PART THREE

Best practice in learning for developing communities

CHAPTER 13
International models of community sustainability

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International travel can provide opportunities to learn about alternative models for community sustainability. During the past three years, the authors have had opportunities to travel internationally and at the same time attend international community development conferences, present keynote papers, interview community developers, and visit unique community development projects. Discussions with community developers and community residents provided insight into the process, methods, and program design of community development in other locations and cultures.

Interviews, site visits, and photographs were taken of community development workers, villages, and local residents in Tasmania and Bendigo, Australia; Botswana in southern Africa; in Kampung Endah, Malaysia; and Chia-Yi, Taiwan; as well as in the Southeastern United States. The theme for the interviews and visits was to learn about community development practice and to identify all or parts of projects that have the potential for being long-term and sustainable efforts.

Examples of alternative models

This chapter presents brief descriptions of community development projects in several international locations and the United States along with comments about the sustainability of the projects. Conclusions about common elements of these examples despite disparate cultural origins, are drawn in the summary.

Example 1

The first example is from Botswana in southern Africa. The Village Industries Program in Gabane, located approximately 30 kilometres from the capital city of Gaborone, employs about 60 individuals from the local village community. Grain sorghum is milled into cereal, packaged in five, ten, 25 and larger pound bags, and shipped throughout Botswana. There is also a pottery where artists produce traditional masks, pottery, and beautifully carved gourds to sell to tourists. Another product from the Village Industries Program is concrete blocks for buildings. Other ventures including welding and metalworking have been attempted with limited success. Poultry has also been a successful venture, although they were experiencing problems with a virus when we visited. Milled grain sorghum, poultry products, pottery, and concrete blocks are products that have been marketed successfully in Gaborone and throughout Botswana.

SUSTAINABILITY

The Village Industries experience can be sustained with markets for their products. If these markets are eliminated for some reason then the Village Industries Program will have to identify new products to market. This has happened with two products already, carved gourds and dried flower arrangements. These products became difficult to produce due to the prolonged drought the country is experiencing, making raw materials hard to obtain. Dried flowers also have gone out of fashion so production was discontinued. Food and building materials for houses and shelter are basic needs in all cultures so there should be a sustainable trend with these products. The tourism potential is expanding so locally produced crafts should also be a much-needed commodity.

Example 2

Located in the outskirts of Zimbabwe's capital city Harare, sits a magical place called Champungu Sculpture Park. Zimbabwe is famous for its stone sculptures and many of the artists are known internationally. You will also find stone sculptures being sold alongside roadways and in markets. Many of these roadside sculptors are competent, but it is a particular honour to be included among the artists at Champungu. The privilege of practicing one's art at the park is a considerable boost for an artist's career. The park selects artists, and even the opportunity to become an apprentice to a recognised artist is competitive.

The park is located on about ten acres or four hectares of land. Upon entering the park, you are allowed to wander among sculptures strategically placed in the attractively landscaped property, take photographs, and talk to working artists. There is a small building where sculptures are sold, be they small (8–12 inches tall) or large (the size of an adult person). The park will ship sculptures anywhere in the world and the buyer receives a certificate authenticating the piece as a genuine original.

SUSTAINABILITY

The owner donated the land for the park. Champungu Sculpture Park functions as a tourist location (it is marketed in all the hotels), a place for artists to work and for budding artists to learn their art, a place to exhibit and sell sculpture, and also provides education for school groups, fostering a sense of cultural pride. In addition to the work of resident artists, the park mounts travelling exhibits, creates posters and exhibits books, as well as published small booklets about individual artists.

Example 3

Sheffield, Tasmania is a small town in Australia that has promoted tourism, culture, and heritage by using murals on buildings in and near the town. Professional artists were commissioned to paint more than 30 murals throughout the community. Since the first mural was painted more than 12 years ago, the number of tourists visiting Sheffield has increased dramatically. Sheffield is located near Cradle Mountain, another major tourist attraction for the area. Visitors travelling to Cradle Mountain often stop in Sheffield to view the murals, visit the welcome centre, stop for tea and a meal, shop in local stores, and learn about the various stories related to individual murals.

SUSTAINABILITY

For more than 12 years people in Sheffield have maintained, expanded, improved, and promoted the murals as a community-building experience for visitors to that region. The murals have been an economic benefit to merchants in the community.

Example 4

Deloraine, a small town in Tasmania, Australia, has a very efficient recycling and waste disposal facility. The facility has been in development or operation for more than five years. The recycling facility, or TIP, as it is called, is under the jurisdiction of the town council, staffed by individuals who have an interest in and knowledge about recycling, and is further supported by community volunteers. Individuals who bring items to the TIP are encouraged to sort their rubbish into aluminium, glass, plastic, wood, metal, organic materials, and useable clothing or articles. The useable clothing and other articles, such as sports equipment, picture frames, and so on, are cleaned and placed in an on-site recycling store that is called an Op Shop (Opportunity Shop).

SUSTAINABILITY
Community developers can determine the commitment and care a community has for the environment by the appearance of the TIP. A clean, organised, efficient, and odour-free TIP is an indicator of the commitment to the recycling and waste management principles of sustainable community development. When concern for the environment, recycling, and waste disposal is a critical component of community infrastructure, it is a strong indicator of sustainability.

Example 5

Ravenshoe in North Queensland, Australia is a small town that has identified a unique niche for the entire world. This region is the host location for 12 species of possum that are found in the forest in this area. This is the only location in the world that has 12 different species of possum. An internationally-recognised researcher lives in this area to conduct studies of these creatures. In the past three years, individuals and small groups have begun to promote this region to themselves and to others outside the region as a place which is unique for its natural beauty and for the special animals that live there. Their community motto is 'anything is possum-able and nothing is impossum-able'.

SUSTAINABILITY
This spirit of creativity has sparked several different ideas for ways to market their area as an international tourist attraction. Residents are knowledgeable and protective of the unique environment and habitat that support the possums.

Example 6

In Australia, the sustainability of commercial agriculture is a common theme on the Internet, affectionately known as the net, although the quality of the discussion varies considerably. Conference areas include sustainable agriculture, climatic conditions and trends, animal husbandry issues, land care protection and preservation, and a wide variety of miscellaneous topics. The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) sponsors a number of telecottages in rural communities to foster use of computer and related telecommunication systems. Likewise, the discussion groups can be used to monitor international political issues, such as the progress of the US Farm Bill through Congress, details of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and activities of the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO).

SUSTAINABILITY
Debate between agricultural producers at the local level, and with agriculturists at both the national and international levels, may be followed by accessing discussion groups and the listservs that are created, or that already exist, for different topical areas. Undoubtedly, the range of listserv-based discussion groups will increase substantially in the future. The fact that rural peoples and rural communities can, and will, access these sources of information is critical to their understanding, and to creating improvement and change.

Example 7

People in Miller County, Georgia, USA had a vision for what they wanted to do in their town and county. Their vision initially developed over ten years and has been discussed, displayed, and updated as community members have systematically worked on each element of their action plans. Activities included developing a community play called

Swamp Gravy, putting up street lights in the town square, remodelling an old hotel into period lodging and dining facilities, expanding their community recreation facilities and park along Spring Creek, supporting the development of a new cotton gin, promoting outdoor recreation, and most recently building a golf course for the community and region.

SUSTAINABILITY

The city of Colquitt, Georgia, has an active Chamber of Commerce, involved and supportive Mayor and Town Council, and many volunteers who work on community projects when called upon. City and County cooperation is the key to the many changes and improvements in the area.

Example 8

Nine communities, which share the Savannah River and three lakes (Hartwell, Russell, and Thurmond/Clarks-Hill) on the South Carolina/Georgia, USA borders are working together to promote the area for two purposes: tourism and small business development. The people involved in the Upper Savannah River Economic Coalition (USREC) want the area to be a tourist destination and a place where small businesses can be started and survive for the long term. Approximately 30 individuals, with diverse interests such as art, culture, history, business, industry, and government have been meeting since June 1996 to reduce the barriers associated with state and local boundaries and to promote regional development. The group meets on the third Wednesday of every month to work on projects and activities of mutual interest that promote tourism and small business development.

SUSTAINABILITY

USREC participants have been successful in (1) publishing an events calender for nine counties; (2) jointly sponsoring tours and trips for tourists to some of these events; (3) preparing a web page to promote the region; (4) identifying tourism attractions in the region and including this information on their web page, and (5) producing a list of sites, attractions, and venues for retirees visiting or living in the area. Each meeting is held at a different location either in Georgia or South Carolina to promote the unique venues and the potential for tourism and small business development in each location.

Example 9

US Highway 441 runs north and south through the state of Georgia and lies east of the city of Atlanta. This highway enters Georgia in the mountains in the north and traverses through the state crossing three interstate highways (I-85, I-20, and I-16) that are major east-west directional thru-ways. There are 17 counties that lie along or touch Highway 441 and over 41 different cities, towns, and communities located along the highway. Community teams of three to five members from ten of the counties along the highway met in Athens, Georgia in the spring of 1998 to discuss working together regarding their interest in promoting tourism, scenic beauty, and unique heritage and cultural venues. The three-day meeting resulted in a plan that included development of highway sites, sounds, smells, and unique places map. Middle-school children from Dublin, Georgia started the idea of putting unique and special places on a long piece of cloth and the idea literally grew in size until it was over six feet wide and 40 feet long. At each meeting leading up to the three-day retreat, participants were asked to mark their unique and special places on the cloth.

SUSTAINABILITY

Since the retreat in April of 1998, the group has met six times a year, every other month, at different locations along the highway to share ideas, discuss local projects, and form a nonprofit organisation that can apply for funding and organise their resources for promoting heritage tourism. Each community requests to host the meeting and provides a meeting site, tours to unique and special places, and a meal for the participants. The group has its own web page that is the result of a student assignment for a marketing class at the University of Georgia. Two teams in the class were asked to develop a marketing campaign for promoting the corridor. Each team travelled the highway, spent the night in some of the communities, interviewed residents, visited unique and special places, and designed a marketing strategy. Team strategies have been merged and a middle-school technology class has put much of the information on a web page for the corridor group. The US 441 Heritage Corridor group continues to meet regularly and work on individual community and joint county projects, as well as seek funding for larger tourism promotion projects.

Example 10

Malaysia is an interesting country because of its cultural, religious, and racial diversity. The population consists of Malay (55 per cent), people who emigrated generations ago from China (30 per cent) and India (10 per cent), as well as a smattering of people from many other countries. People are conscious of race riots that happened shortly after independence was achieved 30 years ago and no-one wants them to happen again. These days, people refer to 'diversity, with unity'. Another item that makes Malaysia interesting is the tremendous development that has happened in the country over the past 30 years.

One of the places visited was a village of Kampung Endah, located south of Kuala Lumpur. A council consisting of representatives from the community and a headman ran the village. The village was insistent that women should sit on the council since they brought up different issues for discussion. This village had won many competitions for their development efforts and the walls of the meetinghouse were covered with plaques commemorating their successes. The village was small and very well kept. In addition to neat homes, they have built a meetinghouse, school buildings, and a small library. Computer technology is available in the library and local schools. Computers turned out to be one of their major foci in their development efforts. Another emphasis was a communal farm, an income-generation project. Not everyone participated, but it did provide economic opportunity for people who chose to. The village had purchased several acres for cultivation to grow cash crops. Another focus was achieving high literacy rates within the village.

SUSTAINABILITY

One of the reasons the village is so successful is that the people have very clear goals. In fact, many of these goals were posted on the walls of the meetinghouse in several languages, even though the people who live in the village are mostly Malay. Some of these signs describe specific goals, but many are statements of values and inspiration. Another reason that they are successful is that they avail themselves of assistance from community developers associated with government agencies and universities.

Example 11

While attending an international conference about learning communities at Chung-Cheng National University in Chia-Yi, Taiwan, it was possible to visit two communities in this

area. One of the communities was in the Hsin-Kang Township (Chia-Yi County) and the other was Won-ten Community (Chia-Yi City).

a) **Hsin-Kang Foundation** located in Chia-Yi County is a well-known and famous grassroots organisation that has been successful in locating financial resources to build a community centre that has a library and meeting space for residents. Residents can come to the centre to meet in small groups, to read resource materials, and to work together on community issues and projects. The building that houses the community centre is located within easy walking distance of many residents or it is an easy commute by motorbike or car. There are few paid staff and many volunteers that work at the community centre to assist residents in their community development work. The centre director is well known in Chia-Yi as well as throughout the country and at state government levels, so there is access to political and financial networks in Taiwan. The faculty from the Institute of Adult Education at Chung-Cheng National University has assisted centre staff and volunteers in identifying the learning and community organisation needs of residents in the area.

Sustainability
The centre is located in the community and is accessible to residents who use it for meetings and resource information. There are representatives from the community who advise the centre about providing outreach services to residents.

b) **Won-ten Community** is a small neighbourhood within Chia-Yi City that has decided to work together on an issue of mutual concern. Rubbish in the neighbourhood has been a concern to residents. Paper, plastics, glass containers, aluminium, and a host of other items had been discarded in the neighbourhood and several people wanted to do something about this situation. The faculty at the Institute of Adult Education at Chung-Cheng National University has met with concerned residents, participated in discussions at community meetings, and assisted community volunteers in designing strategies to clean up and recycle rubbish. Volunteers meet in one of the resident's homes for community discussions and planning. They have encouraged all members of the neighbourhood to recycle paper, glass, plastics, and other rubbish. The city sanitation department has located a space within the neighbourhood for a recycling centre, a clean site with 15 different receptacles for recyclable items, that is accessible to all residents. Also, the city has identified a building lot where the community can construct their community centre when they have acquired enough funding. In the interim, the building lot has been cleared and residents have planted flower and vegetable gardens. The gardens are near the recycling centre so neighbours can drop off recyclable items, work on their garden, and discuss community activities. This site is very busy during the evenings and on weekends when people have time off from their work and other responsibilities.

Sustainability
A grassroots community organisation has emerged from neighbours, volunteers, and residents talking about rubbish. The group has established a tradition of talking about local issues, engaged the City as a partner in recycling, and utilised other resources such as the Institute for Adult Education in assisting them to improve their community. The establishment of a recycling centre next to their community centre building lot, currently used for a flower and vegetable garden, has facilitated networking within the neighbourhood. There is a tendency toward sustainability as the grassroots organisation accomplishes each project.

Summary

We have presented examples of sustainable models of community development from different cultures. Despite differences in culture, languages, and ethnicity, some common elements can be drawn from these examples. One of these elements is the engagement of local people in making decisions about changes in their communities. This can be seen in examples 3, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9. This can happen spontaneously as people begin to talk about mutual concerns, and sometimes existing community groups will call on an outside facilitator to enable this kind of conversation. For example, several communities decided they needed to promote their region as a tourist site, such as examples 3, 5, 8 and 9.

It is important to seek and honour the opinions of diverse members of the community and people we interviewed indicated that this was essential to the success of community endeavours. Time was taken to listen to diverse views in examples 7, 8, 9 and 10.

A second feature is residents sharing their ideas with others and seeking help from government agencies and non-government agencies for information and practical assistance, such as in examples 6, 11a and 11b.

Some of the examples illustrate that as communities learned more they began to develop concrete plans and work together to act on them so that as in examples 7 and 10, community actions produced tangible results such as building a meeting facility, or contracting for a web page as in examples 8 and 9.

Some communities worked with outside funding, as in examples 2 and 5, while others had no outside sources of money and generated the funds they needed by accepting local support and donations (examples 7, 8, and 9).

People deciding to take time to listen to the diverse voices of community members and residents and specify actions that are under local control, have initiated sustainable community development efforts.

A group action learning model for sustainable rural community development: Reflections on an Indonesian case

A Muktasam and S Chamala

The Indonesian Rural Community Development Program was put into practice in the 1960s when the General Education Program (Bimas or Mass Guidance Program) was introduced to increase agricultural production. In the late 1970s, the government introduced a group approach for rural community development. Since then, many types and numbers of groups have been established. These include farmer groups, mass media study groups, water user associations, cattle-fattening groups, and poverty groups. In 1997, in West Nusa Tenggara province, for example, about 12 000 farmer-related groups were identified. However, the Indonesian Rural Community Development Program used these groups within the frame of a transfer of technology model. As a result most groups failed to promote community learning. This chapter examines how action learning takes place within groups, how the modified participatory action research (MPAR) methodology stimulated the action learning process in groups and service agencies, and implications for regional sustainability.

Introduction

Rural community development was put into practice in the 1960s when the government introduced the General Education Program to increase rice production. This era of Indonesian green revolution had a significant impact on rice production. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the government introduced a group approach to support the *Insus* program (a special intensification program focused on intra-group cooperation and five recommended agricultural technologies). As a result, in 1984/1985 the government succeeded in achieving sufficient rice production. After 1985, rice production levelled off and in 1987/1988, the government launched another program called the *Supra Insus* program (focusing on intra- and inter-group cooperation to implement ten technical innovations).

The group approach is also used in other areas of rural development such as in health, information, family planning, small industries, forestry, poverty alleviation, religion, and women's development. Consequently, many types and large numbers of groups have been established such as mass media study groups, water user associations, cattle fattening groups, small farmer groups, small industry groups, family planning groups, and youth Muslim groups. In 1994, through the poverty alleviation program, the government introduced another type of group called *Kelompok Masyarakat*, which literally means *community group* (poverty group is used in this paper to differentiate from the general term community group).

Most research has focused on the adoption of technical innovation, while research on how these groups promote community learning (group members and wider community members gain knowledge, skills, and change their attitude) has been neglected. Research has found that most groups have not contributed much to community learning (Adisoewignyo 1998). The groups mostly exist to participate and capture prizes in government-sponsored group and village competitions, or for policy implementation.

The focus of this chapter is to discuss how the group approach promotes community learning for rural community development. The effect of the modified participatory action research method on the groups, community, and organisation learning (organisation learning refers to the learning process that takes place within the service agencies) is also discussed. Implications for regional sustainability are presented, followed by conclusions.

Sustainable rural development: From 'teaching the community' to 'community and organisational learning'

The transfer of technology (TOT) approach dominates rural development practices in Indonesia where *teaching/mass education* is the main process. Van den Ban and Hawkins (1996) use the phrase *development and diffusion strategy* to explain this approach. The research and development institutions develop technologies which are then transferred to the rural community through extension institutions. Accumulated experience with this approach has developed the community perception that the instrument of development is technology. As a result, the rural community has become dependent and the development process is less sustainable. Rural community development failures due to this approach have been widely discussed (Rahim & Jayalakshmi 1996; Rouse 1995). Learning from this experience, participatory approaches are increasingly recognised (Chamala & Keith 1995).

In Indonesian rural community development, groups are considered to be community participation units that also promote community learning. A wide variety and large numbers of groups have been established in every Indonesian village. The strategic role of groups in promoting effective community learning has been widely discussed (Millar & Curtis 1997; Hamilton 1995). Millar and Curtis (1997) concluded that effective group learning could be achieved if the four critical factors in group learning are present. These factors are group autonomy, use of experience and integrated information, effective facilitation, ongoing relationships and learning opportunities. Exchange of information and experience amongst the group members would enrich their learning experience.

Chamala's model of group effectiveness shows that effective group learning processes are also affected by other factors such as service agency and community factors (Chamala 1995). Muktasam and Chamala (1998) found that most groups failed to promote effective learning processes due to ineffective approaches taken by the service agencies. Organisation learning disabilities (Senge 1992) were also found in the study. If rural development is perceived as a system, then effective and sustainable rural development requires effective learning processes at both community and organisation level (see Figure 2 later in the chapter).

Methodology

A modified participatory action research (MPAR) method was used in this study. The term 'modified' refers to the fact that the method was not purely participatory action research (PAR) because the community and other stakeholders were not involved in the early phase of the study. It is a combination of a snapshot survey and PAR where three phases of fieldwork were conducted (Figure 1). The first phase of fieldwork (Dec 96–Apr 97) was carried out to collect data from groups, group members, field agents, and other government staff, while the second phase of fieldwork was carried out (Nov 97–Apr 98) to bring the tentative results to the groups and related stakeholders for confirmation and to gain further insight on various issues. Six series of workshops were carried out in this phase.

Figure 1: A modified participatory action research method
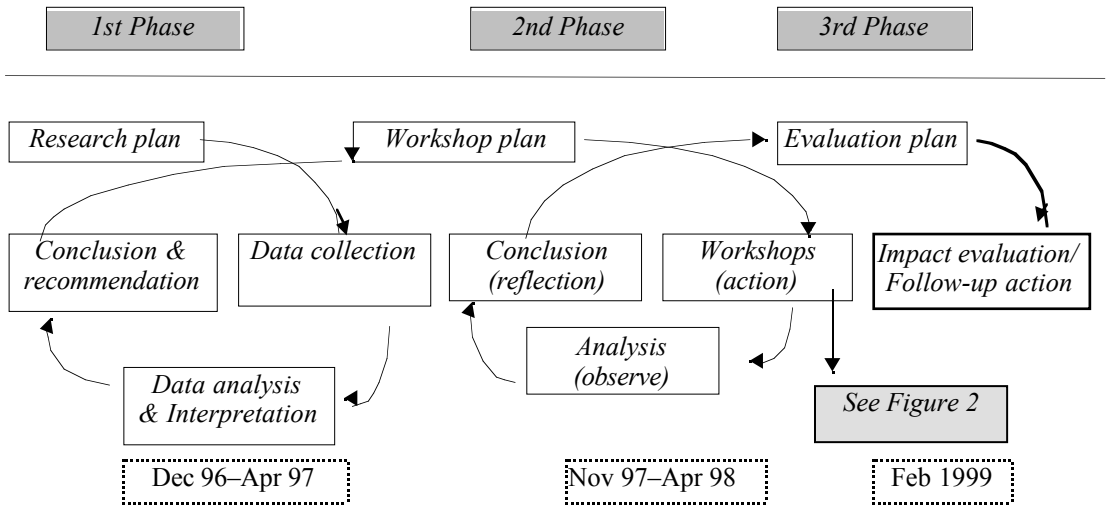
Another objective of this phase was to use the research findings for helping groups and organisations through action learning processes.

Participatory workshops were used to achieve these objectives. Participants were encouraged to reflect on group problems, find solutions, and develop realistic action plans. Brainstorming, SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis, small group and plenary discussions were used to facilitate the workshops. The researchers took facilitation roles and bridged the different level workshops to promote information flow from groups to field extension staff and policymakers at the provincial level (Figure 2).

Group workshop results were presented at the field agent workshop, and these workshop results were presented at the district and provincial level workshop involving policy-makers and other stakeholders from related agencies.

Results and discussion

Group role performance and associated factors

Most groups failed to perform their expected roles. Six out of the nine groups under the study showed no activity. One hundred per cent of the members of the water user associations and the mass media study groups, for example, perceived that their groups have not played any role.

This study confirmed that the agency approaches to the groups have contributed to the group failure. These approaches such as top-down, targeting, incentive (misused), and parallel approach (lead to lack of inter-agency coordination) have also had further impacts on groups' characteristics—leadership, membership, composition, cohesion, rules and environment—as well as group members' perceptions of the group's roles, tasks, and development program in general.

Figure 2: Workshop series used to promote community and organisational learning
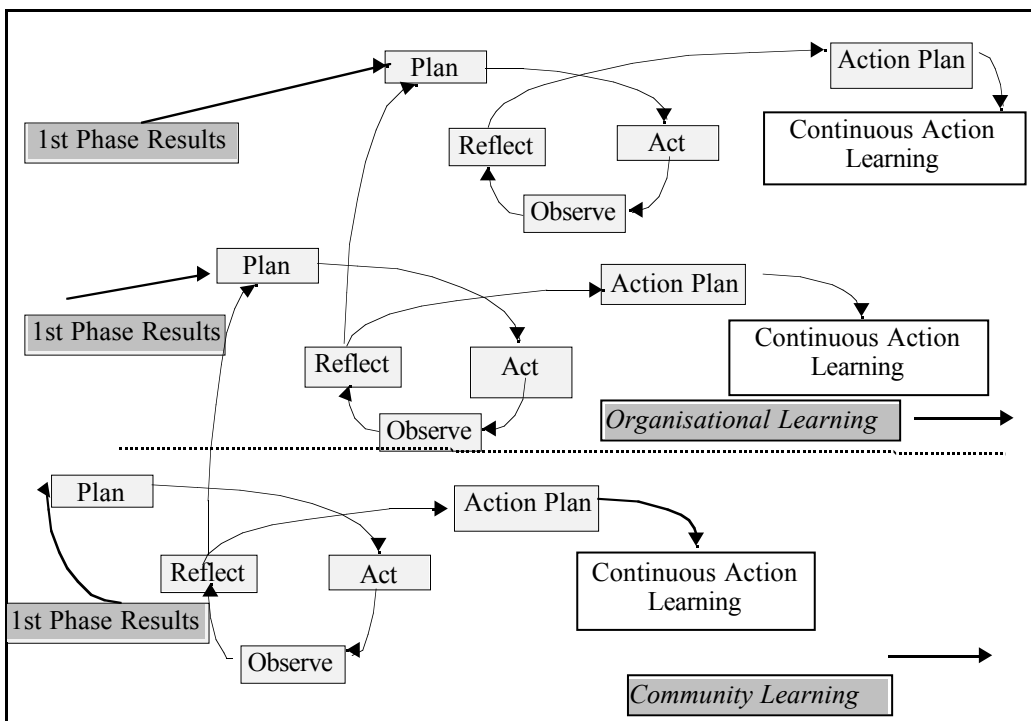

Do the groups learn from their actions?

Action learning processes did not occur in most of the investigated groups, for example, the mass media study groups, water user associations, and the farmer group, and most of these groups performed no voluntary action. However, limited action, which was promoted by government staff, was identified in the water user associations. The groups did not have a culture of reflection on inaction. Reflecting on why there was inaction could help them to search for reasons for their inaction and act as a trigger for action.

Less formal group action learning was only found in the more active groups—one farmer group and two cattle-fattening groups. This modified participatory action research helped to formalise the action learning process, particularly in the farmer group. Figure 3 shows a one-year formalised group action learning model found in the study. This figure shows how the group learned from its action.

Another less formal group action learning process was found in both cattle-fattening groups, where the group members met at their meeting place and discussed the group's issues.

