Evaluation of Triple Bottom Line Impacts of Resourceful Communities’ Creating New Economies Fund

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Abstract

Resourceful Communities is a program of The Conservation Fund, a national nonprofit that promotes conservation and sustainable economic development. In 2001, Resourceful Communities established the Creating New Economies Fund (CNEF), a program to support triple bottom line community development work in North Carolina. The triple bottom line approach integrates sustainable economic development, environmental stewardship, and social justice to create solutions to challenges facing communities in North Carolina. Each year, CNEF awards small grants to partner organizations to develop and implement community-driven triple bottom line projects. Resourceful Communities has experienced difficulty in communicating the aggregate impacts of the partner projects that they support, which may be a result of inadequate reporting and evaluation tools, and is also confounded by the wide variety of projects they support. Resourceful Communities has requested that our team conduct a thorough evaluation of CNEF that will be used to clearly communicate their impacts, as well as provide recommendations to guide CNEF in improving the program and its reporting processes.

We evaluated the impacts of the most recent three years of projects (2009-2011) supported by CNEF using a mixed-method approach, including surveys, interviews, site visits, and review of reports submitted by CNEF grantees. We distributed an online survey to grantee project leaders designed to gather information on the triple bottom line impacts of the projects. We conducted nine interviews with grantee project staff to better understand project impacts and gather grantees’ opinions on how CNEF could be improved. We performed three site visits to talk with project staff in person and to see some of the on-the-ground work being done by grantees. Finally, we reviewed all final reports submitted by the grantees to CNEF in order to gain information on projects that were not included in the survey or interviews. We used NVivo 10 qualitative analysis software to analyze qualitative data, and we used STATA and Excel to perform statistical analysis on quantitative data.

We found that CNEF supported projects are contributing to triple bottom line sustainability in North Carolina in significant and widely varied ways. Further, we found the CNEF program fosters integration of the three components of the triple bottom line, community engagement, leveraged funding, and increased organizational capacity in the projects it supports. Based on our findings we were able to offer several recommendations to Resourceful Communities that might improve the CNEF program and its reporting practices.
**Introduction**

Environmental and land trust organizations have increasingly begun to pay attention to other elements of community development work in order to achieve conservation objectives. The environmental community recognizes that it cannot address resource loss and conservation in isolation from social and economic factors. One approach to development that addresses these issues is “triple bottom line” sustainability, a method that “integrates environmental stewardship, sustainable economic development, and social justice to create lasting solutions to community challenges,” (Resourceful Communities A).

Our client is a nonprofit organization called Resourceful Communities, a program of The Conservation Fund, which works with grassroots community partners throughout North Carolina to implement and advance the triple bottom line. The goal of our proposed research is to evaluate the impacts of the Creating New Economies Fund (CNEF), the small grants arm of Resourceful Communities. CNEF has been providing small investments for projects undertaken by community groups in North Carolina for ten years. While the projects supported by CNEF have demonstrated many positive impacts in local communities, Resourceful Communities has reported that measuring and evaluating the aggregate impacts of the CNEF program has been difficult because current reporting and evaluation tools are insufficient and a more thorough, higher level evaluation is needed. In order to evaluate the impacts of CNEF, we developed two research questions. First, what are the environmental, economic, and social impacts of the community projects that CNEF small grants support? Second, what elements of the current reporting requirements effectively illustrate those impacts, and how can CNEF adapt those requirements to illustrate the impacts of the projects they support more effectively?

Our paper will provide a brief background on our client and the program, as well as some applicable research on community development, the triple bottom line, and evaluation practices. We will then describe our research methods and conceptual framework, followed by our results and analysis. Finally, we will end with some recommendations for our client, recommendations for further research, and our improved reporting tool.
Our Client: Resourceful Communities

Resourceful Communities is a program of The Conservation Fund, a national nonprofit founded in 1985 to promote both conservation and sustainable economic development by protecting working lands. Resourceful Communities started in 1991 to serve the most socially and economically distressed rural communities in North Carolina. Resourceful Communities serves as a resource for grassroots organizations, helping them to access resources and learn techniques to advance triple bottom line solutions. The four primary programs of Resourceful Communities are: capacity building, policy and advocacy, movement building (by creating a network of partners), and innovation and demonstration. Resourceful Communities currently has over 250 partner organizations, mostly focused in “Tier 1,” or the most economically distressed areas of North Carolina. Resourceful Communities generally focuses its work in the southern Appalachian Mountains, the Sandhills, and the coastal plain, which are areas that hold important natural resources, though their partners are not limited to these areas. Resourceful Communities works to advance the triple bottom line by being partner-driven, building skills, engaging communities, and increasing access and understanding (Resourceful Communities B).

In 2001, with support from The Ford Foundation, Resourceful Communities established the Creating New Economies Fund (CNEF), “which provides resources to community groups for innovative projects that might otherwise go unfunded,” (Resourceful Communities C). Resourceful Communities wanted to create a program to build grassroots organizational capacity, support triple bottom line work, encourage seed projects, and assist their partners in leveraging other funds. The grants, which are re-grants from larger foundations and funders, are small (up to $15,000) and are directed at triple bottom line projects by Resourceful Communities’ partners (Resourceful Communities C). The goals of the CNEF program are: building capacity in the partner organizations to plan, fund, and implement community-based programs; to support pilot projects as well as strengthen and expand work already underway by the partner organizations; assist the partners in leveraging other funds; and demonstrate to decision-makers and public/private funders that triple bottom line investments can build sustainable rural communities (Resourceful Communities D). Since it began, CNEF has awarded over $2 million in small grants.

Resourceful Communities reports that their “unique triple bottom line approach integrates sustainable economic development, environmental stewardship, and social justice to create
lasting solutions to age-old challenges such as poverty, racism, and resource loss,” (Resourceful Communities A). The first leg of the triple-bottom line is economic, which can include the creation of jobs, expansion of businesses, increased income, and also indirect impacts like job skills training or the creation of income opportunities such as markets or tourism. The second leg is environmental, which can include land and water protection, improved water quality, sustainable agriculture, or reduced consumption, among other examples. The last leg is social justice, which tries to achieve equitable economic, political, and social rights and opportunities for people of color or low-wealth communities, and includes power sharing and the dismantling of racism (Resourceful Communities E).

The amount of grants given out each year varies based on funding, but is often around $200,000 total with individual amounts varying from $5,000 to $15,000. In the fall, Resourceful Communities will reach out to partners about grant opportunities, which often includes some training on the triple bottom line and organizational capacity. Organizations will submit pre-proposals that describe their project ideas, and then Resourceful Communities will help work with partners to improve and hone their pre-proposal ideas. Finally, organizations are invited to submit full applications, awards are announced in April, and final reports are due the following January. This timeline gives organizations a full year to develop and implement their triple bottom line impacts.

Due to this short grant period, the wide variety of organizations that may apply for funding, and the varying capacity in filling out grants reports, Resourceful Communities has found that it is difficult to communicate the cumulative impacts of the all of their partner organizations. This is of particular concern when Resourceful Communities is justifying its work to potential funders. While the projects supported by CNEF have demonstrated many positive impacts in local communities, Resourceful Communities has reported that measuring and evaluating the aggregate impacts of the CNEF program has been difficult because current reporting and evaluation tools are insufficient. When reporting the impacts of CNEF, Resourceful Communities has focused on enumerating outcomes (e.g. the number of jobs created) and describing impacts qualitatively. However, these approaches are not enough to effectively show that the projects CNEF funds meet the goals of triple bottom line sustainability, so a more thorough, higher level evaluation is needed. In addition, since the types of projects are so varied and have many different types of outcomes, it is difficult to aggregate the impacts
together. Our evaluation attempts to address these problems as well as help Resourceful Communities finds gaps and weaknesses in their program, in order to make improvements for the future. We hope that this evaluation will benefit CNEF by providing an assessment that will improve the program itself, as well as the organization’s ability to communicate its impact to funders.

**Literature Review**

In order to assess the triple bottom line impacts of projects funded by CNEF, it was important that we understand the social, economic, and environmental context in which these projects operate. Our research on the principles of asset-based community development and triple bottom line sustainability shed light on the broader scope of CNEF’s goals and methods. The literature on these topics also heavily informed the ways in which we chose to evaluate the program, specifically in how we developed indicators to measure specific impacts of the projects funded by CNEF. Finally, we examined literature on effective methods for conducting evaluations of community-based projects to ensure that our evaluation is based on accepted methods.

**Asset-Based Community Development and the Role of Conservation Organizations in Development**

Resourceful Communities and CNEF work to build stronger communities by aiding their partners to build on community assets of people, land, and tradition. Resourceful Communities’ programs are influenced by the current economic context in North Carolina, as well as state and local policies that encourage development. As such, it is important to frame our evaluation in a strong understanding of the current economic context of North Carolina, in addition to the literature around asset based community development that influences Resourceful Communities’ work. Further, we acknowledge the importance of literature that explores how environmental conservation organizations like Resourceful Communities can support community development work, especially in communities that are economically disadvantaged.

In order to maximize their impact, CNEF strives to support projects in areas of North Carolina that are designated by the NC Commerce Department as “Tier 1” counties, or the 40 most economically distressed counties in the state. This tier designation system was designed to
incentivize economic development by offering tax credits to businesses that create jobs or invest in business property in North Carolina. By focusing mostly in Tier 1 designated counties, Resourceful Communities ensures that they fund projects in the areas of the state that are in greatest need of development assistance (NCDC, 2012). North Carolina is the tenth largest state in the nation and is experiencing rapid transition away from labor-intensive industries to knowledge-based and service-related industries. In order to continue to grow despite the recent economic recession, the state is in need of more workforce training opportunities, redevelopment, and infrastructure improvements (Weiner, 2011). As a conservation organization with the ability to distribute funds to projects that meet these needs, Resourceful Communities is in a unique position to contribute to North Carolina’s economic growth while ensuring positive social and environmental impacts.

Resourceful Communities’ asset-based community development approach has been recognized in the last 30 years by literature as an innovative alternative to traditional needs-based approaches. Asset-based community development operates under the premise that communities can effectively organize to drive development by identifying and capitalizing on existing social and natural assets (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003). This approach is contrasted with a more conventional needs-based approach, wherein formal institutions including government agencies, universities, and donors identify areas of need within the community and implement solutions to meet those needs. While needs-based approaches tend to promote a negative view and compromise capacity building, asset-based approaches have been found to build local leadership, social capital, and active citizenship (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1999). Furthermore, asset-based community development is more effective at creating lasting change. When communities control assets, they can substantially influence investment and re-investment, causing wealth to “stick” in those communities (Ratner, 2009). In fact, in a recent study, Weber and Rahe (2010) conclude that wealth creation in rural communities requires investment in and control by local residents and businesses.

By prioritizing asset-based community development in the projects it funds, Resourceful Communities utilizes methods that are recognized in the literature as effective strategies for sustainable community-driven development. Though methods vary from project to project, typically asset-based community development projects include strategies to collect narratives around community successes, map community assets, form representative leadership groups,
build relationships among local assets, and leverage resources from outside the community (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003). Walker (2006) describes the central tenants of asset-based community development as using an asset-lens, being inclusive and action-oriented, conducting inventories of assets, nurturing a sense of ownership, and allowing citizens to direct activities. Through the seed funding and technical assistance it provides, Resourceful Communities operates on these expert-developed principles of asset-based community development.

In addition to operating on the theory of asset-based community development, Resourceful Communities’ work in North Carolina is also driven by a growing recognition of the role of environmental conservation organizations in development work. Conservation organizations are beginning to see their work as less about halting degrading practices and more about fostering community stewardship programs that encourage sustainable use (Loevner et al, 2012). According to a 2011 report by the Yale Program on Strategies for the Future of Conservation, engaging communities in the care of natural resources is essential to ensuring the long-term health of these resources. Furthermore, conservation organizations have the unique potential to shape the future of development by supporting approaches that promote social and economic goals while minimizing environmental impacts (Gentry et al, 2011). Through CNEF, Resourceful Communities is operating under the premise that it has the responsibility and ability to guide sustainable development in North Carolina.

The Triple Bottom Line and Sustainable Development

Integrally tied to Resourceful Communities’ approach is the concept of triple bottom line sustainability. Triple bottom line sustainability is the premise that growth and development should take economic, social, and environmental impacts into consideration. Below, we review the literature that defines triple bottom line sustainability, summarize its history, and identify some common themes in triple bottom line literature.

The concept of the triple bottom line has been applied widely by scholars and practitioners as widespread interest in sustainable development grows. As such, many definitions for the triple bottom line are used to explain this three-pronged approach. Simply put, the triple bottom line is an accounting framework that incorporates three dimensions of performance: social, environmental, and financial. It can also be thought of as the three Ps: people, planet, and profit (Slaper, 2011). A more elaborate definition comes from Krajnc and Glavic (2005), who
explain the triple bottom line as “the creation of goods and services using processes and systems that are non-polluting, conserving energy and natural resources, economically viable, safe and healthful for employees, communities and consumers, socially and creatively rewarding for all working people.” Andrew Savitz (2006) further explains that the triple bottom line “captures the essence of sustainability by measuring the impact of an organization’s activities on the world…including both its profitability and shareholder values and its social, human and environmental capital”. Common among all of these definitions is an emphasis on sustainable development that is not focused on only one goal.

In order to fully understand the triple bottom line approach to sustainability, it is important to recognize that the concept of the triple bottom line originated in a business and corporate setting. Most attribute the advent of the term triple bottom line to Elkington, who in 1994 wrote about this “win-win-win” strategy. He contended that it had become increasingly clear that business must play a central role in achieving the goals of sustainable development. Companies needed to become more responsive to what he saw as competitive and strategic challenges of growing concern over the environmental and social justice by consumers. He saw the triple bottom line as a major feature of the business environment in the coming century (Elkington, 1994). Since this time, the private sector has indeed become more attentive to tracking and reporting environmental and social impacts in addition to their finances; tools such as life-cycle analysis and corporate citizenship reporting have become common-place in the private sector. Companies are now realizing more than ever that they can no longer ignore negative externalities, namely negative environmental impacts, and that it is unsustainable to follow an economic model with a narrow focus on economic gains (Wirtenberg, 2012).

Furthermore, interest in this framework to measure performance has been growing across for-profit, nonprofit, and government sectors (Slaper, 2011). Therefore, it is not surprising that Resourceful Communities would adopt this approach and terminology for their work. By using language that is widely accepted across sectors, they maximize the potential scope of their work.

Evidence of the broad appeal of the triple bottom line framework can be seen in the relatively recent adoption of this concept of sustainability by international development organizations. A seminal example of this is the 1987 United Nations report “Our Common Future”, also known as the Brundtland Report, in which the World Commission on Environment and Development argued very strongly that a single focus only on environmental issues would be
a “grave mistake.” It was perhaps the first time that the international community recognized that the environment does not exist separately from human actions or needs, and that the environment is inseparable from development or poverty alleviation (UNWCED, 1987). Another more recent prominent example of global commitment to the three pillars of sustainable development comes from the United Nation’s Agenda 21, an international framework for sustainable development that offers a practical approach on local levels. The 27 principles underlying Agenda 21 promote the centrality of social equity and environmental protection to development for current and future generations (Dodds et. al, 2012). Certainly, there are many more examples that illustrate the prominence of triple bottom line sustainability in international development efforts, but the Brundtland Report and Agenda 21 serve as two particularly formative agreements that give context to Resourceful Communities’ work. Again, by utilizing an ideology that has been championed both by business and international organizations, Resourceful Communities has chosen a path to local development in North Carolina that is widely accepted.

Outside of a focus on environmental, economic, and social impacts, several other themes emerge from our review of triple bottom line sustainability. Among these is the importance of balance between the three components. Key to the triple bottom line is the supposition that each of the bottom lines is related and interlocking and that our aim should be to maximize performance and growth across each of them simultaneously (Rogers & Ryan, 2001). While triple bottom line sustainability is often envisioned as a set of three interlocking rings, perhaps a more accurate understanding should nest the economy within society, which in turn is nested within the environment. This depiction more clearly articulates the fact that the economy depends on society, which in turn depends on society, which more broadly depends on the environment (Giddings et. al, 2002). However one chooses to conceptualize the triple bottom line, it is clear throughout the literature that the interdependence and interrelatedness among the three elements are vital.

