

# Annual Evaluation Report 2019

May 15, 2019

## EXPLORING RURAL REVITALIZATION



**Embudo Valley Library  
and Community Center**



# Executive Summary

The Embudo Valley Library contracted with the UNM Evaluation Lab to help strengthen its evaluative capacity and conduct research into ways the library can work on community revitalization. To that end, the Evaluation Lab (1) provided expertise and assistance in developing logic models for the library and its programs; (2) conducted a literature review on asset based community development, rural economic development, and community revitalization; (3) gathered and analyzed data related to community demographics; and (4) oversaw three focus groups to gain community input on the needs, strengths, and values of the community. The evaluation team then analyzed the data from these focus groups and provided recommendations based on their content.

The focus group analysis revealed a strong and interconnected community with diverse successful businesses, active organizations, and a good elementary school. Community members expressed strong ties to the people, land, culture, and history of the place. Despite the fact that tensions exist between newcomers and long-time residents, and are often expressed through the acequia as a community institution, focus group responses showed the community to be open to newcomers and appreciative of their contributions. The value of the acequias was a central theme across all focus groups; the need to protect the acequias and the traditions around them was prominent. This irrigation system is integral to the community identity and is a site of community interaction. The school was also considered central to the community.

Primary community needs identified by the focus groups were:

- protecting the “spirit of Dixon” and residents’ sense of place;
- economic development and the ability for more residents to be able to make a living locally;
- the need for the community to be attractive, affordable, and accessible to young families;
- the need for more opportunities for exercise, education, and recreation;
- improvements to health and safety, specifically by making the highway safer for pedestrians and maintaining the Neighborhood Watch Initiative; and
- the need for the multi-cultural community to find common ground and work together successfully.

The evaluation team recommends that the Library develop community assets by supporting: (1) the preservation of acequia traditions, (2) increased engagement with the school and school district, and (3) improvements in cross cultural communication and community communication in general; and by leveraging existing community initiatives and assets for the benefit of all community members.

Additionally, the evaluation team suggests the following for continued evaluation capacity development for the Library: reporting back to the community on focus group results and the evaluation report, putting in place a one year plan to diversify the Library board, engaging in asset mapping of community resources to foster cross cultural dialogue and community projects, and solidifying a long term community feedback mechanism in the form of an annual survey and/or community member interviews.



# Introduction

Embudo Valley Library is a non-profit 501(c)3 public library located in the town of Dixon, in Rio Arriba County, New Mexico. Founded in 1992 by community volunteers, the library will celebrate 27 years of service in May. It is one of 14 non-profit public libraries in the state, and one of five in Rio Arriba County. Non-profit public libraries in New Mexico have historically faced unique funding challenges, as they are not tax-payer supported, and must fundraise nearly 90% of their operating budgets annually. However, as non-profit organizations, they can also have a broader mission and undertake projects that may be unique for a public library

The main mission of the Embudo Valley Library is to provide public library service and valuable community programs. These programs include literacy, STEM, arts and cultural programming for children and youth, and an evening cultural series. The library also provides 24-7 wi-fi, public access computing, small business supports, copy, fax and notary services. The library is involved with other community projects as well: it co-sponsors the village's annual Fiesta de Santa Rosa, has completed a number of oral history projects, and it acts as a fiscal sponsor for local organizations like the Neighborhood Watch,

Although the Library continues to rely heavily on volunteers, it now employs 2.5 full time equivalent staff. Its resources include a 3,000 square foot library completed in 2014, and a separate community center on 1.5 acres of land. The buildings and grounds provide a formal and informal gathering space for community meetings, the local fiesta and farmer's market, and a low power FM radio station. The library also owns the 2,500 square foot building that houses the Dixon Cooperative Market. This building has housed a store almost continuously for 92 years, since Doc Zellers founded Zeller's store circa 1927.

Embudo Valley Library partnered with the UNM Evaluation Lab in the 2018-2019 academic year in order to 1) improve and put in place basic evaluation tools, including program logic models and data collection, 2) make current data analysis more effective, and 3) assemble evidence and hold community focus groups regarding local economic revitalization strategies.

The Lab supports teams of graduate students, organization staff and experienced evaluators who work collaboratively to develop evaluation projects over the course of the academic year. In the case of the Embudo Valley Library, Felicity Fonseca held the dual roles of both student and Library director. As such, she was able to use her course work to develop evaluation capacity in the library and to explore program development for community revitalization. Felicity is pursuing a Master of Public Administration. Amanda Bissell, who holds a Master of Public Health, served as team lead. Amanda is an independent evaluator who has worked with the Evaluation Lab since 2015. Mather Cotter, a Master of Public Policy student, rounded out the team.



# Work Performed

The scope of work involved two components:

1. Research and focus groups to support strategic planning by the library to address community revitalization.
2. Improved evaluative capacity for library programs through logic models and data gathering tools (sign-in sheets, surveys etc.).

The work on community revitalization included a review of literature regarding asset based community development and rural economic development; a data compilation of community

characteristics, and three focus groups to gather community input on strengths, challenges and possible directions for community revitalization efforts.

Each focus group involved a different group in the community. The first focus group was conducted with the Library Board of directors to collect data on the board's perceptions of the community's needs and strengths. This focus group was led by a library board member. Three staff members and all six library board members participated.

For the second focus group, library staff made a list of small business leaders and community volunteers, and then made targeted invitations using a snowball method where invitees also suggested potential participants. Seven community members attended the second focus group, which was led by the same library board member. The community members represented arts, agriculture, the volunteer fire department, and education in the community.

