

# **Empowering our Citizens & our Communities**

## **Building an Engine for Social & Economic Change**

### **Talk at the InfoTour-06 in Germany**



Mike Lewis

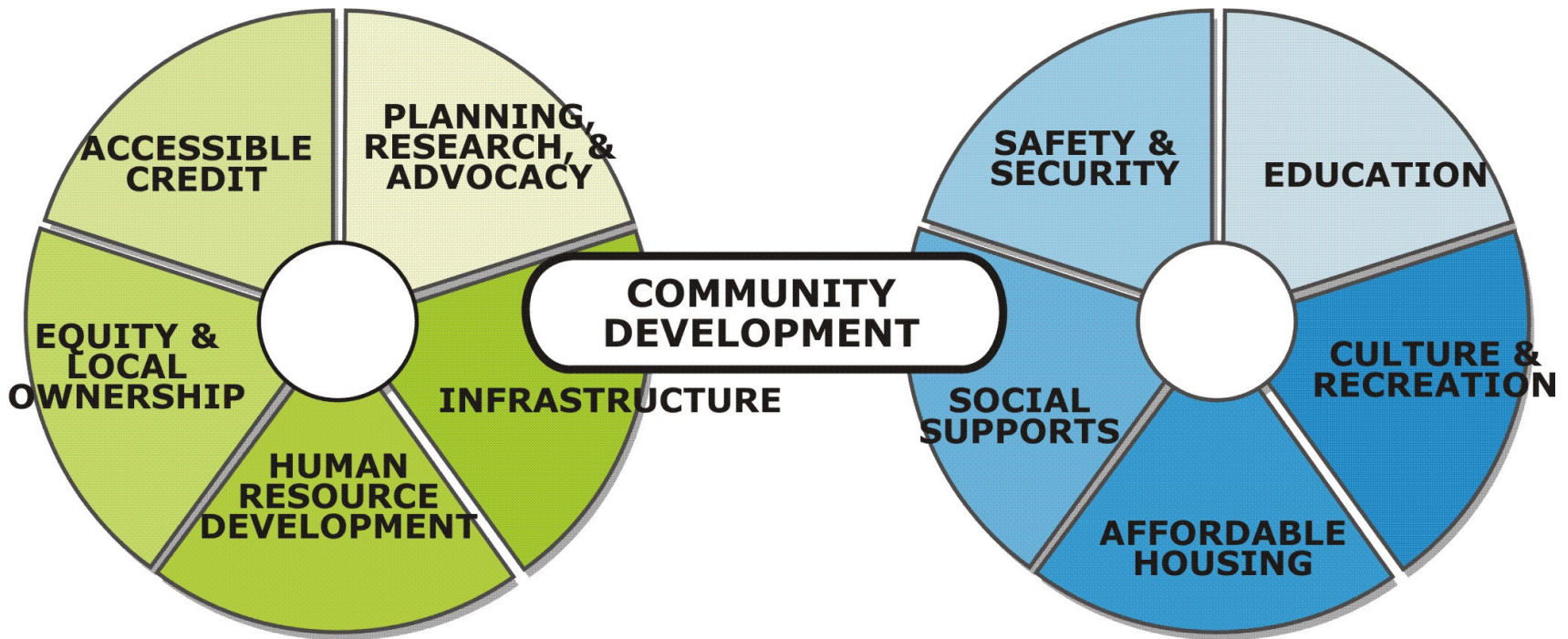
Centre for Community Enterprise, [www.cedworks.com](http://www.cedworks.com)

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# **INDIGNATION AT INJUSTICE**

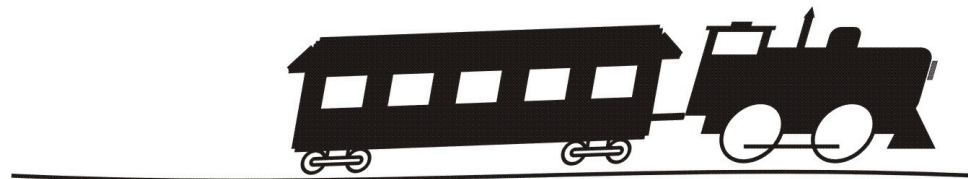
## **RATIONALITY IN ACTION**

# To rev up the engine of community revitalization put social & economic development on the same track

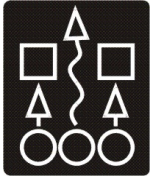


**ECONOMIC FUNCTIONS**

**SOCIAL FUNCTIONS**



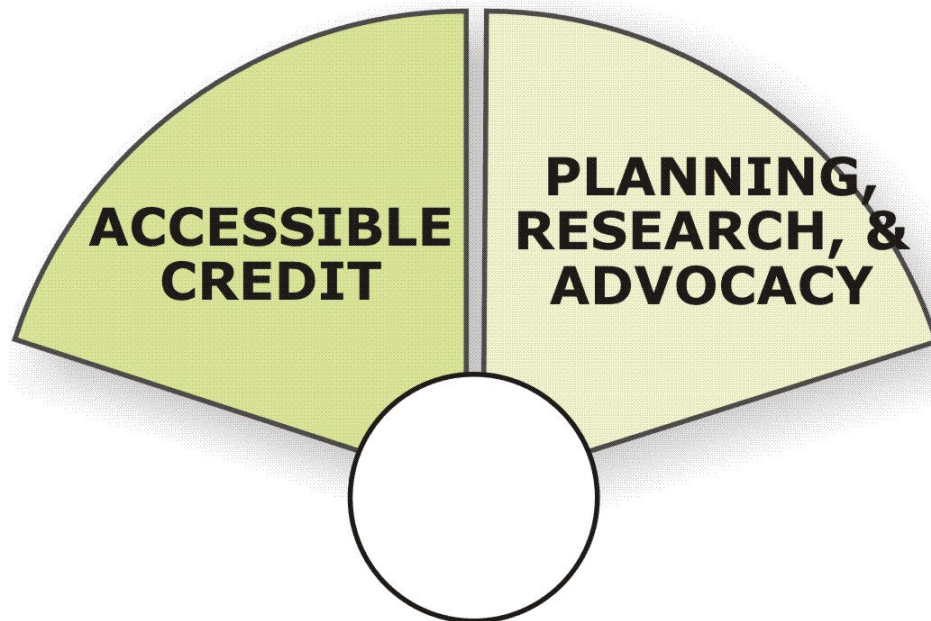
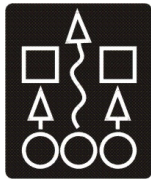
# Key Economic Functions



## ◆ **Planning, Research, & Advocacy**

A capacity to gather intelligence and then apply it to making or influencing decisions in the community's interest is a fundamental and ongoing necessity.

# Key Economic Functions



## ◆ Accessible Credit

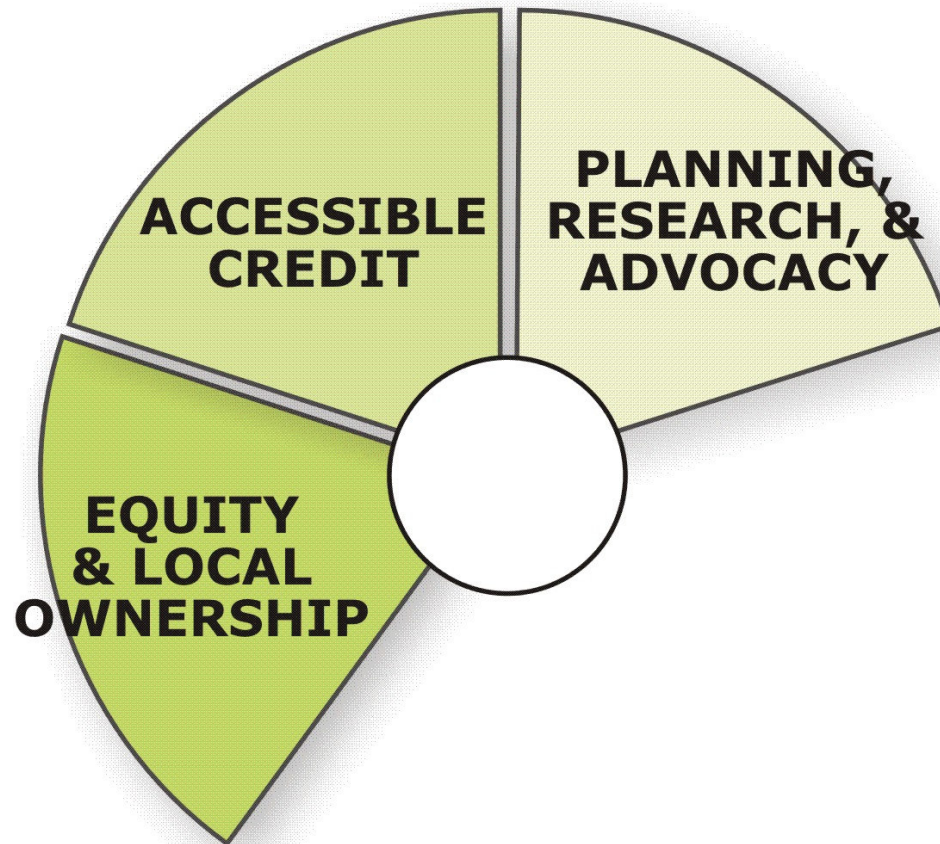
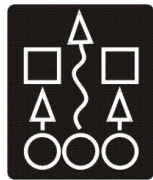
Without access to credit, people and businesses are blocked from productive asset building.

