



APPROACH



CHAPTER 2 STRATEGIC APPROACH

Introduction

The Lummi Ventures Planning Program is best understood as a conversation with the Lummi people about poverty. The purpose of the conversation was to learn what can and should be done to address poverty, to promote prosperity and individual self-reliance, and long-term community stability and well being at Lummi. The conversations with the community occurred in three phases from June 2004 to September 2005 and involved over 1,500 people.

- Phase I: Engage and learn from and about the community
- Phase II: Develop a framework for prosperity at Lummi
- Phase III: Establish a foundation for implementation of the 10-year Ventures Plan
- Phase IV: Refinement of strategies and plan

The table below gives an overview of engagement opportunities available to community members over the span of 15 months.

Type of Community Engagement	
<i>Executive Committee Team</i>	The Executive Committee consists of five members of the Lummi Indian Business Council. They developed, for LIBC approval, the strategic goals of the Ventures Program, the format for securing community input, and met with the community to develop intervention strategies to assist the bottom quartile in areas of wellness, education, jobs and employment. The Executive Committee participated in 14 meetings.
<i>Community Action Teams</i>	Individuals from the bottom economic quartile of the community were invited to participate on this team and to work in conjunction with the Executive Committee. The CAT members serve to tell the real-life story of individuals facing severe and chronic poverty and serve as a "reality check" for input from the community. The Community Action Team met two times as a group but has participated in Leadership and Community Meetings.
<i>Leadership Teams</i>	The Leadership Teams play a critical role in guiding the understanding about poverty and beginning to shape how the future might be different. The Leadership Teams met six times to conduct a SWOT Analysis and develop Process Maps. Initially, the Teams were organized in areas typically associated with poverty: Education, Employment, and Wellness. As the project has evolved, issues surrounding culture became increasingly important so a Culture Team was added.
<i>Community Survey</i>	Tribal members who participated in the survey ¹ responded to the following set of questions, such as: What is poverty? What does a healthy community look like? What are some good things about Lummi? What holds Lummi back from being a healthy community?
<i>Focus Groups</i>	Focus groups included age and special interest groups such as youth, child protection team, natural resource harvesters, entrepreneurs, artists, youth and employees of the Silver Reef Casino. Each focus group dealt with a sub-set of questions used in the individual survey.

¹ The focus of the survey process engaged the community. It did not rely on strict scientific sampling techniques.

Type of Community Engagement	
<i>Community Events</i>	Three large community events were held – a Film Festival, a Genealogy Festival and a Christmas Gathering. The Genealogy Festival came about as a result of the community identifying that members didn't know who their family is. Each dinner provided community members the opportunity to fill out the survey.
<i>Definitions of Poverty and Prosperity</i>	Members of the array of Ventures Teams came together for a day in February to develop a definition of poverty and of prosperity.
<i>Future Search Community Gathering</i>	In March 2005, members of the community were invited to participate in a three-day community gathering based on the future search conference model. The community gathering trained youth to be facilitators for a multi-generational gathering involving people in poverty that shaped the vision and goals for 2016.
<i>Vision Teams</i>	The Vision Teams formed following the community gathering to refine the strategies, goals and actions. The groups met every two weeks over a period of four months with periodic whole community meetings to get feedback on their work.
<i>Finance Team</i>	The Finance Team was comprised of two members from each of the Vision Teams. Their charge was to develop a set of financial guidelines and implementation alternatives for the strategic plan.
<i>Ventures Strategy Refinement Team</i>	In November 2005, representatives from the Northwest Indian College, Lummi Development Authority, Lummi-Planning, Lummi Policy, Lummi Nation Service Organization, Bellingham Technical College, Lummi Council, Lummi Ventures and the Lummi community formed a working group to review the draft Strategic plan and refine the strategies and overall plan.

In the context of the array of engagement options, the Ventures Team learned that the community members share a deep concern about family preservation and sustaining the Lummi traditional life ways for future generations. Consistent with deeply held beliefs, Lummi's see change within the community connected at its core with the family. Thus, family becomes the focal point for the support of the strategies like economic development, education, health and wellness, culture, along with land and the environment presented in Chapter 4 of this plan.

Phase I: Engage the Community

What is poverty?

Poverty is a mixture and combination of factions, like: infrastructure, government, policies, attitudes, upbringing, environment, education, economy, racism, lack of culture, mental health, morals, and values.

Survey Respondent

leadership teams, focus groups, community events and a written survey.