The Evaluation Team led the third focus group with patrons from the library who were invited to give input. The patrons were recruited by library staff, and were all active library patrons or parents of children who participate in library programs. Four community members participated.

Although the core questions were the same for all the focus group, the protocols varied. The library board and small business leaders participated in traditional focus groups, responding verbally to the facilitator's questions. The patrons participated in an interactive focus group, where responses were elicited in a variety of activities, including making lists in groups and "speed dating," where participants interviewed each other in pairs. One advantage of interactive focus groups is that participants write responses, so that ideas are captured verbatim. Another advantage is that the activities elicit responses from all participants, with less chance that one voice dominates. (See Appendices A, B and C for the protocols.)

The board focus group was asked about community strengths and needs; the small business leaders were asked about values, strengths, and needs; and the patron focus group was asked about values, strengths, and needs, as well as challenges to implementation and solutions to those challenges.

The focus groups met at the Embudo Valley Library & Community Center. Each group lasted around 1.5 to 2 hours. The participants were made aware that their responses would be de-identified in any work conducted by the evaluation lab. The first focus group was conducted on 1/21/19, the second on 2/21/19, and the third on 3/6/19.

The evaluation team entered focus group notes and written responses into excel spreadsheets and coded each idea in a group process over a number of different work sessions. Coding was done by cataloging all responses given in each focus group, categorizing responses, and then grouping similarly categorized responses. The team drew out the primary themes from these categories. Felicity listened to the recorded focus groups (which were recorded?) and pulled out direct quotes from the participants to help illustrate the thoughts and sentiments of focus group participants.

Finally, lists of themes that arose from this process were created for each focus group question.

The lab also contributed to the evaluative capacity of the library through improvements of survey instruments used to collect feedback on library programs and development of logic models for library programs. Team members reviewed and improved functionality on the afterschool program and robotics program surveys. The after school survey is directed to parents/caregivers with the goal of soliciting feedback on program structure and content. The robotics survey was given as a pre-survey to the 5th and 6th grade participants to measure their skills and confidence in robotics prior to the program and will be compared to a post survey at the end of the program.

The following themes emerged from the focus group data. (See table 1 for a list of themes linked to each focus group.)

## **Strengths**

### **Strength 1: Strong Community with Varied Knowledge and Experience**

Community strength was expressed in a number of ways across the different focus groups. The patron focus group expressed the strength of community in terms of closeness. One

*“The reason Dixon is such a strong community is because we all know each other and we all watch out for one another. That is a huge part of why we work so well together as a community.”*

*There is “a really great sense of belonging to a small community where people really liked each other and looked after one another.”*

person said, “The reason Dixon is such a strong community is because we all know each other and we all watch out for one another. That is a huge part of why we work so well together as a community.” Another said, there is “a really great sense of belonging to a small community where people really liked each other and looked after one another.” The board focus group spoke of the interconnectedness of people, as well as having a community that embraces newcomers and the skills and experience newcomers bring. In the small business leader

focus group, volunteerism, self-sufficiency and self-motivation, cooperation, and local knowledge were used to describe the strength of community; that people could and would rely on each other was a mark of a strong community.

### **Strength 2: Natural Beauty, Strong Tradition, and Deep History and Culture**

Another strength noted by all three groups was the physical land of Dixon, its history, traditions, and culture. One said, “I was born in Embudo NM, born and raised here. Came back because this was my home. I love this town; I would do just about anything for it. I

love the people in this town, especially the elders.” Another participant said “I was born here, I’m going to die here. I love this town. This is it for me.” Multiple members of the board focus group agreed that Dixon offered a unique and beautiful sense of place. All groups felt that Dixon’s acequia system, which has been effective for almost 400 years in providing water for farmers, was a strength, and a place where different parts of the community connect. In the business leaders and patron focus groups, farming and acequias came up repeatedly as strengths, and again in discussions of needs and values; demonstrating that in the minds of focus group

participants farming and acequias are integral to the community. One participant said “We have a rich acequia culture, all of us belong to an acequia and we all own that. A lot of us farm, whether it’s big or small. It’s part of what brings you to Dixon or what you’ve grown up in.”

*“We have a rich acequia culture. All of us belong to an acequia and we all own that. A lot of us farm, whether it’s big or small. It’s part of what brings you to Dixon or what you’ve grown up in.”*

One participant expressed connection to culture and history as “...staying true to your roots and who you are, and the things you were taught as a kid, and the things your parents were taught, and trickle down to your kids when you are raising kids. I am a Norteña, I was raised here and that’s a huge part of me.”

**Table 1. Themes from focus groups of library board members, small business leaders, and library patrons.**

	<b>Library Board Members</b>	<b>Small Business Leaders</b>	<b>Library Patrons</b>
<b>Strengths</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combination of local traditions and knowledge with skills and experience of newcomers</li> <li>• History and place</li> <li>• Robust civic organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural resources water/land</li> <li>• Community capacity</li> <li>• Existing businesses and institutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close knit community</li> <li>• Existing businesses and institutions</li> <li>• Tradition and history</li> <li>• Social engagement opportunities</li> </ul>
<b>Needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sense of place</li> <li>• Economic development</li> <li>• Retain young people</li> <li>• Educational programs for all ages</li> <li>• Community health</li> <li>• Networking/Partnerships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make community attractive to (young) families</li> <li>• Infrastructure</li> <li>• Protection of tradition</li> <li>• Economic development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community led initiative(s)</li> <li>• Exercise/Recreation facilities and opportunities</li> <li>• Maintain land and agriculture- based traditions</li> <li>• Community engagement</li> <li>• Safety (roads and crime)</li> </ul>
<b>Values</b>	Not covered in this focus group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connection to place, sense of community, traditional lifestyle</li> <li>• Creative environment</li> <li>• Can make a living</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agency (community capacity)</li> <li>• Cross cultural connection</li> <li>• Close knit community</li> <li>• Pride in community</li> <li>• Traditional values and skills</li> </ul>
<b>Challenges</b>	Not covered in this focus group.	Not covered in this focus group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bridging different cultures and traditions</li> <li>• Valuing lived experience</li> <li>• Limited water and land</li> <li>• Monetary and human resources</li> </ul>
<b>Solutions</b>	Not covered in this focus group.	Not covered in this focus group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water technology</li> <li>• Access to funding</li> <li>• Bridging people, ideas, and places</li> <li>• Collecting community input</li> </ul>

