Community Centred:
The Impact of Relationship-Based Fundraising on Strathcona Community Centre

by

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Abstract

This project explores the impact of neoliberal funding on non-profit organizations. Framed by relevant literature on current funding models, community development and social capital, this research consists of an in-depth case study of the Strathcona Community Centre Association in order to contextualize and understand that organization's success at generating revenue through relationship-based fundraising. The project uses a mixed methods approach, including document analysis and interviews with key informants. The organization's reputation and longstanding commitment to community development are key to the Strathcona Community Centre's fundraising success, however the particular historical, geographic and demographic context within which it is located means that this model is not replicable. Furthermore, the need to focus large amounts of time and energy on precarious, short-term sources of funding perpetuates the cycle of financial instability and organizational vulnerability.

Keywords: fundraising; social capital; community development; neoliberalism; Strathcona Community Centre; non-profit sector

Dedication

For my fellow Strath Kids.

And for Diane Purvey, in whose footsteps I followed both in choosing to sit on the Strathcona Community Centre Association's board and in pursuing graduate studies. Thank you; this would not have been possible without your inspiration and support.

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List of Acronyms

ASA	After School Adventures
CoV	City of Vancouver
CCA	Community Centre Association
JOA	Joint Operating Agreement
LICO	Low Income Cut Off
PB	Park Board
SCC	Strathcona Community Centre
SCCA	Strathcona Community Centre Association
VSB	Vancouver School Board

Chapter 1.

Introduction

Using a case study of the Strathcona Community Centre, a joint operation between local government and a non-profit society, this study seeks to respond to the following question: **how has the Strathcona Community Centre Association's focus on relationship-based revenue generation contributed to its fundraising success and impacted its operations?**

Success in this instance can be defined as the ability to effectively navigate current funding systems in order to produce and maintain a healthy programming budget. Fundraising is typically comprised of grants and donations, the latter either from individuals or businesses. Most government, foundation and corporate grants are awarded through a supposedly meritocratic system that prioritizes short-term, project-based funding with an emphasis on partnerships, accountability and the diversification of funding sources (Scott, 2003; Stern and Hall, 2010). Donations, too, can also be restricted towards specific activities, depending on the wishes of the donor. Receiving funding through either grants or donations means that organizations and communities they serve need to appeal to the interests and priorities of funders and donors; differentiate themselves from other organizations and communities; and develop relationships with funders to acquire and maintain funding. The strength of these relationships and the reputation that the organization creates are especially important in receiving donations and new funding as well as maintaining pre-existing funding sources. This study will focus primarily on the impact of funding sources acquired and maintained not through grants but through relationships – i.e. private donations, revenue generated through fundraising events, and funding from businesses and corporations.

While necessary for the provision of services, given the lack of state funding to cover the community centre's mandate and programming, the work required to secure and maintain funding from these various sources has implications for an organization’s ability to support, engage and advocate for the communities it serves. An increased focus on building relationships with funders and donors, as well as a reliance on funding

that is restricted to specific programs, could result in a decrease in staff's ability to respond to priorities stated by the community. Organizations may need to base their activities upon what funding is available, which means that certain communities or priorities that are not as appealing to donors and funders may not receive sufficient funding. Increased competition between organizations and communities could lead to service fragmentation due to a lack of teamwork and coordination. This research deepens the understanding of how these tensions manifest themselves in the life of an organization, and what opportunities, if any, exist to negotiate a path that upholds the community-based mission and intentions of the Association.

Critically examining the perceived fundraising success of one organization, the Strathcona Community Centre Association, provides a basis for understanding the implications of non-profit organizations successfully participating in the pursuit of funding. Specifically, this study will investigate how Strathcona Community Centre has achieved success in attaining funding through relationship-based revenue generation, and what the implications of this success have been on its operations. This research project will be engaging with and critically investigating the notion of success while addressing higher level themes around how social services are funded and provided, and how urban communities are engaged and supported.

To answer the research question, this project is organized into three main sections. In the first section, a conceptual framework is developed. Chapter 2 outlines the relevant literature on the current context in which the non-profit sector operates with regards to service delivery and funding; shifting definitions of community development; and how social capital is created and operationalized. In the second section, these concepts are applied to a case study. Chapter 3 describes the research methods used. Chapter 4 looks specifically at the community development work of the SCCA and how the relationships that have resulted have translated into important sources of discretionary funding. Chapter 5 takes a broader look at how the SCCA generates revenue through relationship-based fundraising as well as the challenges and benefits of that approach. In the third section, Chapter 6 synthesizes key findings.

Background

The development of this research question came out of professional as well as personal affiliations and interests. Working in the Grants and Community Initiatives department of a community foundation, I routinely speak to staff from non-profit organizations that have experienced cutbacks in government funding or are struggling either to secure funding to support their activities, or to try to fit their programs and operations within the funder's stated priorities. As a former board member with the Strathcona Community Centre Association, I also understand from a place-based non-profit's perspective the tricky balance of being responsive to the needs of the community on the one hand, while trying to fulfill funders' priorities and donors' interests on the other. As will be explored further in the literature review, this dependency on grants and fundraising comes with certain compromises that can include changes to the organization's core operations or mission, as well as what programs they deliver.

This experience has led me to explore broader issues and questions around the roles that the non-profit sector plays in the contemporary neoliberal era, particularly around social service provision, funding and community building. As unique partnerships between local government and non-profit place-based associations, I believe community centres are an interesting and relevant institution through which examine those issues and questions in greater detail.

Community centres are important sites of community-building and service-delivery in Vancouver. The City intends for community centres to be recognizable hubs of each of the city's neighbourhoods. As indicated below in Figure 1, the 24 centres are dispersed across the city, with a facility located within 3.5 km of every doorstep in Vancouver. (Joint Operating Agreement Task Force, 7). For the most part community centres in Vancouver are jointly run through a partnership between the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation and a Community Centre Association, a non-profit composed of elected members of that community.[1] Seen as "the closest thing to participatory

[1] Britannia, Ray-Cam and Creekside are exceptions, with the first three being jointly operated with City Council and the last operating without a non-profit partner. In addition, there are three community centres that are operated directly by the City of Vancouver Community Services departments. These centres focus on providing very basic needs for low-income residents.

democracy the city has" (Bula, 2013), they have an important role to play in addressing social inequality, civic engagement and community development.

Figure 1 Map of Vancouver's Community Centres, City of Vancouver Social Policy and Projects

But the development of this partnership has changed over time. From the first Joint Operating Agreement (JOA) signed in 1950 to the most recent version signed in 1979 to the negotiations to renew the agreement currently underway, changes in the relationship between the state and non-profit organizations mirror the shifts from the various models of the welfare state to contemporary models. In particular, most community centres were created at a time when social welfare was considered to be the responsibility of the state, and now they operate under neoliberal policies, when provision of social services is typically provided by non-profit organizations.

The development of community centres in Vancouver has been influenced by many different visions. These include the Park Board's vision of creating indoor

recreation facilities, which was piloted by way of a winter fieldhouse program in 1931 and 1932; the grassroots community hall movement, in which neighbourhood-based community hubs were constructed using voluntary labour and donated materials and operated by community-based organizations; the settlement house movement, which focused on poverty relief and believed that the physical, social and mental benefits of recreation could improve the lives of those living in poverty; and ideas behind community schools, which were intended to provide learning and social opportunities for people of all ages and which contributed to some community centres, such as Strathcona, being built adjacent to schools (Vuillamy, 1995: 48 - 55). Their construction was initially financed through local area plebiscites; however, due to difficulties in getting local improvement bylaws passed in lower income parts of town, as of the 1960s construction of new community centres took place under the City's capital plans, which coincided with the availability of construction and operating funds from senior levels of government (Joint Operating Agreement Task Force, 2004: 54; Vuillamy, 1995: 70). During the late 1960s-1970s there was support from all three levels of government for neighbourhood organization and community development in areas such as the Downtown Eastside, which enabled both the construction of community centres in lower income neighbourhoods as well as funding for programs addressing the specific needs in those communities (Hasson & Ley, 170 – 171). From both a neighbourhood-based and government perspective, community centres were conceived as a hub for important social and recreational services, as well as community-building and participation in civil society.

The JOA currently in effect breaks down the roles and responsibilities of the Park Board (PB) and the non-profit Community Centre Associations (CCAs)[2]. The PB, using property tax revenue from the City of Vancouver, takes care of the physical structure of the community centre, including maintenance and operating costs. Supervisory, maintenance, programming and clerical staff are also provided by the PB. The CCAs are responsible for providing recreational and community programming, including paying contractors and instructors who deliver the programs. They set prices and subsidies and

[2] The JOA is in the process of being renegotiated with the new agreement going into effect as of January 1st, 2018. In recognition of Strathcona's unique situation, a separate funding agreement has been created for the SCC with the intention that Park Board staff provide a report on a long-term sustainable funding strategy for Strathcona.

receive all community centre generated revenues.[3] In addition, they can independently provide other services as they feel necessary, such as running a daycare or preschool, or serve as a site for other groups or organizations to provide services and programs. CCAs serve a linking and intermediary function between local government and the community they serve. Each elected Park Board Commissioner is assigned as a liaison to a couple of community centre associations and given the opportunity to attend regular meetings. This is intended to facilitate an exchange of information between the CCAs and the Park Board as a whole. CCAs are responsible for community engagement and responding to the needs and aspirations of that community. Their budget comes from program fees and memberships, as well as grants, donations and revenue generated through fundraising activities (Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, 5, 7).

Given that community centres are operated by local government, it can be argued that citizens should be able to expect a certain amount of standardization and equity in terms of programs and services delivered. Likewise, it would be expected that these institutions would have access to the same levels of funding in order to perform these functions. A closer look, however, reveals a surprising amount of variance between centres, with some clear inequities. This variance extends the role each centre plays within its respective community and what services are provided, as well as how much those services cost. Some centres play a more or less purely recreational role, while others are more focused on community development and social services. Depending on the demographics of the neighbourhood in which they are located, some Community Centre Associations generate their revenue through program fees and facility usage, while others must rely on grants and fundraising activities (Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, 7). Figure 2, below, provides a snapshot of community centre revenues in 2015 and indicates the sources of revenue that each centre depends upon[4]. Since CCAs are responsible for the community development work of community centres, the degree to which they are able to build capacity, provide services and engage with that community are dependent on their ability to generate sufficient revenue

[3] With the exception of revenues generated from rinks, pools and some fitness centres which are run directly by the Park Board.

[4] The chart only shows information for CCAs that are registered charities and thus have their financial information available on the Canada Revenue Agency's website. Britannia and Ray-Cam are also omitted because they do not fall under the JOA.

to do so. Ultimately, the variance and inequities between centres and the work they do are the results of a decentralised network operating within a neoliberal funding system. The intention of this research project is to explore how one community centre in particular has been able to successfully draw upon the relationships built as a result of its community development work in order to navigate the current funding system.

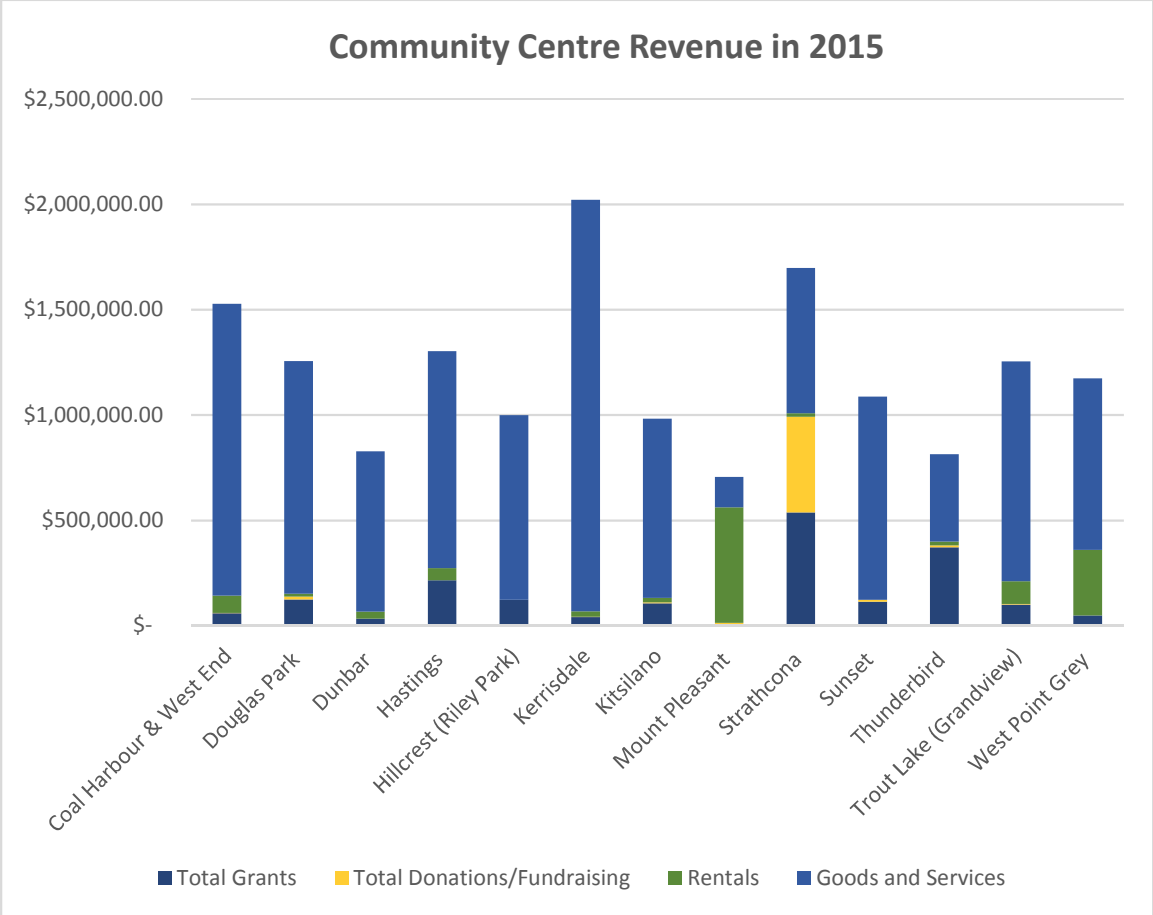

Figure 2 Community Centre Revenue in 2015, Canada Revenue Agency

Case Study Selection

Strathcona Community Centre (SCC) was built in 1972 as part of the community development phase of community centre construction as described above, and serves a historically marginalized and low-income neighbourhood that, while undergoing significant gentrification, is still marked by widespread poverty. A recent Downtown Eastside Local Area Profile (2013) indicates high levels of vulnerable populations,

including low-income seniors and families. Likewise, a recent council report (City of Vancouver, 2015) indicates that 70% of children in the neighbourhood live in poverty.

The mandate of the Strathcona Community Centre Association is "to sustain, promote and develop a resource that supports the changing social and recreational aspirations of the Strathcona community", which currently has a population of 12,585 people (Strathcona Community Centre Association Orientation Manual for Board Members and Administrative Staff Members, 6).The Halsey report[5] (1967), which was commissioned on behalf of the Strathcona and Woodland Park Area Councils, indicates that the Strathcona Community Centre was originally conceived as a multi-purpose service centre "designed to bring a variety of services closer to local residents and to develop means by which residents can influence the development and delivery of these services" (1), the latter of which is enabled through partnering with a local non-profit association. In serving as a neighbourhood hub, the intention was that the SCC would promote teamwork and coordination among various services and programs in the area, thereby reducing duplication and gaps and ensuring that services were accessible and relevant to local residents. It was further seen as a way to "provide tangible evidence of the city's concern for improvement of areas that are underserviced or slated for urban renewal" (3). As a place-based non-profit, the SCCA considers its purpose to strengthen the local urban community and be responsive to the needs of that community. Most of the focus of the SCCA is on community development, and it is currently known and respected for addressing food insecurity. The breakfast program run by the SCCA at the adjacent elementary school, for example, is noted in a recent City report to be a best practices model for building relationships and providing healthy food in dignified way for up to 120 students and their families a day (City of Vancouver, 2015).

Given the demographics of the neighbourhood it is situated in, the SCCA provides low-cost and heavily subsidized programming, meaning that it is dependent on grants and donations in order to remain financially viable. SCCA fees are consistently the lowest in Vancouver to ensure that the programs are accessible and affordable for all residents (Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, 4). The approach staff takes is to

[5] The Halsey report outlines the plan to build both the Britannia and Strathcona Community Centres, the former as a larger community hub and the latter focused on providing neighbourhood-level specific services.

provide subsidies and waive fees based on conversations with participants rather than have them fill out applications and “prove poverty”. Despite being a “have not” centre, as indicated previously in figure 2 the SCCA has been the most successful among its Vancouver counterparts in generating revenue through fundraising and is able to put together a budget that is on par to that of centres situated in high income areas by raising approximately $1 million per year out of a $1.7 million budget (Strathcona Community Centre Association, 2017).