Another emergent theme that relates directly to Resourceful Communities work is an emphasis on the role of community involvement as a necessary component to the triple bottom line. In his work examining popular development strategies, Brohman (1996) concludes that in general, sustainable development strategies should “favor bottom-up over top-down approaches; redistribution over “trickle-down;” self-reliance over dependency; a local rather than a regional, national, or international focus; and small-scale projects rather than grand-scale or megaprojects”.
Triple bottom line sustainability is a relatively straightforward concept that should be used regionally and on a small scale by communities to encourage development growth in a sustainable manner (Slaper, 2011). Without emphasis on community and shared responsibility, true sustainable development cannot occur (Rogers & Ryan, 2006). As such, it is clear that Resourceful Communities’ outpouring of support to community organizations is tied to a strong understanding of triple bottom line sustainability.

A final relationship discussed often in the literature on the triple bottom line is that between environmentalism and entrepreneurship. In the late 1990s, Anderson (1998) argued that environmentalism and entrepreneurship share key commonalities in that they are both founded on social processes and attitudes. Environmentalism can be the basis for entrepreneurial opportunity, as entrepreneurs are agents of change who are most likely to address environmental concerns. Entrepreneurs can give real substance and form to environmentalism (Anderson, 1998). Dixon and Clifford (2007) coin the term “ecopreneurship” to describe people and organizations that create economically viable businesses while retaining their core environmental and social values. They generate economic value as a by-product of social and environmental value and filter the potential of resources through the lenses of environmental and social commitment. These authors define ecopreneurship as a “splendid vehicle” for social and environmental change and large scale dissemination of sustainability (2007).

**Measuring Progress towards the Triple Bottom Line**

Despite the widespread adoption of the triple bottom line framework, a significant challenge to practitioners, and more specifically Resourceful Communities, is measuring progress toward achieving triple bottom line sustainability. Below we provide an overview of the variety of ways in which triple bottom line impacts have been measured by scholars to date. This review of the triple bottom line and impact indicators provides the basis on which we developed our evaluation of Resourceful Communities’ CNEF grantees in the development of our conceptual framework and indicators.

As a result of the variety of projects and scales to which the triple bottom line is applied, no one measurement scheme of triple bottom line impacts has been developed. In fact, the difficulty in assessing the impacts of projects that work towards the triple bottom line has been identified throughout the literature as a noteworthy shortcoming of the framework. Resourceful
Communities is not alone in its struggle to accurately and comprehensively report the impacts of the triple bottom line projects that CNEF supports. According to Slaper, “the trick isn’t defining the triple bottom line. The trick is measuring it.” The chief challenge is in developing measures that are comprehensive, meaningful, and quantifiable through available data (2011). Data availability is an issue for many indicators of the triple bottom line; for example, wealth creation can be hard to quantify because data are not readily available in small regions (Weber and Rahe, 2010). Furthermore, since the triple bottom line works simultaneously towards many different goals, it is impossible to find a common unit of measurement. There is no universally accepted method for calculating triple bottom line impacts, so practitioners, researchers, and evaluators must develop indicators that are adapted to the needs of specific groups (Slaper, 2011). In order to select indicators by which we could measure the impacts of Resourceful Communities’ CNEF program, we found it useful to review previously used strategies.

One common strategy for measuring triple bottom line impacts is to develop an index, or composite “score” of a company, program, or project based on the summation of its impacts on each level of the triple bottom line. For example, Stricker (2010) notes that the World Wildlife Fund uses the Human Development Index (HDI), a measure that combines statistics on factors such as education, income, life expectancy, and literacy, to determine a nation’s progress towards its sustainable development goals. Another example of large scale application of an index is the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), which is purportedly the most widely used framework for determining an organization’s economic, environmental, and social performance (Krajnk, 2005). Though the GRI offers a comprehensive list of indicators, it is flexible in that it guides organizations in what to include in their own specific reports, thus allowing a variety of users, including governments, corporations, and nonprofit groups, to apply the index (GRI, 2006). As a final example of an indexed approach to triple bottom line impact measurement, Krajnk (2005) developed an indexed model to track integrated information on the economic, environmental, and social performance of individual companies. Krajnk’s model uses an analytic hierarchy process that determines the impact of each individual indicator on the overall performance; in other words, it uses a weighted composite of all of the separate indicators. Although each of these approaches appears to be able to produce a comprehensive picture of triple bottom line impacts, they are all very heavily reliant on highly specific data that is not
often available on a small scale. Therefore, it is not possible for us to apply these index measures directly to our evaluation.

While the HDI, GRI, and Krajnk’s model provide useful examples of the index approach to measuring triple bottom line impacts, due to the complexities of triple bottom line sustainability and issues with access to appropriate data, several authors have chosen to measure and describe environmental, social, and economic impacts separately. Below we discuss different approaches authors have used to measure the triple bottom line.

In their analysis of development initiatives in rural communities in Australia with strong natural resource assets, Reynolds and Ryan (2006) developed a unique set of indicators that were determined to be the most relevant to the communities in question. The authors used social well-being indicators adapted from Max-Neef’s concept of fundamental human needs: sustenance, protection, affection, idleness, creativity, freedom, understanding, participation, and identity. They combined these social measures with an ecological footprint analysis to measure environmental impacts. Finally, Reynolds and Ryan used Kinsley’s concept of economic development, which is a strategy to audit community economic resources, paired with input-output analysis to understand economic impacts. While Reynolds and Ryan’s approach is clearly well founded in the literature, the authors also contend that their analysis was dependent on extensive community input in the development of individual indicators.

In his analysis of sustainable community development, Roseland (2000) describes a framework for integrating environmental, economic, and social objectives. According to Roseland, both poverty and environmental degradation are related to wealth. An interesting component of Roseland’s analysis that is not evident in other works is the emphasis he places on the link between natural and social capital. According to Roseland, we must aim to increase social capital in order to preserve natural capital and promote economic and social well-being. Natural capital is a term that describes the stock of natural assets that provide goods and services, including non-renewable resources, renewable resources, and the ecosystem services that natural resources provide. Social capital is described as the shared knowledge, organizations, and social relations that people contribute to a “stronger community fabric.” Yet Roseland recognizes that while measuring natural capital is relatively straightforward, measuring social capital is more complicated. In order to cope with these complexities, Roseland suggests several community-based strategies that evaluators can use to monitor and understand social and environmental
impacts, including case studies, interviews, force field analysis, oral histories, asset-mapping, and SWOT analysis. He also suggests more formal tools, such as the Environmental Impact Assessment and the Social Impact Assessment, Sustainability Appraisal, Environmental Audits (specifically for government policies), and Environmental Action Planning (a variation on Environmental Audits).

In his report titled *Formulating a Sustainable Economic Development Process for Rural America*, Ratner (2009) concluded that, “on the whole, assessments confirmed that we are not very good at measuring the impacts of our work on any of the triple bottom lines.” However, Ratner does point to some promising examples of indicators used by communities to measure their impacts. To measure social impacts, Ratner suggests indicators of social inclusion, or opportunities for inclusion on a systemic, institutionalized basis. Measures of inclusion examine increases in participation by underrepresented groups (women, low income, minorities, and youth), increases in the number of service providers, increases in referrals to service providers, and increases in networking and mentoring. He defines environmental impact as efforts to create and protect natural capital; measures include more efficient use of energy, reducing land in development, sustainable harvesting of natural resources, and reduction of chemical use. Finally, Ratner describes economic impacts as approaches that build individual and community wealth while increasing financial assets. Indicators associated with economic impacts include increased financial investments, increased income, revenue generation, and growth in financial investments.

Stark and Markey (2008) examined the impacts of entrepreneurship (similar to the ecopreneurship mentioned above) on the triple bottom line in rural communities. The authors found that a “great diversity” of indicators and measures was necessary to evaluate the impacts across the six programs they examined. Similar to Ratner, Stark and Markey also measured social inclusion as defined by more networking opportunities, greater participation by previously excluded groups, and increased sense of pride or hope in the community. Their analysis of environmental impacts included a focus on preservation and restoration of the natural environment and heritage of the region, as well as changing attitudes toward engagement in sustainable development. Finally, to measure economic impacts, they looked at the growth in the number of entrepreneurs, skill building, increases in employment, creation of new markets, improved infrastructure, and tax revenues.
Several of the interventions evaluated by Stark and Markey (2008) are similar to the projects supported by CNEF. A sustainable forestry and agriculture initiative undertaken in the southern Appalachian region serves as an illustrative example of how Stark and Markey’s indicators might be applied in our evaluation. As specific measures for social inclusion, the authors measured the number of organic farmers who participated in the program, as well as the percent of farmers with low income, limited education, or small land holdings. To measure environmental impacts, the authors tracked increases in sales of organic produce and increased public participation in outreach events, as well as increased yields, use of ecological farming practices, and the number of acres in transition to organic. Finally, the authors tracked economic measures including the number of farmers receiving technical assistance, the number of producers of sustainable wood, increased sales, and investments in infrastructure such as farmers’ markets, packing houses, sawmills, and kilns. Stark and Markey’s detailed analysis provides a clear example of how specific indicators can be developed for triple bottom line projects.

Finally, Bailey’s 2008 report “Assessment of Triple Bottom Line Financing Interventions” provides clear and concrete social, environmental, and economic indicators, the majority of which are directly applicable to the projects supported by CNEF. Bailey developed a framework of eight indicators in his study of community development institutions that use capital investment to achieve triple bottom line outcomes. These eight indicators include economic impact, environmental impact, social inclusion, intellectual capital, social capital, individual capital, natural capital, built capital, and financial capital. An abbreviated summary of the measures Bailey used can be found in Figure 1. Bailey developed a scorecard of these indicators that triple bottom line groups can use to measure their impacts; this tool was very influential in our development of indicators to evaluate the impacts of CNEF’s grantees.

**Evaluation Theory**

In addition to reviewing the extant literature around measuring triple bottom line impacts, we found it to be necessary to familiarize ourselves with best practices around project evaluation more generally. The literature provides both theoretical and practical insights into how practitioners can create strong evaluations. Evaluations differ from the impact analysis studies described above in that they are meant to provide information to help improve a project or program. The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation defines evaluation as
“systematic investigation of the worth or merit of an object,” and it is meant to provide new insights on a program that were not anticipated (NSF, 2002, EPA, 2009). Evaluation allows for managers to communicate to a variety of stakeholders, to better tell their story, and prove their worth (NSF, 2002).

There are several important distinctions in evaluation that are relevant to our project with Resourceful Communities. First, we must distinguish between program evaluation and project evaluation: a program evaluation analyzes a coordinated approach to address a specific problem, while a project evaluation examines a particular activity (NSF, 2002). Our study is a program evaluation that determines the value of a collection of projects funded by CNEF; it looks across projects to understand the variety of activities and strategies used to achieve triple bottom line sustainability. Second, we must distinguish between formative and summative evaluation: a formative evaluation begins during project development and assesses ongoing activities, while a summative evaluation typically occurs at after the project has been established and is meant to assess whether the project has met its stated goals (NSF, 2002). Our work with Resourceful Communities can be thought of as a summative evaluation, as we are examining the impacts and outcomes of the CNEF program using evidence from projects that occurred in the past. Finally, it is important to acknowledge that evaluations are different from an analysis of performance indicators as described in the previous section about measuring progress towards the triple bottom line. Performance indicators measure tangible results towards a specific goal, but do not typically provide an explanation of why a program is successful or unsuccessful. Evaluation includes more in depth data collection and is intended to be more than a measure of performance; it is meant to influence future decision making and management (NSF, 2002).
Figure 1: Triple Bottom Line Indicators (adapted from Bailey, 2008).

Economic Impact:
- Increase in job and business opportunities
- Increase in income
- Increase in number and value of assets
- Cost savings and avoidance
- Increased efficiency

Environmental Impact:
- Protection from environmental degradation
- Improvements in environmental condition
- Increase in sustainable practices
- Reduction and elimination of hazards
- Re-use and more efficient use of existing space and materials

Social Inclusion:
- Expanded opportunities for minorities and women
- Expanded opportunities for low-income people
- Increased assets for low-income people
- Increase in local ownership

Intellectual Capital
- Understanding of new ideas and opportunities in products and markets
- New ways of thinking and understanding

Social Capital
- Improved working relationships across sectors and within industries and businesses

Individual Capital
- Increased skills and capacities in enterprise management and emerging sectors
- Skill development in operations management
- Increased leadership capacity

Natural Capital
- Protection, restoration, and improvement of natural capital
- Improved water quality
- Preservation of land
- Restored natural conditions

Built Capital
- New buildings, infrastructure and technology
- Protection, improvement and restoration of existing buildings and infrastructure

Financial Capital
- Increase in financial wealth from increased income and savings
- Growth in equity
- Increase in asset value
- Increase in access to capital
Materials and Methods

We conducted a mixed-methods evaluation of Resourceful Communities’ Creating New Economies Fund using qualitative and quantitative data. Our multiple data sources included surveys, interviews, site visits, and an analysis of the reports submitted by the projects to CNEF. Our aim was to use data collected from the last three years of projects supported by CNEF to understand the triple bottom line impacts of the program and to use the information we collected to help improve the program in the future.

Research Questions

The goal of our project was to evaluate the reporting process and impacts of the CNEF small grants program. To fulfill this goal, we developed two original research questions:

(1) What are the environmental, economic and social impacts of the community projects supported by the CNEF small grants program?

(2) What elements of the current reporting requirements effectively illustrate these impacts, and how can the reporting requirements for CNEF funded projects be adapted to illustrate more effectively the impacts of the CNEF small grants where needed?

However, as we further explored, we found it more meaningful to evaluate the impacts of the CNEF small grants program from two aspects: 1) the triple bottom line impacts of the community projects supported by the CNEF small grants; and 2) the community projects’ internal capacity building including organizational development, leveraged fund and partnership growth as a result of working with the CNEF. Based on this understanding of how CNEF contributes to the community projects, we can highlight what important elements should be included in the CNEF reporting process to effectively illustrate the impacts of its small grants program. Therefore, our ultimate research questions evolved to:

(1) What are the environmental, economic and social impacts of the community projects supported by the CNEF small grants?

(2) To what extent are the individual elements of the triple bottom line integrated in these community projects?
(3) Whether, and if so how, do the community projects improve their internal organizational capacity as a result of working with CNEF, including community engagement, organization development, leveraged funding and partnership growth?

(4) What are indicators of success in the community projects?

(5) How do the project characteristics (like size, age, geography, etc.) affect their success?

Research Challenges

To answer our research questions, we are faced with two main challenges. First, scholars have not yet reached a consensus about the best approach to assess implementation of the triple bottom line. Although our literature review helped us to gain an overall understanding of triple bottom line theory and provided assistance in developing indicators, there is no existing tool that we can apply directly to our evaluation of CNEF projects. Furthermore, it is difficult to develop a uniform assessment to evaluate these sustainable projects, because the themes of the projects are very diverse, ranging from organic farming to personal development. A majority of projects address several themes in their goals and there is no universal theme that is addressed across all projects. Since different indicators are required to measure different outcomes from these various themes, it is difficult to develop a uniform assessment to evaluate the impacts of all the projects. Also, many outcomes of the projects are more qualitative than quantitative, making it challenging to enumerate the outcomes clearly. At this stage, CNEF is currently entering its 10th year as a program, having helped over 300 hundreds grassroots organizations to gain financial assistance and technical trainings (Resourceful Communities F). Considering the large amount of organizations and projects that CNEF is working with and the great diversity of their themes, it is challenging to evaluate the CNEF small grants’ impacts.