### **Strength 3: Existing Businesses and Institutions**

Local businesses and institutions were mentioned as a strength in all three focus groups, both in general and with specific examples. The arts economy, library, school, clinic, and volunteer fire department were mentioned by all groups. Regarding the library, co-op, and community center, a participant shared “The co-op and library and community center are used and the community loves them because we’ve never had anything like this in the past. That’s huge to have a co-op and have

*“The co-op and library and community center are used and the community loves them because we’ve never had anything like this in the past. That’s huge to have a co-op and have access to fresh fruits and vegetables. We have an amazing library with so many different programs.”*

*“We have a great elementary school here.”*

access to fresh fruits and vegetables. We have an amazing library with so many different programs.”

The school was recognized for being high quality: “We have a great elementary school here but other areas in our district are not as fortunate.” The school was also seen as a meeting ground: “The school is really important as a gathering place, it’s all we have to gather. It

*“I like Dixon because it’s a small town with character. A lot of these other small towns don’t have the cohesiveness, don’t have anything pulling them together.”*

brings a lot of people together.” The patron focus group made a long list of businesses and institutions, including the animal rescue, theater, crime watch group, senior center, arts tour, and Town Crier (a local volunteer run email network) as community strengths. The board member group and patron group talked about cultural events at the library, festivals, and other opportunities for social engagement and enrichment as a strength of the community. One participant said “This community is made up of nothing but volunteers;” there was a

sentiment that the community would be different without such strong community volunteerism. The business leader and patron group felt that Dixon had a relatively large number of strengths compared to other communities. One person summed it up by saying “I like Dixon because it’s a small town with character. A lot of these other small towns don’t have the cohesiveness, don’t have anything pulling them together.”

## **Needs**

### **Need 1: Protecting the Spirit of Dixon**

Sense of place was one of the strengths expressed by focus group members, and was again brought up in needs. One participant expressed his connection this way: “The ditch is important and it means a lot to me because I see my grandfather and my great grandfather working it. I can still see them there with a shovel, digging that ditch.”

Groups spoke of the need to preserve the sense of place. The business leader focus group emphasized historic preservation and fostering community pride. The other two focus groups echoed these sentiments and spoke of the practical need for protecting the acequias, which are not only central to the history of Dixon but also to continued farming activity. This need was described as an intergenerational gap that risked the loss of culture that is traditionally passed down through the generations. One participant said, “There’s just not that fire in the young kids to continue. We’re getting people from Peñasco to come and clean the ditches that we should be cleaning.” These challenges were expressed as detrimental to protecting Dixon’s history and sense of place.

*“The ditch is important and it means a lot to me because I see my grandfather and my great grandfather working it. I can still see them there with a shovel, digging that ditch.”*

### **Need 2: Economic Development**

Economic development was a common topic in discussions, with both specific needs and solutions offered. The board focus group’s discussion primarily involved the need for programs to improve and encourage education and economic activity. They spoke about loans for agriculture and small business, and encouraging and attracting cottage industry. The business leader focus group mentioned particular forms economic development might take, with a number of businesses that would be well received in the community such as a bakery, laundromat, gas station, and coffee shop. Additionally, both groups mentioned the need for work for young people in the community. The patron group mentioned fewer needs specifically related to economic development, but saw needs in the community that could create economic activity, such as parks with walking trails, a gym or community center with exercise equipment, and a drive-in style movie and other spaces for events.

### Need 3: Being Attractive to Young Families

Related to economic development, but expressed as a particular need in its own right, is making Dixon attractive, affordable, and accessible to young people. Specifically related to affordability, one participant said: “How do we prevent it [Dixon] from being loved to death?” That participant followed up by saying, “The identity of the community surrounding the school: how do we make ourselves attractive to families? How can they afford to live here?”

*“I’m an acequero myself, I farm and I do all that stuff. It’s a very difficult thing for me; I was born and raised here, and taught by my dad how to do an acequia, and then you have people coming over here who have never been inside a ditch and trying to tell you how to run a ditch. These people that are coming here, they never worked a ditch. They are trying to take over the ditches.”*

Within the board group this need to be attractive to younger people also brought up comments on the local school, and bridging the gap between primary, secondary, and post-secondary education. The board group also expressed the need to support young parents and children. The business leader focus group recognized the necessity of young families to keep the school alive, which was seen as a large part of the

community identity. The need for farming jobs and other employment for youth was also mentioned. The patron group saw a need to inspire and incentivize the younger generation to be active within the community. One member said “The young ones need to be picking up the slack. We need to groom the younger adults to learn the ropes. If you’re going to be here and this is your community, you’re as much invested in it as anyone else. You can be a great volunteer in your community and a great professional in your field. Each individual has to find that balance.”

