What is the best modern evidence to guide Building a Community?

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The Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) was founded by a group of eminent experts and organisations in reaction to increasingly worrying trends in the wellbeing of Australia’s young people.

ARACY is a national organisation with members based across Australia.

ARACY asserts that by working together, rather than working in isolation, we are more likely to uncover solutions to the problems affecting children and young people.

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1. To promote collaborative research and agenda setting for children and young people
2. To promote the application of research to policy and practice for children and young people.

This paper is one of a series commissioned by ARACY to translate knowledge into action. This series of papers aims to convert research findings into practical key messages for people working in policy and service delivery areas.

The ARACY topical papers may also be the focus of workshops or seminars, including electronic mediums.

Developed for the Facilitating Partners of the Australian Government Communities for Children initiative, this paper is now being made available to a wider audience via the ARACY website: www.aracy.org.au
ABSTRACT

This paper was commissioned by the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) to provide information on the available evidence for building communities. It canvasses a selection of community development and capacity building programs and processes which can contribute to community building.

These categories are not exclusive, nor do they define the entire arena of community building, but are provided here as representative of the main reported programs that have been evaluated. These programs provide some of the proven strategies for building communities to inform practitioners and agencies throughout Australia.

Attachment 1 includes selected cases and studies which demonstrate principles of practice within community building strategies. They are grouped under the headings used in the paper and use the Pawson [1] framework for assessing evidence. An annotated bibliography also accompanies the paper and gives details of the literature search.

INTRODUCTION

This paper presents the findings of a literature search of what constitutes some effective usage of community development and capacity building processes. This section presents a brief discussion of the terms used. The next section discusses the findings under four main headings dealing with Community Services Development, Community Education, Indigenous Approaches and Strengths-Based Approaches. Details of the search processes, the evaluation framework employed, case examples and
Definitions

Below are definitions of some key terms used in this paper.

Community Development

Community development has traditionally been directed towards the most disadvantaged and marginalised people in a society. Contemporary community development has been expanded to be used by and for a broader cross section that refer to functional and interest groups as well as the more usual geographical forms. There is a case to be made for the aims of the work to be towards providing for fairer and more just treatment for those whose life circumstances tend to exclude them from mainstream opportunities and provisions. Therefore a social justice approach will be used to frame the discussion in this paper. This is consistent with the approach taken by the Stronger Families and Communities initiative, and subsequently the Communities for Children programs. It seeks to encourage disadvantaged neighbourhoods to develop and attract resources which will enable them to achieve better results for the families living in these communities.

In its long and varied history Community Development has been the subject of many different interpretations and usages. Among these has been the discussion as to whether it is a perspective for or a method of work, and consequently there are a variety of meanings and applications. This paper acknowledges these many forms of Community Development by drawing on Anthony Kelly who termed the work collectively as ‘Community Building’. As he writes in his work published nearly 20 years ago:
• Community building is a sea of events and people, not a racetrack over a set course with a starting and a finishing line.
• There are many dimensions of community building and they are all important.

It is less a matter of opposites, such as good/bad, right/wrong, friend/enemy, with us/against us, included/excluded, but more a fabric of connections which make up a whole; when we work with head and heart and hand, we begin to shape a kind of community building that is responsive to many different communities, in different places and in different times, and one that opens up many ways forward; within this wholeness of thought, action and relationship, we need to stay open, flexible and honest. [2]

Following this inclusive approach the works surveyed for this paper contain references to community work, community service, community-based services, developmental work as well as community development and community building. The paper will refer to these many terms, providing their sources for readers to follow up their preferred interpretation.

Muirhead [3] provides a summation of these varieties when he includes:

• Community service – providing a quality, targeted service for community members. eg: providing playgroups or school readiness programs
• Community activity (events) – creating activity that can build a sense of place (where we are) or community (who we are), or simply brings us together. eg: community parks programs
• Community involvement – involving people in decisions that affect our lives. eg: organising consultation to map community assets
• Community action – communities acting to change – or defend – status quo in interests of their community or others who matter to
them. eg: resourcing action to prevent the government relocating a health centre

- Community information – ensuring people have the information they need to manage and enhance their own lives and those of their families and communities. eg: seminars on early brain development in children

- Social (Services) Development – maximising availability and effectiveness of formal and integrated supports and services. eg: working with a range of government and private agencies to ensure more integrated health services [3]

It is clear from these two quotations (from Kelly and Muirhead) that the approaches taken are intended to be inclusive and to build solid foundations to enhance communities and the people within them. As such community building may include activities which focus at any given time on specific groups of people, for example, youth, or, the early years (children 0-5-years-old). The intent, however, is to facilitate people’s access to resources and processes which will enhance their ability to improve their circumstances. All people in the community are likely beneficiaries even when specific projects focus on one group. This is one of the aims of community building: that people with needs are linked with people with resources. This interchange, if conducted from equal partnerships can benefit both groups with the joint working being the essence of building strong and resilient people.

**Capacity Building**

Capacity building has a more recent history as a social policy term particularly in relation to social, human and economic capital although it too has been interpreted in different ways. A succinct definition by the NSW Health Department [4] brings together its main ideas:
Capacity building is an approach to development that builds independence. Capacity building increases the range of people, organisations and communities who are able to address problems, and in particular, problems that arise out of social inequity and social exclusion. [4]

Capacity building comprises a set of activities which can resource individuals, groups and communities. Alongside working from social justice principles, it can be seen to form a part of community development. Equally, activities may be conducted outside of a defined community development program yet still meet capacity building aims and outcomes.

It is not the role of this paper to debate the various uses of the terms, but to present examples of strategies in these areas which represent effective practice.

Finally, note must be made of other activities which are often related to community development and capacity building because of their preventive aims. Early intervention and primary prevention programs often have developmental aims and/or processes and these should not be dismissed from consideration. For a good discussion and referral to other research studies in these areas see Bowes [5].

COMMUNITY BUILDING STRATEGIES

For the purposes of this paper I have grouped strategies which contribute to building a community into Community Services Development, Community Education, Indigenous Approaches and Strengths-Based Approaches. These are not clearly defined categories, as they often overlap. Writers have different methods of categorising community building with not all agreeing on the definitions or application of approaches. For example, some of the community development literature suggests that community development is enacted from a conflict OR consensus perspective thus dividing its description into those oppositions [6]. However, in this paper, the categories have been selected as representing the most commonly reported and studied examples. This may result in some examples being over-emphasised.
as, for example, the amount of literature dealing with community services far outweighs Indigenous approaches. In regard to the latter, the inclusion of Indigenous approaches is not to say that these approaches should only be restricted to Indigenous communities or that Indigenous communities should not and can not participate in other strategies. The purpose of their inclusion is to recognise the important contribution Indigenous communities have made to understandings and use of innovative approaches.

A framework which is considered to be useful for thinking about these different approaches may be found in Muirhead’s adaptation of Kelly’s work. The characteristics of developmental work are compared with those appearing in program work. This is presented as one way of providing clarity for workers and the people with whom they work. The main elements comparing the developmental and community-led approaches with program approaches may be represented as such:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental Approach</th>
<th>Program Approach</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus on the people</td>
<td>Focus on the program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agenda set by people</td>
<td>Clear well-defined agenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process focused</td>
<td>Outcome focused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step by step</td>
<td>Grand plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driven locally</td>
<td>Driven centrally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aim: Self-reliance and sustainability</td>
<td>Aim: Program objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starts from where the people are at</td>
<td>Starts from where we would like people to be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time: Long-term – ongoing</td>
<td>Time: Determined by the program length</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Adapted from Muirhead [3])
In many cases workers and communities have experienced tensions between perceptions of the goals of community projects and the practices used to achieve them, particularly when there are many different groups and organisations involved. It is especially important for clarity when external funding bodies are key players.

While many projects and activities are called community development, external requirements restrict some aspects, such as the level of authority, pace, or time span. The previous table clarifies these and other aspects and enable expectations to be realistic. This differentiation is not intended to specify which approach is better or worse, for both approaches have their applications. Many of the examples which contributed to the summary of the strategies described below have a program base and have been found to be effective in assisting communities to develop and achieve satisfying goals to which they have contributed.

