

# Summary Discussion: Telephone and Web-Based Surveys

## Contents\*

Introduction.....	2
Findings.....	3
Telephone versus Web-based Surveys.....	3
Rural and Aboriginal Communities.....	6
Provincial Analysis.....	8
Business Capacity and Social Capacity.....	11
Data Collection.....	14
Knowledge of Co-operatives.....	15
Conclusion.....	16
Endnotes.....	18
Figure 1 An overall comparison between telephone and web-based survey. CIP 2015.....	13
Figure 2 Telephone Survey and web-based survey comparison of overlapping community responses, CIP 2015. ....	14
Table 1 Rural western Canada, top 15 needs, telephone survey and web-based survey, CIP 2015.....	3
Table 2 Aboriginal western Canada, overall, top 15 needs, telephone survey and web-based survey, CIP 2015. ....	3
Table 3 Western Canada, top 15 needs, overall, telephone survey and web-based survey, CIP 2015.5	
Table 4 Aboriginal communities face a higher need, compared with rural communities. CIP telephone survey 2015.....	7
Table 5 Manitoba, top 15 needs, telephone survey and web-based survey, CIP 2015.....	8
Table 6 Saskatchewan, top 15 needs, telephone survey and web-based survey, CIP 2015.....	9
Table 7 Alberta, top 15 needs, telephone survey and web-based survey, CIP 2015.....	9
Table 8 British Columbia, top 15 needs, telephone survey and web-based survey, CIP 2015.....	10

\* Reference: Co-operative Innovation Project (January 2016), *Summary Discussion: Telephone and Web-Based Surveys*. Part of Co-operative Innovation Project Final Report. Centre for the Study of Co-operatives, University of Saskatchewan.



## Introduction

From January-June 2015, the Co-operative Innovation Project (CIP) conducted two surveys in rural and Aboriginal† communities across the four western provinces: Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. The first survey was a telephone survey, conducted from January 8-March 15, 2015, targeting community members living in the study area. The second survey was a web-based survey, conducted from January-June 2015, targeting community administrators (e.g., mayor, chief, community administrative officers). The two surveys were administrated through the University of Saskatchewan Social Sciences Research Laboratories, Survey and Group Analysis Laboratory.

Both surveys aimed to: (1) develop a good understanding of the current status of rural and Aboriginal communities in western Canada across four dimensions: community needs, business capacity, social capacity, and knowledge of co-operatives; (2) reveal associations among needs and business and social capacities; (3) identify the similarities and differences between Aboriginal and rural communities; (4) capture the similarities and differences across the four western provinces; and (5) see if there was a difference in the perceptions/responses between citizens and community administrators.

This chapter provides a summary overview of the key findings, lessons, and conclusions that can be drawn from the telephone and web surveys. For detailed analysis of each kind of survey, please see the previous two chapters in this report. It should be noted that both questionnaires list 16 services and programs, and asked respondents to rate them individually on a scale of poor, fair, good, and excellent. Our survey asked respondents to rate the quality of local programs and services, as a way to capture a comparative analysis of local need. From these results, we inferred that a poor rating represented a higher need, and a higher rating represented a lower need. The results compare well to the needs expressed during community meetings. (For an overview, please see the chapters Community Needs and Community Capacity in our final report).

Although we used similar or exact wording for many of our questions on both surveys, caution should still be exercised when comparing the results across these surveys, as different data collection methods (telephone survey with a live person versus web-based survey) could contribute to differences. It should be noted that there is ample opportunity for more data analysis on our raw data of the two surveys; if interested, please contact the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives at the University of Saskatchewan.

---

† The Co-operative Innovation Project uses the term “Aboriginal” to denote Canada’s First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities. This usage reflects contemporary census and other documentation which provide source citations throughout this project. We honour and respect the identities of each of Canada’s communities.

## Findings

### Telephone versus Web-based Surveys

**Finding: The two surveys showed remarkably similar responses, particularly in the top five and bottom five needs for both rural and Aboriginal communities.**

**Table 1 Rural western Canada, top 15 needs, telephone survey and web-based survey, CIP 2015.**

Rank	Telephone Survey			Web-based Survey		
	Need	N	Score	Need	N	Score
1	Youth programs	1,378	2.59	Arts and culture programs	231	2.58
2	Roads	1,512	2.56	Youth programs	253	2.47
3	Arts and culture programs	1,396	2.50	Housing	274	2.47
4	Daycare	1,211	2.43	Health care	243	2.39
5	Health care	1,490	2.37	Daycare	209	2.33
6	Housing	1,482	2.36	Internet access	307	2.32
7	Seniors' programs	1,326	2.36	Roads	309	2.28
8	Physical activity programs	1,469	2.21	Physical activity programs	264	2.25
9	Preschool	1,206	2.15	Seniors' programs	260	2.24
10	Internet access	1,465	2.12	Preschool	233	2.02
11	Recycling	1,496	2.08	Recycling	282	2.01
12	High school	1,375	1.98	Sanitation and waste mgt	291	1.75
13	Sanitation and waste mgt	1,483	1.90	Drinking water	278	1.68
14	Elementary school	1,402	1.89	High school	219	1.67
15	Drinking water	1,488	1.88	Elementary school	247	1.62