Figure 3: A one-year formalised group action learning model found in a successful group
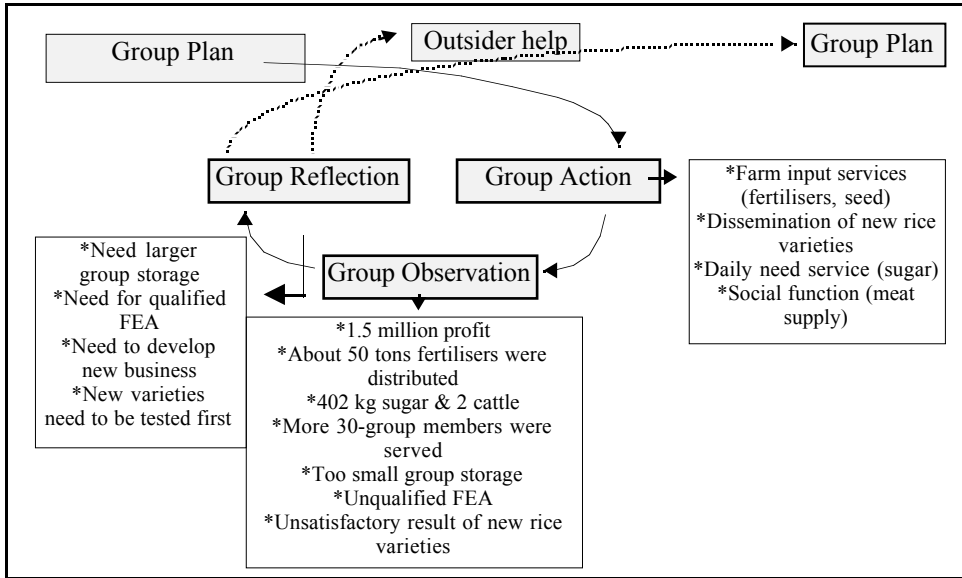
Impacts of this modified participatory action research on community and organisational learning

This study found that the groups' and agencies' learning processes could be revitalised through group workshops and organisational workshops. Learning outcomes generated in the group and agency workshops indicate that the learning processes have taken place within the groups and the service agencies. They learned by sharing their ideas on factors associated with groups' failure, developing solutions and action plans.

Moreover, the learning processes within the service agencies were enriched through this approach. In addition to the first phase findings presented by the researcher in the workshop, the learning outcomes generated in the group workshops were also another learning source for the service agencies (Figure 2). The approach helps to communicate group learning outcomes to service agencies at different levels. Learning/communication processes used to be top-down, but these sequential workshops activated bottom-up processes—learning from the field experiences. Publishing the workshop activities and results twice in the local newspaper made this learning process more transparent and put pressure on various stakeholders to act.

Under the conventional social research methods such as a snapshot survey and case study, these community and organisational learning processes are often neglected.

Barriers to community and organisational learning

ORGANISATION AND COMMUNITY'S CULTURE

Even though MPAR has indirectly triggered action learning within these groups as well as

within the organisation, this study also found several barriers to sustaining the action learning process. Organisational learning disability was identified through the study. At the field agent level for example, they tended not to understand and report the real issues of working with groups. Field extension agents requested the researcher not to bring several issues identified during the workshop, such as duty overload and achieving target, to the attention of the management fearing personal reprisal.

The rural development agent also showed a similar learning disability when he said, 'We know that most of the poverty groups are not active and members could not repay the credit, but our boss wants to see the success. Therefore, we developed a 'successful' report'. The district staff of the Rural Development office also expressed this learning disability as, 'We know that in the field most groups are not active and misused the credit, but we don't care about this fact. We just want to report whatever our field staff reported to us'.

This learning disability is likely to be sustained as long as the evaluation standard applied to field agent promotion is based on their target achievement (predetermined quantity and dateline). The 'success' in achieving the target means that the field agents gained more, and better credit points, from their boss.

On the other hand, community dependency has developed as a community culture. Group and organisation learning outcomes revealed that community activities (learning) were dependent on the field agent's initiative, while the incentive approach had been used to attract the community.

LACK OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL IN GROUP MANAGEMENT
Outcomes of the group and field agent workshops indicate a lack of knowledge and skills in group management. This problem is likely to hinder the continuity of group and organisational learning processes.

LACK OF COMMITMENT FOR COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT
Issues of concern raised by the field agents and policymakers highlighted the poor commitment of government staff to work with groups. They treated the group mostly as an object and instrument for development. This implied that organisational support for effective community learning would not be favourable.

ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS TO ADDRESS THE LEARNING BARRIERS
In accordance with the identified learning barriers, the groups as well as the organisation learning outcomes, clearly show the solutions. At the organisational level, the field agents suggested the need for government will to implement development policies and programs. This solution would address the organisation's and community's learning barrier. This solution would also promote a stronger commitment from government staff to encourage effective community learning.

Training in group management is another proposed solution to address community and organisation learning. Reflection at both community and organisation levels demonstrates their lack of knowledge and skills in group management.

Community leader training is essential to mobilise local human and financial resources and to work closely with other stakeholders. The leaders need to develop a 'win-win' approach as it can help them to get away from dependency to interdependency and empowerment.

Implications for regional sustainability

The study indicates that action learning processes practised by the community groups and by the agencies would strategically contribute to regional sustainability. This study highlights that regional sustainability could be achieved when:

- Continuous action learning takes place within community groups and agencies (horizontal action learning circle), which would lead to the improvement of their role performance.
- Continuous top-down and bottom-up action learning processes (vertical action learning circle) are sustained. Groups and development agencies should learn from their own field experiences and other external resources.
- Other sub-systems are in favour of supporting community groups' and agencies' learning processes. Community groups and agencies are the only two sub-systems of a whole system of regional sustainability.
- Genuine people participation exists in the development and learning processes. Effective participation would lead to better groups' and agencies' performance, which in turn would contribute to regional sustainability.

Conclusions

The results of this study indicate that most groups failed to perform their expected roles. Six major factors affected group performance, namely top-down dominance, targeting approach, misuse of incentive, absence of issues, parallel approach and lack of coordination, and misperception of the group roles and development program.

Less formal action learning processes took place in the successful groups, which were not found in the less successful groups. The MPAR has revitalised action learning processes in the successful groups and stimulated the action learning process in the less successful groups. It has also indirectly promoted organisational learning through which field extension agents and policymakers learned to identify why groups fail and what should be done.

Barriers to community and organisational learning were identified in this study, and suggestions made to improve group, community, and organisation learning. In particular, it was found that activating bottom-up learning—learning from the field—reduces learning disabilities. Overall findings suggest that continuous community and organisational learning—through horizontal and vertical action learning processes—is likely to lead to sustainable rural community (regional) development.

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Enabling communities through the arts: Case studies from the Community Cultural Development Fund of the Australia Council

Onko Kingma

The arts have the potential to encourage creativity, inclusiveness, empowerment and trust in communities—all elements of social capital. Community cultural development (CCD) is a process which fosters the arts as not only a creative occupation in its own right but also as a vehicle for uniting and enabling communities. CCD is therefore an important tool to bring about change in rural Australia. This chapter uses case study projects to illustrate the inherent potential in CCD processes to overcome inertia in communities. The Community Cultural Development Fund (CCDF) provides funding for activities where communities take an active role in artistic collaborations with professional artists. Communities are encouraged to create and manage arts projects which help them express their culture. The creation of contemporary art works in turn provides the community with a focus for finding solutions to wider issues. The case studies range across topics such as domestic violence, youth, the role of women in building social capital, art in public places, Indigenous and multicultural issues, creation of learning environments, equity and diversity, as well as creation of inspired art. The processes required to ensure successful outcomes are outlined and in each case, these can be shown to be consistent with the requirements for a learning culture.

Introduction

Community Cultural Development, by using the creative capacity of individuals and groups through the arts, provides an important vehicle and process for uniting and enabling communities, and for generating sustained innovation and social capital. This chapter uses, as an example of this, eight case study projects funded by the Community Cultural Development Fund, which illustrate the potential of the arts to help bring about learning communities.

The arts in learning communities

Earlier chapters of this book have defined social capital as the relationships, networks, norms of behaviour, trust, and the bonding, bridging and linking ties involved in working together, facilitating interaction and exchange and sustaining communities. As noted by the Australia Council (1999), Madden (2000) and Dunn (2000), CCD activities may act to conserve, increase or develop social capital by extending networks, expanding community horizons, improving wellbeing and facilitating change. CCD activities impact on artistic capital by expanding engagement in artistic activity and changing the quality of the artistic capital stock. Artistic activity not only contributes to relationship building at all levels in the community but also may encourage participation of people and organisations, increase arts appreciation and help with the process of building audiences. CCD projects invariably change the quality of artistic expression and provide the vehicle for development of artistic (human) capital in the community.

The Australia Council (2000a, p. 4) describes CCD as:

> [A] process rather than an artform [spanning] theatre, music, visual arts, multimedia, dance, writing, design and many other forms of cultural expression. CCD encompasses a range of ideas and practices which involve communities with the arts. As well as producing excellent art, CCD activities lead to other outcomes: new community relationships are born; existing relationships and identities strengthened; community discussion stimulated; ideas exchanged; partnerships created; and social isolation diminished. Sharing ownership of arts projects in the community challenges and stimulates artists as it provides fertile ground for the growth of new ways of working and interaction between cultures and sub-cultures.

In this context, the performing and creative arts have the potential to assist in bringing in new cultures and overcoming problems of exclusion and alienation which arise in market economies (see Chapters 1, 2 and 3 of this book). The arts provide not only a basis for creative activity but also for moving beyond economic efficiency to broader concepts of productivity. The arts are a vehicle for not only communicating about change but also for delivering change (Australia Council 2000b, 1999). In addition, they also have further direct and indirect economic benefits—they are labour intensive, significantly increase the satisfaction of employment, are environmentally responsible and tend to have high multiplier effects. The arts also have the potential to provide the bridge from narrow profit-based activity under economic growth policies, to socially useful activities which fulfil the goal of freedom. As such, they help to unite communities and create social capital (Dunn 2000; Australia Council 1999).

Borghino (2000) has identified from the 1996 Census, that some 156 700 Australians or two per cent of the workforce of 7.6 million, were involved in full-time culture/leisure activities in 1996. Only half of these were arts professionals. The number of full-time artists and arts professionals tripled from 26 400 in 1976 to 80 000 in 1996. This represents an annual growth rate of 4.5 per cent, compared with 2.4 per cent annual growth in Australia's employed workforce. Over the period 1991 to 1996, the number of artists and arts professionals grew by 20 per cent or over five per cent annually compared with 1.1 per cent for the overall workforce. In addition to the 80 000 directly involved in the arts, Borghino (2000) reports a further 35 700 people are closely associated with the arts. However, these figures include all art forms, as well as categories such as architects, librarians, and teachers of various types. The balance of the 156 700 are different types of support workers.

Madden (2000) has reported similar statistics from different sources which indicate that in 1993, there were around 43 000 artists employed in Australia, with only around 10 per cent of these or around 4000 being 'community artists'. Even taking into account the growth (noted above) reported by Borghino (2000), it would appear that an extraordinarily small percentage of the Australian workforce is engaged in CCD. It may also be concluded from the above that there is considerable potential for expansion of this sector of the economy.

Community cultural development practice

The Community Cultural Development Fund of the Australia Council provides funding for activities where communities take an active role in artistic collaborations with professional artists. Communities are encouraged to create and manage arts projects which help them express, develop or reclaim their culture. Such projects enable communities and help them

to address concerns through the creation of contemporary art works which demonstrate solutions to issues (Dunn 2000; Australia Council 1999).

Since the mid-1970s when the CCDF (then named the Community Arts Board) was first introduced, the focus of the now CCDF has changed from encouragement of experiential community art by 'taking the arts to the community', to the development of collaborative approaches to communities engaged in creative processes. The early agenda was about wider participation in the arts and quality of the arts experience. Goals of diversity, independence of the arts community, and cultural development, were gradually added and, by the early 1990s, equity issues, learning, information provision, marketing, and planning had become important. Emphasis is on communities taking control of their cultural direction and development, and creating an environment within which the arts can flourish. Projects which give expression to these goals invariably work to enhance social capital in communities. National perspectives, cultural expression, acceptance and promotion of the arts in the community, sustainability of arts practice, and the encouragement of outstanding achievement, are also important CCDF goals.

Case study projects

The eight case studies presented below represent a sample of the work being undertaken by these and many other CCD practitioners around the country. They have been drawn from the programs of the CCDF, to illustrate the value of CCD in generating change at not only the local level but also nationally and even internationally. Invariably such projects involve partnerships with other funding bodies, and also, significant in-kind support at the local level, and much personal sacrifice and volunteer effort without market remuneration.

The sample projects demonstrate the breadth of influence and importance of this work. They include: creation of new artistic work with public outcomes; staging of performances and exposure of this work to wider audiences; enhancement of the skills and creativity of community members by developing ideas, creating contacts and laying the foundation for future work; skilling and learning; promotion, marketing and planning; enhancing the role of women in creating social capital; exploring Indigenous and multicultural issues; youth; the aged; creation of partnerships which enable CCD organisations, artists and business to access resources and opportunities; creating the environmment for collaborative work to plan and design public environments and so on. All projects have generated wider and longer-term activity in their communities and contributed to sustainability of the arts.

Big hART Incorporated and *D Faces* address issues in youth, the disadvantaged and health and show how non-profit arts organisations can collaborate with communities to set in place inclusive processes through which communities can develop their own art and tackle social issues**.** The potential for women and leadership is addressed in *Uniting Rural Communities* and *Pink Palace* through good practice in community processes and use of the arts as a vehicle for skilling women in not only creative work but also organisational and planning activities. *Pink Palace* and *Bloodwood Tree* address Indigenous and multicultural issues, remoteness, and skills development by encouraging local artists to participate in broader community activities. Here, the arts provide a vehicle to break down barriers and create a supportive and inclusive environment across the community. *Northern Exposure*, *River of Life* and *Interlocks* focus on partnerships, remoteness and planning and use the arts to bring together a wide range of interest groups and promote cultural and environmental values.

Big hART

Big hART Incorporated is a non-profit arts organisation that collaborates with communities, groups, and individuals to produce art with people experiencing the effects of marginalisation in rural, regional, and remote areas. Organisations such as these and, for example, 'Connexions', a partnership between the Jesuit Social Services, and philanthropic and community organisations (Jesuit Social Services pers. comm. 2000), are good examples of the sort of partnerships and alliances now emerging and which work well in the arts. Three projects have been chosen here to illustrate the power of such catalytic organisations to create social capital and to show how social issues can be tackled through the arts.

On the west coast of Tasmania, 'SLR 5000' a short play based on violence in the home as experienced by young people in the area was produced following initial research, workshops and consultations. Seventy disadvantaged youth were involved in an ongoing workshop program; 800 people attending the performances. A positive youth profile was generated in the media. Through high profile TV coverage, the youth messages were heard well beyond the local region.

In Illawarra, New South Wales, a similar process created 'Paper Scissors, Rock, Cereal per 30 gm Serve', a production on domestic violence, involving similar numbers of young people. A much larger audience (90 000) was able to see positive youth profiles through good media coverage. The Illawara program was included on an ABC program titled *Coloured Inn* which helped to re-engage the young people into their own community.

In the Riverina, New South Wales, young people worked with Big hART on a performance piece to highlight prevention of youth suicide and to increase the awareness of the use of Life Line by young people at risk, as part of a National Youth Suicide Prevention Program. Two thousand young people attended workshops with 1800 from 17 schools attending school performances of 'Pandora's Shed'. The play on self-harm was also used by the Upper Murray Health Department for the opening of the Medical Health Conference in Albury. Further presentations are planned for the future.

Pink Palace

In 1999, the Julalikari Council Aboriginal Corporation in the remote town of Tennant Creek, Northern Territory, hosted three artists to work with the Julalikari Arts and Crafts Program locally known as the Pink Palace. The Palace encourages local artists to develop their skills and experience whilst increasing opportunities to exhibit and sell their work throughout Australia.

Six-week residencies were developed in response to requests by artists for more interaction with their colleagues, and the opportunity to extend their skills and knowledge base. The community identified the need for experimentation and identity. The residencies were developed as partnerships and the project became a learning experience for the community. As with most regional arts projects, an holistic approach was adopted with the creative work embedded within the community.

The work has built the confidence of the artists at the Pink Palace. Their work has moved from preconceived ideas of what others might want, to development of new approaches to art and craft, networking, communication skills, and commercial expertise in new markets. Skills are being shared and people in other remote areas are interested in learning about the

project. The Julalikari women have been asked to participate in broader community projects e.g. hospital, police, and to give artist talks. Two artists had their work selected for exhibition at the Adelaide Festival and contacts have been made with other art centres. The local police have commissioned Julalikari Arts and Crafts to design and paint four murals in the police cell as part of an initiative to assist relations between police and the Aboriginal community.

River of Life

The River of Life project encouraged an exploration of the relationship between the communities of Cooktown and the Endeavour River in Queensland, by involving community members in the design process leading to a walkway along the river foreshore, with storylines imprinted in ceramic path tiles. Such physical public spaces are used in different ways and given different significance by different people. Determining the designs involved, negotiations, problem-solving, and respect for the contributions of others. People learned how to participate in an arts process and ultimately, these skills have remained and strengthened community relationships.

The project fostered local pride and cultural identity through artistic collaboration and development and encouraged reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultural groups. The development of the project involved extensive community consultation utilising a range of methods to target different sectors and interest groups within the township. Through resulting collaborations, people from various cultural backgrounds were able to express their ideas and ties to the Endeavour River and in doing so, strengthened community spirit and increased awareness of associated environmental and heritage issues.

The project has snowballed since completion. For example, the work has been promoted through conference presentations; the launch will be part of the Cooktown Australia Day celebrations, 2001; there is strong support from local Aboriginal communities, which will lead to a 12-month training program and establishment of a studio pottery in one of the communities; and the project has been nominated for the Australian Institute of Management Awards for project management.

Bloodwood Tree

A new festival, the Nindji Nindji Family Cultural Festival ®, was recently held in Port Hedland, Western Australia, with the aim of bringing the Pilbara community together in a celebration of cultural diversity and Aboriginal culture. The organiser, Bloodwood Tree Association, has a long history of working with communities. It is an incorporated Aboriginal organisation providing services for homeless and alcohol affected people and working across the areas of health, employment, and education to bring people together and help families. Port Hedland in Western Australia, is the major town within the area and a central location for Western Desert communities.

Cultural and other interest groups contributed ideas and guidance on how best to present the varying cultures. Through telling their stories in different languages, members of the community were able to better understand that they all have experiences in common and so were able to share their culture and art in ways not previously possible. Audiences for the Festival performances were substantial and it was the first time that those involved in an Indigenous festival in the Pilbara had invited people from other cultures to participate in their celebrations. This proved to be a positive step for the reconcialition process.

The local community supported the Festival through provision of patrol officers, supervision of children's activities, provision of tents and shelters, fencing, safety and security, and other in-kind support. The community has continued this support in a variety of ways since the Festival.

What made this Festival unique was that the initial concept came from an organisation not associated with the arts and festivals, and that it was an Aboriginal organisation which brought together the rest of the community. Bloodwood Tree recognised the advantages of using the arts to break down barriers and while the festival itself attracted considerable support and audiences, it was the process of planning and developing the festival that has established long term benefits within the community.

D Faces

'From Boys to Men' was a youth theatre production involving a broad cross section of community members and groups to explore personal and social development for young men in rural Australia. Such issues are often ignored in regional communities for fear this focus might promote insecurity and disempower and reduce the status of men.

D Faces of Youth Arts Inc developed the project in collaboration with professional artists and local health workers. Potential strategic partners were identified through research and consultations with local agencies. The project workers undertook a training program to ensure they understood the situation of people at risk of domestic violence. Health workers provided material which was used as the foundation of the performance content and direction. A 'Boys Talk' workshops program was conducted in high schools, which offered a safe environment in which discussion on issues dealing with violence, communication, and masculinity could take place.

Young men from Whyalla in South Australia who had no prior experience in performance continued after the initial consultations, to become a part of the final artistic outcome. The theatre production involved both audiences and participants in debate on the rites of passage for young men in rural areas. This provoked community members to address their own personal development and that of their family, friends and siblings. Young men and women were then able to forge their own passage into domestic and social harmony in a safe and supportive environment.

The accessibility and recruitment process of the project attracted a greater number of young men than was initially expected. The workshop program introduced them and their audience to new forms of artistic expression in which they could discover, explore and analyse the issues and changing attitudes. This began a process of breaking down the stereotypes faced by local men. Many participants have continued with other D Faces projects.

Interlocks

The Interlocks project operated in the Riverland during 1998 as part of a Waterworks program in South Australia. Five artistic installations were developed at five lock sites on the Murray River. Artists involved in fabric art and design, basket weaving, photography and sculpture, worked with local communities across a range of cultures. Those involved with organisation of the project learned new management skills and many who had not previously had experience in art production, were able to explore new forms of creative

expression alongside professional artists. Messages depicted in the art installations centered on the waterways and relationships between local communities and the river.

The river management staff took an active interest in the project and provided assistance and information. New partnerships were forged, such as, for example, between The River Murray Catchment Water Management Board, SA Water, Riverland Schools, three Local Councils, and the Aboriginal TAFE studies. Four hundred school children took part in Water Week, with many continuing to participate in the workshops and celebrations.

The project succeeded at several levels. Through extensive publicity and the greater participation from the non-arts sector, there has been a shift in community perception of the roles that arts and community cultural development can play in the wider community. There has been a noticeable raising of consciousness about river health and constructive debate about possible solutions. The Riverland, South Australia, now has a series of functional sculptures at five lock sites, and the photographic works have been published and viewed nationally, thus taking the messages and images to a greater audience. The silk screens have now become a portable celebration tool for Riverland community events. Many of the participants and students have continued and extended their artistic practice. For example, a group of fourteen artists has developed a touring exhibition as a direct result of the Interlocks project, and some Aboriginal people are exhibiting a new range of basket work inspired by the workshops.

Northern Exposure
In 'Northern Exposure', a part-time CCD officer was employed at the Geraldton Regional Art Gallery, Western Australia, to support and develop rich and diverse arts activity within the region. The officer has worked closely with community groups, local government representatives and individual artists.

Activities undertaken during the 12-month project have been varied. The Streetwork youth program was linked to the Gallery through a project involving a local Aboriginal artist working with the Streetwork project, to create an exhibition which was exhibited in the gallery foyer area. A project with the Yanna Yanna Women's Group resulted in a banner carrying positive messages for young people which was carried in the annual NAIDOC week street parade. Programs offered by the Geraldton Police and Citizens Youth Club were broadened after a street art project was introduced, offering young people skills and involvement in a range of artforms and the painting of a mural.

Six Aboriginal communities were part of an intensive arts workshop program, presented by the Marra Aboriginal Corporation. These workshops created employment for local artists and have given people in isolated communities access to arts experiences. The artworks from the workshops were exhibited in the Geraldton Regional Art Gallery. A textile project with women across the mid-west region was a celebration of the Centenary of Women's suffrage and focused on the history and achievements of women in the region.

The appointment of a CCD officer to encourage and support communities through creative processes has seen many positive outcomes for the Gallery, the region, and the separate communities. Awareness of the Regional Art Gallery has resulted in increased access and audiences. Private business sponsorship has been secured to establish a gallery, workshop and office for local artists in Geraldton Mall, and a successful funding application has

enabled the Mara Aboriginal Corporation to continue the arts program and prepare for an exhibition ' Bush Talkin'. Geraldton is now more widely recognised as the cultural centre of the mid-west in Western Australia. Professional networks have been established and existing ones strengthened through this project. The recently formed Cultural Advisory Committee is promoting the value of CCD practice in all facets of local government and across the community, and is implementing a three-year program of activities for the community.

Uniting Rural Communities

This project was organised by the Foundation for Australian Agricultural Women (FAAW) based in Victoria, to help provide Australian rural women with transferable skills which would enhance their lives and confidence, and in turn benefit their communities. By focusing on arts projects, women were able to develop life, management and networking skills, working together in a non-threatening way to produce an artwork. The project involved: workshops on business, leadership and communication skills; development of the artistic activities and processes and a final workshop and celebration day which validated the women's accomplishments. The importance of accessibility and encouragement was recognised and child minding, location, and refreshments were all part of the planning.

New skills were put into practice as the women decided on a project, an artist(s) and the practical issues to be considered in implementing their ideas. In Queensland the Milla Milla group made a life-size fibreglass sculpture of a cow family while at Herberton the women produced a community seat. Also in Queensland, the Mt Garnet group decided on a bus shelter; in Malanda a mosaic; while the Yungaburra women worked on a tapestry. In Victoria, the Maffra group made a table and seats for the town and seats for the outlying areas while the Orbost group, created mosaic paths and carved wooden animals in civic settings. Also in Victoria, Omeo women produced a documentary exploring the past, present and future while women at Bairnsdale developed and staged the 'Snakes and Ladders' Roadshow.

An exhibition of the artwork developed through and following this project was part of the 'Salute from Australia' at the Second International Women in Agriculture Conference in the United States in 1998. The title 'Moving the Posts', illustrated the diversity and achievement of contemporary Australians involved in all aspects of agriculture.

While all participants learned new practical and artistic skills, possibly the most important has been networking and developing new relationships. As a direct result of the project some women have commenced higher education, and many found the confidence to return to the workforce. Others have started their own small businesses, sent off literary works to publishers, and formed cooperatives. Women in the project areas have demonstrated a new confidence in tackling community issues. The project has become known as 'the project with a thousand outcomes'.

The arts as a driver of change

The above case studies show the important role the arts can play in helping communities to become empowered and work together in harmony. This is not a 'one-off' result. Similar conclusions can be found in the presentations at, and documented case studies from, the recent CCD conferences (see Dunn 2000; Australia Council 1999). The potential of such

projects to drive change and create an inclusive environment with multiple positive outcomes should not be underestimated.

More broadly, the case studies here and in Dunn (2000) provide some insight into ways the arts can help to achieve a better balance between materialism and creativity and in creating a way forward for communities. The arts are highly effective in building trust, confidence, and achievement at all levels. They have the potential to engender close relationships, local ownership, respect, and a willingness to become involved, in the wider community. These are essential components of social capital, as well as a prerequisite for smoothly functioning local economies.

All projects had extensive multiplier effects into their regional communities. Notable in this context are Northern Exposure, Interlocks, Rivers of Life, Pink Palace and Uniting Rural Communities. These multiplier effects, because they embody the attributes and quality of networks associated with artistic endeavour, tend also to have a positive impact on business enterprise—they embody social capital and work to enhance productivity within economic activity.

All projects are having a longer-lasting beneficial impact on communities in and beyond their localities. This has been so whether the focus has been on people as in Big hART, D Faces and Northern Exposure, or on more permanent fixtures such as in River of Life, and Interlocks.