**Community Service Development**

A large portion of community development occurs through the provision of services at the community level.

The descriptor of Community Services includes those activities which are provided by either mainstream agencies at the community or neighbourhood level, by agencies which are themselves based in the locality, or through partnerships between community-based and social service agencies. These services may be small and targeted, such as multi-function community centres, youth and family support programs or aged care facilities, or part of a broader program initiative, such as health services. This category also includes the many community regeneration, comprehensive community initiatives (CCIs), or neighbourhood renewal projects [7-11], within which many of the facilities mentioned above are provided or developed. As such, they meet program objectives in that they have connections in some way with agencies and authorities outside the
locality, either through program design, funding, authority or feedback mechanisms. Often local groups or committees are formed to act as intermediaries or representatives of the locality and outside agencies. Within this broad description may be found many of the activities of community building, such as social entrepreneurship [12], which focuses on the economic development of the locality through strong social structures; and political or social action [13], which focuses on institutional change.

The value of this approach is demonstrated by the numerous projects in progress and the fact that Government actively seeks strong and energetic partnerships.

The value of including the community is noted by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation [8] in the UK:

- Communities have a fresh perspective, and can often see the problems in new ways.
- Community involvement helps to deliver programs which are more accurately targeted to local needs.
- The resulting projects are more acceptable to the local community.
- Program outputs which have been designed with input from local residents are likely to last longer because communities feel ownership of them.
- The constructive involvement of communities in urban regeneration helps to build local organisational skills, making it easier to develop strong successor organisations.
- Partnerships are here to stay - Government will insist on a demonstrably stronger role for communities within these partnerships.
- Successful community involvement helps to revitalise democracy.
What is needed for the developmental process of delivering services to be successful, however, is summarised from several reports as including the following characteristics:

- A holistic approach that is attending to the whole environment, not just the target group.
- The formation of equal and collaborative partnerships in which each partner has a role in decision making, and there is clarity about which decisions must be made elsewhere.
- The development of skills within the community to enable full participation and leadership of many people.

The evidence suggests that services fail to become truly community based when these features are lacking. They rely on knowing the locality or group very well, forming good trusting, working relationships, being able to work through conflicts positively and ensuring the speed of change is at the pace required by the community. Most importantly, external agencies, which are often responsible for funding and therefore require accountability, need to be educated as to the pace, process and products that are possible. In particular, the literature notes that there is often a lack of coordination between agencies both at community and policy levels, and funding can be complex with very little access by local communities to small scale funding which is available quickly. No matter which of the approaches is used, for the activities or processes to be successful, how the community is engaged is vital.

Workers using these processes, then, have brokerage roles to ensure skills development which enable inclusion and inter-agency collaboration at the local level. They also need to provide representation to agencies of the need for agency coordination and use of relevant resources. The Australian experience of the Stronger Families and other associated funding
approaches, such as the Reconnect programs, evidences the effectiveness of these funds.

**Community Education**

Community education has been noted by Ife [14] as being one of the essential community development skills and is widely used as an area of community building or capacity building. In the area of child protection it often appears in the literature under family support where it is discussed as a central tool in early intervention and primary prevention programs. It is noted in all the major programs mentioned above as being a necessity to contribute to capacity building.

Furthermore, practitioners involved in community activities, either from a centre base or a program base (as defined above), tend to use community education as a significant tool. For these reasons it is included here as a distinct strategy, albeit as a noteworthy aspect of community services development.

Although the focus for community education is narrower than a comprehensive community renewal or development, where community education is part of the overall program, its activities contribute to the overall aim. Where community education is a program on its own, it may still be considered to contribute to community development or capacity building. As such, learnings from this group of activities share much with those which are part of community services development.

Under this heading is to be found training or skill development, such as leadership development, planning skills and conflict resolution; information provision, such as details of grant rounds, specific agency information and changes in policies; and promotional activities, such as child safety and immunisation programs. The main sources for evaluations of these types of
strategies are in the health sector, with Nursing and Allied Health providing many detailed examinations of what works well in the provision of necessary information. While health needs have been the main impetus for their work, their approaches draw on community capacity building and development to the extent that this literature is the most prolific in evaluated studies.

People tend to respond better to practical information than the more nebulous ‘community building’ which makes these programs particularly useful. Where they contribute to community development through capacity building they are found to produce increased abilities to participate in wider community activities, thus extending people’s learning and supportive horizons. Collaborative structures between agencies providing education, local groups and participants are also necessary, especially noting the cultural specificity of the information and the processes used.

Developmental outcomes are found amongst those programs which do not specifically target people who are in need of this type of education. Instead education programs which are non-stigmatising and open to all have a better ability to encourage ongoing supportive relationships within the community. They should also be provided at the participants’ convenience, availability and location, rather than that of the agencies delivering the education.

Dorothy Scott [15], a well known Australian researcher in child protection work, provides many examples of developmental education processes which have the manifest goal of providing information and skills but have the latent goal of providing for sustained social network support which can contribute to the protection of vulnerable families. She is wary of the
importation of education packages or processes from other contexts without them being adapted to suit the needs of the local community.

Workers using educative processes are usually mindful of and responsive to the local context in the provision of information and training, as well as being able to encourage and enable collaborative agency and group processes. For these activities workers need facilitation, enabling, consciousness raising and negotiation skills. It is also helpful if the workers have some training skills.

**Indigenous Approaches**

The review would be incomplete without mention of specific Indigenous approaches to community building. It needs to be stated that Indigenous communities may and do use similar programs, projects and processes to those operated and enacted in and by non-Indigenous people. However, there are also processes unique to Indigenous communities, or programs and processes which originated in and by Indigenous communities. These processes should be acknowledged. Two of these processes are *Family Group Conferencing* and *Healing Circles*.

Family Group Conferencing originated in Aotearoa/New Zealand from Maori practices of whole of community (iwi) and family (whanau) approaches which involve extended family members in key decisions about family issues. Enshrined in Aotearoa/New Zealand legislation for all work with children in 1989, the process has been adopted widely around the world for work with child protection and juvenile offending in particular.

As with many other Indigenous people, harmonious relationships are the key to health and healers seek to restore harmony in times of harm and ill health.
It is for this reason that Indigenous healing practices seek to use a ‘whole of community and family’ approach as compared to a Western view of individual healing.

The relevance for community and capacity building derive from ecological principles of system relationships including both spiritual and terrestrial contexts. As such, family includes more than the extended blood relations and reaches into the wider community in which there are recognised resources, as well as needs, which can be developed for use with child matters. Importantly, professional involvement takes its place as one partner rather than the leader as is usual in much social service delivery.

Healing Circles, which originated in Canada with First Nations peoples, are located in a way of knowing different from the dominant Western forms, which acknowledges a holistic view of all life which needs to operate in harmony. As noted by Connors and Oates of the First Nations’ context in Canada

Harm to one community member affects the health and harmony of the entire community. Because health is defined as a state of harmony and balance among all community members, re-establishing health requires that relationships are set back into a state of balance. [16]

Healing occurs with an all of community approach in which there is accountability, acknowledgement of harm, learning, provision of support, respect and expectation of change. While punishment is applied, ongoing healing and restoration of relationships are considered equally important.

This approach does not excuse the offenders for their behaviour or the need to acknowledge their wrong-doing. However, this acknowledgement is a
step towards restoration of trust and reintegration. Community is served rather than severed through these processes.

Above all for both of these approaches recognition of different cultural contexts and values are essential as noted by Dorothy Scott [15] in the preceding section. Operating from a position of what is known as cultural safety is imperative. This is defined from the Aotearoa/New Zealand context referring to children as:

The state of being in which a child or young person experiences that her or his personal well-being, as well as social and cultural frames of reference, is acknowledged – even if not fully understood by the worker(s) claiming to be there to help him or her. [17]

This is, of course, also applicable to adults.