**Lack of Access**

=

**Marginalization**

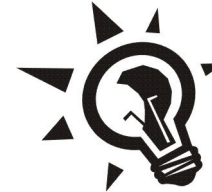
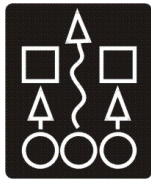
# Key Economic Functions



## ◆ Building Equity & Local Ownership

- ◆ For individuals, ownership of assets is key to escaping poverty.
- ◆ Within territories, businesses that generate profit & reinvest help build the economic base.
- ◆ Maximizing local ownership helps maximize local reinvestment.

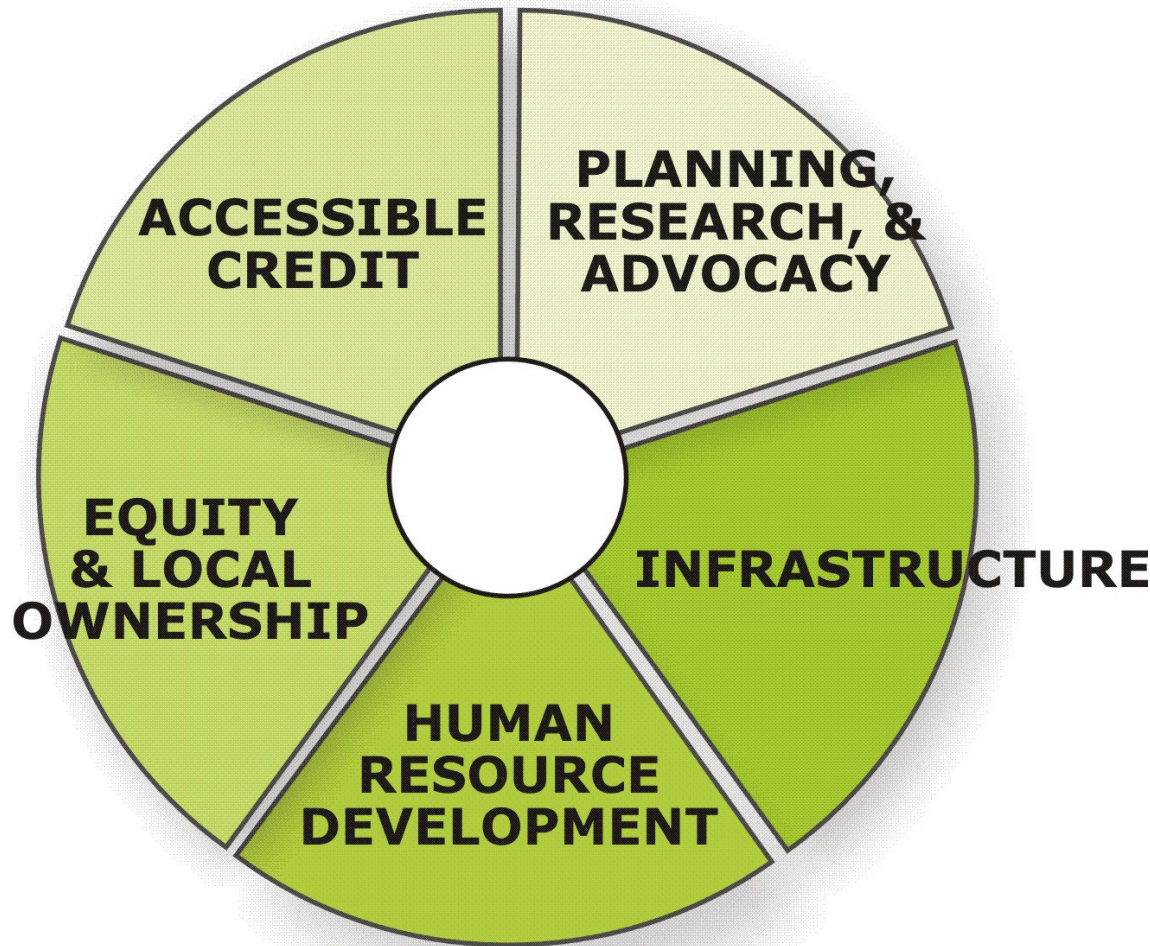
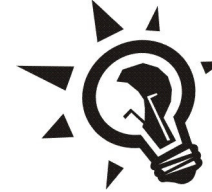
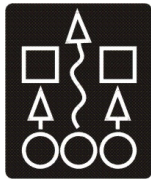
# Key Economic Functions



## ◆ Develop People's Capacity

Ranging from the marginalized to a community's leadership, getting people willing, ready and able to participate in strengthening a local economy is an ongoing strategic function.

# Key Economic Functions

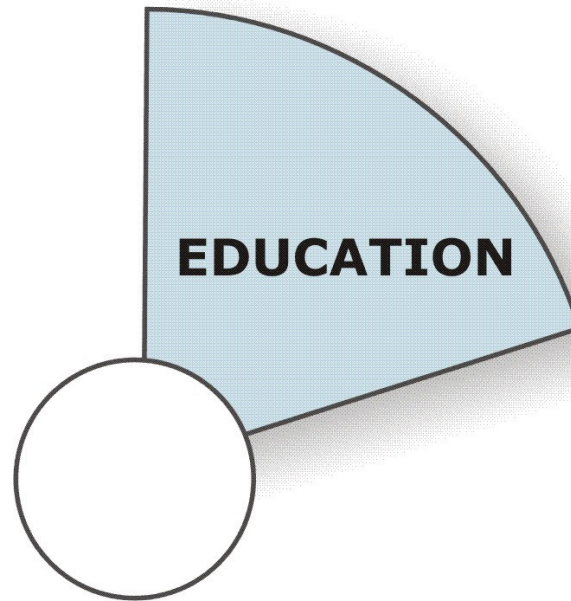
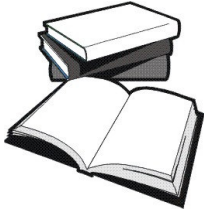


## ◆ **Infrastructure**

Access to clean water; grain storage; transportation; access to the internet: all are examples of infrastructure necessary to the development of a territory



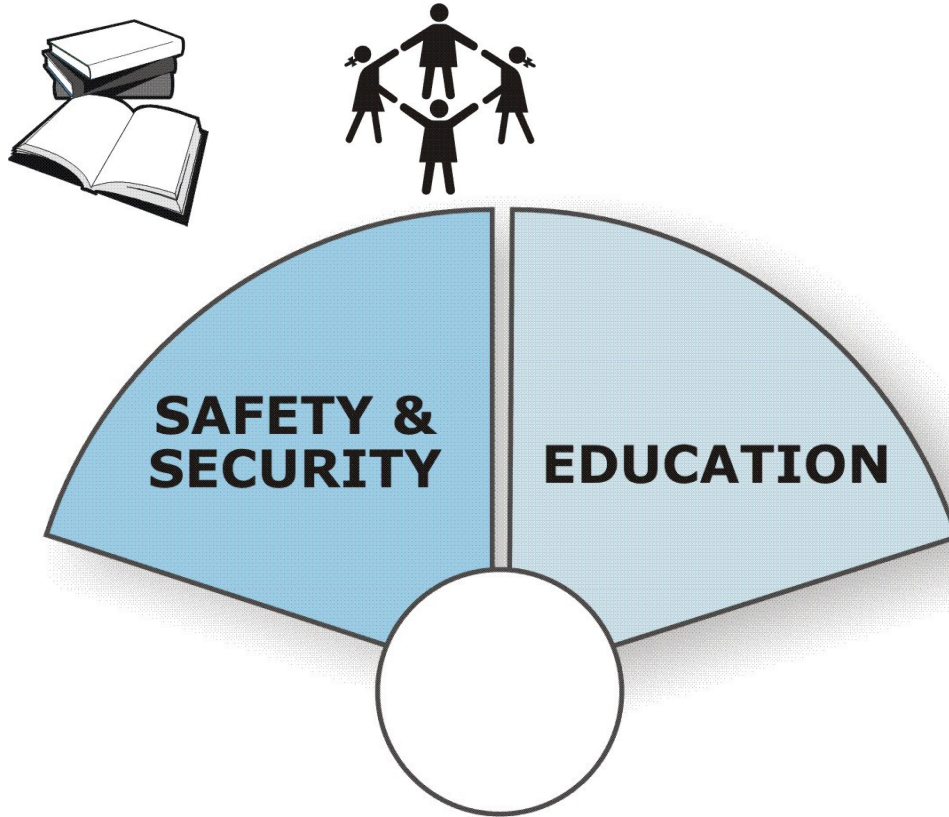
# Key Social Functions



## ◆ Education

Access to and quality of education for children and adults influences the development prospects of a territory

