

REPORT FROM CORTES ISLAND'S 1ST SOCIAL PROFIT FORUM

Saturday, September 28th 2019
Linnaea Farm, Cortes Island

Sponsored by Noba Anderson, Regional Director & the Cortes Island Community Foundation

“Together we are resilient”



Social Profit Forum, Cortes Island B.C,
September 28th, 2019

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
II.	INTRODUCTION	4
III.	PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS	5
IV.	MORNING SESSION	6
V.	AFTERNOON SESSION	8
VI.	NEXT STEPS	14
VII.	CONCLUSION	15
VIII.	APPENDICES	17

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Cortes Island Community Foundation, and Noba Anderson, Regional Director, co-sponsored a day-long gathering with local community groups on Cortes Island, facilitated by Suzanne Fletcher. September 28th, 2019 marked the first time that the entire Cortes Social Profit (not-for-profit) sector had come together. It was a day of sharing and collective brainstorming at Linnaea Farm, on the traditional lands of the Klahoose, Homalco, Tla'amin and K'omoks First Nations. Over 50 people were present, representing over 30 organizations.

The Cortes Island Community Foundation(CICF), is an organization that is the result of three years of discussion around giving and fundraising on the island. These discussions pointed to a Foundation that would support philanthropic giving in response to community needs and in harmony with nature. It would also support the resilient network of community groups and organizations on Cortes, right down to the smallest one.

To begin the day, several board members of the CICF introduced the organization, and much good discussion ensued around the purpose and future structure of the CICF. The need for strong community engagement and accountability within the CICF was expressed by many present, as was the request that early and genuine involvement and consideration of First Nations rights and interests be taken into account.

Together, the entire group identified common strengths and needs, and created a "Cortes Social Profit Map"(See Appendix 4). The map was a powerful representation of the organizational fabric of our island home and the myriad of services provided. We saw ourselves as parts of a greater living whole in need of more connection.

In the afternoon, the group divided into five smaller groups, each considering and answering a single question. Discussion topics were about our community organizational gaps, opportunities for collaboration, the building of community resilience, ways to engage our youth and a better collective response to global circumstances.

There was keen interest in continuing to gather as social profit organizations in various forms, and many ideas were generated about how that might take shape. Participants clearly acknowledged the benefits of collaboration. With the backdrop of the global climate crisis and now the COVID-19 pandemic, it is understood that it is especially important to communicate with each other both as individuals and as organizations. We have much to sustain here and it is our responsibility to care for that which sustains us.

II. INTRODUCTION

The first ever, island-wide gathering of local charities, non-profit societies and cooperatives (collectively termed "Social Profit organizations") happened on September 28th, 2019 and was co-sponsored by our Regional Director and the newly formed Cortes Island Community Foundation (CICF). This event served to foster new, powerful connections between local organizations, and to offer the CICF an opportunity to introduce themselves to the community and to receive important feedback from the community.

The purpose of this Social Profit Forum was information sharing and resilience building within our community. The Forum offered a shared space for representatives of local organizations to gather in the same room with a common agenda for the day – to discover the potential of collaborative thinking and harvest the actionable ideas that arose.

This forum was facilitated by Suzanne Fletcher, who graciously donated her time. Facilitation of this event aimed to develop open communications at the community level, so we could learn how to build our capacity to work together as individuals and organizations. As we gain a deeper and clearer awareness of the diversity on this island we can then actively work together out of our individual and organizational strengths. This is the power of community. By gathering with this intention, we were taking a big step toward creating vibrant societal structures that can support us through uncertain times ahead.

Clearly the time was right to gather in this way! In this era of Climate Change, it was acknowledged that building deep, adaptive, community-based structures of organizing, communicating and decision-making, is indeed an important response to global circumstances. The stronger our collective structures, the more resilient we will be to weather whatever may be coming.

