2020 HOUSEHOLD EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PROJECT

Community-Based Social Marketing Pilot













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INTRODUCTION

About the Project

In spring 2020, a Climate Change Adaptation Intern, Alexandra Buhr, was hired by the Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute (RDI) in the Applied Research and Innovation Centre at Selkirk College. The position was created to help address low levels of personal emergency preparedness in local communities, which emerged as a priority capacity building need as part of the RDI's Rural Climate Adaptation Project.

Using community-based social marketing as a framework, emergency preparedness-enhancing strategies were developed, piloted, and evaluated in three unique Columbia Basin communities—Rossland, Golden and Nelson. An overview of CBSM can be found below, with additional reference materials hyperlinked throughout this document.

Objective

The main objective of the *Household Emergency Preparedness: Community-Based Social Marketing Pilot* was capacity building. Regardless of the strategies' outcomes, the knowledge gained from this pilot project is valuable in enhancing future emergency preparedness efforts at the local government level.

Community-Based Social Marketing

<u>Community-based social marketing</u> (CBSM) is an effective tool for encouraging positive social change in populations. CBSM marries the principles of psychology and social marketing, and offers a boost to traditional informationintensive campaigns. While information-intensive campaigns are great tools for communicating with the public, they are generally ineffective at influencing lasting behavioral changes in communities. CBSM uses engaging techniques like pledges, <u>commitments</u>, <u>prompts</u>, <u>incentives</u>, and <u>social pressures</u>, all of which actively involve the target population in the adoption of sustainable behaviors. CBSM's formula for developing successful strategies is supported by years of reputable research and case studies. CBSM uses a 5-step approach: (1) selecting behaviors, (2) identifying barriers and benefits, (3) developing strategies, (4) piloting, and (5) broad-scale implementation. Completing a household emergency preparedness plan or assembling an emergency preparedness kit were the focal <u>behaviors</u> for this project.

Barrier and benefit research is the most essential step in a successful CBSM strategy. It is also the most timeconsuming. Barriers are the roadblocks that reduce the likelihood of a target population adopting a positive behavior. For example, a barrier to completing a household emergency preparedness plan could be access to a printer to print PreparedBC's template. To circumvent this issue, templates could be printed and delivered to all households in the community, so that everybody has a convenient opportunity to become emergency prepared.

It is imperative that barrier and benefit research is not rushed, as this information lays the foundation for the entire strategy. It is recommended that barrier and benefit research draws from at least two of the following methods: literature reviews, surveys, focus groups, intercept surveys, and where appropriate, discreet observations. After completing barrier and benefit research, the strategy can be designed and applied on a small, representative pilot population. Depending on efficacy, refinements may be made prior to implementing the strategy at a larger scale.

Successful CBSM strategies offer a framework or reference point for those looking to achieve similar behavioral outcomes in a population. However, CBSM strategies transplanted from one population to another without consideration of a community's unique barriers may be ineffective. If a CBSM strategy proves effective in one area of town, but ineffective in a neighboring area, the barriers unique to the latter population must to be considered and factored in to the strategy revision.

Barrier and Benefit Research During COVID-19

The most successful CBSM strategies are prefaced by thorough barrier and benefit research that reflects the specific context of the community in which the marketing will occur. This project, however, had a limited scope and was delivered during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. To remain in compliance with provincial health recommendations, barrier and benefit research was done virtually. This limitation resulted in an imperfect understanding of the pilot communities' barriers and benefits.

Some barriers to personal emergency preparedness were identified in the 2017 British Columbia <u>Personal</u> <u>Preparedness Survey Report</u>, carried out by Ipsos Public Affairs. This survey provided a broad perspective of household emergency preparedness in the province, including barriers that prevented respondents from completing an emergency plan or assembling an emergency preparedness kit. Additionally, community-specific surveys conducted by the RDI in 2019 were reviewed, to understand existing levels of emergency preparedness in local communities. The local surveys mirrored provincial findings: only 1 in 3 households in British Columbia reported having a complete, consolidated emergency preparedness kit. A literature review on emergency preparedness provided a third perspective on common barriers, as well as best practices related to building household emergency preparedness.

COMMUNITY-BASED SOCIAL MARKETING STRATEGIES

About the Strategies

Pilot strategies were developed for three communities within the Columbia Basin-Boundary region— Golden, Nelson, and Rossland. One strategy was budget-intensive, one was capacity-intensive, and one was informationintensive. The variation between strategies demonstrates that emergency preparedness programs can be implemented in all communities, regardless of resources, capacity, or time.