What surprised me when I began my research was learning about the significant number of people who either frequented the community centre or worked there at some point in their life and who remained connected either as a volunteer, a staff member, a donor or some combination thereof. I was additionally struck by the funding that came to the SCCA based primarily on referral and/or the reputation of the organization. The social capital that the organization has generated, in large part due to the community development work of the SCCA, has contributed significantly to the organization’s ability to navigate changing funding landscapes. Furthermore, in a discussion I attended between the Park Board and the Community Centre Association around a new partnership agreement, which would include a more even distribution of revenues generated by the network of community centres, the SCCA was used an example by other Community Centre Associations to illustrate the effectiveness of the current model. It can thus be portrayed as a success story that legitimizes the current, neoliberal funding system. That perceived success, however, is complicated by the fact that the organization has often been in a deficit position financially, particularly throughout the aughts. The focus on relationship-based fundraising also has implications on the priorities of the SCCA and how the organization undertakes its work. As such, I think it is a particularly good example to use in critically examining the connections between community development, social capital and fundraising.

While the SCC was created in 1972, this study focuses on the period between 1984 to 2016. The SCCA became a registered charity in 1984, which has implications on its ability to fundraise. Charitable status allows organizations to give tax receipts, which can be an incentive for donors to make donations and gives organizations access to funding for which non-profits without charitable status are not eligible (such as grants from community foundations). This time period allows me to study the impact of the shift from the welfare state in which the SCC was created to the neoliberal policies under

which it currently operates. It also allows me to study the evolution of the Strathcona Community Centre Association in adapting to changing policies and systems over 30 years, and what the implications of those adaptations have been.

Significance of Research

Vancouver's community centres play an important role in both recreation and social service delivery, and have also operated as a form of neighbourhood council by both promoting citizen participation in local government and making the latter more responsive towards and aware of local needs (Bula, 2013). Despite this, with the exception of a few master's theses, they have not been the subject of much in-depth analysis. This research project helps address this gap. A case study of one community centre contributes to our understanding of the importance of these particular institutions in civil society generally, while also contributing to established and growing literatures on neoliberal funding models, community development and social capital.

Current funding realities and systems in place are often out of touch with the needs of non-profits and communities. As Scott (2003) notes, these funding trends are not intended to be harmful to the organizations that depend on them for sources of revenue, but have had unintended negative consequences. Funders, including all three levels of government as well as private philanthropic organizations, may have specific areas of interest or priorities that they wish to support, but generally speaking they are looking to support organizations and projects that will have a measurable impact and be effective in addressing critical urban issues; they want to support an organization or program that will reflect well on them. That said, a decisive factor in determining whether or not to give funding to an organization may be the relationship or connection the funder has or creates with a particular organization. An intention of this project is to demonstrate how non-profits have had to adapt to the pressures created by the new funding systems and competitive funding environment, and what has enabled them to navigate those changes. While it is unlikely that this case study will dramatically shift the funding landscape, a greater understanding of the implications of current funding realities on the third sector could lead to small shifts in the way that funding is allocated and funding decisions are made, or how organizations choose to conduct their fundraising activities.

Looking specifically at Vancouver, this case study could have implications on how neighbourhood-level services are funded and provided. Strathcona Community Centre's involvement in the negotiation of a new Joint Operating Agreement, a lengthy and at times conflictual process, brought attention both to the needs of the community and the fundraising work the SCCA does to address them. As a result of years of conversations with the board and presentations at public meetings from staff, board and members of the community, the Park Board agreed to develop a separate agreement with the SCCA in recognition of its unique situation operating within a low-income community and relying on fundraising to be financially viable (Stewart, March 28th 2017). An interim funding agreement is currently in place with plans for a long-term solution to be determined in early 2018. Given the willingness of the City of Vancouver to explore other funding models at least within the community centre system, a broader understanding of the issues local community organizations face in terms of providing important services and finding the funding to do so may lead to changes with how the CoV chooses to support other neighbourhood-based organizations and work with other levels of government to ensure that social services are adequately and appropriately provided.

Chapter 2.

Literature Review

This chapter contextualizes the research question within relevant literature. It begins by acknowledging the changed relationship between the non-profit sector and the state in our current political economy, focusing in particular on how services are provided and funded. Next it explores the literature on community development and how its various and changing definitions are reflective of the shift towards neoliberalism. Finally, it concludes by looking at how social capital, created through community development work, helps organizations and communities navigate neoliberal funding regimes.

Funding and the Third Sector

The third sector, in contrast to the public and private sectors, refers to the non-profit sector. It is comprised of voluntary and community organizations. Evans and Shields (1998) identify philanthropy, altruism, charity, reciprocity and mutuality, and the ethic of giving and caring as being key concepts that distinguish the third sector from the market and government sectors. Evans and Shields (2000) go on to explain that under the Keynesian economic model that characterized the welfare state, Canada had a mixed social economy (as opposed to a state monopoly on social welfare provision) with the third sector playing a supplementary role in the following areas: community service and advocacy (contributing to public policy dialogues); mediation (bringing people together across the spectrum and contributing to building social capital and social cohesion); and building citizenship (participation and membership in a community). Neoliberal restructuring, partially in response to the global recession of the 1970s and a perceived failure of the Keynesian welfare state, changed the role of the state with regards to the allocation and provision of public services, the responsibility for which has been shifted to the third sector.

As Harvey (2005) describes, neoliberalism is:

> in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade (2).

The normative assumption is that government will function better if guided by the market and following cues from the private sector. Peck and Ticknell (2002) characterize the process of neoliberalization as occurring in two phases: "roll-back" and "roll-out" neoliberalism. The former refers to the discrediting and dismantling of the welfare state, including cuts in both taxes and in public services, while the latter describes the construction and consolidation of market-oriented policies and a re-shaping of the role of the state. How Vancouver's community centres are currently operating provide an example of roll-out neoliberalism. The normalization and internalization of this neoliberal social reality is what Keil (2009) describes as "roll-with-it" neoliberalism.

This reconstruction of the relationship between the third sector and the state has placed considerable strain on non-profit organizations and re-oriented their focus. According to Evans and Shields (2000), the changed relationship between the state and the third sector has shifted the role of the latter from one of advocacy to a site and agent of service delivery. This shift can occur because of a limited capacity to engage in advocacy, as well as a fear of alienating funders or potential donors by engaging in political activities. Furthermore, Hall and Reed (1998) argue that the third sector does not have the capacity to replace the role of government in social service delivery and that this downloading of responsibility has taxed it to a breaking point.

New funding strategies are further undermining the ability of the third sector to fulfill this role. In her research, Scott (2003) notes a funding shift from long-term core operational funding to targeted, short-term project-based funding with an emphasis on partnerships and a requirement for securing funding from additional sources. This leads to increased competition between non-profits for government funding, philanthropic dollars and funding from private sources (including donations and corporate funding) as well as an increased demand on staff and volunteer time towards soliciting these alternative sources of funding and fulfilling reporting requirements. Indeed, she contends that "much organizational time is now devoted to chasing short-term sources of funding, often at the expense of the organizations' mission and core activities" (ix). Organizations may focus their energy and activities on operations that are most likely to generate

revenue, either through fees-for-service or because there are grants or donors interested in funding them. This means that activities that aren't seen as revenue-generating or a priority of funders could go by the wayside, or receive inadequate attention and funding amounts. Furthermore, activities that require long-term commitment and engagement, such as community development, may not fit into a short-term funding model as they may not demonstrate measurable impact within a short reporting time-frame. The stated objectives of these new funding strategies are to "increase accountability, support partnerships, promote diversification of funding sources, and foster efficiency and innovation within the sector"; however, some of the (unintended) consequences include revenue volatility, mission drift and, as mentioned, advocacy chill (4).

In their analysis of development proposal writing in the town of Cobalt, Ontario, Stern and Hall (2010) describe the funding process as a "supposedly meritocratic process that emphasizes partnerships, the mobilization of community and a circumscribed range of fundable activities" (254). In order to be competitive and "win" funding, organizations must submit well-written proposals; apply to support projects that meet the priorities of the funder; and distinguish themselves from other organizations and communities that are also applying for funding. Stern and Hall (2010) note resulting pressures on organizations to professionalize, both with regards to proposal writing and service delivery, which limits citizen involvement and participation (255). Non-profit boards will often try to recruit members who have connections to funding sources, or skills and expertise in writing proposals, which, in the case of place-based non-profits can mean that the board is not necessarily representative of the community it serves. Furthermore, organizations may need to seek and accept sources of funding for projects that might not fit their own priorities or the needs of the community simply because of what funders are interested in funding (258). Finally, in order to prove that their projects are worthy of support, applicants need to effectively and compellingly demonstrate distinctiveness, potential and a high level of need, as compared to other organizations and communities (260). The ability of a community or organization to market themselves in a way that is appealing to funders and sets them apart from other communities and organizations can contribute greatly to their success in securing funding, but also increases competition within the sector and between communities.

As a non-profit organization, the Strathcona Community Centre Association experiences these constraints and pressures in carrying out its mandate and in securing

the funds to do so. Considerable staff time (from both the Association and Park Board) goes towards soliciting and managing relationships with funders. An understanding of the theory behind the larger context of the effects of neoliberal funding trends on the third sector helps contextualize the circumstances under which community centres are operating, and a way of interpreting their activities with regards to dealing with these circumstances. Given that there is a perception that the Strathcona Community Centre Association has been successful in securing funding, my study will critically examine this "success" to determine the factors that lead to it as well as its implications on the community development work of the Centre, which will be explored further in the next section.

Community Development

'Community' is an often used word that has a multiplicity of meanings. In community development literature, 'community' typically has three definitions: a geographical location, a shared identity, or a group of people coming together around a specific issue or common interest (Craig, 2007; Sihlongonyane, 2009). The term 'community' is often used in a vaguely defined yet value-laden way. It is frequently used to imply a sense of harmony, co-operation and inclusivity. But this conception can be false and misleading, since it fails to acknowledge the conflicts and disparities that can exist within most communities (Head, 2007). Despite existing at all scales, or no scale, 'community' in the case of community development, is also commonly assumed to refer to 'local-scale community' (Purcell, 2006).

In looking specifically at the work of the Strathcona Community Centre Association (SCCA), the word 'community' most often refers to the geographical context (the neighbourhood of Strathcona) and the residents who live there. However, in using that term there are often assumptions being made as to a shared identity, or common characteristics of Strathcona residents (that they are low-income or marginalized) as well as shared issues that they are organized around (such as poverty or food security). The definition of the community the SCC serves is further complicated by former Strathcona residents who remain connected to the community centre either by continuing to access services and programs, volunteering on the board, providing financial support and/or working as staff. For the purposes of this research project, I understand the word 'community' to encompass all three definitions; however, I attempt to clarify what is

meant when the word is used in each instance to acknowledge and engage with these multiple meanings.

'Community development' is a term that is equally contested. It can be described as the "economic, physical and social revitalization of a community, led by the people who live in that community" (Thibault, 2007: 878); as the development of "community control of the skills, knowledge, assets and understanding of local deprived communities" (Craig, 2007: 349); and as "a form of politics whereby citizens participate in civil society through communicative action in order to directly socialize policy issues" (Geoghegan& Powell, 2008: 431). It ranges, then, from a theory that prioritizes community control and community knowledge within a geographical space that is assumed to be in need of regeneration to one that focuses on the strengthening and politicisation of civil society.

Strathcona Community Centre was originally conceived as a multi-functional centre of coordinated programs focused on civic and social development. The Halsey report (1967) notes a concern that "residents feel 'out of touch', and community spirit is often low" within the context of the larger metropolis (1). With the recognition that the area was underserviced and slated for urban renewal, the centre was intended to be a hub for improved, coordinated programs from various service agencies, as well as "develop means by which residents can influence the development and delivery of these services" and participate in civil society through advisory committees and neighbourhood councils (Ibid, 1). Operating as a partnership between the Park Board and a place-based non-profit means that the Centre can serve as a link between residents and local government. In light of these multiple definitions, an important part of my empirical research will involve interrogating and explicating the understandings that staff and board members at the Centre currently hold of this concept and how it informs their perceptions of their work.

According to Sihlongonye (2009), the shifting meaning of community development and the associated language used to describe it is dependent on the social and economic context within which it is taking place. Between the 1960s and 1980s, community development was synonymous with 'self-help' and 'people power' and associated with social and/or civil rights movements. It was conceived as a bottom-up alternative to state development, and a method of resisting capitalist exploitation. With a

shift towards neoliberalism in the 1980s, as described in the previous section, the term community development moved away from a focus on community organizing to become became associated with local economic development and community capacity building, often taking place in partnership with local or higher levels of government (140-142). Neoliberal governance justifies state withdrawal from social service provision by putting the onus on the local community or local government to provide public services, as well as to find the resources in order to do so. Ilcan and Basok (2010) describe this relationship as “community government”, in which the state is “no longer engaged in traditional planning but is more involved in enabling, inspiring, and assisting citizens to take responsibility for social problems in their communities, and formulating appropriate orientations and rationalities for their actions” (132), contributing to what Keil (2009) describes as “roll-with-it” neoliberalism. Drawing on Foucauldian theory, Cruikshank (1999) and Hyatt (2011) describe this empowerment of communities and citizens to be accountable for their needs as a technology of governance, one that justifies the withdrawal of public sector resources. As Stern and Hall (2015) describe, “good citizens are empowered to imagine, engage, and propose but not to count on the state to provide” (197).

A further criticism of community development is that it can easily fall into what Purcell (2006) describes as the local trap; that is, the assumption that the local scale is somehow preferable and better than other scales. Community development at the local scale is often conflated with participatory democracy, which comes with the assumption that local decision making is more democratic and will result in more just decisions being made. As previously noted, Vancouver’s community centres are considered to play a role in participatory democracy by providing a link between citizens and local government. By contrast, Purcell (2006) argues that there is nothing inherent about any scale, and that localising control over space can produce just or unjust, democratic or undemocratic outcomes in equal measure. What is more important is the agenda of those empowered at the chosen scale, and that decisions made around scale be based on which option is most effective in achieving desired outcomes. Purcell (2006) further argues that the emphasis on the local scale in community development literature enables and justifies the state’s withdrawal from social service provision and expectation that the community will be able to secure the resources and capacity to fill the gap.

Part of my study entails exploring what “community development” means in the context of Strathcona Community Centre Association and what its impact has been in terms of creating relationships and capacity to help navigating current funding realities as will be described in the next section. The literature on community development provides a way in which to understand how work of the SCCA is conceived and articulated.

Social Capital

Social capital is another concept with a multitude of meanings and definitions. It is described as “the kinds of social relationships people have with one another and the trust and shared values that emerge from them” (Geoghegan & Powell, 2008: 438), “the ability of individuals to secure benefits as a result of membership in social networks or other social structures” (Middleton et al, 2005: 1716) and “resources that may increase the skills and connections among people at the local and regional levels (Head, 2007: 443). The World Bank (2000) goes a step further in identifying three types of social capital: bonding, which consists of strong ties between people who share similar demographic characteristics such as networks of family, friends and neighbours; bridging, which consists of weaker ties between people with comparable economic status and political power, for example through civic organizations and work; and linking, which consists of vertical ties between marginalized people and those in positions of influence and power (128).

In the neoliberal era, social capital has also been closely tied to community development and notions of community capacity building as it is seen as vital in building community resilience and enabling community self-help. A prevalence of social issues in a community (or an inability to come up with adequate resources to address the issues) can be framed as or blamed by a lack of social capital; that is, a lack of or inadequate levels of trust and shared values. Community development, then, can focus on building or enhancing social capital rather than addressing social and systemic issues directly, the idea being that an increase in social capital will solve the challenges the community faces. This conception of social capital has been criticized for ignoring disparities in wealth and power and their relative effect on securing social capital: “if upper-middle class communities possess more of it than poorer communities, it also follows that its unequal distribution will further empower the already wealthy and powerful in seeking

access to local services" (Middleton et al, 1715). Or, put another way, "what needs to change are those power relations, not the level of connections" because the problem often is "not that there is a lack of trust-based social networks and mutual support [in low-income communities] but rather that these networks and support are unable to generate capital" (DeFilippis, 790 and 797). As such, in their community development work, organizations and the individuals they serve need access to power and resources in order to effectively address social issues.

Social capital is an important concept in terms of an organization's ability to navigate the current, neoliberal funding context through the ability to have connections and form relationships with donors and funders and rally a community around a fundraising goal. Looking specifically at the Strathcona Community Centre, the relationship between "Strath Kids", that is, people who grew up in Strathcona and remain connected to the community centre either as a volunteer, staff member or donor can most easily be described as an example of bonding or bridging social capital. Given that many Strath Kids have experienced upward mobility and moved out of the neighbourhood, providing access to different networks, these relationships can also be an example of linking social capital. The relationships between the Strathcona Community Centre and donors and funders can also be described as an example of linking social capital. Since most of the interview participants used the words "relationship" and "reputation" when referring to social capital, those are the words I will continue to use throughout this research project. An understanding of social capital and how it is created through the community development work of the Strathcona Community Centre will lead to a better understanding of how relationships can help respond and adjust to changing funding situations.

Chapter 3.

Methodology

This research project used a mixed-methods approach to evaluate the impact of social capital on the perceived fundraising success of the Strathcona Community Centre Association. As such, the project takes the form of a case study based on in-depth, semi-structured qualitative interviews and document analysis. Using a mixed-methods approach allowed for triangulation to increase the validity and credibility of the results by complementing the strengths and overcoming the weaknesses of each particular method, leading to a deeper and enhanced understanding of the study purpose.

