Seven Levels of Community Consciousness

The Community Culture Assessment instrument is a simple but effective means of measuring culture by mapping community values. It provides a comprehensive diagnostic of the current culture and a detailed understanding of the desired culture by examining residents' perceptions of the community's current values, what they consider to be desired values and their personal values.

The results provide two perspectives:

• Personal Perspective and the

• Community Perspective

The Personal Perspective is obtained by mapping resident's personal values to the model of the Seven Levels of Personal Consciousness. The community perspective is obtained by mapping the resident's perception of the community's values against the Seven Levels of Community Consciousness.

The models of the Seven Levels of Personal and Community Consciousness were created by Richard Barrett and are described on the www.valuescenter.com website. The fundamental basis of the Seven Levels of Community Consciousness is that communities are comprised of individuals, and act as living entities with similar motivations to those of individuals.

DISTRIBUTION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Individuals and communities do not operate from any one single level of consciousness. They tend to be clustered around three or four levels. Individuals are usually focused at levels 1 through 5, with a strong emphasis at levels 4 and 5. Communities tend to be focused in the first three levels of consciousness. The most successful communities are distributed across the full spectrum of consciousness. They give emphasis to the top four levels of consciousness as well as the bottom three.

SEVEN LEVELS OF PERSONAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Level 1: Survival – This level focuses on matters to do with physical survival. It includes values such as financial stability, wealth, safety, self-discipline and health. The potentially limiting aspects of this level are generated from fears around survival. Limiting values include greed, control and caution.

Level 2: Relationship – This level concerns the quality of interpersonal relationships in an individual's life. It includes values such as open communication, family, friendship, conflict resolution and respect. The potentially limiting aspects of this level result from fears around loss of control or regard. Limiting values include rivalry, intolerance and being liked.

Level 3: Self-esteem – This level addresses an individual's need for recognition. It includes such values as being the best, ambition, professional growth and reward. The potentially limiting aspects of this level come from low self-esteem and being out of control. Potentially limiting values include status, arrogance and image.

• There are no potentially limiting values in levels 4 through 7.

Level 4: Transformation – The focus at this level is on self-actualization and personal growth. It contains values such as courage, responsibility, knowledge and independence. This is the level where people work to overcome their fears. It requires continuous questioning of beliefs and assumptions. It is also the level where they begin to find balance in their lives.

Level 5: Internal Cohesion - Level 5 concerns the individual's search for meaning and community. Individuals operating at this level no longer think in terms of a job or career, but in terms of a mission. This level contains values such as commitment, creativity, enthusiasm, humor/fun, excellence, generosity and honesty.

Level 6: Making a Difference - Level 6 focuses on making a difference in the world. It is also the level of active involvement in the local community. Individuals operating at this level honor intuition and contribution. They may be

concerned about the environment or local issues. This level contains values such as counseling, community work, empathy and environmental awareness.

Level 7: Service - Level 7 reflects the highest order of internal and external connectedness. It focuses on service to others. Individuals operating at this level are at ease with uncertainty. They display wisdom, compassion and forgiveness. They have a global perspective. They are concerned about issues such as social justice, human rights and future generations.

SEVEN LEVELS OF COMMUNITY CONSCIOUSNESS

Communities have seven well-defined developmental levels of consciousness. Each level focuses on a particular existential need that is common to all forms of human group structures. The seven existential needs are the principal motivating forces in all human affairs. Communities develop and grow by learning to master the satisfaction of these needs.

The "lower" needs, levels 1 to 3, focus on the basic requirements of communities – economic security, harmonious internal group relationships, and systems and processes that create order and institutional effectiveness.

The focus of the fourth level is transformation – the creation of the conditions that allow citizens to have a voice in the running of the community and actively embrace and manage adaptation to external conditions and continuous renewal.

The "higher" needs, levels 5 to 7, focus on resilience building and the long-term sustainability of communities – developing a cohesive culture, building mutually beneficial alliances with neighbouring communities, and actively participating in the larger society for the good of the whole.

Level 1: Survival -- This level focuses on matters to do with the survival, maintenance and expansion of the community and the security of its citizens. Healthy communities are financially sound and safe. This level includes values such as prosperity, financial stability, health care, employment, and emergency services. The potentially limiting aspects of this level of consciousness include poverty, corruption and environmental pollution.

Level 2: Relationship --This level concerns the quality of internal interpersonal relationships within the group. Healthy communities create a sense belonging. This level includes values such as family, friendship, tradition, loyalty, neighbourliness, hospitality and open communication. The potentially limiting aspects of this level of consciousness include discrimination, loneliness, segregation, conformity and intolerance.

Level 3: Self-esteem -- This level addresses the community's need for efficient performance. Healthy communities are orderly, regulated and law abiding. This level includes values such as institutional effectiveness, quality, pride, cleanliness and public services. The potentially limiting aspects of this level of

consciousness include bureaucracy, elitism, corruption, complacency and arrogance.

Level 4: Transformation --This level focuses on giving members of the community an opportunity to participate in decision-making – not just the leaders and managers. Healthy communities encourage members to be responsible and focused on their goals. There is a focus on learning opportunities and entrepreneurship. This level includes values such as freedom of speech, equality, fairness, adaptability, accountability, self-reliance, and consensus.

Level 5: Internal Cohesion -- This level concerns the creation of a collective group identity. It involves deepening the sense of internal connectedness among community members by creating a collective vision for the community and a set of shared values. Healthy communities have a positive spirit, a sense of direction and above all, optimism. This level of consciousness includes values such as enthusiasm, integrity, fun, fairness, trust and dedication.

Level 6: Making A Difference -- This level focuses on the deepening of internal connectedness within the community and the creation of alliances and partnerships with other communities. Healthy communities care for the disadvantaged and provide counselling services. They also develop links with neighbouring communities and participate in exchanges of information with communities that share similar issues. This level of consciousness includes values such as community care, sustainability, environmental awareness, aesthetics and quality of life.

Level 7: Service -- This level focuses on a further deepening of internal connectedness within the community and the expansion of external connectedness with other communities and society. Healthy communities are not only concerned with local issues; they are also advocates for social justice and human rights at a national or global level. They are concerned about the impact of their decisions on future generations and they display wisdom and compassion.