In all cases, holistic and integrative approaches were adopted which not only brought the arts into strategic planning processes in the community, but facilitated community consideration of social, Indigenous, multicultural, and equity issues. Pink Palace and Bloodwood Tree are good examples of this. Recognition of the power of women to build social capital was a specific part of most projects and particularly, Pink Palace and Uniting Rural Communities. These and other projects have been able to address the leadership potential of women—a role many women have not taken in the past. Other projects were able to show that exploration of single issues such as, for example, youth (D Faces and Big hART) or issues concerning the mixing of different cultures (Interlocks, Bloodwood Tree), can lead to wider community processes for change.

In the case studies, the arts were not only the focus of valid activity in their own right. The arts also provided the vehicle for improving strategic planning and communication activities. This tended to happen whether the arts medium was visual (Pink Palace) or performance based (D Faces, Big hART). In all projects, catalytic mechanisms were used to achieve successful outcomes. In four projects, organisations interested in the arts and invariably not profit based, took responsibility for project development, management and communications. Organising committees were involved in three projects while for Northern Exposure, a CCD officer provided the catalyst. The arts-focus of these catalytic agents provided a quality to the project management which helped build an environment within which the unachievable was possible. Leadership and commitment expressed through such catalytic agents is an important part of community-based processes for change. Consultation and communication processes were highly effective and developed naturally.

The Australia Council (2000b) Report notes the enormous potential within the Australian public to influence expansion of the arts given appropriate information, encouragement and

opportunities for involvement. The Report also notes the potential for education or a learning culture to promote the value of the arts to the general population. In addition, as noted earlier, any expansion in the arts in Australia will be from a very small base. As reported by Madden (2000), only around one per cent of the workforce or less than 100 000 people are employed as arts professionals. Of these, less than 50 000 are employed as artists, and only around 4000 are employed as community artists. Taken together, these observations and figures would seem to point to an enormous potential for expansion of arts-based and particularly CCD activities. If, as argued above, the arts contribute significantly to social capital and if expansion of social capital is a vital ingredient in any strategy for recovery in rural Australia, then encouragement of public and private investment in CCD could have a major net payoff to the Australian economy. Some issues in achieving a larger and sustainable CCD sector were discussed at the recent CCD conferences (Dunn 2000; Australia Council 1999).

Acknowledgement

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Community strategies: Addressing the challenges for young people living in rural Australia

Johanna Wyn and Helen Stokes

'Getting a life' is a challenging process for all young Australians. Young people growing up in rural areas and isolated areas face particular challenges because structural change to the rural economy has dramatically affected the very fabric of their communities. Recent research on the health and wellbeing of young people in rural communities reveals that there are recurring themes, despite the wide variations across rural communities. Commonly identified challenges in young people's lives are the lack of access to transport, accommodation, education, and training opportunities. Social isolation and social division are important factors. Negotiating gender relations and sexuality are also significant themes, and researchers are increasingly seeking to answer questions about the relationship of these issues to suicide. This chapter is about the barriers to health, wellbeing and participation which face young people in rural Australia, and the responses by rural communities to these issues.

Introduction

Our discussion focuses on the strategies that are being developed in rural communities to address the needs of their young people. It draws on the findings of recent research projects undertaken by the Youth Research Centre on young people in rural Australia (Wyn, Stokes & Stafford 1998) and on the processes which inform different types of inter-agency collaboration (Stokes & Tyler 1997). These projects involved an extensive review of the literature and focus group interviews with young people and youth workers in rural communities. In this work we identified key issues and challenges which face young people in rural Australia, the effects of which are reflected in rates of youth suicide, high unemployment, lower rates of educational participation, and lack of access to health services. Our research found that, despite the difficulties they face, many young people nonetheless place a high value on the positive aspects of rural life, including a feeling of belonging, access to the environment, and a commitment to self-sufficiency.

Many communities are actively engaged in the process of meeting the challenges of rural restructuring and changes to the economy. We focus on the ways in which communities are acknowledging and addressing young people's needs. There is increasing interest in documenting strategies and identifying their successful elements and processes. The active involvement of young people in shaping community responses is a key element. Collaboration between agencies to enhance their service provision to young people is also significant. In the following sections, we briefly summarise what is known about the challenges to the health and wellbeing of young people in rural Australia, as a background for the discussion of the different ways in which these challenges are being met in various rural communities.

Issues for young people's wellbeing

Their social, economic, and physical environments, especially in the context of rapid social change, profoundly affect young people's health and sense of wellbeing. Although young people in rural Australia grow up in very different environments, they share common challenges such as isolation, and the effects of the changing rural economy. For young Aboriginal people, in addition to these issues, the historical struggle for land rights continues to play a significant role in their lives. Young people in rural areas also share common challenges, related to the social relationships that characterise rural communities. For example, close social networks and adherence to traditional values, while providing security and certainty to some, are detrimental to others, especially in relation to gender relations, sexuality, and sexual identities. Our research, involving focus group discussions with young people and youth workers in a number of rural locations, found that the issues they identified fell into two categories. One category was the external factors, imposed on young people through bureaucratic or historical arrangements (structural), and the other was the more personal, everyday or face-to-face interactions with people (cultural).

Structural issues

The things that limit young people's full participation in society are inevitably the lack of access to transport, health, education and community services, accommodation and employment. They are often interrelated in young people's experience; so that for example, lack of accommodation affects access to education, and transport difficulties have an effect on the accessibility of employment opportunities.

Transport

[W]ithin towns there was some public transport, but outside of towns, people relied on cars. Links between towns were maintained by public transport, but bus services operate infrequently, and rail links have been scaled down. People in the north west, including towns like Mildura were as likely to access services in South Australia as in Victoria, because of the difficulties of transport, and people in towns along the Murray were likely to access services across the river in NSW (Wyn, Stokes & Stafford 1998).

This description could have applied to a number of rural communities in Australia. Lack of transport into rural towns' provincial centres is a common problem, especially for young people. Without adequate transport, young people have very limited access to health services, to education and employment opportunities, and to leisure facilities. Until they are able to drive, young people are reliant on others for transport. This can cause its own problems. For example, relying on someone else for transport may make it difficult to ensure discretion and confidentiality about a visit to the local health centre. Other researchers have suggested a link between the reliance of girls on older boys for transport and the institutionalisation of rape, in which sex is an accepted 'payment' for transport (Hillier, Warr & Haster 1996). The lack of access to alternative leisure has been linked to the dominance of the local 'footy club' as the only source of entertainment. Binge drinking at other local venues is also seen as a form of entertainment.

Health and community services

Access to appropriate health services is a common theme across many rural communities. Hillier, Warr & Haster (1996) found that young people in rural communities thought health services were very difficult to access. The issue is not simply one of access; the

way in which services are offered is also important. Young people place a high priority on services that are confidential and private, and on being treated as adults. Having access to bulk billing, and being able to enter a health centre discreetly were also seen as crucial. This means that the local health centre is not necessarily seen as an option. Young people in our study said that they would rather travel to a regional centre or to a metropolitan practice than risk embarrassment at the local practice. The focus groups revealed that lack of information might also be a factor. In some cases, young people were not aware of the existence of services that would meet their needs.

The health of young Aboriginal people is an urgent issue (Commonwealth Department of Human Services and Health 1995). Health for many young Aboriginal people involves spiritual dimensions, including the ability to complete their traditional initiation ceremonies, living on traditional land, and hunting. The appropriateness and relevance of services to their needs is a central issue. The annual death rates for young Aboriginal people in Western Australia, South Australia, and the Northern Territory are double that of young Australians of the same age for Australia as a whole (Bhatia & Anderson 1994). Wyn, Stokes and Stafford (1998) concluded that:

> Primary health care for some Aboriginal communities remains a fundamental issue. Simple public health provisions such as clean water, adequate and appropriate accommodation, and treatment and prevention of gastric, eye, ear and other infections remain a serious concern (Gray & Atkinson 1990). Brady's research on the health of young Aborigines confirmed that young Aboriginal people in rural and remote areas face the same issues as other young rural people, but that their health is often more seriously compromised by their circumstances, especially those living in remote communities. Brady reports that one Aboriginal health service, assessed the major health problems of young Aboriginal people as: sexually transmitted diseases, alcohol related problems, poor nutrition, skin disease, problems associated with pregnancy and domestic violence (Brady 1993; Brady 1991, p. 8).

Research on the health of young Aboriginal people reaches a consensus that the National Aboriginal Health Strategy and its recommendations should be strongly supported, including the principles of community control of primary health care, with the States retaining responsibility for secondary level, and other, health services (Brady 1991). Brady also emphasises that both the National Aboriginal Health Strategy and the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody stressed the special role of Aboriginal community-controlled organisations. In our focus groups in several communities, it was suggested that sometimes Aboriginal people are unwilling to access any government service through mistrust and fear.

Models of preventive care are especially relevant in rural areas. A decade ago it was suggested that in rural communities, a medical model of health care dominated. Today, while 'the hospital' still provides a focus for health concerns, it is clear that health promotion and preventive medicine is a more acceptable model, as many communities are now defining what this means in their particular situation. Often, this means the emergence of partnerships between different types of health service. However, the evidence from the focus groups suggests that the effect of this change is yet to be felt outside of regional centres.

Accommodation

Access to affordable accommodation is just as important to young people living in rural areas as it is to young people in the city. Young people in rural areas often have to move from their parents' home for work, or for their education, and in many areas there is a scarcity of public housing stock which young people can rent. Quixley's report on young people's housing needs in rural Australia remains the most comprehensive study (Quixley 1992). Her report shows the interrelationship between education, employment, and housing, and how they can combine to have a significant effect on young people's well-being.

Education

The increased importance of educational credentials in the job market has hit young people in rural communities especially hard, because in order to gain post-compulsory education or training credentials, it is common for rural young people to have to leave home and move to metropolitan or regional centres. There has been some improvement in areas served by university campuses and TAFEs   . However, because of the lack of jobs and the restricted choices for study, students in rural areas tend to be denied the opportunity to develop the kinds of 'mixes' of school and work that are now becoming common for urban students (Wyn, Stokes & Stafford 1998).

Difficulty of access to education for rural youth at both a secondary and tertiary level is well documented and many reports have identified this as a significant source of disadvantage to young people in rural areas (e.g. Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission 1999; Stevens & Mason 1992; Robson 1991; Department of Employment, Education and Training 1990). However, this negative general picture is tempered by the fact that teachers in rural areas also develop innovative and alternative forms of education in order to respond to the particular needs of their community. This is especially evident in the literature on the education of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth.

Employment

For young people, the lack of job opportunities in their local areas is a serious issue. Our focus group interviews reveal that there is a significant proportion of young people who would rather continue to live in their hometown, but feel 'forced' to leave by the lack of employment opportunities. This includes lack of job opportunities in towns, and the difficulty that farm families in some areas have in making a living from the land. Unemployment contributes directly to the destruction of rural communities, as the young make an exodus from their communities to towns and cities, and it places greater strains on the provision of support services for those who remain. Unemployment rates are higher in rural areas, and in some Aboriginal communities, as high as 95 per cent (Commonwealth Department of Human Services and Health 1994). Although recorded rates of unemployment amongst both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal rural youth are high, many are not recorded. In areas where seasonal work is common, young people's unemployment is masked by the jobs they do for part of the year, to tide them over.

Social and cultural issues

Young people's health and wellbeing are closely related to how they see themselves and the quality of relationships they have with significant others. The social and cultural issues discussed here are linked to the structural factors we have outlined above.

Gender relations

'Gender issues' are increasingly being recognised as one of the key social factors that needs to be taken into account in developing health promotion strategies for young people. The effects of domestic violence are compounded by the lack of alternative accommodation, the lack of professional help and the tendency for local police to be influenced by the community values which 'turn a blind eye' to violence in domestic relationships (Coorey 1990). In some instances, women face the added stress of victimisation from an intolerant community if they leave their husbands (Iley 1993). The issue of domestic violence is also now being openly discussed in some Aboriginal communities. This is an especially sensitive area, given the history of the violent treatment of Aboriginal people by whites (Brady 1993). For example, Brady points out the effect of the institutionalisation of young Aboriginal people on missions, as a factor affecting the quality of relationships between men and women in this generation.

Narrow conceptions of masculinity and femininity are also of concern. Our focus group interviews revealed that the strong commitment to sports such as football and netball tended to reinforce gender stereotypes. Although sport was a positive aspect of their lives, some were less enthusiastic about the expectation that football frequently included a heavy ('macho') drinking culture. Associated with this culture is the practice of 'bonnet surfing' and 'dirt surfing' in some communities, which put young men's health at risk. The focus on gender should not imply however, that rural women are victims within traditionally conservative communities. Women often constitute a formidable, if unacknowledged, political force in rural communities.

Suicide

> The very tradition of self-sufficiency may prevent young men in rural communities from seeking help when they need it (Graham 1994).

The research literature is divided on the issue of whether suicide rates for young people are higher in rural than in urban areas. For example, Dudley et al. (1992) showed that the rate of suicide in rural areas of New South Wales has increased, whereas a Queensland study (Cantor & Coory 1993) found similar rates of suicide for young men in rural and urban areas—although they found that there were higher rates of male suicide in all areas of Queensland compared with New South Wales.

The decline of the rural economy and the consequent stress this has placed on the health of rural people, is linked to the high rate of male suicide in rural New South Wales (Lawrence & Williams 1990). The effects of unemployment, of poor educational opportunities, and poverty itself, contribute to the high suicide rate. There is evidence that 'rural youth experience higher levels of domestic violence and homicides' and 'consume more alcohol and have readier access to firearms than their urban counterparts' (Graham 1994, p. 409). There is also evidence linking suicide with community intolerance for gay people. The following extract was originally quoted in a local newspaper. It is about:

> [T]he tragic story of Nicolas, a young gay man who failed to come to terms with his sexuality in a country town .... He explained that he couldn't live up to the role of a 'typical country Catholic boy'. He knew that he would never be accepted for what he really was. 'You're shunned in the Catholic Church if you are a homosexual' a friend said. Nicholas felt his place in the church, family, school and local community would no longer exist and therefore his life was not worth living because these things were so important to him (quoted in Green 1996, pp. 85–86).

Social isolation and youth culture

Young people in Australia's rural communities have an enormous amount in common with the older people in their communities, because they share the same environment and in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, young people have a lot to learn from the 'older generation', associated with both survival in 'the bush' and with the enjoyment of the rural environment. Sport continues to be an important source of solidarity between the generations. Yet, at the same time, young people have different interests and needs from the older people in their communities. Summed up in the inadequate term 'entertainment', this issue is raised as a concern by young people over and over again (Wyn, Stokes & Stafford 1998).

Young people would like to go to movie theatres (that show current movies), to see live theatre that is relevant to young people, and to participate in dances, discos or other forms of youth community entertainment. The alternatives to these forms of entertainment and sociability are often an early engagement with 'pub culture' and a reliance on the drinking which frequently accompanies sports such as football. Young people in our focus groups were frank about the extent to which binge drinking occurs because of a perceived lack of alternatives.

Without legitimate space of their own, young people are seen as a threat if they gather in public places, such as the main street, the football oval, or other places where, officially, they do not have a reason to gather. The focus group interviews found, for example, that young people in one rural town were not gathering in town to be part of the 'druggie' groups, but because they had nowhere else to be.

The recognition and acceptance of 'youth cultures' in rural communities is important because of the positive place of young people in the cultural life of rural Australia. It is as important as the creation of jobs for young people, and as their educational opportunities. In the context of the changes that have affected many of Australia's rural communities, the creation of stronger youth-oriented communities can contribute significantly to young people's wellbeing and to their own ability to construct meaningful futures.

Social division

The social divisions that exist in rural communities can seriously limit options for young people. We have already discussed the effects of gender divisions on young people. Both race and social class also have a considerable impact on young people's wellbeing and their options for the future.

Not everyone in rural communities belongs to the community in the same way. In focus group discussions, young people mentioned divisions between the 'aristocracy' (the traditional land-owning families) and the 'landless' (seasonal workers). It was suggested that 'to belong, be respected and get a job in town, you need to have a surname that matches the street names'. These older divisions are sometimes the source of more contemporary divisions. For example, in recent times, the relocation of people needing public housing, from big regional and metropolitan centres to the available public housing stock in rural areas and isolated regional centres, has created an added demand on already stretched services. People who move into this situation are often in distressed social circumstances, and the lack of public transport and employment only exacerbate their problems. In many towns they form a separate group, whose dependence on income support clashes with local traditions of self-reliance.

For many young people, the best thing about living in the country is 'the security of knowing most (if not all) of the people in your town and the sense of being far removed from the problems of the city' (Hillier, Warr & Haster 1996, pp. 10–11). Yet this idyllic experience of rural life is not always matched by the reality. The effect of social class in rural areas is to replace a real sense of belonging with a sense of exclusion.

Community strategies

Many communities acknowledge the issues outlined above, and have developed strategies which address them in a way that is sensitive to local circumstances and concerns. Despite the uniqueness of each community and the variation in response, it is possible to identify a number of processes that are associated with successful outcomes. Here we document a range of strategies and highlight the processes, which are in each case seen to be integral to their success.

Young people's involvement

Many rural communities across Australia are holding youth forums that allow young people to have a voice and speak out about the issues that concern them. For young people to be regarded as an important part of the community and then to regard themselves as important to the community, their views on issues need to be heard. An example is an initiative undertaken at the Youth Services Centre in Wodonga, Victoria. A group of 16 year olds meet weekly to discuss and initiate strategies around the issues of suicide, unemployment, and pathways for school leavers. This group was set up after the young people attended a youth forum in Canberra (organised by young people) which was attended by 400 youth. The Canberra forum would meet again in six months to discuss strategies from the different communities, nationally. In order to contribute to this, the young people in Wodonga organised a regional forum to find out the views of other young people in the area, which will lead to the development of strategies to address the identified issues.

The step from 'being heard' (youth voice) to generating 'action' is an important one. As Holdsworth (1998) emphasises, 'a simple focus on being heard can merely serve to make it appear that young people are active participants; it may, in fact serve as a "safety valve" to ease pressure for real changes in decision making.'

In the Goulburn North Eastern region of Victoria there has been recognition of the need to move from voice to action. Throughout 1997 there were four forums held called 'Teenroar' that gave visibility to issues identified by local young people. In 1998 a new phase started with 'Teenaction.' The facilitator, Jan Osmotherly from the Country Connections Project, describes how 'The idea is to build on what we know and rather than just "roar"—'act on implementation of programs which will positively address relevant issues in the youth culture.'

'Teenroar' and 'Teenaction' have involved nine secondary colleges over a 300-kilometre radius in the Goulburn North Eastern region. Project workers from Country Connection worked intensively for two days a week over a ten week, time frame with young people from the particular school that was organising 'Teenroar' to develop all aspects of the program including the agenda, catering, advertising, and the budget. Young people evaluate the event and recommendations are given to the staff and school council regarding issues identified at 'Teenaction' and 'Teenroar'.

The move from voice to action is shown through the role that young people take in working with policy to bring about change at a systemic level. An example of this is work on youth suicide prevention. To access the State government Youth Suicide Prevention money, schools have to have a policy in place by June 1998. But at the schools involved in 'Teenaction', the young people had not been asked for their ideas on the policy. So the young people have put together a number of recommendations at 'Teenaction'. They recommended the need for:

- students to be trained as peer mediators
- a counsellor who is not a teacher in a youth-friendly space on the school sites
- teachers to receive professional development on youth issues
- an anti-homophobic campaign, as young people identified the link between the lack of acceptance of homosexuality and suicide.

Communities can also identify how young people can be directly involved in service provision, and the development of links between agencies and young people. For example, in response to a lack of youth-specific health services in the Mandurah area, the Peel Health Centre has established a network of practising peer health educators for adolescents. Twenty peer leaders were identified from the local schools and youth programs to be trained over a series of 12, two-hour sessions on youth health issues, leadership and life skills. They were then employed at the Health Matters Shop in the local shopping complex one night a week as health educators, to circulate among the young people who frequent the centre in order to establish a link between the young people and the health service (Mukherjee, Stokes & Holdsworth 1997).

Local involvement

The involvement of local communities in planning, developing, controlling, managing, and providing services and programs is now regarded as integral to their success by practitioners in rural areas (Cheers 1992). A number of researchers have commented that 'most Australian policy formulators, service planners, and practitioners are socialised, trained and work in an urban context, and are informed by urban-based research and literature from Australia and overseas' (Cheers 1992, p. 13). While concepts and models which are developed in urban areas offer important insights, it is important to recognise that they cannot necessarily be applied directly to rural communities. Cheers notes that 'many urban-based welfare services are also unsuited to rural settlements because of their high public visibility because staff roles are defined too narrowly, or because of inappropriate funding and resourcing principles'.

In addition, funding decisions which are made on the basis of the 'broad picture', can be especially inappropriate in particular rural settings. For example, changes to the Youth Allowance have made young people dependent on families for a longer period. The effects of this are especially punitive to young people and families in rural areas in which the added high costs of transport, lack of employment, and poverty make the cost of supporting young people even harder to bear (Wyn, Stokes & Stafford 1998; Dwyer et al. 1998).

At Beechworth Secondary College there has been an emphasis on how to engage a group of Year 9 and 10 female students as full citizens, including them in decisions about themselves, with a community-based response to problem solving (Semmens & Stokes 1997). The students perceived a lack of information and support for young people's health issues from the local health agencies. In response to this the students formed the Young

Women's Project and developed a poster resource with assistance from the school and the Goulburn North Eastern Women's Health Service (NEWomen). The resource is entitled *This is where it's at* and will be promoted and used throughout Victorian schools with support from the health service who will facilitate workshops for students to use the resource.

Collaboration

There is substantial evidence that collaboration amongst agencies such as schools, health workers, youth workers, police, recreation workers and others has the potential to enhance the level of support a community can give to its young people (Stokes & Tyler 1997). Young people's health and wellbeing, in particular, benefits from intersectoral collaboration to:

- identify and address the gaps and duplication in service provision, and
- empower and enhance the community through their direct involvement, with an emphasis on the role of young people in this process.

Many rural areas have community network meetings once a month to share information about the services that are available. In the smaller towns, all agencies attend the one meeting, while in the bigger regional centres the meetings tend to focus on specific areas such as health, youth, and Koori issues, which are attended by smaller interest groups. Despite this, representatives of agencies in regional centres expressed the desire to have more across-agency meetings, especially in the education sector. An example is found in the Stawell area of Victoria, where people who work with adolescents and young adults, work collaboratively to assist and support each other and to proactively address local young people's needs (Mukhurjee, Stokes & Holdsworth 1997).

There is increasing recognition that agencies outreaching from the regional centres can join together to fund a single multi-skilled outreach worker. This worker is then able to spend time in one particular area, rather than having each agency send an outreach worker one day a week to a number of different areas. An example of this was being organised in Murray Bridge in South Australia. There are also a number of difficulties and barriers to these kinds of initiatives. One of the major barriers is the way in which funding criteria foster competition for funding. Compulsory, competitive tendering can create tensions between agencies, instead of fostering collaboration.

It has been noted that the development of intersectoral collaboration has been hindered by the competitive tendering process between councils, agencies and community groups which all rely on the ever-diminishing supply of government funding for their survival and for the provision of services (Stokes & Tyler 1997). In one regional area, our researchers were informed that there would be tenderers from all the different services for a particular part of a service, competing against each other. In particularly poor communities some services can be so keen to retain their clients (and therefore their access to funding) that they will not necessarily refer a client on to the most appropriate agency (see Stokes & Tyler 1997, p. 46). It has also been suggested that in cases where large private metropolitan service providers tender for rural service provision, they are tempted to sacrifice services to remote and difficult-to-reach areas.

Despite these tensions, there is also evidence of extensive collaboration. For example, in the Goulburn North Eastern region of Victoria, the Ovens and King Community Health Centre and Bright Secondary College are collaborating. They are developing a five-year

program, looking at structural, community, and curriculum issues related to self-esteem and resiliency development with students, teachers, and families. In its developmental stage, this project involves inter-agency meetings between teachers, parents, school council, community health and students to develop a response to issues and to link with the school council structure. The aim of the program is to bring about a reorientation of school structure and culture in order to increase the opportunities for young people to have input into their school direction and community decision-making. At this stage this is being implemented through a change in the home group structure, as well as the development of orientation programs for new staff.

The program has positive outcomes for both the school and the community health service through the development of closer links between teachers and health workers, providing improved referral services for students and families. The collaboration process has involved the negotiation of the following issues:

- the lack of adequate and flexible funding for the program development on the school site has meant that the school and the health centre find funds from already stretched budgets;
- the differences in approach to welfare, health, and discipline issues with the need for undergraduate training to address a team approach in both disciplines, and
- the need for a quick fix to problems rather than the understanding of the need for long-term structural change (Mukherjee, Stokes & Holdsworth 1997).

Diversity

While there are many common challenges faced by rural communities in providing for young people's health and wellbeing, the picture to emerge is one of local diversity and of specific needs. The only way in which this diversity will be met is through ensuring that local people are partners in all the stages of program and service provision. Because the problems are complex, spanning both social and structural issues, so the strategies to address them will need to be flexible and multifaceted (Wyn, Stokes & Stafford 1998).

The following examples illustrate how two rural communities have developed very different strategies to attempt to address their concerns about young people's use of alcohol. The examples draw on information obtained for the report *The Nature of Health Service-School Links in Australia* (Mukherjee, Stokes & Holdsworth 1997).

In Launceston, Tasmania, an inter-sectoral project entitled 'Remember the Time We Had Last Night' was developed. This project was designed in response to the tradition for students at the end of Year 10 to engage in excessive alcohol consumption, especially in the events surrounding the end-of-year 'Leaver's Dinner'. Three members of the Drug Education Network (DEN), Alcohol and Drug Services and the Tasmanian Police worked together to develop and deliver a program towards the end of Year 10 in two Launceston high schools. One of the facilitating factors in this case was the relatively small size of the community, enabling workers from different agencies to network effectively.

The program emphasised safer ways to celebrate and have a good time, while avoiding the negative social outcomes, legal implications and health consequences of excessive alcohol use. It used the perceptions and knowledge of the students as a key part of the program. A parent evening was arranged to let parents have their say, and professional development of teachers was offered in the use of the *Rethinking Drinking* alcohol education program.

Although the program was judged a success, especially with the parents (who formed a support group as a result of the meeting, to address wider issues around drugs and alcohol), continuation of the program still depends on the resources to be made available.