The strategies have been categorized in relation to one another based on four indicators—*cost, visibility, involvement* and *directness* (Table 1). Cost refers to the total budget of the strategy. Visibility estimates how conspicuous the strategy was to the average resident. Involvement refers to the amount of time and effort required to carry out the pilot strategy and directness refers to the level of frankness used when asking residents to engage in a particular behavior (active versus passive messaging). Details about the specific strategies are below.

Community	Strategy	Cost	Visibility	Involvement	Directness
Golden	Capacity- intensive	Low	Moderate	High	High
Nelson	Information- intensive	Moderate	High	Moderate	Moderate
Rossland	Budget- intensive	High	Low	Low	Low

Table 1: Resource and capacity considerations for each pilot strategy.

The Town of Golden: Capacity-Intensive Social Diffusion

The strategy developed for the Town of Golden aimed to stimulate conversation between neighbours, which is a form of <u>social diffusion</u>. Social diffusion is frequently integrated into CBSM strategies, and refers to the increased

likelihood of a person adopting a behavior because a trusted colleague or friend has done so. Social diffusion subtly influences the choices that people make. For example, when a person is looking for a new book to read, they will likely seek the recommendation of a friend rather than a stranger on an internet forum. This strategy uses the familiarity of neighbors and the power of suggestion to diffuse emergency preparedness throughout a pilot community. The objective was to encourage households to complete an emergency plan, complete with an out-of-town contact. As shown in Table 1, this strategy required high involvement and directness from local government partners, and was carried out at a relatively low cost.

Within the Town of Golden, a pilot neighborhood was selected. Thirty households were visually divided into ten clusters of three houses. A canvasser was recruited to knock on the doors of all middle houses within each cluster of three houses. The canvasser had a physically-distanced conversation with each middle household, and provided them with materials that supported the



Figure 1: Static-cling sticker (4" diameter) designed for Golden's Emergency Preparedness Pilot Project (2020).

pilot strategy. These materials included three fillable household emergency plans, three static-cling stickers (Figure 1), and three information cards (Figure 2; Figure 3). One fillable household emergency plan, information card, and static-cling sticker was designated for the middle house; the other materials were to be distributed to the neighbors by the middle household.

Each middle household (ten out of thirty homes) was prompted by the canvasser to complete these steps:

- First, complete a household emergency plan. Elements like a rendezvous-spot and out-of-town contacts must be considered, in case of evacuation.
- Second, upon completion of the emergency plan, display the provided static-cling sticker in a window visible to the street.
- Finally, visit the neighbors on both sides, provide the neighbors with a fillable emergency plan and staticcling sticker, encourage them to complete the plan and display the sticker to signify their preparedness.

The information card stipulated that the static-cling sticker was only to be displayed if the household had completed an emergency plan. Participating households were asked to leave the sticker up until a specified date. The pilot neighborhood was given four weeks to complete their plans and display their stickers. On the final day of the pilot, the canvasser visually surveyed the neighborhood, counting visible static-cling stickers; this is how the overall success of the strategy was quantified. If a household did not have a sticker displayed on the day the neighborhood was surveyed, it was assumed that the household did not make an emergency plan.

Help your neighbours get emergency prepared!

Part of living in these breathtaking and wild landscapes involves recognizing the risks of wildfires, floods and landslides, caused by extreme weather. With these events occurring more frequently due to climate change, households should practice preparedness so that they are better equipped to respond in the event of an emergency. We encourage you to complete this fill-in-the-blank emergency plan with your household. When you're finished, proudly display this cling-sticker in a streetfacing window of your house. Please leave it there until at least August 15th 2020, to help us measure your neighbourhood's emergency preparedness. Only place the sticker on your window after your household has completed an emergency plan.

One more thing... Could we ask you a favor? We are counting on you to bring a blank emergency plan and cling-sticker over to your neighbours on the left and right side of your house. Please encourage them to complete their household emergency plan, asking them to display their sticker afterwards to signify their preparedness. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, please maintain appropriate distance when speaking with your neighbours. Good old-fashioned neighbour-to-neighbour contact builds the most resilient communities. Thanks for your help!



Figure 2: The information card designated for all middle houses.



Figure 3: The information card designated for all other houses except for "middle" houses.