Conceptual Framework

We developed a conceptual framework to focus our research questions and guide our data collection. A visual representation of our conceptual framework can be found in Figure 2 and Appendix A. The core of our conceptual framework is our research target—CNEF Project Effectiveness. To evaluate CNEF Project Effectiveness, we considered inputs of the projects as well as the outputs of the projects.
Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

- Leadership
- Size
- Age
- Budget
- Geography
- Partnerships

Data from Surveys

- CNEF Funding
- Project Stewardship
- Communication
- Evaluation Practice
- Goals and Objectives

Data from Annual Reports and Projects' Reports; Data from CNEF Staff Interviews

CNEF Project Effectiveness

Effective Process

Data from Interviews with Projects

- Triple Bottom Line Integration
- Triple Bottom Line Impacts
- Project Capacity Building

- Environmental
- Economic
- Social

Community Engagement
- Leveraged Funding
- Partnership Growth
- Organizational Development

Data from Surveys and Project Interviews
The input component of our conceptual framework is composed of two sets of variables: project characteristics and CNEF characteristics. Project characteristics include leadership, size, age, budget, geography and partnerships. We believe that these indicators for project input characteristics will have the greatest effect on the success of the CNEF projects. We obtained data about these indicators from surveys and reports with the CNEF projects. The second set of input variables are characteristics of the CNEF program itself. The indicators of CNEF include goals and objectives, funding, project stewardship, communication and evaluation practice, all of which can show CNEF’s contribution to the success of the projects it funds. We gathered data on both categories of input indicators through CNEF staff interviews, reading Resourceful Communities materials, attending a workshop, and from our reports, survey, and interviews.

The output component of our conceptual framework also consists of two sets of variables, since CNEF Project Effectiveness can be shown into two areas: 1) Effectiveness in Process; and 2) Effectiveness in Goal Focused Outputs. Data on effective process is captured from interviews with the CNEF projects. The other set of variables about goal-focused outcomes can be further divided into three areas: 1) Triple Bottom Line Impacts; 2) Triple Bottom Line Integration; and 3) Organizational Capacity Building. According to the triple bottom line methodology, triple bottom line impacts consist of environmental, economic and social impacts. Triple bottom line integration shows how well the projects incorporate the three aspects of impacts into their projects. For organizational capacity building, we studied the projects’ community engagement, leveraged funding, partnership growth and organizational development as a result of working with CNEF. This data was collected from surveys and interviews with the CNEF projects. There are interactions between these two areas of outcomes. We expected that effective process would contribute to goal-focused products. Meanwhile, project capacity building would help improve the projects’ effectiveness of process.

After data collection, we summarized our findings of input and outcomes, and further discussed what success had been achieved by the CNEF projects and how certain inputs influence success. Our analysis was based on a set of indicators we developed, which can be found in Appendix B. We analyzed data quantitatively using statistical methods, as well as qualitatively, coding our data for specific themes. Finally, with identification of successes and important input variables, we compared our evaluation results with current CNEF projects’
reports to find whether any gaps existed, and made recommendations to improve the CNEF small grant program’s reporting process.

**Research Methods**

We conducted a mixed-method evaluation of Resourceful Communities’ CNEF program using data collected from project reports, surveys, interviews and site visits (detailed below). We used STATA, a statistic analysis software, Microsoft Excel, and NVivo 10, a qualitative analysis software, to analyze and code our data. Since our research goal is to study the current impacts of CNEF projects and the reporting process of CNEF small grant programs, we limited our sample to the CNEF projects funded in the latest three years of completed projects (2009-2011).

**Reports Review**

We reviewed all the CNEF funded projects’ reporting forms from 2009 to 2011. These projects’ report forms were turned into Resourceful Communities as part of the grant reporting and evaluation process for CNEF and were provided to us by Resourceful Communities. The format is a uniform answer sheet with eleven questions asking about the project’s expected goals, implementation, interpretation of the triple bottom line, budget and participation in the CNEF small grant program. They are generally completed by a project lead or organizational lead. The purpose of reviewing these reports is to have a broad idea of the CNEF projects and current reporting content, as well as to have some data on all of the projects, not merely those that completed our survey. We read the reports in their entirety to gain a perspective on the projects, and we also analyzed them using a coding structure. We compared the findings from the reports to the data collected by the surveys in order to evaluate the usefulness of both in capturing project impacts.

**Surveys of CNEF Grantees**

We distributed an online survey to the projects funded by the CNEF small grant program from 2009 to 2011. The purpose of the survey is to collect firsthand data on the triple bottom line impacts of the CNEF projects and their experience in the CNEF small grant programs based on our conceptual framework.

The survey contains multiple choice questions, ranking questions, and open-ended questions. We developed the survey questions based on our literature reviews of best practices in
triple bottom line assessment, our review of the CNEF reporting forms, and our conceptual framework. Before delivering our surveys, we chose six 2012 CNEF small grant recipients (beyond our potential survey respondents) to pretest our surveys. Based on their experience and comments on the survey, we further revised our survey questions to make them clearer and easier to answer. The survey includes questions relating to most elements of our conceptual framework. The complete survey instrument is included in Appendix C.

In order to implement the surveys, Resourceful Communities’ staff provided us with the recipients’ contact information and sent an email to introduce us and the purpose of our survey to all the CNEF projects* from 2009 to 2011. We sent the online survey via Qualtrics, an online survey system, and responses were collected between November 2012 and January 2013. We sent the survey to forty-nine organizations, and we received thirty-three complete responses out of the total. Therefore, the final response rate of our survey is 67.3%.

The quantitative data gained from the surveys were analyzed in Excel and STATA, while the qualitative data gained from the end-open questions were coded in NVivo 10 under the guide of the conceptual framework and coding structure. In addition, Qualtrics software also provided some summary quantitative outputs of qualitative data for our research study.

**Interviews**

In addition to our online survey, we wanted to gain a more personal and in-depth perspective on the impacts of CNEF grants from both Resourceful Communities staff members and project staff members.

We conducted three individual interviews with Resourceful Communities staff members who are responsible for managing the CNEF small grant program, selecting grant recipients, providing technical assistance to grantees, and keeping records. These interviews helped to define desired impacts as well as current strengths and weaknesses in the reporting process. In addition, we gained information about the expected indicators of success from the perspective of the CNEF staff through these interviews. These interviews were informal and recorded by a digital recording device after we gained consent from the interviewees. These interviews were primarily used to help us design our conceptual framework and survey and interviews. We also performed one interview with staff at a North Carolina foundation that provides funding for

* Some projects were excluded from the survey because they were no longer operating or because staff members who were familiar with the CNEF funded project were no longer present.
CNEF. We asked them questions about their work with Resourceful Communities and their desired outcomes for CNEF-funded projects.

We conducted nine interviews with CNEF small grant recipient staff/leaders. From our sample of projects funded in the last three years (2009-2011), we selected twelve projects in order to interview staff members or leaders of those groups. In an effort to allow CNEF staff to be involved in the selection process while reducing bias, we asked CNEF staff to select four projects, while we selected four projects based on our interest, and the remaining four projects were selected at random. After selecting these groups, we e-mailed these projects to ask project leaders to participate, including providing the initial informed consent information. Nine projects agreed to be interviewed. Six of the interviews were performed over the phone, and three were performed in person. These interviews provided in-depth views of the funded projects, including their project design, implementation, work with the CNEF staff, and self-identified successes and challenges. The interviews were semi-structured. We followed an interview protocol (included in Appendix D), but were able to deviate from the protocol in order to ask follow up questions.

Site Visits

We performed three site visits for the funded projects in the CNEF small grant program to obtain an on-the-ground perspective of the projects’ results. These three projects were chosen as a subset of the nine cases that participated in the project staff interviews. The site visits provided us with in-depth, experiential data to evaluate and ground-truth the impacts of the project, especially those beyond or in contradiction to what was reported on the reporting document, and to provide us with a broader understanding and experience of CNEF projects beyond reports and surveys. We took pictures and notes with consent of these projects as well as collecting the project’s educational and promotional materials. We developed a site visit protocol, (in Appendix E), which guided aspects we tried to note during our visit, but the site visits were informal. The site visits also coincided with performing in-person interviews. Consent forms for site visits, as well as interviews and surveys, can be found in Appendix F.

Coding and Analysis

In order to evaluate the impacts of CNEF supported projects on each of the three elements of the triple bottom line, we used examples from the literature, our discussion with the staff of Resourceful Communities, our basic familiarity with the projects, and our conceptual framework to develop a set of indicators for each of the elements. We coded qualitative data
from the surveys, interviews, and reports, and organized quantitative data from the surveys according to the following indicators (Figure 3). A complete description of the indicators and their sub-questions can be found in Appendix B.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INPUTS</th>
<th>OUTPUTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A) Project Characteristics</td>
<td>A) Triple Bottom Line Impacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Leadership</td>
<td>a. Environmental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Size</td>
<td>b. Economic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Age</td>
<td>c. Social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Budget</td>
<td>B) Triple Bottom Line Integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. CNEF Funding</td>
<td>C) Capacity Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Partnerships</td>
<td>a. Community Engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Geography</td>
<td>b. Partnership Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Organizational Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D) Leveraged Funding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3: CNEF evaluation indicator structure.**

Quantitative data from the surveys and reports was analyzed using Microsoft Excel and Qualtrics software for summary data. The data was also analyzed in STATA to further understand the impacts of the input variables on the projects output variables. We coded the qualitative data from our interviews, reports, and open-ended questions in the surveys based on our coding structure. This coding was done using the NVivo software. The coding structure and nodes we use for analysis can be found in Appendix G. By coding the data, we were able to use the software to select and highlight examples and quotes, as well as count coding references in our documents according to themes that we designed.
Results and Observations
We will first discuss some of our results in relation to the inputs in our conceptual framework. Then, we will present the output results that we used to analyze the “success” of the projects.

Project Inputs

Leadership
Leadership of the projects was analyzed by looking at three aspects: leadership training, work experience/expertise, and educational background of the project leaders. First, looking at the leadership training, 94% of project leaders have received leadership training on the job and 73% of project leaders have received leadership training through workshops. Also, 45% of project leaders have received leadership training through university or community college courses. Therefore, it can be concluded that most project leaders have leadership training either on the job or through education. Second, we asked whether the projects leaders have any personal work experience or expertise in a specific field. Almost all the project leaders (98%) have work experience or expertise in program or organizational management. Seventy percent of project leaders have work experience in the social field (including community development and community organizing), while 70% of project leaders have work experience in the economic field (including business management). However, only 21% of project leaders have work experience or expertise in the environmental management field. Lastly, when it comes to formal education level of the project leaders, almost half of the respondents have a Masters or PhD degree.

Size
We defined the size of organizations that ran the CNEF projects as the sum of the numbers of full-time employees, part-time employees, regular volunteers and volunteer leaders in the organizations. From our survey, 33 projects answered questions about the number of employees. We found that five of the 33 projects have no paid employees at all (full-time or part time), while four projects have neither regular volunteers nor volunteer leaders. The numbers of volunteers far outnumber employees (329 vs. 62 in total). Excluding the projects that did not respond or who entered zero for the variables, we can statistically summarize our data of staff size as follows:
### Table 1: Statistical Summary of Organization Staff Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Obs</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full Time Employees</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part Time Employees</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4.88</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular Volunteers</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>11.75</td>
<td>18.48</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Leaders</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6.10</td>
<td>6.56</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>19.24</td>
<td>23.76</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Age

Assuming 2011 as the cut-off time, we defined the age of the organizations as equal to 2011 minus the year the organization reported being established. One project did not report its establishing year, which provided an outlier amount. Therefore, we calculated the mean of ages twice: one mean is with the outlier value included while the other is not. The statistic summary of organization age is shown in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Obs</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean Without Outlier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>17.13</td>
<td>27.11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>12.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Budget

We asked each project about their current or most recent operating budget, as well as their actual operating budget in the year(s) it received a CNEF grant. For the current operating budget, 27% (8/29) projects had current operating budgets below $10,000, and 83% (24/29) projects had a current or most recent operating budget below $100,000. For the actual budget during its granted year(s), 14% (4/29) projects had an actual operating budget below $10,000 in the year(s) it received a CNEF grant; and 86% (25/29) projects had operating budgets below $100,000 in the year(s) it received a CNEF grant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Obs</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current Operating Budget</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>57,877.97</td>
<td>93,816.49</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>438,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual Budget during Granted Years</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>54,316.14</td>
<td>64,580.54</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>308,169</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CNEF Funding

For the 32 projects that responded to this question, the total amount of CNEF grants is $449,064. The average amount of CNEF funding for each project is $14,033. Projects could receive funding in 2009, 2010, and 2011 and multiple projects received funding over multiple years. The information below shows the values of CNEF grants over the entire three year period.
Table 4. Statistical Summary of CNEF Grant(s) Amount

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Obs</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CNEF Grant(s) Amount</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>14,033.25</td>
<td>7,821.13</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td>32,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Partnerships**

According to our survey, the projects reported having an average of 5.5 partnerships with other organizations, with a maximum number of $10^\dagger$, and the minimum number of 1. Among the total of 195 partnerships listed in our received surveys, the most frequent kind of partner with these CNEF projects are non-profit organizations. The proportion of universities, colleges, and community colleges to the total partnerships are relatively low (Seen in Figure 4).

In our research study, we considered numbers of partnerships as an indicator of input and hypothesized that more partnerships would make projects more successful. Whether the hypothesis is true would be further discussed in our discussion and conclusion section.

![Partnership Composition](image)

**Figure 4: Composition of Partnerships Resulting From CNEF Participation, 2009-2011**

**Geography**

The projects we examined were located across the state, and the location of all of the projects we analyzed (those funded from 2009 to 2011) is shown in Figure 5.

$^\dagger$ The online survey form only allowed for 10 entries on this question, so it is possible that some respondents may have had more than 10 partner organizations and were unable to list them.
Figure 5: Location of Projects

Using the cities listed in the mailing address according to the reports the projects submitted to CNEF⁡, we categorized the projects into 4 groups by their geographical location: 1) Western, which includes any projects in cities west of Winston-Salem, North Carolina; 2) Piedmont, which are any projects between Winston-Salem and Raleigh, North Carolina; and 3) Eastern, which are any projects east of Raleigh; 4) Other – one project was in Georgia. In a total of 71 projects, the percentage of each group to the total is shown in Figure 6.

⁡Our analysis uses the cities listed under a project’s mailing address. However, some projects may serve multiple cities or counties within the state.
Project Outputs

We also sought to evaluate the outputs of the projects using the indicators of successful projects that we designed. The results are detailed below.

Evidence of Triple Bottom Line

Environmental Impacts

CNEF funded projects addressed a variety of environmental themes. Based on the literature and our preliminary review of the project reports, we created seven categories of environmental themes to analyze how the practices of the CNEF projects impacted the environment. The categories are: 1) Protection from environmental degradation; 2) Improvements in environmental condition; 3) Increase in sustainable practices; 4) Reduction and elimination of hazards; 5) Re-use and more efficient use of existing space and materials; 6) Increased environmental awareness; and 7) Activities to increase interaction with nature. Each of these categories also had different questions from the survey that corresponded to the category. The proportion of projects addressing each theme can be seen in Figure 7. According to our survey, the three most frequently environmental themes addressed are Protection from Environmental Degradation, Increase in Sustainable Practices and Reduction or Elimination of Hazards. However, based on our coding the CNEF projects’ reports and project interviews, the three topics with the largest number of coded references were: Increase in Sustainable Practices,
Increased Environmental Awareness and Education, and Improvements in Environmental Condition.

![Proportion of Projects addressing each theme](chart)

**Figure 7: Proportion of Projects Addressing Each Theme, 2009-2011**

Furthermore, we found that a majority of the CNEF projects addressed a variety of themes (Seen in Figure 8).

![Number of Environmental Themes Addressed](chart)

**Figure 8: Number of Environmental Themes Addressed, 2009-2011**

Due to low reporting numbers, we did not obtain much quantitative data on environmental impacts. The numbers we did obtain included 332 trees planted, 18.5 miles of stream protected, and 35.6 acres protected, but these numbers come from the reporting on our survey of just a few projects.
Economic Benefits

In terms of economic benefits, we analyzed the success of CNEF projects according to three themes:

1. Provision of useful skills or job trainings, especially in which a large number of people participated
2. Assistance in helping people to obtain employment, either as positions working as staff for the project itself or by providing trainings and placements at other organizations
3. Creation of new business opportunities for the community; especially those that bring revenues through the project

According to our survey, a majority of the projects (82%) provided job or skills trainings. More than 838 people are reported to have received job or skill trainings. When asked whether the training lead directly to job placement, 41% of projects answered yes. Furthermore, survey respondents reported that 249 people gained employment as a result of the job or skill trainings. Finally, 36% projects claimed that they created jobs for community members, including 25 full-time positions and 95 part-time or seasonal works. Forty-eight of these jobs are currently active.

Combining information we gained from surveys, reports and project interviews, we found that the topics covered by the trainings are various, including organic farming, sustainable agriculture, tourism, green job skills, dried food preparation, self-sufficiency and leadership development. The forms of training include sessions, workshops, meetings and conferences.