In rural western Canada, both the telephone and web surveys produced similar results. Of the top five needs, four – youth programs, arts and culture programs, daycare, and health care – are in the top five in both, although in somewhat different order. Of the top seven needs, six are the same across both surveys.

A similar result is noted for the bottom five needs. Both the telephone survey respondents and web-based surveys placed recycling, high school, sanitation and waste management, elementary school, and drinking water as the lowest five needs, although again, the order is somewhat different.

(Because our survey asked respondents to rate these services and programs, it should be noted that communities are doing a comparatively better job in these areas.)

**Table 2 Aboriginal communities in western Canada, overall, top 15 needs, telephone survey and web-based survey, CIP 2015.**

Rank	Telephone Survey			Web-based Survey		
	Need	N	Score	Need	N	Score
1	Roads	241	2.93	Housing	42	3.38
2	Youth programs	226	2.85	Recycling	34	3.32



3	Arts and culture programs	223	2.82	Seniors' programs	35	3.09
4	Housing	240	2.79	Arts and culture programs	37	3.05
5	Seniors' programs	218	2.77	Youth programs	37	3.05
6	Health care	237	2.73	Physical activity programs	39	2.97
7	Daycare	199	2.60	Roads	42	2.95
8	Physical activity programs	235	2.45	High school	25	2.84
9	Internet access	231	2.39	Internet access	42	2.71
10	Recycling	235	2.35	Health care	42	2.67
11	Preschool	199	2.29	Daycare	36	2.44
12	High school	228	2.24	Sanitation and waste management	42	2.43
13	Drinking water	241	2.14	Elementary school	32	2.31
14	Sanitation and waste mgt	239	2.10	Drinking water	42	2.26
15	Elementary school	226	2.09	Preschool	35	2.26

In Aboriginal communities, the two surveys showed high similarity, particularly in the lowest priority needs. Of the top five needs across the two surveys, four – youth programs, arts and culture programs, housing, and seniors' programs – are on both lists, if in somewhat different order. Of the top seven needs, five are found in both surveys.

Of the five lowest priorities, four are the same across both surveys, although their rankings are somewhat different. The five needs ranked lowest are preschool, drinking water, sanitation and waste management, and elementary school. Again, as respondents rated these programs and services, it should be noted that communities could be doing a comparatively good job in these areas.

The level of the perceptions expressed in the telephone and web surveys differed in Aboriginal communities, with respondents in the telephone survey giving, on average, lower scores than did the respondents to the web survey (i.e., the administrators).

**Finding: There are important indicators from rural and Aboriginal communities that are contrary to conventional beliefs.**

While some of the findings from the two surveys are consistent with contemporary media reports regarding rural and Aboriginal communities, others are not. In the web-based survey, youth programs were reported as a higher need in rural communities and seniors' programs as a higher need in Aboriginal communities. These findings are not consistent with the census demographics reported for those communities, which indicate that Aboriginal communities have a higher youth population and rural communities have a higher seniors' population.

Administrators in Aboriginal communities reported housing as the highest priority – a finding that reflects contemporary understanding and expectations of Aboriginal community needs. Yet for community-level respondents in the telephone surveys, housing was not the top-ranked need;

instead, it was ranked fourth. Nonetheless, housing was still a major need in Aboriginal communities, and only somewhat less so in rural communities.

Finally, drinking water – an issue that has captured much media attention, particularly in Aboriginal communities – was perceived to be one of the lowest ranked needs.

Another difference between rural and Aboriginal administrators is in the area of local recycling. Aboriginal administrators place this issue second in terms of needs, while it falls below the top ten for rural administrators. It was a far lower priority for telephone respondents.

**Finding: Aboriginal and rural communities share many similar needs.**

Table 3 shows the top overall needs as expressed in the telephone and web surveys (using the combined samples of rural and Aboriginal respondents). Although there are some differences in the relative rankings, three needs – youth programs, arts and culture programs, and housing – are found amongst the top five needs in both surveys. Opening the comparison up to the top seven needs results in six needs being on both lists – these needs are youth, arts/culture, housing, roads, health care and daycare.