### Need 4: Opportunities for Exercise, Education, and Recreation

While the board and small business leader focus groups expressed the need for more educational opportunities for people of all ages in the community (such as parenting classes and supports, and an arts and crafts school), the patrons focus group expressed a need for more recreational spaces in the community for health and wellness such as a gym and walking trails. Community events such as movies, art workshops, and performances were also seen as needed by the patron and small business leader focus groups. All groups saw a need for spaces in which such activities could occur.

### Need 5: Community Health and Safety

Health and safety of the community came up in all groups. For every focus group, improvements to the road to make it safer, for both pedestrians and bicyclists, was seen as a need. The need to combat crime was additionally brought up as a concern for the board and patrons focus groups. The patron focus group noted the success of the Neighborhood Watch organization as a community led initiative, the need to continue such efforts, and the need to raise awareness on crime.

### Need 6: Bringing Together and Empowering Community Members and Communities

The need for collaboration and empowerment was expressed by both board members and patrons. Both groups saw the need for increased collaboration on farming and acequia maintenance. The patron focus group, again, noted the success of the community led Neighborhood Watch initiative; it was seen as a positive model. Board members saw regional partnerships to bring together communities and undertake collaborative projects as a need. Such inter-community partnerships were not as prominent in discussions by the patron focus group, and when they occurred it was with some ambivalence. Both the diverting of water by Mora and the water demands of Sipapu Ski Resort were brought up along with comments on interconnectedness.

While the board members talked about how welcoming to newcomers the community was, the patron focus group spoke openly about community tensions around integrating newcomers and long-time residents. For example, one participant said, “I’m an acequero

myself, I farm and I do all that stuff. It's a very difficult thing for me; I was born and raised here, and taught by my dad how to do an acequia, and then you have people coming over here who have never been inside a ditch and trying to tell you how to run a ditch. These people that are coming here, they never worked a ditch. They are trying to take over the ditches."

Another participant said we need to "teach newcomers the history and the importance of the ditch and give them the bylaws and teach them what it is. We had some trouble with some new people. The ditch has the right of way to come in and clean the ditches. They're starting to put up fences now, and they won't take them down."

Another participant said "There's always a lot of people with a lot of opinions on how things should be done and everyone thinks that they're right. And that's a big thing that separates our community. The gringos [say] this and the chicanos [say] this and there's always opinions and there's never solutions." The patron focus group explicitly stated a need for cross cultural understanding and capacity. One participant said "Holding groups on how to bridge cultures, there's a lot of people in our community who would show up for something like that. There would be a strong Chicano presence and a strong Caucasian presence. There's a lot of people that already work well together in the community."

*"Holding groups on how to bridge cultures, there's a lot of people in our community who would show up for something like that. There would be a strong Chicano presence and a strong Caucasian presence. There's a lot of people that already work well together in the community."*

## **Values**

### **Value 1: Connection to and Pride in People, Place, and Past**

Unsurprisingly, after numerous mentions as both strengths of Dixon and something necessary to protect, sense of community, place, and history were seen as central values of all focus groups. In addition to comments on the long history of the community and the highly motivated and helpful people, acequias and agriculture were expressed as valuable practically and culturally to Dixon. One participant put it this way: "We have a rich acequia culture, all of us belong to an acequia and we all own that. A lot of us farm, whether it's big or small, it's part of what brings you to Dixon or what you've grown up in."

The patron focus group strongly valued the democratic process within acequia culture, and the need to continue respect for bylaws and traditions regarding acequias. Preservation of local wisdom and character was also a value expressed by the patrons group.

### **Value 2: Agency and Opportunity**

While a need for more jobs and economic development was expressed, focus groups acknowledged the existence and value of both an arts economy and a strong tradition of self-reliance. A number of community members are self-employed, and as one noted, "If you've made it in business in the Embudo Valley, then you can make it anywhere." One

*"I came here to be able to do my work; to have a quiet place to work and have an outlet to sell my work. It's a balance between having the quiet focused work and a retail venue. For me, it's that I can make a living here."*

participant said "I came here to be able to do my work; to have a quiet place to work and have an outlet to sell my work. It's a balance between having

the quiet focused work and a retail venue. For me, it's that I can make a living here."

All focus groups expressed that one of the biggest resources in the community is the people who live here. The community has a "very motivated volunteer base," as was noted in the small business leader group. This is a value that translates into a high degree of community capacity (agency). Participants in the business leader focus group said, "Our biggest asset is people who get involved and do things."

*"Our biggest asset is people who get involved and do things."*

### Value 3: Creative Environment That Combines Cultures

Both the business leader and patron focus groups recognized the creative environment of Dixon. One aspect of this is the arts economy supported by the Dixon Studio Tour. The community has both longtime residents whose families have been here for hundreds of years, and newcomers. This combination has great potential to foster other kinds of creativity. In addition to placing value on traditional wisdom and skills, the patron group

*“Traditions and newcomer ideas...how to bring these two realms together? How do we do that in a way that is socially, racially, ethnically responsible?”*

recognized the knowledge and skills of newcomers as valuable. The integration of new and old was a value expressed by this group as well. One participant said “Traditions and newcomer ideas...how to bring these two

realms together? How do we do that in a way that is socially, racially, ethnically responsible?” While another said “There’s different ways of going about things. The new people are bringing in new technology about how to farm. There needs to be a bridge built on that, the old and the new.”

#### Differences across focus groups

The board member group emphasized on the importance of education and organizational partnerships; the small business group highlighted the issue of affordability and accessibility of the community to young families; and the library patron focus group focused on the importance of cross cultural connection, understanding and bridging different cultures and traditions in order to undertake meaningful and effective community projects.