In addition, 85% of projects created other economic opportunities in the community. The three most common type of business opportunity created is value-added products (25%), Farmer’s Market (14%) and tourism (20%) (as seen in Figure 9). Some survey respondents indicated the “other” category, which includes popular education, crafts, green entrepreneurship and retail jobs.
In addition, from the nine CNEF projects interviewed, five reported that their projects generated revenues for the organization or local communities. From all the CNEF projects’ reports, five of them reported revenues earned from their projects. Their revenue generation came from wages from project participants, sales of value-added products in market (e.g. organic food), “souvenir” type items (e.g. DVDs, CDs, T-shirts, post cards, etc.), recycling, and additional equipment installation that doubled productions and cut production costs.

**Social Justice**

When it comes to social justice, we organized our analysis over four themes: 1) Social groups served; 2) Services provided to improve social justice; 3) Impacts on participants; 4) Broader impacts to the community.

According to our surveys, all minority groups listed as options in the survey are impacted by at least one project. Low income groups and youth are impacted the most frequently by CNEF funded projects. Also, the respondents pointed out other groups they served beyond our list, including former substance abusers, Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender (LGBT), special needs adults, rural people, and the elderly. Native Americans and former offenders are the least served groups. The proportion of social groups served by the CNEF projects can be seen in Figure 10. Moreover, we found a majority of the CNEF projects served more than one social group; the average number of social groups served per project is 3.1.
Second, looking at what services the CNEF projects provided, the most frequent service provided is education. Personal development and access to fresh and healthy food are also frequently provided. Legal Services, Housing, and Health/Mental Health Services are the least frequent (Seen in Figure 11). The average number of services provided per project is 4.3, while the minimum number of services provided is 0 and the maximum is 13.
Third, for impacts on participants in the CNEF projects, we created coding themes for the reports, open-ended questions in the survey and interviews in two areas: individual capital and intellectual capital. Individual capital includes gains in skills and capacities for business management and leadership, while intellectual capital includes understanding of new ideas and opportunities, awareness of economic opportunities, and new ways of thinking and understanding. For individual capital, nine sources coded for “skills and knowledge to improve quality of life,” including English classes, personal finance, leadership, etc., and six sources were coded for “self-confidence or self-awareness.” Other themes like sense of community, political awareness or access, interaction with other cultures or social groups are also coded. For intellectual capital, the CNEF projects’ activities involve personal rights (e.g. immigrant rights and land ownership rights), cultural heritage, job preparation, entrepreneurship and access to or knowledge of markets.

Finally, in a broad view of the projects’ impact on community, from our survey, 83% of the projects agreed that they had an impact on the broader community outside of the targeted project participants. After coding the text answer responses from the survey, the following

Figure 11: Services provided, by proportion, 2009-2011

- Education: 85%
- Personal Development: 64%
- Access to Fresh/Healthy Food: 58%
- Physical Activities: 39%
- Nutrition Counseling: 36%
- Afterschool Activities: 33%
- Other: 27%
- Career Coaching: 21%
- Gov’t Services: 21%
- Transportation: 18%
- Housing: 9%
- Mental Health Services: 6%
- Health Services: 6%
- Legal Services: 3%
themes emerged: 1) 12 projects discussed increased awareness in the broader community; 2) four projects discussed increased opportunities for community discussion of problems; 3) three projects discussed political action that impacted broader community; 4) three projects discussed increased media attention to central issues. In addition, other themes mentioned include infrastructure improvements that benefit the entire community, inclusion of additional underserved groups, improvement in environmental conditions, and donations to other organizations.

**Triple Bottom Line Integration**

In their conversations with us, Resourceful Communities stressed the importance of holistic triple bottom line integration in the projects. So, we also wanted to analyze how well integrated each project was, by comparing each element of the triple bottom line. In looking at the integration of the triple bottom line in the projects, our first indicator of interest was to examine how much attention each of the three legs of the triple bottom line received across the projects. In the survey, the organizations were asked to rank themselves on each of the three legs. The results for the 33 projects surveyed are shown in Figure 12.

![Figure 12: Self-evaluation of strength in the triple bottom line.](image)

We also created a numerical score based on this evaluation, on a scale of 0 (not present) to 6 (very strong). The mean score for economic development was 5.03, Social Justice had a mean score of 5.42, and Environment had a mean score of 5.52.
Our second indicator in regards to the triple bottom line was to see whether organizations gave equal attention to all three legs or if one leg received more attention within each project. By looking at the rankings provided in the survey, there were 11 organizations that ranked all three elements equally, 11 organizations that had nearly equal rankings (a difference of one category), and eight organizations that did not rank them equally (a difference of at least two categories). In our interviews, when asked which leg was the strongest or weakest, four of nine organizations said that all three were equal. Thus, about 40% of projects reported that all three elements of the triple bottom line receive equal attention.

Community Engagement

We also wanted to examine whether these projects were engaging the community. In our survey, 93.7% (30/32) answered that the community participated in project planning and/or implementation. The most common methods of community engagement are illustrated in Table 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Number (out of 32)</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Number of People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meetings</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisory or planning board</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach or marketing</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicly available reports</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveys or focus groups</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other methods of community engagement that were noted from the reports and interviews include: meetings and events, visiting people in their homes, democratic voting or group brainstorming, feedback and evaluations, and community asset mapping.

We also collected information on volunteers as a measure of community engagement. 97% (31/32) of projects surveyed reported that they engaged volunteers. Over the course of the projects, the organizations reported that they engaged 937 volunteers, with an average of 31.2 volunteers. Of these volunteers, 329 were considered “regular” volunteers, with an average of 11.75 regular volunteers engaged for the projects. Also, 36% of projects reported that they did not have any full-time staff.
Growth in Partnerships

Some information on partnerships has been discussed as an input variable. But, for this output indicator, we wanted to evaluate whether the number of partnerships increased due to the CNEF grant. Since many organizations that receive CNEF funding are young or underfunded, growing the number of partners is an important outcome for the grants.

Overall, the organizations have a wide range of partners, with a total of 195 partners identified by the projects surveyed. The average number of partners per organization is 5.5. The composition of partner types is shown in Figure 13.

![Partnership Composition Diagram](image)

**Figure 13: Composition of Partnerships Resulting From CNEF Participation, 2009-2011**

When asked whether partnerships were a result of working with Resourceful Communities, organizations identified 32 (16.8%) partnerships that resulted directly from an introduction or referral by Resourceful Communities or CNEF. Of the partnerships that resulted directly from working with CNEF, many (27%) are local, state, or federal government agencies. Other partnerships likely to result directly from working with CNEF are nonprofit organizations (19%), colleges or universities (19%) or funders/grantmakers (19%).

There is also some distinction between new partnerships and those that resulted from CNEF. We sought to answer this question by looking over the reports and interviews. We cannot
report actual numbers of partners, but of 41 reports that discussed partnerships, 29 (71\%) mentioned that those partnerships were new for that reporting year, and six of those directly resulted from working with Resourceful Communities. Since the question was not directly posed and the analysis is based on reading responses that were answering a different question, those numbers may actually be higher.

**Leveraged Funding**

Since CNEF grants are often seed funding, we also wanted to look at whether organizations were able to leverage additional funding due to the grant and working with Resourceful Communities. In looking over the reports, of 70 reports that we reviewed, 50 reported that they gained leveraged funding. The cumulative reported amount from those grants was $3,194,112. Of that amount, $471,867.08 was in kind funding. These estimates may not be precise measures of the funding leveraged as a direct result of projects’ participation in CNEF, since it was difficult to distinguish between additional funding and funding that resulted directly from obtaining a CNEF grant. In the survey, we did not ask for exact amounts of leveraged funding, but projects were asked whether CNEF was essential in receiving additional funding. The results are shown in Figure 14.

![Figure 14: Responses about CNEF support in leveraged funding](image_url)

Leveraged funding was also addressed in the interviews. Of the nine projects interviewed, seven discussed leveraged funding with us. Five reported leveraged grants due to working with
CNEF, though two of those had not yet gained leveraged funding, but were connected with potential funders by CNEF and have grants in development.

**Organizational Development**

One type of development in an organization is development of new thinking and ideas. Many of the projects interviewed and surveyed mentioned how they gained new ideas by working with Resourceful Communities, including being introduced to the concept of the triple-bottom line. Another benefit mentioned by organizations is the way they were able to network and meet other organization leaders, as well as participate in peer-learning visits. 59% of the projects surveyed mentioned that they gained leadership development by working with CNEF.

There are other types of development related to gaining skills and capacity. The types of skills gained that the organizations reported in our survey are illustrated below in Figure 15.

![Figure 15: Skills gained through participation in CNEF](image)

Other skills that were mentioned in the interviews and surveys include board development, organizational assessment, and leadership transition planning. Overall, 88% (29/33) of the projects say they gained skills by working with Resourceful Communities, with an average of 4.2 skills gained per project.
Quantitative Analysis of Inputs’ Influence on Success

In this part we further analyzed our data in order to see if certain input variables influenced or were related to the projects’ success. As mentioned above, we analyzed the following inputs: leadership, the organization’s size, age and budget, geography and the total number of partnerships. We examined each input’s effect on the following outputs: number of social groups served, number of social services provided, number of environmental themes addressed, job creation and placement, other business opportunities created, partnerships resulting from participation in CNEF, amount of leveraged funding, and level of triple bottom line integration.

Due to the small size of our sample from the surveys, we chose simple correlation analysis between inputs and outputs and basic comparisons of mean values by different groups rather than regression model or t-test to analyze our data, since we did not have the sample size to run robust tests for statistical significance.

Leadership

We assumed that leadership as an input can affect the projects’ outputs in the following two ways:
1) The project leaders could contribute their personal work or educational experience in a specific field to their projects’ outputs in that field;
2) The project leaders’ higher formal education level could result in better outputs of their projects.

First, we classified the project leaders’ work experience and the project’s outputs into three fields: social, environmental and economic, and then calculated the mean values of the project related outputs in a specific field (either social, environmental and economic) by two groups: one is that whose project leaders have working experience in that field, and the other is that whose project leaders have no working experience in that field. Tables 7-9 show the output from STATA.
Table 7-9: The Influence of Project Leader’s Specific Work Experience on Related Outputs

Q1. Do the project leaders have working experience in social field?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Related Outputs</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>Mean of Output</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Projects An</td>
<td>Projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Answered Yes</td>
<td>Answered No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Social Groups Served</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Social Services Provided</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q2. Do the project leaders have working experience in environmental field?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Related Outputs</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>Mean of Output</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Projects An</td>
<td>Projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Answered Yes</td>
<td>Answered No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Environmental Themes Addressed</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q3. Do the project leaders have working experience in economic field?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Related Outputs</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>Mean of Output</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Projects An</td>
<td>Projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Answered Yes</td>
<td>Answered No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Jobs Created or Placed</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Other Business Opportunities Created</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of Leveraged Funding</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Also, according to the project leader’s highest formal education level, we calculated the means of projects’ outcomes by two groups: one includes projects whose project leaders have either masters or PhD degree (Shown in Table 10 as “Master/PhD”), while the other includes projects whose project leaders have an education level below master degree (Shown in Table 10 as “Below”). The calculation results are shown in Table 10.
Table 10: Impacts of Project Leaders’ Highest Education Level on Projects’ Outputs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Highest Education Level</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Master / PhD</td>
<td>Below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Social Groups Served</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Social Services Provided</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Environmental Themes Addressed</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Job Created and Placed</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Other Business Opportunities Created</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of Leveraged Funding</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Partnerships Resulted from CNEF</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Triple bottom line Integration</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Size, Age, Budget and Partnerships

To analyze the impacts of the organization’s size, age, budget and total partnerships on the projects’ outcomes, we ran all the correlation tests with p-value of 0.01 between all of our input and output variables. The full results can be found in Appendix H: STATA Output of All the Correlation Analysis. Table 11 shows the correlations that were statistically significant, while Table 12 shows the tendencies between the inputs and outputs (low, but not statistically significant p-values).

Table 11: Significant Correlations between Inputs and Outputs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input</th>
<th>Output</th>
<th>Correlation Parameter</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Size¹</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age²</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Operating Budget</td>
<td>Number of Job Creation and Placement</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual Operating Budget During Granted Year(s)</td>
<td>Amount of Leveraged Fund</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of Job Creation and Placement</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Partnerships³</td>
<td>Number of Partnership Resulted from CNEF³</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 12: Tendencies between Inputs and Outputs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input</th>
<th>Output</th>
<th>Correlation Parameter&lt;sup&gt;4&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>P-value&lt;sup&gt;5&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Size&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Number of Environmental Themes Addressed</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Level of Triple Bottom Line Integration</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Operating Budget</td>
<td>Amount of Leveraged Fund</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Partnerships&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Number of Job Creation and Placement</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.109</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1. The organization’s size equals to the sum of the numbers of full-time employees, part-time employees, regular volunteers and volunteer leaders in the organizations.
2. The organization’s age equals to 2011 minus the year the organization reported being established since we assumed 2011 is the cut-off time.
3. Total partnerships refers to the total number of partnerships the organization owns. Number of partnerships resulted from CNEF refers to the amount of new-generated partnerships the organization owns as a result of working with CNEF.
4. Correlation parameter indicates the correlation between input and output. A positive sign of the correlation parameter shows a positive correlation between input and output and vice versa.
5. P-value indicates the reliability of the correlation. In our analysis, a p-value smaller than 0.01 indicates a significant correlation between input and output.

First, the STATA outputs show five significant correlations between input and output shown in Table 11. According to the significant correlations found, an organization with larger current operating budget or larger actual budget during granted year(s) would more likely gain larger amounts of leveraged fund, and produce more job creation and placement. In addition, an organization with a larger amount of partnerships would more likely have larger number of partnerships resulting from CNEF. Moreover, the STATA outputs indicate some tendencies between inputs and outputs shown in Table 12. To be more specific, the size of the organization with a CNEF project has an insignificantly positive correlation with the number of environmental themes addressed by the project and the level of the project’s Triple Bottom Line integration. In other words, a larger organization would likely address more environmental themes and have a stronger triple bottom line integration. Last, we can also conclude that the total number of partnerships has an insignificantly positive correlation with the number of job creations and placements.
Geography

We analyzed the impact of geography on both inputs and outcomes as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input</th>
<th>Number of Observations</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>Piedmont</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Operating Budget</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual Budget during Granted Year(s)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNEF Grant</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Partnerships</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For input factors, the projects in the Piedmont region have bigger size, larger budgets and CNEF grants and a larger number of total partnerships than that in Western or Eastern regions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Number of Observations</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>Piedmont</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Social Groups Served</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Social Services Provided</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of Leveraged Funding</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Job Created and Placed</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Other Business Opportunities Created</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Environmental Themes Addressed</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Partnership Resulting from CNEF</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Triple Bottom Line Integration</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We can see that projects in the Western region leveraged more funding. Projects in the Piedmont region had higher outputs in terms of jobs created, partnerships resulting from CNEF, and environmental themes addressed.
**Triple Bottom Line Integration**

For our analysis in STATA, we assigned a score on a scale of 1 to 3 to the level of triple bottom line integration, and assumed 1 indicates the lowest level of triple bottom line integration while 3 indicates the highest level of triple bottom line integration.

In Table 15, we calculated the mean values of the projects’ outputs by groups with different level of triple bottom line integration: 1) The group “Low” includes projects whose level of triple bottom line integration equals to one; 2) The group “Medium” includes projects whose level of triple bottom line integration equals to two; 3) The group “High” includes projects whose level of triple bottom line integration equals to three. We expected that a high level of triple bottom line integration would contribute to the success of the project. However, according to our analysis, we did not observe a significant contribution of a high level of triple bottom line integration on the projects’ outcomes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Group Served</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Service Provided</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of Leveraged Fund</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Placement</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Business Opportunities</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Created</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Themes Addressed</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnership Resulted from CNEF</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion and Conclusion

It is important that all grants that receive CNEF funding advance triple-bottom line sustainability by contributing towards economic, social justice, and environmental goals. The leadership of Resourceful Communities views successful CNEF projects as those that holistically address and integrate all three elements of the triple bottom line. Here we will discuss the impacts and success of the projects overall in advancing triple bottom line development.