Between June 2004 and March of 2005, the Lummi Ventures Team engaged members of the Lummi Community in an effort to learn about poverty, their experience of poverty and what might be done to overcome poverty. Community members participated through

Gaining Trust and Gathering Input from the Community about Poverty

During the first six months of the planning project, Ventures staff conducted focus groups, created and implemented a community survey, and hosted community events. The trust factor was slow to build, but after six months, the Ventures Program became known in the community and people watched with curiosity, calling or dropping in to find out how they can participate. For example, homeless individuals were reached through members of the Community Action Team. The Ventures Staff and Executive Committee were not successful in reaching them directly, so they relied on community members known to the target group.

There was a tremendous upsurge of anger and frustration expressed at being approached about poverty, but as trust was built, individuals began coming forward on their own. In addition, Ventures' staff's experience with the 3-hour focus groups was that the 10-15 participants had to spend the first half of the meeting expressing anger and frustration with the system, the conditions and attitudes, then once they vented, they began to find or identify solutions. The meetings with the Commissions and Boards were primarily for providing information on the Ventures Program, however, we did receive valuable input and ideas either at the meeting or in follow up conversations from members.

Getting to the Roots of Poverty

Community engagement was built out of a growing understanding that there was something different about the Ventures Program. The difference was a genuine interest in addressing the needs of people living in the lowest economic quartile with a focus on finding ways to provide a hand up and not a hand out. However, getting at the roots of poverty raises questions about programs or services that address the symptoms or conditions of poverty. At times, the shift in paradigm made it difficult for individuals associated with programs and services to join the conversation with people in poverty who were most interested in getting at the roots of poverty. This tension existed throughout the planning process and is likely to continue to be a challenge during the implementation phase of the project.

What was learned?

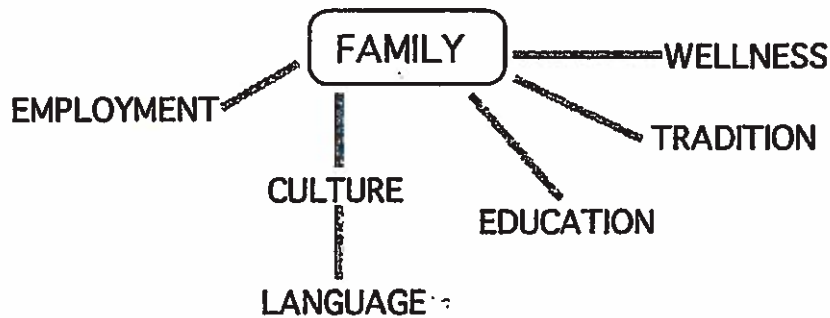
In December of 2004, the Lummi Ventures Team presented an Interim Report to the Tribal Council and to the Northwest Area Foundation. (The Interim Report can be found as Appendix B). Reading the responses to the survey and listening to the ideas offered through the focus groups and leadership teams afforded the opportunity to look at the issues associated with poverty with fresh eyes. The overarching assets and challenges adjust the frame through which we see poverty and provide the keys to unlock the doors that lead to prosperity.

Assets	Along with issues like education, employment, and wellness that began as a major focus for the Ventures Program, culture, children, and family appear as overarching issues. <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Culture: Strengthening culture is seen as a way to strengthen children, families and the community as a whole.▪ Children: Are seen as the future of the Lummi Nation.▪ Family: The heart of how children grow to be healthy adults.
Challenges	Through the conversation with the community, overarching challenges affect the capacity of the Lummi People to transform poverty to prosperity. These include:

- Lack of resources – such as education, employment, child care, transportation and housing
- Poor health and inadequate health care
- Lack of hope – connected with multi-generational grief and loss
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Racism – discrimination inside and outside of the Reservation
- Tribal government – expressed as not listening to the people, preventing change from happening.

Opportunities

The overarching themes from the first phase of the planning process offer a way to see beyond the traditional elements of what we have known as poverty reduction programs and categorical funding streams. The graphic below depicts focusing on the family as a possible way of tying important issues together in the 10-year plan to reduce poverty.



Phase II: Develop a Framework for Prosperity at Lummi

The community meetings and the specific focus group sessions provided an in-depth view of assets, challenges, and opportunities that could make a difference for individuals and for the community. During a full day meeting in February, discussions amongst Lummi community members about the definition of poverty led them to recognize that poverty was not defined by income, but rather the community identified poverty in terms of loss of language, culture, traditions and ceremony, sense of self, environment, and land. Based on their conversation, the following definitions were created.

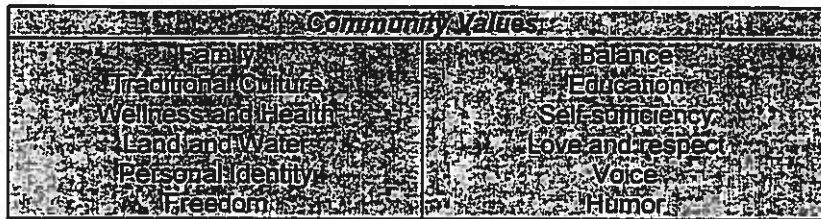
Definition of Poverty:
When one, some or all Lummi values are missing that make a fully functional individual, family or community.