Non-Indigenous workers are sometimes reluctant to become involved in processes which are culturally specific for fear of not knowing the proper protocols, or for considering it to be outside of their responsibility, knowledge or appropriate place. Additionally some workers consider that only Indigenous people can and should be those who are responsible for the work. This can have negative effects by placing Indigenous workers in unviable positions where they can be expected to shoulder burdens not of their making or which are too large for single workers. Often situations are societal- made rather than being able to be addressed individually.

The work necessarily involves the worker in not only being culturally aware and sensitive, but requires the worker to take steps to examine his or her own cultural belonging and the relationship between the cultural contexts of the worker and participants. This is often a life-long journey.
Strengths-Based Approaches

There has been a growing trend towards the use of what has come to be collectively known as Strengths-Based or Asset-Based which can be found across these selected areas of community building and are considered important to discuss because of their extended and relatively recent use.

Strengths-based approaches are commonly referred to as strengths perspectives, with a focus on the resilience of children, families and communities and identifying resources and assets in each of those groupings. They contrast with the predominant view in much social services work which identifies the problems, needs and deficits of target populations.

Instead, there is the recognition that these populations and their environments often contain the knowledge, expertise and some resources which can be productively used for development. Strengths-based approaches acknowledge that there are structural disadvantages which must be overcome and that individuals need assistance to enable them to recover their own strengths and local assets. This involves the worker collaborating with individuals and groups to assist in this recovery and further discovery. Therefore the elements present in other forms of community building already mentioned are important here: collaboration, relationship building, moving at the pace of the people and working towards goals set by them.

Strengths-based approaches acknowledge that there are structural disadvantages which must be overcome and that individuals need assistance to enable them to recover their own strengths and local assets.

These principles guide the design of different models of practice to suit particular situations or groups of which there are many different versions enacted in many different settings. They have been found to be effective in
child protection, mental health, family violence, drug abuse, and with the elderly in residential settings amongst others.

**CONCLUSION**

Community building is the policy direction of our times. As such it holds the hopes of policy makers, practitioners and local people. These aspirations are not always met in the ways hoped for, and energetic and committed people are not always rewarded in their efforts to change situations. The literature, however, does provide some evidence which supports those hopes, for there are many activities which are constructive, productive and satisfying. Amongst the different pathways chosen for change are to be found strategies which can be successful. They are less models than principles, which if used to guide the work can bring useful results.

These principles reiterate the policy directions of collaboration and partnerships but require greater levels of examination by the policy makers, of the extent they are willing to permit community responsibility and ownership as well as the honesty and openness of the non-negotiable features which are part of any policy direction and program. Because there are non-negotiables does not necessarily mean that development cannot happen, nor local people cannot have a greater say in the plans and processes which affect them.

Workers and the people with whom they work are alert to the possibilities for change and the processes needed to assist them in that change. That they can succeed is evidenced by some of the examples found in the writings across the four categories which have given rise to young people engaging is less risky behaviour [18], or young parents using the supports provided from local centre based activities [15]. All of these examples provide the information about what is possible and how we might work with the challenges in ways that help our organisations
to change their expectations and practices to develop new skills in this area of work.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

From these reviews it is clear that there are some activities which contribute to successful community building. Some are specific to the approach, but others can be used.

**Place**

While there is some increasing belief that community is and can be formed and built according to functions and interests, it is evident that place-based communities are easier to establish and maintain. Even when working with interest or functional groups the activities of development often occur in a site which itself will have meaning for some people. Care taken over location can repay the time spent. Additionally, community building can and does take place even without the provision of services and with minimal material resources. Place, people and positive activity are often the most essential resources.

**Mapping assets**

Knowing the community is essential and time is well spent getting to know the people and their concerns and aspirations. As a practical activity and heeding the strengths-based messages, practitioners could well start by mapping the assets of the community [19].

**Framework for practice**
The approaches here are not exclusive, although the underlying differences between the program and developmental approaches may not easily be resolved. Practitioners may find that clarity about their own framework for practice and the assessment of the approach from which they are working at any given time serves them well in being able to identify and design strategies suitable to the purpose.

**Universal versus targeted approaches**

Many projects are designed for people identified as in need or at risk. The evidence to emerge from the programs described, strongly suggests that programs are more effective in building community when they are holistic, thus avoiding stigmatising groups and enabling relationships to be built across people with resources rather than only across people with needs.

**Community Building**

The evidence suggests that, while community building may be a goal, people respond more readily when there is an identified practical aim. Defining and describing the goals in practical terms may encourage more participation.
REFERENCES


19. Kretzmann, J.P. and J.L. McKnight., Building Communities from the inside out: A path toward finding and mobilizing a community's assets. 1993 [cited 2006 2nd June 2006]; Available from:

APPENDIX 1

Table of Major Cases/Studies Reviewed

This table contains selected cases and studies which demonstrate principles of practice within community building strategies. They are grouped under the headings used in the paper, although, as previously mentioned, there is some overlap.

The table is arranged according to the following headings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cases/Studies</th>
<th>Name project or study. Included here are both examples as cases and research studies of practices or strategies.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Provides the location.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program aims</td>
<td>Describes the goals of the programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligibility/Target group</td>
<td>Which section of the community the program is aimed at. This may be widely or narrowly targeted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content and format</td>
<td>A summary of the processes used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation and research</td>
<td>Locates the evaluation source. In many cases this is a combination of sources, one of which may be formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>evaluation. This framework is drawn from Pawson et al [1].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Community</td>
<td>The authority for the program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More information</td>
<td>The reference in the annotated bibliography.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cases/Studies</td>
<td>Context</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matching Needs and Services (MNS)</td>
<td>UK</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Partnership to Strengthen Families Project</td>
<td>The New York City Administration for Children's Services</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cases/Studies</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Program Aims</th>
<th>Eligibility/Target Group</th>
<th>Content and Format</th>
<th>Evaluation/Research</th>
<th>Policy Community</th>
<th>More Info</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation of children &amp; young people in decisions about UK service development</td>
<td>Children's National Services Framework - UK</td>
<td>To gather and review evidence on children &amp; young people's participation in service development &amp; public decision-making.</td>
<td>Children and Young People</td>
<td>A number of points about good practice provided: listening culture, clarity, flexibility, resources, skills development, inclusion, feedback &amp; evaluation.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (ratified by the UK in 1991).</td>
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</table>