Case Study

Case studies offer the opportunity to provide in-depth, concrete, context-dependent knowledge about complex social issues or phenomena. The risk to this kind of research is that conclusions drawn may not be generalizable to other cases. A way to mitigate this would be to conduct multiple cases; though this would drastically increase the scope of a research project and may risk loss of depth and context-specific knowledge. While I reference other community centres over the course of this study in order to frame and contextualize my research, for the purposes of this project I conducted one case study focused on the Strathcona Community Centre Association.

Flyvberg (2006) identifies four strategies for selecting cases to “achieve the greatest possible amount of information on a given problem or phenomenon”: extreme/deviant cases, case studies with maximum variation, critical cases and paradigmatic cases (230). Given that the Strathcona Community Centre Association is seen as an outlier in its ability to effectively navigate the current funding context and because it is not a replicable example, it represents an extreme or deviant case.

My personal history and involvement with the Strathcona Community Centre also figured into the case selection process. I grew up in Strathcona, attended programs at the centre as a child, and was recently an Association board member. My familiarity with the SCCA as an institution and pre-existing relationships with current employees

provided me with easier access to the documents described below, many of which were only available in hardcopy onsite. While I wasn't previously acquainted with the majority of the interview participants, a certain level of trust and openness was immediately established once they learned that I too identified as a "Strath Kid". This resulted in very candid interviews. The balance between both the Strath Kid insider perspective as well as the funder and researcher outsider perspective provides the ability to dig deeply into this particular case study while keeping broader themes and contexts in mind.

Document Review

The document analysis was conducted in order to fulfil two objectives: a) to identify sources and levels of funding to the Strathcona Community Centre Association (SCCA) and evaluate how they change over time; and c) to determine the implications of these funding arrangements on the work of the centre.

Documents that were collected and analyzed included the following:

- Strathcona Community Centre Association's audited yearly financial statements (1984 – 2015);[6]
- Strathcona Community Centre's Annual Reports (1984 – 2015);
- Documentation related to the creation, history and governance of the community centres, looking specifically at Strathcona Community Centre;
- Media coverage related to the Strathcona Community Centre

Documents were either collected in hardcopy and scanned or collected online and downloaded for storage and analysis on the university's network and in qualitative analysis software.

Interviews

In-depth, semi-structured interviews were used to corroborate, complement and expand on information gained through the document review process. This method

[6] I was unable to locate the annual report and audited financial report for the 1988/89 and 2004/05 fiscal years. Given the lengthy timeframe of this study, their absence is not a significant issue.

allowed for the gathering of data from a range of opinions and experiences, which further allowed for the representation of perspectives that might not otherwise be recorded and information that has no official record.

Nine in-depth interviews were conducted with key informants who have been involved in both the fundraising and community development work of the Strathcona Community Centre Association either as a staff member, volunteer and/or donor. Prospective interviewees were contacted using publicly accessible contact information and additional contacts and suggestions were offered by interview participants using the sampling method of purposeful snowballing.

All participants were offered the option of anonymity but told that true confidentiality could not be guaranteed. They were also advised that their contributions would represent their individual views and not those of their employers or other affiliated organizations. All but one participant consented to be identified; as such a list of interview participants appears in Appendix A, but individual contributions are not identified by name through this project.

The interviews took place in 2016 with each conversation ranging from one hour to two hours in length. A semi structured approach with guiding questions, as outlined in Appendix B, was used to begin the conversation. The discussion proceeded with participants expanding on areas relevant to their expertise and interest and suggesting other, relevant areas of discussion. Eight interviews were recorded with one partially recorded[7] and all recordings were transcribed with the original audio files deleted. Transcripts and notes were stored on the university's network.

Data Analysis

In analyzing the data I gathered both through the content analysis and interviews, I borrowed from the grounded theory approach (Gioia et al, 2010). As explained in Babbie and Benaquisto (2010), grounded theory is "an inductive approach to social research that attempts to derive theory from an analysis of the patterns, themes, and

[7] Unbeknownst to me, the battery ran out mid-way through one of the interviews.

common categories discovered in observational data" (325). Data collection and analysis are conducted simultaneously as an iterative process.

Coding is a key process in this approach, and occurs in three stages: open coding, in which concepts and categories are identified; axial coding, in which concepts and categories are refined and examined in depth; and selective coding, which focuses on the relationships between and among a few particular categories (Ibid, 326). Every code generated must fit the data, rather than the other way around. Coding leads to the development of concepts, which lead to the formation of hypotheses, which must be checked back against the data in what Babbie and Benaquisto (2010) call constant comparative method (390).

Another key process in this approach is that of memoing. Memos are analytical, conceptual or theoretical notes that help document the researcher's thinking process as well as questions and ideas that emerge while gathering, coding and analyzing data. This helps them further investigate their own codes and categories and helps them gain analytical distance from the data and the codes they've generated (Ibid, 163).

Some criticisms of the grounded theory approach include challenges with remaining objective and avoiding bias, as well as having the data 'speak for itself' without referencing existing frameworks and research (Babbie and Benaquisto, 326; Thornberg and Charmaz, 154). A further challenge in remaining objective is my own long history with the Strathcona Community Centre, both as a centre user in my childhood and more recently as a board member. While I used the methods associated with the grounded theory approach, I also looked at the data I collected through the lens of the key concepts explored in my literature review. This both allowed me to situate and contextualize the data I collected, as well as draw from existing hypotheses and theories of third sector funding, community development and social capital. Using a mixed-methods approach beginning first with the collection of data from a more objective source (the documents) also helped avoid bias, as well as constant checking back with the data to make sure the codes and themes that were developed were appropriate and relevant.

Chapter 4.

Developing a Community

This chapter will explore the connections created between program participants and the SCC through the community development work of the community centre, and what its impact has been on the SCCA's fundraising ability, particularly in regard to discretionary funding.

"Once you're a Strath kid you're always a Strath kid"

In going through the annual reports from 1984 to 2015 and in the interviews I conducted, I was surprised to find out how many people who either frequented the Strathcona Community Centre or worked there at some point in their life remained connected to the Centre either as a volunteer, a staff member, a donor, or some combination thereof. A current volunteer and donor who grew up in the neighbourhood in the 70's and 80's describes their relationship with the community centre this way:

> I went to [Strathcona] Elementary School, grade 1 up to grade 7 and then went to Britannia. My involvement at Strath is as a participant, as a young kid in the summer programs and it was quite neat to see the Rec leaders, you know, leading, and that kind of appealed to me. My interest was to kind of do what they did. So then I volunteered when I was 15 doing the summer program as well. Then an opportunity came up where I guess one of the Rec leaders moved on so I ended up, instead of volunteering, landing the job instead. So at 15 onwards that's when I started working for Strath in different capacities. As program leaders for the gym, crafts, cooking. […] And then another opportunity came up full-time for the Recreation Programmer. And at that time I was, I had just finished high school and didn't pursue post-secondary yet. But they saw, I guess, it was good timing for me to fill in as Acting while they resolved opening that position on a more permanent basis. So I was the Acting Programmer for about a year. And then back to part-time after that. (Interview A)

Years later, in 2012, this person returned to the community centre as a board member and became the chair of the fundraising committee. This experience is not dissimilar to that of other people I interviewed who describe a kind of pathway to leadership moving from a program participant to a volunteer role and/or paid position at the SCC. Some stayed within the Park Board system going on to work at other community centres or in

other roles, while others went on to a different career path. All, however, maintained a connection with the Strathcona Community Centre in some way or another including as a volunteer, a staff member or a donor. As one staff member who also grew up in the neighbourhood describes these ongoing connections:

> I mean, you move out of the neighbourhood but still feel like you're part of it. […] We coined a phrase that once you're a Strath kid you're always a Strath kid. […] I couldn't imagine not being connected. And I know that I run into people that haven't come to the community centre in 15 years, 20 years, but they still think of themselves as Strath kids (Interview B).

Furthermore, an intergenerational connection is created by parents who bring their own children to the Centre for programs, despite no longer living in the neighbourhood. As another interviewee puts it:

> I have two girls and they were at Strathcona doing the Chinese dance program. I used to go down every weekend to wait for them to finish. And now they're older they don't do Chinese dance anymore but they're into basketball. So they're part of the coaching; they're coaches there. (Interview C).

For these parents, having their children participate in programs at the SCC can be a way of connecting them to a place that played an important role in their development while also having their children experience the same pathways to leadership that they did. This creates generations of so-called Strath kids who are now contributing their time, skills and experience to the community centre.

Who is the Community?

The range of people continuing to feel connected to the community centre whether or not they still live in the neighbourhood raises the question of what, or who, is the community that the Centre intends to serve. Coming up with a succinct definition of community is a challenge, as one long-time staff member observes:

> There's the basketball community, and there's a geographic community, and there's the school community, there's a volunteer community and there's an alumni community. So I think it could be all those things. But I think one of the things that we see in Strath is people wear more than one hat. So you might live in the community, you might work in the community, your kid might go to school, or might not, or they might play basketball or they might go to the food

> [programs] so I think you can cut it a whole bunch of different ways. I don't think there's one way of determining that. (Interview B)

The introduction of the OneCard, which acts as a general community centre membership allowing residents from any part of the City of Vancouver access to community centres regardless of where they are located, further complicates the definition of the community it serves. Generally speaking, interview participants understand the community to be local residents and those who use the Centre, along with alumni who in many cases no longer live in the neighbourhood.

In recent years, the Strathcona Community Centre Association has had to face the challenge of further defining its service priorities as the neighbourhood changes. Strathcona is undergoing a significant gentrification process: although it maintains a large low-income population, its traditional role as a neighbourhood for immigrants and non-English speakers is diminishing. One staff member uses the childcare programs as a framework to explain the changing community:

> In our childcare programs we have about a third of that community can pay for services. Another third of that population is on social assistance, so they're on welfare, they get provincial subsidies for their programs; they don't have any extra funds so they qualify for subsidies. But there's also a group in the middle that we call the working poor. Not a great title, but it kind of is at least descriptive. And those are people who live in the community that have limited disposable income. They might work minimum wage or unskilled labour, unskilled type of jobs. They don't have a lot of money to pay for services. So how do you pay for a childcare program that's going to cost you $200 a month? That you desperately need because you've got to go to work. Well, that's the group that we always try to support. I mean, so, let me back up a bit. If you look at that on the whole, two thirds of the population can't pay for services. So when you're trying to support that in an infrastructure that is generally viewed as a fee-for-service kind of model, it doesn't work. (Interview B)

Recently the City of Vancouver has attempted to provide a more concrete definition of the working poor, which they describe as "individuals and families who earn less than the Living Wage but more than the Low Income Cut Off (LICO)." Currently the annual Living Wage amount before tax in Vancouver is $37,528 for one individual and $75,056 for a family of four. The LICO is $24,949 and $46,362 respectively. In Strathcona, about 12% of the population can thus be categorized as working poor, with 37% making a Living Wage or above and the remaining 51% below the LICO. The Park Board's Leisure Access Program which is designed to support low-income individuals and families,

provides a 50% subsidy but only for those below the LICO (Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, 2017). In light of the demographics of the neighbourhood, the SCCA has made the decision to offer programs at a low cost (well below the market rate), accept what participants can afford to pay, and fundraise in order to subsidize their participation. The overall goal is to make the programs as accessible and affordable as possible to ensure that nobody is turned away due to an inability to pay.

Strathcona Community Centre directors and staff have made a deliberate decision to engage and serve the low-income population of the neighbourhood. The prioritization of that segment of the general community thus affects how work gets done at this particular community centre.

SCC Versus Other Community Centres

Most of the people I talked to refer to the Strathcona Community Centre as being unique in comparison to other community centres in the city. While I did not do an in-depth study of any of Vancouver's other community centres, I did interview four people who had worked at other centres as well as Strathcona (one of whom also grew up in the neighbourhood) in order to understand some of the differences between Strathcona and the city's other community centres. Some of the differences have to do with the demographics of the Strathcona neighbourhood and the fact that the SCC doesn't make money through program fees, but rather through fundraising. One interviewee observes the marked contrast between programs at Strathcona versus other centres:

> What happens in other community centres is they don't have to fundraise […] I've heard people say, well, if you guys need money why don't you just run more programs? Which is their frame of reference because every time they run a program they make money. They don't realize that every time we run a program we lose money […] I always use the example of Mt Pleasant. When I left Mt Pleasant and their swanky new community centre they were making $200,000 a year, net. (Interview B)

Because of the specific needs in the community that Strathcona has chosen to focus on, the approach to the work and the types of services offered need to be different from other community centres. Strathcona, according to one interviewee, builds long-term relationships with its service population that extend far beyond the transaction of registering for a program:

> There are some community centres you don't even have to advertise to fill up the programs. But say with inner city community centres there is more, you need more engagement. You need more connection. You need to develop more trust; you need to build community to get them into your community centre. […] I find that a lot of community centres I've worked at – and I've worked at some very, very nice community centres – a lot of it more was towards filling the programs and making more money. […] It's not one of those things where we just want to take your money – and I'm saying that all the 24 community centres are great – it's that we have to – because of the community that we're serving [in Strathcona] – we have to sort of step up the notch when it comes to the social programs. (Interview D)

The substance of programming must also be different at Strathcona from other community centres. Instead of being a facility focused primarily on recreation, an important focus of the Strathcona Community Centre and Association is to be a neighbourhood hub involving the active participation of residents in addressing the needs of the community. According to a former staff member "a Community Centre should be the centre of the neighbourhood. We don't look at it as just a recreational facility. And we always look at the recreation as the tool for social development" (Interview C). This was described by other interview participants as being different from other community centres: "I think in your studies you might find that other community centres don't do a lot of community development. But they do a lot of purely recreational services – and that's okay. That's one end of the spectrum" (Interview E). Furthermore, interviewees felt that while other community centres also have people who have been active on the board for a long time, or who had been part of the community for a long time, what is different at Strathcona is the depth of that connection and the layers of inter-connectedness:

> I think you'll see staff coming back to be a part of these things – I see that at Strathcona. I don't see it at a lot of other community centres in the city. And I see, like you said, a lot of young people and a lot of ex-board members being involved.
>
> Welcome. Sense of belonging. I can walk into Kitsilano now – and I haven't been for many years – I won't know a soul. There would be no connection. Strathcona tries to make that connection, and that's an important piece. They create opportunities through their events so you feel like you're still part of it. You don't see that at a lot of other places. (Interview E)

In talking about the work and values of the SCC, the people I interviewed pointed to a different kind of interaction between the community centre and the people who

frequented it. Rather than a business transaction where people pay for and receive the service that they want, it was described as a longer-term relationship that builds a sense of belonging and longstanding connection to the Strathcona Community Centre.

In emphasizing how Strathcona Community Centre is different from other community centres, the people I interviewed did note similarities between the SCC and neighbourhood houses in Vancouver. Indeed, community centres and neighbourhood houses share a common influence in the Settlement House Movement which came to prominence in North America in the late 1800s. The Neighbourhood Houses in Metro Vancouver (NHiMV) project's research briefs presented online and in the Leadership Forum booklet (2017) describe the role of neighbourhood houses in building capacity in both individuals and community; fostering community engagement and civic participation; and serving as a critical link between residents, local government and the private stakeholders that make up community. The briefs also describe pathways to leadership among program participants and intergenerational connections similar to what I found in my research and described above.

The following sections will further explore how these relationships and connections were built and maintained, and what their role has been in terms of helping the Centre navigate changing funding landscapes.

Geographic and Demographic Context

Strathcona Community Centre was constructed in 1972 as an auxiliary Neighbourhood Services Centre, or Mini Centre, to the Britannia Community Services Centre which officially opened in 1976. Both neighbourhoods are described in the Halsey Report as being low-income, underserviced and slated for urban renewal and as a consequence in need of an emphasis on social planning and civic development (3). The general catchment area for the community centre is Gore Avenue/Chinatown in the west, Clark Avenue in the east, Malkin Street (on the border of the False Creek flats) to the south and the Burrard Inlet waterfront in the north. A map of the area appears in figure 3, below, which also outlines nearby community facilities, such as schools, libraries and other community centres.

Figure 3 Map of Strathcona, City of Vancouver Social Policy and Projects

Since Strathcona is isolated from other residential neighbourhoods by industrial and commercial uses as well as major rail lines and roadways, the Halsey Report (1967) considered it essential that programs for young children, mothers and seniors in particular be located in the immediate vicinity to complement the more comprehensive services to be offered at Britannia (4). The geographic isolation of the neighbourhood is, for some of the people I interviewed, a factor in their enduring connection to the place:

> It's just really deep, my connection with it. I think when you look back to when I was a kid, before internet, before wide open communications networks. It's always had a history of being an underprivileged neighbourhood, we didn't know it at the time. So it tended to be quite insular. This is when I was growing up, I didn't know anything sort of east of Clark or West of Carrall. I was there, all my friends were there, all the community services were there, my family was there too. When that's your whole world for such a long time I think you're sort of naturally drawn back (Interview F).