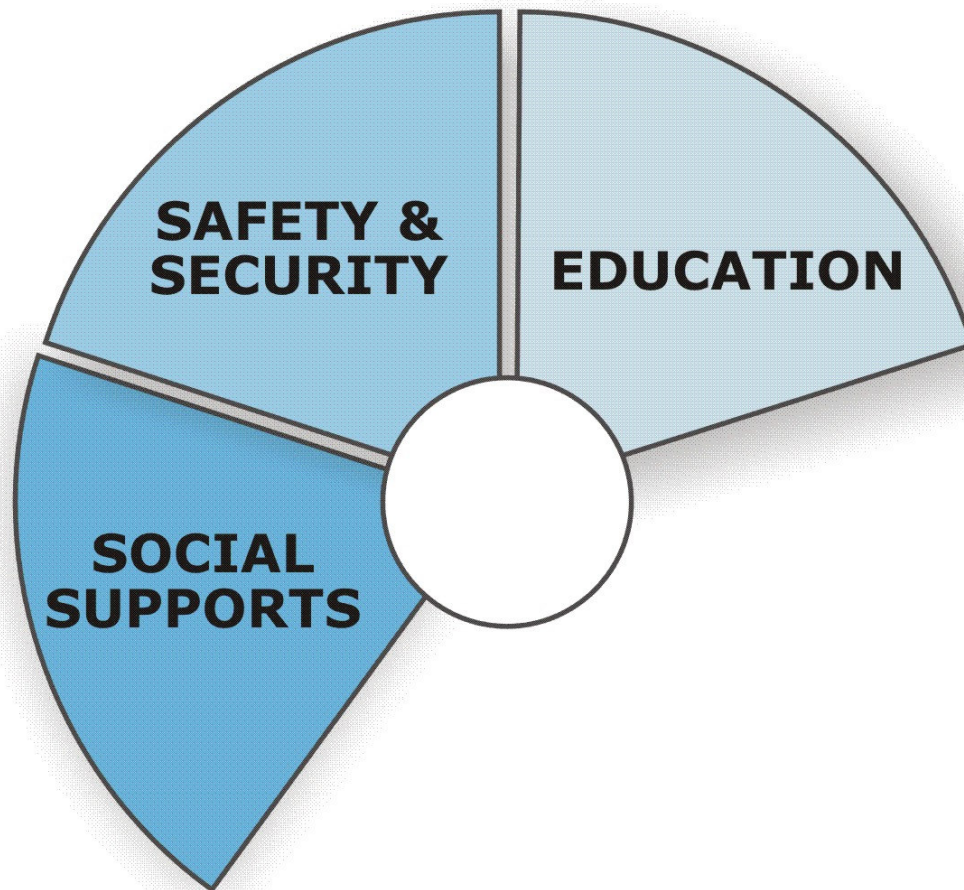
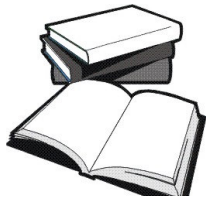
# Key Social Functions



## ◆ Safety & Security

The extent to which safety and security of citizens and businesses is assured makes an important difference to peoples ability to participate in the development of a territory

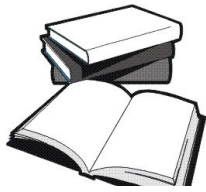
# Key Social Functions



## ◆ **Social Supports**

Reaching out & supporting citizens to meet their basic needs & participate in community life strengthens the social interconnectedness within a territory which in turn effects the extent to which local people & resources can be effectively mobilized..

# Key Social Functions



## ◆ Affordable Housing

Accessible & affordable housing has a major influence on quality of life and the ability of citizens to adequately meet their social and economic needs.

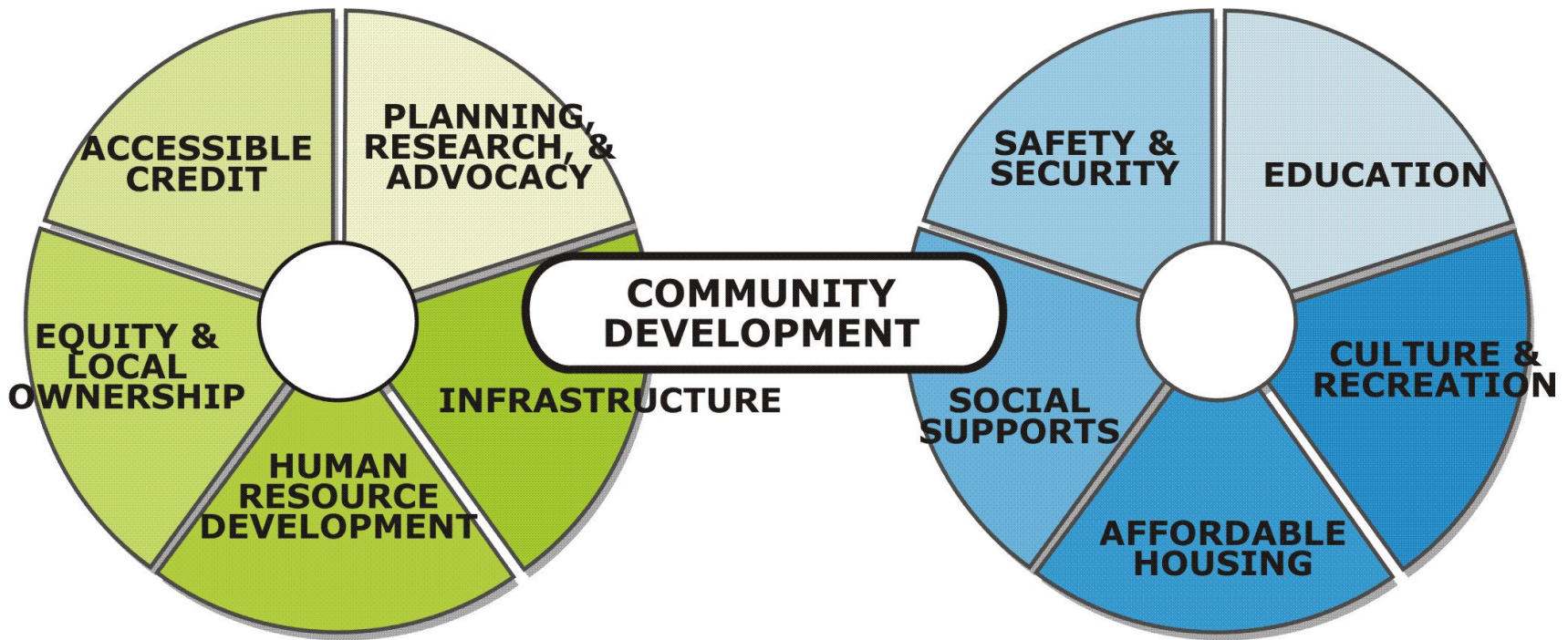
# Key Social Functions



## ◆ Culture & Recreation

The physical and emotional health of citizens and communities is reinforced by active physical and cultural engagement.