Many thanks are given to all who participated, and to all those who will participate. Thank you to those who donated funds, services or time to make this event possible. Special thanks to Leaf and Autumn for providing documentation of this event that served as the basis of this report. Thanks to everyone for realizing the importance of coming together with a passion and curiosity to see where the future will take this. Thank you all for your contributions to this inspiring community gathering.

III. PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

Over 50 people came representing over 30 organizations. All groups invited were able to attend, save one organization.* This was an exceptional representation of social profit organizations on Cortes. Clearly this was of value to the community. The following is a list of all groups present:

- o Cortes Literacy Now / Folk U
- o Cortes Island ESS
- o Reel Youth
- o Cortes Island Museum and Archives Society
- o Cortes Island Radio
- o Old School House gallery
- o Southern Cortes Community Association
- o Whaletown Community Club
- o Cortes Community Health Association
- o Linnaea Farm Society
- o Forest Trust for the Children of Cortes Island Society
- o Hollyhock
- o Klahoose First Nation
- o Harbour Authority of Cortes Island
- o Free Store
- o Cortes Island Firefighting Association
- o Cortes Island Seniors Society
- o Cortes Community Economic Development Association
- o Cortes Island Seafood Association
- o Island Car Share Co-op
- o Cortes Housing Initiative
- o Cortes Natural Food Co-op
- o Friends of Cortes Island Society
- o Cortes Community Forest Co-op
- o Community Forest General Partnership
- o Cortes Women's Resource Centre
- o Cortes Food Bank
- o Cortes Cat Rescue
- o Cortes School Parent Advisory Council

- o Lovefest
- o Cortes Island Community Foundation

*The Cortes Craft Co-op was the only group not able to send a representative.

We also welcomed the Surge Narrows Community Association & their initiative Discovery Islands Ecosystem Mapping (DIEM), to join us for the day.

IV. MORNING SESSION

Regional Director Introduction

Noba Anderson, SRD Regional Director for Cortes Island, gave a welcome and spoke of how the near-term reality of climate change is upon us, and that the Cortes Island community has a unique and timely opportunity to come together and build community-based resilient responses. She outlined the cross-sectoral work that has been happening through the Cortes Community Economic Development Association and now the Cortes Island Community Foundation, and spoke of the need to create a Cortes Community Council. This Council, contributed to in some significant way from the Social Profit sector represented here, would serve, she submitted, as a critical community organizing tool and actually be a meaningful climate response measure.

CICF Introduction and Q & A

The newly formed Cortes Island Community Foundation (CICF), host of this event, formally introduced themselves.

The vision of the CICF is to realize, on Cortes, *“a thriving community that fosters a culture of giving now and for all time in respectful relationship with our natural home.”*

The mission of the CICF is: *“To facilitate strategic gifting in support of community needs and priority projects.”*

Four of their board members were at this gathering (De Clarke, Jodi Peters, David Rousseau, and Ian Watson) and spent some time fielding questions from the organizational representatives. Deepa Narayan, the current CICF Chairperson, gave a welcome via video.

The CICF explained that as a community foundation, they are a public, charitable organization whose purpose is to generate a climate of philanthropic giving on Cortes Island, to respond to community needs and priorities in harmony with nature, and to help build resilient and vibrant networks of community groups and organizations embedded in the local community. The CICF is designed to take advantage of larger philanthropic funding sources that are often not available to smaller, community non-profit groups, and to offer donors seeking to bequest funds to the community as a whole, a registered charity set up to receive them.

The questions from participants were diverse, and offered the directors of the CICF helpful and necessary input for moving forward together with the social profit organizations of Cortes. The issue of accountability was brought up several times, as the structure of community foundations differs from most charitable organizations, in that there is no voting membership. The CICF, like all public community foundations across Canada, will work hard to communicate with the people of Cortes, donors, and grant recipients. Transparency and accountability measures will be incorporated into the policies that govern the CICF, and these are currently under development, as the CICF is preparing its application for charitable status.