At Yirrkala in East Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory, a group of Aboriginal women called the Sober Women's Group deliver the message about alcohol consumption to the young Aboriginal people. The Yolngu (Aboriginal people) in East Arnhem Land define real knowledge as that which derives from older men and women in their community and is based on Gurrutu (kinship system). Unless the health messages are taught by Yolgnu, using traditional methods then the messages received at school are regarded as having been imposed by Balanda (non-Aboriginal) and are not important.
Educating Yolngu young people about alcohol and nutrition are two examples of culturally-determined and appropriate health messages. The education is based on Gurrutu, which is the kinship system for the extended family and the behaviour that is necessary to maintain the kinship systems. When alcohol was discussed it was placed in reference to Gurrutu. All children at the Yirrkala School were placed in groups to describe and discuss Gurrutu and their skin groups and the importance of Gurrutu to Yolngu (Aboriginal people). It was then shown that alcohol 'puts shyness to sleep' and that people then go off and live with the wrong related kinship group. This is wrong for Yolngu culture as it breaks down the kinship system. The health effects of alcohol were shown to the children by cooking a wallaby. When a wallaby is cooked its liver becomes hard. This was related to alcohol to show the effect that alcohol has on peoples' livers.

The diversity that is needed in different communities is further shown by responses of different communities to the issue of petrol sniffing. In South Australia and in Central Australia programs and resources developed to try to prevent petrol sniffing are based on the relationship of the young people to their land. In Indulkana in South Australia, Anangu (traditional Aboriginal) young boys who had not yet taken up 'sniffing' were taken on a trip during the Christmas holidays to Yalata and the Great Australian Bight with the theme of the trip being 'What will Indulkana be like in twenty years time?' The aim of the trip was to reinforce the virtues of not taking up sniffing and to emphasise the role that they need to play in their own community (Mukherjee, Stokes & Holdsworth 1997). Focus group interviews in western New South Wales revealed that petrol sniffing is also an issue for young Kooris. However, different strategies need to be devised to address their needs, because many of these Koori people are part of the stolen generation who have been transported to where they live and do not have the same relationship to the land and country (Wyn, Stokes & Stafford 1998).

Sustainability
Young people's wellbeing will be most strongly fostered in communities in which there is a sense of continuity, and in which young people feel they can depend on the established services and personnel. Unfortunately, many good initiatives are short-term because they are so directly linked to funding provision. Community strategies need to be based on a realistic assessment of the amount of time needed to develop collaborative processes that will be sustainable. Structural support at either a regional, State or national level is often important in enabling community processes to get started. The successful collaboration relating to the management of health care needs of students in schools initiated by the Departments of Education and Health in South Australia, for example, took around four years to develop (Mukherjee, Stokes & Holdsworth 1997).

An example of programs being devised at a local level, but funded at a State level, is the Health Promoting Schools initiative in Queensland. Here, different local programs are being developed in Brisbane and south east Queensland, the population centres along the coast and the hinterland as well as in some inland regional and remote areas. The Queensland Department of Health has taken the lead in developing Health Promoting Schools by providing one position in the Queensland Education Department and providing some resources to Public Health Units across the state. Of particular interest is the Public Health Unit at Maroochydore developing the program on the Sunshine Coast. It has aimed to take a whole school approach to Health Promoting Schools by working in collaboration with schools, the Department of Education, and health professionals. Their initial work has been aimed at educating schools, education department officials and health professionals about Health Promoting Schools. The Unit has taken a developmental approach to Health Promoting Schools, beginning with whole-school change rather than the identification of critical issues.

Conclusion

In response to a range of adverse circumstances, many rural communities are developing strategies that promote young people's health and wellbeing. Based on an extensive review of the available literature and on original research, this chapter has described some key characteristics of community strategies that are meeting young people's needs. One of the most common elements is the linking of agencies that support young people. Many services in rural areas need to collaborate to survive in a climate of declining populations and funds. It is important that the goal of collaboration is not simply to prevent young people from falling through the gaps of lack of service provision. Community strategies also need to develop an active role for young people, in order to be relevant to their needs and to affirm the positive value placed on youth in rural communities. Sustainable strategies are developed to address local needs (rather than departmental priorities) and within realistic timeframes that are conducive to the participation of young people.

Finally, it is in the interests of all Australians to find ways to support the development of rural and remote communities, because rural Australia is an important part of our society. The health and wellbeing of young people will need to be a central component of any strategy to build viable rural communities. Young people hold the future of these communities, but more importantly, they have vitality, optimism, and knowledge to contribute now.

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CHAPTER 17
A regional approach to youth employment: The role of young people in renewing regional communities

James Mulraney and Peter Turner

Far from being seen as a problem, young people are a major resource for rural and regional communities, and can play an important catalytic role in revitalising economic and social development at the local level. Communities can most easily be united around issues concerning the future and their hopes and ambitions for the younger generation.

This chapter seeks to reposition young people in their communities and to demonstrate their potential to help manage change and create more positive futures. It is presented in two sections each of which look at a separate aspect.

SECTION ONE

Background

Many areas of Australia face significant social and economic challenges. Globalisation processes and rationalisation of businesses and service provision continue to have serious impacts. The wool and timber industries, for example, have been significantly affected by world commodity prices. Other industries, such as the dairy and viticulture industries, now require less labour as the size of economic units increases, and as technological innovations are introduced banks, post offices, hospitals and other community services are under threat.

Paradoxically, while the majority of young people want to settle in or near their birthplace, they do not feel confident that there is a future for them in the region. This is in part because regions have high numbers and percentages of young unemployed people (approximately 30 per cent of 15–19 year olds in 1997 and rising). Clearly, the future development of the regions depends to a large extent on the vitality and enthusiasm of local young people, their skills and training, and the positive way they view the future.

In reality rural communities have enormous potential and are already showing success in the development of new areas of industry, and further adaptations of agribusiness. Australia is rich in both human and natural resources. There is significant tourism potential, produce is of world standard, and new value-added products are developing. There are emerging opportunities to increase employment in these developing industries and in areas such as tourism, entertainment, information technology and telecommunication (IT & T), viticulture, aquaculture and the service, health, and education industries.

However, regions commonly require a mechanism to act as a catalyst to bring this potential to fulfilment, principally to enhance the spirit of enterprise and self-reliance, and to energise and coordinate the different groups who can contribute to growth and prosperity. The potential of each region, together with the increased awareness of the need to change, offers an opportunity to build on existing leadership, to restart the local economy, and rebuild community confidence. State and Federal government agencies, in partnership with key sectors of the local community, have a significant role to play.

Synergies can be created at the local level by judicious interventions of support, integrated across agencies.

A focus on young people as a central component of a new rural and regional economic development strategy for Australia could catalyse considerable positive change by:

- changing the *culture* towards one that is enterprising, forward-looking, and one which engages with both local and global directions;
- providing best practice education and training opportunities in the region, and
- creating new employment opportunities which will allow talented and enterprising young people to remain in the region and contribute to its prosperity.

A new paradigm of service delivery is required, that both supports revitalised local leadership and economic development while visibly implementing government policy. Strategic interventions should initially focus around coordination and leadership development, with a focus on the future and an emphasis on the role of young people in that future.

Rural and regional consultations

Rural and regional consultations undertaken by Department of State Development, University of Melbourne and the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) have revealed:

- Communities are seeking interventions that will increase the sense of belonging for young people in their region. In order to achieve this, young people need to be more connected to relevant local economic and social activities.
- While some young people will always take up the traditional occupations that are available in the region, such as farming, dairying, working in service industries and in trades, there is also a need to facilitate young people's involvement in new enterprises and in encouraging a more enterprising culture.
- There is also a recognised need to maximise the return opportunities for talented young people to regional business and industry through fostering more effective links and communication amongst education, training, business, and industry groups.
- A key issue is the positive management of processes of economic and social change. Community ownership of the directions and programs for change is essential, and within this, the participation of young people in local and regional affairs is crucial.

Rural youth

While rural young people do not constitute a homogeneous group, they do share a number of circumstances (Wyn, Stokes & Stafford 1998). In many rural areas in Australia, the 1990s have been an era of almost unprecedented change. For young people, the changes associated with global economic conditions, local climatic circumstances, political decisions and regional economic restructuring have left them wondering if they have a future in rural Australia.

Yet, if rural Australia is to regenerate its economies, young people will have to play a central role.

Research projects are currently underway (Youth Research Centre, University of Melbourne), aiming to conduct a full review of what is currently known about the generation of positive approaches to education, training and employment pathways for

young people in rural areas, identifying the factors which enhance young people's opportunities and those which constitute barriers. A more action research approach is required—one that demonstrates new and emerging models of youth-driven economic development.

Young people are too often lumped together as a problem—another disadvantaged group—and, if we are to move out of this deficit approach, we must become more aware of the need to take account of the diversity of young people who constitute *rural Australian youth*. It will be increasingly important to acknowledge the different needs and circumstances of young women, young men, young Aboriginal people, young people in remote areas, and those who are living in poverty or under very constrained financial circumstances. The extended period of being classified as *youth* (it is now not uncommon for 26 year olds to still live with their parents) also needs to be factored into any new paradigms.

Alternative future models

There is an urgent need to identify models of best practice in the area of regional economic development, demonstrating how education and training provision can be linked to growth industries, the local economy, and new civic initiatives that offer employment to young people in rural areas. These models will include approaches that will strengthen the development of enterprising educational institutions and communities. Partnership approaches, which model integrated service delivery, and are focused on employment pathway generation for young people, can be further developed. There is a need to also model the ways in which government agencies can cooperate with each other and with the private sector to enhance opportunities that exist in rural areas to regenerate economic growth.

What should we be aiming for?

To create a more enterprising culture that is future and opportunity oriented. To provide a central role for youth in this dynamic culture which increases their sense of belonging. To build best-practice education and training systems linked directly to the regional economy, which focus on technology, enterprise, and sustainable employment.

The focus on youth represents a new approach, which draws on successful developments in rural and regional development at national and international levels. Action needs to be carefully planned to build on local strengths and to integrate with current regional directions, while introducing exciting new elements based on the concepts of enterprise education, youth leadership and coordinated employment planning.

Who should be involved?

The participation of an extensive range of organisations including local government, regional business and industry groups, government departments and small business is required.

An alliance of local key stakeholders and natural civic leaders could formulate an approach in the early stages of initiation but the focus must quickly shift to young people themselves as leaders of the change, otherwise there is a risk being seen as hypocritical or patronising.

A rural example

In the south west region of Victoria the Premier appointed a Community Forum that developed an integrated strategy based on five areas of change. The approach is summarised below:

1. SWEET-P (South West Education, Employment and Training Pathways)

    The project focus is the coordination of employment needs with education and training provision in both Geelong and Warrnambool.

    In Geelong the initial process is through a forum of key stakeholders centred on the Geelong Region Vocational Education Council (GRVEC) model. An analysis of communication issues and other inhibitors is to be followed with advice and support for development. Federal funding is being sought to expand GRVEC to facilitate a skills audit and to begin employment placement matching programs.

    In Warrnambool there is a significant presence of unemployed youth requiring prompt intervention. Initially a coordinator is to be appointed (preferably a local person with strong industry experience and connections) to support the development of a specific strategy for this targeted group.

    Following the successful establishment of these two regional SWEET-P networks, sub-groups can be established in smaller rural and regional centres almost simultaneously.

2. Towards more enterprising communities

    - In the Surf Coast Shire: assist local government to establish a Centre of Excellence in Youth Enterprise with a focus on the surfing industry precinct—a showcase for youth-related business and value-added tourism.
    - Education: actively promote and introduce enterprise education and business-related courses, through programs such as Young Achievement Australia, Australian Business Week, National Enterprise Day Initiatives and Small Business Management.
    - Expansion of business incubation programs: youth dedicated incubator, Start Me Up Program with Small Business Vic, beginning in Warrnambool and linking the Multimedia Centre with an expansion of the existing incubator.

- Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme to be established in Geelong in partnership with the City Council. Venture capital needs to be coordinated and sponsors found through industry networks.
- Mortlake (an enterprising community model): a research project on how to create a successful school/community partnership with an economic/environmental approach.

3. Communication and information

Already, some schools and community houses form 'hubs' of communication and information exchange in the region. These networks are to form the basis of an integrated community approach to more rapid social and economic development.

A communication/information strategy focusing on young people in the first instance would connect young people across the region and outside it:

- State Training Profile courses for young people in IT—IT Traineeships;
- promotion of VicOne access points in all schools to the community;
- expanding Skills Net in small communities, based on peer training;
- set up international projects eg. schools via UNESCO schools-net.

4. New paradigm teacher education

- Deakin University is being supported to establish, at the Warrnambool campus, a teacher education program to offer specialist training, drawing on a number of developments that have already been trialled in schools in Australia and internationally. This program would be distinctive in providing a more coordinated approach to enterprise education, vocational education and training/school-to-work transition, and information technology and telecommunication.
- Programs focusing on youth development (life skills, mental health, youth leadership) full service schooling, and middle schooling will be trialled.
- Students would spend a major proportion of their time learning 'on site' in an Internship based in local secondary schools, TAFE and local industry.

5. Youth leadership

Youth leadership is intended to be locally driven and supported, through the creation of a youth enterprise with a specific focus on coordinating activities such as:

- youth forums;
- youth entertainment events (e.g. music based);
- mentoring programs;
- youth radio;
- exchanges/excursions with other regions and capital cities;
- young people's market;
- leadership programs—Williamstown Foundation.

Their major task will be to orchestrate a series of broad youth consultations across the region, culminating in a large annual youth forum representing all areas and feeding directly into the Premier's Youth Council.

An urban example

The Northern Adelaide Regional Education Employment and Training (NAREET) Network has put structures in place that have encouraged educators and trainers at all levels to work collaboratively with community and industry stakeholders to constructively attack the issue of full youth employment.

In the disadvantaged area of Northern Adelaide this learning community partnership approach is evolving into a very successful model which could be transmitted to similar communities.

As we shift out of the passive, benefit-oriented welfare system towards a regional skill-and-wealth building approach to economic and employment development, it becomes increasingly obvious that more active, locally sensitive measures are needed. In Northern Adelaide, regional approaches are developing that are giving more coherence and effectiveness to public sector programs (particularly in education and training) and moving towards measures promoting entrepreneurship, job creation, and innovation. This is leading us to more actively promote and develop the local labour market and to make explicit the skills required and the pathways into this labour market.

Recently, broader regional objectives have been defined through developments in education, enterprise and employment, giving rise to new groupings and potential new structures. While government-led regional development policies have been important in the past, a more grass roots, indigenous development strategy is becoming more critical in local economic development. Local personality and organisational factors such as the capacity to form partnerships, establish innovation, and encourage entrepreneurship, are vital in this approach.

In practice this is being driven by the private sector, although public institutions and policy are being harnessed along the way. Public policy and investment in human and institutional development capacity must be further developed so that Northern Adelaide can minimise market failures and avoid ineffective public policy, particularly that which presents obstacles to dynamic local economic development.

The Northern Adelaide Development Board (NADB) recognises the importance of small businesses as catalysts for economic growth. Small firms play a dynamic role in the region, providing jobs and generating local wealth. They introduce new technologies, act as innovators, and help maintain positive community attitudes towards enterprise development. Grouped into districts, clusters or networks, they have widespread impact on the region's global competencies and its resilience to economic shocks.

The NADB assists this development by providing research and conferences for small businesses, promoting and supporting new and small firms, ensuring regional training of entrepreneurs, and providing special support for women entrepreneurs and youth in business.

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), international experience shows that 'policies focusing on macroeconomic stabilisation and growth have not been able to resolve the problems of structural long-term unemployment and exclusion for growing numbers of people'.

In fact 'marginalisation, dependency and impoverishment challenge traditional notions of national prosperity, as they threaten social cohesion and take a high toll on the lives of individuals and communities'.

Regional structures that bring private sector and public sector individuals into joint collaborative programs (e.g. Northern Adelaide Regional Education Employment and Training) promote new social as well as economic activities, leading to a more balanced and active community. In the short term, setting up these regional structures and promoting their activities can be expensive but they can have 'a profound effect on the long-term wealth of the community' (OECD).

Northern Adelaide has still some important work to do in this area, particularly in social development, and the OECD suggests the following action:

- further analysis and definition of the local economy that complements the mainstream market economy and includes social as well as economic development;
- seminars and similar activities which explore ways to integrate the *human* and market economies, thus generating jobs in sectors which are not directly exposed to competition;
- some comparative study of economic and social conditions in selected groups of similar urban areas (e.g. Western Sydney).

Recent OECD research (Jobs Study and the White Papers of the Commission of the European Union) stressed the need for more active labour market policies at a regional level. This requires the development of a clear understanding of the relationship between a qualified labour force and local training opportunities, as well as an understanding of the capacity of local labour markets to adjust to changing conditions.

A starting point for the Northern Adelaide region is an evaluation of the local labour market, particularly the operations and management of the labour market at a regional level. The region continues to:

- Examine the cooperation and coordination levels between the major regional players.
- Research key issues in local employment management such as
    - training levels and provision
    - role of employment placement agencies
    - coordination of the various sectors and the three levels of government.
- Organise seminars/conferences for major players on national and international approaches to regional job creation
- Develop guidelines/policy for more effective local employment management.

Northern Adelaide has begun the process of culture change that will allow the community to leave behind decades of passive welfare dependency.

The Northern Adelaide Region of Councils (NAROC), NADB and its support structures (such as NAREET), serve as the focal point for cooperation within the region as the economy is in this transition phase. These collaborative structures develop and implement policy and programs that channel the experience and expertise of local leaders in key social policy and economic areas, into regional activity. The results are obviously translating into a far more focused and supported business community, with strong links and partnerships in the public sector and widely throughout the community.

Small business is the cornerstone of the growing private sector. It provides the impetus for the establishment of an enterprising culture, where individuals are prepared to take initiative and to assume responsibility for their own actions. These are the catalysts for local job creation. At a regional level we must provide advice, information and support to reinforce the growth of the small business sector as the site of most employment growth.

Need for enterprise creation

Since 1982 the OECD has been promoting programs that concentrate on small business creation, particularly in stagnant economies, in response to the 'growing importance of small firms as a source of new jobs.'

Plant closures and large scale job losses (e.g. BHP) have reduced our confidence in the ability of large *globalised* corporations to guarantee lifelong employment. As well, job growth in the public sector is limited by the current phase of lean budgetary policies.

OECD evidence suggests that job creation is 'closely linked to the capacity to create new businesses in particular, as it relates to strong entrepreneurial turbulence and high enterprise birth and death rates.'

SECTION TWO

Regional learning community

Northern Adelaide is a dynamic region with a clear focus on improving economic and social performance. The interconnecting relationships of education, business, local government, university, training providers, and community organisations has resulted in a regional commitment to articulating pathways for local people into employment, education, and training to skill the workforce to meet the changing needs of regional employers.

During late 1994, a group of people accepted the challenge of regional employers to work together, articulated by Peter Smith, Managing Director, at a Northern Adelaide Development Board (NADB) reference group meeting. They produced a concept for development titled 'Pathways and Partnerships for Young People in Northern Adelaide.' The concept included a definition of regional development, the creation of an *enterprise* high school, a national conference on *Jobs for Young Australians,* and a Youth in Business program to follow OECD research that creating their own employment was a valuable option for young people in the current employment market.

A major feature of the concept was the creation of the Northern Adelaide Regional Employment, Education, and Training Network (NAREET). The network began in 1995 and involved up to 100 people in working together to improve employment and training for people in the region, particularly young people. NAREET reports directly to the Northern Adelaide Development Board.

The success of the network has been evident from its inception. In the first year it brought together for the first time regional schools, the university, business, local government, and training providers to plan how to work together to improve employment and training in the region. It built on the success of the *Jobs for Young Australians* conference.

NAREET was marketed to regional business and initiated a Jobs Pathway Program to place young people into employment in the region.

The pathways committee was active in developing vocational education options in the region, with the introduction of the TRAC program, planning for the Automotive and Engineering\Electronics pathways, and expanding the number of schools involved. The NAREET-Industry-Partnership group arranged seminars to discuss options with employers.

An intersectoral committee oversaw research about employment options for young people, which they published as a booklet called *It's your future: Pathways to employment in Northern Adelaide* and distributed to 5000 Year 9 and 10 students in the region. As well, this committee staged the Career Expo articulating options for 3500 Year 9 to 12 students.

Vocational education options now include schools, training providers, and the university in planning. Training providers work together to expand the options available and target young people to take up the options for training with success. Schools understand their role in vocational education and plan courses within their own locations as well as joining regional programs e.g. TRAC, Building and Construction, Automotive and Horticulture.

With the introduction of the South Australian Government 'Ready Set Go' program, schools in Northern Adelaide were in a healthy position to extend their network to expand the vocational options available to young people in 1997. Regional schools have co-operated with the NADB to form the Northern Adelaide Regional Workplace Learning Centre. Schools have funded a Coordinator position, and two additional staff positions to ensure regional programs continue to flourish and work placements are regionally coordinated and planned.

A review of the Career Expo has resulted in the development of a strategy to plan a coordinated industry visits program for young people with the support of regional industry. A research project with the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) in relation to work placements and the advantage to small employers will provide valuable information for accessing small business.

The university sector successfully introduced a bridging program in Information Technology (IT) to supplement the NADB\NAREET Certificate III and IV program to provide skilled IT technicians for the workforce.

In school programs such as Office Skills, Food and Hospitality, Furniture Construction and Graphic Design work placements are arranged as part of the schools' commitment to providing learning at an on-the-job setting. Often classroom teachers or students themselves arrange work placements. In the regional model, work placement is a part of an overall strategy. Our model links it to regional economic development to generate a partnership approach to forge greater employment, training and educational opportunities for people in the region.

The Jobs Pathway Program is now administered by the regional public high schools in partnership with regionally-based Jobs Network brokers. The assistance available to young people to build a pathway to education, training and employment is now a strong partnership focused on successful outcomes.

Authentic lifelong learning

Enterprise education is directed towards achieving a learning culture which will result in greater numbers of students and school leavers enthused and equipped to identify, create, initiate, and successfully manage personal business, work, and community opportunities.

There are two powerful reasons for encouraging enterprise education:

- The skills and qualities that are generally seen as enterprising are *increasingly important* for Australians—especially to young Australians—in maximising opportunities in the environment of change which is the nineties.
- Australia's future prosperity depends critically on starting and growing more successful businesses … *the development of an enterprise culture in individuals will improve the performance of business and support business development.*

Thus it is no surprise it is becoming increasingly important in Australia to expose young people to the value of enterprising behaviour in taking charge of their own future and doing things for themselves.

> An improvement in enterprise culture would impact on Australians in many ways. Broad-based enterprise programs would have benefits to the community beyond business and industry, for example in employment generation, workplace relations, social and community organisations. Enterprise and entrepreneurship provides all types of organizations—government, private and non-profit—with the ability and opportunity to adapt and survive in conditions of rapid economic and environmental change.

The Task Force also concluded that the lack of enterprise and entrepreneurial studies at school, in vocational education and training and in higher education, forms part of the reason why there is not a strong small business culture in Australia. Enterprise education is the main arena whereby enterprise and entrepreneurship can be encouraged across an entire society and the range of business organisations.

Salisbury High School is a best practice example in the region of a school implementing at a local regional level, the national and global requirements for people to be positive about an enterprise culture and acquire and promote enterprising behaviour. The school has taken up the challenge to transform its educational program, and approach to learning, to better equip students for the future.

The school listens to local industry and employers and works in partnership to provide a curriculum that is responsive to industry needs and provides opportunities for students. The classroom focus is on students achieving a personal best in the key competencies for work within a balanced curriculum framework, which promotes good citizenship.

The integration of vocational and general education, in an enterprise classroom methodology which produced clearly understood pathways to employment, training, and further education was the impetus Salisbury High was looking for to make a difference for its students and support their move from welfare dependency to creating a future for themselves. The schools' programs now stimulate students to put their own ideas into practice, make real decisions, assess risk and accept responsibility for achieving their own successes.

Teachers are working on understanding and implementing a different pedagogy to expand their methodological repertoire. Their role now includes the 'brokerage of authentic learning experiences' in real life situations, which contain the potential for students to link into post-secondary activities and networks, be they entrepreneurial, educational, or artistic.

As part of authentic learning, students learn the importance of presentation, service, quality, and punctuality—skills they will need in the marketplace. They run their own enterprises, learn self-management, how to develop their ideas, and how to improve their communication and team skills. Students work with business mentors who help them to design a business plan and marketing strategy and deal with the myriad of problems that arise in running a small business. A Year 9 arts group, for example, developed its own business with the help of a local florist. They were taught how to arrange and care for flowers, make flower pots, and promote and sell them. With the help of Australian National another class created a safety video on the potential danger of a local railway crossing. Student enterprises include car wash and garden maintenance programs, manufacture of pavers, and the creation of computer programs, arts events management, and desktop publishing.

Once pedagogy changes in this way, all kinds of unexpected things happen and developments occur that would not be possible in a traditional curriculum. Now educators can notice and respond to students' talents, abilities and interests because the curriculum constantly emerges around these inputs. The emergence of a curriculum centred on the talents of a student is a trend Salisbury High School wants to develop and refine. The curriculum should fit the student, to recognise and extend their talents in a range of settings, rather than the student fit a traditional curriculum framework and not have their needs addressed.

Additionally, based on the principles of regional development and the revitalisation of the regional economic and social infrastructure, an enterprise pathway for all young people is emerging. The objective of this pathway is to develop options for young people in:

- self-employment and small business;
- further education and training;
- employment in other regional enterprises.

Strong industry-school partnerships are key ingredients of this new educational approach. The Salisbury High relationship with British Aerospace Australia illustrates just how successful such a partnership can be. Under a Young Achievement Australia mentoring scheme, 13 of the company's executives are working with the school to help students with projects. School staff have received technical training at British Aerospace Australia. Students have honed their design and planning skills through engineering instruction on site. In other examples, the City of Salisbury has provided substantial in-kind support for the community arts Northwalk Streetscape project. Students have gained valuable insight into the scope and nature of local government and have helped to develop a Youth Policy for the council.

Enterprise learning

Students are individuals. They each have unique ways of thinking and approach learning from different perspectives. In the future, self-directed learning will become more and more important. Most importantly, it is teaching them how to deal with their fears of the

future; to take positive actions to contribute to and even steer their future directions without fear.

A Youth Enterprise Centre was established by the Northern Metropolitan Youth Association, which provides students with enterprise courses. The courses offer young people a mixture of accredited and non-accredited training, practical enterprise development, and on-the-job experience. The methodology of each course is designed so that it links young people to further education and training and also to employment. The curriculum is based on the principles of key competencies, providing outcomes of learning that are required by industry. This provides young people with the opportunity to transfer skills and abilities they develop to other employment and training opportunities.

Young people now have the opportunity to develop their enterprise potential and work towards the development of their own business. The Youth Enterprise Centre generates a whole range of enterprise concepts and small businesses. Staff assists organisations in the Youth and Training sector to develop the skills and the framework to implement the enterprise curriculum for young people of the region.