The only difference in the top 10 needs (besides in relative rankings) is that preschool makes the top 10 needs for community residents whereas recycling makes the top ten for community administrators.

**Table 3 Western Canada, top 15 needs, overall, telephone survey and web-based survey, CIP 2015.**

Rank	Telephone Survey			Web-Based Survey		
	Need	N	Score	Need	N	Score
1	Youth Programs	1,604	2.63	Arts and culture programs	268	2.65
2	Roads	1,753	2.62	Housing	316	2.59
3	Arts and culture Programs	1,619	2.54	Youth programs	290	2.54
4	Daycare	1,410	2.45	Health care	285	2.43
5	Housing	1,722	2.42	Internet access	349	2.36
6	Health care	1,727	2.42	Roads	351	2.36
7	Seniors' programs	1,544	2.41	Daycare	245	2.35
8	Physical activity programs	1,704	2.24	Physical activity programs	303	2.34
9	Preschool	1,405	2.17	Seniors' programs	295	2.34
10	Internet access	1,696	2.16	Recycling	316	2.16
11	Recycling	1,731	2.12	Preschool	268	2.05
12	High school	1,603	2.02	Sanitation and waste mgt	333	1.83
13	Sanitation and waste mgt	1,722	1.93	High school	244	1.79
14	Drinking water	1,729	1.92	Drinking water	320	1.76
15	Elementary school	1,628	1.92	Elementary school	279	1.70
	<b>Total N</b>	<b>1,756</b>			<b>354</b>	

The respondents in both surveys ranked local elementary and high school, drinking water, and sanitation and waste management as amongst the lowest needs.

**Finding: The highest needs reported by both rural and Aboriginal communities are likely not ones that can easily be (or should be) solved through traditional government policy interventions, approaches, or programs.**

Interestingly, Tables 1 and 2 show that both rural and Aboriginal communities rate the need for community-based programs (e.g., for youth, seniors, arts and culture, etc.) to be quite high relative to basic needs and needs for educational services. Such programs do not garner the most media attention. Rather, needs such as access to healthcare, education and drinking water receive far more focus, likely because these latter needs are much easier for governments to influence through policy.

As outlined above, three needs – youth programs, arts and culture programs, and housing – are found amongst the top five needs in both surveys. Interestingly, all three of these needs are ones that can be provided through some kind of community action, organized either by the local government or by a group of local citizens (e.g., through a co-op). In the context of co-operative development, it will be important to explore the degree to which media attention on certain needs has directed attention away from needs that can be addressed through local initiative.

## Rural and Aboriginal Communities

**Finding: Aboriginal communities face greater average needs in almost all areas when compared to rural communities. They also report much lower quality of life.**

Overall, the results clearly show that respondents from Aboriginal communities indicate greater needs than respondents from rural communities in almost all areas (see Tables 1 and 2). They also report much lower quality of life.

Although this finding may not be surprising, these differences show that the issues facing Aboriginal communities are not simply due to geography or distance from major centres, given that all of our communities are rural by definition. These differences are most likely due to historical, economic and/or cultural differences between rural and Aboriginal communities that require a different policy approach to address the causes of these problems. These issues have been extensively covered in other literatures, and we will not delve into them here.

**Finding: There are important nuances in the needs reported by rural and Aboriginal communities in the different provinces that require further analysis.**

We could not reliably compare the responses between rural and Aboriginal communities across provinces using the web survey, due to the low number of responses from Aboriginal communities. However, in the telephone survey, there were important differences noted between rural and



Aboriginal communities across provinces. Table 4 shows a summary of the differences in the level of need between rural and Aboriginal communities across the provinces. For more detail about the relative ranking of needs in rural and Aboriginal communities across the provinces, see the results reported in the telephone survey chapter.

**Table 4 Aboriginal communities face a higher need, compared with rural communities. CIP telephone survey 2015.**

Need	Manitoba	Saskatchewan	Alberta	British Columbia	Western Canada
<b>Need for Programs:</b>					
1. Seniors' Programs	Higher	Higher	Higher	No Difference	Higher
2. Arts and Culture Programs	Higher	No Difference	Higher	No Difference	Higher
3. Physical Activity Programs	No Difference	Higher	No Difference	Higher	Higher
4. Youth Programs	Higher	No Difference	No Difference	Higher	Higher
<b>Need for Basic Services:</b>					
1. Drinking Water	Higher	No Difference	No Difference	Higher	Higher
2. Sanitation and Water Management	Higher	Higher	No Difference	No Difference	Higher
3. Recycling	Higher	No Difference	No Difference	No Difference	Higher
4. Roads	Higher	Higher	No Difference	Higher	Higher
5. Housing	Higher	Higher	Higher	Higher	Higher
6. Health Care	Higher	No Difference	Higher	Higher	Higher
7. Internet Access	Higher	No Difference	Higher	Higher	Higher
<b>Need for Educational Services:</b>					
1. Daycare	Higher	No Difference	Higher	No Difference	Higher
2. Preschool	Higher	No Difference	No Difference	No Difference	Higher
3. Elementary School	Higher	Higher	No Difference	Higher	Higher
4. High School	No Difference	Higher	Higher	Higher	Higher