**Evidence Source Key:**

1. Organisation  
2. Practitioner  
3. User  
4. Research  
5. Policy Community
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Regeneration – Communities First</td>
<td>Wales – Rural and urban</td>
<td>Multi-faceted strategies for regeneration.</td>
<td>Outlines in detail, and draws together, principles underpinning community regeneration best practice.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Housing &amp; Community Renewal Division, National Assembly for Wales (NAW) [7]</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDUCATION FOCUSED</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>CCI</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Multi-faceted development aims including developing self management and other skills.</td>
<td>Varied targets according to need.</td>
<td>Provision of skills development and information.</td>
<td>4, 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeovil Family Centre</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>Improve work and education entry skills.</td>
<td>Women returning to the workforce and education.</td>
<td>Provision of informal and later formal education as one of many activities of a family centre.</td>
<td>2 &amp; 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation of a community based intervention program of 4 year old preschool children</strong></td>
<td>Melbourne preschools</td>
<td>Early intervention project focused on improving child pre-reading skills and parent behaviour-management skills of 4 year olds.</td>
<td>4 year old preschool children and their parents</td>
<td>Education and skills development for children and parents</td>
<td>Pre and post, 1 &amp; 2 yr follow-up – surveys/questionnaires used.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>INDIGENOUS FOCUS</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family Group Conferencing</strong></td>
<td>Aotearoa/New Zealand</td>
<td>Child protection healing and reintegration.</td>
<td>Families</td>
<td>Traditional Maori Hui to include all family members in resolving the issues and providing a plan for child safety.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Treaty of Waitangi 1989 Children, Young Persons and their Families Act</td>
<td>[11]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Four Circles of Hollow Water</strong></td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>The restoration of community.</td>
<td>Community and offenders</td>
<td>Community wide healing process to reintegrate offender and heal offender and community.</td>
<td>3 &amp; 5</td>
<td>Corrections Department</td>
<td>[12]</td>
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<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Practitioner</th>
<th>User</th>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Policy Community</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Claymore Miracle</strong></td>
<td>Suburb in NSW</td>
<td>To transform Proctor Way – known as the worst street in NSW – into a positive place to reside.</td>
<td>Local neighbourhood</td>
<td>Transfer of housing responsibility to local Housing Association. Example of social reconstruction whereby NGO put in place to build community relations where previous state interventions failed.</td>
<td>1, 2 &amp; 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minto Hill Project</strong></td>
<td>Suburb in NSW</td>
<td>Transfer of housing responsibility to local neighbourhood.</td>
<td>Community (public housing occupants)</td>
<td>Example of social entrepreneurship. Intensive tenancy management.</td>
<td>1, 2 &amp; 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Families in Partnership</strong></td>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>Strengthen supportive family networks.</td>
<td>Families with developmentally delayed children</td>
<td>Mobilisation of supportive learning resources for families.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental Assets &amp; Asset-building Communities Framework</td>
<td>US - Minnesota</td>
<td>To emphasise the human relations and developmental infrastructure children, youth, and families require for their health &amp; well-being through survey-based evaluation linking young people’s developmental milestones to the developmental assets which they had access.</td>
<td>Young people (6th through 12th class grade inclusively)</td>
<td>156 item instrument, the Profile of Student Life: Attitude and Behaviour Survey – instrument captures basic demographic information &amp; measures developmental assets and other constructs like developmental deficits eg victims of violence watches too much television</td>
<td>Literature based (around prevention, resilience, youth development, and protective factors). Survey measurements. Findings suggest developmental assets a better predictor of engagement in high-risk behaviour than certain demographic factors (hence isolated program responses insufficient – a multi-pronged investment in building community capacity needed. Search Institute, Minneapolis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Shared Action in Long Gully

| St Luke’s Anglicare - an inner suburb of the regional Victorian town, Bendigo | Promote the safety and wellbeing of children and social justice in Long Gully. A 3yr community development project working with adults and groups in the community to mobilise resources and undertake community building activities. | Children (0-12 years) and families IN Community | Strength-based perspective where recognised power imbalances incorporates consideration of a promotion of the use of ‘power with’. Social justice framework within a wider community development perspective. | Participatory Action Research Reflecting back regularly on vision & value statements as a reference point. 2 & 3 | St Luke’s |

### Evaluation of Shared Action


### Evidence Source Key:

- 1. Organisation
- 2. Practitioner
- 3. User
- 4. Research
- 5. Policy Community
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Aintree Community Centre Practice</th>
<th>Aintree Community Centre</th>
<th>Centre supporting families, particularly single mothers. Breaking down social barriers.</th>
<th>Families</th>
<th>Ecological perspective; building new narratives; draws on psycho-dynamic theory, and Freirian ideology. Working closely &amp; building relationships between Centre staff and families.</th>
<th>Participatory Action Research theoretical/practice based literature informs practice. Development of new narratives and relationship building apparent over time. 2, 3 &amp; 4</th>
<th>Treaty of Waitangi 1989 Children, Young Persons and their Families Act Aintree Community Centre</th>
<th>[18]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| Midwestern and Honduran community-based collaborative problem-solving case example | Midwest US & Honduras | Midwest: school children care Honduras village conflict resolution | Children Villagers | Based on a collaborative model that creates an environment with citizens and experts working together to create knowledge and establish dialogue on an evolving issue. Cross culturally adaptable given applicability of lessons learnt 1-10. | Participatory Action Research 1, 2, 3 | Research Institute [19] |
|---------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------|-------------|-------------------|

**Putting Family First**

**Time IN For Family & Family Time 1st**

Minnesota, US

A citizen model applied to the over-scheduling of children & decline of family time.

Family professionals partnering with families.

The Families and Democracy Model (provides criteria): Citizen versus program perspective.

Participatory Action Research

Research Institute

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Health Collaboratives</td>
<td>Pennsylvania, US</td>
<td>Collaborative partnerships in health</td>
<td>Community Health organisations</td>
<td>Presents the results of a qualitative case study designed to identify indicators of success for a specific community partnership and to test the feasibility of an evaluation tool for collaborative efforts</td>
<td>Through using principles of social justice, feedback from pilot-test participants on the feasibility &amp; value of the process is presented. 1,2, 3 &amp; 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCES

21. Hausman, A.J., J. Becker, and R. Brawer, Identifying value indicators and social capital in community health partnerships

APPENDIX 1. ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Community building strategies and evaluations

This annotated bibliography was generated from the searches conducted to provide evidence of community building strategies. It contains a selection of these works which contributed to the ideas and material contained in the accompanying paper. Some works are not annotated but provide reference points for follow up.

Details of the search strategy are provided.

Research Strategies

The review was undertaken of the literature on community development and capacity building using several databases, search engines, web sites and recent bibliographies. Database searches involved 149 Databases including APAIS, Blackwell Synergy, Illumina, ERIC, Informit, JSTOR, ProQuest, Infotrac, Science Direct, Taylor & Francis and Social Work Abstracts. Ninemsn and Google scholar, including others were search engines utilised. Government, non-government and Third Sector websites were included in the search providing capacity building examples across the sectors. Web sites ranged from international to local sites and included: the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Australian Research Alliance For Children and Youth, Department of Local Government and Regional Development, Western Australia’s Early Years Strategy, onlinewa, NSW Health, Community Builders NSW, Department for Victorian Communities, Tasmania Together, School of Social Welfare, Institute for Policy Research, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, HeadStart, Northwestern, Partnerships, Arizona, Cambridge Journals Online and Cavaye Community Development.
Search terms included: community development, capacity building, community capacity building, capacity based practice, asset-based community development, evaluation, research, with refined searches including the terms ‘children’, ‘families’, ‘sustainability’, ‘evidence-based practice’, and ‘early years’. Although the search did not specify a timeframe to view the literature where databases requested timeframes the past decade was given to obtain the most current literature. Bibliographies from the literature further guided searches. In addition, opportunistic searches were made of known existing works. A total of approximately 270 works were generated, from which this selection is derived.

**Search findings**

The search uncovered examples of the available research and evaluations. Included here are those which carry out some research which is associated with community development (broadly defined) and capacity building. Little of this asks the specific question ‘is this effective?’, most often being more broadly concerned with descriptions of the programmes and processes and concluding more research is necessary and desirable.

What is reported here includes accounts of quantitative studies, either by the project evaluators or through literature reviews conducted by others; and examples of types of applied research techniques for effectiveness or as evaluations. These latter tend to use qualitative data and processes.

Some overviews of programmes and practices have been conducted, for example the analysis conducted for the Family and Community Services Department in 2000 of community-based prevention and early intervention action (Gauntlett, Hugman et al. 2001), the review of Communities, social capital and public policy (Johnson, Headey et al. 2005), the evaluations of the Reconnect Programme (Ryan 2003; Ryan and Beauchamp 2003) and the evaluation of the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy in 2004 (Funnell,
Rogers et al. 2004). These are included as citations in the bibliography. In addition, other reviews have been conducted, such as that provided for the WA Department for Community Development to inform the Capacity Building Strategic Framework. This report and its accompanying appendices contain case examples describing work conducted and lessons learnt (Government of Western Australia 2005; Government of Western Australia 2005; Government of Western Australia 2005).

Where available, the annotations include recommendations and/or guidelines for practice.
This describes the successful restorative justice programme which is based on community healing principles and is deeply rooted in cultural traditions.

The healing process is based on traditional ways of knowing:
1. conceiving of the world as a circle - a web of relationships in balance with each other, so healing is intended to return the balance.
2. the offender must be accountable to the community - he (usually male) must agree that he did it - it is restorative/forgiveness - the healing circle is on p.121

The first circle is people stating why they are there; the second is to praise the victim and absolve his/her of blame; (this is important as often the victim has been blamed for his/her situation); the third is to speak to the offender, this is to say to the judge what should happen to the offender; the fourth insists on guilty pleas so that the children don’t have to go through the course, and they don’t want the offenders to go to prison, because there is no healing in prison. The offenders have to commit to four months work during which they have to admit what they did and work with their counselors; they have to tell their families what they have done, they bring their families to the circles, then they tell the whole community what they’ve been charged with and what they have done to heal so far. If they can’t do that they go through the court system. They report once every six months to the community for a period of five years.