The Northern Metropolitan Youth Association has been instrumental in reopening Paralowie House, both as a residential education and training facility, and as a medium to long-term accommodation option for youth in the Salisbury, Playford and Gawler areas. There are self-contained units for shared or individual accommodation. This means that Paralowie House can offer residential education and training facilities, as well as providing accommodation for homeless youth.
The accommodation facility provides a component of emergency accommodation for students needing very temporary assistance, but its primary focus is in the area of medium-term supported accommodation, working closely with the Housing Trust to get young people into secure/affordable long-term housing, providing a stable and secure home base from which to make a career start in life.

The Paralowie House itself, is utilised by the Business Incubator, for activities such as information technology, desktop publishing, video production, classroom/learning activities including food preparation, health and personal dfevelopment, nutrition, budgeting, and so on.

Paralowie House now offers a diversity of enterprise pathways for young people linked to formal education and industry. The Internet Café is combining the heritage of the past with the technology of the future. Young people, most from disadvantaged or homeless backgrounds, have established the Internet Café with associated enterprises in food preparation, hospitality and the Northern Web Site. The Northern Web Site is linked to Salisbury High School and DETAFE, with training accredited through SACE and recognised by TAFE. The young people are keen to make an impression, successfully manage small enterprises, gain experience as café operators, and promote their businesses to the general public.

The *Youth in Business Program* is sponsored by Hotel Care Community project with local hoteliers acting as mentors. The program provides a bridging environment for young people to access and experience the skills and knowledge of the real commercial world. The Northern Metropolitan Youth Association (NMYA) manages a Job Placement, Employment and Training (JPET) project at Paralowie House which provides a case management service to homeless and disadvantaged youth to guide them on a pathway to

further employment and training. The NMYA, which manages much of the work of Paralowie House, is a recognised charity for the homeless and disadvantaged youth of Salisbury community.

Broad principles

The above youth-based approach to regional social and economic development is grounded in some broad principles common to successful national and international experience and best practice.

In summary, they are:

- Youth voice
  For young people to experience a sense of belonging and connectedness, they must feel valued and that their *voice* will be seriously listened to by the powerbrokers. In short they must be empowered.

- Social capital
  High performance communities are those that understand that all human potential must be utilised to the maximum. This implies no underemployment, let alone unemployment of community members; all strengths must be utilised, even if voluntarily. Such communities place emphasis on building networks and establishing trusting relationships as the basis of their social capital. Smart communities such as these do not rely on their physical capital and resources alone, but build up their human capital by skilling their people, and their social capital by developing interconnections.

- High reliability organisations
  A successful community will look to its organisations and ensure that they emphasise reliability in performance. As an example, imagine if every school or training organisation had to be as reliable as an airport traffic control outfit—just as every plane must land safely 100 per cent of the time, every child must experience success at school!

- Partnerships
  A prosperous community will encourage mutually beneficial partnerships between its organisations, whether business or social in nature; collaborative synergies can be generated by looking to cooperatively build community wealth.

- Capability
  All of the above refers to the ability of a community or region to increase its *capacity*—its current ability and future potential. There are common values and ideals that bind and strengthen societies, that allow people to develop resilience, optimism and confidence in their ability to take appropriate action in a changing world. Natural leaders, including young people, have the ability to enable communities to identify their common values and build social capital.

- Lifelong learning/lifelong employability
  No longer is it possible (if it ever was!) to be trained as a young person for a job that lasted for life. Rather, a rapidly changing world and workplace require continuous skilling, updating of knowledge and the ability to grow into new employment areas.

Our knowledge institutions and processes are only just beginning to adjust to these new dynamic conditions and to evolve seamless and distance methods of delivery. They and their leaders will need to be encouraged to take on a more integrated approach to creating learning communities.

- Place management
Latham (1998) describes a system he calls *place management* that is an attempt to find improved ways of delivering government resources and services. The ineffective *silo* system based on completely separate departments has further disadvantaged rural and remote communities by failing to respond to their needs or timeframes. Progressive governments around the world are all examining new models of better integrating service delivery systems, with the current consensus being towards a local brokerage structure.

Conclusion

Given that there is a crisis of confidence at local community level in rural and urban Australia, added to the sense of uncertainty at all levels of government on how else to deal with regional economic development issues, particularly those affecting young people and morale, there has never been a more propitious time for regional leaders to seize the initiative.

International experience suggests that investment in and encouragement of local civic entrepreneurs and natural leaders, to focus the community on building capability and social capital, is the most likely recipe for success and prosperity.

This chapter points to the future and the place of young people within the region as the most galvanising and uniting focus for rural and regional communities. Indeed, the very energy, creativity and vitality of local young people can provide another under-utilised resource to catalyse further economic and social activity.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world—indeed, it's the only thing that ever has! ... Margaret Mead

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What does the business sector get out of investment in communities?

Marc Bowles

Using information from real examples this chapter examines how community partnerships hold, create, and add value for businesses. Indicators of return on investment will be drawn from examples of partnerships revolving around knowledge and learning.

The sources of information for this chapter include one of Australia's largest companies. This company has trialled and adopted components of performance and learning systems that embrace 'learning community' models. It has also been implemented at an internal, intra-organisational, and at a regional level (Woolworths 1998; Bowles 1998; Bowles 1997a).

As other chapters in this book study models for regional partnerships, this chapter will simply explore learning communities as one form of collaborative architectures built by individuals, groups, an organisation, and multiple organisations to forge meaning, purpose, and commitment towards a shared future.

This chapter will highlight how knowledge and learning are a basis for communities to forge sustainable collaborative partnerships with business. How well partnerships enable, stabilise, and sustain relationships between the community and business players will also determine how well business can manage knowledge capital and build unique competitive advantage. Overall performance improvement can be manipulated to provide an immediate and attractive basis for a business to invest in any collaborative partnership. However other advantages must be addressed if sustainable improvement and performance are to be generated through any such partnership.

Building community-business collaborative architectures

Over the last decades of the 20th century businesses have increasingly explored the management of individuals as a capital resource. The move has been from the Industrial Age when individuals were simply a factor of production, to the Knowledge Age where increased emphasis has been placed on how individuals contribute towards organisational agility and strategic capabilities. In the Knowledge Age businesses need to develop and harness an individual's capabilities to achieve competitive advantage. The aim for any organisation in such an era is to accelerate knowledge acquisition and its transfer to productive outcomes. One strategy a business or any organisation can pursue to achieve this end is to build a learning community.

A learning community is used to denote individuals or organisations cooperating through planned relationships and networks (collaborative architecture) to promote actions and learning processes that achieve mutual advantage. However, business can gain enormous benefits from participating in a learning community.

What does the strategic approach to a learning community look like?

By using the term 'strategic' we are referring to the learning community being tied to purpose and not to processes. Strategic frameworks help all those involved in the management of a process respond to changes while ensuring fundamental activities are performed to the required standard.

The fundamental reasons for cooperation really revolves around the eight drivers identified in Figure 1. These drivers are sorted to *enable* enterprise participation and cooperation and how key players can *stabilise* how businesses achieve greater competitive advantage. Collaboration must be based on, and measured by the shared outcomes all parties in the process seek to achieve through implementation *(sustainers)*. In effect, indicators of business success are one measure of successful collaboration. It should be recognised that shared indicators need to be derived that mesh business indicators with those indicators that other participants are motivated to achieve.

Figure 1: Learning Community Framework

Businesses want …

Enablers

Business
Drivers

1. Improved performance

2. Responsiveness to clients

3. Responsiveness to change

4. Capitalising knowledge
assets

- Jobs
- Better recruits
- Wellbeing
- Adaptiveness
- Regional
development
- Competitive-
ness
- Business
Success
- Agile
workforce

Sustainers

Shared
Futures

8. Reducing risk

7. Shaping industry evolution

6. Promoting learning for new
skills and technologies

Stabilisers

Policy/
Community
Drivers

5. Reducing the cost of
doing business

Government/community can assist by…

Source: Bowles 1997b, p. 137; Slocum & Lei 1993, p. 298.

Constructing learning communities that are tied to achievement of mutual advantage for participants is not a denial that other purposes or advantages may be derived by

membership in the community. Equally, one needs to be very careful that construction of these partnerships is not oriented only towards indicators that business may 'value'.

What enables business participation?

While the types of indicators chosen by a learning community may vary, there is advantage in aligning these with indicators business partners may consider important. The measures business uses to indicate the success of a community-business partnership will vary depending on purpose.

For community partnerships that wish to secure business commitment, the immediate advantage of using indicators synergistic with the business needs is the tying of the partnerships to a shared senses of purpose. Collaboration is measured, at least in part, by indicators managers already link to business success.

Enabler 1: Improved performance

The first major enabler for business involvement in community partnerships is improved performance. This is a Damoclese sword for those constructing partnership frameworks. On one hand the advantages are the commitment to assist improve business outcomes. On the other hand many businesses have a very short-term view of business performance and lack the strategic perspective necessary to see beyond task or process improvement. For those constructing learning and knowledge based partnerships, this can warp the target business sets for 'successful' relationships. Equally, if more than one business partner is involved in the collaboration the focus can shift between short-term demands made by each organisation for performance benefits the learning community cannot collectively reconcile nor prioritise.

To establish indicators that span a number of businesses the collaborative partners need to set benchmarks. In Australia, as in many overseas countries (e.g. New Zealand, United Kingdom, Malaysia, Singapore, Sweden, South Africa), industry-devised competency standards have been widely used to establish an independent benchmark for the training and assessment of individuals to achieve workplace performance outcomes. This benchmark standard is also very attractive as competencies are designed to be achieved across variables that may include the person, location, work context, technology, and task mix for a particular job.

Nevertheless, a focus on competencies relating to tasks or even job performance narrows the scope of learning to training relating to the skills and knowledge that deliver immediate job performance outcomes. Such a focus may be too narrow a basis to encompass all the indicators of benefit business may derive from collaborating with a wider community to enhance learning.

Let us examine one example where value adding to existing human resource activities occurs through collaborative partnership for entry-level training. In this case the school-workplace programs helped reduce the costs of doing business in four major areas, including:

- recruitment
- selection
- succession and employee retention
- training and assessment activities.

Table 1: Indicators of Business Return on Investment in a Learning Community

Benefits of training	Indicated by
Improved performance	Productivity increase Increased sales (higher comparative sales revenue) 'Better' quality product/service Reduced variations (waste and error rate reduced) Improved ratio of labour cost to production/service costs
Improved attitude, motivation	Improved job satisfaction Improved work attitude or workforce/teams Decreased absenteeism Reduced staff turnover
Replacing or integrating 'traditional' HRD tools	Integration of, or reduced completion costs for: • skills audits • skills analysis • training needs analysis • performance appraisals • recruitment and succession planning
Agility of the workforce	Adaptability or responsiveness of workforce to market opportunities Responsiveness to customer demands More rapid adoption of innovations, work practices, new technology Improved skill levels–individuals, teams, occupations, etc. Overall advances in the skills and knowledge held by the workforce
Reduced staff replacement costs	Mobility of existing staff to vacant jobs (part time, casual and full time) Cost of retraining and recruitment reduced Number of potential recruits (entry-level recruitment pool) Staff retention, promotion and term of employment (by commencement age and employment level or area) Volume of part time/casual staff moving into full-time jobs
Reduced costs of recruitment, selection and succession planning	Improved recruitment Targeted selection to 'match' an individual to a job Better matching of training to individual job and career needs Self-assessment against competencies required for a position Retention rates for individuals (time and percentage) Reduced absenteeism Improved relationship between promotion and learning completed
Improved customer service	Improved customer satisfaction Reduction in (surveyed) complaints Service ethic/climate (survey)
Present net worth of human capital	Increase in human capital asset value Decrease in expenditure required to maintain capability of workforce to meet performance demands Reduced expenditure on the contracting of external expertise Staff compliance with all legal and legislative requirements (i.e. cost of non-compliance can incur operational loss/costs)

Source: OTFE 1997, pp. 3–4; Woolworths 1997, pp. 12–13.

Training and assessed outcomes are one aspect of the benefits business gain from participation in these learning communities. Evidence from learning communities that focus on school-workplace programs indicates that such programs work better for enterprises with existing performance systems that have the capacity to measure how training contributes to bottom-line outcomes (Bowles 1998, p. 12). However, enterprises do not have to have such a system in place to derive benefits from partnerships in school-workplace or learning communities.

One employer conducted an 18-month project from mid-1996 to late 1997 to determine measures for evaluating performance improvement gained through competency-based traineeships completed with young people still at school.

Performance indicators used by business will vary greatly. For community-business partnerships involving alliances based on learning, the indicators can be extrapolated from Table 1.

Enablers 2 and 3: Responsiveness to clients and responsiveness to change

Organisations and managers utilise a range of strategies to achieve responsiveness to markets and customers. Some organisations are operating in stable developed markets with little threat of new competition, and therefore have everything to lose and little to gain by implementing new structures or practices.

Individual managers in traditional organisational structures are given little reward for challenging the order of things. Such organisations place little value on learning, or how the collaborative architecture needs to be managed to enhance learning that improves responsiveness to change or to emerging demands that will necessitate change.

Organisations whose core business is in the area of information technology and those operating across a range of environmental conditions and market places, have to be more adaptive than those in traditional manufacturing and closed markets. Organisations, whether they be large global corporations such as Microsoft, Shell International, Kodak, and Intel, or small to medium enterprises operating in highly localised markets, all have to learn to cope with a rapidly changing environment. As larger companies absorb markets traditionally held by small businesses the way small business managers operate has also had to change.

This management of knowledge has important foundations in how well, and how quickly companies can translate learning into outcomes. Achieving strategic outcomes requires learning and knowledge management that improves *both* current performance and the capacity to meet future strategic imperatives.

The ability to generate new knowledge through learning processes is critical to any organisation seeking to build unique competitive advantage (McGill, Slocum & Lei 1992). Organisational learning can be managed to enhance the depth, speed, and breadth of learning (Redding 1997). In environments where change is rapid and sustained, the ability to just adapt and 'cope' with change is an insufficient basis for assuring business survival. The ability to be responsive and to seize emerging opportunities created through the change process may be the basis for competitiveness.

Responsiveness is embedded in how well individuals and the organisation can learn. This suggests learning needs to be continuous, not necessarily continual. Even for the largest organisations, the resourcing of such frameworks is expensive and very risky.

Fundamentally the creation of business-community partnerships for many corporations has eventuated because of a desire to source improved future recruits, to influence education structures, and to promote lifelong learning in society. While this can serve to meet immediate performance imperatives, it is motivated by a longer-term need to link competitive advantage with resources and knowledge frameworks only societies can build and maintain.

The message to collaborative partners outside the business is to embrace the longer-term purpose for the relationship. Learning communities are partnerships that actually provide opportunities for individual and collective learning. Learning becomes much more than an intervention controlled and targeted towards training for performance or adapting actions to meet performance ends; it is a strategic capability that improves bottom-line outcomes *as well as* the competitiveness of individuals, groups, regions and businesses (Calvert, Mobley & Marshall 1994).

Enabler 4: Capitalising knowledge assets

The management of knowledge capital is a much talked about, rarely understood aspect of modern management. Let's challenge current thinking by sorting knowledge capital in three different categories:

- *Human capital* where knowledge resides in people and their 'collective expertise, creative and problem solving capability, leadership, entrepreneurial and managerial skills' (Brooking 1999, p. 21).

- *Infrastructural capital* which is a broad category of assets that contribute to how an organisation conducts business; such as processes, financial relationships, communication systems, information systems, philosophies, and financial structures (Brooking 1999).

- *Social capital* which resides in networks and relationships that guide interaction between individuals and the management of societal networks that can impact group, regional, community, social, and organisational outcomes (Woolcock 1998).

The aim for any business is to manage this knowledge to achieve strategic ends. For competitive businesses this ultimately means absorbing, transferring and expanding knowledge for productive purposes, in a manner that a competitor cannot replicate. This means escaping the Industrial Age mind-set of controlling and organising knowledge through its allocation into jobs that meet defined functions, to the Knowledge Age imperative to manage knowledge to meet ever-changing strategic ends that cannot be controlled by an organisation's structure of work.

The three types of capital require different strategies to manage the development and transferral of knowledge to individuals generating productive outcomes. Equally, ownership of knowledge will vary. While infrastructural knowledge capital is mainly constituted by explicit knowledge that can be owned by an organisation, ownership of

most human and all social knowledge capital resides with the individual or their interactions.

Table 2: Collaborating to build specific types of knowledge capital

Types of knowledge capital	Examples	Community actions to enhance
Infrastructural	Intellectual property Processes Systems Philosophy Customer goodwill Partnerships Professional skills Craftsmanship Funding bodies support for activities Procedural manuals Training courses/ manuals Process flow charts Design specifications Technology Individual customer/ service relationships Service strategies Strategic vision Strategic plans Systems architecture Market research	Proximity to the market-place Encourage technological know-how in region to support businesses Link suppliers and buyers and customers in innovative projects Promote community projects that harness collective expertise Audit industry capabilities required for specific markets in a region and tie local infrastructure to support these capabilities Establish regional visions that reinforce industry capabilities Ensure government and public service providers reinforce a culture of service and commitment to business Mechanisms to match competent individuals to a job Reduced 'red tape' Become a customer/market for the local businesses
Human	Competencies Experience Commitment Craftsmanship Working relationship with bodies/ people external to the firm Individual commitment Value statements Participative planning processes Shared visions Service ethic	Expand pools of competent individuals Audit required industry competencies and map available individual competencies in region Expand experience of individuals Encourage 'right attitude' in individual recruits Promote community values that parallel business values Undertake action and experiential learning in schools or in the community
Social	Culture Social network Wellbeing Cross-links between macro-planning processes (planning across economic, technological, regional, employment etc.) Community support Political stability Personal links with suppliers Shared commitment Shared purpose	Promote political stability Encourage civic pride Identify new markets and community opportunities Identify factors that generate wellbeing in the community Community awareness of collective needs and future imperatives Expand competencies or capabilities tied to wellbeing indicators that impact productive purposes Harness diversity and divergence Credibility—history of businesses support/good governance

For many authors writing on intellectual capital, corporate wisdom, or enhancement of knowledge capital, a business's competitive advantage lies in how quickly it absorbs, transfers, and expands knowledge. This is more than entering into partnerships or building learning frameworks that enhance explicit knowledge found in the skills and knowledge required for competent performance (Brooking 1999). It reinforces learning communities as one strategy able to generate and source tacit knowledge held by individuals or groups inside *and* outside the organisation. These networks also hold social capital value.

Table 2 indicates the tangible relationship between building human and infrastructural capital knowledge and productive outcomes. In hierarchically-structured organisations trying to control all factors of production to improve bottom-line results, the concept of social capital represents a real challenge. It may, for instance, reside in indicators such as 'wellbeing' that are still in the early stages of being tied to business competitive advantage (Rose 1999; Falk & Harrison 1998). This makes it both difficult to build, but incredibly valuable if harnessed by a business because, unlike infrastructural capital and many aspects of human capital, social capital is context-specific and hard for any competitor to replicate.

What stabilises business participation?

Collaborative structures with business are not just about adding value to businesses in a specific community. They are also about supporting efforts to attract new businesses and keeping businesses in a community.

Stabiliser 5: Reducing the cost of doing business

The ongoing participation of businesses in community partnerships can be realised by assisting them to reduce their immediate cost of doing business. In simple, if somewhat crass terms, this means ensuring participation has an impact on the bottom-line.

As previously indicated this can become a Damocles sword hanging over the proverbial head of the collaborative structure. The balance is to assist enhanced bottom-line results while instilling a longer-term perspective on the reasons for the collaborative structures. Participating in the partnership can actually be constructed and reported to emphasise reductions in the cost of doing business.

While stressing businesses should be discouraged from structuring processes to just access available funding, it makes sound business sense to access available funding where it reduces the costs incurred in undertaking normal business activities.

Reporting on cost-of-doing business outcomes can also reinforce that the learning community (or any such collaborative architecture) is set on building capital value for the business, beyond human capital derived from recruiting or accessing competent people. It is also about creating access to a source of knowledge that can structure learning to actually attract funding or off-set business costs (i.e. infrastructural capital) and to create interactions that stimulate the generation of solutions that business and community members can access (i.e. social capital).

Stabiliser 6: Promoting learning for new skills and technologies
Strategic alliances should enhance the learning and transfer of new skills and technology between partners. Learning can also be framed in areas where enterprises have yet to acquire expertise, e.g. community partnership that promotes action or project-based experiences that permit the exchange of information and learning. Such learning can target areas where businesses, especially smaller businesses, cannot afford to develop knowledge or undertake structured learning

Stabiliser 7: Shaping industry evolution
Strategic alliances can identify learning needs and develop interactions whereby businesses can gain insight into future industry evolution and personnel can access the knowledge necessary to exploit this evolution. These strategies may also enable future or embryonic industry activities to occur through a learning community that actively promotes the specific knowledge and skills required to attract or embrace new economic activities (Clegg et al. 1995; Slocum & Lei 1993).

Stabiliser 8: Reducing risk
As costs of production and product development increase, the motivation to form alliances that reduce financial and planning risk also increases. These alliances become even more attractive if they further reduce risk by off setting the financial commitments required to achieve current productivity. In technology-based industries or those involving complex processes of service and product delivery, the diversity of skills and technology promote the desire to form partnerships that redistribute risk (Slocum & Lei 1993). Partnerships with a community can:

- Maximise resource utilisation in order to forge more sustainable programs.

- Build relationships and networks with businesses or individuals in order to better integrate supply, distribution or sales chains.

- Build programs in emerging job areas and where job growth trends are reported.

- Assist to build structures for transferring codified (explicit) knowledge between organisations and across organisations (e.g. competency-based industry training).

- Impede the fragmentation of effort by players that threatens any systems solutions to problems impacting the conduct of business within the community (whether it be a geographic, purpose driven, or virtual setting).

Fundamentally the sense of partnership and the construct of collaborative architectures can permit businesses to better manage risk. These outcomes may be individual or collective. They may have a local or global (beyond the local geographic location) impact. The learning community model purely provides architecture that is a low-risk option in which to become involved, while offering ongoing opportunities for risk sharing.

Sustainers: The value of purpose and commitment to shared futures
Unless a clear rationale and direction is derived it should be anticipated that individuals in any collaborative partnership would feel defensive, distrustful, unmotivated, or even resist the promotion of shared outcomes.

Business and regional development, and community issues exist in such a dynamic relationship. Variables impacting the purpose for collaborative partnerships need to be

addressed at the community level. Learning community structures illustrate how flexible structures can be constructed. However the development of indicators that sustain community-business partnerships must be contextual to that community and its shared sense of purpose. The indicators of sustainability, or what Figure 1 depicts as shared futures, must extend well beyond task, process, and even short-term business imperatives. The indicators need to continually move as participative structures redefine collective purpose.

For many businesses the immediate basis for collaboration is the removal of barriers that limit performance. For instance, a number of barriers can be identified as impinging upon employers' confidence in school-workplace learning programs.

- Students assessed as competent for a job are job-ready, but not competent to perform in 'my' workplace.
- Training costs outweigh the return on investment.
- Tools are too complex and oriented to training, not business needs.
- The national vocational education and training process is too complex, impossible to shape to business imperatives, and in a state of constant change.
- Structured competency-based training requires time and cost commitments that fall outside core business activities (i.e. it is an additional impost on the business).
- National competency standards in Training Packages and supporting learning resources are too generic and do not reflect the unique performance that supports an enterprise's unique competitive advantages.

When commencing implementation of competency-based training systems, Woolworths overlaid its partnerships with community organisations and education and training providers with critical HR Key Performance Indicators. The benchmarks used to measure overall success of the program from 1994–1998 were:

- increase staff retention;
- improved career pathways and identified progression points from school-based employees to management;
- return on investment from training;
- reduce cost of doing business;
- targeting of training to priorities and funds to improve store performance in terms of bottom-line budget results, and
- shift training from a benign to performance-based activity to an activity-shaping behaviour that delivers service standards (Woolworths 1997, p. 3).

True measures of success need to be more durable and indicate targets that are meaningful for all participants in the collaborative relationships. They need to motivate, elicit commitment, and promote advantage to all players through mutual effort. The participants in their specific context can only derive such indicators. Fundamentally a 'community' that takes ownership of the process required to build collaborative architectures has created something as important as the outcomes they can achieve. As such, the following are only a guide to what shared futures could entail. Each could, in turn, guide how indicators listed earlier in the chapter are chosen and measures set.

Table 3: The basis for setting indicators derived from shared futures

Area	Examples of areas for setting indicators
Employment measures	Job creation Recruitment targets Percentage of employment by age, occupations, etc.
Wellbeing indicators	Job security Ecological health of region Freedom from harm Levels of stress Climate for change
Adaptiveness	Ability to meet emerging market needs with current workforce Depth and breadth of available learning in the region Available knowledge assets in the region
Regional development measures	Levels of disposable income
Competitiveness	Profit margins Comparative industry or regional benchmarks Best practice analysis and comparison
Retention of businesses within a region	Numbers retained Number of families associated with a business/industry leaving a region
Workforce agility	Transferability of capabilities within existing 'pool' of labour across industry sectors

Conclusion

Building learning communities with business have tended to re-emphasise the importance of focusing on how the business is making an investment decision that will translate learning activities into applied performance improvement. This chapter has argued this focus as a necessary but too narrow a basis for building sustainable business-community collaborative architectures.

Collaborative partnerships that espouse value of learning need to set indicators that extend beyond task or job performance within a specific workplace context. This is not devaluing performance indicators that can be contextualised to measure the development of the individual and improved productivity. Such indicators are critical short-term stepping stones. They 'sell in' the value of a partnership, in lieu of convincing managers that the long-term performance value resides in investing in a partnership that provides the framework and resources necessary to accelerate organisational learning, and to generate the responsiveness necessary to secure customer and market opportunities.

The value of collaborative relationships in promoting different types of knowledge capital—infrastructural, human and social—is not well understood by businesses in Australia. Some larger corporations are building knowledge or learning communities conscious of the need to invest in partnerships that promote the speed, depth, and breadth of learning and the transfer of knowledge. However, the inherent value to a business of participating in collaborative frameworks that promote social and human knowledge capital that resides in individuals and networks existing outside the organisation are, at best, poorly understood.

The triggers for business involvement in collaborative architectures that involve the local community must differentiate short-term and longer-term indicators or benefits. This requires an acknowledgment that business and government agencies currently focus on short-term performance improvement. This can be achieved through strategies that reduce

the cost of doing business. However, this strategy must be part of the overall effort to build sustainable competitive advantage.

Triggering business involvement is more than commitment to short-term benefits. It is about building frameworks that enable and sustain partnerships and create a mechanism whereby business, the community, and individuals can access and leverage knowledge to achieve their preferred futures.