## Provincial Analysis

**Finding: There are noticeable differences in needs reported across the provinces that should be explored further, particularly where government policy interventions may be helpful or necessary.**

The needs reported by respondents differ somewhat across provinces. See tables 5-8 for a summary of the rankings and level of needs for both telephone and web survey respondents across the provinces.

**Table 5 Manitoba, top 15 needs, telephone survey and web-based survey, CIP 2015.**

Rank	Telephone Survey			Web-Based Survey		
	Need	N	Score	Need	N	Score
1	Roads	438	2.73	Housing	37	2.49
2	Arts and Culture Programs	411	2.62	Youth Programs	34	2.41
3	Youth Programs	411	2.61	Arts and Culture Programs	33	2.30
4	Health Care	435	2.48	Internet Access	38	2.24
5	Housing	434	2.36	Health Care	35	2.23
6	Daycare	383	2.35	Roads	38	2.18
7	Seniors' Programs	399	2.34	Seniors' Programs	34	2.00
8	Physical Activity Programs	428	2.26	Physical Activity Programs	37	1.97
9	Preschool	354	2.21	Recycling	36	1.83
10	Internet Access	423	2.20	Daycare	32	1.81
11	High School	405	1.98	Sanitation And Waste Mgt	35	1.63
12	Drinking Water	435	1.93	High School	31	1.58
13	Elementary School	412	1.91	Preschool	33	1.58
14	Recycling	434	1.91	Drinking Water	35	1.49
15	Sanitation And Waste Mgt	433	1.87	Elementary School	34	1.47
	<b>Total N</b>	<b>438</b>		<b>Total N</b>	<b>38</b>	

In Manitoba, four of the top five needs are the same across both surveys, although their relative ranks are different. The four common needs are: arts and culture programs, youth programs, health care and housing. Of the top seven, six are the same – roads and seniors' programs are added to the list.

A critical difference between the two surveys in terms of top seven needs is that the telephone survey respondents identified daycare, while administrators pointed to Internet access as a critical infrastructure issue.

The bottom five issues are similar across both surveys, with elementary and high school, drinking water and sanitation and waste management ranking lowest. Between the two surveys, community residents had fewer concerns with recycling, while administrators did not place preschool as a priority.





**Table 6 Saskatchewan, top 15 needs, telephone survey and web-based survey, CIP 2015.**

Rank	Telephone Survey			Web-Based Survey		
	Need	N	Score	Need	N	Score
1	Roads	431	2.70	Arts and Culture Programs	132	2.78
2	Arts and Culture Programs	378	2.69	Youth Programs	153	2.59
3	Youth Programs	388	2.66	Housing	177	2.54
4	Seniors' Programs	364	2.57	Health Care	148	2.53
5	Health Care	422	2.46	Physical Activity Programs	161	2.47
6	Housing	422	2.44	Seniors' Programs	153	2.42
7	Physical Activity Programs	406	2.38	Internet Access	197	2.42
8	Daycare	355	2.34	Roads	199	2.35
9	Recycling	423	2.29	Daycare	124	2.27
10	Internet Access	415	2.07	Preschool	139	2.06
11	Preschool	350	2.02	Recycling	173	2.02
12	Drinking Water	427	2.00	Sanitation And Waste Mgt	185	1.89
13	Sanitation And Waste Mgt	428	1.98	Drinking Water	172	1.82
14	High School	403	1.88	High School	127	1.79
15	Elementary School	406	1.84	Elementary School	146	1.75
	<b>Total N</b>	<b>432</b>		<b>Total N</b>	<b>200</b>	

In Saskatchewan, there was a greater divergence between the two surveys than in Manitoba, with three of the top five needs the same across both surveys: arts/culture programs, youth programs, and health care. Of the top seven needs, six made both lists, with different rankings: arts/culture, youth, health care, and housing, seniors' programs, and physical activity programs.

There were also some fairly large differences between the two surveys. Telephone survey respondents called first and foremost for better roads, while roads were ranked eighth by Saskatchewan administrators.

As in other provinces, the bottom-ranked needs were nearly identical between the two surveys.