Reviews literature in US, UK and Europe and evaluations of best practice.

Key Principles for the Communities First need to address the themes to emerge from the Review: Partnership, Participation, Capacity Raising, Identifying Communities for Support; Equal Opportunities, Evaluation of Success and Funding Frameworks.

The National Assembly should develop the Communities First Strategy to create an enabling and facilitating environment for community based regeneration schemes to flourish;

The Communities First programme should be a flexible means of achieving a common vision for communities in Wales without prescribing the specific means to achieve that vision in each community;
That Communities First creates a unified funding regime for disadvantaged communities that provides a long-term commitment within a non-competitive funding environment;
That the Communities First Programme should not be a vehicle for transferring responsibility for economic regeneration from the state to the community;
The National Assembly should retain a commitment to redressing structural disadvantages by pursuing an equal opportunities and anti-poverty element in all its actions;
Communities First partnerships should be constituted to reflect local conditions and the current capacities of the respective partners to participate;
that the 'three thirds' principle should inform the pattern of representation but not be prescriptively applied;
That the respective roles and responsibilities of the partners should be clearly defined and codified as the first task achieved by newly formed area partnerships;
That the partnerships should have a clear legal framework which sets out unambiguously its powers, responsibilities and patterns of accountability;
That experience derived at the local partnership level should inform structures and processes at the centre of all agencies and organisations which impact on the area;
Community participation must be a central feature of the Communities First approach if the National Assembly is to realise its vision for a Better Wales;
Participation must be developmental and progressive and avoid tokenism;
Communities First must be supported by incentives and sanctions to encourage and promote power sharing and community participation in decision making and resource allocation;
Local structures and partnerships must interact with the formal democratic process and develop supplementary community based mechanisms to secure fair and open community representation;
Monitoring and evaluation of these objectives should be frequent and community based;
Capacity raising of all partners in the regeneration process is an essential pre-condition of community development;
Funding and resourcing of capacity raising is an essential component of a strategy such as Communities First;
Community members require an informal ‘soft-entry’ training structure which progresses in a ladder of achievement to more formal processes. This structure should be developed on a national basis but with local community delivery mechanisms;
All capacity raising training and education should be recognised and accredited;
Effective planning for capacity raising should be a condition for funding allocation;
Criteria for selecting communities must be clear, unambiguous and externally verifiable;
Hard statistical or quantitative evidence must be supplemented and focused by acquisition of more qualitative and localised knowledge;
Selection criteria must be ‘rural proof’ and recognise the diversity of Welsh communities;
That care and attention be paid in all area-based partnerships to the promotion of equal and adequate opportunities for all sections of the community;
That mechanisms of community representation do not favour specific groups or exclude others by design and implementation of their form and practices;
Monitoring and evaluation techniques must be participative and directly involve the community in measuring and determining the level of change;
Monitoring and evaluation must aim to balance the quantitative indicators conventionally required for public accountability with qualitative indicators which are meaningful to the community and demonstrate change in the daily experience of life in deprived communities;
Monitoring and evaluation should set out a number of clear and accessible ‘benchmarks’ which measure the quality of life in a community and which should provide a standard which all communities aspire to;
Future funding of disadvantaged communities in Wales must be long-term and stable;
Funding must be allocated according to need, established by comprehensive and clear criteria;
The funding framework must enable the regeneration partnership to influence and control mainstream funds and allocated them according to community priorities;
The funding framework must support the principles of area regeneration and enable them to become reality.

Describes a democratic citizen model of community organising for mobilising and partnering with families, using the over scheduling of children as a case example.
Provides an overview of the growing body of research on this aspect of family time;
describes the difference between a citizen model and programme models for
working with families; gives two examples of community initiatives initiated by family professionals; describes next steps for evaluating this community organising model; and offers implications for family professionals. The examples are Family Time First and Family Time In, both of which started with a community conversation about the issues and resulted in groups forming to initiate actions such as family friendly community meetings (not scheduled over the dinner hour) and families committing to balancing family and sports time for children. While focusing on family time, the process could be used with other initiatives within the community.


"The Nursing Model of Community Organization for Change presented in this article describes the relationships among the concepts of empowerment, partnership, participation, cultural responsiveness, and community competence within a community organizing context. These concepts are implemented through the use of the Nursing Model of Community Organization for Change, which consists of four phases: assessment/reassessment, planning/design, implementation, and evaluation/dissemination. This nursing model provides a theoretical framework for community health professionals when creating community health interventions in partnership with community members.” (Abstract)

The model is to be found in the Webinar presentation.


Provides definitions, methods and examples as well as effectiveness specifically within the area of housing. The examples include small funds schemes to enable community projects such as community arts or parenting, film making to record stories and the creation of community gardens.


A think tank for child welfare practitioners recognised the value of agency-community member collaboration and asked about the knowledge, policies and strategies needed to build community. It emphasises implications for professional education. Included are examples relating to activities in family centres such as the use of Time Dollars (exchanges of time spent reading to children etc., for money to
buy computers, school supplies etc in the Time Dollar Store using donated goods) and the formation of partnerships with local businesses to provide employment, leadership development etc.


A detailed account of how to undertake evaluation of community development focusing on inputs, processes, outputs ad outcomes using community activities and their experiences. A working example of a hypothetical project is given, in some detail.


The community building framework proposed here identifies value bases, knowledge and theoretical dimensions and methods. Identifies the principles of strengths based approaches in partnership with local communities and using a holism approach.


This work details the Shared Action programme implemented by St Luke’s in Victoria as a community building activity designed to provide the community with protective measures for children at risk. See Gardner for details.


This article reviews evaluation approaches and suggests that the standard evaluations used by authorities lack the processes understood by ‘lay’ people for judging how and how well they do their work. They need rather to focus on how the participants think about their work rather than on pre-imposed criteria.


Based in secondary schools this process uses capacity building to affect behaviour (e.g. smoking and bullying). It is evaluated using a cluster-randomised controlled trial
design with 26 schools. Using the criteria of connectedness, security and positive regard to design activities to promote well being, this project suggests a whole of school approach which may mean restructuring the schools.

This describes an Action Research project with 10 young people encouraging them to tell their stories through theatre. It is a capacity building demonstration using political awareness and building of young people's capacities in marginalised communities. The outcomes included improved health outcomes.

This review explores the early strategies, issues, and implications that shaped these lessons.
Neighbourhood Transformation (NT) was one of the first attempts to systematically bring together diverse strands of thinking about comprehensive community change. NT was driven by several core components, including a comprehensive vision for ending poverty; a strategy that simultaneously addressed social, economic, and physical conditions; partnerships that linked the public and private sectors; a commitment to building capacity and ownership within individuals and the community; and efforts to leverage public will and investment—both financial and political—on behalf of social change.

Those relationships and investments produced several notable achievements:

- Six intermediaries were created to facilitate improvements in housing, health care, education, employment, and other public services.
- More than 1,000 affordable-housing units were renovated or built.
- Two elementary schools showed significant improvements in test scores.
• Streets became significantly cleaner and safer because of improved city sanitation and public safety services.
• Medical and mental health services and computer labs were established in Sandtown’s schools.
• Hundreds of residents received job training and placement.
• A community market opened, and a monthly community newspaper was founded.
• More than $70 million in new funds was committed to community improvements by federal programs such as Healthy Start and the Empowerment Zone initiative.