Definition of Prosperity:
Prosperity is living our lives according to Lummi values.

The Community Gathering and Vision Teams

A three-day Community Gathering brought together a cross-section of the community to build a foundation of understanding about how to move out of poverty and into prosperity over the next ten years was held in March of 2005. The group established a set of community values to use

as the basis to test the definitions of poverty and prosperity and to serve as the foundation for their strategies and actions.



By the conclusion of the 2.5 day Community Gathering, the definitions of poverty and prosperity were finalized and six broad strategies and a beginning list of actions were identified: Families, Education, Employment, Land, Culture, and Wellness. The broad strategies served as the foundation for the development of the Vision Teams that were launched at the end of March. A Vision Teams Toolkit was developed to assist team leaders and members to navigate a four-month process to finalize strategies and research and define the actions over the 10-year plan implementation (See Chapter 3: Visions and Strategies for detailed information about the work of the Vision Teams). Members of the Vision Teams contained a predominance of community members with some participation on the part of staff from departments or services especially in the area of education. They met approximately every two weeks with periodic report back to and confirmation of their work by the community.

Financial Management Team

The Financial Management Team began meeting in late April to outline the overall financial guidelines and policies that are included in the plan as well as the management structure to assure the effective implementation of the plan. They continued to be a backbone of support in developing the overall implementation plan. A thorough discussion of the products of their work can be found in Chapter 4: Management and Implementation Plan and Chapter 5: Financial Plan.

Phase III: Establish a foundation for implementation of the 10-year Ventures Plan

The conversations to engage the Lummi Community concluded with a major community meeting in mid-August, where the overarching strategies and actions were approved. The community meeting opened the door for the Ventures Staff to focus on other issues fundamental to the completion of the plan which include:

- Finalizing a management plan
- Articulating for the Tribal Council and Staff within LIBC how the Ventures Plan connects and collaborates with other community and departmental plans
- Development of a 10-year fund development plan and budget
- Creating a foundation for ongoing assessment of results

The Financial Management Team, the Chief of Staff, leaders and members of other departments and programs, along with the Ventures Staff, have worked closely together during September to complete these elements of the plan. A variety of questions and concerns from many corners within the Tribe have surfaced related to potential impacts on other programs or services, how the implementation of the plan should be organized and managed, and what the budget should look like across the strategies (e.g. where does leverage come from and where are there overlaps in expenses and funding streams).

A draft management plan has been developed, which is designed to protect the integrity of the plan and assure accountability to the Northwest Area Foundation and persons living in poverty within the Lummi Nation. The Lummi Ventures Program will become the Lummi Venture Project, housed within the Lummi Nation Service Organization, a tribally chartered 501c3 organization. The staffing for the agency will include an Executive Director, Administrative Support, and a Financial Manager. These positions will be supported by a community board that will be extensively trained in the roles and responsibilities of a not-for-profit board of directors (See Chapter 4: Management and Implementation Plan).

The Ventures Program will be housed in the Lummi Nation Service Organization and will identify and advance opportunities for collaboration with existing community plans, departments and services. The Ventures Program strategies align closely with existing LIBC, NWIC and BTC programs and will work closely with the Lummi Development Authority in developing and implementing poverty reduction initiatives/ (See Chapter 3: Visions and Strategies for identification roles for specific strategies within Lummi).

An initial framework of understanding for the budget and funding strategies which support the desired outcome of at least a 1 to 1 ration of leveraged dollars to Northwest Area Foundation funds has been developed and is described in Chapter. Chapter 5: Financial Plan covers this in greater depth.

Outcomes and indicators that address the roots of poverty as contained in the strategies are included in Chapter 3, but also separated and described in Chapter 6

Phase IV: Refinement of Strategic Plan following October 5, 2005 submission

The Ventures Staff and Executive Committee organized a Technical Team made up of representatives from the Northwest Indian College, Lummi Development Corporation, Lummi Nation Service Organization, Lummi Planning Department, Policy Staff, and Bellingham Technical College along with representatives from the community.

The Team held two day long sessions and then assigned sections of the plan for revamping. The Team maintained the integrity of the Strategies identified by the community representatives, did research into best practices and refined the strategies to more clearly reflect what the tribe intended to do, how we would measure and evaluate success and specifically who our target population was.

The plan was unanimously approved by Lummi Indian Business Council at a meeting held on December 20, 2005.