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CHAPTER 19
Learning, change and sustainability: Exploring the learning processes of pastoralist stakeholders in the tropical savannas

Allan Arnott and Rebecca Benson

A number of issues emerge when reviewing notions of education and communication as they impact on rural industries in the tropical savannas. For example, it is perceived that some difficulty exists in communication between landholders in rural industries, government departments, and other research centres. This chapter reports on a research project which aims to identify, describe, and share knowledge and understanding of some of the learning processes of pastoralists in the tropical savannas. It does this by investigating how they go about learning and change. Such learning processes include experiential and informal learning, formal training, and engaging in information technologies.

Introduction

It is essential that sustainability is at the core of development and land use management practices in the tropical savannas. Such diverse land uses include the mining, pastoral and tourism industries, management of Aboriginal land, and conservation and defence interests. The tropical savanna region takes in much of northern Australia, including the Kimberley of Western Australia, the Top End of the Northern Territory, and the gulf and peninsula country of North Queensland. The region is characterised by its vast area and the small population living within it.

For many, in an effort to enhance the economic, ecological, and social sustainability of land use practices, working towards sustainability in the region means rethinking current ways of doing things. It may be necessary to change elements of practice as a result, which will often require some form of learning to occur in order to make such changes. The link between learning and sustainability is, therefore, an important one. The following pages describe a research project aimed at a particular group of stakeholders in the tropical savannas. This research endeavours to explore the ways in which a group of pastoralists in this region learn and manage change. The way this occurs is likely to have implications for sustainability in the region.

Sustainability in the tropical savanna region

The concept of regional sustainability in the tropical savannas refers in part to the prevention of land degradation and resource depletion from land use. However, other important requirements for sustainability include the development of an economic base that can create an ongoing income for its population. It is also about the development of strong communities, through social interaction and development of networks, which live and work in the region as a result of its industries and land uses. Such communities form part of the identity of a region, and are vital for its sustainability. It is essential to consider all three aspects—the social, economic and ecological, when talking about sustainability. To overlook ecological issues is to risk degradation of natural resources. Land degradation is significant for those industries that depend on land use for their survival. Without an ongoing economic base, it becomes difficult for communities to be sustained in the region. Ramifications would be evident both in Australia and internationally were the tropical savannas to become an unsustainable region. Some

examples include the defence of the northern coastline, support and infrastructure for Aboriginal communities and homelands, the management of areas such as Kakadu National Park and revenue generated for domestic and export markets from the mining and pastoral industries.

As such, the Tropical Savannas Cooperative Research Centre (TSCRC) was established to conduct research and education to further the sustainable development and management of the tropical savannas. The Centre aims to conduct its activities in partnership with its stakeholders—the land user groups mentioned above.

Sustainability, learning and change

It is often argued that change is necessary for sustainability, as achieving sustainability is likely to require reassessing current management practices, in particular where such practices are connected to industries based on land and natural resource use. This could include, for example, examining how efficiently an industry operates, how 'ecologically friendly' an industry is, and how well the industry is contributing to the ongoing employment of people in the region. Learning plays an important role in enhancing informed decision-making, and expanding understanding and awareness of the issues surrounding sustainability. Other aspects of learning, such as how effectively people engage in and process it, are also fundamental aspects of learning and sustainability.

It is from this recognition of the link between learning and sustainability that a TSCRC research project about learning has been developed. The project aims to explore learning processes of the stakeholders in the tropical savannas. By doing this a picture can be constructed of what stimulates people to learn, how they go about learning, and what changes may result from learning. Such a picture will help the TSCRC to focus its education program, and the educational materials and other information to come out of the Centre, so that it more effectively meets the needs of stakeholders.

The research has focused on the pastoral industry stakeholder group; in particular cattle producers on family owned non-Aboriginal stations in the tropical savannas. (Other producers such as Aboriginal-owned and company properties could be the focus of further research.) Cattle production is a prevalent and widespread form of land use in the tropical savannas. Pastoralism contributes to the regional economy; the industry has also created infrastructure, employment, and the development of communities in the region, despite the isolation (Taylor & Braithwaite 1996). However, from an ecological perspective, it is often a contentious form of land use, due to differing perceptions of the contribution of the industry to land degradation in the region. Therefore pastoralism is a significant form of land use in terms of social, economic and ecological sustainability, and thus pastoralists are an important group with which to explore learning.

Learning and communication issues

It has become well understood that a great deal of learning occurs in the workplace (Marsick & Watkins 1990). Such learning often involves informal and incidental learning, of particular interest with regard to the research with the pastoralist stakeholders. Learning is also connected to broader issues of communication, information use and access, and understanding between people. With regard to the pastoralist stakeholder group of the tropical savannas, there are several such connections.

There is recognition that communication issues often exist between landholders and the government departments and research organisations that produce information for them

(Hartley 1991). For example, landholders are dissatisfied with management research that is irrelevant to their needs. They are often bombarded with too much information from research, often presented in unsuitable or unusable forms. The knowledge and experience of the landholder is often overlooked, and from a research perspective, there is frustration that results of research are not applied. Landholders may decide not to apply the results of research for various reasons, but this is often interpreted by some researchers as an unwillingness or inability to learn (Vanclay 1992). A number of these communication issues exist in the interaction between the TSCRC and pastoralists in the tropical savannas. This research will aim to address some of these broader issues by way of its exploration of learning processes.

The research
The intention of the research was to explore how members of the pastoralist stakeholder group are stimulated to learn, and how they go about learning and gaining the required information and knowledge to achieve their learning outcomes. As such, the study had a number of objectives. These ranged from establishing what initiates participants on a learning episode, to understanding the form that the process of learning takes, and to reviewing issues and barriers associated with the learning process. Important in this approach was establishing whom the pastoralists access and how they access information to assist in their learning progress. It was hoped that by better understanding and mapping such learning processes and activities, a range of insights and directions would emerge to further facilitate and support communication between stakeholders. Such information may also provide a challenge to some of the stereotyping that occurs.

Using in-depth, semi-structured interviews, the researchers from organisations across the tropical savannas, worked with pastoralists in the Kimberley of Western Australia, the Victoria River District of the Northern Territory, and the Mareeba District, North Queensland. The interviews were based on incidents from practice, often focussing on a scenario depicting a stimulus to learning, based on a recent change to the interviewee's property or practice. The interviewees often provided a story that described such aspects as the stimulus to change, how it was actioned, the steps taken to achieve the outcomes, problems encountered, and where information was sought. In this way each interview became a story of how these pastoralists perceived and managed change. They also provided clear pathways describing the learning patterns and processes on which they embarked or on which they were engaged.

Emerging outcomes
It is important at this point to indicate that the research is still in progress. However, information has been collected and is in the process of analysis. As such, a number of tentative outcomes can be put forward. These outcomes provide a perspective on the learning processes and the way in which this group of pastoralists manages change.

Results from this research, which will be of interest to educators and service providers, supply a number of insights into the learning and associated change processes adopted by pastoralists who participated in the study. As a generalisation, the pastoralists involved in the study saw themselves as 'risk-takers', unafraid of changing aspects of their property or the operations of their property. The context of pastoralists in the tropical savannas is also quite complex. It is largely a geographically 'harsh' region and pastoralists tolerate isolation and the inevitable drought, floods or fire. Often they may be more engaged in economic survival, rather than particular issues of sustainability. Thus, while generally

keen to maintain the sustainability of their properties, they do not feel that they can necessarily carry the economic burden of doing so.

In terms of some of the outcomes of the study, pastoralists confirmed that they gain information from a wide range of sources, including scientific papers, field days, courses and 'experts'. However, for a number of reasons, the ideas and information they gain from these sources may not be adopted either immediately or in full. Pastoralists may begin a learning process that will lead to change, but it may take some time to 'operationalise' the accumulated knowledge.

The fact that the pastoralist may not adopt a recommended practice in full also impacts on change and learning processes. There was a strong belief amongst the participating pastoralists that their properties are distinctive to the point of being unique. These pastoralists tended to see their situation in isolation and as theirs alone, and that no solution that has worked elsewhere will necessarily work on their property. Thus, they see a need to trial and adapt any practice to suit them. As discussed below, this point has particular implications for service providers and others who expect ideas or products to have 'universal' appeal and to be fully applied.

Factors such as the accumulation of information, a desire to trial elements of practice before accepting large-scale change, and not necessarily accepting all aspects of a change, may mean that the implementation of new practices takes place over a prolonged period of time. Such a period of time may be more related to the time required for the producer to consider how the new information will be incorporated into the whole property management system, while accounting for financial constraints. Once adoption of the new techniques is undertaken, this often occurs in steps, in order to minimise risk and spread capital inputs.

The study also highlighted the importance and the effectiveness of the informal learning processes in which pastoralists engage. These included the use of family and other networks, seeking out of 'experts' for advice, trial and error, and membership of small groups. The study demonstrated that pastoralists often accessed formal and structured education/training courses. However, it also demonstrated that the accumulation of knowledge and the stimulus for change mostly occurred through less tangible and more informal means. While this may not be surprising in itself, it is important that such practices are understood, respected, and also incorporated into programs designed to support pastoralists' learning opportunities and processes. An element of these pastoralists' informal and incidental learning processes was a continual 'diagnosing' of their contexts. Often a decision to learn and/or adopt change was the noting of difference in their contexts (which reinforces the individualistic position taken by these pastoralists).

Further, the interviewed pastoralists also indicated a strong preference for one-to-one contact with education/training/service providers (although in general they understand the financial constraints affecting such services at present). This point may well be connected to both the use of networks based on developed personal relationships, and to the pastoralists' perceptions of the unique nature of their properties.

Implications for regional sustainability

From the above outcomes it is possible to highlight implications for sustainability in the tropical savanna region. For example, as outlined in the previous section the context of the pastoral industry in the tropical savanna region is one of economic survival in difficult

conditions. In general, the pastoralists interviewed were aware that it was beneficial to them that their properties were sustainably developed, and many were taking action in this way. However, many believe the cost of such measures cannot and should not be taken on by individual producers. A major issue concerning regional sustainability is thus balancing the ecological and the economic, and coming to conclusions about whom is prepared to pay for the necessary measures. If sustainability is an issue that affects the broader community then the question raised is, 'should that broader community (and government) be prepared to share the costs?'

Another implication for sustainability that emerged from the above discussion, concerned the dual points of length of time that may be taken to make decisions on change, and the pastoralists' perspective of the uniqueness of the properties. Adaptation of ideas takes time, often revolves around the accumulation of information, the knowledge of their properties, and a range of other contextual factors. The timing of such changes tend to be very individualistic. It is arguable then that a 'one size fits all' program/course mentality will not be greatly effective. Similarly, a coercive 'top down' approach (unless legislated) will have questionable returns. Long-term, flexible, easily accessed programs would appear to be a more effective option. In support of these points, the outcomes concerning the importance of informal learning processes and pastoralists' preference for dealing with people on a one-to-one basis, suggests that contact built on the development of relationships is also crucial.

Conclusion

There is a strong case to put that there is an important link between ensuring and maintaining sustainable development of the tropical savanna region, and how land managers learn and manage change. This chapter has described the background to, structure of, and potential outcomes from a research project being carried out with a number of pastoralists in the tropical savannas. The study is providing a number of directions that are potentially useful to a range of interests including those who are connected directly to the pastoralist 'effort' and to wider community interests. Issues of sustainable land development impact on most Australians, and understanding how such stakeholders live and learn can only benefit the various interests involved. It is important to understand not only the context in which stakeholder groups are situated, but to understand that there are ways of working with that group so that 'common' learning processes might be made more effective. It is also important that communication between stakeholders, the government, and educators remain open. Knowing the ways in which landholders such as the tropical savanna pastoralists learn and manage change can only help communication between these landholders and the broader community, and thus enhance efforts towards a sustainable future for the region.

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CHAPTER 20
Learning partnerships in the workplace
Jo Balatti

In this chapter I describe how a learning community in a remote mine site successfully developed literacy and other communication skills of employees. Collaboration between the Tropical North Queensland Institute of TAFE and mine management produced a peer tutoring model that was successfully implemented in a work site that had thwarted all previous attempts in meeting those same communication training needs. Eighteen months after the project began, I interviewed managers, TAFE personnel, and program participants. This chapter discusses why the peer-tutoring program was introduced, how it was implemented, and why it worked. As an unexpected bonus, the tutoring program proved to be a catalyst for learning experiences and partnerships that extended beyond what had been envisaged.

Introduction
To transform enterprises into learning organisations companies and trainers are developing the capabilities of employees to enhance their own learning and that of their co-workers. The learning organisation has been defined by many (Burgoyne, Pedler & Boydell 1994; Kline & Saunders 1993; Senge 1992), but the following definition by Watkins and Marsick (1993) captures its fundamental property:

> The learning organisation is one that learns continuously and transforms itself. Learning takes place in individuals, teams, the organisation, and even the communities with which the organisation interacts. Learning is a continuous, strategically used process—integrated with, and running parallel to, work ... The learning organisation has embedded systems to capture and share learning (p. 8).

In this framework, learning is both a collaborative and an individual pursuit that is meshed with the everyday activity of the workplace. Peer tutoring along with mentoring and coaching, are learning arrangements that help operationalise this notion of learning (Balatti, Edwards & Andrew 1997). These strategies facilitate the transfer of knowledges and skills that already exist within the company, as well as those introduced via training and other professional development experiences.

Structured peer-tutoring programs comprise learning partnerships usually between two colleagues. Peer tutoring is often part of a training program designed to develop specific vocational skills beyond the duration of the training course. It comprises a set of aims, some initial training for tutors and less commonly for tutees, a protocol for matching each pair, and procedures for monitoring the results. Critiques and evaluations of peer tutoring programs are often in terms of these components.

But the success of the peer-tutor relationship is also dependent on other learning partnerships that are operating in the organisation. It is from this perspective that I discuss the peer-tutoring component of a communication-training program introduced in a gold mine.

Background
Red Dome was a remote gold mine site operating on a 24-hour, fly-in fly-out basis with 12-hour shifts and seven-day rosters. The workforce had been downsized and almost all of

the 120 employees lived on-site in company provided accommodation. These conditions made training programs difficult to design and implement, with time release and continuity being the most difficult issues.

Prior to the collaboration with the Workplace Communication Unit of the Tropical North Queensland Institute of TAFE, the company's previous attempts at negotiating literacy training with outside organisations had been unsuccessful. Available packages had been either incompatible with the Red Dome working conditions or inconsistent with the company's overarching training strategy.

This communications training program was delivered by an enterprise-based teacher and trained peer tutors. All participants were volunteers. It targeted individual needs in the Red Dome context while being consistent with the company's aim to self-manage as much of its training as possible.

The enterprise-based teacher spent two to three days a week on site. She promoted the program, analysed company and individual communication needs, interviewed all prospective participants, and delivered the training. She trained employees who wished to complete the requirements of a Vocational Education Training and Employment Commission (VETEC) adult literacy training course and thus become accredited literacy tutors, and she also provided training to employees who wished to improve their communication skills.

The 100-hour tutor training course comprised approximately 45 hours classroom instruction conducted on a one-day/fortnight basis over a three-month period, and 55 hours of face-to-face tutoring. Using criteria such as compatibility and logistical considerations, the enterprise-based teacher matched the tutors with co-workers who required assistance in literacy skills. Once the tutors and tutees had been matched, the teacher monitored the process, offered encouragement, support and when necessary, expertise.

Employees who were not matched with a tutor became the students of the enterprise-based teacher. Most common requests were for assistance with compiling resumes and writing reports and memos. Most of this work was on a one-to-one basis as release time difficulties made group work almost impossible to organise.

Research methodology
The case study took place the year after the program had officially terminated. In all, 17 people were interviewed individually. They were the program manager from the Tropical North Queensland Institute of TAFE who negotiated the course; the enterprise-based teacher who delivered the program; the Red Dome Human Resources Development Coordinator who was the key on-site person involved in the program; the General Manager; two departmental heads; four tutors, and seven students. Interview data were supplemented by written evaluations and reports already collected by the enterprise-based teacher.

Why did the program work?
Interviewee responses suggested that the program's success was attributable to at least four effective learning partnerships. These were the learning partnership between the company and the training provider; between management and the workforce; between the enterprise-

based teacher and the employees, and the learning partnership between the learners and their co-workers.

Learning partnership 1: TAFE program manager and mine management
At this workplace, the training program was subject to a successful application for funding from the Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) Program. This was prepared by the program manager from TAFE and the Human Resources Development Coordinator from Red Dome.

Collaboration between the provider and the company produced a proposal that was strongly responsive to the company needs. From the training provider's perspective, understanding the needs of the client is the single most important element in designing a program:

> *You have to become very familiar with the workplace. You have to get to understand what their strategic goals are, where that company is trying to go. Know about their philosophy on learning, their training and any systems they have in place for training. Understand their pay structures. In other words, become very familiar with how their operation works overall.*

The company, on the other hand, has to have a clear vision of its training philosophy and be able to articulate its training strategy. The Human Resources Development Coordinator stressed the importance of advance planning by the company to better integrate the training into the everyday work of the trainees:

> *We should have done our homework better to make the tasks more specific, to set up things in the workplace for people to do so they were actually becoming better at reading and writing as a part of the job not as an addition to the job.*

Learning partnership 2: Mine management and employees
The peer tutor relationships developed in a workplace where work practices and, in particular, management's promotion of training, produced an environment favourable to learning.

Notwithstanding the difficult working conditions, the morale of the workforce was high. Interviewees described a mutual respect between staff and management, which was summed up by a manager.

> *Here at Red Dome we have a culture, a way of thinking where we're all pretty well equal. I may be higher in terms of hierarchy, but after work, we're all the same. This basic equality and respect for fellow workers is reinforced with symbolic things like having the same standard of accommodation for all. There's no elitist bar. I think that permeates right through your working environment. There's a mutual feeling of trust and respect.*

In terms of training, Red Dome had two interrelated goals that made the development of its employees' training skills a company priority. First, it wanted to develop the in-house expertise necessary to provide as much of its own training as possible. Second, it planned to integrate as much of the training as practicable into existing work practices.

Communication training, therefore, was imperative in attaining the long-term goal of self-management of training needs. It gave employees the prerequisite reading and writing skills to undergo further training themselves, to pursue the necessary qualifications to become accredited trainers and assessors; and most importantly, the confidence and self-esteem that allowed them to realise that they were already learning and training in their everyday work.

Learning was actively encouraged with the recently introduced career path program called the Personal Development Plan. The previous skill acquisition scheme often referred to as the 'dash for cash' system was based on financially rewarding acquisition of skills to operate different pieces of equipment or machinery in the plant. This scheme had proved unsatisfactory because it resulted in unnecessary mobility while producing a workforce that was essentially at the same ASF (Australian Standards Framework) skill level.

The system had also become untenable in the face of new demands on the workplace—flatter management structures, developments in technology, the decline of labour intensive occupations, and the accelerating rate of change in the workplace. Most at risk were the process workers who could no longer assume that their jobs would continue to exist in their present form.

The life skills that formed the basis of the Personal Development Plan were based on the seven Mayer key competencies. The Plan consisted of eight broad bands or tiers in which each employee was located. A skill matrix provided a guide to identifying the skills that needed to be developed for each tier. Literacy and other communication skills featured strongly in the Personal Development Plan and as a result, employees had requested literacy and communication training.

The existing culture, with the new demands made by the Personal Development Plan ensured that the communications training program received management's support in terms of encouragement and time off for the tutor training.

Learning partnership 3: Enterprise-based teacher and employees
Upon completion of tenders and contracts, the enterprise-based teacher together with the company, assumed responsibility for the implementation and delivery of the program. The enterprise-based teacher entered learning partnerships at an organisational level with management and at a personal level with the trainees.

Integral to the program was the steering committee. It consisted of the Human Resources Development Coordinator, the enterprise-based teacher, and several program participants. The steering committee had a multi-faceted role that included: assisting with the course planning and its implementation; monitoring workplace needs; seeking feedback from the workplace; ensuring the needs of participants and non participants were represented, and finally, ongoing monitoring of the course. The enterprise-based teacher met regularly with the steering committee to share feedback about the program and to solve problems that were often of a logistical nature.

To service the communication training needs of her clients, the enterprise-based teacher needed to demonstrate a high level of flexibility in working arrangements. Following is how Dave, a coordinator, described his training experience:

> *Sue used to come in on the Monday plane and she used to come up and have a yarn to you. She'd ask when you could slot in a time to meet ... And before she left that week, she'd organise a time for the following fortnight. And if you couldn't make it, you'd talk about it when she first came in ... She'd work around us.*

From the enterprise-based teacher's perspective, important attributes that the trainer must bring to the various partnerships on site are high levels of workplace communication skills. The enterprise-based teacher has to relate effectively with a range of people from managers to operators, from people with very low literacy skills to tutors. Good negotiation skills in dealing with supervisors or managers to arrange student release time are also important. But the ability to establish good rapport with students is the most important requirement:

> *I can remember one guy coming in and the perspiration was pouring off him and he was shaking. And he said 'I'm not hot— just embarrassed'. ... You could have lost him at that stage if you didn't show a lot of patience and interest in him as a person.*

Although the program was a shared responsibility among all stakeholders, the enterprise-based teacher stressed the importance of the trainer developing a sense of ownership of the program:

> *If you don't go in there and push no-one else is going to do it for you. So the program is your responsibility in that sense.*

Learning partnership 4: Mine employees and their work colleagues

The fourth learning partnership operating in the program and the most direct in achieving the program's goals was the tutor-tutee partnership.

No two tutor-tutee pairs were the same. Each tutoring relationship was influenced by many variables including the goals of the tutee, situational conditions such as work obligations, the personalities of the tutor and tutee, their rapport and their commitment. Meeting times were either during working hours or after work. One tutor explained that his trainee had developed the confidence and enthusiasm to enrol in additional off-site courses in his time off and that their relationship had developed into a mentoring relationship.

Another tutor described his own learnings in fostering the learning of others:

> *I learned to move along at his pace not mine. In all the other instructing type jobs I've been involved in, I controlled the programs. With this it's different. It all depends on the person you're working with. You have to get to know him, get to know what he wants to achieve.*

In terms of longevity and possibly results, the enterprise-based teacher felt that the more effective pairs had tutors who adopted a more flexible and collaborative approach.

> *The ones that I saw as being more successful were the ones who saw the tutoring relationship as a partnership where they were working together. They were more open to the requests of the students.*

Outcomes

Over 30 per cent of the 120 employees were involved in the program as tutors or students. Six employees became accredited literacy tutors providing training to six fellow workers, and a further 25 students underwent training with the enterprise-based teacher. Both students and managers reported improvement in participant literacy skills, with managers also reporting an increase in company morale.

As well as immediate results the program contributed to the company's longer-term goal of building up its own training expertise. The trained adult literacy tutors became an on-site source of expertise in communication training, and co-workers continued to seek their assistance either formally or informally after the program officially terminated.

Unexpected consequences actually became as important or even more important than the intended outcomes. One example was maths-tutoring classes initiated by a metallurgist with the full support of his manager. These weekly classes attracted a dozen participants over a 12-month period.

The Human Resources Development Coordinator summarised the impact of the program as follows:

> *The value to me of the WELL program was not so much the WELL program itself but that it was a bit of a catalyst and it got people up and taking on a bit of learning—taking on something a little bit different.*

Conclusion

This case study illustrates that the success of a training program depends on the quality of the learning partnerships that exist in the workplace. The establishment of a peer tutor group trained in improving the literacy skills of co-workers was integral to this program. However, the tutor-tutee relationship was only one of several learning partnerships that was successful. In this case those relationships were between management and employees, between the provider and the company, between the trainer and the learners and of course, between the learners and their work mates. In describing mental monoliths such as 'contractual arrangements', 'company culture' and 'training programs' in terms of learning partnerships between people, I am emphasising that ultimately, success is dependent on relationships that value, actively promote, and facilitate learning.

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Acknowledgments

Building social capital and community learning networks in community Internet access centres

David Bruce

The Province of New Brunswick, Canada, has committed itself to the development of a highly Internet- and computer-literate society to take advantage of emerging employment and social opportunities. A key element in this strategy is the creation of community access centres in all rural communities and small towns in the province. These provide opportunities for residents to learn about, receive training on, and have continual access to, computers and the Internet. A natural by-product of this activity is the emergence of new networks among individuals and organisations at the community level, among communities, and between communities and the provincial bureaucracy. The close to 200 access centres are having varying degrees of success in developing new social capital and skills in their communities. A critical question is the future viability of these centres, which rely heavily on local volunteers, provincial employment programs, and blanket provincial policy and program intervention to ensure their sustainability.

Introduction

The establishment of community access centres in rural areas provides an opportunity for building social capital and developing new forms of community learning networks. This chapter explores answers to two critical questions: In what ways are community access centres building social capital? In what ways are community access centres serving as community learning networks?

Answers to both questions come through a discussion of how community access centres in New Brunswick, Canada, function. In particular, the discussion focuses on the lessons learned from the experience of their development and ongoing management.

The chapter begins with a brief overview of social capital and of community learning networks. It then turns to a discussion about changing government roles in communities, particularly the emergence of an enablement role for senior levels of governments within that context. A description of the enabling efforts of Connect NB Branché (CNBB) follows. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the substantive issues in the development and sustainability of community access centres within the context of social capital and community learning networks.

Social capital

Social capital is primarily built through an ongoing process of establishing norms and building trust. How communities learn, and how they approach the concept of what learning is about, determines the degree to which social capital is built and the extent to which communities respond and adapt to change. The contemporary knowledge-based economy depends on active and effective learning processes for developing this social capital.

What is critical in the context of rural Canada in general and rural New Brunswick in particular, is the need to use new forms of learning and to embrace information technology as vehicles for developing new local economies. This can only be achieved

through effective local provision and management of learning processes, the establishment of community trust, and the willingness to explore new inter- and intra-community networks. Rural New Brunswick's challenge is to change the traditional dependency model of both service delivery and income generation, to create new and vibrant communities.

Community learning networks

Community learning networks (CLNs) are defined as community-based structures designed to support learning for their members. These become increasingly important for those communities or groups that see themselves as being marginalised in the process of moving towards the 'new economy' (New Economy Development Group 1998; Law & Keltner 1996). Barriers of geography and time are diminished and access to knowledge and markets are improved. Technology is equalising opportunities for communities to compete.

Common among CLNs is their potential to rebuild and mobilise communities using computer and networking technology as the main tools. Perhaps the most important function of community learning networks is that of being a lifelong learning provider. Lifelong learning may be enhanced by using technology to build networks which support more collaborative approaches to learning, as well as changing the learner-educator relationship. This function addresses a structural gap in the provision of education generally. There are those (primarily adults) who are unable to avail themselves of existing formal learning opportunities. In a knowledge-based society, less work exists for those who are less qualified, and available work often yields lower pay. Providing alternative learning environments through community learning networks is one critical element of resolving that dilemma.