Summary of Lessons
Lesson 1: Build on a Deep Understanding of the Neighborhood.
Lesson 2: Invest in Community Capacity Early.
Lesson 3: Generate Belief in and Ownership of the Change.
Lesson 5: Specify the Rules of Engagement.
Lesson 6: Consider Partnership with the Public Sector.
Lesson 7: Embed Community Building in Every Activity.
Lesson 8: Ground Expectations in an Explicit Strategy.
Lesson 9: Balance Funding Against Pace and Priorities.
Lesson 10: Nurture Connections Among People, Ideas, and Institutions.
Lesson 11: Build Residents’ Economic Self-Sufficiency.
Lesson 12: Use Neighbourhood-Focused Intermediaries to Change Systems.
Lesson 13: Create a Culture of Learning and Self-Assessment.

Abiding Challenges
Challenge 1: Altering the Balance of Power.
Challenge 2: Acknowledging Issues of Race and Class.
Challenge 3: Showing Respect.
Challenge 4: honouring Residents’ Competence as Leaders.
Challenge 5: Harnessing the Community’s Spiritual Strength.

Examine through literature and professional feedback the extent to which young people are in fact equal participants in decision making. "Issues identified as barriers to change included adult attitudes and intransigence, lack of training for key adults, lack of clarity leading to tokenism, the nature of organizations (i.e. their formality, complexity, bureaucracy and internal politics) and the short-term nature of much funding. The evidence suggests that good practice includes a listening culture among staff, clarity, flexibility, adequate resources, skills development and training for staff and participating children and young people, inclusion of marginalized groups, feedback and evaluation. There is only limited evidence that children and young people's involvement in public decision-making leads to more appropriate services, although there is evidence that participating children and young people benefit in terms of personal development and that staff and organizations learn more about their views." The researchers conclude there is the need for further evaluation.


The New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS) instituted a neighbourhood-based services system through the realignment of all foster care, preventive, and protective services along community district lines. ACS, with its community partners, also formed neighbourhood-based networks to improve service coordination and collaboration among key community stakeholders and to shape a multisystem strategy tailored to each district informed by child welfare data. Based on analysis of neighbourhood-specific census tract child welfare data, ACS initiated the Community Partnership to Strengthen Families project to address the disproportionate number of foster care placements originating from a small group of high-need communities, including Manhattan's Central Harlem. This article describes examples of specific strategies based on the Central Harlem experience. A Community Walk strategy involved service providers walking the locality to see the services in action and to talk to the providers and consumers to match the joint perceptions and work out how to overcome the perceived mismatches. Family team conferences were another strategy used.

This article seeks to define community capacity and explore how a capacity building process works through examining two case studies of Comprehensive Community Initiatives (CCIs). It follows the Kretzman & McKnight approach of assessing assets and forging links between components of community. Concentration on building informal relations (between neighbours) and semi formal network (between organisations) rather than intimate ties is recommended for the development of social capital.


This full evaluation report provides an update on the activities of the initiative since November 1996 and distills the lessons learned by the Neighbourhood and Family Initiative over much of its implementation through June 2000. The setting, content and programme are defined and described and problems in collaboration are discussed. Major findings are to be found in a separate, briefer report entitled Lessons Learned from the Implementation of the Neighbourhood and Family Initiative: A Summary of Findings, available from Chapin Hall.


This paper describes the project and examines the 'enabling systems' that may be needed for the community based organisations (CBOs) to operate effectively. Findings suggest that taking a capacity building rather than a technical assistance approach is potentially more sustainable. This means rather than providing services, assisting member organisations to develop skills through mentoring, training and other processes contributes to sustainability.


Discussion of a process evaluation model with a participatory action research project which found that the Seattle Partners for Healthy Communities, which acts predominantly as broker was successfully supporting and evaluating community health projects.

The use of focus groups of usually under-represented members of communities identified the assets and challenges of a multicultural environment and led to actions in the community such as community forums, workshops, clean-up activities and development of community information networks and web sites.


This article describes an innovative approach to creating the basis for partnerships to address community wellbeing on an estate in south London. Drawing on participatory appraisal and action planning methods, it drew together residents and professionals within and beyond the health service, provide strategies for health professionals.


This paper discusses the interrelationships between concepts such as human and social capital, community well-being, citizen participation, community capacity building and community engagement. Working from this discussion a research agenda is presented relating to citizen participation in local governance with particular emphasis on the role of local government in building human and social capital, thereby contributing to the well-being of communities.


Much contemporary planning literature places emphasis on involving people, who have an interest in or may be affected by planning outcomes, in the planning process. This move towards participatory planning has been enthusiastically embraced and implemented in many places both in Australia and overseas. However, there has been little reporting of the practical aspects of implementing such an approach. This article describes a community visioning process that forms the basis of the Mermaid Beach Local Area Planning project on the Gold Coast.
Successful operational initiatives and constraints identified through the implementation of this visioning process are discussed.


This article presents a synthesis of research findings drawn from a pilot study and five applied research projects focusing on the concepts and processes which underpin the operationalisation of citizen participation in local governance.


An exploration of the term social entrepreneurship and its applications in business. This article suggests social entrepreneurship can be used with social problems as they are social change agents.


The evaluation of this community based intervention operated by medical practitioners suggested it resulted in positive effects, despite being of low intensity. This universal-type of intervention involving parent skill development training and child pre-reading sessions appeared to be well accepted by the community, but the authors recommend that there is a need to increase recruitment of families of at-risk children into such programmes.


This paper reports research carried out in Australia designed to evaluate the impact of family support interventions by comparing the views of families and their caseworkers with respect to the perceived benefits and outcomes of the interventions in the context of changes in family functioning and parent–child relationships, and the extent to which changes led to reduced involvement in protective services.
Findings support the use of intensive interventions based on feedback from the young people children and parents to avoid children being taken into care.

This two volume work provides many articles concerning the theory of evaluation, some reflections from practitioners and comments on measurement and analysis of community change initiatives to emerge from a Round Table held in the early nineties. The Comprehensive Community Initiatives (CCIs) were initiated by governments concerned with poor social, economic and health outcomes. CCIs are discussed in other items here such as Chaskin.

Cultural safety has its current origins among the Maori peoples of New Zealand. The reader is encouraged to consider how rituals of encounter that promote cultural safety might enhance the cultural competence of workers and improve the quality of services offered in a variety of settings. Family Group Conferences also support active family participation in the care and control of children while empowering family decision making and promoting safe practices.

This issues paper canvasses the aspects of capacity building found through the literature and discusses implications for analysis, planning, processes and sustainability. Several projects are analysed with some presentation of strategies in use, such as skills development, working with local media for more positive reporting, a youth-run Youth Summit, and parks improvement projects. This is a worthwhile paper for practitioners and programme planners.

The evaluation of the “Shared Action” project implemented by St Luke’s Anglicare (and described in Beilharz - see earlier entry).

Findings concluded that the project:

1. increased opportunities for participation in a clear structure
2. enhanced participation in a way the meant people felt valued
3. focussed on individual and community capacities and strengths
4. used participation in activities to explore processes for dealing with differences and conflict
5. provided a variety of activities so that people could choose their level and type of involvement
6. encouraged respectful attitudes
7. provided workers as resources who were able to demonstrate respect and constructive processes, encouraged participation and the development of community responsibility

Changes observed in the community included

1. community members with a greater sense of pride and hope in their community as well as a feeling of ownership
2. people who felt capable that they could influence change both at a personal and community level
3. community members who felt more able to deal constructively with conflict
4. the development of community resources, an infrastructure of activities and committees so that people can choose how to be involved
5. individuals and groups who developed knowledge, skills, confidence and the capacity to work together effectively
6. the development of strong social networks and a sense of social capital
7. physical resources such as the playground and barbecue area
8. increased feelings of safety from feeling connected to others and being able to deal with conflict
9. positive changes in relationships with voluntary organisations, schools and businesses involved in the community
"It is not possible to prove ‘statistically’ a reduction in child abuse. However it is clear from the Long Gully community and its key workers that children are now living in a safer and more nurturing environment with a strengthened community life."


This study sought evidence that the Stronger Communities element of the Commonwealth Government’s Stronger Families and Communities Strategy had beneficial outcomes and that it was cost effective. The analysis found that preventive and early intervention programmes are beneficial and that that they are cost effective.