Similarly, the location of the neighbourhood within the larger context of Vancouver, specifically its borders with Chinatown and other parts of the Downtown Eastside, are cited as reasons for people's longstanding connection to the geographic area as well as to each other:

> I think when you're in a place where you feel safe and you have lots of fun, that it really connects on a real, sort of deep level, a forever kind of thing. And if you never really leave the community, or you come back to the community you still feel the same way about it. So I think that makes it extremely unique. […] It's a small community, people tend to know each other and tend to have stayed in the community for long periods of their life. I mean, there are portions of the community that are very, very transient. The ones that live in social housing perhaps or you know, some First Nations families who move in and out of their reserves. But there are lots of families that have put down roots. You think about the Asian immigrants – the Chinese immigrants and the Vietnamese immigrants in particular have really established roots here. And I think part of it is the proximity to Chinatown and that community, that connection. So I think it is pretty unique that way. (Interview B)

Another participant describes a mutual need among residents to ensure each other's safety:

> This community is very unique. One, because it's adjacent to a very rough community, some of the negative stuff that happens in the Downtown Eastside overlaps into the community. So we have a community that has a heightened awareness of each other's security. The Strathcona motto is we care for ourselves, we care for each other, we care for community. (Interview D)

The demographics of the neighbourhood also contributed to creating strong ties and a sense of belonging. As a Strath kid and former staff member describes "we were all children of immigrant parents and, you know, all Cantonese speaking families and big cultural and value gaps between the kids and the adults, and the parents were always working, so we all hung out together kind of as our survival mechanism" (Interview B). Historically, Strathcona has been home to a large immigrant and working class population, although 2016 census data for the neighbourhood compiled by the City of Vancouver suggests that is changing[8]. The census indicated that 24% of the population identified Chinese as their mother-tongue (down from 44% in 2001), as compared to 22% city-wide. This suggests that the Chinese community is a significant but shrinking

8 Data obtained through the City of Vancouver Social Policy and Projects division.

minority in the community. Most of the people I interviewed are of Chinese descent and while they no longer live in the neighbourhood, many of them described a continued cultural connection to the community, such as bringing their kids back for Chinese dance programs that were perhaps not available in other neighbourhoods. Since at least the mid-1980s there has been a Chinese language requirement for some of the CoV staff positions at the SCC in recognition of the large Chinese-speaking population living in the neighbourhood and accessing services as the SCC. The 2016 census also revealed that 43.4% of the population lives in low-income households (it was 47.9% in 2006) and the median household income is $21,964 as compared to $65,423 city-wide, indicating that a significant low-income population remains despite gentrification taking place in the neighbourhood.

Community School

Strathcona Community Centre is not the only service providing organization in the neighbourhood, so along with a longstanding connection to the geographic location, there are also reasons why people feel a strong link to and choose to remain connected with the community centre specifically. One reason is built in to the actual physical structure. The Halsey report (1967) describes the intention to create multi-purpose service centres “designed to bring a variety of services closer to local residents and to develop means by which residents can influence the development and delivery of these services” in the Strathcona and Britannia neighbourhoods using schools as a focal point (1). As well as responding to the shortage of park and recreational facilities in the area, a key component of the plan was to integrate voluntary and public services at one location to promote teamwork and coordination between service agencies and programs. Additionally, it was hoped that the creation of a community services centre would avoid duplication of services and be more cost-effective (3). Strathcona Community Centre exists within a Vancouver School Board facility on a site that also houses an elementary school and, up until recently, a branch of the Vancouver Public Library (the local high school as well as another library branch are adjacent to the Britannia Community Centre). In speaking with a Community School Coordinator who worked at Strathcona in the 1990’s it was explained that a benefit of having the school and community centre next to each other is the ability to ensure a “seamless connection” between the two in which “all the children would be covered from before school at 8:00 am right through

until 6:00 pm" (Interview G). Young children especially "spend time in the school and they'll spend time in the community centre and because they're geographically linked the kids tend to spend more time there than normal, if the centre and the school were separated. You spend a lot of time on the site. So it becomes more important that way" (Interview B). One Strath Kid who grew up in the neighbourhood in the 70's and 80's and is currently a donor describes his experience with the site like this:

> And then there's these memories, when your parents are working – all our parents worked, there were no stay-at-home moms there. So who took care of you? Your coaches. Some good teachers. The guys at the community centre. They were kind of like your extended family. You get off school, you don't go home. There's nothing to do at home. You play ball, you hang out at the community centre. You see younger kids hanging out with older kids, because there's really no age thing. You go to a more affluent area, you have older kid activities, younger kid activities. At Strath activities is whoever shows up. (Interview H)

With the exception perhaps of parents with school-aged children, it is easier for people to remain connected to the community centre rather than the school since the community centre, as a charitable non-profit, provides a greater range of and a greater opportunity to participate in volunteer roles, is able to receive donations and provides programs for all age ranges.

In October of 1985 the Park Board passed a resolution allowing the Strathcona Community Centre Association to initiate a planning process to review the short and long term needs of the neighbourhood and present a submission to the Park Board's Four Year Capital Plan process. An ad-hoc Capital Plan Committee composed of community organizations, service agencies and local residents was struck in order to broaden community involvement, disseminate information and ultimately determine the needs of the community (Strathcona Parks and Recreation Needs: A Position Paper, A-1). The Committee submitted a position paper in April 1986, just before the upcoming Expo '86 celebrations, outlining the inequitable access to recreation, park and cultural facilities in the community as compared to other neighbourhoods (S-1). Noting in particular the high population of seniors and youth, immigrants and low-income households in the neighbourhood, the position paper argues that the two existing facilities, Strathcona Community Centre and Ray-Cam Co-op Centre, were inadequately sized to meet the needs of the neighbourhood and recommended conducting a feasibility study on their potential expansion and improvement to upgrade them to full-sized centres (10). As a

result of the completion of the Feasibility study, the SCCA was able to successfully lobby the Park Board to increase Strathcona's share of the Four Year Capital Plan to $575,000 (AR 1986-87, 8). After extensive fundraising and a lengthy renovation process, the Centre was officially re-opened on April 6th, 1990 as a full-sized community centre (AR 1989 – 90, 13). Despite more recent calls for an increase in universally accessible amenities, such as recreational facilities (Strathcona 2010: A Clear Vision for our Community), the physical space has not undergone significant updates or changes since that time.

The Strathcona Family

Along with an attachment to the space itself, another reason why people feel a strong link to the Strathcona Community Centre is because of the human connections that were (and are) formed at the space. A staff member who worked on the site in the 90s describes the sense of community that exists like this:

> It's the relationships. Even in a community as large as Strathcona, it's making individual connections I think. With families, with providers of services – yeah, people. Everybody. It's reaching out, to students, seniors. To me that's community. And developing those relationships. And making them, commiting to helping each other. That's the Strathcona model. (Interview I)

Most people I interviewed described the relationships they formed through the community centre as being part of the 'Strathcona family.' As one participant observes: "And Strathcona always had a bit of, you know, the board and staff always worked very well together, kind of like a family. And we keep in touch with each other" (Interview C). This idea of family includes people who grew up in the neighbourhood, those who came from elsewhere to work at the Centre and people who moved elsewhere. It also includes relationships characteristic of bonding and bridging social capital between participants and with and between staff and volunteers. The latter play an important role in terms of cultivating a welcoming, safe environment and sense of belonging among Centre users and program participants. Another interviewee observes how relationships formed in youth generate long-term successes for Strathcona's program participants

> I read some research on things that are important in young people's lives. And it often boils down to one or two influential adults when they're at a certain age. Usually a teacher or a coach or something like that. When you think of how many times that's happened at

> Strathcona with basketball …. I mean there's generations and generations and you think of all the people that have played basketball here that are now successful in their lives. It's got to be hundreds. And in a neighbourhood where you wouldn't necessarily thing there'd be so much success. So what was the one thing that made a big difference? And I think if you asked the people that played basketball one of the key things they would say is the community centre. (Interview B).

Success, in this example, is the upward mobility of program participants as a result of the community development work of the SCC and value placed on providing volunteer and job opportunities for program participants. In order to make that "big difference," it is important to have staff and volunteers who are aligned with the values and priorities of the community centre; certainly the standard job descriptions for recreation programmers in the Park Board do not require a long-term commitment to community development. Strathcona's work is, in this sense, quite precarious, as one longtime staff member observes: "I mean I think that's one of the fears of the Association is we've got to get the right people in the right positions because if we don't everything can crumble" (Interview B). Since Community Centres are run as a partnership between a non-profit Association and the Park Board, some staff members, like the Food Security and Childcare Coordinators, are hired and paid for by the SCCA while others, like the Recreation Programmers and Supervisor, are City of Vancouver employees. Fortunately the CoV employees and SCCA board of directors and staff have historically been able to work closely together in order to ensure that those who work and volunteer at the SCC reflect the needs and demographics of the community. One interviewee observes longstanding success in recruiting people on these terms:

> I think Strathcona has been very fortunate to get good people based on recruiting people in and encouraging them to apply. […] When I was around we had language requirements for certain positions, which I think is great because how can you really address issues or relate to the community if you don't have multiple language skills or cultural understanding? It doesn't have to be Chinese, if the community changes it could be something else. (Interview E).

The community is changing, as discussed above, and it remains to be seen how and how quickly the centre's City and Association staff might reframe these requirements and which new cultural and linguistic competencies might be emphasized. But beyond this, a persistently important employment qualification remains alignment with SCC's focus on community development. A current volunteer describes the approach that staff take as a core component of the work of the community centre, noting that "they're

talking about people's assets, they're looking at how you leverage assets to address the challenges or deficits or frustrations that they have, and build more resilience, build more capacity" (Interview I). According to one former staff member who currently works for the City of Vancouver in another capacity, the focus on community development started in the 70's and 80's and wasn't restricted to the Strathcona Community Centre but rather was a city-wide priority:

> I remember when I was still with the Park Board [in the 1980's] there would be a city-wide staff training every year that talked about community development. We brought in people like a well-known professor at UBC from the School of Social Work with expertise in community development. So we would have him come and talk to the staff about community development. You know, why you want to do that, what is the benefit, how do you approach it. So staff would think about that in some way. But over the last so many years I can see that Park Board are very much - maybe because of resources and budget, I don't know - but they have actually gone back to looking at the facility and what core services should be. So they see that community development is not their responsibility but the responsibility of I guess social agencies who get a grant to do something about it. (Interview C)

Another former staff member who went on to a senior management position with Parks and Recreation made a similar observation: "it's moved from that real community development approach to more of a fee-for-service, a consumer approach to service delivery" (Interview E). But despite no longer being a priority of the Park Board and the community centre system overall, the focus on community development remains among staff and board members at the Strathcona Community Centre, A likely explanation can be found in all those who were involved with the SCC during the PB's community development phase who have returned to the Centre bringing with them the values and experiences they grew up with. As described previously, many interview participants talked about their involvement with the SCCA as part of a pathway to leadership, moving from a program participant to a volunteer and/or paid position, often inspired by the coaches and program leaders they interacted with at the Centre. Young people growing up connected to the community centre "talked about being welcomed and how the community centre was a place that gave them the opportunities because it removed barriers to the basics and then opened the doors to new experiences, and at the same time challenged them to give back at all times" (Interview I). They were then able to take the skills and values that they learned at the community centre with them into other

institutions and other roles, and in some cases, back to the community centre when they returned as board members or staff in management positions.

Building up the capacity of program participants to then benefit the geographic community as a whole is a key tenet in the community development approach taken by community centre staff. The focus on individual, and by extension, community capacity building is imbued into all the programs that the community centre offers, putting the priority on community and civic engagement rather than purely providing recreational and cultural services:

> [The Strathcona Community Centre Association board] saw the community centre as more than just a recreational plant that would offer all these different programs. Wendy [former staff member] will often talk about using recreation as a vehicle. I agree, it is used as a vehicle, but sometimes recreation is recreation. So I talk more about a continuum of service. I know basketball is not the end to a lot of young people; it's learning leadership, it's building a skill-set. The dragon boat races, stuff like that when David [Ng, Community Youth Worker] was there. I could see these things going on, kids getting that experience – they're learning the skill-set that's really important to them. I see kids getting more involved in community art and stuff like that. Those are great things. They're getting them thinking about what's going on outside. And they might not become artists or whatever else, but it gets them thinking about how to give back to the community and stuff too. (Interview E)

So the programs and services that the centre provides are incidental to a broader mission. As one interviewee puts it:

> The underlying strategy for doing that is to train youth so that they have skills to contribute to those programs. So on one level it's around, you know, providing activity, but the real gist of it is building up capacity in the individuals that live in the neighbourhood so the skills stay in the neighbourhood. (Interview B)

One way of ensuring that the skills and capacity that are built at the SCC stay in the neighbourhood is through encouraging the civic engagement and participation of program participants and asking them to put back into the community. As one staff member put it, “empower them to become citizens, better citizens” (Interview D).

As an example, community involvement was an important aspect in preparing the submission to the Park Board’s Four Year Capital Plan process in the mid-80’s, as described above. In June of 1986 two busses transported a delegation of seniors to the

Trout Lake Community Centre for a public meeting on the capital plan to present the need to upgrade the Centre to the Park Board Commissioners present (AR 1986-87). In reflecting on their involvement, the Seniors Coordinator at the time noted that “they have certainly contributed their share in the political bargaining process and in so doing, gained a better understanding of advocating for one’s civic rights and the means of reaching that goal” (AR 1985-86). The presence of so many local residents who had been supported to participate in the civic process certainly helped convince the Commissioners that an upgrade of the Centre was overdue, thus benefiting the neighbourhood as a whole. Indeed, the stated purpose of the SCCA around that time was to “provide adequate opportunity for people in the Strathcona Community to engage in satisfying and constructive activities during their leisure hours for the benefit of the individual and of the total community” (Strathcona Community Centre’s Recreational/Social Needs Assessment Survey, 1). Additionally, in the late 1980s the number of board of directors was expanded from 14 to 18 members in order to “further extend the scope of the involvement of the board to include more issues and areas of concern facing our community” (AR 1987-88). That same year a Community Issues Committee was established to focus on areas of local concern such as prostitution, health and safety. Through until at least the mid-90s, a primary focus on the community development work of the SCC was to encourage civic engagement and advocacy work to benefit both the individual but also the community as a whole.

Looking at the present-day work of the Strathcona Community Centre Association, the link between community development and giving back to the community is most clearly seen through the SCCA's food programs. The breakfast program, which provides breakfast to students attending Lord Strathcona Elementary School and their families, was started in 1996 and is the only breakfast program in Vancouver that is run by a community centre (as opposed to the school board) and allows the families of the students to eat as well. The program is open to everyone because “the whole point is not only to provide food, but also remove the stigma of needing to lean on some of the supports that are provided by the community” (Interview I). While initially funded through private donations and grants, in December 2015 the City of Vancouver passed a motion to provide $80,000 towards the program with the intention of continuing to provide annual financial support (City of Vancouver, 2015). This grant was part of a larger strategy aligned with the CoV’s Healthy City Strategy in which the city partnered with the

Vancouver School Board to expand the VSB's meal programs to ensure that all children have access to healthy food (City of Vancouver, 2015). Recognizing that children who are hungry during the school week are probably also hungry on the weekend, the backpack program was started to ensure that children and their families had access to food outside of school hours. Both programs have opportunities built in for the participants to learn skills and become involved in the planning and delivery of the programs. As staff members describe:

> The parents in the backpack program, they don't just come in and receive food, they come and they form a backpack committee, an advisory committee. They offer to help set-up, take-down, drive and pick-up food. That's all part of community development. Because people want to, people sincerely want to give back. I don't care who you are, there always is that need, not just to receive all the time, but to give back. And what that does is it makes them respect themselves more, it makes them feel more dignified to accept things, because they know that yes, I'm accepting food but I'm also putting back. In some ways I've earned it. So it's about engagement and empowerment. (Interview D)

> We have Breakfast Buddies[9]. And then we have volunteers, you know, community volunteers, retired people, all sorts of connections back. People who have received the breakfast programs. Some very empowering opportunities for people to put back into a program that they get direct benefit from. So you think, okay, the sense of connection, sense of worth, sense of community grows out of that. And we also allow families of the kids to come and eat. Our premise all along is, you know, if the kids are hungry probably everyone else in the family is hungry, right? [...] So the interactions that happen in our breakfast room where clusters of families sit together and have breakfast, I mean, that's pretty empowering. You think about a single family with maybe a preschooler and a school-aged kid, a mom or a dad or both – the opportunity to sit and have breakfast, that's a bonding experience. And you think of the value to the community that that brings is probably pretty good. […] You think about how that connects people back, okay, it's a great experience for a family on the best level, and you think that it probably means a lot to a family. So does that keep the doors open for having a special place in your heart for the community centre and whether or not that translates to people wanting to donate or people wanting to volunteer? I think it does. Because it means more. (Interview B).

The food programs aren't framed as providing handouts, but rather as non-stigmatizing opportunities for participants to get their needs met while engaging in social interactions,

9 A program for students in grades 6 and 7 to learn culinary skills and help prepare breakfasts.

learning new skills, and having a say in how those programs are run. The social capital created from having built-in opportunities to form a stronger connection to the community centre as with other members of the community and creating a norm of giving back has also had unintended consequences with regards to helping the community centre navigate changing funding landscapes and meet fundraising goals.

From Community Development to Fundraising

On Saturday, April 16th 2016 a banquet dinner took place as a retirement party for Ron Suzuki, who had worked as a Recreation Programmer at the Strathcona Community Centre for 16 years. On his request the party took the form of a fundraiser with proceeds primarily going towards the Association's Participation Fund, which subsidizes or offsets the cost of programs for those who can't afford them. The party was remarkable for two reasons: the number and range of people who attended as well as the amount of money raised. As someone who attended the dinner commented, "there were almost two things going on there. One was a Strathcona reunion – and I would extend that to a Strathcona/Britannia reunion. The other was a Ron party. […] And then on top of that there was the whole fundraising kind of thing. You know, all the people who contributed big cheques that night had deep connections to the community centre" (Interview B). With approximately 500 people attending and $73,500 raised[10], the retirement party illustrates both the strong relationships that the Centre holds or has access to, as well as the benefits of those connections.