**Table 7 Alberta, top 15 needs, telephone survey and web-based survey, CIP 2015.**

Rank	Telephone Survey			Web-Based Survey		
	Need	N	Score	Need	N	Score
1	Arts and culture programs	403	2.67	Arts and culture programs	53	2.53
2	Youth programs	405	2.61	Housing	54	2.52
3	Daycare	324	2.55	Daycare	44	2.50
4	Roads	436	2.55	Recycling	58	2.45
5	Seniors' programs	384	2.40	Youth programs	54	2.44
6	Housing	429	2.40	Roads	63	2.24
7	Health care	428	2.35	Internet access	62	2.16
8	Physical activity programs	427	2.27	Health care	51	2.16
9	Internet access	422	2.22	Physical activity programs	55	2.15
10	Recycling	428	2.21	Seniors' programs	58	2.07
11	Preschool	360	2.12	Preschool	52	2.02
12	High school	397	2.00	Drinking water	60	1.65
13	Drinking water	425	1.95	High school	49	1.61



<b>14</b>	Sanitation and waste mgt	422	1.93	Sanitation and waste mgt	61	1.57
<b>15</b>	Elementary school	403	1.89	Elementary school	56	1.52
	<b>Total N</b>	<b>436</b>		<b>Total N</b>	<b>63</b>	

In Alberta, both surveys identified the same top need: arts and culture programs. Of the top five needs identified, three – arts/culture, youth programs, and daycare – are the same across both surveys, although their rating varies. In the top seven needs, five make both lists: arts/culture, youth, daycare, housing and roads.

There are also some interesting differences. Administrators identify Internet access as more of a priority, while telephone survey respondents noted a lack in seniors’ programs.

The lowest five needs were the same across both surveys, albeit with some variation in ranking.

**Table 8 British Columbia, top 15 needs, telephone survey and web-based survey, CIP 2015.**

Rank	Telephone Survey			Web-Based Survey		
	Need	N	Score	Need	N	Score
<b>1</b>	Youth programs	400	2.64	Housing	48	2.94
<b>2</b>	Daycare	348	2.59	Daycare	45	2.78
<b>3</b>	Roads	448	2.49	Roads	51	2.67
<b>4</b>	Housing	437	2.46	Seniors’ programs	50	2.66
<b>5</b>	Health care	442	2.37	Arts and culture programs	50	2.66
<b>6</b>	Seniors’ programs	397	2.35	Youth programs	49	2.59
<b>7</b>	Preschool	341	2.32	Recycling	49	2.53
<b>8</b>	Arts and culture programs	427	2.22	Health care	51	2.53
<b>9</b>	High school	398	2.22	Internet access	52	2.50
<b>10</b>	Internet access	436	2.15	Physical activity programs	50	2.42
<b>11</b>	Physical activity programs	443	2.08	Preschool	44	2.41
<b>12</b>	Recycling	446	2.07	High school	37	2.22
<b>13</b>	Elementary school	407	2.02	Sanitation and waste mgt	52	2.10
<b>14</b>	Sanitation and waste mgt	439	1.94	Elementary school	43	1.93
<b>15</b>	Drinking water	442	1.79	Drinking water	53	1.87
	<b>Total N</b>	<b>450</b>		<b>Total N</b>	<b>53</b>	

For British Columbia, of the top five needs in both surveys, three are included in both: daycare, roads, and housing. Of the top seven needs, five are found on both lists: the three above, plus youth and seniors’ programming.

Whereas the telephone survey respondents noted a high need for health care and preschool, administrators reported needs around arts/culture and recycling in their respective top seven.

British Columbia showed the least amount of agreement of all the provinces in the bottom five priorities. While the very bottom – drinking water, elementary school, and sanitation/waste management were the same, telephone respondents felt that their communities had better

recycling and physical activity programs, and administrators pointed to high school and preschool as less of a need.

Overall, our surveys reveal that needs are not necessarily the same for all provinces, which suggests that there may be cultural, policy, or economic solutions already at work in some of these cases.

When comparing the top three needs (identified as those that made the top five list for both surveys, for each province), Saskatchewan and Manitoba residents share the same concerns (arts/culture, youth, health care, with Manitoba also adding housing). Alberta is very similar, noting arts/culture and youth. However, Alberta is more in line with British Columbia on their third top issue, daycare. British Columbia survey respondents reported daycare, roads, and housing on both survey lists.