Strategy Rationale

• Barrier-free, intentional marketing materials

The decision to use static-cling stickers was purposeful. Households may opt out of placing a traditional adhesive sticker on their window because it could be difficult to remove. Static-cling stickers are easy to remove, since they adhere to surfaces without adhesive. Effective CBSM strategies anticipate barriers and act to alleviate or remove them before they become problematic. The static-cling sticker was also designed to be as visibly appealing as possible.

• A trusted community member

For this pilot project, Golden's emergency management coordinator volunteered to be the canvasser. Theoretically, the more respected and trusted a canvasser is, the greater potential influence they have on promoting positive behavior in a community.

• Establishing social norms through visibility

By displaying a sticker in a window, a household is making the invisible behavior of emergency preparedness visible. This can be likened to placing a recycling bin at the curb on collections day. People are subconsciously aware of their neighbors' participation, or lack thereof, in curbside recycling. Blue bins transform the invisible act of at-home recycling into an observable declaration of environmentally-conscious behavior. Similarly, displaying a static-cling sticker after making an emergency plan communicates to others that a household has taken steps to become more emergency prepared. Both of these acts establish <u>social norms</u>, effectively setting a precedent for what the "status-quo" behavior is. As households in the pilot community display their static-cling stickers, social pressure will mount, motivating ambivalent households to engage in the positive behavior of emergency preparedness.

• Using consistency as a stepping stone

People like to be consistent in their actions; the pilot uses this knowledge as a springboard. <u>Studies show</u> that folks who engaged in a small, positive behavior just once were significantly more likely to engage in larger and more impactful related behaviors when prompted up to one year after the initial behavior. This strategy is straightforward with few barriers—the emergency plan is delivered to people's doorsteps and takes very little time to complete; the sticker is non-adhesive, attractive, and inconspicuous. The act of

making an emergency plan is undoubtedly valuable, but it more importantly paves the way for the adoption of additional impactful preparedness behaviors later on.

• Accountability for all

There is a healthy dose of accountability in this strategy. Most people agree that emergency preparedness is important, but fail to prioritize it. In this strategy, it becomes the ethical duty of the middle houses to evoke emergency preparedness in their neighbors, and in order to do so, they must first participate in emergency preparedness themselves. Theoretically, nobody gets off the hook in this strategy—all parties involved feel morally obliged to partake in emergency preparedness knowing that they play an important role in community resilience.

Results and Recommendations

The pilot neighborhood was canvassed on a Saturday morning by Golden's emergency management coordinator. The canvasser was met with mild skepticism at first, since the strategy required door-knocking during a global pandemic. The canvasser adhered to physical distancing protocols, knocking on the door, placing the marketing materials on the doorstep, stepping back and having a conversation from an appropriate distance. The canvasser reported that after explaining their role within the Town of Golden, people warmed and became more receptive to the pilot project.

Out of the neighborhood of thirty homes, ten doors were knocked on. The canvasser had a physically distanced conversation with seven of the ten homes, with no response from the remaining three homes. All seven homes took the materials in; the remaining three households had the materials dropped on their doorsteps. The canvasser personally knew two of the seven households. None of the households agreed on the spot to commit to the pilot project, nor did any of the households refuse the materials.

Returning nearly four weeks later, the canvasser observed just three households displaying stickers, out of the thirty total houses, equating to a 10% success rate. All of the "successful" houses were middle houses, and all were houses that shared an in-person conversation with Golden's emergency management coordinator during the initial phase of the project. Zero neighbors participated in the project, and it is unknown if the middle households had a conversation with their neighbors informing them of the pilot project, or if the emergency preparedness materials were distributed to the neighbors by the middle houses. The canvasser personally knew two of the three middle households that displayed their stickers. Overall, the canvasser was very surprised by the lack of engagement on behalf of the community.

It is difficult to draw conclusions from such a small sample size. However, the canvasser's role within the local government, and their familiarity within the community, appeared to be major factors in encouraging the adoption of emergency preparedness behavior. It is also possible that more than the three counted households completed a household emergency plan, but did not display a sticker. Finally, the impacts that COVID-19 had on this strategy are unknown, although physical distancing may have discouraged the neighborly discourse vital to the efficacy of this strategy.