Another important question raised was how the CICF will act in the spirit of reconciliation and right relation while carrying out granting activities on the unceded territories of the Klahoose, Tla'amin, Homolco and K'omox First Nations. The CICF will be working to establish and maintain a respectful relationship of appropriate consultation, communication and support with the Klahoose First Nation, and other First Nations as appropriate in CICF activities.

Many other questions that arose will be answered in 2020, as the CICF moves forward with gaining its charitable status and initiating its granting programs.

Organizational community building activities

a. Step in/Step out - What are our common experiences and needs (See full list of questions in Appendix)

This exercise involved the entire group, and identified our common needs as well as our differences. It identified that more partnerships, board training and administrative support would be of value to many groups. Many clearly needed more stable core operating funding as well as more program funding. At the end of this exercise, it became clear that only a few groups had relationships with stable philanthropic donors, none had received a posthumous donation through a bequest and only one organization was aware of anyone actually writing them into their will. It was noted that this was the space that the Foundation would be able to occupy in terms of donors. It also became clear that no group had discussed the Cortes Local

Economic Action Plan at their Board table and that more cross-sector, island-wide thinking would be of value.

b. Circles - Mapping the Social Profit organization landscape of Cortes

For this exercise each group represented received a paper circles with their name on it. Organizational representatives were then invited to write on smaller circles all the programs or projects run by each of their respective groups, and place all the circles on the wall to form a Cortes social profit map. The image was quite powerful as it represented the organizational fabric of our island home. We could, in a glance, see the diversity and the great potential for beneficial connections. (See Appendix 4 for image).

V. AFTERNOON SESSION

Big Picture Questions and Breakout groups

After a delicious lunch, the remainder of the day was taken up by small groups discussion and presentations. The large group was divided into five smaller groups. Each group considered a single question, and brainstormed answers. At the end of the small group brainstorm, everyone gathered together again, and each small group made a presentation to the whole, allowing time for both questions and additions from the larger group.

Here are the questions and responses from the five groups:

QUESTION 1 : What are the missing pieces of the Cortes Infrastructure—what organizations, focus areas, funding?

I. Local food and agriculture

- o Dairy, fruit juicing and other food processing
- o Community greenhouses
- o Grain production and storage
- o Bio-char production and distribution
- o Sea salt production

II. Coordinated Organizational Infrastructure

- o Shared office spaces
- o Shared office supplies and equipment
- o Shared book-keeping and accounting
- o Administrative support

III. Community Land

- o Community ownership
- o Management
- o Preservation
- o Local covenanting organization
- o Light Industrial Zoning ie. manufacturing/car repair/woodworking shop/etc.
- o Alternative affordable housing ie. eco-village model

IV. Educational infrastructure

- o Local secondary school - to keep families intact
- o Alternative education models to draw new energy to the island
- o Entrepreneur training/mentoring

V. Accessible Transportation

- o Public transit (clean energy)
- o More comprehensive vehicle sharing
- o Electric Ferry

VI. Social Services

- o Birth support
- o Childcare
- o Death caring
- o Safe rides
- o Local response network (phone tree)
- o Restorative Justice Council
- o Cultural competency
- o Language Matters

VII. Independent Local Media

- o Local news reporting

VIII. Local Governance

- o Council for local decision making
- o Regulations regarding food safety ie. Shellfish testing

IX. Freshwater Resiliency

- o Rainwater Catchment
- o Shared wells/aquifers

- o Seawater distillation

X. Energy

- o Solar
- o Wind
- o Hydro
- o Tidal
- o Geothermal
- o Methane production

XI. Waste Management

- o Anaerobic human waste digestion (reduces groundwater contamination, supplies fuel and fertilizer)
- o Septic system pump out to digester
- o Pump out station for boats at marinas
- o Upcycling of recycling centre - plastics and metals

QUESTION 2: What are the ways that your organization could benefit through collaboration with other organizations on Cortes?