# To rev up the engine of community revitalization put social & economic development on the same track



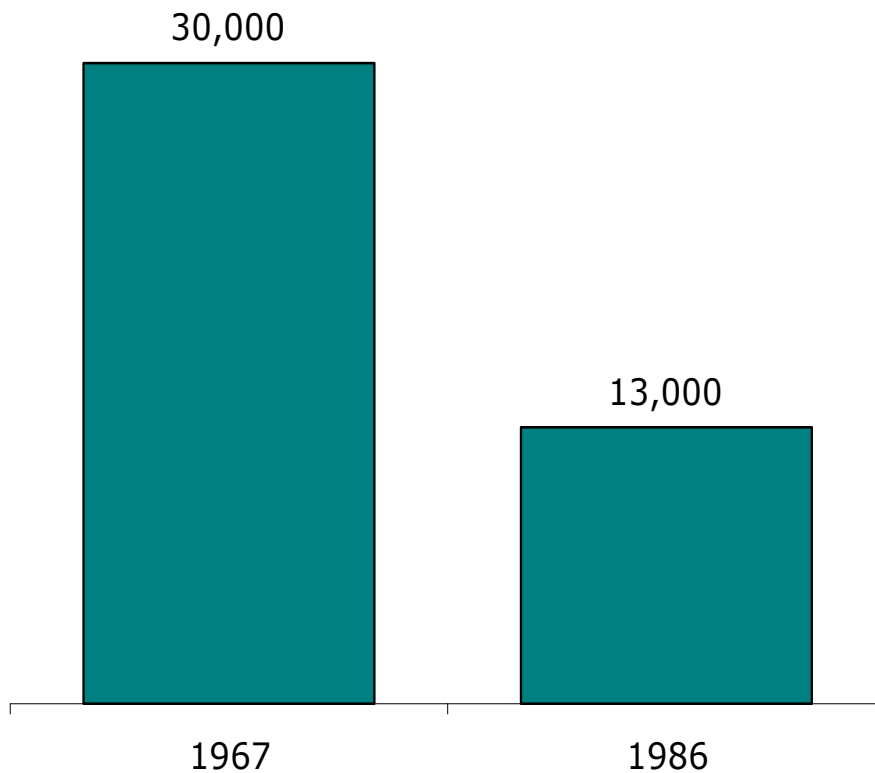
**ECONOMIC FUNCTIONS**

**SOCIAL FUNCTIONS**



# Decline of Population: Point St. Charles SW Montreal Quebec

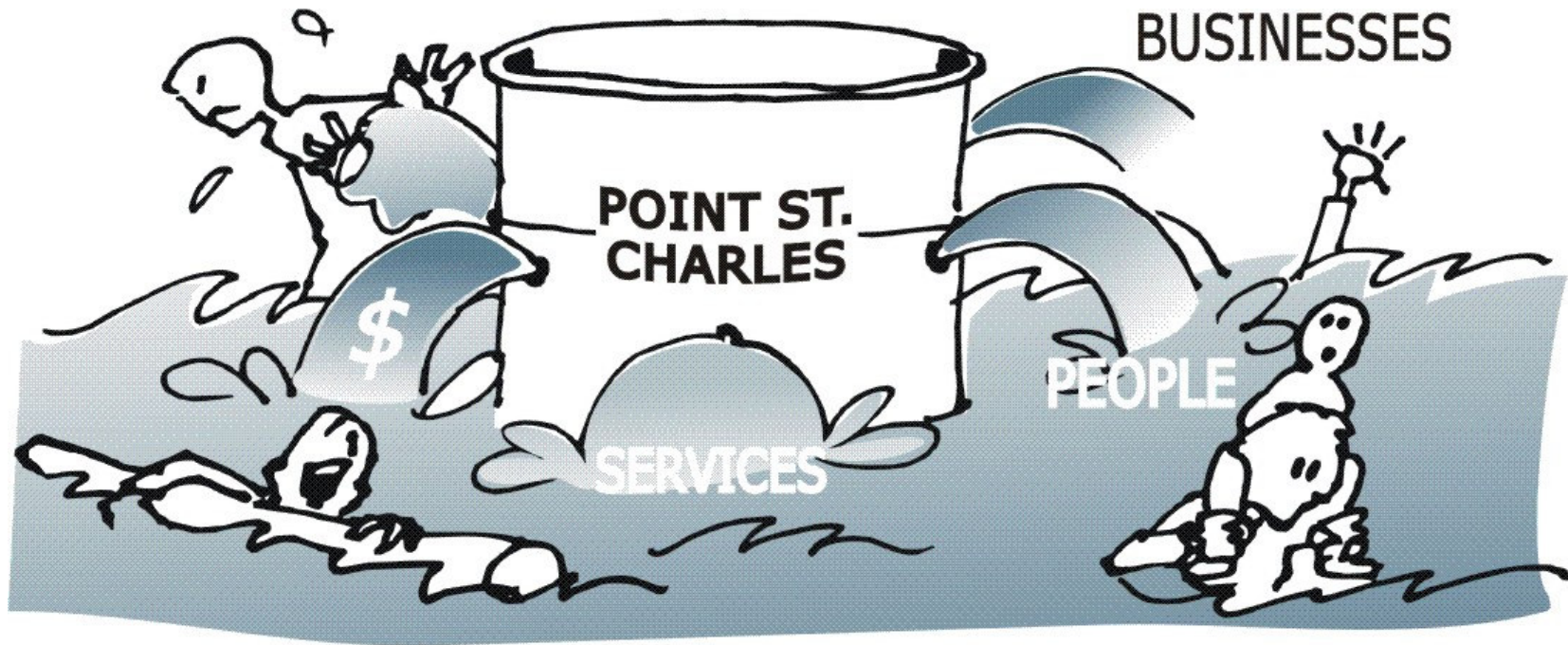
Population Decline in Point St. Charles



By 1984 poverty is entrenched

- ◆ 43% live below poverty line
- ◆ 17% unemployed
- ◆ 25% living on state assistance

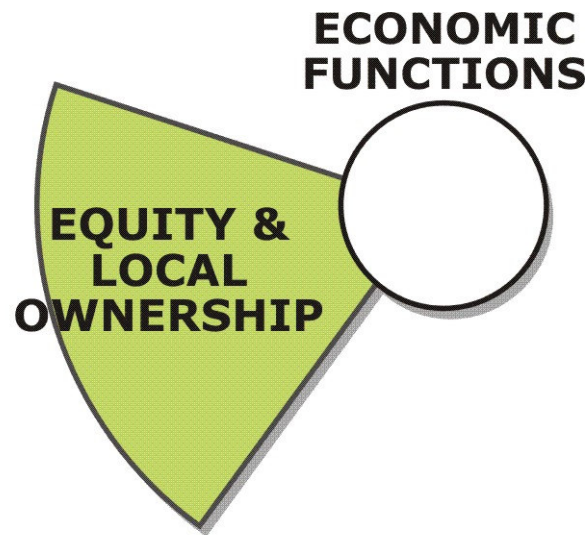
# Plugging the Leaks



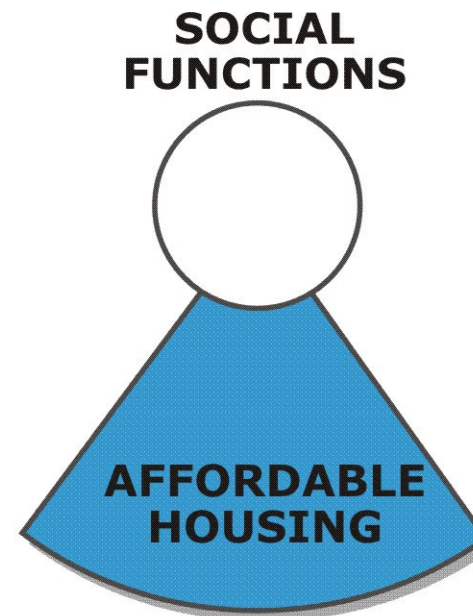


# Animating & Organizing the Base: Basic Needs Focus

- ◆ Late 60's and through 70's: Community Organizations focus on building community assets to meet basic needs