Environmental

It is very difficult to quantitatively judge the success of the projects in terms of environmental protection since the projects work on such a variety of environmental issues. In addition, most projects reported addressing multiple environmental issues simultaneously. Based on the survey results and coding the reports and interviews, frequently addressed themes include:

- Protection from environmental degradation, which includes projects such as water and forest conservation, and preservation of native plants;
- Increase in sustainable practices, which includes recycling, organic farming and gardening techniques;
- Reduction and elimination of hazards, which includes water and air quality, as well as toxics reduction and education;
- Increased environmental education and awareness; and
- Improvements to the environmental condition, which includes stream cleanups, tree plantings, or the removal of invasive species.

Categories that were not as well addressed included eco-tourism or activities to increase interaction with nature.

One area of interest in our analysis is that we coded instances of “environmental education” more frequently than it was self-reported in the survey. It is possible that the groups are not giving themselves credit for environmental awareness activities. It is also possible that the groups are claiming credit on advancing certain environmental projects, such as improving water quality or reducing hazards where in fact they are only educating about these topics. More specific results in the reporting are needed.
Based on the variety of projects, it can be said that CNEF’s partner organizations have a broad sense of environmentalism and are creatively addressing multiple environmental issues in their communities. We consider CNEF projects overall to be successful in addressing multiple environmental issues throughout the state in a way that incorporates community participation. Also, by linking environmental protection with the other two legs of the triple bottom line, CNEF projects encourage more participation, interest, and sustainability in environmental conservation.

**Economic**

There were multiple ways that a project could be considered “successful” under our conceptual framework for economic development. One way was for a project to provide useful skills or job trainings that lead towards employment. As we can see, this was a common practice of projects, with 82% of the projects reporting that they provided job or skills training. Many types of job and skills trainings were provided, including agriculture, construction and green jobs, digital literacy, as well as basic job finding skills. Yet, only 41% of those projects mentioned that this training led towards job placement.

This is impressive that many of these projects contributed towards job placement, though the number is slightly lower than expectations considering the investment in training. There could be many reasons why the rates are not higher. For one, the continued economic recession has made it difficult for people to find jobs, even with new skills. Also, some skills may lead towards increased personal income without necessarily providing a job. This includes the fact that many programs teach skills related to agriculture, such as gardening, raising chickens, beekeeping, or canning and food preservation. Finally, another element we observed was that many skills and job trainings were directed at youth, whom may still be in school and not applying to full-time work. More investigation would be needed into the 59% of participants who did not obtain jobs, even with the training.

We recognize that partner organizations also directly created jobs. Ten projects reported creating over 111 jobs total, some part-time or seasonal or some full-time. Also, two-thirds (22/33) of the projects reported CNEF grants contributed to support staff positions. Thus, some projects directly create jobs in their communities, and some indirectly support participants to find jobs through skills building.
A second way to achieve success was to create economic opportunities within the community, apart from job creation. Of participating projects, 85% (28/33) of those surveyed claimed that they created some sort of economic opportunities in the community. These types of opportunities include gardens or Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs), farmer’s markets, tourism, or value-added products. These services are also important since many communities that receive CNEF grants are places with few economic opportunities. One example of the creation of an opportunity includes an organization that built Native American sites as tourism destinations with interpretation. The group said that the site has put the community on the map, and at least once a day people visit the site and do self-guided tours.

Finally, we wanted to look at how the projects are able to generate revenue apart from in-kind donations or other grants. While we had a couple organizations that mentioned selling products or other revenue generating activities, we did not obtain good data on this subject from our survey or interviews. This could be an area for growth. Projects should not only be sustainable by finding other funders, volunteers, or donations, they should also look for revenue-generating activities.

Overall, while there are some concerns about the amount of participants that actually obtain jobs and revenue generation of the projects, CNEF funded projects are successfully addressing economic development in their communities, both in the short-term through job creation, as well as the long-term by providing job skills training and creating economic opportunities.

Social Justice

Overall, CNEF projects are addressing social justice in relation to many different racial, economic, or other minority groups. Certain projects target ethnic minority groups, but also low-income populations, migrant workers, ex-offenders, or other groups. Most projects said they targeted “low-income” populations and most projects claimed that multiple populations benefitted from their projects. Also, the most frequent services provided were education, personal development, and access to healthy foods.

Some of the more direct and tangible needs may possibly be under-addressed. Few organizations provided services such as housing or career, legal, or health services. While services such as education or personal development are important, these terms are somewhat vague and it can be difficult to determine whether they are addressing tangible needs.
It was noted that some organizations are not reporting an understanding of the difference between social and social justice. Often organizations would cite examples on the survey or report of the “sense of community” or “leadership development” or “meeting other cultures” as the services provided. On the survey, when asked to describe how their projects demonstrated social justice, we got some answers such as “the children learned how to like and work with each other and not look at differences” or “provided social interaction for the elderly residents.” These activities are important, but it can be difficult to determine whether they are addressing real social justice concerns in these communities. In the materials, Resourceful Communities seeks to remind that social outcomes (bringing people together) are not the same as social justice outcomes (attempting to achieve equitable economic, political, and social rights and opportunities for all).

Some projects are very strong in social justice, addressing serious needs. Some examples include bringing in attorneys to assist minority landowners hold on to their land or training migrant farm workers on pesticide handling. But, we feel there is a weakness where some projects may address more communal or social outcomes, rather than social justice. Social justice teaches that racism and discrimination are dismantled, not just by encouraging relationships across groups, but by addressing the institutionalized injustices in the system. More research is likely needed to draw out the social justice elements of some projects, or perhaps more education on social justice is needed.

Integration of the Triple Bottom Line

Overall, all three elements of the triple bottom line are strong in CNEF funded projects. The average score for the projects surveyed was a self-evaluation as “strong” or higher in all three elements. The highest ranked of the three was environmental. This is interesting because in our interviews, more than one organization listed it as their weakest element. There may be some potential bias in survey respondents to try and please Resourceful Communities/The Conservation Fund or the Duke Nicholas School, which are environmental entities, or further research is needed on the environmental element in the triple bottom line.

During the application process and in their conversations with us, Resourceful Communities also discussed the process of triple bottom line integration, or “adding legs to the three legged stool.” There is some interesting discussion about whether organizations or projects have all three legs initially as the project is designed or whether organizations or projects may
“add on” one or two of the legs in order to be considered triple bottom line. For example, some organizations are primarily social justice while some organizations may be primarily environmental. As they design projects for CNEF grants, they may need to add one of the elements of the triple bottom line in order to obtain funding. In the training and informational sessions that Resourceful Communities holds to talk about the CNEF program, there are practice activities where organizations can design triple bottom line projects, either from scratch, or by adding on each leg to an original idea. Based on our results, about 40% of projects consider all the elements of the triple bottom line to be equally important, and a majority putting importance on all three. We were interested in how projects arrived at this result, or the process they are currently in to achieve the integration of triple bottom line.

In our interviews, we asked the organizations about their process for triple bottom line integration. Some said that their organization or project had always been triple bottom line, but they may not have realized it until they worked with Resourceful Communities and learned about the concept. One project felt that “I think they [the 3 legs] were all present at the beginning but we didn’t realize it…After attending a workshop with CNEF and seeing how the triple bottom line fits together well, it became natural for this project.”

Many of the projects that we interviewed mentioned that the element of the triple bottom line that they added in was often the environmental one. More than one said that the leader or board already had an interest in the environment and pushed the issue, and one group said “…as part of our relationship with CNEF. We wanted to include environmental issues because of them.”

One of the elements that is important to consider in integrating all three elements of the triple bottom line is the initial vision and mission of the organization. When asked which element of the triple bottom line they felt was weakest, one organization answered environment and elaborated “I think the problem is that the organization was not founded from the beginning on the triple bottom line, so we don’t have an environmental aspect in our mission.”

Overall, it seems that through participation in the CNEF grants program and by working with Resourceful Communities, the organizations are able to develop projects that address all three elements of the triple bottom line. In addition, when asked in our interviews, the organizations were able to articulate the importance of the triple bottom line as a theory as well as part of their specific projects.
Community Engagement

In our discussions with Resourceful Communities, they felt that projects that lacked community engagement were not likely to be successful. In our survey results, community engagement during planning or implementation was present in all but one of the projects. In addition, many organizations have many volunteers, with some being entirely volunteer run. In our interviews, when we asked organizations what led to success, more than half (5/9) mentioned the importance of volunteers and the community engagement as an important variable responsible for their success. In our interviews, one project detailed the challenges that had led to the project failing to get off the ground as a lack of community interest and participation.

We also asked some organizations how they felt that the overall community (not just the targeted population) benefitted from their project. A few projects sought to educate the wider community on the heritage and history of certain populations, like Cherokee Native Americans or Hispanic immigrants. Others mentioned that a greater sense of community came about due to their project. One project mentioned that by working with CNEF, they transitioned from a service organization to reaching out to the larger community and that “the [group] is moving to a more community based organization and emphasis is shifting from access to advocacy and community organization. The community is communicating more effectively with the [group] on community needs and issues and beginning to understand organizing around issues.”

Based on the large number of volunteers and participants, and the fact that a majority of projects responded positively to each option for community engagement (with the exception of making reports publicly available), it can be said that CNEF funded projects have been successful in engaging and impacting their communities, and that the projects recognize the importance of this element.

Partnerships

Overall, CNEF funded projects have a large and diverse number of partners, with all organizations reporting at least one, and an average of 5.5 partners. But here we want to look at growth in partnerships as a success indicator of participation in the CNEF program. As mentioned in the results, about 75% of the project reports mentioned that new partnerships were formed during the past year. Since that wasn’t a direct question and our analysis was only based on reading what they wrote in the report, the number may actually be higher. Other non-profit organizations were the most frequent type of partner.
A potential weakness is that less frequent types of partners for the organizations include the federal government, funders/grant makers, or businesses, which are likely to be the types of partners that bring in more money or opportunities to the organizations. It would be useful to encourage more of these partnerships for the growth and development of the organization. As far as the partnerships that resulted from CNEF and Resourceful Communities, these types of partners had a larger percentage, which can be viewed positively for CNEF.

We noted is that not many of the partnerships resulted from working with CNEF. Only 16.8% of the partnerships reported in our survey resulted from working with Resourceful Communities. Also, in the reports, only six organizations mentioned new partners resulting from Resourceful Communities. Obviously, the number might be higher if directly asked. It is not a requirement that working with Resourceful Communities and CNEF creates new partnerships, but we believe that based on talking to Resourceful Communities about their work, we would have expected the number would have been higher.

**Leveraged Funding**

Overall, CNEF funded projects were able to leverage a large amount of funding. In addition, 74% of the organizations surveyed agreed that “CNEF support was essential to gaining additional funding for this project.” When directly asked, there were a few organizations that had not yet obtained leveraged funding. Two (of nine) of the organizations interviewed, and eight (of 37) of the projects that we read their reports said they had not yet obtained leveraged funding, but had made some potential connections with funders through Resourceful Communities.

The overall amount of leveraged funding and the number of organizations that obtained funding can be considered a success for CNEF grants, especially since those grants are meant to be seed funding for organizations that may not be able to receive other funding sources. Through our survey, we did not obtain good quantitative data on leveraged funding, and in the reports it is hard to determine funding leveraged by the grant vs. other funding sources the organizations already had. More research and analysis would be needed to determine the quantitative aspects of leveraged funding.

**Organizational Capacity**

Most (88%) of the organizations surveyed reported gaining multiple capacity building skills by working with Resourceful Communities. Most organizations consider this a special asset of the CNEF program. One organization stated that “something Resourceful Communities
and CNEF do really well is technical assistance.” More than one organization interviewed mentioned how useful the Board Training with Cynthia Brown was. These are organizations that were not unfamiliar with board trainings, but they felt that “she understands it—(i.e.) how to do Board training with a mix of well-educated white people and low-education Latinos and addressing issues like power dynamics. She just gets it. I know people that are good consultants but never could have been able to handle our organization like that.”

More than one organization interviewed felt that this was the specific element that separated Resourceful Communities and CNEF from other similar organizations. One interviewee said that Resourceful Communities is “hands-on in a mentoring, supporting sort of way.” She also stated that “justice work is really, really hard. And CNEF is an organization that really knows that. And a lot of our funders don’t understand that.”

Based on the survey, some areas of organizational capacity where Resourceful Communities could improve are budget management, evaluation, and communication planning. In addition, we asked organizations what challenges or weaknesses had impacted their projects. Most mentioned external factors like the economic situation or the weather. A few other challenges mentioned, though, where Resourceful Communities might be able to provide greater technical assistance, include volunteer management (ensuring consistent volunteers), and helping with staffing and leadership transitions.

Factors/Inputs That Influence Success

Based on the statistical analysis of inputs and outcomes, we also wanted to see if any variables may have impacts on the success of projects in obtaining certain outputs. We didn’t have a sample size to produce statistically significant results in all of our analysis, but there are some areas that suggest potential correlation and interest.

First, our analysis showed some interesting results in terms of the input variables of education, experience, and geography. In terms of experience, leaders with experience always had slightly higher results than those without. Yet, major differences were only noticed for project leaders with environmental experience and economic development experience, which had higher results in those indicators. The level of education of the project leader didn’t seem to have much impact on outcomes besides job placement. In fact, some projects led by leaders without masters or PhDs actually had higher outputs. In terms of geography, one outcome that seemed to vary by geography was that projects in the Western region were able to leverage more funding.
This may be due to greater amounts of funding and federal grants available in the Appalachian region, but we could not test this. Another major difference was that projects in the Piedmont had much higher results for job placement. This is probably due to the fact that these projects may be located in larger cities in the Triangle or Triad area, where more opportunities exist than in rural areas. Overall, the projects in the Piedmont had slightly higher average outputs than the other regions, but these projects were also the strongest in terms of the different input variables. In terms of triple bottom line integration, projects with high levels of integration did not have higher outputs. In fact, projects with medium level integration actually had higher outcomes in leveraged funding and job placement.

We also chose to analyze inputs that seemed to influence important output variables. For a project’s ability to create jobs or provide training that resulted in job placement, inputs that seemed to make a difference were: whether the leader had background experience in economic development, a higher level of education (PhD or Masters degree), the size of the budget, projects located in the Piedmont, and projects with medium levels of triple bottom line integration. In terms of leveraged funding, projects seemed to be more successful if the leader had experience in economic development, or the project was located in the Western or Piedmont region. The number of environmental themes addressed by the projects was influenced by the overall size of the organization and whether the project leader had environmental experience.

**Self-Identified Variables of Success**

In our interviews, we also asked Resourceful Communities staff and project staff to identify some variables that they felt led towards success or failure of CNEF funded projects. Elements listed as challenges by the project leaders often had to do with logistic elements such as time, money, property issues, or having sufficient staff. One project mentioned a decrease in community participation as a factor. Resourceful Communities staff mentioned a lack of funding or a lack of community participation if the project wasn’t addressing a real need as reasons that a project may not be successful.

When asked what accounted for their successes, many projects identified a strong and passionate base of volunteers and a spirit of community service. Projects also mentioned crucial funding, partnerships that provide technical assistance, and staff that are committed and experienced in running an organization. Resourceful Communities staff felt a project would be
successful if it engaged the community, had some tangible outcomes to show for itself, and if it was sustainable and could continue to operate without constant CNEF grants.

**Limitations**

Our evaluation of the triple bottom line impacts of CNEF projects relied on data from three main sources: grant reports submitted to Resourceful Communities by projects, surveys of project staff, and interviews with project staff. While each data source is meant to compliment the others, we also believe it is important to address some potential limitations to our findings.

First, we found in some cases that data from one source was contradictory to that found in the others. More specifically, we found that for some of our indicators, information provided in the grantee reports was different from information provided in the survey or interviews. A primary example comes from our analysis of community engagement as an indicator of social impact. We found that the majority of our survey respondents (94%) agreed that the community was involved in the planning and implementation of projects. However, when coding qualitative data from the reports in NVivo, we interpreted that only 17 projects (52%) specifically mention community involvement. Another example of this comes from our analysis of integration of social, environmental, and economic components of the triple bottom line. Many projects ranked their emphasis on each leg of the triple bottom line equally in our survey. However, some of the project staff answered differently in the interview, explaining that one component was stronger than the others. As noted above, we also coded many references to environmental awareness, yet it was not as highly reported as an environmental theme in the surveys. Further, it was not clear in our analysis of qualitative data from reports that all of the projects could provide evidence to support an equal emphasis on all parts of the triple bottom line.