Since the 1980s, the SCCA has held social fundraising events such as Casino Nights or Pub Nights, or larger celebrations based on special occasions such as the one described above. These events provide an opportunity for people currently living in the neighbourhood and participating in programs at the Centre to socialize and get to know one another better, as well as an opportunity for the Centre to re-engage and remain connected to alumni and the larger network of people who somehow have a relationship with the Centre. Looking specifically at the retirement party, a former staff member described the attendance this way:

[10] $15,000 of which is intended to be allocated over 4 years.

> I didn't only see people from that local neighbourhood and other places where he worked at. For me what it says is Strathcona is a little bit different that way, because it has bigger representation. […] I think it's a result of the community development and the outreach piece. I totally think that's one of the reasons. And that whole thing about being non-stigmatizing and welcoming, and that it's more than just recreation. So you see folks there connected from social services, teachers, police officers, and politicians of course. You see that whole gamut of people going to that thing and they do have a connection to Strathcona. And you have to ask the question why. Because of the service piece, but also because of how they've done the work. And because of Ron, you have got to have the right staff and Association folks to do that. (Interview E)

While these events started off primarily as social events with fundraising taking a secondary role (AR 1985/86), in more recent years they have become an important source of discretionary funding meaning that the funds can be used based on the discretion of the SCCA. Maintaining and nurturing connections with people who were involved with the Centre at one time as a participant, staff member or volunteer through these events can have direct benefits in terms of individual giving, as well as indirect benefits through the networks and resources that those individuals have access to.

While many people participate in these events for the social benefits, for others it is an opportunity to give back. As one former Strath Kid and current donor stated with regards to the retirement party, "if it had nothing to do with raising money, I wouldn't need to be at his retirement, just like I wouldn't expect him to be at my retirement. But I was there because there was another opportunity to turn it into something more than that" (Interview H). The fundraising aspect of the retirement party was originally intended to come out of proceeds from ticket sales, a raffle and silent auction. A large portion of the funds raised, however, came from that donor approaching the Centre with $20,000 from his Foundation on the condition that match funding be secured. According to a current board member (and former Strath Kid), "the large portion to try to match was more at a friend's level […] because we didn't really promote it, because it was more Ron's retirement party versus a heavy fundraiser" (Interview A). Through using personal connections and without putting out a broad ask, the Association was able to raise a significant amount of funding.

Indeed, relying on personal connections and the alumni network of Strath Kids is a tactic that the Association uses for fundraising, particularly with regards to events. At least in recent years, SCC staff have primarily been responsible for holding relationships

with funders and corporate donors, while the Association has focused on using their personal connections. Contacting alumni is an important part of fundraising "but it's more through friends, and friends of friends. It's not a cold call kind of thing […] When I talk to people and ask if they would like to donate, a lot of them don't really hesitate because you can see that there is a connection" (Interview A). People who have a strong connection to the community centre know why the money is needed, and have confidence in both the organization and the people involved that the funding will be used appropriately. Their interest in contributing is typically called upon in fundraising events and activities (such as sponsoring runners in a half marathon with the proceeds going to the SCCA) in order to raise discretionary funds, meaning that those dollars aren't tied to particular programs or causes but can be directed to wherever the Centre needs them most. This might include initiatives or programs that that aren't appealing to external funders, or that need a base amount of funding before they are presented to external funders, or situations in which emergency funding is needed, such as making up a budget deficit.

Of course, a key factor here is having alumni who are both in a financial position to be able to make donations, and are interested in doing so. One of the success stories of the Strathcona Community Centre is the number of Strath Kids who have experienced upward mobility and find themselves in a position to contribute back to an organization that played a big role in their development. As an alumni donor puts it "you know those that can, you know those that will. You know those that can't, you know those that won't. A lot of times it takes a nudge. […] Can you match, can you do something?" (Interview H). There is a story from the 40th Anniversary Celebration Gala in 2012 (an event that raised over $43,000) about a case of water in the silent auction that went for $10,600. The individual who brought the case of water and set the starting bid at $500 encouraged his table of friends, all of whom grew up in the neighbourhood in the 70's and 80's, to make increasingly higher bids by either providing matching amounts or pooling their funds. The case of water eventually went for $2,500, but all seven bidders decided to make donations of their bids for a total of $10,600. (AR 2012/13) The case of water provided an opportunity, and a nudge, for those with the means and the willingness to make a large donation to the SCCA.

From an alumni donor perspective, their personal knowledge of and connection to the SCC is an important factor in their reasons for giving, but so too is their relationship with the people doing the asking:

> It's not what is being asked, it's who asks. You come to me from Mt Pleasant board of whatever, I'm not going to give you a penny. I don't know you, I'm not familiar with Mt Pleasant. You come to me as part of Strathcona Community Centre, I'll listen to you. I'll give you something. Shirley who I grew up with since childhood asks me for help; I'd do anything for her. (Interview H)

Having people involved on the board or as staff members who grew up in the neighbourhood or who worked at the Centre years ago and have personal or family connections to other Strath Kids is a key factor in keeping the pool of alumni who can or want to make financial contributions engaged. There are many examples of Strath Kids moving away from the Centre (or the neighbourhood) and coming back at various points in their lives as volunteers, as staff members and as donors. As a Strath Kid and long time staff member describes:

> People go away and come back, but come back and bring skills and bring dollars and bring that experience back to things like the board. I mean, we did an intro yesterday so our new Programmer came to a board meeting and people were introducing themselves and you sort of go around the table and it's like, oh yeah, I grew up in the community, and I grew up in the community, and I went to this school, you know, and I went to [Britannia Secondary School]. And you hear that so often. (Interview B)

The current board provides a good example of engagement across generations, from young people in their twenties up to people who were kids growing up in Strathcona when the Centre first opened in 1972.

Despite the good alumni representation on the current board, getting former Strath Kids who have participated in events or provided donations to become involved in a deeper, more time committed way can be a challenge. According to a current board member, "their interest is still very high, they are still committed, but not committed to participating in meetings and the planning and stuff like that, but committed in supporting" (Interview A). The same challenge is also present when trying to engage community members more generally to participate on the board and in committees. As of the aughts, the board rarely filled its 18 member maximum and the number of committees comprised of both board members and community members decreased.

The Community Issues and Planning Committees merged in 1997 and mostly disappeared after 2000, while the Facilities, Arts and Culture and Programming Committees merged together in 2003 (AR 1997/8 – AR 2003/4). While the SCCA still was represented in city planning processes, such as on the Strathcona Revitalization Committee from 2002 – 2008, less of a focus on engaging in broader civic issues is seen throughout the aughts as the organization became more focused on service delivery. This is characteristic of the shift to neoliberalism, with non-profit boards needing to professionalize in order to take on the requirements of service delivery and fundraising, making it more challenging to engage the community more broadly in other areas of community concern and interest. The time and energy commitment required to participate on the board is also a barrier. For many Strath Kids, their preferred level of involvement is through making one-off donations, participating in events, and using their skills and connections to support the Centre, while program participants are supported and encouraged to put back into the programs they've benefited from whether it be through recreation like the basketball program or through the food security programs.

Linking Social Capital

There are a number of names that jump out in the lists of staff and board members in the annual reports from 1984 to 2015. Some of them are notable in that they keep appearing over the years as people take on a variety of roles at the centre or move up within the park board system and come back to Strathcona in a different capacity. However others stand out because of what those people have done after their involvement with the community centre. This includes working within other departments at the City or at funding organizations. Many of these people have remained connected to the Centre over the years and have been able to use their resources, connections with and familiarity of the work at Strathcona to continue to support the Centre. As one former staff member put it "no matter what, people are not going to be working together for ever and ever ... but by keeping the relationship and nurturing the relationship on an on-going basis, in other jobs we do what we can to be helpful" (Interview C). The support from this kind of linking social capital can come in several different forms, including in-kind or monetary support, as well as being able to provide useful knowledge and advice.

Unlike the direct donations and fundraising described above, this kind of support, be it financial or otherwise, is more based on the resources and networks that alumni

have access to, providing the SCCA with linking social capital and a larger pool of opportunities and relationships to potentially draw from. While some people are no longer working directly with the Strathcona Community Centre, their current jobs might in some way related to the work of the SCC, either because of its location within the Downtown Eastside or because of the specific programs it offers. Because of their knowledge of the work of the SCC, when appropriate resources become available they are able to pass those opportunities on. A former staff member describes it this way: "Strathcona has always been kind of part of my work and responsibility in some ways ... [N]ow with my position here [at another job] I try to facilitate some kind of help to them once in a while. Like recently with the Spring Break program I can give them some small amount of money that can enhance the volunteers. So in different ways everyone is always helping out" (Interview C). Likewise, having close connections with people working at funding organizations, means that the SCCA might have more knowledge about the different funding opportunities available and more confidence applying for them, even if their connections aren't able to directly provide them with funding.

Maintaining relationships with the wide network of people formerly involved with the Strathcona Community Centre can also provide access to professional knowledge or advice. While this may not translate directly into funding, in-kind support can help offset costs for support that would either need to rely on volunteer time or hiring a consultant, as described by one former staff member:

> [We're] connected with [someone] who is involved in a pretty high profile marketing company in Vancouver. Again, another Strath kid who grew up in the neighbourhood [...] who has now done really, really well. And, you know, he was approached to see if he was interested in sitting on the board and he just said look I don't have time for that, but I would like to help if and when I can on a professional level. So we're going to go back to him and say hey, you know we're struggling with our website, can you send someone, is there someone you could refer us to who would like to be involved. You know, open up those kinds of doors. (Interview B)

As described above, this kind of support can be ideal for people who don't have the time or ability to commit on a deeper level, but have access to knowledge or expertise that could be of benefit. Being able to draw upon historical knowledge and the advice of people who used to work at the SCC or in upper management positions in the Park Board or the City of Vancouver has been particularly helpful in when it comes to navigating the relationship between the SCCA and the PB such as in the renegotiations

of the Joint Operating Agreement. There are some people who because of their experience moving up within the Park Board or working in other positions at the City have an understanding either of the political context or how other organizations in similar positions have managed that relationship. While these people might not want or be able to be directly involved, they can still work behind the scenes to provide feedback and/or ideas that can be very useful (Interview C).

While unintended, the social capital formed as a result of people who grew up connected to the Strathcona Community Centre or who worked there at some point in their life as well as the other connections and networks they have access to have played an important role in terms of the community centre's ability to navigate changing funding contexts. More explicitly, the SCC makes use of relationships with donors as part of their fundraising strategy to bring in funders based on the reputation of the organization and its programs as will be explored in the next chapter.

Chapter 5.

Relationships and Reputation: Funding the Community

Community centres in Vancouver, as partnerships between the state and the non-profit sector, express this dual role in their financial practices. Strathcona Community Centre as a Park Board operation is partially funded through public revenues, notably property taxes, but the Strathcona Community Centre Association must also raise additional funds through other means. In Strathcona's case, less than half of revenue comes from program fees: the majority is from grants and donations. Grants are solicited through government bodies as well as community and private foundations. Donations either come from individuals or from businesses and corporations. During the interviews I conducted, I was surprised to learn from one former staff member about the donations that arrive at the SCC: “I mean we don't go out and solicit. We don't cold call or anything like that. We've never done that like a real fundraiser would do. It's really done by referral. And it's done when people show an interest in a particular area.” (Interview B). This kind of funding makes its way to the SCC because of the reputation the organization has achieved as well as the relationships it has created and nurtured with donors and funders. This chapter details the mechanism by which the SCCA has been able to successfully access these sources of funding, focusing in particular on donations and grants from business and corporations, as well as looking at the constraints this method of fundraising has on the organization’s operations.

Fundraising Context

The audited financial statements from 1985 to 2015 illustrate the Strathcona Community Centre Association’s changing financial context over a 30 year period. It is important to note that the SCC’s Park Board related expenditures (for City of Vancouver staff, for example) are not captured in these documents; they only contain information related to the non-profit association’s expenditures and revenues. Figure 4 below provides an overview of the SCCA’s revenue from 1985 – 2015 separated into three

main categories: donations and fundraising; grants; and earned and other revenue. Funding from donations and fundraising consists of private donations from individuals as well as funds raised through events such as pub and casino nights. As shown, revenue generated from those sources is very minimal in the 1980s, but grows steadily over the years, particularly after 2011, representing their growing importance in terms of the organization's overall budget. Funding from grants shows the greatest amount of variation among the three categories, reflecting the unpredictable nature of grant funding and the challenges associated with relying on that form of revenue. Up until 1992 this category indicates funding received from federal grants, with funding from provincial and municipal governments as well as other philanthropic organizations and corporations added after that point. Earned and other revenue also increases over the years as the organization matures and grows.

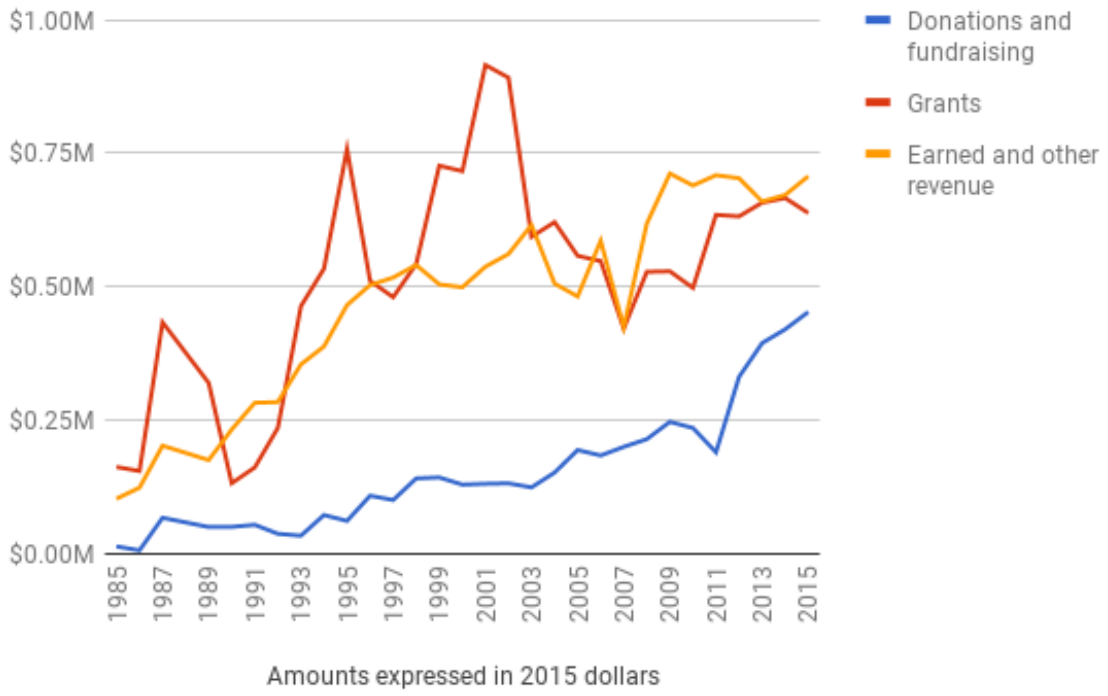

Figure 4 Strathcona Community Centre Association Revenue 1985 - 2015

The annual reports from 1984 through to 2015 outline the Strathcona Community Centre Association's attempts to respond to the changing financial context as illustrated above. While a fundraising committee was formed in 1985 and organized events such as pub nights and casino nights, the primary focus of the committee was on the social aspect of those events with fundraising being a secondary concern (AR 1985-6).

Otherwise, stated fundraising goals were towards smaller capital costs and events such as camping and other out trips for young people (AR 1986-7). The committee did become more active in the late 1980's with raising funds to support the renovation of the Centre (AR 1989-90). While the reports do mention cuts to government funded programs, the response from staff and board was to lobby the municipal government for funds and/or work with the Park Board to ask the federal government for continued support (AR 1984-5). At least until the mid-1990s, the expectation was that government would be responsible for funding and providing social services.