#### Challenges and Solutions

The patron focus group was asked about challenges in addressing community needs, and solutions to those challenges. Bridging different cultures and traditions was seen as both a challenge and a solution. Additional challenges seen by the patron focus group included respecting the expertise gained through lived experience, limits to both land and water that would constrain new additions to the village, and the need for monetary and human resources to make new projects feasible. Solutions discussed included investing in and investigating water technology, such as drip irrigation and acequia maintenance or improvements. For example, one participant said “There’s different ways of going about things. The new people are bringing in new technology about how to farm. There needs to be a bridge built on that, the old and the new.” Other solutions identified were accessing funding from government and grant sources, meetings directed toward increasing cross cultural engagement, respect through increased tolerance, and collecting community feedback through surveys or community forums.

(See Appendix E for more quotes.)



## Recommendations

The evaluation lab suggests the following based on analysis of focus group data, and reviewing literature on economic revitalization and asset-based community development:

1. **Based on the focus group data and analysis, we recommend establishing a planning group for community development.** This recommendation follows asset-based community development strategies of using social capital (the community’s dedicated volunteer base and positive community connections) to build relationships for beneficial problem solving within the community. The library is one community organization that can leverage resources and investments from outside the community.
2. **We recommend using appreciative inquiry to understand why the Neighborhood Watch is a success and how the library and community can**

**follow that pattern in subsequent projects.** Appreciative inquiry is a technique used in asset-based community development. In appreciative inquiry you examine a community success story to understand the reasons for success. The Neighborhood Watch is a successful and popular community led initiative. Understanding what made this initiative successful can help future community initiatives succeed as well.

3. **We recommend that the library work with another community organization, like the Neighborhood Watch or the Fiesta Council, to co-develop a few local recreational opportunities, including a potential summer outdoor movie series.** The patron focus group expressed a need for more recreational opportunities and saw the school as a neutral gathering space for the community. The Neighborhood Watch organized a December 2018 light parade that was a huge success and well received by the whole community, and the fiesta council has a long track record of organizing a successful fiesta.
4. **We recommend finding and supporting additional ways to engage with the public school district beyond parent volunteering at the local school to help support this important aspect of the community.** This could mean official partnerships on projects between Dixon Elementary School and Embudo Valley Library. The school was repeatedly mentioned across all focus groups and categories of inquiry as a strength, value, and need of the community.
5. **We recommend encouraging respect for and engagement with acequia traditions as a community asset, as well as getting individuals and groups in the community to recognize, use, and develop the community's own internal assets needed to protect acequia traditions and the acequias themselves. Acequia related work could be promoted as healthy recreation and social activity for community members to engage in together.** The acequias are central to life in the Embudo Valley; wherever the town's heart may be, the acequias are its veins. This agricultural infrastructure is not only necessary for continued farming in the area, but also provides a central shared interest that can be leveraged for increased community connection. Asset based community development works by identifying and mobilizing existing (but often unrecognized) assets.
6. **We recommend requesting recognition of the importance of acequias and acequia culture, both historically and economically, by regional institutions such as Española Public School District. One request of the school district could be lesson plans to include place-based learning that engages students with their local communities and culture. This could form the basis for increased cooperation and networking between local communities, and increased connection to the school district.** Acequias also form a connection between Embudo and other rural villages in the region. This could be an opportunity for a formal partnership between Embudo Valley Library and Espanola Public Schools on a place-based learning initiative.
7. The Town Crier (a volunteer run local email network) is recognized as a community asset and as an effective tool for community communication. Are there sectors of the community that aren't currently benefiting from this community resource? **The library could interview the Town Crier volunteer to better understand how this service functions and whether the library could support it more as a tool for community communication. The library could offer basic computing classes that would link to having an email address and receiving Town Crier emails, posting the daily email to the library's social media outlets, or maintaining a binder with hardcopies of the postings on a bi-weekly basis.**



# Next Steps

1. Follow through with a communication plan for focus group and evaluation report results. The recommended communication plan is to:
  - a. Post evaluation plan on library website and Town Crier, and have hard copy available in library by 4/8/19.
  - b. Provide draft evaluation report to library board by 4/8/19.
  - c. Hold focus group report back session in April; start to plan next steps with the group that attends.
  - d. Post evaluation report on library website and Town Crier, and have hard copy available in library by 5/15/19.
  - e. Display the evaluation lab workshop poster in the library if relevant.
2. The evaluation lab recommends that the Embudo Valley Library put in place a one year plan to diversify the board of directors. Diversity will add value to the organization by involving a broader spectrum of the community in decision making. For successful integration of new board members, it is recommended that the new group makes up 30% of the total, or at a minimum, three people. This helps change the culture, and the new members will not feel isolated. See Appendix F for a list of suggested resources for diversifying a non-profit board.
3. Cross cultural training and dialogue were mentioned as both a challenge and solution by the patron focus group. Inclusion and equity are key to the library's mission and vision. The library, acequias, Dixon Cooperative Market and Dixon Studio Tour are all organizations that could benefit from an inclusion and equity perspective. The library could host or lead a diversity training for local organizations as well as create an opportunity for other institutions and community members to explore Asset Based Community Development methods. This would help foster cross cultural dialogue and community projects. See Appendix F for suggested resources.
4. Continue to gather community input and stabilize methods of garnering such input. Methods of doing so could take the form of an annual survey. See Appendix D for a draft example of an annual survey.



## Appendix A – Focus Group Protocol for Library Board

### **FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW WITH EVL BOARD: Monday, January 21, 2019 9:00-10:00 am**

This focus group is the first of a three-part series that will be conducted in conjunction with the UNM Evaluation Lab. The other two parts will include small business leaders in our community and patrons of our library.