For local governments interested in adopting a similar strategy into their community, consider the following:

- Explore various canvassing methods in numerous neighborhoods; weigh against one another to determine which are the most effective. Although the emergency management coordinator's position and status presumably encouraged households to complete their plans and display their stickers, it is worth testing how essential an influential member of the community is to the strategy's success. With a better understanding of this, local governments may consider outsourcing canvassing to volunteers and/or summer students.
- Consider revisiting the same middle households on the final day of the pilot, while counting stickers. It could be worthwhile to ask residents for their thoughts on the project, reasons for participation (or lack thereof), and suggestions for improvement. Approach people with a friendly, respectful demeanor so that they do not feel judged for their participation, and feel comfortable providing honest feedback.

- Health, wellbeing, and safety were top priorities in summer 2020 as Canadians navigated the pandemic. At this point, it is too challenging to untangle the lack of participation in the pilot project from pandemic-related safety measures. Consider retesting this strategy in a post-pandemic world.
- To hold people more accountable, consider gaining permission from the middle houses to send a follow-up text message three weeks after the canvasser's initial visit. This could be done using an automated text messaging service.
- Consider testing thirty houses with this exact method, as well as thirty houses with 100% in-person conversations with a canvasser, and thirty houses with zero in-person conversations. Test against one another to determine how much capacity is required to push this strategy forward.

Regardless of outcome, this strategy and the face-to-face conversations engendered important discussions about emergency management and flood preparedness specific to the Town of Golden. Even unsuccessful emergency preparedness efforts are beneficial to boosting community resilience.

The City of Nelson: Information-Intensive Campaign with a Pledge

In collaboration with Nelson Emergency Management, a comprehensive emergency preparedness campaign was launched for the month of August. Disaster preparedness is more likely to be at the forefront of residents' thoughts as wildfires dot the province and dominate the news headlines towards the end of summer. Thanks to Nelson's Emergency Management Department's contributions of time, support, and resources, a comprehensive strategy was implemented within the community. This campaign was moderate in its directness, cost and involvement, and high in visibility (Table 1). The primary objective of the campaign was to elevate Nelson's general level of household emergency preparedness and disaster awareness through a blitz-style campaign. No singular CBSM strategy was piloted or tested, but CBSM techniques were integrated into the campaign frequently.

In terms of vulnerability to wildfire, Nelson ranks as the #1 most endangered community of >10,000 people in BC. FireSmart, fuel reduction and emergency preparedness can significantly reduce the likelihood of devastating wildfires, and can concurrently boost community resilience. Nelson's fire chief recommends that all residents are actively involved in the processes of prevention and preparedness, and are aware of the risks associated with living in a forested community. For this reason, the strategy was marketed as the "Community Preparedness Pledge", which shares the responsibility and accountability of emergency preparedness with Nelson residents. <u>Commitments</u> made publicly, such as pledges, are significantly more likely to be upheld; this was considered when Facebook was chosen as the platform for the Community Preparedness Pledge.

Committing to consistent vernacular was a priority in Nelson's emergency preparedness campaign. Emergency preparedness kits have myriad names (72-hour kits, grab-and-go-bags, bug-out-bags, G.O.O.D bags), but similar functions. Knowing that confusion and overwhelm were identified as barriers to emergency preparedness in British Columbia's 2017 *Personal Preparedness Survey Report*, the term "emergency preparedness kit" was chosen to be used exclusively. The take-home message from the campaign was to "know the risks, make a plan, and build a kit".

Elements of Nelson's Community Preparedness Pledge Campaign

• Local business collaboration

Select local businesses on Nelson's main street (Baker Street), set up in-store displays compiling emergency preparedness-related items that they retailed. Four businesses participated. These shops were given an eye-catching poster (Figure 4) to identify that they were part of a local resilience-boosting initiative. Nelson Fire & Rescue's Facebook Page promoted the participation of these businesses to their following of 1,400 people, with the hopes of directing emergency preparedness-related sales to local stores.

• Plentiful emergency preparedness resources

Three hundred copies of emergency preparedness resources were distributed between the four participating businesses. These included <u>household</u> preparedness guides, <u>apartment/ condo</u> preparedness guides, preparedness guides for people <u>living with disabilities</u>, and FireSmart <u>home manuals</u>. These resources were free to the public, and their quantities were counted before and after the pilot.