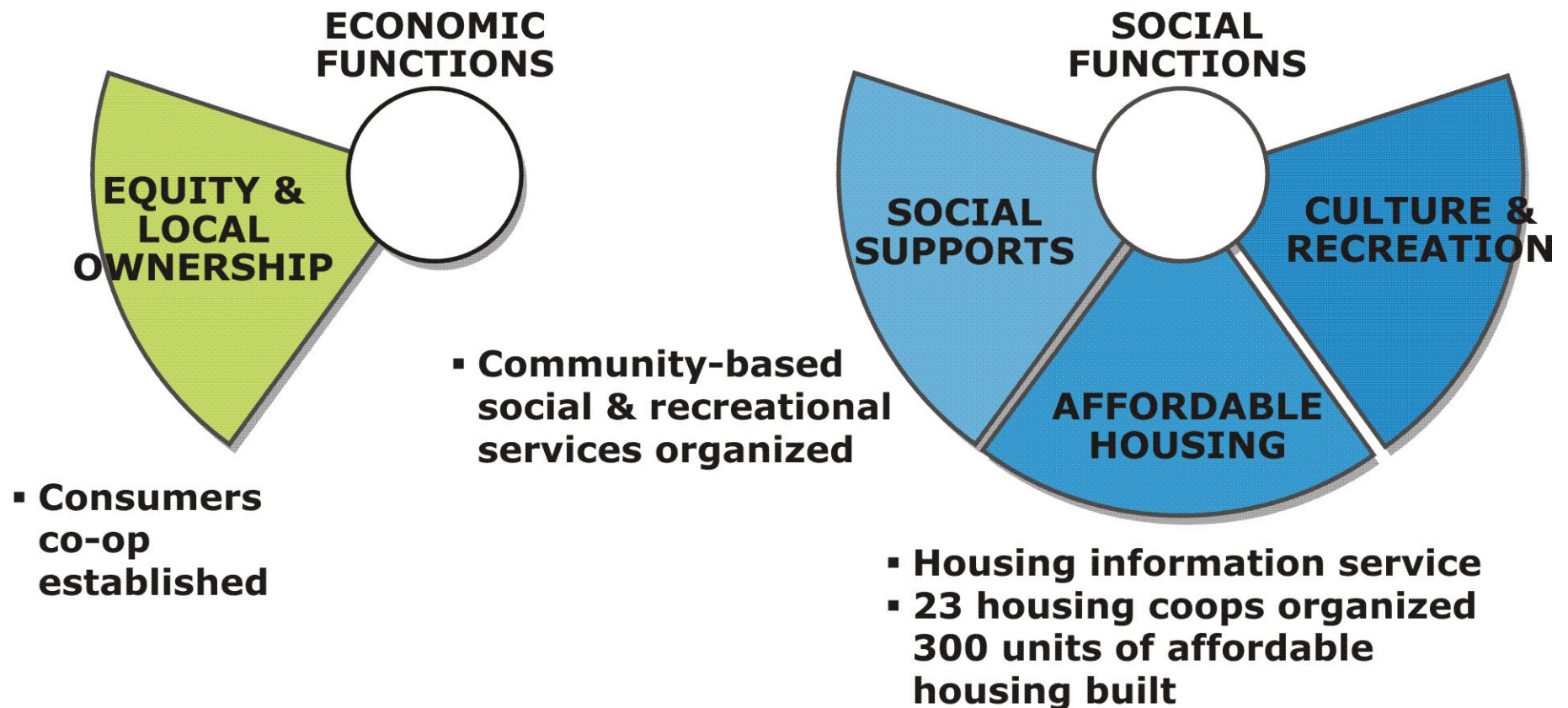
- Consumers co-op established



- Housing information service
- 23 housing coops organized
- 300 units of affordable housing built

# Animating & Organizing the Base: Basic Needs Focus

◆ Important Gains? ✓ **YES!** BUT the decline continued ☹️



# Animating & Organizing the Base: Resistance to Displacement



- ◆ In the 70's and early 80's real estate developers pressed city government to allow them to "revitalize" the neighbourhood by building up-scale condominiums

# Animating & Organizing the Base: Resistance to Displacement



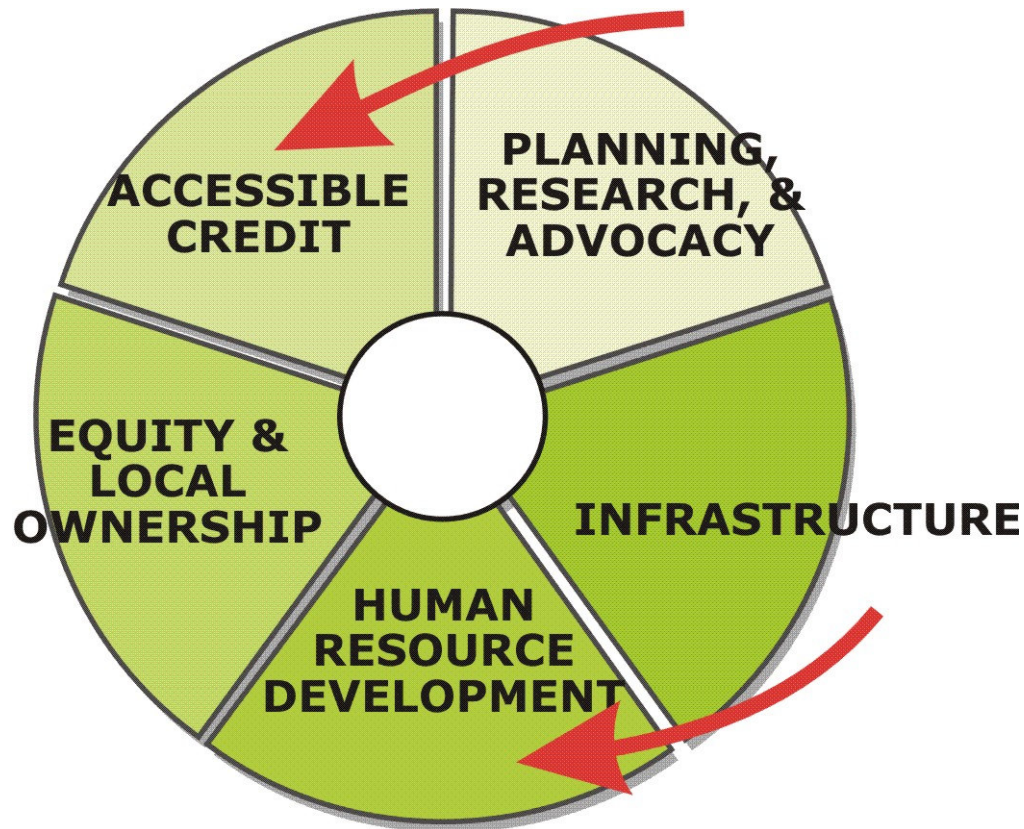
- ◆ By the early 80's the community had a permanent coalition in place to resist unwanted developments.
- ◆ But organized resistance does not by itself build an alternative.

# Animating & Organizing the Base

## Focused Organizing & Learning

- ◆ 1982- YMCA hires **two community organizers for two years** to foster a more integrated approach
  - **Research and learning** about what is going on elsewhere (CDCs in U.S., European experience).
  - **Educate and animate** community organizations around what is working elsewhere
  - **Begin applying lessons** learned to the neighbourhood context.
- ◆ The resulting coalition presses the provincial government for **dollars to study how to reverse the decline** of Point St. Charles.

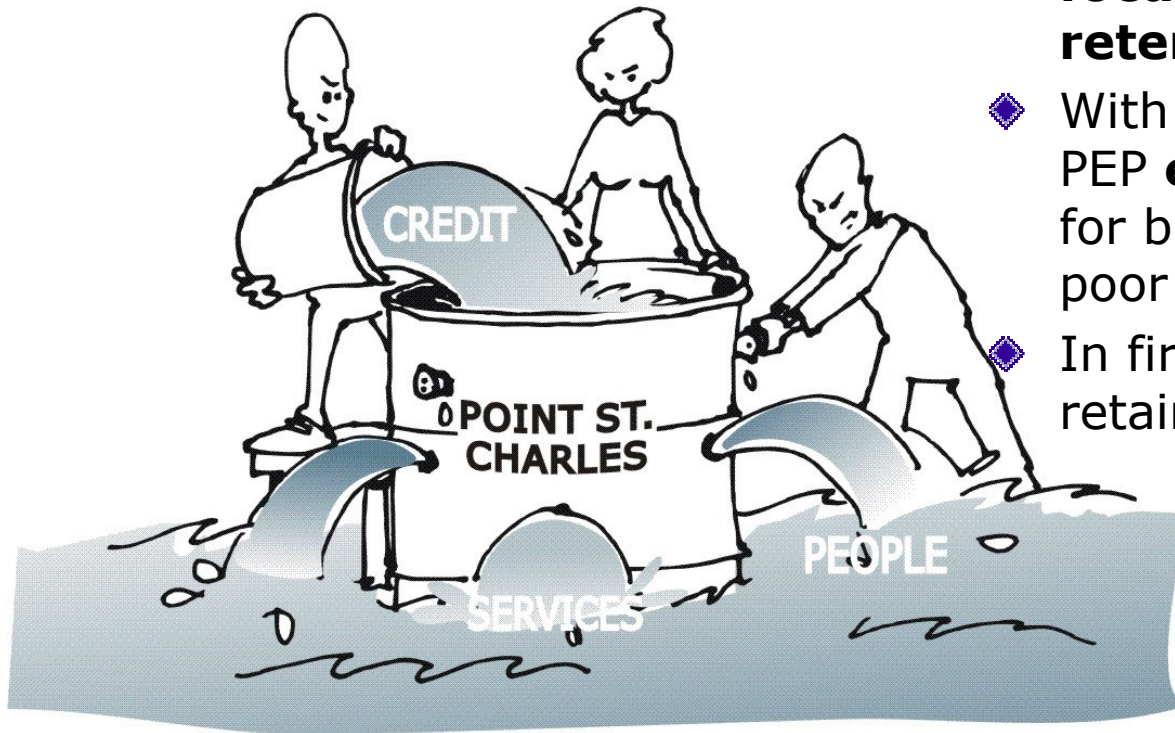
# Getting Started – Using the Resources Available & Building the Membership Base-85-86