The importance of creating effective collaborative partnerships in establishing and operating CLNs is clear. There is considerable unanimity in terms of the positive impact of CLNs on community revitalisation, innovation, and a reduction in the sense of isolation and marginalisation. The usefulness of the technology as a tool for mobilising a broad cross-section of people, creating networks, and identifying under-utilised local resources is noted. Increased access to information and knowledge resources is cited as a benefit, with a range of technologies used (New Economy Development Group 1998).

Government as enabler

Canadian communities have traditionally looked to senior levels of government for some form of assistance in local development efforts, typically in the form of money. How can senior levels of government better help communities solve their own problems? The short answer is by providing resources and a framework within which communities can choose their own directions (Bruce 1997). Senior government is now becoming more interested in creating an environment in which to do business. This is characterised in part by the desire to establish public-private partnerships across all of its mandates. Senior levels of government need to provide the means and opportunity for communities to solve problems and develop solutions that best address their needs. Senior levels of government become 'enablers' of opportunities rather than 'providers' of programs and solutions.

With government as enabler, local communities are more likely to succeed in their efforts. The community makes strategic decisions about its future and pursues its goals, rather than endlessly chasing one government program after another. Priorities are set based on

community strengths and opportunities, rather than on those of others. Key decisions are made locally and action percolates from the bottom up, with the guidance and assistance of government staff. Projects and enterprises are initiated in the community, not transplanted from elsewhere. Government employees act as 'enablers' by providing information, training, and start-up capital when required. Initiatives aim at self-sufficiency, outliving the life of start-up grants. There is also growing awareness in communities that these initiatives should benefit a full range of residents, linking social policy with economic actions.

Enabling efforts of Connect NB Branché (CNBB)

A priority of the federal government has been to make Canada more competitive in the global information technology field. The Community Access Project (CAP) is a three-year, $15 million program to help 1500 rural and small communities connect to the Internet. CAP is a unique federal program providing start-up funds, training, and an electronic support network to communities. Its main objectives are to give Canada's rural communities economical access to the information highway and to train rural Canadians to use it for economic and community development purposes.

The province of New Brunswick has established itself as Canada's leader in information technology, and has contributed through financial, policy, and program vehicles to both the hard and soft infrastructure within the province. The province was the first to sign a formal cost-sharing agreement to speed up the number of New Brunswick communities to receive CAP funding (Information Highway Secretariat 1996).

CNBB, a special operating agency of the Information Highway Secretariat, coordinates the development and support of community access sites in New Brunswick. Its original mandate was to establish 200 sustainable community access sites in locations across New Brunswick by July 1998, and to provide the citizens of rural New Brunswick with lifelong learning opportunities utilising current information technologies in an accessible community environment.

Two years into the life of CNBB and almost three years into the life of the national CAP program, we are witnesses to some emerging successes and to some problem areas. Some measures of CNBB's 'reach' relating to the development of social capital and community learning networks, include:

- 185 *access centres* throughout rural New Brunswick (as of 31 May 1998).
- 85 per cent are *located in schools*, 7 per cent in community centres, and 4 per cent in each of libraries and other places within the community.
- 87 per cent of the local steering committees are *registered charities*, and 49 per cent have formal partnership arrangements with other community groups.
- A total of 1130 *volunteers* serve on steering committees while another 1006 volunteer in some other capacity (such as providing training or troubleshooting) with access centres.
- A total of 271 005 *people* have used a community access centre for one purpose or another (this figure is cumulative and includes the same individual each time they use the centre).
- There have been 3556 *courses* delivered to 20 670 participants.
- 62 people have received *payment for their employment* in various centres, above and beyond those employed through government employment programs.

- 826 people have received some *economic benefit* from their employment or training in community access centres (obtained a job in the marketplace or received a promotion in their current job).

These impressive numbers have been achieved primarily due to the enabling efforts of CNBB and its ability to leverage resources for all community access centres as a whole. Specific enabling elements include:

- Provision of *regional facilitators* to assist local communities with developing their funding applications and local partnerships, launching the access centre, and providing ongoing advice and contact.

- Development and provision of *standard manuals* to assist communities with basic implementation and management elements.

- Negotiation of changes to *school use policies* across the province. Traditionally the use of schools outside school hours for any activity was limited, and required a series of approvals from different branches within the education system. CNBB arranged for custodial services, dealt with security issues, and opened the doors of these 'community' buildings.

- Provision of *employees* for access centres. Through the provincial government's Rural Experience program, CNBB arranged for six-month work terms for people on social assistance to be employed as Internet facilitators in the access centres. It also coordinates summer student employment positions for all access centres and it has arranged for high school students interested in cooperative education to be employed in access centres. The removal of red tape and bureaucratic barriers for local committees to access these necessary resources has been critical.

- *Training* for staff and committees. CNBB provides weekly training for people employed in community access centres. It also holds periodic regional workshops for volunteers on steering committees, and an annual conference.

- Access to *adult education upgrading* programs. CNBB provides access to online learning software through a partnership with a private company.

- 'Get Connected II' *computer purchase and training* program. The Province of New Brunswick for two consecutive years offered a tax rebate program to encourage more people to either buy a home computer or upgrade their existing one. This has resulted in more computer owners and created a demand for computer training. In the program's second year, CNBB developed a training program aimed specifically at purchasers of new computers. Participants pay a $25 fee to the access centre for training and the province matches the fee, also paid to the access centre.

- Access to *dedicated government phone lines*. These phone lines cost only $21 per month. In many cases this reduces the monthly telephone line costs by 75 per cent or more.

- *Start-up money*. The cost sharing agreement between the federal and provincial governments provides communities with up to $30 000 to get their centre launched. The money has been spent on upgrading existing computers, new computers, special hardware such as printers, scanners or digital cameras, software, supplies such as paper and toner cartridges, and advertising.

Each of these have been critical enabling elements in making local community access centres viable start-ups, helping them to begin functioning as real community learning centres, and developing social capital in the community. The challenge now for the access centres is to find sustainability solutions, both in terms of revenue generation to meet

ongoing expenses, and in terms of building on the initial momentum and interest generated locally.

Implications for regional sustainability

There are several elements of 'contention' which contribute to varying degrees of success, mediocrity, or failure of community access centres, and thus have important implications for regional sustainability:

- Planting the seed—Big Brother or the community?
  Actively going into rural communities across New Brunswick and delivering the message that an opportunity for computer literacy and access will be lost if communities don't join the rush, smacks of 'Big Brother' in the eyes of some. Perhaps not every community sees the establishment of an access centre as the highest priority and would like to use the resources for other activities. Sustainability is linked to having decisions about community priorities made from within the community (Kretzmann & McKnight 1993).

- Appropriate venues of activity
  Part of CNBB's mandate is the use of the local schools as community access centres. For the most part this is laudable because of the existing infrastructure and hardware already in place there. But it is well known that for some segments of society the public school experience was a very poor one and it is proving difficult to bring those people back into the schools for access centre activities. Furthermore, because of the long history of local school buildings being inaccessible to the general public, there is still much work to do in promoting the use of the school as the access centre. A final point is that not all of the school principals, staff, or school district employees have been thrilled about the increased use of 'their' facilities and equipment. Sustainability requires appropriate venues defined and chosen by community.

Management and operations

The local community access centres are managed by volunteer steering committees. However, in some of the more rural communities there are only a handful of people with technology skills and they are relied upon heavily. To ensure sustainability the steering committees must work toward having a balance of representation among school employees, community people, technology people, and youth, and they must ensure some sort of rotation and turnover.

An important element of concern is the day-to-day operation of the centres. For the most part community access centres rely on government-paid employees to run the sites. Since it is unknown from year to year whether or not employment resources will be available to any or all sites, sustainability will require that sites develop a cadre of volunteers to supplement this resource.

Developing community

There is uneven 'development of community' across the province. In some communities, access centres have become an integral part of everyday life. In many other communities, however, there is a limited level of activity and integration with other community activities. Regardless of the degree of impact, access centres have played a valuable role in opening up a community resource (the public schools) which had previously been

unavailable to the general public. They have also created the opportunity for broadening the 'community of computer users' to include those who do not own a computer at home. In terms of economic development in communities the impact has been minimal, although in some communities local computer and software dealers, private Internet service providers, and web page designers have seen an increase in sales. Some businesses are beginning to use the Internet for economic purposes. Furthermore, the training at access centres is creating a more knowledgeable and computer literate society demanding new products and services in electronic format. This increases the chances for regional sustainability.

Building social capital

There is uneven development of new local partnerships in communities across the province. In some communities, particularly those with little or no previous Internet experience, many are joining the local steering committee, providing resources and support. However, in many communities local partnerships are frail and weak, or limited only to those between the local school and a handful of volunteers. The issue comes down to the 'value' placed on the access centre's activity and the extent to which partners see the potential benefit for themselves and the community.

It is fair to say, however, that we are witnessing a building of trust both within the community (in the form of new partnerships) and with the provincial government (through its various enablement efforts), resulting in new and emerging opportunities. The challenge has been for communities to take the risk and invest their time and energy in making access centres a real success locally (Dykeman 1990; Graham nd). Not all communities have taken this risk, posing a threat to regional sustainability.

Establishing viable community learning networks

CNBB has been successful in assisting communities with the provision of a broad range of training and development opportunities. The extent to which local community groups have actively marketed and promoted these opportunities varies greatly. Some have generated high volumes of demand while others have done very little marketing or perceive that there is little 'market' opportunity. What can be said is that only those access centres that make a commitment to active marketing and consumer development will succeed in establishing and nurturing a real community learning network.

Summary and conclusions: Sustainability solutions required

Sustainability is a critical challenge. Schuler (1996) argues strongly that access to a community network should be free, for the same reasons that society provides free public libraries, fire and police protection, and public schools. Most sites are struggling to find a balance between services that generate revenue—as they must do to cover basic expenses, repairs, and upgrades—and providing as much free access as possible.

A related sustainability issue is whether or not survival is possible without grants and subsidies. Cisler (1995, p. 6) notes that 'Many of the services provided on community systems are valuable to the community as a whole, but they may not make much money. [Community networks are needed because] commercial services seeking a healthy return on their investment may avoid marginally profitable services.' In some communities there will undoubtedly be small business start-ups—web designers, software developers, trainers—who will want a piece of the action generated by the access site. How will these sites survive in this climate?

CNBB has done a credible job of building community access centres in the province of New Brunswick through its enabling efforts. To ensure sustainability, communities must move beyond any notion of token contributions which result in access centres struggling from day to day, to making a serious contribution to ensure the success of the access centres, building social capital, and developing meaningful community learning networks.

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Newspapers and health centres: Selected short stories of community development case studies

Rosa MacManamey, Ian Falk, David Bruce and others

This chapter is divided into three sections. Section One describes the Australian example of a newspaper's involvement in regional community development. Section Two describes the development of a community health centre. Section Three contains 23 selected snapshots of community development projects, large and small.

The purpose of the chapter is to provide an overview of the practical projects and strategies that people draw on to solve the challenges they face.

I would especially like to acknowledge the work of Lesley Harrison in the conduct of the Community Development Workshop from which were developed the short reports that appear in Section Three of this chapter.

Section One

A newspaper's contribution to community development: 'Believe it!'

Rosa MacManamey and Ian Falk

Introduction

The region in question is one of those with all the symptoms of rural atrophy. High unemployment, lack of availability of jobs, high youth suicide, big industry re-locating to cheaper labour sources, and a reduction in infrastructure in terms of government and private facilities and services. At the heart of the trouble it was believed that the population at large had lost hope. People's 'regional self-esteem' seemed to be at an all-time low. It seemed hard for people to believe that things could ever be better, yet in order to turn this tide, people needed to have hope—to believe in the possibility of positive outcomes in interventions in their futures. In these circumstances, the regional daily newspaper became interested in the economic condition of its distribution area. It had initiated several previous attempts to raise the region's awareness of the effects of its own apparent negative self-image; none seemed to result in long-term benefit. However, the leadership of the newspaper was determined that this time it would persevere, and it launched a new and invigorated campaign called 'Believe it!'

What was 'Believe it!' about?

There are other examples of cases where newspapers have taken a community development leadership role. The *Charlotte Observer* in the USA is one such. It aims for coverage that provides a background for solving community problems (Peirce & Johnson 1997). Others have used the support of a sole measure, such as sponsoring a sporting team, as a vehicle for raising the public's wider recognition of the value of community spirit. There seemed to be no documentation of the success or otherwise of these initiatives, and it seemed that such a campaign had the possibility to make a real difference. So following a cross-sectoral business breakfast hosted by the newspaper to launch the 'Believe it!' campaign, a partnership was forged between the newspaper and a local university research centre to conduct an 'action evaluation' of the campaign.

The action evaluation was designed to follow the various stories of different parts and groups of the newspaper's regional communities. The researchers formed an evaluative framework against which to gauge the campaign's impact, and the project was jointly funded by the newspaper and the university.

The newspaper had originally conceived of the campaign mainly on two fronts. One was to work closely with business to raise confidence and help create the climate for increasing job opportunities. The second was to sponsor and support the local football team and so help raise the community spirit—and, it was hoped, the self-esteem—of the general public. However, after some meetings with the researchers, which stressed the importance of a whole-community approach to community development, the scope was widened to include all aspects of the community—community and volunteer groups, local businesses of all kinds, celebrating the successes of employment outcomes. The newspaper ran daily columns featuring success stories under the 'Believe it!' banner. 'Believe it!' bumper stickers proliferated. The newspaper hosted a series of community conferences in key locations around the region to raise awareness of the campaign and to promote activities that saw the community working together.

What happened?

The researcher gathered all the stories from the newspapers, and followed up most of them with interviews as time went by. The purpose of the interviews was to tease out the possible impacts of the 'Believe it!' initiative, to see if its effects went further than expected (or not) and so created a snowballing effect. The researcher also followed up with a majority of the participants at a later stage to gauge longer-term impacts.

After nearly a year, the evaluation was completed. The outcomes showed that the campaign had been successful. For a start, it was recognised that the action evaluation could not hope to establish if there had been an increase in job availability, and no attempt was made to do this numerically. However, the documentation of a number of success stories shows how this community development measure has the capacity to work. The interesting things that did emerge from the evaluation, however, related to the increased capacity that communities gained in 'getting things done'.

Community projects that had been unresolved for years were accomplished following the whole-community meetings that brought the capacities of the towns and communities together for a common purpose. Many individual businesses documented the fact that, through their involvement in 'Believe it!' they had accelerated their business plan faster than in their wildest dreams. The public education sector became close partners, and immediately recognised the value in working across sectors to enhance outcomes for their students and schools, especially in the area of a closer integration of the schools with their local communities. Volunteer and fund-raising groups reported some astonishing outcomes from their involvement in the campaign.

Of course, there were not all success stories, but there were no failures, either. The action evaluation partnership's real value lies in the way it was able to show that *it is possible* to increase the community's confidence and level of activity, and it showed *how* this could occur in variety of ways for a variety of groups and people.

The lessons learned from the evaluation reinforce the accuracy of the principles of good practice in community development, and as a result of the project we are able to say that

the following features of good community leadership are of paramount importance in achieving a turnaround in a community's fortunes:

- building relationships across community sectors (genders, classes, ethnicities, ages and so on) to establish common interests and activities for furthering the community's specific future and goals;
- developing relationships from interactions which need qualities of historicity, externality, reciprocity, trust, shared norms/values;
- identifying relevant knowledge, common and identity resources for particular purposes taking account of need for plentiful interactions;
- bringing people together with resources to plan possible futures;
- from the futures agenda, planning opportunities, events, interactions small and large, across the community to facilitate the short- and long-term goals of the futures agenda;
- ensuring the facilitation of networking across groups and sectors throughout all processes, and
- celebrating and documenting successes, recognising and moving on from failures.

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Section Two
Lessons learned from a business planning approach to community health centre development
David Bruce

(Note: Adapted from a paper presented by the author at the 30th Annual Community Development Society Conference, Kansas City, Missouri, USA, July 1998.)

Introduction
This section of the chapter describes the lessons learned from the Four Neighbourhoods Community Health Centre (FNCHC) in the community of Sherwood, Prince Edward Island (PEI), Canada, and their business planning approach to establishing their community health centre.

The community health centre (CHC) concept and community development
Community development is about helping people to develop the skills they need to make informed decisions and removing the structural barriers that prevent them from achieving their full potential as members of the community.

CHCs occupy a unique and privileged place in the health system. Their philosophy of community participation and their broad, holistic view of health allow them to consider health issues from a different perspective and to complement the activities of other more traditional components of the system.

The way CHCs are structured and funded makes it feasible for them to enter into effective partnerships with the communities they serve. They may not be the only organisations that can adopt community development approaches to deal with issues, but CHCs may be in a better position than any other elements of the health care system to work with communities on the determinants of health.

CHCs have proven to be 'health' effective as well as 'cost' effective for individuals and communities because they offer more preventative and health promotion services; are more accessible to disadvantaged groups; and have had more success integrating health with non-health services, resulting in lower costs per client, lower hospital utilisation rates, and lower drug costs per client.

Four Neighbourhoods Community Health Centre
FNCHC is located in the community of Sherwood, part of the Queens Health and Community Services Region. The catchment area encompasses a population of 9545 people (mostly youth and middle-income families).

FNCHC offers a variety of programs and services including:
- Community Kitchens/Community Kitchens for Seniors, which offer small groups of people a chance to meet and make low cost, healthy meals. They share the costs and then take several meals home with them.

- 'Mommy/Daddy I Don't Feel Well', family sessions to learn tips on what to do when young children are sick.
- Breastfeeding Support Group, a drop-in program for women (and their families) who are currently or are planning to breastfeed, providing information and assisting and supporting women who are currently breastfeeding.
- Parenting programs, including 'Nobody's Perfect' (for parents of children 0–5 years of age) and 'Ready or Not' (a drug education program for parents of children aged 12 and over).
- Drop in Child Play/Care-giver Support Group, providing a chance to learn tips on raising healthy children, an opportunity to get to know other caregivers in the neighbourhood, and to give preschoolers an opportunity to interact with other kids.
- Youth Panel, a group of students who talk to parents about what it is like to be in high school, the challenges youth face, and how parents can help.
- Youth Asset Map, where youth in the community created a map showing resources available to them as well as the skills they have to offer.

Business planning and community health centre development

A business planning approach makes sense as a community development tool. Reformed health systems generally do not provide new funds to support new or additional services; they must come from a more efficient realignment of existing services. Therefore, a business planning approach forced those involved to look carefully at what services already existed and who their potential clients might be. The CHC then positioned itself to accentuate or transfer existing services and programs to the CHC. In addition, various business-planning elements require broad-based input, thus satisfying the CHC's desire to actively involve the community in the development of the centre.

The elements of a business plan

A business planning process involves the following seven important elements:

1. *Clarification of Mission*—What business are we in?
2. *Competition Analysis*—Who else out there is in this business?
3. *Market Analysis*—Who will this business serve?
4. *Marketing Plan*—How will we promote our business to our clients?
5. *Operations Planning*—How will we provide products to our clients?
6. *Financial Management Plan*—How will we manage our resources?
7. *Organisation Structure*—How will we manage this business?

FNCHC chose to concentrate on the first three steps of the business planning process to define their 'product.' The remaining steps were carried out by a relatively small group of people serving on committees. In the end FNCHC produced a business plan that was accepted by the Queens Region Health and Social Services, and support for an 'operationalising' phase was negotiated.

The lessons learned

Resources are limited in any CHC. It becomes necessary to set priorities and to direct activities where they will be most effective. The lessons listed below reflect the experiences of those involved with the development of FNCHC, including past and

present staff, members of the present and interim Council, members of the Citizen's Advisory Committee, and staff of Queens Region Health Authority.

- Business planning is a useful approach for CHC development.
- Developing a CHC requires a committed group of people with a variety of skills.
- A clear vision is required.
- Health reform is a complex undertaking.
- Nothing develops in a vacuum.
- True partnering takes work.
- Official endorsement is important.
- Think carefully about committee structures.
- Clarify group decision-making rules up front.
- Try to maintain broad community involvement.
- Never make assumptions; always recheck with the community.
- Think ahead about staff/leadership requirements.
- Actively promote your CHC.
- Strive to find ways to increase participation.
- Give careful consideration to location.
- Keep moving forward.
- Community development is a continuous process.
- Look for opportunities.

FNCHC has implemented far more programs and is much more of a true 'community' health centre than the two CHCs developed through the provincial government pilot program. Both of those are located in hospitals, staffed primarily by Health Department employees, and are seen to be too closely tied to the health system as opposed to being a community initiative.

FNCHC has recognised that it is involved in a community development process. It takes time to work with neighbours to create opportunities, improve skills, and give the community greater control over its health. The business planning approach provided a useful and realistic community focus for this CHC.

Section Three
23 Snapshots of community development projects

Introduction
Section Three of this chapter summarises 23 snapshots of community development projects from around the world, but mainly from Australia. Each is produced in a similar format for ease of referencing, and includes the author's name.

SNAPSHOT 1
Monkton Headstart (Canada), David Bruce

Memorable features?
- community program aimed at single parent and low income families;
- break poverty cycles;
- life skills, food/clothing, bank, special programs;
- power play;
- focus on long-term vision/outcome, mutual benefit for broader community;
- diversity;
- business, community service clubs, individuals working together.

What made it work?
- personal commitment of one person, supported by others;
- corporate sponsorship of special events;
- broad volunteer base.

What limited its success?
- lack of government funding for operations;
- overwhelming social ills in communities.

SNAPSHOT 2
Year 5 Day (Queensland), Robyn Donovan

Memorable features?
- coordinated activities for Year 5 Primary Students provided at Department of Primary Industries (DPI);
- DPI 'scientists' provided activities which described their field of work;
- horticulture;
- animals;
- sharks;
- Landcare.

What made it work?
- personal invitation to extension officers;
- responding to their concerns;
- briefing session the day before (including morning tea)—with dummy run;

- the numbers of students increased from expected 400 to 840 so then more DPI staff were called in—the briefing was essential.

What limited its success?
- large groups of kids 50–100;
- my concern that the groups were too large.

SNAPSHOT 3

Dairy Discussion Groups 1975–1986 (Queensland), Dick Fells

Memorable features?
- groups of dairy farmers gathering together to talk about things of interest to them, from practical tips, to accounting, to helping with community activities like the local show;
- started to involve whole families;
- leadership skills developed;

What made it work?
- good facilitation (in hindsight);
- social needs;
- networking of resources through 'facilitators' (me);
- laid-back informal style;
- every farmer welcome;
- use of adult learning principles;
- letting go—control with group.

What limited its success?
- my lack of understanding of what I was actually doing;
- not using active learning process;
- inability to direct the letting go process—lack of understanding.

SNAPSHOT 4

CETCH—Continuing Education and Training Committee (Tasmania), Wren Fraser

Memorable features?
- to promote and support the provision of lifelong continuing education especially vocational education and training;
- brought together a far reaching group to work towards local post-secondary delivery having identified the specific needs of the Huon;
- overcame rural isolation and lack of access by opting for IT delivery and industry involvement;
- government funding for a skills centre;
- ANTA and ASTF Vet in schools project.

What made it work?
- strong community base;
- strong sense of place;
- an identified need;
- large pool of professional service providers;
- the 'will' to make it happen;
- a few visionary zealots to keep it on there.

What limited its success?
- power plays for the funding by participants;
- traditional locality rivalries;
- difficulty in grasping the delivery mode.

SNAPSHOT 5
Swan Hill Quad Care (Victoria), Mallee Family Care

Memorable features?
- no government aid so community was asked to assist;
- 80 volunteers engaged for rostered support;
- agencies (government and non government) 'clubbed' to create the infrastructure;
- my agency managed volunteer recruitment and training.

What made it work?
- community concern at absence of government assistance;
- cause had appeal;
- community could identify with problem;
- easy to publicise;
- volunteers could go home!

What limited its success?
- commercial interests attempted to exploit;
- need to separate good and 'not good' help;
- agencies keen to claim glory;
- need to avoid intrusion.

SNAPSHOT 6
Multi-level land use (Queensland), Jim Page

Memorable features?
- discussed with a graingrower who formed an association with a neighbouring grower;
- now expanded to four—all specialising in their areas of management interest, formalised in legal agreements;
- rules of participation are agreed to;
- diversity of management;
- skills recognised and encouraged;

- what they received determined by their contribution of assets and personal skills, labour etc.

What made it work?
- a shared goal of increased efficiency and profitability;
- leadership and people skills practised at leadership course;
- propinquity;
- diversity of skills and interest.

What limited its success?
- limited skills in financial and marketing area but good production skills;
- need for formal legal arrangements likely to limit ability to evolve;
- inexperience on part of all stakeholders including solicitor, accountant, insurance etc.

SNAPSHOT 7
'Spontaneous' extension (New South Wales), Jeremy Cook

Memorable features?
Due to long distances and remoteness, I would ask graziers who phoned me with a question to gather together a group of neighbours before I would travel out to answer their question in person rather than by phone.

What made it work?
- local issue;
- needs driven;
- voluntary participation;
- timely +/-;
- group rapport;
- trained the expert;
- informality;
- provision of expert advice;
- no formal objectives.

What limited its success?
- by invitation;
- diversity;
- downtime between calls;
- relied on graziers knowing the question/identifying the problem;
- informality;
- reliance on expert.

SNAPSHOT 8

'Turnaround' group (Queensland), Lindsay Coghill

Memorable features?

Formed about three years ago from a community meeting (200 attended) to address rural decline issues. Since then have done strategic planning, collaborated with a range of organisations to do market research and feasibility studies on a number of primary industries-based initiatives, and grown the individuals in the group. Attracted attention of government.

What made it work?

- State Department of Primary Industry (DPI) working with the group in a support and facilitation role;
- dedication of community members to work together;
- ability to collaborate with a range of organisations/groups to get things done;
- getting all personalities to commit to planning.

What limited its success?

- believing money to do things would solve all their problems;
- same group members, getting tired and wondering if getting anywhere;
- chasing smoke stacks rather than the people things;
- few young people involved;
- group members already very busy with own work/community issues.

SNAPSHOT 9

Housing expo (New South Wales), Greg Paine and Gerard Howard

Memorable features?

Aim:

1. To give people information on different housing services—mortgages, supported accommodation services, different housing types.
2. To 'raise awareness' of people in housing difficulty.

How to measure the success:

1. Good public attendance.
2. Change in local (government) policy.

What made it work?

