# Capacity and Resilience: Inverness Reports

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# The Point

- Rural communities are not just "not-urban" spaces, but possess distinct practices of place
- Community development is organized by the rationale and demands of the core agency / department, rather than the specific dynamics of the community being developed
- This can lead to a break between goals and outcomes

# The Project

- 12 Ethnographic Cases across the Atlantic region
- We know policy capacity for CD exists (past work), what is out there, how is it practiced?
- Inverness completed summer 2016

# Inverness County: Background

Chetticamp (5280), Inverness (3000), Mabou (1207)

Net loss of population across the board (15% from '86 to '06, negative natural pop growth, negative international, negative inter-provincial

Median Income $45 687 (2010, skewed by Port Hawksbury), vs. Nova Scotia 64 100, Canada 69 860

## Inverness: the case

- Recorded interviews with 35 subjects

- 2 groups sessions

- 1 focus group

- Ethnographic study – understanding community from the perspective of community members

- Initial interviews sourced via cold-calling and referrals from local ACOA staff, later interviews sourced via referral

# Inverness: resulting themes

- Volunteers
- Community capacity and knowledge
- Need for government
- Projects

## "Inverness wouldn't exist if not for our volunteer sector . . ."

- Seeing "the same faces"
- Seeing "a lot of grey hair"

# "Communities know where the energy is."

- Communities can identify projects
- Communities can manage projects; fundraising

## "Rural life needs government support . . . "

- "Funding keeps us afloat, but doesn't help us grow . . ."
- Jobs, services, housing, infrastructure (demand, but not enough for the market to respond)

# The problem with projects

- "There's never a chance to learn"
- Succession, planning, and the administrative burden

# A matter of perspective

- Need for funding agencies to show their money is "working" (accountability, procedure, metrics)

- Specificity of place in rural communities; rural life as a cultural practice

- Need to create space in administration for the articulation of specificity

- Organizational challenge:  how to meet accountability / procedural needs of funders while mobilizing community capacity to greatest possible extent?