

## *Trends in Rural Culture*

**CEED In-Service  
December 4, 2002**

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## Five essential forms of capital

- Financial Capital
- Physical
- Human
- Environmental
- Social

## Social Capital

- Community involvement of people and organizations; participation in community events and projects; membership in local organizations; diversity of leaders; cooperation among organizations, etc.

## Emerging Traits and Characteristics

### 1. Turbulence

- Rapid changes
- Social and economic change is never equal in its impact; produces gains for some and losses for others
- Externally driven social changes → powerless
- As losses mount → grief → anger → reaction

### 2. Anxiety

- Fear of the future, because the past has produced so much change (losses)
- Are rural people more anxious?
  - Fear of additional losses
  - Fear of prosperity

### 3. Weaken social institutions

Social institutions brings people of dissimilar interests together (unlike special interest groups)

- Local government, schools, hospitals, libraries, etc.

### 4. Decline in civility

- Less tolerant
- Less respect
- Unyielding positions
- Divided communities

### 5. Widening gaps between groups/sectors

- Age, income, generational differences
- Race or ethnic background
- Local versus state versus federal regulations
- Commodity interests
- Rural–Urban
- Newcomers versus long–term residents

### 6. Consolidation of business enterprises

- Production
- Processing/Manufacturing
- Marketing
- Banking
- Retailing

### 7. Occupational changes

Moving from a nation of self–employed entrepreneurs, business persons to one of hired managers and employees

### 8. Callousness

- Indifference
- Erosion in community and trust
- Blaming the victim
- Orientation to individual rather than group or collective needs

## Are these trends creating a “*distrustful culture*”?

- Where people no longer trust each other
- Where extreme individualism is primary
- Where people no longer know each other
- Diminished respect, communication, and cooperation

## Traits of a distrustful culture

- Legal representation
- Formalized contracts
- Fear of liability
- Less personal contact
- Formal communication
- Suspiciousness
- Negative attitudes

- Is it possible that we are creating a rural culture, where no one wants to live?
- Where there are limited opportunities?

## Building Social Capital

- Communication
- Trust
- Cooperation



## Importance of Service Clubs in Building Social Capital

- Opportunities for leadership development
- Strengthens social capital
- Networking
- Building sense of belonging
- Demonstrates civic duty and responsibility
- Bringing people of diverse backgrounds, interests and talents together—community building

## Need to Restore the Practice of Neighboring

Neighbor as a verb

versus

Neighbor as a noun