During each of the three focus groups, a UNM Evaluation Lab member (probably Amanda) will be present to record and organize the responses.

What we need from each of you (staff, board members) is to come prepared and ready to brainstorm on the following questions:

1. What are the Embudo Valley Community's needs that the Library can address?
2. Why are these needs important?
3. Which of these needs are priorities?
4. What strengths and past successes can we leverage to meet those needs?
5. What would success look like for each of the prioritized needs?



## Appendix B – Focus Group Protocol for Business Leaders

### Focus Group Program Outline

Introduction – Felicity  
Facilitators – Cedric, Kris  
Scribe/timekeeper - Kate

#### VALUES

**First, What binds us together as a community in the Embudo Valley?**

**Question #1 –What matters to you and your family? (our values)?**

Stage One – Individual reflection (4 minutes)

Stage Two – Share in Twos (6 minutes) – Make a summary on sticky notes of top four values

Stage Three – Place sticky notes on board and begin a summary of top issues in individual buckets (20 minutes)

#### NEEDS

**Question #2 What are the needs of our community?**

Stage One – Individual reflection (4 minutes)

Stage Two – Share in Twos (6 minutes) – Make a summary on sticky notes of top four needs

Stage Three – Place sticky notes on board and begin a summary of top issues in individual buckets (20 minutes)

#### STRENGTHS

**Question #3 What are the STRENGTHS of our community that can help meet the identified needs?**

Stage One – Individual reflection (4 minutes)

Stage Two – Share in Twos (6 minutes) – Make a summary on sticky notes of top four strengths

Stage Three – Place sticky notes on board and begin a summary of top issues in individual buckets (20 minutes)

**Next Steps (Felicity and Cedric) 20 minute**

Data analysis

Results distributed to each of you

Discuss in your individual interest groups

Revisit the topics with a focus on ACTION (The How)



## Appendix C – Focus Group Protocol for Library Patrons

### Protocol for Focus Group March 6, 2019 5:30pm-7:30pm

- 4:30/5:00 Arrive and set-up room for 8-10 people.  
Set up food, water, utensils.
- Have a flipchart ready with pages for each question and masking tape to post the questions on the wall as needed.
- Materials needed: Flip chart(s), masking tape. Pens, pencils, markers, post-its in different colors including red and green, 3 copies of a treasure box image, 3 copies of a tool box image each posted to a flip chart, 3 copies of the maze image, 3 copies of pulling the rock up the hill image (include this or not?) each posted on a flip chart, food.
- 
- 5:30 Dinner; greet participants as they arrive and direct them to the food.
- 
- 6:00 **Welcome:** Felicity thank them for their participation, explains that the evaluation team is working with EVL to learn from participants their ideas on community revitalization and economic development. Another way to say this is employment and community well-being/prosperity. **Focus on their shared values, potential challenges and ideas.**
- Introductions of team:** Each team member briefly introduces her/himself and their roles as facilitators, note-takers, recorder, observer.
- Read and get verbal consent agreement to participate:** **Amanda** will read the consent form (consent to participate, to be recorded, and to be photographed) and explains that the team will write a report of the focus group without identifying who said what and will share the findings back to the group.
- Participant Introduction:** Felicity Have them introduce themselves with name, their history in the area, how they are connected to the library and in what capacity. Brief intro about 2 minutes.
- Amanda As a reminder, we want to hear from everybody and be respectful of the time we have for this group.
- 
- 6:15 Felicity will introduce the first activity  
**[Question Goal: Identify community values that can be drawn from for any efforts focused on revitalization and economic development]**
- Question:** What are the community values that matter to you, your family, and your community? Think of these as values reflecting the community we want.

Note: if the participant is not sure how to answer, then use the prompts:  
What are elements of our history and community now that we want to see continued to the future?

**Activity: (2 minutes to explain) Treasure Box (Have 3 ready).** Flip chart, post-its, markers, pens.

Divide participants into 2-3 groups, each with their own flipchart page. On each flipchart page will be a picture of a treasure box. Each participant will be asked to reflect individually on the question, and list their ideas on a post-it (2 minutes). Then in their groups, they each write, place post-it, or draw their responses on the flip chart (5). Group share-out. (5 minutes).

---

6:30 Mather will introduce the second activity and point to the question taped to the wall/on the flip chart.

**[Question Goal: To understand if patrons think there is potential/need for economic development and revitalization in the community and any ideas on what that would be]**

**Question:** What are the community needs in Dixon?

Opportunities for creating more employment and prosperity (economic development and community revitalization) in Dixon/Embudo/Rinconada?

**Activity: (2 minutes to explain) “Speed Dating.” Use post-its.**

Each participant writes their answer to the posted question (2 minutes), then gets together with another participant to discuss, and may add to their answer if they had left something out (2 minutes).

When they are done they stick their answers on the flip chart page with the question, look at all the answers as a group, Mather read out loud and ask participants to add if necessary. (3 minutes)

Note: if the participant is not sure how to answer, then use the prompts:  
Do you think this is needed in the community? If so, what are some potential areas that could benefit the community and/or create jobs?

---

6:40 Mather: **[Question Goal: Identify community strengths that can be drawn from for any efforts focused on revitalization and economic development]**

**Question:** What are the community strengths that can be leveraged to create prosperity? Think of these as tools we have to make the community we want.