Starting in the 1994-1995 annual report there is increased mention of budget cuts and a reduction in funds available. As figure 4 shows, there is a sudden drop in grant funding after 1994 that starts picking up again in 1997. At the same time, there is increased reference to the role of the community centre as social safety net for the community and reports of significant growth in seniors, children and youth programming despite the cuts (AR 1995-6 and 1996-97). As a former board member who was active in the 1980s puts it:

> In our day, I don't remember there being such a large need to provide community services. Really we were trying to figure out the budget we were allocated by the Park Board and how best to spend that in the community centre. Now I think it's changed quite a bit because of cutbacks and financials constraints. The [community] centres – and many community groups – have stepped in to provide social services. I don't think that component was anywhere near as large as it is now. And maybe some of that is the maturing of the Association as well. But probably mostly because the social services gap has gotten larger and larger, and more and more is falling through the cracks and the Associations are looking to step in. (Interview F)

Amidst the budget cuts, the annual reports in the 1990s refer to collaborative service delivery and community development as a funding trend. The Downtown Eastside/Strathcona Community Development project, co-funded by the City of Vancouver and the Central City Foundation describes community development as "a process of promoting social relationships, developing a sense of social self-reliance, social responsibility cohesion within the community, encouraging the participation of individuals in solving neighbourhood problems and improving the quality of community life" (AR 1995/6, 20). This understanding that community development means developing the capacity and social capital of the residents so that they can deal with community problems *independently* fits squarely into the neoliberal justification of

withdrawing state resources. Similarly, the focus on collaborative service delivery justifies a reduction in services because of perceived costs and duplications and a move to fund coordinating positions instead. In Strathcona, a community school coordinator was hired in 1995 through the Vancouver School Board to develop a full service school model “something called the CORE committee, 'COordinating REsources' in the community to better serve the families in Strathcona through a collaborative service delivery model” (Interview G). As he describes:

> The concept was to bring in parents, the community centre and then all the ministries that had impacts on the community of Strathcona. At the time the Provincial government was still funding a lot of their services. The welfare ministry was very active, so they came in and sat on the committee. We had people from there and then the community centre, parents and other programs. […] And my role as a board member was to do all that coordination. I also coordinated the counselling services at the school so I was connected there with all the people who provided counselling support to the families. So I had that kind of awareness of what was going on with the families. I developed a good picture. I would share that with the community who would come in. You bring in all these people like the social workers and the supervisors of welfare and human resources to sit down with parents. It breaks down a lot of barriers. […] I think there was back then a real intention to bring in the most vulnerable families in the community and have them become the advocates. (Interview G)

One of the strengths of this model was the ability to engage those most affected by the issues in the community and convene them with those who were in a position to do something about it, creating linking social capital between the community and decision-makers. The CORE committee met once a month and along with coordinating existing resources also developed a number of services in response to the neighbourhood’s needs. This included programs that are still active today, such as After School Adventures and the breakfast program, as well as a dental clinic which opened in the early aughts. Funding for these programs was also coordinated through the CORE committee. The success of the CORE committee in creating new programs in response to gaps and to bring partners together so that local needs were responded to and funded speaks to Strathcona’s ability to adapt to changing funding environments and leverage their pre-existing relationships and community development focus. A subsequent community school coordinator describes fundraising for the dental clinic like so, noting that the ministry also put in a substantial amount of money:

> At that point in time we were like if you're on our side and if you want to help this happen, then you're a partner. And, you know, we wouldn't take money from porn or cigarettes or alcohol, but we would take virtually anything else. And the whole point was the kids don't care and we were really clear: we're not promoting you. [...] If you want in on it, you're welcome to help us out but you're not getting the shine. The shine goes to the families. (Interview I)

Strathcona's longstanding emphasis on local community development, on building solutions within the community, found success in the new regime relatively quickly. A particular neoliberal understanding of social capital became dominant: that of relying on the community and its connections to come up with solutions for social issues. Strathcona shifted towards partnering with local businesses and corporations: this is noted in the annual reports in the late 1990s as well as a need for different, creative fundraising ideas and an overall fundraising strategy.

In the annual reports following the 2001 provincial election, cuts to provincially funded programs at the community and to other agencies are described. Indeed, Figure 4 on page 48 notes a sharp reduction in funding from grants following 2001. This is coupled with an increased demand for services in the neighbourhood. In 2003, for example, the number of families using the breakfast program increased by 60% due to policies implemented by the Ministry of Human Resources that resulted in many families losing access to social assistance supports (AR 2003-4). The cuts also impacted the collaborative services put in place in the 90s with the loss of the family advancement workers whose job it had been to link families to resources as well as the Community School Coordinator position, and the CORE Committee as a result: "if you don't have a Coordinator in the school to make all those connections and keep the coordination of all those resources and don't have the contacts to maintain between the resource providers and the resource users, it falls off the table" (Interview G). Increased service fragmentation is another result of the shift towards neoliberalism with organizations competing with each other for limited resources rather than working together. Furthermore, without an avenue for community members to directly engage with government and advocate for their needs, the community development focus shifted farther away from advocacy and focused on capacity building so that the community could take care of its own needs. The budget cuts put increased pressure on the community centre to provide social services and fundraise in order to do so, as noted by a longtime staff member:

> There were huge cuts. Whenever there is a cut, the community has to rally and fill that gap. Because to the government they're saving money. To the community, you have a huge gap in service. […] So who comes up with that funding? The decision makers need to know that when you do cut, you really make a huge gap and hole in services. And so you hope that when one pocket closes another pocket would open. And unfortunately people like myself and my staff, we're always chasing, we're always having to chase the dollar. And it's very frustrating when you find out that funding you have come to rely upon is not going to be there. If you're a successful fundraiser I guess you have to look at the politics. You have to look at the trends, you do have to be aware there's a possibility that something might not be here the next year, and you have to come up with some sort of plan B or some sort of way to address the deficits. (Interview D)

For the Strathcona Community Centre, the plan B was to continue to look for non-governmental sources of funding as well as rely on the social capital of the community to secure funds from businesses, corporations and individual donations.

On April 14th, 2003 the treasurer at the time presented a statement of concern to the SCCA board in light of the board unanimously adopting a 2003 budget with a projected deficit. He notes that the projected deficit was primarily due to the cost of providing children's programs (such as childcare) as well as summer daycamps and the breakfast program (Deficit Blues, 2).

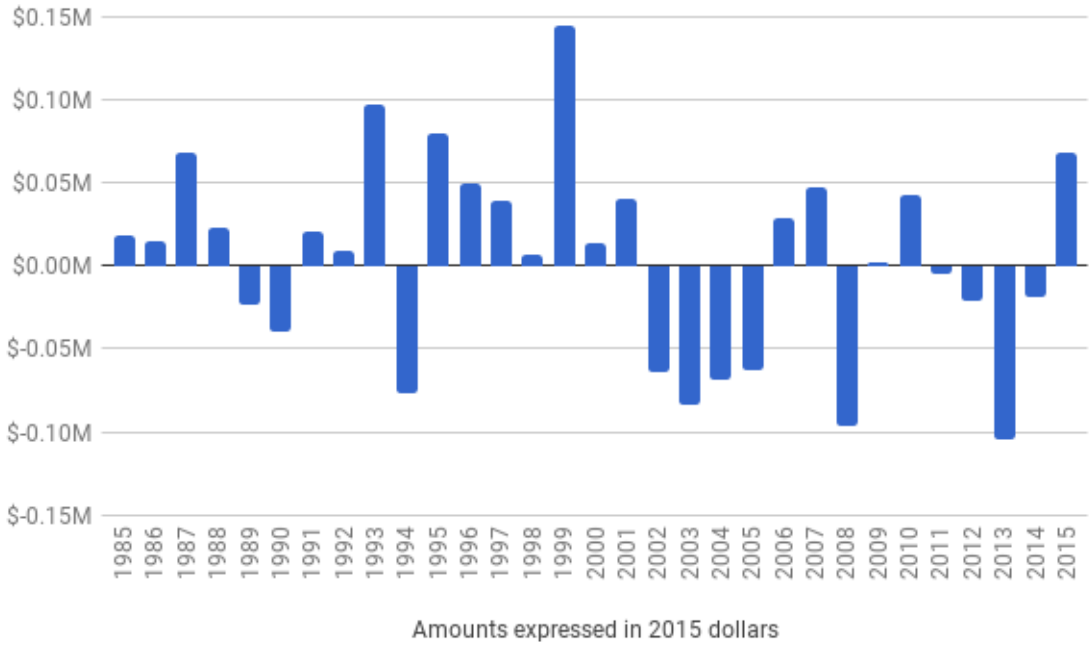

Figure 5 Strathcona Community Centre Association Net Operating Revenue 1985-2015

As figure 5 above indicates, the SCCA occupied a deficit position for most of the aughts, which coincided with the sudden reduction in government funding after 2001. Having a shortfall in revenues over expenses made it very difficult for the SCC to support the programs and services in place and respond to increasing community need. As for the board's plan to reduce future deficits with fundraising activities, the treasurer cautioned:

> I wish to express a separate concern if the Board wishes to rely on (or plan for) 'fund raising' as the primary – or even the secondary – salvation against 'deficit hemorrhage'. Our recent volunteer efforts around the 'Pub-Social' fundraiser demonstrated, I believe, just how much effort around a special fundraising event can be required, and how modest the net results can turn out to be; Also at this time S.C.C.A. neither has in place (nor has specifically planned for – with the exception of some improvement to the fitness centre) a 'killer' ongoing fundraising strategy; Thus I believe, for now, we should only mainly look at 'fundraising' as possible 'bonus' money – not to be too counted on until actually achieved. (Deficit Blues, 1)

Despite his concerns, fundraising became a greater priority of the board and a policy on fundraising was created in 2004 in recognition that "in order to maintain our physical plant, level of programming, and services for the community consistent with our mission

statement, funding from government and public sources is not sufficient. Therefore solicitation of donations, monies, services or in-kind contributions from other sources is required and must be sought" (Policy on Fundraising, 1). Also in 2004, a Directed Studies report intended to help the centre with its fundraising efforts describes a "heavier reliance on external funding from local corporations" (Directed Studies Report, 9). A staff member describes the shift from looking to government to provide and fund social services to relying on private sources of funding as follows:

> And then there's some people who say why should you be doing this? Shouldn't it be up to the government to do this? And because you are doing it you might not get any financial support from the government, so you have to ask yourself that. But you also have to ask the next question which is if we're waiting for anyone to fund us, what happens to the kids at that time? So my answer would be we need to do it now, okay. We need to do it now but we have to keep on lobbying to the government that we need more food programs. And we need a food security coordinator, but let's not sit on our butt waiting for something that may never happen. (Interview D)

Without being able to rely on government funding, the community centre became more dependent on alternative sources of funding which, despite the efforts of board and staff, were still insufficient to adequately fund necessary programming as illustrated by the many years of deficits shown in figure 5. At the end of 2016, the financial situation of the SCCA was so precarious that an emergency contribution of $50,000 from the Park Board was necessary to cover an operating shortfall (Stewart, February 6th, 2017). The repeated years of deficits challenges the neoliberal assumption that fundraising is a successful or even an appropriate revenue generation method for non-profits organizations tasked with providing important social services

Meanwhile, an increase in affluent residents and community centre users are described in the early aughts, bringing with it the challenge of balancing the need to generate revenue while supporting the most vulnerable members of the community while recognizing that the community centre cannot cater to all the needs of the neighbourhood (AR 2002-3). At the same time, as previously noted, the board was experiencing difficulties recruiting and retaining board members and getting community members engaged on committees. The 2005-2006 annual report describes how people don't feel like they have the time, energy or capacity to contribute to a volunteer board or committee, and previous years describe a reduction in the number of active committees with the priority being focused on having strong programming and fundraising

committees (AR 2003-4, 2005-6). As a former community school coordinator describes the change: “before you were to bring in the resources and coordinate the resources between government and agencies. Now I think the community centre is basically a fundraising committee – that becomes your core committee – and you have to get out there and bring in the dollars” (Interview G). With the priority on fundraising, it’s helpful to have board members with connections and skills related to bringing in funds, which puts an emphasize on recruiting professional members of the community as opposed to those most impacted by the social issues the SCCA is working to mitigate. The challenges of bringing in funding, determining which needs in the neighbourhood to prioritize, and how to engage a broad spectrum of community members without burning them out are still ones the SCCA wrestles with today.

Current Fundraising Overview

Today both the board and community centre staff are actively involved in fundraising activities. Figure 6 below outlines the revenue make up of the Strathcona Community Centre from earned and other revenue, grants and donations and fundraising. As shown, throughout most of the organization’s history (the exception being from 1990 – 1992), donations, fundraising and grants have made up more than 50% of the organization’s revenue. Even excluding grants, in 2015 donations and fundraising made up 25% of the SCCA’s revenue – which is substantial. By comparison, in the same year the Britannia, Thunderbird and Kitsilano Community Centres generated 0.7%, 8.7% and 0.6% of their respective revenues through donations and fundraising, while Kiwassa Neighbourhood House obtained 5% of theirs through that method[11]. As one interview participant noted: “I don't know any other centre in Vancouver that gets most of its money through fundraising. It's a massive subsidy to the city” (Interview I). This perception is confirmed by figure 2 on page 7 which shows that the amount of fundraising revenue generated by the SCCA far exceeds that of other CCAs. Given that fundraising activities represent a lot of work – applying for grants, writing reports, maintaining relationships with funders and donors, organizing events – these numbers represent a substantial amount of time and commitment on behalf of staff and the board

[11] These calculations were pulled from financial information submitted to the Canada Revenue Agency as a requirement of each organization’s charitable status.

in order to meet the needs of the community and attempt to maintain an adequate program budget.

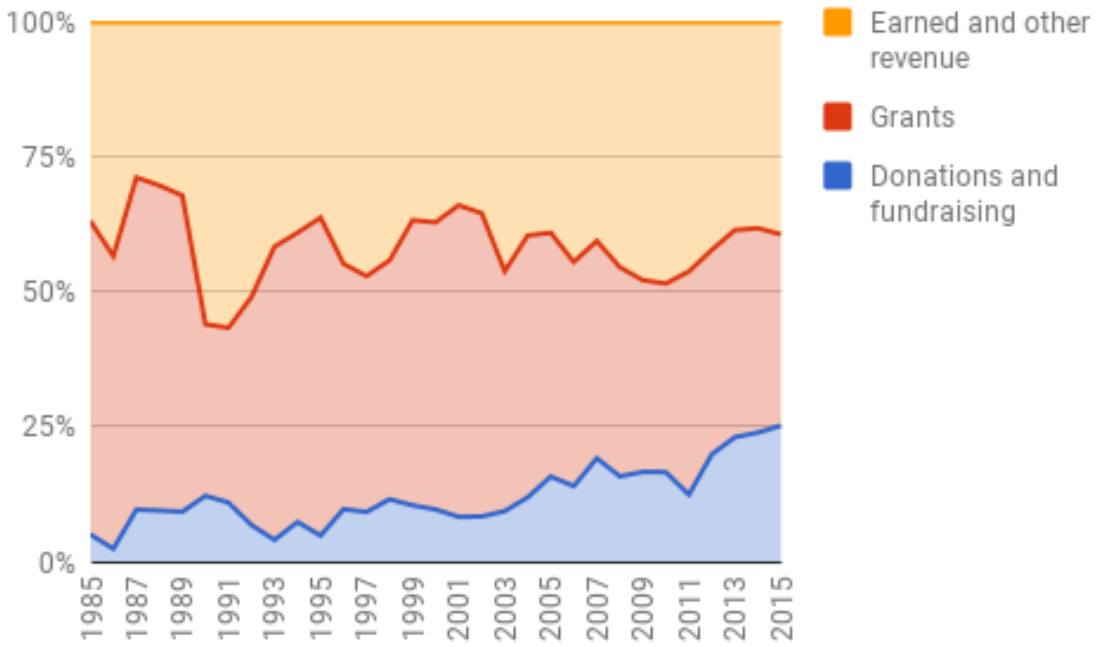

Figure 6 Strathcona Community Centre Association Revenue Make Up 1985 - 2015

While the board is primarily focused on organizing fundraising related events and maintaining connections to Strathcona alumni, community centre staff take a lead role on identifying and applying for grants and maintaining connections with private donors. As one current board member puts it:

> It's very event-based. And I think that's just part of the community centre event and board planning, to do a couple socials a year. So through that we would raise maybe $5,000 to $10,000 per pub night or something like that. But our [fundraising] committee doesn't really seek out specific grants. I know I've found one grant with RBC where we applied and had a student come in and work with us. But that was probably the only grant that I'm aware of that a committee member pushed through in conjunction with the staff. But more on a solo basis, a lot of the grants were usually Harvey and Ron [Recreation Supervisor and Recreation Programmer] going for it. I think those are probably the key fundraising roles. Donors are more staff-led. (Interview A)

While the funds raised through events aren't as substantial as funds raised through grants or private sources of funding, they are important sources of discretionary funding, meaning that they can be applied to expenses that typically aren't of interest to funders,

such as administrative costs. Fundraising events also play a role in mobilizing support towards emergency funds, to make up an unexpected deficit, for example. But, again, the bulk of fundraising work rests precariously on the shoulders of staff:

> As long as say Ron's position, Lauren's position [Food Security Coordinator], as long as each of those programmer positions and including Harvey play a role in supporting this fundraising work then we would be able to function in that way. If not, I don't know. Because again then you're counting on volunteer time and that's huge, huge, huge. Even for myself, being involved and working closely with Ron, I have a hard time keeping up […] hopefully the new person coming in will recognize that it's something we have to continue. I think as an Association we can't really super control that because it's a Park Board employee. (Interview A)

Because Strathcona Community Centre is run as a partnership between the Park Board and the Community Centre Association, the staff that are primarily involved in fundraising are City of Vancouver employees. And fundraising isn't technically part of their job description. In 1997 Ron Suzuki, a Recreation Programmer who spent 16 years at the SCC, asked to have his position reclassified in recognition of the depth of work he did, including fundraising. In 2007 that request had still not been resolved but the position of the city was clear: "the job description, including running community centres, is clear and any extra work they do is volunteer" (Woodward, 2007). Currently staff's decision to participate in fundraising whether that be through applying for grants or maintaining relationships with private donors is still at their discretion, which puts the community centre in a precarious position, especially if new staff members choose not to be involved in fundraising. Having the relationships with donors and funders centered on individual professional altruism also puts the community centre in a precarious position. One interviewee notes how dependent the core work of the centre is on particular staff maintaining particular relationships:

> You think about the vulnerabilities, losing Ron. I mean worst case scenario you imagine Ron decides he's going to move to South America and take all these relationships, they would all be gone. Then what would we do. I mean that would make us really vulnerable. We're really fortunate that Ron is not moving to South America and that he's going to stay and be part of our fundraising committee. So he has a role to continue to play. And we've realized that so much of what he's brought is that relationship with the funders. And Ron's realized that too and over the last probably 6 or 8 months we've been painstakingly sending other people with Ron to meet funders to start putting faces, different faces at the table and different voices but with the same messaging. (Interview B)

So the social capital generated through these types of relationships is also tied to individuals rather than to the organization as a whole. In recent years the board and staff have tried to diversify the people who are involved in funding relationships and attempting to better engage the board and Association staff, such as the Food Security Coordinator and Childcare Coordinator, into fundraising roles. As previously noted, this represents a shift from the role of the board as being representatives for and advocating on behalf of the community to one of service provision, including finding the means to provide those services.