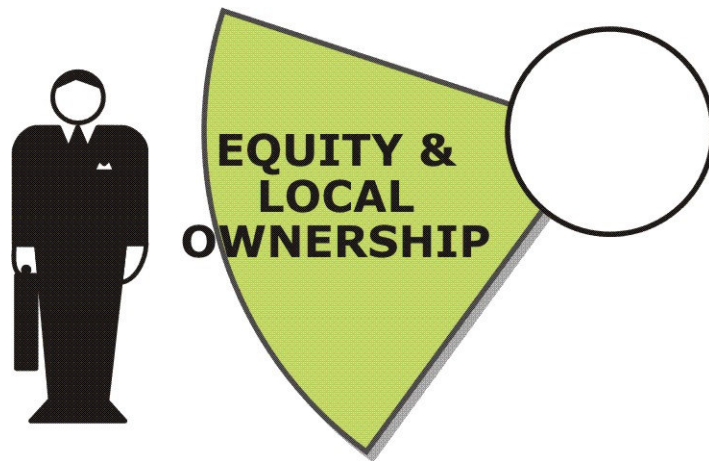
- ◆ PEP secures from Province 1-year funding & \$100,000 fund for business loans
  - Entrepreneurial Training for 25 people
  - Most fail but 50 jobs created
  - Many more jobs lost in the meantime
- ◆ Controversy over focus on business development - 3 founding organizations leave
- ◆ But 140 individuals & 13 corporations and other organizations join

# Building a broader strategy

- ◆ PEP moves away from new business development to **focus on business retention**
- ◆ With the other two CDECs, PEP **establishes loan fund** for business financing in poor neighbourhoods
- ◆ In first two years 188 jobs retained and 76 more created



# RESO – Building a multi-function strategy



- ◆ Ongoing work to strengthen business retention capacity – 200 businesses assisted in first 2 years

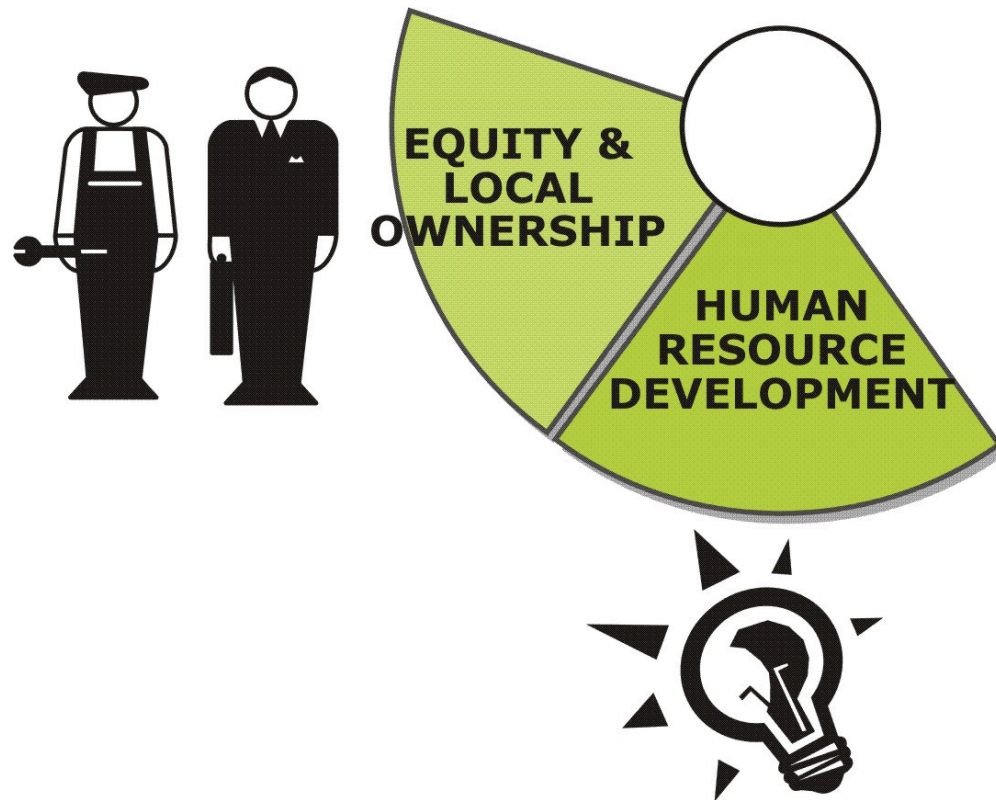


# RESO – Building a multi-function strategy



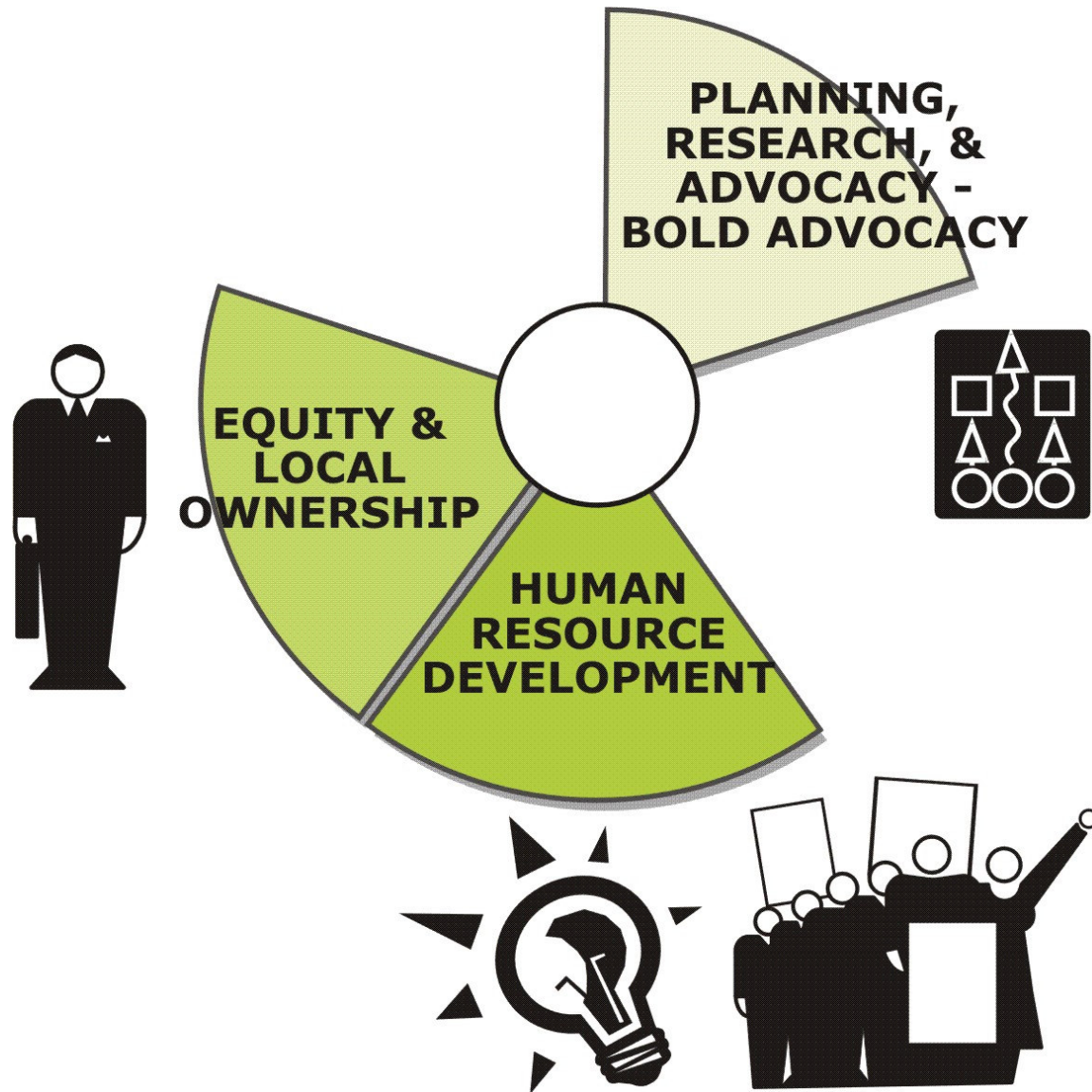
- ◆ Work with unions to build early warning system focused on avoiding plant closings