**Activity: (1 minutes to explain) Tool box (have 3 ready).** Flip chart, post-its, markers, pens.

Divide participants into 2-3 groups, each with their own flipchart page. On each flipchart page will be a picture of a tool box. Each participant will be asked to reflect individually on the question, and list their ideas on a post-it (2 minutes). Then in their groups, they each write, place post-it, or draw their responses on the flip chart (5). Group share-out. (5 minutes).

Note: if the participant is not sure how to answer, then use the prompts:

What are examples of successful community efforts? What were the elements that contributed to that success?

---

6:50 Felicity will introduce the fourth activity. Post its.

**[Question Goal: Identify challenges to creating more employment and prosperity.**

**Question:** What are the potential challenges to revitalization and economic development?

(Felicity can talk about how with some projects you feel like you're in a maze- don't know where to go or how to get there. Or the task is overwhelming.

**Activity: (1 minute to explain)**

**Individual participants** will reflect on question, write answers on post-its (2 minutes), then pair participants to discuss question (2 minutes), write their answers on post-its then stick to flip chart with maze image. Then in 2-3 groups they organize, discuss, add to the flip chart either in words or drawing (5 minutes). Group share-out. (5 minutes).

---

7:05

**[Question Goal: Identify community solutions to challenges to creating more employment and prosperity. Use green post its.**

**Question:** What are the potential solutions to challenges to revitalization and economic development?

Mather: We can transform our situation, sometimes through skill building, sometimes by working together and learning from each other. Pour one thing in, and out comes something else- eventually!

**Activity: (1 minute to explain)**

**Pair** participants to discuss question (3 minutes), write ideas on post its. Then in 2-3 groups they organize, discuss, add to the flip chart either in words or drawing (5 minutes). Group share-out. (5 minutes).

---

7:20

Felicity will introduce the fifth/final activity

**[Question Goal: Discover new ideas/objectives that weren't asked in previous questions/activities]**

**Question:** Are there any other important ideas missing or anything that you thought of during this time together that isn't up here? Is there anything you think we should have asked that we didn't? Felicity writes on flip chart any

**Activity: Ask and answer, a facilitator will call on folks who have something to add (10 min)**

**Flip chart** page with question, F or M ask, call on people, F or M records on flip chart.

Felicity Thank you for your time and participation. Again, we will follow up and share the results with you. Are there any questions or other things you'd like to share before we end? Report back and planning next steps session will be on Thursday March 28 at 5:30pm for food, 6pm for report back and planning next steps.



## Appendix D – Proposed Annual Survey

“Where has the library positively affected your life in the last year?”, and “Name a problem you tried to use library resources to solve, but found you couldn’t.”

Feedback could also be elicited through individual interviews with community members. Such individuals could be selected during community events at the library and run no more than 15 minutes.



## Appendix E – Selected Quotes from Focus Groups

**These quotes were selected because they were powerful and illustrative of the thoughts and sentiments of focus group participants related to the community strengths, values, needs, challenges, and solutions topics addressed in the focus groups.**

I listed culture. There is the aspect of the acequias, there is the aspect of taking care of the mountains, and cleaning up after yourself, and also staying true to your roots and who you are and the things you were taught as a kid and the things your parents were taught and trickle down to your kids when you are raising kids. I am a Norteña, I was raised here and that’s a huge part of me. Knowing neighbors. The reason Dixon is such a strong community is because we all know each other and we all watch out for one another. We all know each other. That is a huge part of why we work so well together as a community.

The acequia culture is a very democratic process. Traditions and newcomer ideas...how to bring these two realms together....how do we do that in a way that is socially, racially, ethically responsible.

I’m an acequero myself, I farm and I do all that stuff. It’s a very difficult thing for me; I was born and raised here, and taught by my dad how to do an acequia, and then you have people coming over here who have never been inside a ditch and trying to tell you how to run a ditch.

These people that are coming here, they never worked a ditch, they are trying to take over the ditches.

That’s why I say it’s a tradition, because I was brought up like that. I have a document from 1874 from my great grandfather and the State engineer. It’s been passed on and passed one. My dad would tell me, this is the way you do things, this is the way you do things....Farming is also very hard when you don’t have an acequia system....I had dreams like that when I was younger, I have a lot of land and it’s hard without any water, it’s going to be like this now, we’ll probably have good years and good runoff and bad years. It’s not like growing up here, we always had water.

What does it take to be an active participant in the acequia process: a shovel.

If we could teach newcomers the history and the importance of the ditch and give them the bylaws and teach them what it is. We had some trouble with some new people and the ditch has the right away to come in and clean the ditches....they're starting to put up fences now, and they won't take them down.

Being a mayordomo: It's not really the pay you do it for, you do it because you want to do it or you have an interest it.

The school is really important, as a gathering place, it's all we gave to gather, it brings a lot of people together.

We're all trying be more community involved, trying to bring our community together in different ways, we all have the feeling we're needing to get our community together more.

This community is made up of nothing but volunteers.

We have a tremendous amount of community closeness; we know our neighbors.

The coop and library and community center are used and the community loves them because we've never had anything like this in the past. That's huge to have a coop and have access to fresh fruits and vegetables. We have an amazing library with so many different programs. We have a rich acequia culture, all of us belong to an acequia and we all own that. A lot of us farm, whether it's big or small, its part of what brings you to Dixon or what you've grown up in.

Sipapu wants to expand and they're going to want more water. Where do you draw the line? I know Sipapu has been really good with the schools and the skiing program.

It's got some resources there, the library, for me. It's probably one of the best things we have in Dixon, for me.

If you look at the intake of the labs, how many they hire from out of state, for the higher level paying jobs: a lot of us get picked for the worker bee position instead of the queen bee, and that needs to be addressed.