These discrepancies most likely are a result of the different ways in which questions were asked in the different ways in each of our three data sources. Our surveys and interviews were designed to ask very specific, straightforward questions tailored to measure each of our indicators on each of the three components of the triple bottom line. However, the report forms that grantees filled out for Resourceful Communities were not originally designed to measure against the same indicators; e.g., questions on the report form were more open-ended and did not necessarily ask direct or quantitative questions. For example, our survey included a direct question about whether projects involved the community, but the same question did not appear in the report forms. Instead, we were able to code in other areas in the reports for indicators of
community engagement -- for example when a project mentioned community meetings, workshops, or celebrations. Therefore, though high levels of community engagement are not evident in the report forms, this does not mean that projects did not engage communities. There are likely topics that projects may have engaged in, but since they were not directly asked, it would not show up in the reporting.

Second, we must acknowledge that all of the data used in our evaluation is self-reported by the projects that CNEF funds or the CNEF staff. It was beyond the scope of our project to verify the on-the-ground impacts reported by survey and interview respondents; therefore, we must assume that respondents gave accurate and honest answers to our questions. Further, we must be aware of the potential bias that is associated with this kind of evaluation, especially social desirability bias (Cowen, 1978). Social desirability bias is a phenomenon in which respondents are unwilling or unable to report accurately on sensitive topics (Fisher, 1993). In this study, respondents may be hesitant to answer questions accurately if they perceive that their answer might cause their funding agency, Resourceful Communities, to regard them negatively. In other words, respondents may answer questions in the way that they believe that Resourceful Communities would prefer that they answer them. In order to minimize the potential for social desirability bias, we assured all participants in the study that their answers would be kept confidential and would not impact their relationship with Resourceful Communities.

Another area of limitation is the subjective nature of evaluating some qualitative data. In the surveys and open-ended questions on our survey, many projects might detail how their project met a certain goal. As evaluators, some answers seemed to us “insufficient.” We could not completely disregard nor fully count their answers; instead, we tried to keep our results to the tangible and quantitative answers provided as much as possible.
Recommendations

While Resourceful Communities is very interested in our evaluation of the triple bottom line impacts of the projects supported by the CNEF program, they are also motivated to learn how they can improve the ways in which they evaluate projects. Based on our findings from interviews, surveys, and reviewing grantee reports, we have several suggestions that Resourceful Communities should consider in the future.

Continue to Fund a Variety of Projects. One of the strengths of CNEF is its ability to fund projects that have impacts on a wide variety of environmental, social, and economic issues throughout North Carolina, tailored to the needs of the communities. While there are certainly challenges associated with working on such a broad scope of issues, CNEF should refrain from limiting its impact by selecting to support projects based on specific issues such as organic farming or green job training. Instead, CNEF should continue to support projects that can clearly demonstrate goals in accordance with the triple bottom line. This will also allow CNEF to continue its emphasis on community-driven projects that are based in the individual assets and goals of the particular communities that they serve. When communicating with its current and potential funders, Resourceful Communities can use the results of our analysis to demonstrate that by funding a variety of projects, they are encouraging diversity and innovation in the triple bottom line work.

Continue to Provide Organizational Development/Technical Assistance to Grantees. Another great strength of the CNEF program that was frequently mentioned by grantees is the organizational and technical assistance services that CNEF provides. Survey respondents and interviewees repeatedly identified the dedicated support and training from Resourceful Communities as an integral component to their success; one interviewee described CNEF as “the most gracious, supportive funder” she had worked with. Resourceful Communities should continue to prioritize these services, especially board development and strategic planning workshops. We believe that this strength sets Resourceful Communities/CNEF apart from its competitors, as they are creating improvements in the organizations that will continue even after the funding for the projects runs out.
**Facilitate and Track Partnerships.** As a seed funding and community building organization, Resourceful Communities prides itself on its ability to facilitate partnerships and network building. While our evaluation shows that CNEF funded projects have a large and diverse number of partners, our respondents reported that not many of those partnerships resulted directly from their involvement in the CNEF program. Only 16.8% of the partnerships reported in our survey resulted from working with Resourceful Communities, and in their reports, only six organizations mentioned new partners resulting from Resourceful Communities. Further, CNEF grantees were most likely to form partnerships with other nonprofit organizations; however, Resourceful Communities would like to facilitate more partnerships with larger organizations, including state and other government agencies. These “resource” organizations are those who are likely to continue to provide technical assistance and funding to grantees in the future, so it is important that grantees form relationships with them if the grantees are to continue to be successful. As such, Resourceful Communities should explore ways to more explicitly and intentionally build partnerships between grantees and resource organizations. In addition, Resourceful Communities should more carefully track partnerships that they facilitate by keeping their own records, but also by asking grantees to record partnerships in their final reports.

**Provide Evaluation Training and Resources.** Specifically, Resourceful Communities could work to address grantees’ confusion about evaluation jargon. Several interviewees mentioned that the difference between goals, objectives, outputs, outcomes, and activities is not always clear. Our research also revealed that having the time and staff knowledge/capacity to keep detailed and accurate records was a significant challenge to many of the projects. Our survey indicated that only 31% of project leaders gained skills in evaluation, which is quite low compared to other management skills. We believe that if projects become more familiar and comfortable with evaluation techniques before they must submit their final reports, the quality of the reports that they submit will be higher. An additional benefit to more extensive evaluation training is that project staff will be able to use this skill to communicate more effectively their impacts to other grant-making organizations, which may increase the amount of leveraged funding that partner organizations gain.
One approach to evaluation and tracking metrics that Resourceful Communities might consider implementing is participatory evaluation, or an approach that actively engages stakeholders in developing the evaluation and all phases of its implementation. This would include identifying relevant indicators of success, planning the evaluation design, selecting appropriate data collection methods, and analyzing data (Zukoski & Luluquisen, 2002). Evaluation theorists have found that participatory evaluation leads to greater levels of organizational learning and empowers organizations to make better decisions and to use and disseminate data more effectively (Cousins & Earl, 1992). Practically speaking, this approach would mean that projects would develop indicators of success and methods for tracking progress towards those indicators of success at the outset of the program. While CNEF requires projects to develop outcomes, they do not require projects to outline measures of success or methods for tracking progress in the outset of the project. Again, projects would need training and guidance to accomplish this. A number of manuals and resource guides for participatory evaluation have been developed; a list of suggestions is included in Appendix I.

A final recommendation is to train projects to create goals and outcomes that are SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time Bound. The so-called “SMART” approach is a commonly used strategy by evaluation consultants because it stresses accountability in goal setting. The advantage of this approach is that it clearly defines what projects need to achieve and measure in order to demonstrate the success of their programs. For example, projects could be asked to design three SMART outcomes, one for each of the three elements of the triple bottom line. Figure 16 outlines the details of the SMART approach.
Adapt Reporting Procedures. While our interviews and surveys indicated that CNEF grantees are generally satisfied with the format CNEF uses to collect information for final reports, from the perspective of measuring aggregate impacts and data quality, we feel that the reporting form could be improved. Resourceful Communities should ask specific questions that will allow them to make comparisons more easily across projects. Currently, the final report form does not specifically ask for quantitative information. By intentionally asking projects to report numbers related to the project’s impact across each of the components of the triple bottom line, Resourceful Communities would be able to more easily aggregate impacts and compare

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**Figure 16. SMART Goals (adapted from LeHigh, 2007).**

**Specific:**
- Address the five Ws: who, what, where, when, and why.
- Specifies a timeline for completion
- Uses action verbs (create, implement, produce, etc.)

**Measurable:**
- Include numeric or descriptive measures that define quantity, quality, cost, etc.
- Focus on observable actions

**Achievable:**
- Objectives should be within the organization’s control and influence
- Must be achievable with available resources and within the timeframe outlined
- Consider authority, control, influence, resources, and circumstances

**Time-Bound:**
- Identify a target date for completion and/or frequencies for specific action steps
- Consider how often activities should occur and by what date they goal should be accomplished

**Examples:**
- By January 2009, implement an environmental education program that teaches 100 elementary school students from Smalltown Elementary School how, what, and why to recycle household waste.
- By January 2009, hire and train 5 high school students from Smalltown High School to supervise and teach elementary school students about recycling.
- By January 2009, hold 5 community meetings to plan processes and guidelines for the implementation of a community-wide recycling program.
projects. Resourceful Communities may choose to use or adapt many of the questions used in our survey for this purpose.

The new reporting procedures could also allow space for projects to include supporting materials. Many of our interviewees mentioned that they had taken pictures of events, projects, and people involved in their work. They also mentioned that they had collected press pieces, such as newspaper articles, magazine features, and newsletters. Our interviewees expressed pride in these supporting materials, and indicated that they would like to have the opportunity to share them with Resourceful Communities. This may provide an alternative avenue of reporting for project leaders who do not have strong writing skills to communicate their impacts.

As part of our final project, we have used our conceptual framework, survey and interview instruments to create an improved reporting tool for Resourceful Communities. The new reporting tool uses questions from our survey and interviews we felt were effective in measuring project impacts. This new reporting tool is included in Appendix J.

Consider the potential influence that project characteristics (inputs) have on indicators of success. As is described above, our research indicates that several of the project characteristics we examined have the potential to impact the success of the projects. For example, projects with larger budgets may be more successful at leveraging additional funding, creating jobs, and forming new partnerships. This may mean that Resourceful Communities should consider giving slightly larger awards to fewer projects. Further, our results indicate that the previous experience of the project leader may influence several outcomes; for example, project leaders with business or economic development experience created more jobs, more business opportunities in the communities, and leveraged more funding. So, Resourceful Communities may choose to support projects whose leaders have demonstrated experience in economic development, or they may simply provide more economic development training to project leaders once they have been selected to participate in the CNEF program. Finally, our results indicate that projects located in the Piedmont region show higher levels of impact across most of the indicators that we examined. This might indicate that projects in the Eastern and Western regions of the state need more support and assistance from CNEF than those in the Piedmont. A visual representation of the relationships we observed between inputs and various elements of success is shown in Figures 17 and 18.
However, it is important to note that our research on these factors is only preliminary, and our sample size was too small to show statistically significant relationships. Therefore, Resourceful Communities should consider these factors in their decision-making, but should be careful not to exclude any groups based on these criteria alone. Resourceful Communities should also consider further research to describe and understand the various inputs we discuss across all projects. Currently, Resourceful Communities only explicitly tracks some of inputs we describe, but they do not have a clear analysis of how inputs are spread across all grantees. This information could help Resourceful Communities begin to understand more fully how inputs affect success.

Figure 17. Correlation Analysis between Inputs and Outputs
Figure 18. Trends (non-statistical) observed between inputs and outputs
**Conduct Future Research.** Though our analysis of the last three years of CNEF grants allows us to identify the triple bottom line impacts, strengths, and weaknesses of the program, further research is needed to better understand predictors of the success of projects. For example, a more thorough and statistically powerful analysis of how different project inputs, such as organizational capacity, leadership, region, and goals, affect the project’s potential for success, would be valuable for Resourceful Communities in choosing which projects to fund. Also, further research into economic impacts such as leveraged funding and increased revenue in a more quantitative way would be useful for CNEF. This analysis could use and build upon the impacts described in our analysis, but would require more intentional data collection to understand project inputs. This kind of analysis would help CNEF determine whether it should prioritize funding towards larger, more established organizations, or continue in the goal of providing “seed” funding to smaller organizations with less capacity to achieve tangible impacts.
Acknowledgements

We wish to express our thanks to the staff of Resourceful Communities: Kathleen Marks, Mikki Sagar, and Monica McCann, for allowing us to assist in evaluating the impacts of the Creating New Economies Fund program. Their input, guidance, and assistance in contacting grantees was integral to our project. We would also like to acknowledge the help of Charlotte Clark, who provided us with assistance in qualitative research and using NVivo software. We would also like to acknowledge our advisor, Dr. Pamela George, for her valuable input throughout the development of this project. Finally, we would like to thank all of our interviewees and survey respondents for their time and insight, without which we could not have completed this Master’s Project.
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Resourceful Communities E. “What’s the Triple Bottom Line?” handout.


Appendices

Appendix A: Conceptual Framework

Data from Annual Reports and Projects’ Reports; Data from CNEF Staff Interviews

Leadership
Size
Age
Budget
Geography
Partnerships

Project Stewardship
Communication
Evaluation Practice
Goals and Objectives

CNEF Funding

CNEF Project Effectiveness

Data from Surveys

Goal Focused Products

Effective Process

Triple Bottom Line Integration
Environmental
Economic
Social
Community Engagement
Leveraged Funding
Partnership Growth
Organizational Development

Data from Interviews with Projects

Data from Surveys and Project Interviews

Project Characteristics

CNEF Variable

Size
Age
Budget
Geography
Partnerships

Leadership

Project Stewardship
Communication
Evaluation Practice
Goals and Objectives

CNEF Funding

CNEF Project Effectiveness

Goal Focused Products

Effective Process

Triple Bottom Line Integration
Environmental
Economic
Social
Community Engagement
Leveraged Funding
Partnership Growth
Organizational Development

Data from Surveys and Project Interviews
### Table 1. Indicators for the Projects’ Triple Bottom Line Impacts

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Analysis Questions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Environmental</strong></td>
<td>This indicator is aimed to describe the projects’ environmental impacts. Seven categories of environmental themes are created in this indicator: 1) Protection from environmental degradation; 2) Improvements in environmental condition; 3) Increase in sustainable practices; 4) Reduction and elimination of hazards; 5) Re-use and more efficient use of existing space and materials; 6) Increased Environmental Awareness; 7) Activities to increase interaction with nature.</td>
<td>What are the most common types of projects? What are the main environmental issues being addressed? How many projects are addressing a variety of issues?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Economic</strong></td>
<td>This indicator is aimed to show the projects’ economic benefits to the local communities. The economic benefits can be divided into three parts: 1) providing training and job opportunities for the communities; 2) Creating other business opportunities; 3) Save or earn money for the projects or the communities.</td>
<td>What percentage of projects provided job or skills training? What kind of trainings did the projects teach? How many people received training? How many job placements resulted from the trainings? What are the most common types of business opportunities created by the projects? In what ways did the projects save money or generate revenue for their projects or communities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social</strong></td>
<td>This indicator is aimed to show signs of more participation or better inclusion of previously underrepresented groups in the projects (for example, in jobs, training, outreach, or direct service), as well as work towards social equity in overall community.</td>
<td>What social groups are served most frequently? Are there any groups frequently left out? How often do the projects include more than one group? What services are most frequently provided by the projects? What kind of skills or personal development did participants gain? What are the broader impacts on society or community?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Triple Bottom Line Integration</strong></td>
<td>This indicator is aimed to describe how the projects incorporate environmental, economic and social impacts into their mission. Also, this indicator attempts to show how the projects developed their projects under the Triple Bottom Line methodology through participation in the CNEF program.</td>
<td>Overall, is there one part of the triple bottom line that is getting more attention? Which is most frequently addressed? For individual project, how many projects clearly address one aspect over the other? What percent of projects clearly integrate triple bottom line? Focusing on project developing process, how many projects became triple bottom line as a result of work with CNEF? Do they originally consider triple bottom line or incorporated it as a process?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indicator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Engagement</td>
<td>This indicator is aimed to involve community members or project participants in project design, management, or implementation. This is also aimed to describe how the projects involve broader community in the organization (festival, fair, events, etc.)</td>
<td>How many projects claim that the community is involved in planning/implementation? What is the most common way for the community to be engaged in projects? How many volunteers are engaged by the projects? In what way are volunteers engaged?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnership Growth</td>
<td>This indicator is aimed to show how many partnerships are developed as a result of working with the CNEF and what is its composition.</td>
<td>What is the average number of partnerships that the projects own? What is the percentage of partnerships that resulted from working with the CNEF? What is the difference between the overall partnership composition and the partnership composition resulting from working with the CNEF?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Development</td>
<td>This indicator is aimed to show how the projects developed new ideas or increased awareness of opportunities and resources, leadership and entrepreneurship and skills in operations management, finance, planning and marketing, etc. through their participation in the CNEF program.</td>
<td>What is the percentage of projects that received new ideas or increased awareness? What is the percentage of projects that gained skills? What are the most frequent types of skills that the projects learnt? What is the average number of skills developed per project?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leveraged Funding</td>
<td>This indicator is aimed to show other sources the projects gained except the CNEF grants, including other donations, grants or in-kind sources. This indicator also attempts to show some signs of the CNEF's contribution to the projects' leveraged funding.</td>
<td>How many projects were able to leveraged funding? How much of the leveraged funding is in-kind? What is the percentage of projects agree that CNEF is essential to gaining leveraged funding?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indicator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>This indicator is aimed to describe how the project leader’s education background contributes to the project’s success.</td>
<td>What is the distribution of project leader’s formal education level? What skills (for example, leadership training, work experience or expertise in a specific field, etc.) do the project leader personally bring to the management of the project?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>This indicator is aimed to describe how many employees or volunteers the organization has during the project period.</td>
<td>What is the average number of full-time and part-time employees the organization has? What is the average number of regular volunteers and volunteer leaders? What is the percentage of the projects that have no full-time employees?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>This indicator is aimed to show the length of the organization’s developing history. Since the projects we study are from 2008 to 2011, we assume 2011 is the cut-off time. Therefore, the age of the organization equals to 2011 minus the year that the organization was established.</td>
<td>What is the distribution of the organizations’ ages?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>This indicator is aimed to describe the financial conditions of the project.</td>
<td>What is the project’s current or most recent operating budget? What is the actual operating budget in the year(s) the project received a CNEF grant?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNEF Funding</td>
<td>This indicator is the amount of CNEF funding the project gained.</td>
<td>What is the percentage of the CNEF funding to the current or most recent operation budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnerships</td>
<td>This indicator is aimed to show the overall social networking ability of the projects</td>
<td>How many partnerships did the project have? What is the project’s overall partnership composition?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>This indicator is aimed to show the geographic distribution of the projects. Three geographical categories are created: 1) Western are any projects in cities west of Winston Salem, NC; 2) Piedmont are any projects between Winston-Salem and Raleigh; 3) Eastern are any projects east of Raleigh. 4) Other: one project was in Georgia.</td>
<td>How does the geographical location affect the project’s success?</td>
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</table>
Appendix C: Survey Instrument

CNEF Project Evaluation Survey

Q1   WELCOME!