"Some specific conclusions may be drawn from the various areas covered in this study.

- the building of trust and reciprocity leads to an increased social capital, which is an important ingredient of healthy communities; and
- there is significant research to support the notion that people with diverse networks of quality relationships are healthier than people who are socially isolated.

- Keys to building healthier and therefore stronger communities are:
  - structures in place to identify community leaders and other highly-motivated community members; and
  - the inputs of relevant professionals working in the community are mobilised and where these skills are utilised in a multi-disciplinary framework.

- The building of social capital through community-based programs is also facilitated where opportunities exist:
  - to enable skills development in areas such as organising groups, running meetings, lobbying, the writing of grant applications, and so on;
  - to enable the identification of funding sources and the capacity to bid for these funds; and
  - to build better links with other community groups and organisations, to publicise achievements and, in turn, to access information about other communities’ achievements.
The literature reviewed clearly establishes the benefits of community-based early childhood and family prevention and intervention programs. The benefits arise from both the cost effectiveness of many of the programs as well as in building stronger and healthier families and, in turn, stronger and healthier communities. The premise for early childhood prevention and early intervention programs is the recognition that a child’s development in the first few years of life sets the foundation for life-long learning, behaviour and health outcomes.

- similar conclusions can be drawn for family support programs—community-based programs build resilience and protective factors which address the structural causes of disadvantage in ways which are not addressed by individual programs alone;
- by building social networks and empowering communities, self-reliance and protective factors are strengthened (and there is some evidence that dependency on individual programs is thereby reduced); and
- because of the complexity and multi-dimensional nature of many social problems affecting children and families (for example, child abuse, maltreatment, and so on ), community based initiatives that are integrated with government programs, and which address combinations of problems, are likely to produce more socially and cost-effective results.” (From executive summary)


A comparison of two approaches conducted in Fiji and Nepal to assess community capacity. Using a framework of ‘domain’ descriptors to assess community capacity, such as the extent of participation, leadership and organisational structures, the authors demonstrate that while communities are all different, this method is useful for evaluative purposes. The use of visual representations of community change, in particular the spider web approach, are also discussed.

A number of examples are described in key performance terms and lessons learnt, such as Aboriginal Parenting Workshops (Men and Women’s business needs to be dealt with separately, etc), Grandcare Grandparent Support Service (there is an unanticipated demand), Carers Counselling Line (carers prefer anonymous counsellors for assistance in the country), etc.

Details the strategies to be used in the Department in the two year time frame with definitions and concepts explained as guides to action. For examples see reference above.

Provides a review of the literature used for the development of the capacity building strategy. A useful resource.

This is a review of some of the conflicts between traditional problem-based assessments and alternative, strengths-based approaches. It offers useful tools and strategies for incorporating client-centred, strengths-based practice in settings where social workers are required to use assessment processes based in the medical model and deficit-based language of psychopathology and the DSM. It also promotes a process of infiltrating, influencing, and transforming the assessment process so that it reflects a more holistic and strengths-based social work perspective. An example is provided for transforming the traditional assessment and incorporating the strengths-based perspective in practice through using a case study.

The authors developed the Strengths-Based Practices Inventory (SBPI) from 2 studies of parents. They found that the tool is sensitive to differences between programmes in the extent of strengths-based practice and is related to some expected outcomes, including family empowerment and social support. They note that this was developed from in-depth interaction with parents to develop the scale and that these were parents of a voluntary service. Other scales would need to be developed for programmes in involuntary services to better reflect the purpose of service delivery.


This paper reports on a meta-analysis of ten community action projects in Aotearoa New Zealand. The importance of processes for critical reflection, the analysis of power dynamics between stakeholders, and recognition of the social, cultural and historical context of a project's genesis are discussed.


A model for analysis assesses effective participation along the axes of Approach (passive, one-way; reactive 'community consultation'; pro-active 'community participation'; interactive or partnership working; community mobilisation/empowerment; and entrusted community control), and describes models of engagement such as consultation/public participation, asset-based, community democracy, identity based, learning-led and popular education, service development, community organising and regional and national network models.


This article describes a qualitative case study which was designed to identify indicators of success for a specific community partnership as well as testing an evaluation tool to be used for collaborative efforts. It found that the most common performance indicators leading to the development of social capital across areas such as hospital/business, small community organisations, youth groups, faith-based
groups and block captains were mutual support, networking and trust; and what needed improvement was role definition, coordination and communication.


Details a community education programme run from a neighbourhood centre which covered a range of skills and knowledge development for women who wanted to return to the workforce and education. Other services are offered at the centre, focusing on children who have been abused and parent support groups.


An early article from the US providing some definitions of community building and commenting on organisational/ government capacity building projects. It reviews some of the then common conceptions of capacity which relate mainly to organisational ability.


A discussion of the need to evaluate the popular community models in use in disadvantaged communities. He finds that the limitations of targeted funding, and the difficulties of establishing and maintaining the effective partnerships upon which successful programmes rely, are emerging as significant issues. These findings are discussed in the context of ever-widening inequalities in UK society and the need for integrated and multi-agency service delivery.


An evaluation of an education programme in Macedonia which used a train the teachers model to develop a strategy for health promotion. The strategy found it to be successful in increasing capacity in perinatal medicine.

Another of the literature reviews conducted for the then FACS which contains a wealth of resources.


Provides detailed outline of processes deemed necessary for community organisations to enhance their connection to community and seeking funding. Community mapping and participation are early strategies as well as developing sustainable organisational structures. The Foundation has many such resources on their web site.


Comments to the Government of UK’s consultation paper on community capacity building which note the need to acknowledge community complexity, the inclusion of other than geographic communities and the need for local participation.


Consultants examine the way community involvement in neighbourhoods is currently resourced in UK. They highlight the strategic and financial gaps and put forward specific proposals on how these might be filled. These include engaging communities before problems are identified so they may be ready to fully participate when projects are designed (this requires general community building as a principles and practice), the use of a multi-disciplinary approach, paying residents for development work and using community ‘champions’.

Another comment on a consultation paper reiterating local participation, intergovernment collaboration and the need for training, as well as specifically providing links to resources which detail audit and assessment tools for assessing community capacity.


The Community Development, Sustainable Development and the Environment section at the Budapest conference brought together people from Norway and Hungary involved in linking sustainable (mainly environmental) development and community development. Examples include Representations of Future Generations (Hungary) brought together the protecting of the environment with the creations of conditions for a better quality of life through local community decision making and implementation, and the Last Straw landscape rehabilitation project which had the effect of bringing together a diverse range of local community groups. Other examples are a café at the centre of an Old People’s Centre which is designed along eco-friendly lines and a local centre for sustainability across age groups. The messages of community development processes are evident in these examples.


Case studies of school/community partnerships gathered from around the country reveal some clear lessons about what works and what does not in this case study of local schools as assets. Using assets instead of needs assessment and the focus on people rather than economic resources, and building sustainable relationships across age groups are the foundations of this practice engaging the young people’s attention on ideas they want to pursue. Lessons to be aware of where the need to fit the projects into already existing concerns, not to make the relationships too multiple or wide, start small and include all the young people, not just those who are considered capable.

The paper describes a range of service models that focus on Indigenous collaboration, community development, community participation and community control. Some key policy and practice recommendations for the development of better child protection and child welfare/family support systems are described.

Findings include the focus on a holistic approach to healing, autonomy and flexibility in service provision, and the capacity to respond or tailor services to meet local needs as important indicators with a particular emphasis on family preservation, which is a particularly important part of Indigenous family support systems. She finds that the flexible family and home-based nature of family preservation services renders it suitable for use with a variety of cultural traditions.


In this study of how an organisation engaged the local community on a respite care project the following themes stressed the importance of: (a) identifying a community need; (b) addressing the various components identified in the community development process (relational, structures and process); (c) highlighting the strategies used to engage in successful community development (developing shared visions, creating win/win relationships); and (d) attending to factors that influence community development (philosophical and practical 'fit' with existing concerns, reciprocity and to take time).