Social media promotion

Nelson Fire & Rescue's large Facebook following contributed to the success of this project. A preparedness pledge (Figure 5) was made shareable on Nelson Fire & Rescue's Facebook page, and was boosted for \$25, to reach a broader audience. The social media pledge was <u>incentivized</u> to help encourage participation. The act of sharing the Facebook post indicated that the person was pledging to complete an emergency plan with their household in the month of August. Each person who pledged via Facebook was entered into a raffle to win an emergency preparedness kit with a value of \$125. Shareable posts are a fantastic way to create <u>social diffusion</u>, with each consequent share expanding the reach of the post. A pledge, whether done on social media or with pen and paper, is a great opportunity for people to publicly commit to positive behavioral changes. A Facebook Poll was also carried out to identify barriers, misconceptions and attitudes that Nelson residents had towards emergency preparedness (Figure 6). This was not used as a metric of success, but as an opportunity to better serve the Nelson community in future emergency preparedness related endeavors.

Results and Recommendations

Nelson's strategy had multiple elements, and as a result, the overall success of the campaign was challenging to measure. Nelson Fire & Rescue's main objective was to build general awareness surrounding the importance of household emergency preparedness, recognizing that engaging residents in emergency preparedness is a process that requires ongoing commitment. Below are the components of the Nelson Community Preparedness Pledge that were measured.

• Shareable Facebook pledge

The Facebook Community Pledge for Preparedness was shared by twenty-two Nelson residents between August 7th and August 16th, 2020. The boosted post reached 1535 people in Nelson, appearing on 680 Mobile App News Feeds and 473 Desktop Right Columns, amongst other places. Overall, this was a quick, easy and inexpensive way to encourage residents to make emergency plans for their households while upholding the visibility of the campaign. Unfortunately, only eleven of the residents who shared the post did so publicly; the other half shared privately. This was a major learning: when sharing a post, Facebook defaults to the settings used by a person the last time they shared a post. Local governments considering using shareable Facebook pledges as a part of their emergency preparedness campaigns must *explicitly state that the post must be shared publicly* to be entered into the raffle. This will ensure that social diffusion is not hindered and continues to increase the influence of the campaign.

• Facebook poll responses

In 2017, Facebook introduced "stories", which are temporary posts that are visible for 24 hours. Facebook stories disappear after this time, unless archived by the user. Facebook stories are a great place for polling, due to their ephemeral and urgent nature. The poll used in this strategy was presented as a judgment-free opportunity for Nelson Emergency Management to better understand residents' relationships to emergency preparedness. Twenty Facebook accounts viewed the stories, but very few responded to the questions and polls. Of three respondents, two people indicated that building an emergency preparedness kit was too time-consuming; one participant admitted that they were unaware of emergency preparedness kits. Of five respondents on another story, four indicated that they genuinely believed emergency preparedness was important, while one believed the opposite to be true. Of four respondents, two reported that they were proactive when it came to emergency preparedness measures, while two admitted that there was room for improvement.

Emergency preparedness resource count

Supplemental resources, such as household preparedness guides and FireSmart brochures, were distributed to each participating local business. Locals could take these resources home, free of charge. During the month of August, one business distributed thirty-four household preparedness guides and nine preparedness guides for people living with disabilities. Another business reported that twenty copies of the household preparedness guide had been picked up by shoppers.



Figure 4: The official Community Preparedness Pledge poster, displayed in participating local businesses on Baker Street.



Figure 5: Social media pledge used to enhance Nelson's Community Preparedness Pledge campaign.

Local businesses were quick to rise to the occasion and join Nelson's Community Preparedness Pledge campaign. However, all stores reported that their shipments were unreliable and delayed as a result of the pandemic. One store special-ordered emergency preparedness related items into stock, in an effort to become a partner in community safety. Another local business was working with I.T. staff to explore adding a locally-sourced emergency preparedness kit to their popular online store. An online offering like this is an excellent way to merge local business stimulation with <u>convenience</u>. As affirmed by Nelson Fire & Rescue's Facebook poll, building an emergency preparedness kit is seen as time-consuming. More convenient options for locals would, in theory, result in more prepared households.

To close the campaign, participating businesses were contacted at the end of August. One business, a cornerstone hardware store in the community, expressed that they would happily participate in a community resilience campaign annually. Due to delayed shipments, a consequence of COVID-19, the hardware store was not able to assemble their display until midway through August. The manager of this store reported that many people were asking about the campaign poster displayed at the front of the store, and as a result of their display, were having more conversations about household emergency preparedness with customers. The manager also mentioned that he sees a surge in emergency preparedness-related sales during catastrophic fire years. He also reported that when wildfires are proximate to Nelson, people come into the hardware store looking for methods to structurally protect their homes. This suggests that a collaboration between local hardware stores and FireSmart could prove synergetic.