Pragmatic Approach

The 2004 fundraising policy loosely outlines guidelines for soliciting and accepting funds, the main criteria being that the funding entities or products are consistent with the mission of the Strathcona Community Centre. Other guidelines have a focus on socially responsible individuals, corporations and agencies that: encourage progressive community, stakeholder and employee relations; respect human rights; demonstrate leadership in environmentally responsible practices; provide products and services primarily for civilian rather than military purposes; do not derive a significant portion of income from tobacco products; and do not derive their income from nuclear fuel sources (Policy on Fundraising, 2004). When it comes to unsolicited funds, in practice, at least currently, those are accepted at the discretion of board and staff. As one staff member notes, refusing funds is unlikely in most cases:

> There's a certain level of pragmatism that happens. I mean, you were part of the discussions around who should we take money from, remember that board discussion? No nukes, no big tobacco, no big oil, that kind of thing? I would have to say personally my standards are a little lower than that. I'll take money from pretty well anyone. But, you know, there's a value system at play here and my perspective is I can do a lot of good with that money […] If you don't give it to me you're going to give it to someone else. So better for me to use it for my community. (Interview B)

Board and staff do their due diligence in terms of understanding who or what the individual donor or funding organization is, why they want to support the SCC and what they might want in return; however the overriding sense that I received from the interviews was that board and staff members were happy to take money from any company or organization that truly wanted to support the work of the SCC. As a current

volunteer and long term resident of the neighbourhood put it: “It's not a leftist community. It's a business friendly community. […] I never sensed that parents, unless they were highly politicised, gave a hoot about where the money came from” (Interview I). Since gentrification is one of the big issues facing the neighbourhood, and the Downtown Eastside generally, discussions around accepting funds from developers do come up from time to time. For some members, accepting funds from developers may be a necessary evil while for others it represents an opportunity to benefit from the changes taking place in the neighbourhood:

> I haven't come across major concerns because we do get support from different, smaller developers. And sometimes there are certain developers who might raise a concern amongst different board members so as we go through discussions there's that. But in general so far it hasn't been too challenging or too controversial. I think we get a lot of money from gaming as well, so what can I say? (Interview A).

> I think when it comes to developers, we have to bear in mind that one, there is a process that they have to go through, and we have to trust the City that they will make the right decision. So if he does get the permit to develop then he can develop. If, because of this inconvenience, he's willing to give money to support a program, why would we not take that money from him? Let's get something out of it. […] I don't think it's wrong to sort of put the pressure on a developer that's along Main and Keefer and say, hey, would you like to put in some money? Because again, there's nothing you can do. The City has given the permit. So why not? That's money that they can write off. And it also makes the community look at them, it reflects them better if they're helping out. […] So you know, when people are talking about gentrification and all that, I don't have an issue with it if their desire is to become part of our community and put something back into the community. (Interview D).

In general, the attitude towards property development taking place in the neighbourhood seems to be a pragmatic one that it is the responsibility of the CoV to determine whether or not that development can take place, and if it does, that the SCCA might as well benefit from it. For many people I interviewed, there is an expectation that local businesses, corporations and the more affluent residents of the neighbourhood, as members of the community, should contribute to and support the SCC. As the board President in 2006 described “by giving back to the community these corporations are being responsible citizens” (AR 2005-6). Because of the relationships that the SCC forms with donors and funders, by providing financial or in-kind supports to the community centre, businesses and corporations become members of the community the SCC serves and partners in their work.

Importance of Relationships and Reputation

In looking at the reasons for why donors choose to give money to the Strathcona Community Centre Association, a lot of it comes down to the location of the community centre, the programs it offers and the relationships it has built: “I think it's the connections, basically. Whether it's staff, whether it's government, whether it's alumni, whether it's media; it's the connections and the relationships that make it successful” (Interview A). Having a reputation for doing good work and being well-regarded in the community as well as by other funders is a big reason why the SCCA receives donations. In many cases, donors looking for a charity to fund are referred to the SCC, as recounted in one example from a former staff member:

> We got a letter that said okay this company is going to write us a cheque for $5,000. And I said who are you guys and how did you hear about us? Well [they said] someone on our fundraising committee heard about you guys from someone else and we did a little bit of research and we think you're exactly what we want to give money to. Like how does that happen? But I think part of it is we're in this community. They are a company that does work on the waterfront and I think they're some sort of logistics company and they wanted to contribute something back to the neighbourhood. And I think about Gourmet Warehouse. I heard the story from Karen [from Gourmet Warehouse] about how they connected with us. Karen's got a pretty big social conscience and she was giving money to a charity, an international charity. And someone on her staff who lives in the neighbourhood said, well, shouldn't we be helping out our own neighbourhood? And the connection was made because he lives in Strathcona and knew about the community centre. […] I think Karen has contributed $50,000 in her fundraising efforts [over the years]. (Interview B)

In some cases, like with Gourmet Warehouse, an initial contribution can turn into a longer relationship with that organization making contributions year after year. Along with businesses and corporations in the neighbourhood who want to contribute back to the community, the SCCA also receives funds from organizations outside of the neighbourhood who want to make donations in the Downtown Eastside because of the well-known and often reported poverty that exists in the community. In this way the SCCA is able to benefit both from the gentrification taking place in the neighbourhood as well as Strathcona’s connection to the Downtown Eastside and reputation of a low-income, high-need community. As a longtime staff member explains:

> Another reason why we get funds is because we are one of the poorest communities in the country; people know that. If you look in the media: 160,000 children live in poverty. Majority of them are in the Downtown Eastside. So you have businesses and organizations that do realize that they're not going to go and fund a children's breakfast program in Kitsilano or Point Grey or things like that. But definitely Strathcona, our area, because it's in the news. So people really get the idea of feeding hungry children and knowing that the children live in poverty. So they maybe look at us first. (Interview D).

Because Strathcona is known as a high need community relative to other neighbourhoods, donors are more inclined to support programs in the area. Many donors first come to the community centre wanting to fund food programs, and everyone I interviewed acknowledged that hungry children are an easy sell for donors. Despite the media focus on the poverty in the community, the community centre tries to emphasize the resilience and self-sufficiency of those in need as a result of the community development work of the centre:

> We don't talk about the poor people, we talk about the community kitchen programs that came out of it, how the parents are now part of an advisory committee and how they are getting their certification for food safe – all coming out of the programs. A lot of times when people apply for funds they talk about how poor they are and if you don't give us the money people aren't going to survive they're all going to die. I think we're the opposite in a sense. These parents, these children are amazing. They deserve the funding. Because this is the outcome, because they are going to put back into the community. (Interview D)

By emphasizing the success of the programs in terms of supporting participants to contribute back to the community, this kind of messaging reinforces the narrative of the deserving poor and helps funders feel like they can be, or are, part of this success story.

Media coverage of the neighbourhood and the issues it faces can play a huge role in terms of highlighting the need of the community and referring prospective donors to the Strathcona Community Centre. The Vancouver Sun's Adopt-A-School program is the most clear example of this. In 2011, Carrie Gelson, a grade 2/3 teacher at the neighbouring Admiral Seymour Elementary School wrote a letter to the people of Vancouver that was published in the Vancouver Sun. In the letter she brings attention to the fact that children in inner city schools often arrive to class hungry, without proper clothes and dealing with the stress and trauma that living in poverty causes (Gelson, 2011). While her letter contains a plea for citizens to advocate for better, more affordable housing and supports for children, it is her request for funding for food and clothing that

resonated the most for people who read it: “that's when greater awareness of the needs of the community in Strathcona/Seymour really kind of started rolling. So in terms of our organization having to really go out and canvas for funds, we were really lucky that we didn't have to” (Interview A). In response to an outpouring of offers of support, the Vancouver Sun's Children's Fund created the Adopt-A-School program in order to collect donations from individuals and corporations on behalf of schools in need. Since 2011 the program has raised close to $4 million to distribute to schools; as of June 2017 the program had distributed $623,000 to 85 schools across the province (Bellet, 2017). One of those schools is Strathcona Elementary. The fund contributes to the community centre's food and after school programs and has featured the work of the community centre in the Vancouver Sun as a way of drawing in more funds for the program as a whole (Bellet, 2015).

Along with supporting the community centre's programs directly and drawing attention to the work of the centre through newspaper stories, the Adopt-A-School program also connects prospective funders to the community centre. In some cases, those donors form a relationship directly with the community centre without going through the Adopt-A-School program. Having a credible funder refer potential donors to the organization can have huge benefits:

> They ran into a display from Adopt-A-School and they were speaking to Gillian and said they were looking for an organization they could contribute to and these were the kinds of things they were interested in: kids and poverty. And Gillian said go see Ron at Strathcona. So by direct referral, right. Sure enough they came one day and Ron being Ron dropped everything. He didn't know who they were or how much money they had but Ron being Ron took a couple hours to show them the community centre, talk about the needs – and you know how articulate and passionate Ron is. [...] They came back and kind of said, wow, great. What do you need? So I think a couple things happened there. They got referred by someone who was very credible and then they believed in what they saw here. But I think part of it too was they could feel Ron's passion and energy, the sincerity and all those human things. You know, the first year they said okay we've got $50,000. And we said, what? Because we didn't think that. You never know what's going to come out at the end. And I'm always really shy to ask, you know, how much can you bring because it seems kind of crass. So we were really surprised. And at one point Ron wasn't so shy and in their conversation they had said, oh, $20 – 25,000, something like that. By the time they were ready, which was only a few weeks later, it became $50,000. Which became $60,000 which became $70,000 [in subsequent years]. (Interview B)

This story illustrates the power of linking social capital and forming strong relationships with funders. The Adopt-A-School program has a good reputation for knowing the issues facing inner-city schools as well as connections with wealthy donors. Their staff formed a close enough relationship with the Strathcona Community Centre in order to be able to speak highly of and recommend their programs to other interested donors for funding. The partnership formed between the SCC and the donor because of the trust and respect created through interactions with staff and belief in the programs offered can result in repeated funding over the years and, in some cases, increases to the amounts provided.

Along with the well-reported needs of the Downtown Eastside community and referrals from other funders, another reason why donors choose to support the Strathcona Community Centre is based on strength and reputation of the programs offered. Donors want to know that the programs they fund are going to have a positive impact and the organizations they support are well-run and will, essentially, reflect well on them as a funder:

> What we do, we do very well. There is a lot of organization and structure and detail in that program. And because of that, we're able to show people with money that we're a really good organization. We do good things. We have all the information you need in terms of stats and the metrics and that. We have all the outcomes. And we can show you year by year how this program has blossomed and developed. And funders when they read about this are more apt to fund something they know is going to be successful in terms of making a difference than something that's a trainwreck waiting to happen. […] People talk about the program and then they say, yeah, that would be a good thing to fund. And a lot of funders, like places like Canada Place and all these local merchants, they fund us and support us not because we've been banging on their doors, but they come to us. (Interview D)

The SCC has a reputation for doing good work in the area of food security and in feeding hungry children and many donors initially approach the centre because that is an issue that they feel is a worthy and important cause. However, other donors get connected to the centre because of their personal areas of interest. Along with food, another area that generates interest is the basketball program:

> We went to meet a funder, a couple of youngish, very successful businessmen. And they'd been funding basketball for a bunch of years. And I couldn't understand, I'd never asked the question of how did this come about. […] We were chatting afterwards and they're both basketball players. So they came to us through basketball because

> they valued how important basketball was and they wanted to provide opportunities where opportunities didn't really exist. So you think, okay, that's kind of a different connection. It has nothing to do with the community centre initially. It was basketball. Because they had both played basketball through their high school years and they knew how important it was to them. So I guess they both decided they wanted to support inner city basketball. And here we are. (Interview B)

In this case the reputation of the basketball program drew in funds from donors who might not have otherwise been connected to the community centre.

Benefits and Challenges of Private Funding

A big issue in providing services when reliant on fundraising in order to do so is trying to make the programs financially sustainable. Given the cuts to government funding over the years, for some people I interviewed private funding was seen as more stable: “Because government, it seems like every time you look around there are cuts; they're cutting things. Private funding is actually quite good because I think that everyone wants, everyone does sincerely want to help” (Interview D). The belief there is that providing there still exists a need for the programs, someone will step in with funding to ensure that the need is met. And as long as a relationship is maintained with the donor, the program will probably continue to be funded. For others, however, being reliant on private funding puts the organization and the programs it offers in a very precarious position:

> The breakfast program had been funded entirely by private donations or grants or corporate donations. And it's grown in such huge numbers that it's probably a $100,000 program. It's staggering. One of the big fears we have from an operational level is one of our funders is going to walk away and we'd have to cancel the whole thing. We were so vulnerable. [...]. Especially after we had a couple of years where we had deficits. So the ability to carry something even in the short term was almost negligible, like we had no abilities. So that really made it apparent to us that we had to find other ways to make programs sustainable. […] So I would relate that back to our breakfast program. Now we have city funding that funds $80,000 of a probably $100,000 budget. I would see that as us being totally sustainable because of the security of that funding. I can't imagine any city council being the one to say I'm the one who cut that funding. So I think it's less vulnerable. Whereas I'm always afraid with funders, particularly with private funders, that their values might change, their favourite charity might change, their area of concern might change and they might just say we've done the food thing for 15 years, we're going to go into

> something else. So there's certainly less of a recourse with private funders around how you get back onto their agenda once you're off. (Interview B)

Having local government step in to provide funding for a program that was previously supported by private funding and grants speaks both to the strength of the program as well as a widespread acceptance that this is work that should be publicly funded. Having the funds be given as part of the City's Healthy City Strategy as well as a broader partnership with the VSB to fund its meal programs also increases the perception of stability (City of Vancouver, 2015): it's unlikely that funds would be cut to Strathcona's breakfast program without other schools also receiving cuts leading to a more broad public reaction.

Conversations with donors who had previously supported the breakfast program after the City stepped in to provide funding reveal a difference between the goals of the Strathcona Community Centre and those of donors. Because the SCC sees its relationship with donors as a partnership, staff and board want to be transparent and up front with donors about their funding situation and where their needs are. When the funding from the CoV was confirmed, community centre staff spoke to donors to thank them for getting the program off the ground, to let them know that they no longer needed the funding for the breakfast program and to offer other funding opportunities, if applicable:

> We had our breakfast program fully funded and then we got this $80,000 from the City. So we're certainly going to be up front to tell the other funders that we've got this new funding. […] And I think there was a great appreciation that we were up front, but I heard from another source from the funder that they were kind of upset that we got the money from the City. […] And we got another reaction and again both of us were really surprised by this, was the Breakfast Club of Canada. So they have been a relatively small funder for us, in the past $10,000 a year or something like that, but really crucial in the early stages for the breakfast program. And they've been a good partner. They've always viewed Strath as the ideal place to take their funders, potential funders to show what's actually happening. So it's been a great relationship that way. We get visits from all sorts of funding bodies that they want to show off what our breakfast program is like. But anyways they had a similar reaction. And their reaction is well why would Strath get all that money? Which I thought was really strange. […] I would have thought they would have been thrilled for us. You know, like yay you're on solid ground now. (Interview B)

For the SCC, the goal is to have sustainable funding for its programs in order to be able to know that they will be able to provide the programs that the community needs. Donors, however, want to fund programs that are well run, highly regarded and have a positive impact so that they reflect well on the company or individual providing the funding. If they find a program to fund and then are told that funding is no longer needed, that means that they'll have to find another funding opportunity. In the case of the Breakfast Club of Canada, providing funding to Strathcona's breakfast program was also an opportunity to generate more funding for the work it does by using the SCC as an example to show off to prospective donors. Not providing funding any more to the program also means a loss of a fundraising opportunity for them. While the impression that I received from staff is that they consider their relationship with donors to be a partnership in which they're all pitching in and working towards tackling these issues together, their surprise at the donor's reactions point to a fundamental difference in purpose between the SCC and private funders. The social capital that the Strathcona Community Centre holds in relation to funders is therefore dependent on a relationship in which the SCC needs something that the funder can provide. Once the SCC is no longer in that place of need that relationship is likely to end.