# RESO – Building a multi-function strategy



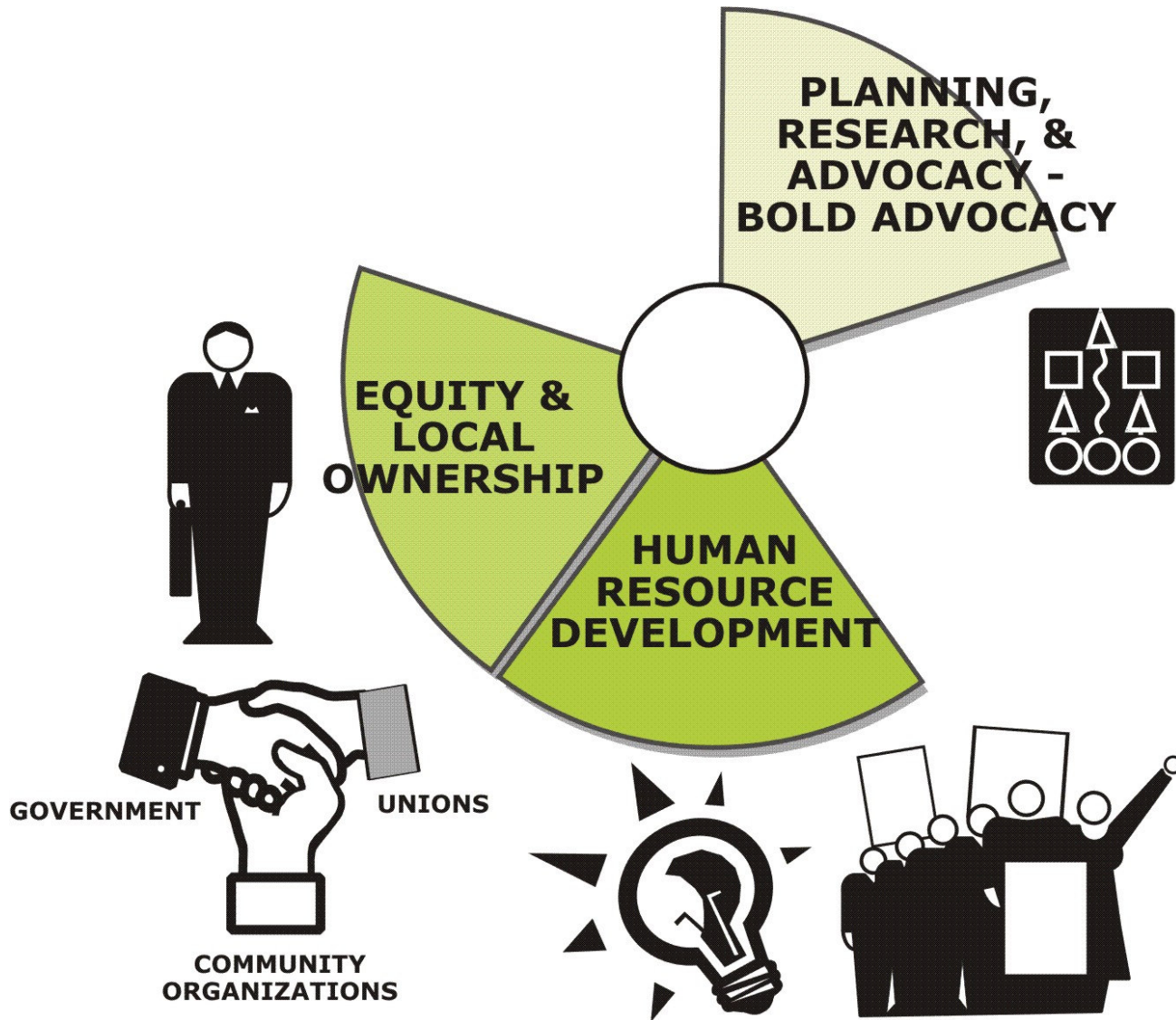
- ◆ Training of 1500 people per year – customized to business needs

# RESO – Building a multi-function strategy



- ◆ Mobilizing growing membership to fight for zoning and other decisions to reflect the priorities of the five neighbourhoods

# RESO – Building a multi-function strategy



- ◆ Establishing a \$7 million equity investment fund with government and union assistance – becoming owners

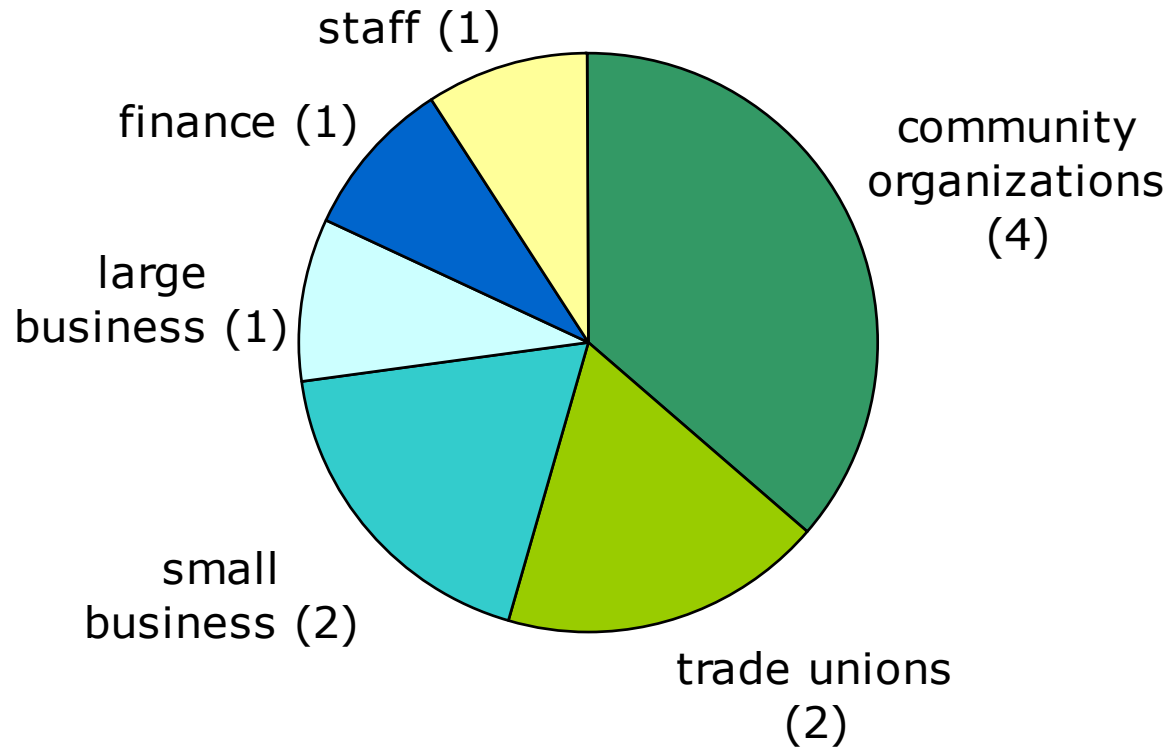
# RESO – Building a multi-function strategy



- ◆ **Networking, Brokering and Partnering** is a central role.
- ◆ **Leveraging & Strengthening community assets** is ongoing process across functions

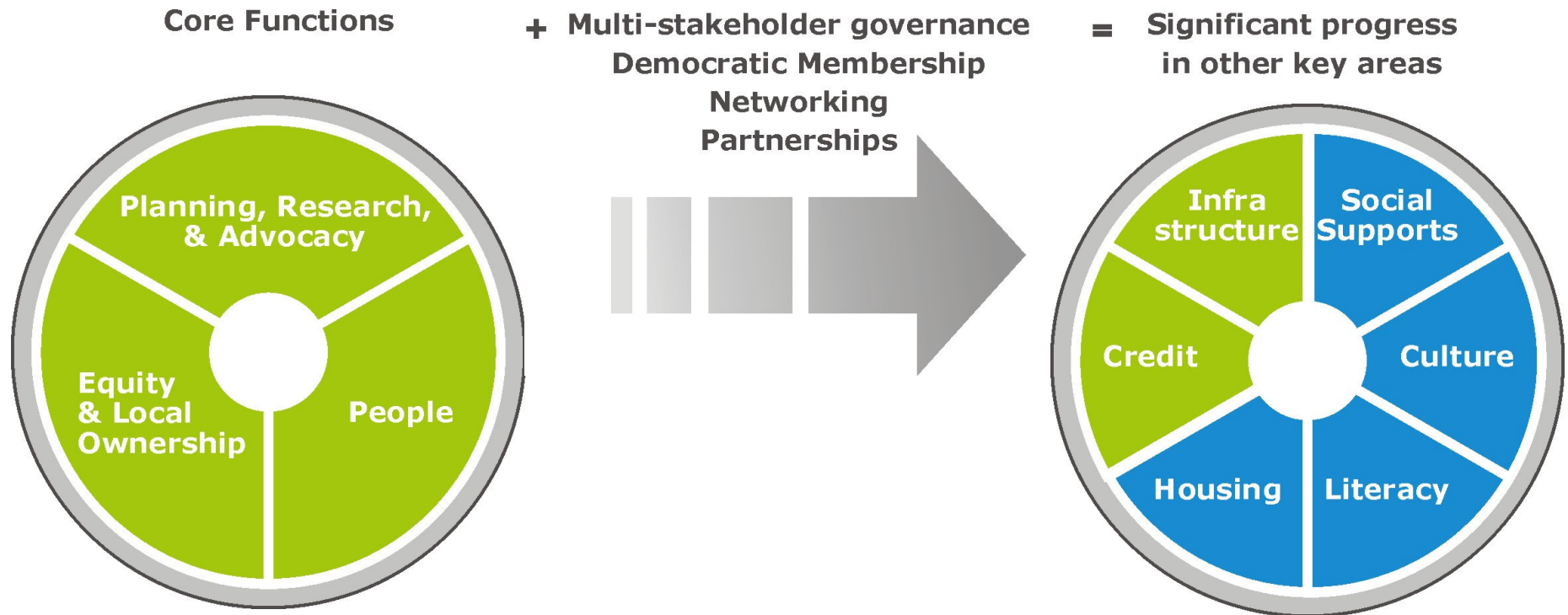
# Evolving Governance & Building the Membership Base 1989-94