Figure 6: Nelson Fire Rescue's Facebook story polls, used to gauge attitudes towards emergency preparedness.

A local drugstore placed their emergency preparedness display on an end-shelf

display, directly in front of where the pharmacy queues. The display included supporting resources, the campaign poster, pet food, water, batteries, emergency chargers, canned goods, and more. The manager of the store reported that they would be happy to participate again, and that at the very least, the campaign engendered household preparedness actions by herself and the drugstore's staff.

For local governments interested in adopting a similar strategy into their community, consider the following:

- Design and print out small, aesthetically pleasing bag inserts, and distribute them to local businesses that
 retail emergency preparedness items. These bag inserts, roughly the size of a bookmark, are an
 opportunity to direct residents to important local emergency planning resources. For example, many
 Columbia Basin communities have <u>emergency notification systems</u> that inform residents via text, phone
 and email about impending hazards like fires, floods and storms.
- Wording matters. Consider testing the effectiveness of different pledge phrases to determine what resonates with your intended audience. Which is more effective?
 "To protect my loved ones, I pledge to _____" OR "I pledge to _____"?
 "I pledge to _____" OR "I pledge to _____ by the end of August 2020"?
 More about this study <u>here</u>.
- Consider in-person, public commitments in hardware stores and other participating local businesses, to appeal to a less technologically inclined demographic.

The strength of this campaign was its omnipresence— it was supported by an update to the Emergency Preparedness section on the City's website, it was promoted by a strong social media presence, and it was boosted by visibility and signage in local businesses. Nelson residents were prompted constantly to engage in emergency preparedness. This campaign was a major collaboration between local businesses, emergency management, and the RDI. The City of Nelson demonstrates a clear commitment to emergency preparedness, risk awareness, and disaster mitigation. Overall, Nelson's Community Preparedness Pledge laid a great foundation in the City for future emergency preparedness projects.

The City of Rossland: Incentivized, Hands-Off Approach

The pilot project developed for the City of Rossland was largely hands-off, testing the efficacy of a strategy that required very little local government involvement. It was essential to test a remotely-delivered strategy, since local governments often have very little capacity to dedicate to emergency preparedness. The general objective was to encourage Rossland residents to build emergency preparedness kits. This strategy was low in directness, visibility and involvement, and high in cost (Table 1).

Hand addressed envelopes, which are more likely to be opened than other mail, were sent to thirty randomly selected addresses in Rossland. These mail-outs informed residents that they were eligible to redeem a \$30 gift card to the local grocery store, should they build an emergency preparedness kit by a certain date (Figure 7). A simple checklist for building an emergency preparedness kit (Figure 8) was included in the envelope. To prove participation, recipients were asked to send a photo of their household with their newly assembled emergency preparedness kit to an email address created specifically for this pilot project. The incentives were transparently marketed as "first come, first served, while quantities last", as the total budget available was limited, and more households were engaged than the budget allowed, under the assumption that not everyone would participate.

Similar to the approach created for Golden, this strategy thinks big-picture. First, a small group of a population would be incentivized to participate in the positive action of building an emergency preparedness kit. The gift card incentives result in submission of photographs of local residents engaging in a proactive and safety-conscious behavior in small-town Rossland. Once the incentivized period ends, these photographs could be used (with consent) to create a display in a visible community location such as the grocery store or post office. The compilation of photos of local families with an emergency preparedness kit establishes a social norm, ideally motivating other families to get prepared. Social norms create friendly levels of pressure that are proven to be effective at motivating members of the community to make positive decisions.

Your address

Hi there! Your household has been randomly selected to participate in a pilot program, in an effort to engage citizens of Rossland in emergency preparedness. Your participation is voluntary, but appreciated. This is part of a project addressing rural climate change adaptation, funded by the Federation of **Canadian Municipalities.**

While supplies last, the Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute (RDI) and the City of Rossland are offering a \$30 Ferraro Foods gift card to households that assemble an emergency preparedness kit between July 15th 2020 and August 5th 2020. This incentive is not available to the entire city. A checklist on building an emergency preparedness kit is enclosed.

If your household wishes to participate, the following items must be emailed to preparedrossland@gmail.com



- A photo of a useful, consolidated emergency kit or bag, tailored to your household's needs
- A photo of your household with the emergency preparedness kit. (Note: Your photo will not be shared unless you give consent)
- A brief 50-100 word summary of why emergency preparedness is important to your household

Each of these bullets must be included and addressed for households to qualify for incentive. Gift card quantities are limited, and will be distributed on a first come, first served basis.