It was agreed that the benefit of partnerships and collaboration with other island organizations were undeniable. Some direct examples are:

- o CCEDA aiding by facilitating collaboration of organizations on island
- o Shared training ie. Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) training
- o Cultural competency (building awareness, pre-reconciliation) ie. suggestion to respectful invitations, non pushiness, language matters etc.
- o Shared lobbying efforts ie. climate emergency, shared grants etc.
- o An ongoing process for shared forum calendar communications
- o Shared skills
- o Shared resources (and resource lists)
- o Shared communication/information
- o Shared support ie. letter writing to support other organizations with 'roadblocks'
- o Shared ownership
- o Job sharing ie. admin support

- o Program and content ie. shared events calendar
 - o Non-competitive and island wide programming
-

QUESTION 3: How do we build resiliency on Cortes Island?

First, we have to define resiliency. The dictionary definition is “**the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties**”. Some definitions that the group came up with were: **bouncing back from adversity, health, thriving interconnectedness, independence and interdependence** to name a few. It was noted that it would be forward thinking to put systems in place for sharing before challenges arise. By coordinating and sharing our resources we build resiliency, which can grow and expand out into the community. Here are some examples of how we can build resiliency for all people on the island and in the community:

- o Actively staying connected with nature
- o Deep local understanding environmentally and socially
- o Knowing of the state of Cortes now and tracking what the coming trends could be
- o Food resiliency
- o Communication network follow and lead
- o Stop assuming that there are shared values and ethics on island. Create a ‘Code of Ethics and Conduct’
- o Become aware of those who are struggling so they are not lost. It is the community’s shame if people are left behind in the dark
- o Willingness to accept change. Recognize our own biases and be willing to see them and change
- o Developing local capacities
- o Land acquisition – family and youth support ie. cradle to grave
- o Understanding interconnections and working with strengths
- o Holding higher vision
- o Trust in relationships
- o Boundaries are healthy and okay to set
- o Mental health – individual and esoteric
- o Spiritual and emotional resilience ie. story telling
- o Teamwork – building the capacity to work on a team and take action
- o Celebration and joyfulness
- o Action

- o Educating self and community ie. DEI, climate change, skills, etc.
- o "Agregra" – common soul
- o Phone tree for safety community response to domestic and gender-based violence
- o Safe rides
- o Youth through rites of passage
- o Resilient plant medicine collective (coming into fruition)

- o Building and supporting relationships between mothers and elders in an eldership care: for intergenerational and mutual well-being, support, and connection. As a community we can support people stepping into this role for each other. Creating extended family among generations on the island
- o Gather to share grief and sorrow – ceremoniously and simply ie. death caring
- o Gather to talk about climate change. Share with others what worked and what didn't for you in your projects. Sharing our practices and share our actions. A true venue to share awareness and understanding.

QUESTION 4: How do you see your organization's work transforming in response to global issues?

First one must address what the global issues are. Here are some:

- o Climate change
- o Demographic of baby boomers aging, smaller population sizes in younger demographics
- o Peak oil
- o Lack of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity
- o A.I technology etc.

And then, which ones relate to the capabilities of our organizations?

- o Klahoose: food security, composting, aquaculture
- o Klahoose Multipurpose building runs on propane, how do we change that
- o Food bank: supports as long as it can but we need more food security
- o Hollyhock: food security, a space to knowledge share, focus on more support for community
- o FOCI: ecological restoration and species monitoring
- o As a community it is important that we make decisions, and keep them viable and resilient from external influences. Neighbourhood resiliency.
- o Preventing the collapse of ecosystems

- o Long-term planning for climate change
- o Water bureaucracy/governance...
- o Water conservation program
- o Water truck, electric
- o What are you planting? Is it too water intensive?
- o Different modes of transportation: people powered water craft, horses, etc.
- o Resource independence * renewable energy infrastructure
- o Political activism involvement
- o Jump over any solution that involves assumed availability of any petrol, otherwise it is fundamentally flawed

QUESTION 5: How do we engage young people on Cortes in our organizations?

There were many layers to this question and many other questions arose.