What the study is about:

We are three Duke University graduate students conducting an evaluation study of the current Creating New Economies Fund (CNEF) program on behalf of Resourceful Communities. The purpose of this evaluation study is to improve the current CNEF program’s effectiveness and reporting process. This evaluation research study also is being conducted as part of the requirements for our master’s degree project.

What you will be asked to do:

If you agree to be a part of this research study, we will ask you to answer several questions in an online survey. In the future we may ask you to participate in an interview, and you may also be asked to participate in a site visit.

The survey includes questions about your project, some of the impacts of the project, as well as your experience working with CNEF and Resourceful Communities. Because it is important to obtain accurate and valid information, we hope that you answer each question honestly. Your participation is completely voluntary. This means you do not have to do the survey if you do not want to. If you agree to do the survey, you do not have to answer any question you do not want to. You have the right to stop the survey at any point by closing your browser window.

How we will use your information:

The information we collect about your program and project will be used to inform our study, our master’s degree project for Duke University, and the evaluation report for Resourceful Communities. Although we will not use personal information about you (such as your name or job title) in our publications, staff at Resourceful Communities may be able to identify you because we will use information about your program or project.

Note: Your responses to the survey and whether you decide to complete the survey will NOT affect your present or future relationship with CNEF and Resourceful Communities.

Whom to contact:

If you have questions or concerns regarding this research, you can contact PI’s Alexandra Kay at alexandra.kay@duke.edu, Abigail Furnish at abigail.furnish@duke.edu, or Shuang Xia at shuang.xia@duke.edu. You may contact our faculty advisor, Dr. Pamela George, at pamela.george@duke.edu. You may also speak with a member of Resourceful Communities’
staff. You can also contact the IRB office at Duke University at 919-684-3030 or ors-info@duke.edu with further questions.

If you agree to participate, please click below to start the survey.

Q2 Name of your organization: \${q://QID5/ChoiceTextEntryValue}

Q3 Name of your Creating New Economies Fund (CNEF) supported project: \${q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue}

Q4 What year(s) was \${q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue} funded by CNEF? (check all that apply)
Q5 How were you involved in ${q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue}?

- I am the primary director/manager
- I managed the project with other people
- Other (please explain): ____________________

Answer If How would you describe the management of your project? Single Director - I am the primary director/manager Is Selected Or How would you describe the management of your project? Multiple Directors - I co-direct or co-manage with another person(s) Is Selected And How would you describe the management of your project? Other (please explain): Is Not Empty

Q6 What skills do you bring to the management of ${q://QID5/ChoiceTextEntryValue} or ${q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue}? (Check all that apply)

- On the job
- Workshops
- University or community college courses
- Business management
- Environmental management
- Community development
- Program/organizational management experience
- Community organizing
- High School degree
- Certificate program
- Associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's or Doctoral degree
- Other: ____________________
Q7 How many employees does (or did) ${q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue} have on its payroll during the project period?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of people:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full Time</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Part Time/Seasonal</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Regular Volunteers</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Volunteer Leaders/Coordinators</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Q8 What year was ${q://QID5/ChoiceTextEntryValue} established?

Q9 Is ${q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue} ongoing?

- Yes
- No

Answer If Is the project that CNEF funded ongoing? <o:p></o:p> No Is Selected

Q10 What year did ${q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue} end?

Q11 What is ${q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue}'s current or most recent operating budget?

Q12 What was ${q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue}'s actual operating budget in the year(s) it received a CNEF grant?

Q13 How did ${q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue} use the CNEF grant funds? (Check all that apply)

- Support staff position(s)
- General operating expenses (supplies, rent, utilities, etc.)
- Infrastructure improvements
- Stipends for project participants
- Training/workshops
- Special events
- Services for project participants
- Equipment/machinery
- Marketing/outreach materials or campaigns
- Community and/or project participant meetings
- Other: ____________________
Q14 List partners or connections \(q://QID5/ChoiceTextEntryValue\) had during the time it participated in the CNEF program in the following form:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the name of the partner?</th>
<th>What kind of organization is the partner?</th>
<th>How would you rate your level of engagement with this partner?</th>
<th>Did your partnership result from an introduction, suggestion or referral by the CNEF staff?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State government</td>
<td>Federal Government</td>
<td>Nonprofit organization</td>
<td>Hospital or other health care provider</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commnity Group</td>
<td>Church</td>
<td>Community College</td>
<td>Legal Assistance</td>
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<td>University/College</td>
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</table>
| Q15 Triple Bottom Line projects can have many different kinds of economic benefits. In the next section, we ask you about the economic impact of \(q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue\). \(q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue\) does not need to illustrate all of these results. This information is part of your project evaluation where you record outputs and outcomes. Please answer the questions that apply to \(q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue\).
Q16 Did ${q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue} provide job or skills training?

- Yes
- No

Answer If Did ${q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue} provide job or skills training? Yes Is Selected

Q17 How many people received job or skills training?

Answer If Did your project provide job or skills training? Yes Is Selected

Q18 Did the training lead directly to job placement?

- Yes
- No

Answer If Did ${q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue} provide job or skills training? Yes Is Selected

Q19 How many people found employment as a result of the job or skills training?

Q20 Did ${q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue} create jobs (beyond project staff) for other community members?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>How Many?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Full time</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part time or seasonal</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Currently active jobs</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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[Table showing how many people found employment as a result of the job or skills training, and whether jobs were created beyond project staff for other community members.]
Q21 Did ${q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue} create other economic opportunities in the community?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Q22 What kind of economic opportunities did ${q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue} create?

☐ Farmer's or tailgate market
☐ Tourism
☐ Value-added products
☐ Infrastructure
☐ Garden/CSA
☐ Green building
☐ Other: ____________________
Q23 If economic benefits were a feature outcome of \(q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue\), please briefly tell us more about it.

Q24 Triple Bottom Line projects can work towards social justice in many different ways. In the next section, we ask you about the social justice impacts of \(q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue\). \(q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue\) does not need to illustrate all of these results. Please answer the questions that apply to \(q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue\).

Q25 Does \(q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue\) target a specific group in the community? (Check all that apply)
Women
Youth
Hispanic/Latino
African American
Native American
Other Minority group: ____________________
Low income
Unemployed/underemployed
Migrant workers
Farmers
Ex-convicts
Other ____________________
Q26 What kinds of social services or programs did you provide for program participants? (Check all that apply)
Education
Afterschool activities
Personal development
Legal services
Housing
Health services
Mental health services
Access to government services
Career coaching
Physical activities
Transportation
Nutrition counseling
Other ____________________
Q27 Did \(q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue\) affect social justice in the broader community outside of the project participants?

- Yes
- No

Answer If Did your project affect social justice in the broader com... Yes Is Selected

Q28 How did \(q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue\) affect social justice in the broader community?

Q29 If social justice were a feature outcome of \(q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue\), please briefly tell us more about it.

Q30 Triple Bottom Line projects can work towards environmental sustainability in many different ways. In the next section, we ask you about the environmental impacts of \(q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue\). There are a variety of types of environmental projects. \(q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue\) does not need to illustrate all of these results. Please answer the questions that apply to \(q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue\).

Q31 Did \(q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue\) target a specific environmental problem?

- Yes
- No

Answer If Does your project target a specific environmental problem? Yes Is Selected

Q32 What type of environmental problem does \(q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue\) target?

(check all that apply)

- Stream/river/lake cleanup or restoration (if selected, how many miles?) ______________
- Clean water issues
- Water conservation
- Forest conservation
- Tree planting (if selected, how many trees?) ______________
- Native plant protection
- Invasive species removal
- Trail/greenway creation (if selected, how many miles?) ______________
- Fishing/hunting
- Wildlife viewing
- CSA
- Community garden
- Organic gardening
- Urban farm
- Land conservation (if selected, how many acres?) ______________
- Land ownership retention
- Environmental education (if selected, how many students?) ______________
- Sustainable resource use
- Recycling
- Other (please specify): ____________________
- Air pollution
- Water quality
- Environmental hazards
- Farm chemical exposure
Q33 If environmental sustainability was a feature outcome of ${q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue}, please briefly tell us more about it.

Q34 Did ${q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue} involve the community in its planning, implementation, or evaluation?

- Yes
- No

Answer If Did your project involve the community in its planning, i... Yes Is Selected

Q35 How did ${q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue} involve the community in its planning, implementation, or evaluation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Included in your project?</th>
<th>How many?</th>
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</table>

Q36 Did ${q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue} engage volunteers?

- Yes (how many?) ____________________
- No

Q37 How successful was ${q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue} in accomplishing its goals? (check one)

- Exceeded goals
- Met all goals
- Met some goals
- Did not meet any goals
Q38 How well did ${q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue} incorporate each of the elements of the Triple Bottom Line?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very strong</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Very weak</th>
<th>Not present</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Q39 What skills, if any, did you gain through your participation in the CNEF program?

- Grant writing
- Communication planning
- Project planning
- Project management
- Budget management
- Leadership development
- Strategic planning
- Volunteer management
- Evaluation
- Other: ____________________

Q40 In what ways did Resourceful Communities support ${q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue}?

(choose all that apply)

- Technical assistance
- One-on-one guidance
- Wrote letter of support for a funding opportunity
- Connections to partners
- Introduction to new funder(s)
- Other: ____________________

Q41 How satisfied are you with your participation in the CNEF program?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neutral
- Dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied
Q42 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CNEF support was essential to gaining additional funding for this project. The current reporting process for CNEF is effective in displaying our project’s achievements.</td>
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Q43 Will you apply for CNEF funding again?

- Yes
- No

Q44 Is there any support that CNEF could have provided that might have improved the outcome of ${q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue}?

Q45 Provide any additional comments on ${q://QID6/ChoiceTextEntryValue} or the survey here.
Appendix D: Interview Protocol for Project Staff

Interview Protocol for Project Staff Interviews

Interview Date:
Interviewer Name:

Interviewee Name:
Project/Organization Name:

Read Consent Script:

1. Tell us what is important about your project?
   Prompts: mission, vision, and goals, project for which you received funding from CNEF.

2. What is your role in the organization/project?

3. We would like to learn more about you. Could you tell us a little bit about the background, education, and experience that you bring?
   Prompt: Also for other project leaders if relevant.

4. What is the primary group that your organization/project aims to benefit?

5. How do you think the group targeted by your project has benefited from the project?

6. In what ways do you think the overall community in which you work has benefited from the project?

7. What were the some of the challenges of trying to get this project started?

8. What are some of the biggest challenges over the course of the project?
   Prompts: staffing, funding, organizational characteristics: geography marginalization?

9. CNEF talks about “Triple Bottom Line Sustainability.” Can you explain what a “Triple Bottom Line” project means to you?
10. Tell us about your initial project and how it was designed to incorporate the TBL?
   Prompt: Did you start with one leg and then add others?

11. In which of the three areas of the TBL do you feel was the strongest in your project?

12. Which was the weakest?
   Prompt: Why?

13. Tell us about how you worked with CNEF/Resourceful Communities
   Prompt: what specific ways did they support your group?

14. In what ways did working with CNEF benefit the development of your organization and project?

   If not addressed above: Creating New Economies Fund helps new projects get off the ground. How successful was your project in finding additional funding since you received CNEF funds?

15. What additional assistance or support could have been useful from CNEF or Resourceful Communities?

16. Your project is really interesting. Are there ways CNEF could have gathered more information about everything that you accomplished?
   Prompt: press, reputation, not just money, more partnerships, more accessibility,?
   Specifically try to get at things that could be included in an improved reporting form

17. What really accounted for your success?

18. Is there anything else that we should know about your project’s work?

Some potential clarification questions, if not clear from the reports and surveys:
Where does your project operate?

Please explain a little how the design, goals, or objectives of the project changed since you originally received funding
Appendix E: Site Visit Field Guide

Site Visit Field Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer Name:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Interviewee Name: |
| Project/Organization Name: |

Leadership Characteristics

Organizational Capacity (office space, meeting rooms, classrooms, access to supplies, etc.
project relation to organization)

Geography/Community Characteristics

Educational materials (if any)

Promotional/marketing materials (if any)

Project participants or Community Members/Participation

Additional notes

Site Visit Description
Appendix E: Consent Forms

Consent Form 1 for CNEF Staff
Interview with Resourceful Communities’ Staff

What the study is about:
We are three Duke University graduate students conducting an evaluation study of the current CNEF program on behalf of Resourceful Communities. The purpose of this evaluation study is to improve the current CNEF program’s effectiveness and reporting process. This evaluation research study also is being conducted part of the requirements for our master’s degree project.

What you will be asked to do:
Your participation in this study involves a 30-minute interview.

Your participation is completely voluntary. This means you do not have to complete the interview if you do not want to. If you agree to be interviewed, you do not have to answer any question you do not want to. You have the right to stop the interview at any point.

How we will use your information:
The information we collect about your work with Resourceful Communities will be used to inform our study, our master’s degree project for Duke University, and the evaluation report for Resourceful Communities. Although we will not use personal information about you (such as your name or job title) in our publications, staff at Resourceful Communities may be able to identify you.

Whom to contact:
If you have questions or concerns regarding this research, you can contact the graduate student researchers, Alexandra Kay at alexandra.kay@duke.edu, Abigail Furnish at abigail.furnish@duke.edu, or Shuang Xia at shuang.xia@duke.edu. You also may contact our faculty advisor, Dr. Pamela George, at pamela.george@duke.edu. You also can contact the Duke University Institutional Review Board office at at 919-684-3030 or orsch-info@duke.edu with further questions.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

If you agree to participate in this research, please indicate below
Your Signature ___________________________________ Date ________________________
Your Name (printed) ____________________________________________________________

Printed name of person obtaining consent _______________________________________
Date __________________________
Consent Form 2 for Survey Participants
Survey for Project Staff

(1) Recruitment E-mail
We are three graduate students at Duke University, and we are working with Resourceful Communities to evaluate the CNEF program. Over the course of several weeks, we will be contacting recipients of CNEF grants from the last three years (2009-2011) to take part in a research evaluation study.