Figure 7: Original mail-out that was sent to thirty randomly selected Rossland households.

Emergency Preparedness Kit Checklist					
DO YOU HAVE YOUR ESSENTIALS? UNATE: 2-4 litres of water, per person, per day. Don't forget about your pets!	Printed "Help/ OK" signs from PreparedBC's website. Display the appropriate side outward in your window during an emergency.				
Non-perishable foods: minimum 3-day supply	Your emergency plan, complete with out- of town contacts				

- Manual can opener
- Hand-crank or battery-powered radio
- Hand-crank or battery-powered flashlight, or headlamp
- Extra batteries, if necessary
- First-aid kit with emergency blanket
- Extra prescription medications, eye glasses/ contact lenses
- Lighter, matches, candles
- Garbage bags & Ziploc bags
- Whistle
- Photocopies of important documents, including health card numbers, in a waterproof bag.
- A power bank/ phone charger
- Personal sanitation items like hand sanitizer, toiletries, toilet paper, feminine hygiene products
- Duct tape
- Latex gloves, mask
- A small tarp
- A pocket knife or multi-use tool



- of-town contacts
- Special items for infants, pets, or folks living with disabilities
- Cash in small bills and coins. Acquire slowly when you can spare a few dollars. In the event of an emergency, debit/ credit/ ATM networks may be down.



- Fill-in-the-blank Emergency Plans are available on PreparedBC's website.
- Make sure that you keep everything in one place, like a duffel bag or tote.
- Every 6-12 months, check your kit. Food, ne, use daylight savings to prompt you, or check when you routinely change your smoke detector's batteries.
- Always keep your gas tank ½ full.
- in Rossland, and plan accordingly. Have a rendezvous spot, should an emergency strike when your family is out of the house.

Figure 8: Mail-out emergency preparedness kit checklist designed, to help guide Rossland residents assembling kits.

Evaluating and Revising

The pilot strategy developed for Rossland, which offered a \$30 grocery store gift card to households who built an emergency preparedness kit in a particular time frame, was unsuccessful. The pilot ran for three weeks. No submissions were received. The project team believes the following factors contributed to this strategy's lack of success:

- Comprehensive barrier and benefit research was not carried out due to COVID-19 limitations. CBSM projects are much more likely to be successful if major obstacles and inconveniences specific to a community are identified and used to inform development of strategies.
- The time frame of three weeks may have been too short. Building an emergency preparedness kit can be time consuming and costly, making it more practical to acquire contents over time.
- Renters and those who live independently are less likely to take emergency preparedness measures than homeowners, according to Statistics Canada's <u>2014 report</u>. Addresses were randomly selected without considering homeowner status. There is roughly one rental property to every four owned dwellings in Rossland, according to the City's <u>2016 census</u>.
- The incentive may have been too small for people to see as worthwhile.
- Although the envelopes mailed to households were on Selkirk College branded stationary, and the contents contained the City of Rossland and the RDI's logos, it may have bred skepticism. Some people may have felt uncertain about sending a photo to an unfamiliar email address, or thought the pilot project was a scam.

Failures can be expected when trying something new. An adapted strategy was implemented within the limited time remaining in the pilot term. This adapted strategy took advantage of the City of Rossland's semi-regular email newsletter that they send to a list of 378 people. With the help of the City, this e-newsletter platform was used to distribute the same incentivized encouragement that was previously offered to a limited number of households. This newsletter is available <u>here</u>. However, the revision asked people to submit photos of their newly assembled kits, rather than photos of their households with their kits, to test if the initial request was a limiting factor. Email recipients were able to access an emergency preparedness kit checklist designed specifically for Rossland. Although this strategy revision utilized email, it could have also been offered to the public via Facebook. A sample Facebook post that went unused can be viewed in Figure 9.

The strategy revision ran from August 17th until August 28th. During this period, four Rossland residents assembled emergency preparedness kits. It is challenging to determine if this small success should be attributed to the much larger reach of the e-newsletter (378 people versus 30), or the fact that the revised version asked for a photo of the kit, rather than the household alongside the kit.



Figure 9: An example of a graphic that could be used to promote the incentivized campaign on social media. Information on how to participate in the incentivized strategy would be included.