A lot of good teachers are leaving because there's no incentive to stay.

The young ones need to be picking up the slack....to groom the younger adults to learn the ropes. If you're going to be here and this is your community you're as much invested in it as anyone else. You can be a great volunteer in your community and a great professional in your field, each individual has to find that balance.

The ditch is important and it means a lot to me because I see my grandfather and my great grandfather working it, I can still see them there with a shovel, digging that ditch.

There's always a lot of people with a lot of opinions on how things should be done and they everyone thinks that they're right....and that's a big thing that separates our community...the gringos this and the chicanos this and there's always opinions and there's never solutions.

Water is a resource for everything, water for farming and for drinking water. That's an issue too, drinking water. Is this river going to continue running forever?

Regionalizing community drinking water systems into one.

If we start building gyms where are we going to get the land and get the money?

Every time a well is dug around here the water table drops.

It's the very first time here.....for how much we took for granted the water in the river.

You got to remember too that farming, it's hard work, sometimes you make a little bit of money sometimes you might not make money at all. You really want your kids to grow up to be a farmer? It's nice if you have a real job and then you can do your own little (farming) thing on the side.

There's different ways of going about things. The new people are bringing in new technology about how to farm. There needs to be a bridge built on that, the old and the new.

Extensive reviews for the acequia the drip system vs. flood irrigation...that way there's not a whole bunch of fighting over it.

Holding groups on how to bridge cultures... there's a lot of people in our community who would show up for something like that there would be a strong chicano presence and a strong Caucasian presence. There's a lot of people that already work well together in the community.

If I can see change in my dad (asking for the advice of his daughter), then I think the rest of the community can come together like that.

Patience, you got to have patience.

Climate change... that's affecting everything, that's affecting our rivers, that's affecting our land, that's affecting our trees, that's affecting everything.

The parcientes should do their own. We're the money, we're the workers, the parcientes. Actually the work isn't too bad, but it's the people.

Educating newcomers and educating young kids coming up.

We need to address the educational system here. We have a great elementary school here but other areas in our district are not as fortunate. It's hard to be grouped with them. We should strive to be better. The whole Espanola public schools system. Being 49th or 50th is not ok for me as a mother, for somebody who lives here. It's not ok. It needs to be addressed as broad spectrum, how are we going to turn the public school system around? We have a lot of teachers from out of state who don't have our culture, understand our communities.

We do have a great school here, others are not so fortunate, we're all grouped as one (with the Espanola Public Schools), so we need to raise that bar.

The acequia is huge, and it's apparent that it's something we hold dear.

Visiting neighbors, visiting your friends, it doesn't happen anymore, it used to happen a lot.

Being a mayordomo, it's not an easy job, it's not as easy as you think it is. I don't recommend it. They tell you to pass it on to your kids, and I say, "Nope."

There's just not that fire in the young kids to continue, we're getting people from Peñasco to come and clean the ditches that we should be cleaning.

Maybe we need an acequia orientation. What do we do with all these people who don't know how to treat the acequia or participate?

I like Dixon because it's a small town with character. A lot of these other small towns don't have the cohesiveness, don't have anything pulling them together.

A really great sense of belonging to a small community where people really liked each other and looked after one another.

I came here to be able to do my work, to have a quiet place to work and have an outlet to sell my work. It's a balance between having the quiet focused work and a retail venue. For me, it's that I can make a living here.

I was born in Embudo NM, born and raised here. Came back because this was my home, I love this town, I would do just about anything for it, I love the people in this town, especially the elders.

I love it here because I have small kids, it's easier for them to be out and about, and the sense of community. You know so many levels of the community and you get to know people on a personal deep level.

You can't become involved in your own community if you can't even see it. (bedroom community)

There's really no jobs here. The artists can't afford to hire some of these young kids, and once they move out, they find themselves finding a house closer to where they work.

The identity of the community surrounding the school. How do we make ourselves attractive to families, how can they afford to live here?

If you don't have any agrarian based development....that's one of the stigmas of growing up here..most people that grew up here don't want to have gardens.....that's all they did when they were young, summers weren't for vacationing and having fun, summers were for working in your own family garden. This has gone from being an agrarian based economy to an arts based economy.

Unless there's a beneficial use for all that water...the acequia used to be the community, now it's an amenity for the community.

If there was a way for people to learn how to make something and be self employed.

Very motivated volunteer base.

Our biggest asset is people who get involved and do things.

If you've made it in business in the Embudo Valley, then you can make it anywhere.

I think we have a good reputation.

How do we prevent it from being loved to death? How do you not price the families out of a community based on families?



## Appendix F – Resources on diversifying a non-profit board, equity, and inclusion

Chandler, Jennifer, 2016. Nonprofits, you are the Champions for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. National Council of Non-Profits. Retrieved from <https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/thought-leadership/nonprofits-you-are-the-champions-diversity-equity-and-inclusion>

Chandler, Jennifer, 2017. 10 Steps to a more diverse Board. National Council of Non-profits. Retrieved from <https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/thought-leadership/10-steps-more-diverse-board>

Jana, Tiffany, 2017. How to Diversify Your Board of Directors, and Why it's Valuable for your Business. B the Change. Retrieved from <https://bthechange.com/how-to-diversify-your-board-of-directors-ae07da128e45>

Walker, Vernetta, Beyond Political Correctness, Building a Diverse Board, 2009. Retrieved from [https://www.bridgespan.org/insights/library/boards/building-a-diverse-board#.VdZbD8t\\_Yal](https://www.bridgespan.org/insights/library/boards/building-a-diverse-board#.VdZbD8t_Yal)