## Business Capacity and Social Capacity

**Finding: Aboriginal communities report lower levels of business capacity and social capacity than rural communities. Low levels of business capacity and social capacity are likely linked to the higher needs and lower quality of life reported in Aboriginal communities.**

Based on the telephone survey, there is an overall difference in the business capacity reported between rural and Aboriginal communities: rural communities receive higher scores than do Aboriginal communities in each aspect related to business capacity (e.g., general business skills, access to financing, access to technology, local labour force, and networking opportunities), with the exception of post-secondary training, where no significant difference between the two groups is observed. In fact, rural communities reported post-secondary training to be unavailable in their communities more often than did Aboriginal respondents. The difference in the perception of financing between the two groups appears to be the largest, although access to technology and networking opportunities are also considerably lower in Aboriginal communities.

With regard to social capacity, both rural and Aboriginal respondents are willing to work together with other members in their own communities to address the common issues they are facing. However, although they are also willing to co-operate with members in nearby communities, respondents believe that they haven't built good relationships (sharing and co-operation with neighbouring communities at the administrative level showed relatively low scores for both rural and Aboriginal communities). The reported level of volunteerism in communities is also not high in either rural or Aboriginal western Canada, although respondents reported a slightly higher level in rural than Aboriginal communities. Respondents from rural communities tended to report a higher willingness to work together overall than did respondents from Aboriginal communities.

The telephone survey results also suggest that respondents in rural communities tend to feel safer than those in Aboriginal communities: non-compliance with laws, property crimes and violent crimes take place more frequently in Aboriginal communities, according to respondents. Aboriginal

respondents also reported the cleanliness of their communities to be less satisfactory than rural respondents.

**Finding: There are clear associations between needs and business and social capacity in both rural and Aboriginal communities and across provinces, but more research is needed to determine what the causal relationships between these factors are, or if they are caused by other factors that have not been examined in this project.**

Our results show fairly clear negative correlations between needs and business capacity, and negative correlations between needs and different types of social capacity. In other words, needs increase as business and social capacity decrease. There is also a positive relationship between business and social capacity, that is, they both move up and down together. For the most part, the relationships between needs and business capacity appear to be stronger than the relationships between needs and social capacity; however, this may just be due to better measures used to construct the business capacity variable.

Caution should be exercised when interpreting these results. It is not clear from the research if greater investments into solving particular needs, or if greater investments into building business and social capacity, will necessarily lead to improvements in the other factors. In addition, it could very well be that a set of third factors that were not identified in the research are responsible for both business and social capacity.

**Finding: Quality of life is clearly impacted by needs, business and social capacity.**

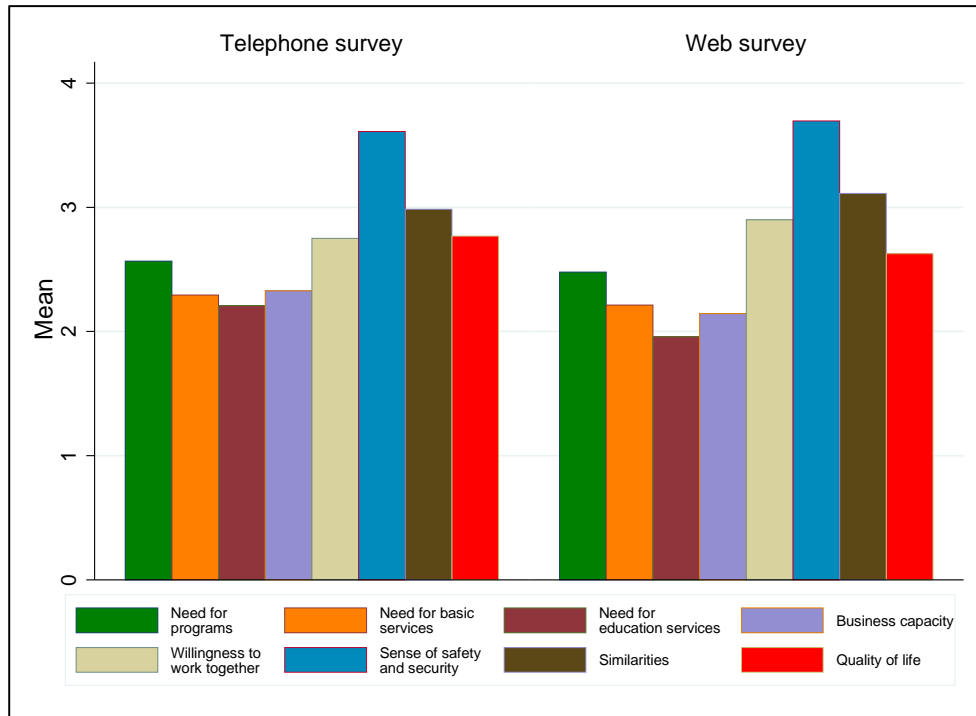
The data collected for this study shows a correlation between community needs, business and social capacity, and quality of life for community residents. Specifically, a negative relationship exists between needs and quality of life, and a positive relationship exists between business and social capacity and quality of life. Thus, as needs increase, quality of life deteriorates. And as business and social capacity increase, quality of life improves. However, the study cannot claim there is a causal relationship between these variables and quality of life.