- o How do peers feel supported in who they are? How does it feel being the only woman or the only man on a board? These spaces have to be safe environments for a young person to join
- o Cradle to grave awareness of an organization
- o Functioning board with people of like age group, how do we encourage succession?
- o How do boards rejuvenate themselves and stay resilient
- o Are organizations open to changes as young people may change the way it used to work, how are we open to evolving?
- o It is transformative for young people to be deeply seen by respected older people in the community. What creates the soil for really active and engaged citizens? As older people we have a responsibility to shepherd youth. Young people need to belong to the community. What do young people need? Employment, stake-hold (investment) in organization, have passions supported, peer-support and gender equity.
- o Younger people are in need of jobs and don't have the freedom to volunteer at the same rate. These people may also be very busy with families or single people. Support offered to organizations to pay for young involvement

- o Alternative education to students; support youth to keep young families from having to leave the island for high school. What models can we look at that will bring young people to the island and keep them here?
- o Being on a board grows our relationship to the island
- o Increase number of contacts in the community
- o Active recruitment
- o What works to recruit people? How we use our language. Personal “touches” to recruit young people. Acknowledge their strengths and how it will benefit them to join.
- o Personal contact, face to face conversations
- o Speak to passion – what are the young people you are recruiting passionate about?
- o Complimentary pairs, invite a friend of theirs to join with them
- o Organizational climate
- o Personal investment in organization
- o Young people – do they feel a part of this reality as a political world? How are they going to shape the world that will come? How do we include them and help them feel important?
- o Mentorship program – awaken natural inspiration
- o Group of elders who want to support the group of a foundation. Refer to Rick Bockner to guide a unique path for a board. Council of Elders
- o Seeking safe houses on Cortes is a HUGE need (couple of nights). Contact womens’ centre!

VI. NEXT STEPS

At the very end of the day, all participants were all asked to brainstorm answers to the following question: The responses are listed below.

- o **What would be useful/great/fun for 50+ change makers to do together next time?**
- o Reporting in on what worked and what didn’t work
- o Where do the challenges still exist? More time for smaller break out groups.
- o DOING/acting on things together – more hands on

- o Create lists between our organizations for ongoing information sharing
- o Space to allow more sharing about what the local organizations are actively doing
- o True confessions: share wisdom in the room of past successes and learning
- o Bring a challenge that you're currently dealing with as an organization and have people from other organizations help to brainstorm solutions. Collective intelligence. "Case studies". Proactive cafe
- o Include an element of training that all organizations that would benefit from ie. Diversity Equity, Inclusiveness (DEI) training, etc.
- o Regenerative thinking - applies to organizations. Helps with problem. Field possibility – sit with the solution that is in the room that we haven't found. Turns from pro and con to co-creative effort. Valuable as ever for boards. Ben Haggard -- read up on it
- o Two or three organizations co-collaborate between their 2 or 3 mandates to create something together
- o Deep adaptation – building climate resilience

Already, there are groups connecting as a result of this event. Initiated due to the current COVID-10 pandemic, there has been a teleconference with as many participating organizations from this event as possible attending, as well as a public, town hall ZOOM discussion.

While it may take more time, given current global and local events, our Regional Director, the CICF, and other local organizers would like to repeat this event and initiate others, specifically to move forward action items that are of priority to the Cortes community.

VII. CONCLUSION

It is clear that the consensus of the participants was an acknowledgement of the benefits of collaboration. Ultimately, this forum was an opportunity for the community's social profit groups to share, network, grow, and celebrate the efforts and achievements of the Island's organizations, as well as to solve problems as a community.

We can all add our voices to the shared visioning and decision-making process. Forums are one way we can do this. Our organizations can be heard by one another and strengthen relationships in order to thrive in the current and coming times. It was acknowledged that there is real value to learning more deeply about the workings of Cortes organizations. This collective learning can guide us in becoming respectfully interdependent, which will strengthen us as a whole.