This lengthy and detailed report details four case studies of Healthy Communities Healthy Youth projects operating along asset-based approaches. Largely descriptive of the projects the preliminary findings rest on the formation of relationships between young people and adults and the need to resist imposing norms and expectations.

This describes how an emphasis on the elements of positive human development and community approaches to asset building can make a meaningful contribution to the field of child welfare. The institute’s framework of developmental assets identifies a set of interrelated experiences, relationships, skills, and values that are associated with reduced high-risk behaviours and increased thriving behaviours. The model developed was reproduced for the Webinar.


This paper looks at recent attempts to increase public participation in local decision-making which will actively involve children in the processes that will affect them. The author examines the policy of young people's participation and finds that there is resistance to including young people's voices and recommends the development of local community structures which will enable this to happen. Using the framework of dialogue, development, participation and integration Matthews suggests more needs to be done by adults to actively include young people.


This paper takes a strengths approach to research with First Peoples instead of the more commonly used problem focused approach. The study undertook an extensive literature on healthy child development and family practices in Caucasian families and found that contrasted with the limited perspective healthy development in First Peoples families. They recommend that research adopts a strengths approach which is more culturally sensitive.


This lengthy report details a project undertaken to enhance awareness of the evidence base of environmental and other influences on the early years. The focus was on improving the capacity of early childhood workers (from a range of disciplines) to use the evidence base and educate others. There is a detailed
literature review of evidence and recommendations concerning specific training and skills development.


Describes the role of community centres in family work in which participatory action research strategies engage families in developing activities that best meet their needs and lead to other developments in the locality. Taking a strengths approach the practitioners use the centre as a springboard to other community driven activities.


Examples of three community projects/community building including that known as the Claymore Miracle, the Minto Hill project and Families in Partnership. Social entrepreneurism here is used to describe the beginning phases of projects in which the ‘social entrepreneur’ takes an active role in providing organisational resources then moving towards a developmental approach of starting with small community identified mainly social activities which had the effect of stimulating further interest in small projects. The final example started with the efforts of two concerned parents who joined a Kindergarten programme and initiated parent networks.


This paper describes some experiences in capacity strengthening and proposes mechanisms for building these capacities in a sustainable manner. It focuses mainly on the development of human resources and training to develop research skills an recommends the building of networks across developing and the developed world.


This article describes a substance abuse intervention programme for children and their families which relies on collaborative work between agency staff and the
families. Family group conferencing is one of the strategies used with a special emphasis on inter-agency collaboration.


The search conducted for this review revealed a relatively small number of quantitative intervention studies using experimental or statistical controls (9), which suggests the need for a consideration of how to develop the evidence base for community practice. The qualitative research suggests effectiveness of community practice interventions on psychosocial aspects of communities including citizen participation, and the improvements in physical, social and economic conditions of communities. Contextual factors such as who participates and the level of stability in communities is found to be important.


This paper describes the efforts taken to improve the child welfare service delivery system in a US state. The authors explore a model which illustrates leadership as the key ingredient rather than a general focus on collaboration and integration. This suggests locating and developing leadership across the community is of most importance.


This report proposes a classification of social care knowledge based on its sources: organisations, practitioners, the policy community, researchers and users and carers. This framework is used in the ARACY topical paper.


This article explores the family social networks and the community of caregivers of neglected children. Using social network mapping used they found that far from being isolated from the larger community, the children had many caregivers. Community building can result from understanding these patterns.

Report on research conducted on developmental assets inventory of young people finding evidence of the deliberate development of assets in and for young people. This was a deliberate strategy to raise awareness of how to develop assets and found that although many residents and families were building assets almost half weren’t suggesting the need for a whole of community approach. Encouraging volunteering, school reach out activities and deliberately seeking to involve those not already participating are some of the suggestions.


The assessment of the effectiveness of providing support to young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness through community capacity building activities suggests that the programme be continued, that there be better agency collaboration and provision of services and that further follow up research is necessary to build on the success. This lengthy report provides details of young people’s circumstances and hopes for their future as well as the capacity building strategies used.

The Reconnect Programme is subject of several reports to be found on the FACSIA website:


This paper focuses on a single case study in a Community Centre to explore the aspects of practice within the centre which contribute positively to support. The researchers found a mix of psycho-dynamic and systemic approaches were needed.


The author uses several examples of programmes which she considers contribute to building communities, identifying some of the common characteristics such as: the
need to construct bridges across both the different levels of government and the different sectors of the service system, and to involve a broad range of people such as economists, business and union leaders, social planners, professionals in health education and welfare services and local community members.

This article argues that the 1989 Children Act has provided a poor context for discussing prevention. The article discusses Sure Start and Communities that Care and their impact on disadvantaged children and neighbourhoods.

This report found that the relationships formed between the workers and the young people involved in the projects were the most crucial for success. The evaluators also identified that being treated as adults, by the opportunities for self-development, socialising and, in some cases, to do something for other people were also important to the young people. There was also a high level of sustainability with many re-engaging with education, employment or training.

Midwestern (US) and Honduran community-based collaborative problem-solving case examples provide cross-culturally adaptable lessons. Common models include clarification of issues, involvement of others, development of coalitions, educational intervention processes, and evaluation strategies.

This paper draws on a survey of 1,506 households to examine the distribution of social capital across regional Australia. The paper explores the nature of people's connections with one another and with their communities and examines how these connections reflect the bonding, bridging and linking distinction drawn in social capital theory.

Taylor describes the tool, Matching Needs and Services (MNS) to help professionals engage with community members in the effort to gather evidence of community needs, aggregate and prioritize those needs, and begin to design services to better meet them.


The study focused upon community capacity building workers and using case studies explored the various work, roles and settings for the workers which all varied across the districts. While there was commonality in the sorts of work performed, such as a focus on local educational activities and larger regeneration projects there was also different in the amount of resources available to each and the expectations by their organisations on each worker. In particular there was a variety about the clarity of what constitutes capacity building by organisations and the people with whom they work. They conclude that effective capacity building needs long term commitment and mainstream support as part of the overall promotion of well-being by public agencies.


This conference paper explores the needs of capacity building in relation to human development, the restructuring of institutions, political leadership, building partnerships and building problem solving capacities in communities. In particular he notes the need for recognition and respect for the already existing abilities in Indigenous communities which needs to be harnessed.


This article examines the mechanisms for involving marginalized groups in the process of participating collectively and working toward a common interest. The study focuses on parents’ experiences with two of Canada’s largest community-
based health promotion programmes for children. The conclusions emphasize the need to recognize the informal and everyday as important sites for governance and decision making. In addition, they add substance to the claim that women's spaces that focus on women's work are legitimate sites from which to build civil society.

This paper describes some of the approaches to addressing maltreatment of children in OECD countries and explores whether these approaches could be used to improve outcomes in New Zealand. Comparisons are made between the Anglo-American model of child protection, which New Zealand uses, and the Continental European model of Family services. New Zealand's use of Family Group Conferences, which is developed from an Indigenous Maori structure, is more akin to the family services approach.

Ideas to strengthen and expand community practice and community building are presented in this paper. Examples such as Habitat House and Head Start are explored with an examination of current community building models. These include Neighbourhood and Community Organising, Organising Functional Communities, Community Social and Economic Development, Social Planning, Programme Development and Community Liaison, Political and Social Action, Coalitions and Social Movements.

This paper describes the use of the critical incident technique (CIT) to identify the critical success factors in developmental social work services as a means of evaluating the success of using community development approaches. These critical success factors appeared to be the people themselves who were involved and the roles they played (support, volunteer, leaders); skills such as administration, financial management, needs assessments, motivating others; and the provision of moral rather than practical support.

In designing the evaluation of six capacity-building programs implemented by one rural Primary Care Partnership (PCP), the evaluators opted to use an approach that would, in turn, enhance the capacity of program staff to undertake evaluations of their own programs. An over-arching framework was developed for the evaluation, based on a program logic model. The same framework was used to develop an individual program logic for each of the six projects. Participants were coached through the development of an evaluation plan and supported to undertake their evaluations.

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