**Finding: It matters who you ask about the community, but not as much as you might think.**

Perceptions of the measures we collected can differ greatly from person to person, and the type and quality of information that can be collected from communities may differ depending on who provides the information. Moreover, respondents may offer different information about their communities for different reasons. Gatekeepers may view the community differently than community members who are not as involved in the community, or who may feel more isolated from other members or from decision-making responsibilities. CIP sought to collect information in a variety of ways, and from a variety of types of respondents.

Given that we used similar or exact wording for many of our questions on both the telephone and web surveys, we can compare the similarity and differences in responses from community

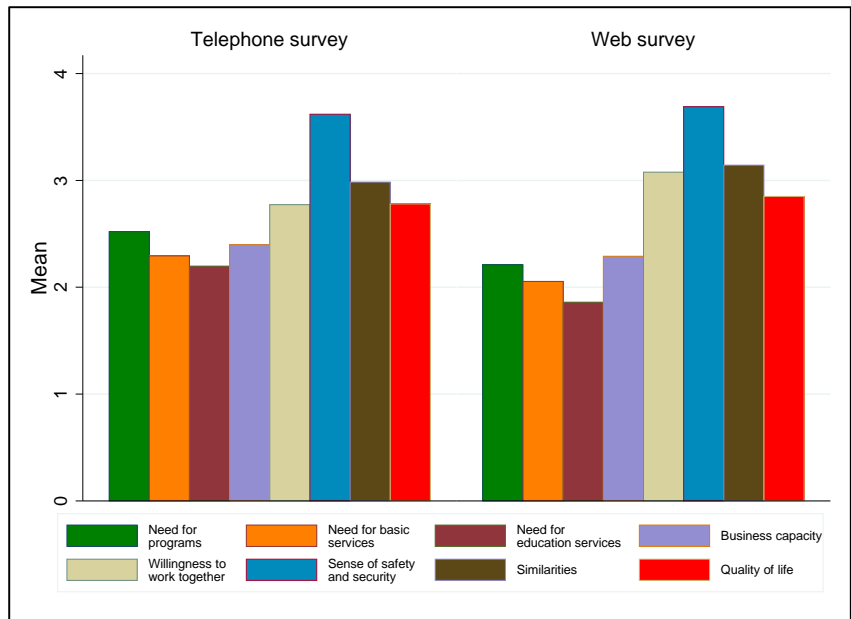
residents versus administrators. Caution should be exercised when comparing the results across these surveys, as different data collection methods could also contribute to differences.



**Figure 1 An overall comparison between telephone and web-based survey. CIP 2015.**

The results show that, compared with community residents, on average, administrators tended to perceive somewhat less needs for both basic services and educational services, lower business capacity, higher willingness to work together, stronger sense of safety and security, but lower quality of life. Administrators tended to feel their communities have become slightly more homogeneous, while community residents don't feel such changes. Nevertheless, despite these differences, the relative ranking of the needs and capacities is similar across the two surveys.

We were able to do a comparative analysis where we had overlapping resident and administrator respondents from the same communities. In total, we had 107 communities that overlapped between the telephone and web survey (i.e., where we had respondents from both data collection methods).<sup>1</sup>



**Figure 2 Telephone Survey and web-based survey comparison of overlapping community responses, CIP 2015.**

The two overlapping groups exhibit many similarities in the patterns across their responses. However, a few differences exist. On average, community residents (telephone survey respondents) reported higher needs for basic services, programs and educational services than the community administrators. There was no difference in the reported business capacity; however, the administrators reported a higher willingness to work together. There was no difference in the reported sense of safety and security between respondents; however for the administrators, homogeneity (similarity of residents) of the community was reported to have increased over time, while for telephone survey participants, the homogeneity of the community was reported to have slightly decreased. There was no difference in the reported quality of life between the two groups.

## Data Collection

**Finding: It is extremely difficult to collect high quality and reliable quantitative data from Aboriginal communities using traditional survey methods. Current government data sources on both Aboriginal and rural communities are incomplete and potentially highly inaccurate.**

There have always been problems with census data collected from Aboriginal communities, but the changes made to the 2011 census make all data collected from both Aboriginal and rural communities highly suspect.