While the second attempt to engage residents in building emergency preparedness kits yielded minor results, both strategies were unsuccessful overall, presumably because both failed to address the barriers that prevent Rossland residents from taking preparedness measures. Moving forward, a better understanding of the Rossland community and their unique barriers to preparedness must be established prior to further strategy development. Attempts to establish a better understanding of the community were made, but were unfortunately hindered due to COVID-19 restrictions. For example, an inquiry was made about setting up a booth in the grocery store entrance, with intent to chat to locals about their relationships and obstacles pertaining to emergency preparedness. This request was understandably denied, with the best interest of public health in mind. As demonstrated in The City of Nelson's strategy, surveying locals through social media is possible, though challenging. Intercept surveys carried out in a public space like a grocery store result in a more complete and accurate representation of the community. An example of an intercept survey can be found in Figure 10. The most prevalent attitudes and beliefs expressed should be considered and reworked into future strategy revisions.

"Hello, my name is Alex. I work with the Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute at Selkirk College. Can I ask you a few questions about emergency preparedness? This will take about one minute of your time."

Shopper replies.

"Are you familiar with household emergency preparedness kits?"

Shopper replies.

"Could you tell me what you perceive to be a **challenge** or a **barrier** that prevents you from assembling a household emergency preparedness kit?"

Shopper replies.

"What do you consider to be a **benefit** resulting from assembling an emergency preparedness kit?"

Shopper replies.

"Thank you for your participation. Goodbye!"

Figure 10: An outline for intercept surveying.

For local governments interested in adopting a similar strategy into their community, consider the following:

- If there is little room in the budget for incentives, consider asking local grocery stores to match contributions or donate gift cards. For this project, Ferraro Foods offered to donated two \$30 gift cards; their logo was included on the marketing materials in exchange.
- Rather than incentivizing randomly chosen households, local governments may consider asking wellrespected community members to build and photograph themselves with their personal emergency preparedness kits. These community members could include school teachers, local business owners, fire fighters and front line workers. A prominent display of these photos could be placed in a central community location. The display should be accompanied by resources that encourage and support residents in building an emergency preparedness kit. The more familiar and trusted these upstanding citizens are, the more likely it is that emergency preparedness will diffuse throughout the community with minimal effort.

Project Limitations and Lessons

Barrier and Benefit Research

Results from household emergency preparedness surveys conducted by the Province of BC and the RDI provided some background information on barriers that prevent local residents from becoming emergency prepared. However, results of the pilot project indicate that more extensive, community-specific research is needed to better understand the barriers that prevent households from engaging in emergency preparedness.

Future projects may benefit from hosting a focus group to gather in-depth opinions on barriers that are specific to the context of the project. Casual intercept surveys in local grocery stores could also help achieve this goal. For example, if the majority of survey respondents indicated that they were keen to become more emergency prepared, but didn't know how, the CBSM strategy would be developed in accordance. Inversely, if the intercept surveys revealed disinterest and lack of knowledge surrounding emergency preparedness, the CBSM strategy would focus on creating a level of awareness and accountability prior to focusing on larger behavioral shifts.

Timeline

These three CBSM pilot strategies were developed, tested and evaluated between mid-May and the end of August. Future strategies would benefit from a more expanded timeline, especially during the barrier research phase. Each of these strategies show promise in building community resilience, but require further refinement and research.

COVID-19 Impacts

COVID-19 greatly restricted options for community outreach, and may have even limited the anticipated diffusion of emergency preparedness behaviors. It is difficult to say if these strategies would have yielded the same results in a pre-pandemic world.

CONCLUSION

These small pilot projects successfully engendered conversations about emergency preparedness in small subsets of the communities and within their respective local governments. Each success and failure over the course of the project provided valuable information for future ventures. Even small successes in boosting household emergency preparedness can be considered significant, as they add to a body of work that is largely underdeveloped. Each strategy resulted in some level of community engagement, but there was no clear outlier of success or failure. While this project did not achieve its original goal of developing strategies ready to be adopted by local governments, it does suggest numerous approaches that are ready to be modified to each community's specific context.

Rich and diverse communities mean that there is no universal approach to emergency preparedness. In recognizing that emergency preparedness is an ongoing process, rather than a singular action, the objective will become less about "achieving" emergency preparedness, and more about building resilience and climate-adaptation within communities.



Photo: An email submission of an emergency preparedness kit assembled by a Rossland household. Note the printed checklist designed by the RDI, the fillable Home Emergency Plan from PreparedBC's website, and the DIY "HELP/ OK" signs.