With the backdrop of the global climate crisis, it is especially important to communicate with each other, as individuals and as organizations. Gaining trust and understanding of each other now, when there are less environmental stressors, is crucial to being able to respond effectively to whatever is to come. We are all interdependent, and building deeper capacity for this conscious way of relating is fundamental to a thriving community.

Community is the Unit of Resilience!

VIII. APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 - Announcements

- **Klahoose First Nation** bought a vehicle that is seeking priority loading on ferry. Seats are for those who need the service and any open seats are open to public. Any letters on behalf of your organization support to the Ministry of Transportation. We need safe and consistent transportation across the island to health care. **Meeting on October 25th at Klahoose!**
- **SeaFest** is looking for new people to run the event, the original founders are retiring
- **Community Housing** needs support for letter writing, phone calls for rezoning of land
- **FolkU** – the intention behind FolkU is empowering people of community to share their knowledge, learn from others, and become resilient. Also developing ‘Youth Advisory’ which is a council that other organizations can consult with. If you’d like to volunteer or learn more, reach out to Manda Aufochs Gillespie
- **DIEM (Discovery Islands Ecosystem Mapping)** is looking for relationships for mapping projects! Check it out at: <http://www.diemproject.org/>
- **CCEDA** is looking for people to get involved, and is ready to build and grow relationships with community
- **Cortes Investment Concepts** was proposed as resource-mobilizing structure that assesses the viability of ideas and links them with local human resources, financial resources, and physical resources. How could it tie into existing organizations such as the Community Foundation, CCEDA etc.?

APPENDIX 2: Forum Supporters

In preparation for this Social Profit Forum, there were many contributors and supporters that came together to bring this day to fruition. Donations of time and donations of money were both pivotal in pulling this together.

We would like to give many acknowledged thanks to all those who contributed including, but not limited to:

- **The Cortes Island Community Foundation**
- **Linnaea Farm**
- **Hollyhock**
- **The Cortes Natural Food Co-op**
- **Gathering Place**
- **Suzanne Fletcher**
- **Amy Robertson**
- **Corry Dow**
- **Rex Weyler**
- **Lisa Gibbons**
- **Lore and Derek Mack-Mumford**
- **Mark Lombard**
- **Bill Weaver**
- **Victoria Watson**

APPENDIX 3: Step-up Step Back' Questions from morning session

All participants stand in a circle facing inwards. Each group represented is given a piece of paper with their organizational name written on it to hold up facing into the circle. They are then asked to take a step into the circle if they answer yes to the following questions, and then step back again. A hand can be raised if the answer is not known or not applicable.

- o Have you been around for more than 10 years?
- o Do you own land or buildings?
- o Are you membership-based?
- o Do you have more than 50 members?
- o Do you have more than 200 members?
- o Do you have more than 500 members?
- o Are you primarily in service of people?
- o Are you primarily in service of nature?
- o Do you have a strategic plan?
- o Do you have an updated and activated strategic plan?
- o Do you have a dynamic board at this time?
- o Do you struggle to recruit and retain committed board members?
- o Would you benefit from board training?
- o Do you have any formal partnership with other Cortes organizations?
- o Could you benefit from, or have your work amplified by, more formal partnerships?
- o Could you benefit from shared admin support (membership renewal, record keeping, etc)?
- o Do you feel sufficiently regionally connected in your work?

- o Do you have employees or stable contract employees?
- o Do you think that you pay real living wages?
- o Have you discussed paying a real living wage?
- o Do you struggle to find (not pay for) sufficient administrative support, including bookkeeping?
- o Do you struggle to secure core operating funding (lights, rent, insurance, etc)?
- o Do you struggle to secure core admin funding?
- o Would you better thrive with more stable program funding?
- o Could you use private business investment?
- o Do you get key funding from government sources?
- o Do you have relationships with stable philanthropic donors?
- o Have you received a posthumous donation through someone's will?
- o To your knowledge, are you a beneficiary at present in anyone's will?
- o Have you discussed the Local Economic Action Plan at your board?
- o Is this kind of gathering something that your organization has thought about before?

APPENDIX 4: Circles Map