Despite a negative reaction from some donors when they're told that their money is no longer needed for the breakfast program, other donors are more willing to consider funding other programs and relying on the community centre to let them know where the funding could best be used. One of the big differences between receiving funds through private funders as opposed to through grants is the flexibility of the funding. Grantmakers usually accept applications for specific pools of funding or have their own pre-determined outcomes or priority areas that they want applicants to address. While donors often come to the Strathcona Community Centre with a specific idea in mind of what they want to give money towards, through the relationship developed with staff there are sometimes opportunities to educate donors on other issues and have more control over where the funding ends up:

> We often get funders coming to us with kind of a purpose or one thing in mind that they want to fund. Whether it's food or basketball or children or… So that's not uncommon. What we have is lots and lots of ability to influence where the money eventually gets to. For instance, we've had funders come to us and say 'I really like what you do, could you send me a list of things you want funded'. And then suddenly we can pick and choose. [...] We had identified children's programs, the

> participation fund and ASA as really high need areas, because we could see that on our budgets that those were the deficit areas. So in some places you can sort of move money around and you can articulate to the funder why it's important. So the message we use for moving money from food to ASA was: you know the kids that you were feeding? They're the same kids who need after school programs, because they're the ones who need a place to go because their families are working. You can connect the dots for them and then they say oh, of course, that makes sense. (Interview B)

Again, through the reputation of the work of the community centre and the relationship built with staff, donors can rely on the SCC to let them know where their money is most needed and trust that it will be put to good use. However, this approach only goes so far. With food programs generating the most interest from donors, it makes sense to be able to redirect some of those funds towards other programs that benefit the same group of people. Redirecting funds to a different population entirely is more challenging:

> And our seniors are our biggest demographic. […] Many of our elders live in isolation; their families and extended families have moved on. Their partners, so many have passed on. So they live alone. And because they live in the Downtown Eastside, in terms of their safety they're very vulnerable. And yet in some ways we allow them just to live alone in their homes and we don't really do what we want to do. And when it comes to fundraising, you have to reach out to all these different organizations or they'll have to reach out to you. But there is not that interest, is that a cruel thing to say? It's just not there. […] It's embarrassing to see actually how much we spend on children's programs and youth programs and that and how little resources go to seniors. (Interview D)

Children are much easier to fundraise for than adults or seniors, and the SCC is lucky in that many of its programs target a population and an issue that donors are interested in. However, even with the flexibility that private funding can offer, there are issue areas and needs, such as seniors programs, that will always be more challenging to raise funds for and will receive fewer resources as a result.

Even though receiving unanticipated donations means less work in terms of going out and canvassing for funds, there is still a lot of work that needs to go into maintaining that funding and thanking the donor. According to a board member on the fundraising committee:

> Most are not really pursuing high level recognition, so we're kind of lucky in that way. It's good to recognize the donors however we can, but we don't really have the resources to do that. So what we're

> providing them is just the 1:1, face-to-face, email thank-you's. I think they're happy with that. And I don't think we're in a position to do a lot more because of funds and people; resources. (Interview A).

Even though the SCCA doesn't have the capacity to do much in terms of official recognition, staff do put a lot of work into maintaining an on-going relationship with funders. By maintaining a relationship, the hope is that the funding will also be continued:

> Say that we got the funding, then comes the hard part: keeping it. […] So in other words, what we do is, if they say something [the answer is] yes. How high do we jump? Because these people trust us and they count on us to do this. And it also shows we appreciate the funding, we need the funding to continue, and we'll do anything we can for our kids. And that passion, that appreciation comes out by our immediate response. You make a point to get an email and return it right away. You return a call as quickly as you can. Before you say no you think of how you can say yes. This is so important in keeping funders. […] And again, it's not easy because there is a time commitment from my staff, myself and my staff. We need to be present at meetings, we need to have a report when they need it, and we need to jump when they ask for it. And it doesn't have to be $40,000 and it doesn't have to be $25,000. Sometimes it could maybe be $500 that you jump for because when you do receive that funding or when they do put down the cheque there are many, many other people who are out there who might see that. And the corporation will be singing our praises. You have an organization that is well-respected and they're talking about how great Strathcona is and how appreciative they are and that pays big dividends. (Interview D)

A lot of time and energy is put into activities that may not necessarily look like fundraising activities but go a long way in terms of cultivating and maintaining a relationship with funders. I heard stories about staff working on evenings and weekends and helping to organize and provide support for events for funders such as staff appreciation days. While there is no direct monetary support connected to activities like that, being responsive to the requests and needs of donors serves two purposes: to continue receiving funding from that donor and hope that they will speak highly of the organization to other prospective funders.

Being responsive both to the needs of the community the Strathcona Community Centre serves as well as the donors who support the programs is a lot to juggle and can have an impact on the work of the community centre. It certainly has an impact on the jobs of staff involved in fundraising:

> You can always, always do better. Because I never, ever did get the computer system. You know, I mean, if I didn't spend so much time on the phone or writing grants or being with funders and spent a bit more time taking computer courses maybe that would be better. I think I mentioned to Harvey that on average maybe a good third of every day was spent on some sort of fundraising-related thing. And only my supervisor can tell me that I cannot do it. I was allowed to do it, so I did it. But also trying to maintain the service. Usually they talk about the long hours and the long days and that; that's what I had to do to make up for the time that maybe you're away from your desk. So there is conflict; there is always going to be a conflict of time. There's not enough time to do things. If I'm doing this it means something else has to suffer. (Interview D)

Having so much time being put towards securing and maintaining funding does come with a cost. Again, the staff primarily involved with fundraising currently are City of Vancouver employees and the work they put towards donor stewardship and fundraising-related activities is optional and on a voluntary basis. The SCC has been lucky so far to have staff with the skill and interest in doing that work and the willingness to work extra hours in order to make sure that the other aspects of their jobs get done. But there will always be a conflict in terms of balancing fundraising with the other aspects of their jobs:

> If you look at this in black and white he ought to be developing a great recreational service, whatever your definition of recreation, that's what he's supposed to be doing. The funding of that whole thing needs to be figured out. [...] End of the day, they might decide to hire professional [fundraising] staff, or the Association might decide to hire a staff person to do fundraising. But you're bleeding away from what Ron should have as his priority. I hate to say that, but I do see that. You could spend hours and hours on it. It's really an art and takes a lot of time. And you have to be very, very good at doing that stuff to make all those connections, sustain them, and to write things; proposals. It's a tough gig. (Interview E)

As long as the Association doesn't have staff hired solely for the purpose of fundraising and as long as fundraising is not considered part of the City of Vancouver staff's job descriptions, fundraising activities will continue to be something that staff do off the sides of their desks, along with their many other duties. While initially I had thought that the priority of fundraising might take away from the community centre's focus on community development, multiple interviewees told me that was not the case:

> I don't think the trade-off was between community development and fundraising. I think it was between fundraising and programming. I would suspect that you might find there was less diversity of

> programming as the fundraising went up. I mean, some of it was targeted for basketball programs for example. I would suspect that the shift would be, there would still be lots of community development but the programming side would suffer. So the arts programming, those kinds of things would fall by the wayside, and fundraising and community development would still happen. I don't know, but that's my suspicion just based on my thoughts about how that worked at Strathcona. (Interview I)

Instead, while community development seems to be a priority that has been maintained through the SCCA's history the focus of that work has shifted, whether directly or indirectly, towards developing community self-sufficiency to adapt to the withdrawal of government support in service delivery in funding. Through my research I was not able to find enough information on the programs offered each year and their enrollment rates to be able to determine if and how programming was affected by fundraising activities. I do know however that up until recently funds would often be received and targeted for specific programs - notably the basketball and food programs - meaning that other programs wouldn't receive as much attention. In the last couple of years the SCCA has introduced the concept of the participation fund in order to track unrestricted funds that could then be used to subsidize whatever programs participants were interested in. So, instead of having donors give funds towards basketball, for example, those funds would instead go into the participation fund to give the SCCA more discretion over where the funding was allocated based on community need and interest, rather than having that be determined by the donor.

The Strathcona Community Centre Association's ability to navigate changing funding situations has only been possible through determined staff, fortunate relationships and maintaining a particular reputation that appeals to funders. The organization's existing commitment to community development, pragmatic approach to fundraising and ability to create social capital with donors, philanthropic organizations and alumni has allowed it to survive in an atmosphere that prioritizes community self-help. Surviving, however, is not the same as thriving. The SCCA carries a heavy financial burden and relies on short term funding sources that may easily disappear depending on the whims of the donor, which would have dramatic consequences for the programs the Association offers and the community it serves. Likewise, changes in the relationship between the Park Board and Community Centre Association would also a large impact in terms of the SCC's ability to generate revenue through fundraising. Despite pouring staff and volunteer time into raising significant funds through donations,

fundraising events and grants, the SCCA has often been in a deficit position financially, which further calls into question the organization's reputation as being successful at fundraising.

Chapter 6.

Conclusion: What Does Success Mean?

When I started this research project I wanted to engage with and critically investigate the notion of success when applied to the Strathcona Community Centre Association's ability to navigate the current funding context. Looked at in a certain light, fundraising $1 million out of a $1.7 million budget and delivering a comprehensive set of well-regarded programs that build the capacity of its members does look like success. However, taking into consideration the Centre's persistent financial deficits despite an extraordinary amount of work on behalf of staff and board it becomes more challenging to view the SCC as a success story. It is also undeniable, that the SCCA's ability to survive in the current funding context through a focus on relationship-based fundraising in particular has had an impact on its operations and mission.

First, the data presented show that the organization's longstanding commitment to community development has had unintended beneficial consequences with regards to fundraising and building social capital. The SCCA came to be in a political climate that supported community development and collaborative service delivery – traits that continue to be valued by the current board and staff. The SCCA's ability to engage program participants in a pathway to leadership through supporting them to volunteer at the Centre and, in some cases, through providing them with their first jobs, has contributed to the upward mobility experienced by many Strath Kids who have longstanding connections to the community centre. A continuity of relationships attached to the organization is created by having some of these Strath Kids continue to be involved with the SCC, through sitting on the board or working as staff or bringing their own children to access programs at the centre. Having the SCCA be in a financial position that requires fundraising has also kept people connected to the community centre through regular fundraising events while providing the SCC with sources of funding and connections to draw upon that they might not have otherwise had. Furthermore, the success of its programs, notably the basketball and food security programs, as well as being located in a well-known low-income community has made the SCC visible and appealing to donors. Because of these particularities, the

Strathcona model is not one that is replicable for other charitable organizations or other community centres, even those that also operate within low-income communities. And with the demographics of the Strathcona neighbourhood changing, it remains to be seen whether the SCCA's current ability to navigate the neoliberal funding context holds true for future community needs and priorities.

The SCCA's focus on relationship-based fundraising must also be understood within the context of a very precarious funding situation that must be continually maintained and reimagined. As a result of the withdrawal of state provided social services, the community centre has had to step in and fill the funding and service-provision gap. As a consequence, the definition that staff hold of community development has changed over time from a focus on civic engagement and neighbourhood-level advocacy to building the capacity of the community to independently respond to and mitigate the issues they face. This change in definition is accompanied by a change in how the community is defined: from local residents, program participants and alumni to also include those who contribute financially to the organization, whether they be local business and corporations or external donors and funding organizations. By considering donors and funders to be part of the community and a partner in their work, the SCCA's focus has shifted to being more donor-centric with significant staff and board time going towards both maintaining relationships with funders as well as maintaining the positive reputation of the organization. While the SCC delivers high quality programs in order to meet the current needs of the community it serves, the focus on fundraising means those needs are not going away. A Community School Coordinator who worked at the site in the 1990's and came back to the SCC as an Interim Childcare Coordinator in 2013 describes the situation this way:

> What really struck me is the issues for families were exactly the same as they were 20 years ago, just a different model to address it. So it was all about fundraising rather than bringing the existing resources in. […] I don't think we should be fundraising all the time, I think the government really should be providing a lot of these services. Because things never change otherwise. When I came back a few years ago, I thought oh, things are still the same. We're depending on corporate funding and the situation in the community is the same as it was 20 years ago. (Interview G)

The linking social capital generated through relationships with funders and donors has some benefits in terms of alleviating the SCCA's heavy financial burden; however, at

best it will continue to perpetuate the status quo of funding instability and organizational vulnerability.

Epilogue

More recently there has been an interest from the Park Board in stepping back in to better support community centres to provide social services. In the report, "Vancouver's Playbook: A Plan for the Future of our Parks and Recreation "(2017) a growing need for social services is acknowledged along with the recognition that "the values upon which we've based our facilities and services are no longer fully meeting the needs of a diverse population." On March 27th, 2017, as part of the process of negotiating a new Joint Operating Agreement with the Community Centre Associations, Commissioner Crawford, the liaison to the Strathcona Community Centre Association, put forward a motion to develop an interim as well as a long-term sustainable funding strategy for Strathcona as well as other community centres facing similar funding challenges that was unanimously adopted (Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, 2017). The motion was in response to the SCCA's request that the Park Board provide an additional $200,000 per year of funding to make up the funding shortfalls in programs such as licensed childcare and senior's programs as well as to fully fund the Food Security Coordinator's position in order to put the SCCA in a more sustainable financial position (Strathcona Community Centre Association, 2017). In putting forward the motion, Commissioner Crawford recognized that the "Strathcona Community Centre provides services that should not just be paid through the park board, but should also be funded on a permanent and guaranteed basis through other public coffers" (Stewart, March 24th, 2017). Creating an alternative agreement with the SCCA acknowledges both that the SCCA is operating within a different revenue generating context than other CCAs and that the services it provides are essential and deserving of public funding.

Participating in the lengthy process of renegotiating a Joint Operating Agreement with the Park Board gave the Strathcona Community Centre the opportunity to rethink its role within the Strathcona neighbourhood and advocate for an arrangement that acknowledges both the important work the SCC does in the community and the challenges it faces by being dependent on grants and donations. In theory, having a Park Board Commissioner assigned to each community centre allows neighbourhood level concerns and challenges to reach decision-makers which could lead to actual

changes to social policy. Not all Commissioners regularly attend community centre meetings[12] but in this case, Commissioner Crawford's attendance at the SCCA's meetings and surprise at learning about the financial conditions the SCCA faces prompted him to advocate on behalf of the community centre and support the SCCA's request for a different JOA. This example of linking social capital is different from the social capital created between the SCCA and funders because by putting local community organizations in contact with decision-makers can lead to actual policy change. It would be interesting to see if having a CoV liaison assigned to other local community organizations, such as neighbourhood houses, would lead to a greater change in how community services are supported and provided in the City of Vancouver.

While a long-term strategy funding is still in development, the interim strategy starts to address the SCCA's funding sustainability. The model's funding adjustments include the Park Board providing program subsidies along the following schedule: 25% for the working poor, or those earning between a Living Wage and the Low Income Cut Off; 50% for those in the upper third of the LICO; and 75% for those in the lower two thirds of the LICO. Operating adjustments include the Park Board taking over operation and maintenance of the SCC's fitness centre as well as the SCCA's 24 seat van, with the SCCA committing to review program fees to adjust them closer to market rates. (Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, 2017) Previously, rather than make program participants prove poverty in order to receive subsidies, the SCCA kept program fees very low and would often waive fees based on conversation between program participants and staff. It will be interesting to see whether the Park Board's subsidy model will make programs accessible to all residents and if the SCCA will continue to fundraise to make up additional subsidies for those program participants who still will not be able to afford programs. With the new partnership agreement creating a different funding context for the Strathcona Community Centre to operate in it remains to be seen if and how the community development work and creation of social capital through relationships with Strath Kids and donors are impacted and what the effect might be on the organization's ability to respond to community needs.

[12] The first few years I was on the SCCA's board the Commissioner assigned to Strathcona would only come to the Annual General Meetings, not the regular monthly meetings.

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Appendix A.

Interview Participants

Name	Involvement	Date Interviewed
Ron Suzuki	Recreation Programmer	April 22, 2016
Harvey Eng	Strath Kid / Recreation Supervisor	April 22, 2016
Shirley Joe	Strath Kid / Board Member / Donor	April 25, 2016
Wendy Au	Strath Kid / Former staff member / Assistant City Manager	April 28th, 2016
Kyle Pearce	Former Community School Coordinator / volunteer	April 29th, 2016
Peter Young	Strath Kid / Donor	May 12th, 2016
Greg Eng	Former staff member / former Manager of Recreation Services	May 12th, 2016
Anonymous	Strath Kid / Donor / former Board Member	May 13, 2016
Bill Hamilton	Former Community School Coordinator / former interim Childcare Coordinator	June 27th, 2016

Appendix B

Interview Questions

Could you tell me how you became involved with the Strathcona Community Centre, when and in what capacity?
How do you understand or define community and community development with regards to Strathcona Community Centre? In your opinion, has this changed over time?
Has how the SCCA raises funds changed over time? If so how and why? What do you perceive as the impacts of this?
In your opinion, what factors contribute to the SCCA's successful fundraising attempts?
In your experience, what differentiates Strathcona from other community centres? Are there other organizations that are similar?
People often talk about Strathcona as being a special, or unique place. Why do you think that is? Do you agree?
There seem to be a number of people who were involved in the community centre in some way who maintain their connection or come back years later as a volunteer, a donor or as a staff member. Why do you think that is? What do you see as the impact of this?
Is there anything else you'd like to add?
Is there anyone else you think I should talk to?