## Composition of RESO Board

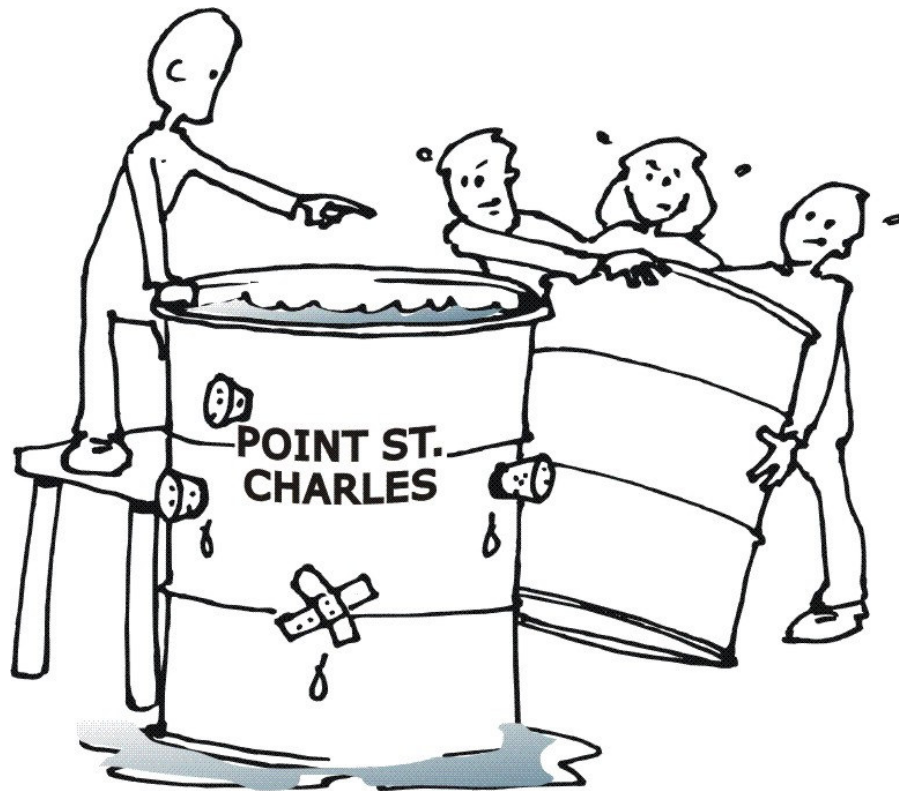


◆ Over the first several years the membership grew to 1500 individuals and 300 organizations

# RESO's DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM



# Core Functions + Democratic Base = Influence over Territory = Results



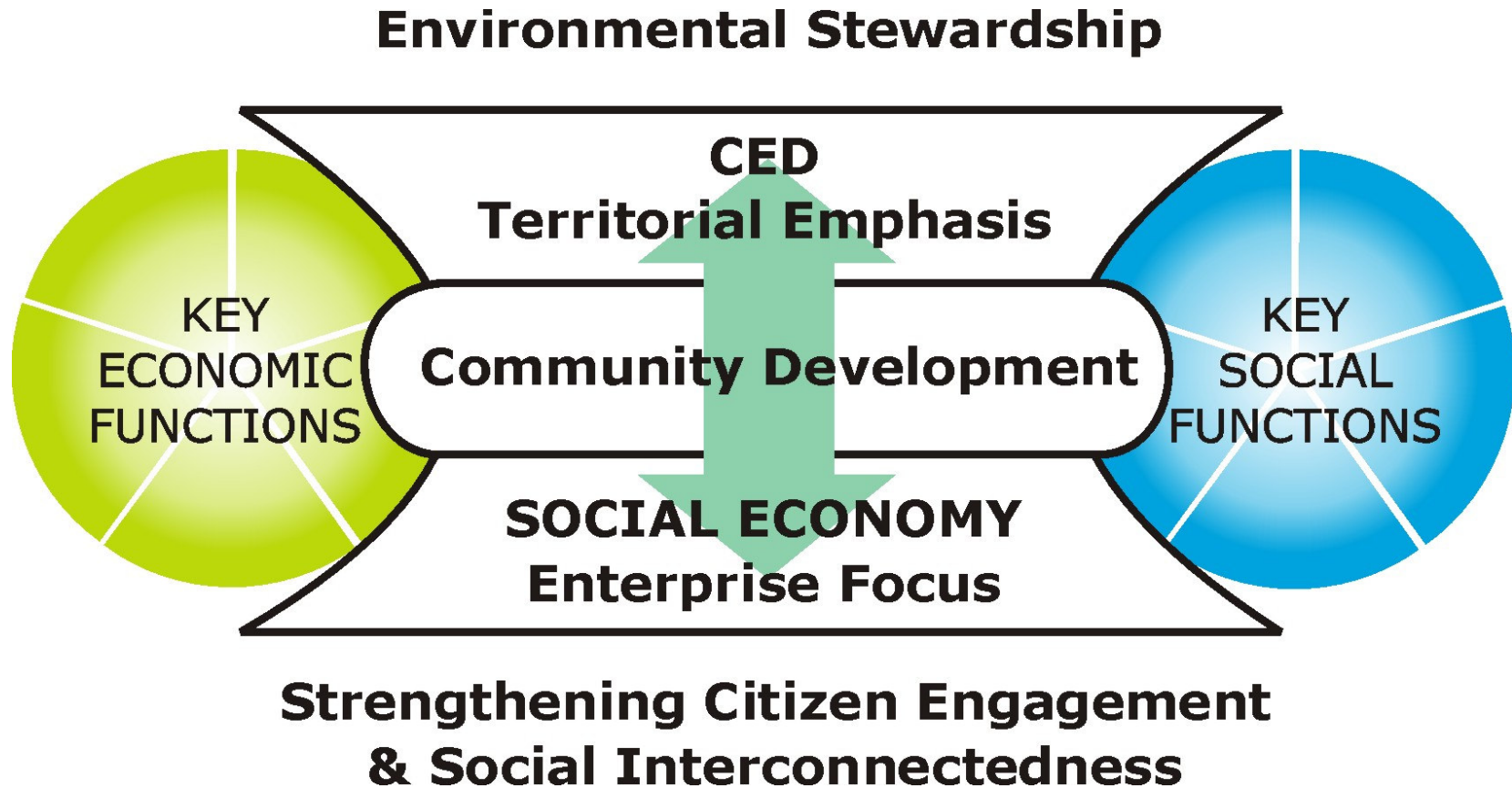
- ◆ By the mid 1990s, Statistics Canada reported that for the first time in 30 years, the economic decline in SW Montreal had stopped.



## Some Basic Conclusions

- ◆ An impoverished community that is not **organized** will not contend.
- ◆ Without a **strategic approach or plan**, it is not possible to create durable social and economic results.
- ◆ It takes a **multi-functional approach** through a CED organization, or a strategic partnership of organizations within a territory, to have significant impact over time
- ◆ **Ongoing learning is central to building democratic organizations** that can sustain the mobilization of social and economic resources necessary to make and maintain a positive development impact.
- ◆ **State support**, while not a prerequisite to initiating action and innovation, **is still critical**, at least in Canada, **to scaling up to the level that has broad impacts.**

# The CED – Social Economy Linkage



# THE CENTRE FOR COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE

[www.cedworks.com](http://www.cedworks.com) for (Canada's  
CED quarterly) **Making Waves Special  
Issue on *CED and the Social Economy***

Free on line in English and French

More on Coops, CED and the Social Economy

RESO – A more Detailed Account

Going Glocal – Elevating the Local to the Global Stage

And a wide range of other resources free & for sale on  
line. Thanks again.