Learning Commons
- Federal funding** has been secured to support workforce development, open data, and truth and reconciliation in our region
- RDI just released their **Bi-Annual Report**
- BRE Reports for **Creston** and **Fernie** have been released
- Columbia Basin Trust is **helping 50 Basin-based** businesses attend the #BCTECH Summit



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The Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute is a regional research centre with a mandate to support informed decision-making through the provision of information, applied research and related outreach and extension support.

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