We are e-mailing to invite you to take a survey about your project and experience with CNEF small grants. Your participation is important in order to understand the impacts of CNEF grants throughout North Carolina as well as understand any weaknesses in order to make improvements in the future.

The questions you will be asked on the survey are included below. Because it is important to obtain accurate and valid information for the evaluation, we ask that you please answer each question carefully. It is therefore important to look over the questions to collect any information that may be needed before you agree to start the survey. The survey should take about 30 minutes.

Once you are ready to complete the survey, please click on the link: [link to survey]

[copied of questions]
(2) First page of survey

What the study is about:
We are three Duke University graduate students conducting an evaluation study of the current CNEF program on behalf of Resourceful Communities. The purpose of this evaluation study is to improve the current CNEF program’s effectiveness and reporting process. This evaluation research study also is being conducted part of the requirements for our master’s degree project.

What you will be asked to do:
If you agree to be a part of this research study, we will ask you to answer several questions in an online survey. In the future we may ask you to participate in an interview, and you may also be asked to participate in a site visit.

The survey includes questions about your project, some of the impacts of the project, as well as your experience working with CNEF and Resourceful Communities. Because it is important to obtain accurate and valid information, we hope that you answer each question honestly.

Your participation is completely voluntary. This means you do not have to do the survey if you do not want to. If you agree to do the survey, you do not have to answer any question you do not want to. You have the right to stop the survey at any point by closing your browser window.

How we will use your information:
The information we collect about your program and project will be used to inform our study, our master’s degree project for Duke University, and the evaluation report for Resourceful Communities. Although we will not use personal information about you (such as your name or job title) in our publications, staff at Resourceful Communities may be able to identify you because we will use information about your program or project.

Note: Your responses to the survey and whether you decide to complete the survey will NOT affect your present or future relationship with CNEF and Resourceful Communities.

Whom to contact:
If you have questions or concerns regarding this research, you can contact PI’s Alexandra Kay at alexandra.kay@duke.edu, Abigail Furnish at abigail.furnish@duke.edu, or Shuang Xia at shuang.xia@duke.edu. You may contact our faculty advisor, Dr. Pamela George, at pamela.george@duke.edu. You may also speak with a member of Resourceful Communities’ staff. You can also contact the IRB office at Duke University at 919-684-3030 or ors-info@duke.edu with further questions.

If you agree to participate, please click below to start the survey.
**Consent Form 3 for Interview Participants**

*Interview for Project Staff*

(1) **E-mail Recruitment**

We are three graduate students at Duke University, and we are working with Resourceful Communities to evaluate the CNEF program. Over the course of several weeks, we will be contacting recipients of CNEF grants from the last three years (2009-2011) to take part in a research evaluation study.

We are e-mailing to invite you to be in an interview about your project and experience with CNEF small grants. Your participation is important in order to understand the impacts of CNEF grants throughout North Carolina as well as understand any weaknesses in order to make improvements in the future. The interview will take about one hour.

If you are interested in taking part in the interview, please contact us to schedule a day and time to meet or speak on the phone with us. You also can contact us to discuss more information or ask any questions about the study.
(2) Consent Script (telephone)
Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. As you know we are three Duke University graduate students conducting an evaluation study of the current CNEF program on behalf of Resourceful Communities, to improve the current program’s effectiveness and reporting process. This study also is being conducted as part of the requirements for our master’s degree project.

We are asking you to take part in this study because of your participation in the CNEF small grant program run by Resourceful Communities.

If you agree to the interview, we will ask you to discuss the CNEF supported project with which you are involved, your experience with CNEF, and the impacts of your project. The interview will take about one hour to complete.

Your participation is completely voluntary. If you do not want to talk to us, you do not have to. If you agree to be interviewed, you can skip questions or stop the interview at any point. Your responses and whether you decide to be interviewed will NOT affect your present or future relationship with CNEF and Resourceful Communities.

The information we collect will be used to inform our study, our master’s degree project for Duke University, and the evaluation report for Resourceful Communities. Although we will not use personal information about you (such as your name or job title) in our publications, staff at Resourceful Communities may be able to identify you because we will use information about your program or project.

If you have any questions, you can ask me now. We will e-mail you a copy of this form that includes a list of people you can contact, including our faculty advisor, Dr. Pamela George, and the Duke University Institutional Review Board, if you have any questions later.
(3) Consent Form (in-person)

What the study is about:
Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. As you know we are three Duke University graduate students working with Resourceful Communities to do an evaluation of the current CNEF program’s effectiveness and reporting process. This evaluation research study is part of the requirements for our master’s degree project.

We are asking you to take part in this study because of your participation in the CNEF small grant program run by Resourceful Communities.

What you will be asked to do:
If you agree to be in this study, we will ask you to discuss the CNEF supported project with which you are involved. We will ask you a semi-structured series of questions about your experience with CNEF and the impacts of your project. The interview will take about one hour to complete.

Your participation is completely voluntary. This means you do not have to complete the interview if you do not want to. If you agree to be interviewed, you do not have to answer any question you do not want to. You have the right to stop the interview at any point.

Note: Your responses during the interview and whether you decide to be interviewed will NOT affect your present or future relationship with CNEF and Resourceful Communities.

How we will use your information:
The information we collect about your program and project will be used to inform our study, our master’s degree project for Duke University, and the evaluation report for Resourceful Communities. Although we will not use personal information about you (such as your name or job title) in our publications, staff at Resourceful Communities may be able to identify you because we will use information about your program or project.

Whom to contact:
If you have questions or concerns regarding this research, you can contact PI’s Alexandra Kay at alexandra.kay@duke.edu, Abigail Furnish at abigail.furnish@duke.edu, or Shuang Xia at shuang.xia@duke.edu. You may contact our faculty advisor, Dr. Pamela George, at pamela.george@duke.edu. You may also speak with a member of Resourceful Communities’ staff. You can also contact the IRB office at Duke University at 919-684-3030 or orts-info@duke.edu with further questions.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

If you agree to participate in this research, please indicate below:

Your Signature ___________________________________ Date ________________________
Your Name (printed) ________________________________________________________
Printed name of person obtaining consent ______________________________
Date _____________________
Consent Form 4 for Field Visit

Field Visit Consent Form

(1) E-mail Recruitment
We are three graduate students at Duke University, and we are working with Resourceful Communities to evaluate the CNEF program. Over the course of several weeks, we will be contacting recipients of CNEF grants from the last three years (2009-2011) to take part in a research evaluation study.

We are e-mailing to ask you if you will allow us to conduct a site visit to learn more about your project and experience with CNEF small grants. Your participation is important in order to understand the impacts of CNEF grants throughout North Carolina as well as understand any weaknesses in order to make improvements in the future. The site visit will take about two hours.

If you are willing to allow us to conduct a site visit, please contact us to schedule a day and time to meet. You also can contact us to discuss more information or ask any questions about the study.
(2) Consent Form (in-person)

What the study is about:
Thank you for agreeing to allow us to conduct a site visit. As you know we are three Duke University graduate students working with Resourceful Communities to do an evaluation of the current CNEF program’s effectiveness and reporting process. This evaluation research study is part of the requirements for our master’s degree project.

We are asking you to take part in this study because of your participation in the CNEF small grant program run by Resourceful Communities.

What you will be asked to do:
If you agree to be in this study, we will ask you to discuss the CNEF supported project with which you are involved. We hope to better understand your project and explore your project’s impacts and challenges. To be more specific, we would like to:

1) Learn more about the project in general, clarify information as needed, and help determine impacts of your grant
2) See your project’s headquarters, equipment, centers, etc.
3) Estimate the numbers of people involved with or impacted by your project
4) Collect any literature or marketing material you are willing to share
5) Understand CNEF can help improve your project
6) Take pictures (if needed)

Your participation is completely voluntary. This means you do not have to complete the site visit if you do not want to. If you agree to participate in the site visit, you do not have to answer any questions you do not want to. You have the right to stop the site visit at any point.

Note: Your responses during the site visit and whether you decide to participate in the site visit will NOT affect your present or future relationship with CNEF and Resourceful Communities.

How we will use your information:
The information we collect about your program and project will be used to inform our study, our master’s degree project for Duke University, and the evaluation report for Resourceful Communities. Although we will not use personal information about you (such as your name or job title) in our publications, staff at Resourceful Communities may be able to identify you because we will use information about your program or project.

Whom to contact:
If you have questions or concerns regarding this research, you can contact PI’s Alexandra Kay at alexandra.kay@duke.edu, Abigail Furnish at abigail.furnish@duke.edu, or Shuang Xia at shuang.xia@duke.edu. You may contact our faculty advisor, Dr. Pamela George, at pamela.george@duke.edu. You may also speak with a member of Resourceful Communities’ staff. You can also contact the IRB office at Duke University at 919-684-3030 or ors-info@duke.edu with further questions.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.
If you agree to participate in this research, please indicate below:

Your Signature __________________________ Date __________________________
Your Name (printed) __________________________________________________________

Printed name of person obtaining consent __________________________
Date __________________________
Appendix F: Coding Nodes Used in NVivo qualitative analysis

Coding Nodes:

Environmental (Code to type of project, and any numbers if applicable) (In interviews, reports, possible supplementary materials like website)

- Protection from environmental degradation (preserved farmland, land set aside for conservation)
- Improvements in environmental condition (restoration, clean-ups, tree planting, invasive removal)
- Increase in sustainable practices (recycling, organic, other sustainable resource use projects)
- Reduction and elimination of hazards (reduce contamination, exposure to farm chemicals)
- Re-use and more efficient use of existing space and materials (energy or water efficiency, weatherizing, green job training)
- Increased Environmental Awareness/Education (anything that educated people)
- Activities to increase interaction with nature? (tourism, trail construction)

Economic
- Trainings or workshops provided (From interviews and reports)
- Job opportunities (type and number) (From interview and reports)
- Other business opportunities (code the detailed information, need sub-nodes under “Other business opportunities”) (from the interview and reports)
  - Market
  - Tourism
  - Value-added products
  - Infrastructure
  - Garden/CSA
  - Green building
- Revenue generated from the project activities (from the reports, maybe some in interviews)

Social
- Description of how minority/low-income groups were included
- What services were provided (coding for more details beyond just the basic
category of service)

- Intellectual Capital (description of how participants or targeted population gained awareness of economic or political opportunities or training,

- Individual Capital (description of how participants or targeted population gained skills and capacities for greater participation in work force)

**Triple Bottom Line Integration** (Look in interviews, may possibly see something in reports)

- Description of how they developed TBL or made it a triple bottom line project

- Description of how their project is TBL

**Community Engagement in Project Design** (interviews or reports)

**Relationship with Volunteers** (interviews, maybe reports)

**Growth in number of partnerships** (Any description of how CNEF helped them gain new partners) (Interviews, and reports)

**Leveraged Funding** (Any description of how they were able to leverage more funding by CNEF grant) (Interviews and reports)

**Organizational Development** (how working with Resourceful Communities helped the staff and organization): (Interviews and reports)

- New thinking, new ideas, increased awareness of opportunities and resources, leadership and entrepreneurship

- Skill development in operations management, finances, planning, marketing, etc.
Appendix F: STATA Code and Output of Correlation Analysis

STATA Code

*Leadership- Experience in a specific field
by EconomicExperience, sort : summarize LeveragedFund Job OtherBusiness by SocialExperience, sort : summarize SocialGroups SocialService by EnvironmentalExperience, sort : summarize EnvironmentalThemes

*Leadership- Formal Education Level
by EducationLevel, sort : summarize SocialGroups SocialService LeveragedFund Job OtherBusiness EnvironmentalThemes PartnershipsCNEF triple bottom line_Integration

*Geography
*Outcomes
by Geography, sort : summarize SocialGroups SocialService LeveragedFund Job OtherBusiness EnvironmentalThemes PartnershipsCNEF triple bottom line_Integration

*Inputs
by Geography, sort : summarize Size Age CurrentOperatingBudget ActualBudgetduringgrantedyea CNEFGrant Partnerships EconomicExperience SocialExperience EnvironmentalExperience EducationLevel

*triple bottom line Integration
by triple bottom line_Integration, sort : summarize SocialGroups SocialService LeveragedFund Job OtherBusiness EnvironmentalThemes PartnershipsCNEF

*Size, Age, Current Operating Budget, Actual Budget, CNEF Grant, Partnership Impacts
pwcorr Size SocialGroups SocialService LeveragedFund Job OtherBusiness EnvironmentalThemes PartnershipsCNEF triple bottom line_Integration, sig

pwcorr Age SocialGroups SocialService LeveragedFund Job OtherBusiness EnvironmentalThemes PartnershipsCNEF triple bottom line_Integration, sig

pwcorr CurrentOperatingBudget SocialGroups SocialService LeveragedFund Job OtherBusiness EnvironmentalThemes PartnershipsCNEF triple bottom line_Integration, sig

pwcorr ActualBudgetduringgrantedyea SocialGroups SocialService LeveragedFund Job OtherBusiness EnvironmentalThemes PartnershipsCNEF triple bottom line_Integration, sig

pwcorr CNEFGrant SocialGroups SocialService LeveragedFund Job OtherBusiness EnvironmentalThemes PartnershipsCNEF triple bottom line_Integration, sig

pwcorr Partnerships SocialGroups SocialService LeveragedFund Job OtherBusiness EnvironmentalThemes PartnershipsCNEF triple bottom line_Integration, sig
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Appendix G. Participatory Evaluation and Monitoring Resources

World Bank: Sleeping on our Own Mats: An introductory Guide to Community-Based Monitoring and Evaluation.

IUCN: Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines for Learning and Adaptive Management

Natural Resources Institute: Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation for Natural Resource Management and Research.

Food and Agriculture Organization: Training Module on Participatory Community Monitoring and Evaluation.

USAID Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Tips for Conducting a Participatory Evaluation
Appendix H. Suggested Reporting Form

The Conservation Fund – Resourceful Communities Program
Creating New Economies Fund

Reporting Form DUE ______

Directions: Please respond to the following questions about the Creating New Economies Fund grant your organization received in ______. Please limit your response to 6 pages.

Contact/Organization Information

Organization: _________________________________________________________

Contact Person, Title: _________________________________________________

Address: ____________________________

________________________________________________________

Phone: __________________________ Fax: __________________________

Email: __________________________

Project Administrator: ______________ Email: __________________________

How many staff does your organization have:
  Full-time staff?
  Part-time or seasonal staff?
  Volunteer Leaders?

What was your organization’s most recent operating budget?

Project Information
Project Name/ Brief Description:

Project location, including county:

________________________________________________________

Project start date ____________ completion date ____________

If this project has been supported by CNEF in other years, please specify:

Do you plan on continuing the project and/or applying for CNEF funding in the future?
Project Report

1. Please describe the economic development outcomes and outputs of your project. This may include job training, jobs created, economic opportunities created, increased revenues. Where possible, please include numbers of jobs created, trainings held, revenue earned, etc.

2. Please describe the social justice outcomes and outputs of your project. Please mention which groups were targeted, what services were provided, and how the targeted groups were empowered. Where possible, please include numbers.

3. Please describe the environmental conservation outcomes and outputs of your project. What environmental issue(s) did your project address and how? Where possible, please include numbers.

4. Please describe funding or grants, as well as in-kind donations you were able to leverage because of the CNEF grant. Please include source and amount.

5. Please describe new partnerships you formed this year. Did any result from CNEF involvement? Will the partnerships continue, and, if so, how?

6. Briefly describe how the community was engaged in designing and implementing the project. Who was involved, how often, and in what ways?

7. Did you gain any skills as an individual or organization by working with Resourceful Communities? If so, how and what skills?

8. What training or support could Resourceful Communities have provided that would have improved your ability to implement your project? Do you have any other comments?

9. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your project?

10. Please share one story that illustrates the impact of your project. For example, you might share how your project helped one person or changed how something is done in your community. You may also attach additional materials, such as photographs, testimonials, press recognition, etc.
In the space below, provide an itemized total project budget and explain how CNEF funds were spent. Be sure to use the projected budget items from your CNEF application and indicate if there were any changes in how CNEF money was used. Please indicate if leveraged funds were received and how they were applied to the project.

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**Budget Narrative** (Please provide an explanation of how the CNEF grant was used and what additional support, both in-kind contributions and funding, was leveraged.)