Recognizing these limitations, we spent an extraordinary amount of time and effort in attempts to increase response rates from Aboriginal communities. Even with these efforts, our response rates from Aboriginal communities are much lower than from rural communities. Furthermore, many of our Aboriginal respondents in the telephone survey are technically from rural CSDs according to Statistics Canada based on their reported postal code; however, they report that they are from Aboriginal communities. This is possible, given that many Aboriginal communities do not have local post offices. However, there is no way to be certain. It may be that differences between Aboriginal and rural respondents would be even more pronounced if we were able to collect more data from respondents currently residing in predominantly Aboriginal communities.

**Finding: Summary quantitative data is difficult to interpret without detailed on-the-ground data collection of information and deep institutional knowledge of the surveyed communities.**

Related to the previous finding, many of our results, such as differences across the provinces, only make sense when connected with the data collected from community meetings. At the beginning of our project a lot of time was spent to understand the governance structures of the communities that made up our sample, rather than just relying on the CSDs created by Statistics Canada. This also changed our sampling procedure, and our attempts to achieve representativeness. Provinces are structured differently, and residents often do not associate or identify with the community associated with their postal code. Initial knowledge of differences between types of Aboriginal communities (e.g., between First Nations and Metis communities) that exist both within and across provinces was also critical. Some of this knowledge also aided and/or changed our interpretation of the quantitative results.

**Knowledge of Co-operatives**

**Finding: Community administrators have a better knowledge of the co-operative model than general community members.**

There was a significant difference in co-operative knowledge between the two types of surveys and respondents. General community members (telephone survey) reported that 25% did not know, *what is a co-operative?* Community administrators (web-based survey) reported a much higher overall knowledge of co-operatives – only 9% reported that they did not know what is a co-operative.

For administrators, that level of knowledge depended on which province they lived in: only 7% of Saskatchewan administrators indicated no knowledge of co-operatives, while in British Columbia,



15% of administrators did not know what a co-operative is. It mattered less whether the administrator was from a rural or Aboriginal community; their knowledge was similar.

**Finding: Aboriginal residents in western Canada have far less knowledge of the co-operative model than rural residents.**

There is a remarkable gap between rural and Aboriginal community respondents in the telephone survey. When asked, “Do you know what a co-operative is?”, 23% of rural respondents and 41% of Aboriginal respondents reported ‘no’ or ‘don’t know.’ The responses from Aboriginal surveys range from about 34% and 35% in British Columbia and Saskatchewan respectively, but rise to about 42% in Alberta and about 46% in Manitoba. Future co-operative development with Aboriginal communities must address this lack of co-operative knowledge.

## Conclusion

While there are many needs that are the same between rural and Aboriginal communities, the intensity, severity, or urgency may be different depending on a variety of factors within the community. Addressing these needs will likely require localized strategies.

There are, however, some interesting surprises in our findings. A few of the issues that garner media attention, such as water or sanitation, tended to fall at the bottom of our list of needs, indicating that both community members and administrators feel that, overall, communities are doing a reasonable job of addressing these needs. That point holds true for both rural and Aboriginal communities.

Communities and community administrators both suggest that communities would like to see more effort put into local programming, particularly programs that target and support youth, arts and culture, and seniors. These needs tended to land higher on lists than services such as health care or educational supports. During community visits, health care was the number one need, in part because a number of related health care needs, such as hospital, mental health services, doctors, nurses, and addictions services tended to be rolled together. In the surveys, these issues were not split out for respondents to rate.

Housing is a key need across rural and Aboriginal communities, emerging as a higher priority in Aboriginal communities. This finding reflects what communities told us during the community engagement meetings: housing, as it stands, does not match needs in rural and Aboriginal western Canada.

Aboriginal communities report lower levels of business capacity and social capacity than rural communities. Low levels of business capacity and social capacity are likely linked to the higher needs and lower quality of life reported in Aboriginal communities, issues that clearly are not related to rurality, but to other social, economic, cultural, historical, and policy factors.

Gathering usable and accurate data, particularly relating to Aboriginal communities, remains a concern. Even when the Co-operative Innovation Project identified gaps and took extra measures to mitigate or influence data gathering, we were not always successful.

Finally, there are clear differences in the level of co-operative knowledge, first between community members (as represented in the telephone survey) and administrators, and between rural and Aboriginal respondents. The vast majority, over 90% of administrators could answer with confidence that they know what a co-operative is, but about one quarter of community members could not. Moreover, Aboriginal residents in western Canada report weaker co-operative knowledge than rural respondents. Any work to promote the co-operative model, and support its increased use as a tool to help address community-level needs in rural and Aboriginal western Canada, must contend with and overcome these knowledge gaps.



## Endnotes

---

<sup>1</sup> To facilitate comparison at the community level, for the telephone survey we used the mean score for each variable of all the respondents from that community, if there was more than one respondent. We only compared the overall means because the low number of overlapping communities does not enable us to reliably break down the results across provinces or community type.