COMMUNITY PARTNER DESCRIPTION:

The Centre for Local Prosperity is a registered charity which has worked for the last 10 years to empower rural Atlantic Canadian communities to strengthen their local agency for the future through education, building connections, creating pathways, and catalyzing new initiatives. We believe economic localization is a key aspect of the solution to building resilience for current and future challenges including the interlinked and overlapping climate crisis, food insecurity, biodiversity loss and socioeconomic inequality.

The Centre's work includes research into re-localizing institutional procurement, rebuilding local skills and supplier capacity, regional conferences and retreats, a monthly webinar series, and many ad hoc initiatives with specific rural communities.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

We propose using Shelburne as a case study in building deep community engagement – growing from 'a spark to a flame', which would involve documenting history and progress, interviewing key players, understanding significant milestones and events that moved the project forward and gathered deeper community engagement. Key objectives include:

- Understanding the micro, meso and macro conditions present in Shelburne that led to sustained momentum for engaging volunteers and acquiring resources for systems-level changes in the community relating to improving food security.
- Understanding how (or whether) the unique historical context of Shelburne as it relates to the Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotians affected how the community was able to mobilize around shared goals.
- Identifying themes with potential replicability to other contexts to develop a conceptual model to frame future research for understanding how deep engagement and systems change occur in rural communities.
- Using the research findings to develop a community toolkit for others to apply learning from the Shelburne case study.

These objectives are critical for the Centre for Local Prosperity as it continues to work with other small and rural communities across the Atlantic region to develop capacity for localizing economic development, increasing food sovereignty and gaining more agency over their future economic needs.

PROJECTED BENEFITS:

The Centre wishes to put this information into a high-quality, user-friendly tool kit, showing how these efforts come together, which critical steps occur, how they are executed, and how the results build for greater community self-sufficiency and local agency going forward.

This experience and the research to be conducted can be the lead example for the tool kit, showing how the community project developed, and how the results will build for greater food self-sufficiency going forward. There are other communities in the Atlantic Canada region which will be inspired by this effort and cross-fertilization can begin to occur.

[NB: These are excerpts from the Community Partner's original proposal from 2025]