- venue in middle of main shopping centre;
- video playing on footpath—showing/giving people the opportunity to say what they think;
- lots of information—all subjects by various stall holders;
- ten speakers and a 'celebrity debate' in evening.

What limited its success?
- design of venue space not ideal;
- hard to see an immediate outcome and judge success;
- people are busy and those comfortable with their lot did not see it as 'for them';
- variable participation by local decision-makers (councillors)

Swimming pool (Tasmania), Peter Cox, Mary Malliff, Anneke Tame and Colin Tame

Memorable features?
- Council agreement;
- small committee of seven;
- two years;
- cost $750 000;
- feasibility study $100 000;
- newspaper advert of meeting.

What made it work?
- vision;
- small committee;
- good management in committee;
- never give up x 3;
- fresh attitudes;
- new people in community.

What limited its success?
- this had been tried twice before;
- negativity from older people in community;
- councillors' apathy;
- project was too big.

SNAPSHOT 11
Community Transport Services (Tasmania), Bruce Milne

Memorable features?
A network of community agencies based in the north west and west coasts of Tasmania, dedicated to providing transport for the aged and those with disabilities. Association formed in 1989. Funding provided for vehicles and costs but local coordination and drivers were voluntary.

What made it work?
- community groups and their enthusiasm and cooperation;
- flexibility of service delivery;
- service tailored to meet specific community needs;
- funding and support for community agencies.

What limited its success?
- funding levels;
- narrow guidelines.

SNAPSHOT 12

Community facilities for isolated communities (Queensland), John Goodall

Memorable features?
Secured State funding for community facilities for two isolated communities. Each community had a population of around 100–150 people. They had no effective community centres.

What made it work?
- shire councillors took State government officers to the communities;
- the needs were clearly articulated by our office to the relevant State agencies;
- communication between stakeholders;
- tolerance of different lifestyles.

What limited its success?
- nothing—it was a success story, although the community spokespersons could benefit from training in communication skills.

SNAPSHOT 13
Launceston Business Incubator Centre (Tasmania)

Memorable features?
- involves heaps of different local people, groups and government departments;
- to be a 'birthplace' for 3–12 months for enterprising people who have a business;
- plan to set up business at a reasonable initial financial outlay;
- access to office, law, accounting and mentor support;
- success rate is estimated at 92 per cent.

What made it work?
- people talking;
- people listening;
- people resolving differences;
- working as a team;
- making sure progress ran in tune each step of the way;
- being positive!

What limited its success?
- there should be no limit to its success other than the management not continuing with the agreed initial principles;
- once the 'cord' or 'lifeline' is broken then it will wallow and fail.

SNAPSHOT 14

Working for Women's Health (Tasmania), Joan Coleman

Memorable features?
An accredited (TAFE) training program. Runs for one day per week over six weeks, recall day after six months. Program aims to mix non government organisations, community people and Comm & Health Services staff. Discuss/Learn—everything from the history of the women's movement through to group skills and use of media. Groups of two to three join together and work on a small project they have identified. At six months everyone reports back on project.

What made it work?
- cross fertilisation;
- support *plus* information given;
- participants choose their own topics, but work with like-minded others;
- support comes from facilitators and peers, plus links to new resources.

What limited its success?
- not everyone gets a project completed;
- some participants have been 'forced' into the course.

SNAPSHOT 15

Development of online training centre in small community (Tasmania), Susan Powell

Memorable features?
This has given us a united focus and brings together people who have been traditionally divided. Local talent has either been identified or is being developed.

What made it work?
- united focus/sense of purpose;
- something the community saw/sees as a valuable asset—high motivation;
- people willing to undertake tasks;
- powerful dominance—controlled early in the piece;
- school site—reasonably neutral site.

What limited its success?
- This is still happening—will need a wide variety of programs to ensure they are representative of the community interests.

SNAPSHOT 16

Futures Forum (New South Wales), Roderic Gill

Memorable features?
Participation by a variety of stakeholders, from the police to women's housing representatives, were able to communicate in a meaningful way and be heard and understood by diverse range of participants. Many diverse views incorporated into final plan.

What made it work?
- participation—participants chased and encouraged to attend which took lots of work;
- diverse views incorporated through everyone's ideas being put up on the board with discussion if contentious.

What limited its success?
- the menu of suggested activities had already been set which limit imagination of the group;
- not enough time, participants got worn out and tired;
- not full representation from community.

SNAPSHOT 17
Weaving the Threads (South Australia), Elizabeth Mansutti

Memorable features?
 A performance by four Aboriginal families, 'telling' their story and including three grandmothers from the 'stolen generation'. Workshops, weekly over ten months recording (on paper) their autobiographies then selecting material for the script. Rehearsing, music workshops, training in stage performance. (An Aboriginal Director engaged also here.) Eight very successful performances, including one in the desert beyond Port Augusta.

What made it work?
- the determination of the grandmothers;
- the inclusion of their adult children and grandchildren;
- the power of 'visually' presenting their stories;
- the support of their extended families;
- their trust and patience with this 'white fella' writer;
- three small grants for the production, director and writer;
- other outcome/video and booklet for libraries and schools.

What limited its success?
- the time frame imposed by the grant bodies;
- lack of additional grants to travel the production;
- the poor health of one of the grandmothers.

SNAPSHOT 18

Alcohol management (Northern Territory) Julalakan-Tennant Creek Town Council and Tangetegeve Association Alice Springs

Memorable features?
- reducing dangerous levels of alcohol consumption by various means including closing all alcohol outlets on days people get cheques;
- Tennant Creek NT Alcohol Management Julalakan Association;
- Alice Springs NT Tangetegeve Association Housing and Employment;
- 17 housing areas and a broad range of support including garbage collection.

What made it work?
- negotiation with interest groups in the towns;
- commerce and local government;
- unity in town to negotiate with State government.

What limited its success?
- next level of government up fearing the creation of strong grass roots organisations outside their direct control.

SNAPSHOT 19
Rural and isolated young people (Tasmania), Helen Rees

Memorable features?
- two rounds of forums
  - nine statewide with young people identifying needs, aspirations, concerns, issues, recommendations - summarised in report - key issues identified
  - six statewide—young people and key stakeholders influence/influenced, e.g police, schools, local government, agencies (youth) etc.
- based on key issues—focus to identify strategies and responses;
- also collated and summarised in recently released report through Office of Youth Affairs (OYA);
- communities came together—some ideas able to be addressed immediately.

What made it work?
- young person participation;
- structure;
- communities meeting;

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- dialogue;
- key issues, isolation, transport, education, employment, activities, communication, having a say (somewhere to go and something to do).

What limited its success?
- timelines;
- planning issues;
- changing participation;
- lack of follow up (in the context of community development—originally designed as a consultation process).

SNAPSHOT 20

Tourism for small town (Western Australia), Jane Moritz and Ian Crellin

Memorable features?
- group of citizens had developed community-managed facilities for local tourist industry and wished to expand into community facilities;
- 1994, President approached federal bureaucrats at a meeting in a town 200km away with a funding application which was inappropriate to the grant program selected. The President and the bureaucrats sat for several hours in local bar rewriting the application. Funding was received and Hyden now has a successful community Telecentre.

What made it work?
- willing and enthusiastic community leader;
- interaction;
- communication;
- willingness to engage the outside;
- good identification of community need;
- sense of community ownership of idea.

What limited its success?
- lack of knowledge initially by community;
- $/resources;
- initial misdirection to inappropriate funding source.

SNAPSHOT 21

'Remake' of a township (Queensland), Ivan Searston

Memorable features?
Ex mining town in decline; old (1880–1900) buildings; low self-value; little view of future. Local Authority conducted 'town workshops'; begins program to address resident needs as articulated by meetings (workshops); also begins effort at 'sprucing up' visual

appeal, repaint shire buildings in heritage colours etc.; theme picked up by residents—now remarked on by visitors as 'something special'.

What made it work?
- Shire leading from the front;
- residents listened to and needs actioned;
- encouragement not directive;
- next stage is development of new tourism based industry (networks in place to do so).

What limited its success?
- some individual business owners resistant to change and/or cannot see value in what is present with only little change.

SNAPSHOT 22

Reconnecting public schools with their community (Queensland), Mary Searston

Memorable features?
- Herberton: what can communities offer the teenagers?
- Malanda: what remains in the community to connect with the curriculum e.g. history: initiating a Medieval Banquet and Fair; a night with a Renaissance Dukedom;
- Ravenshoe: employer-based seminars to teach matriculating youth about the workplace, local and wider community.

What made it work?
- involvement of wider community with which all schools had lost much contact except in money raising capacity (also limited funding);
- making opportunities for students, teachers and others to value opportunities for learning existing in these communities, not 'outside'.

What limited its success?
- limited understanding of long-term community goals and benefits;
- tendency to look at system's constraints as more powerful than the betterment of the community by the education 'system';
- poor self-esteem.

SNAPSHOT 23

Skills.net Roadshow, taking technology to the 'Bush' (Victoria), Sandie Downey

Memorable features?
- participation is widespread;
- diversity is all encompassing;

- equity is not an issue;
- power plays have been met with challenge, from within each community.

What made it work?
- being accessible to all, no matter what the location or time;
- the people within each community.

What limited its success?
- nothing!
- it works and is growing stronger every day.

Enabling leadership:
A new community leadership model*

Ian Falk and Bill Mulford

Over the last few decades, a number of communities in regional areas have been successful in their efforts to halt the slide in their communities' fortunes (Editor 1997; Falk & Harrison 1998). Consolidating and even developing a community under adverse economic circumstances is not easy, and is often viewed as pointless—the last ditch effort by desperate survivors. The common threads to success stories lie in the way the community leads the development of its stores of social capital. This chapter discusses these two aspects of rural development—the question of leadership and the need to marshal new forms of leadership around the development of social capital to bring sectors together in times of change as communities of learners working for the greater common good.

Change and leadership

Some argue that the decades of change, improvement and reform have left many, consciously or otherwise, confused, exhausted and disillusioned (Deal 1995). On the other hand, Drucker (1989, p. 10) reminds us that 'a time for turbulence is also one of great opportunity for those who can understand, accept, and exploit the new realities. It is above all a time of opportunity for leadership'. In fact, it could be argued that understanding the role and function of leadership is one of the most important intellectual and practical tasks of this generation (Fairholm 1998). The reason is simple. Those in our communities who take on leadership roles or functions play a major role in helping us shape our lives. Success in the new millennium, as in the past, will depend on how well leaders understand such things as their roles and functions, the leadership processes in which they are engaged and their own and their community's values and visions.

Our research (e.g. Falk & Kilpatrick 2000) shows that there are two sets of resources that leaders of the 21st century must take account of, as they interact with each other, in developing the social capital of modern communities: *knowledge* and *identity* resources. The knowledge is about people and common resources that facilitate action through people's interactions. Identity is about using relevant available resources to foster people's identity in ways that promote self-confidence and a willingness to take a risk and act for the common good of their communities; in other words, to take on leadership.

The definition of social capital used here, developed from Falk and Kilpatrick (2000) is:

> Social capital is the product of social interactions that may contribute to the social, civic or economic wellbeing of a community-of-common-purpose. The interactions draw on knowledge and identity resources and simultaneously use and build stores of social capital. The nature of the social capital depends on various qualitative and quantitative dimensions of the interactions in which it is produced, such as the quality of the internal-external interactions, the historicity, the reciprocity, the trust and the shared values and norms (p. 103).

This definition stresses the role of interpersonal interaction as the engine of social capital. Any interaction between two people will involve the participants bringing into the

conversation or discussion things they know and indicators of their identity. These two groups of resources—knowledge and identity resources—are closely related and interact with each other. For example, people might believe they are not leadership material. In some cases, this might be a statement resulting from a long history of 'knowledge' of their experiences, times when they have tried but not succeeded in leading others according to their own and others' criteria of success. However, the belief about not being leadership material might also represent a statement about peoples' identities, in the sense that they are simply not willing to 'have a go' at leading. Their confidence may be low when working in groups, or they may be shy. They may not have the knowledge to be able to articulate their reasons. This is not a piece of knowledge that people have: it is an aspect of their self-perception, or identity. They are bringing up in the conversation, their identity as 'non-leader', so reproducing their public role as non-leader with the other.

Let us take the above example one step further. If people with the 'non-leader' identity undergo, for example, a further education course on self-confidence and leadership skills, they may well then have additional knowledge which affects the resources they have to draw on in the presentation of their own identities. Alternatively, they may experience a crisis of some kind, and 'without thinking' take a leadership role. By so doing, they 'learn' something about themselves, which allows their self-perception to alter and so affects their identity formation and presentation.

What this definition and examples of social capital show is that leadership is normally distributed, dispersed and diffused rather than concentrated in one or few hands. Not only are leaders heavily dependent on followers, but also, followers can become leaders. Knowledge and identity resources can assist a person make this transition. For example, the following are some of the key qualities of interactive process that foster positive learning of knowledge and about identities, and so contribute to enhanced networks, relationships, collective action and, therefore, leadership:

1. *Building internal networks:* Are the relevant knowledge of skills, knowledge and values present for the purpose in hand?

2. *Building links between internal and external networks:* How well are the links between the internal and external networks in the community built and maintained?

3. *Building historicity:* How effective is the building of shared experiences (including norms, values and attitudes) and understandings of personal, family, community and broader social history?

4. *Building shared visions:* How systematic, inclusive, and inclusive of knowledge and identity resources (including norms, values and attitudes) is the reconciliation of past shared experiences with the desired future scenario/s?

5. *Building shared communication:* How explicit and systematic are the communicative practices, about physical sites, rules and procedures?

6. *Building each other's self-confidence and identity shifts:* How explicit and systematic are the opportunities where these interactions occur?

The role of leaders under these circumstances can be seen to be developing trust. For example, the building of networks relies for its success on building trust between the

network members which is a clear leadership role. Likewise, building trust between people as they share communication is fundamental to successful outcomes. It can also be seen that one outcome of the above indicators of sound process will be enhanced levels of generalised trust and commitment in all the networks of that community-of-common-purpose. In other words, trust is apparent at both specific and generalised levels, and building trust is clearly a goal of leaders of the new millennium.

It is useful to reflect on the way conceptions of leadership have changed over the years, in response to changing circumstances. The next section provides a snapshot of the history of leadership as a springboard for discussing why contemporary leadership is different, and how it might be characterised. We will argue that none of the previous models seems to 'fit' the circumstances required of leadership in communities of the new millennium. We will propose a fifth form of leadership that we do consider 'fits' the new circumstances, a model we call 'enabling leadership'.

Four types of traditional leadership

The four established forms of leadership can be termed: *managerial*, *participative*, *contingent* and *learning*.

Managerial

The first category was the managerial. It highlighted the functions, tasks or behaviours of the leader and assumed that if these functions were carried out competently, and members behaved rationally, the organisation would prosper. It was about control, precision and predicability (Fairholm 1998). Followers' involvement was seen as 'transactional' with compliance exchanged for valued things whether they be economic, political, and/or psychological (Leithwood & Duke 1999).

In one form, managerial leadership was about hierarchies with power, authority, and expertise commensurate with position (Leithwood & Duke 1999). Pyramid theory, as it was termed by Sergiovanni (1996), was seen to work well in situations that involved standardised products which were achieved in uniform ways and that did not require those involved, to be mutually pursuing higher purposes. However, if applied to the wrong situation, the result of managerial leadership could, at best, be chaotic or, at worst, a bureaucratic nightmare (Sergiovanni 1996).

In another form, managerial leadership was about standardising work processes. In schools, for example, this meant making the curriculum 'teacher-proof' by providing as much detail as possible with clearly articulated procedures of teaching and a ways to monitor progress. This railroad theory (Sergiovanni 1996), was thought capable of ensuring that followers were collectively both on track and on time. However, it was also thought to be prone to goal displacement in the form of 'doing things right', that is following rules and procedures, rather than 'doing the right things', that is solving problems and making good decisions. It has been suggested that when the goals are clear-cut, and when choices can be made on the basis of known and objective technical criteria, the engineer rather than the leader is called for (Sergiovanni 1996).

Senge et al. (1999, p. 565) have argued that, 'It would take a genuine flight of fantasy to both take seriously the multiple interdependent challenges involved in sustaining profound change and still hold the view that change happens because great men *[sic]* 'drive' change from the top'. He continues, 'Organizations will enter a new domain of leadership when we

stop thinking about preparing a few people for 'the top' and start nurturing the potential for leaders at all levels to participate in shaping new realities' (p. 568).

Participative

The second leadership category was the participative. It de-emphasised visible top-down hierarchies and detailed scripts that programmed what followers must do. It stressed the decision-making processes of the group.

Like the managerial focus, participative leadership has taken different forms. One form was not that far removed from the managerial in that it involved getting others to do what the leader wanted but in a 'nice' way using positive human relations. It usually involved outsiders and/or the leader providing a vision, or high performance goals (Sergiovanni 1996) and then followers, as a result of their expertise, interest, role in implementation, and/or democratic right (Leithwood & Duke 1999), collectively deciding how to achieve them. The leader's job was to set the compass direction rather than provide mandatory road maps (Sergiovanni 1996).

Often in participative leadership, the leader's role in implementation was seen as one of motivating their followers to share and work effectively towards the leader's vision and values (Bolman & Deal 1991; Fairholm 1998). In contrast to a transactional emphasis in managerial leadership, 'transformational' leadership focused on the commitments and capacities of followers. Higher commitment to goals and greater capacities for accomplishing those goals were assumed to result in extra effort and greater productivity (Leithwood & Duke 1999).

This model assumed that once followers were empowered to make decisions about how they would do assigned work, they would do it, do it well on a continuing basis and, at the same time, be motivated, committed and satisfied. However, another form of participative leadership emphasised facilitation and the use of all available human resources. The task of the leader was not necessarily to get what he or she wanted but to empower or facilitate others to do what *they* wanted. True empowerment and a full sense of responsibility were assumed to require having autonomy over means *and* ends, that is over purposes, goals, priorities and other issues of policy. Separating the planning from the doing may be okay when all expertise resides with leaders or when applied to the running of some organisations, such as fast-food restaurants. However, it may not be okay at other times, such as the present, where there is increasing uncertainty and complexity and where the education and expertise levels of people has continued to increase (Sergiovanni 1996).

Contingent

This last point brings us to the third leadership category, contingent. Here the focus was on how leaders responded to the unique circumstances or problems they faced. Here leadership was seen as always situational and relational (Bolman & Deal 1991) and able to be changed to suit the changing context.

Several writers have offered situational (not to be confused with 'situated') theories of leadership. For example, Hersey and Blanchard (1982) argued that depending on the maturity of the followers (defined as their ability and readiness to do a good job), the leaders needed to combine their task and relationship behaviour in different ways. For the situation where followers were unable and unwilling to do a good job, the appropriate leadership was 'telling' (high task, low relationship); followers unable but willing required

'selling' (high task and high relationship); followers able but unwilling needed 'participation' (low task, high relationship); and followers able and willing needed to be left alone, or 'delegated to' (low task, low relationship).

While attractive, contingent leadership theory was seen to have its problems. For example, leadership involved relationships beyond immediate subordinates, including significant stakeholders, peers, superiors, and external constituents. Such leadership also needed to consider the development of followers. A leader who persisted in 'telling' those who were unable and unwilling to do a good job merely ensured his or her followers remained 'immature'. Finally, it has been argued that there are situational factors other than followers' maturity that are important to consider (such as whether the situation is in a production line or a rural community) and that no advice is offered on who or how judgements are made about maturity (one assumes it is the leader who may or may not have the expertise) (Bolman & Deal 1991).

Learning

A fourth, final, more recent and not fully articulated leadership category centres around the leader's fundamental or core values. This category could be summarised as learning. It arises from a re-analysis of the dramatic change we all face, including, as Howard Gardner (1995) argued, the possibilities of immediate or gradual world destruction, new forms of instant, copious and often overly simplified forms of communication, the demise of privacy, the proliferation of entities that transcend national boundaries, heightened fundamentalism, and the increased politisation of public enterprises. It includes elements of professional leadership or leadership based on expertise (Sergiovanni 1994), moral leadership (Leithwood and Duke 1999), values-based leadership (O'Toole 1995), and spiritual (whole-soul) leadership (Deal 1995; Fairholm 1998).

The last element arises from a belief that leadership comes out of the leader's inner core spirit. This, not facts about personality or situation, determines what is right and good for them (Fairholm 1998). For example, Gardner's (1995) analysis of what he called 'leading minds', namely leaders such as Martin Luther King, Margaret Thatcher and Mahatma Gandhi, led him to construe leadership as a transaction that occurred within and between the minds of leaders and followers. In this sense, a leader is an individual who creates a story that significantly affects the thoughts, behaviour and feelings of a significant number of people. Gardner (1995) found that the most powerful stories were ones about identity; stories that helped individuals discover who they are, where they come from, where they are, or should be, headed. A crucial element in the effectiveness of a story hinged on whether the leader 'embodied' the story. Senge (1990) goes further in declaring that the leader bears an almost sacred duty to create conditions that enable people to grow and have productive and happy lives. The conditions change people (including the leader him or herself), allow them to learn, to be different, better, than before. The change involves a change from the extrinsic (what gets rewarded gets done) to the intrinsic (what is rewarding gets done and, most importantly, what is good gets done).

Conditions for a situated Enabling Leadership model

Until now, the four models outlined have focused on 'the leader' rather than on the situation that leaders must enable. The speed and nature of change as we approach the new millennium have re-focused our attention on the situations that demand a leadership of enablement, rather than on the 'person' themselves. This re-focusing provides an important

and new possible perspective for those concerned with leading in new times—a chance to include and value a wider group of people than where the focus is on the one 'leader'.

John Gardner, in his introduction to an important summary of issues and challenges facing community leadership for the 21st century (Peirce & Johnson 1997) highlights some of the main requirements for leadership under the new circumstances:

> What we need, and what seems to be emerging in some of our communities, is something new—networks of responsibility drawn from all segments, coming together to create a wholeness that incorporates diversity. The participants are at home with change and exhibit a measure of shared values, a sense of mutual obligation and trust. Above all, they have a sense of responsibility for the future of the whole city and region (p. vi).

Peirce & Johnson (1997) describe ten 'lessons' that we are using provisionally as the basis for the model of situated Enabling Leadership.

Lesson 1: The table gets larger and rounder
The old-style top-down management style doesn't work much any more. We are in a transition to a new, more collaborative style, a culture where citizens insist on having a place at the table. We must find ways to include everyone.

Lesson 2: The only thing more challenging than a crisis may be its absence
Success in cities is often heralded as a story of civic perseverance in the face of extreme crisis, but complacency has led to serious unattended problems. The lessons prove that even in the absence of civic meltdown, smart cities can solve problems before they loom large.

Lesson 3: The agenda gets tougher
Shiny new buildings and newly-bustling cities are the easy part of development. The more difficult question is how to improve the lives of those still caught in dead-end suburbs and towns of poverty and hopelessness. Progress is possible. People are talking about the problems and possible answers. That is not necessarily a solution, but it is seen a powerful first step.

Lesson 4: There is no magical leadership structure—just people and relationships
The message from a wide variety of cities in the United States is that there is no all-purpose governance structure that works today. What matters instead is organising governance based on a community's strengths—and recognising that it is the relationships among people that get things done. In every case of successful leadership, it is not the structure that matters, but the way people work together to get things done.

Lesson 5: No one's excused
Everyone has to chip in to make the mix work. Universities, professions, faith communities, and the media are top among the candidates to enrich the leadership mix.

Lesson 6: Sometimes the old ways still work
Charismatic individual leaders can still make things happen. The lesson is to respect and welcome civic-minded leaders who can make a difference.

Lesson 7: Collaboration is messy, frustrating and indispensable
Regardless of whether traditional leaders like it, collaboration is here to stay. Once people

know they can have a voice, they demand it. The partnerships take many forms. But power-sharing is always difficult, and some learn the language so they can abuse the process. Today, development groups are fumbling toward collaboration, making mistakes, and beginning to form new, inclusive institutions that can solve problems.

Lesson 8: Government always needs reforming, but all the reforms need government
Most people in Western countries say they don't like their governments, but real change depends on good government. Government's perceived role runs the gamut across the country, from innovator and catalyst in to leader. These days, government has a new role—as a bridge between community organisations and business. In all its myriad forms, though, and despite its inefficiencies and problems, we still need government as a partner for real, long-term change.

Lesson 9: Place matters
Connect to the Internet all you want—but realise that home counts. The places that matter most today are (a) regions, formed by districts, suburbs and inner cities; (b) neighbourhoods, increasingly organised and involved in partnerships; and (c) city centres, the heart and soul of every region.

Lesson 10: Keep your eye on the ball
No success is ever final. After major community events such as carnivals or fairs, regions and cities cannot afford to be complacent. The community must be kept 'toned up' to respond to opportunities and keep the community capacity bubbling along.

A situated Enabling Leadership model
The precondition for 'good leadership' in the new times heralded by the above is that the leadership is not approached from a predetermined 'this is the right way to do the job' stance: the action is situated in a particular location, with particular needs and particular planned outcomes in the form of *enabling* others. The situation dictates the needs, the planning and the outcomes. The situation determines the type and extent of enabling leadership that is involved. Think of a typical community activity—a club or association, the local School Parents and Friends committee or other group activity. The participants interact with each other, talk through local issues and problems, discuss local and national events, scandals, births and people, consider what forms of leadership will achieve the social and economic outcomes which are the common goals of the project. How do these forms of leadership match different stages of the activity? What kinds of characteristics of people and resources are required at different times? The answer, of course, is that these characteristics are indeed determined by the nature of the changing situation and how to enable its goals, not by some preconceived notion of 'a good leader'. The characteristics include these attributes of an enabling leader in new times:

- relationship-building across community sectors (genders, classes, ethnicities, ages and so on) to establish common interests and activities for furthering the community's specific future and goals;

- relationships developing from interactions which need qualities of historicity, externality, reciprocity, trust, shared norms/values;

- identifying relevant knowledge and identity resources for particular purposes taking account of need for plentiful interactions;

- bringing people together with resources to plan possible futures;

- planning opportunities for future events, interactions small, large, across community to facilitate the short- and long-term goals of the futures agenda;

- ensuring the facilitation of networking across groups and sectors throughout all processes, and

- celebrating and documenting successes, recognising and moving on from failures.

...and in conclusion

Situated Enabling Leadership as relationship building across traditional barriers, may at first, appear to be an unnatural act. It needs to be learned. It requires constant, hard work. Tools for community builders include relationship building and collaborative problem-solving. More than this, they involve carrying out situational analyses, an extension of the now trendy Community Resource Mapping, to establish the knowledge, identity and interactional needs of the particular purpose in hand. With the results of the situational analysis, the leadership structure for that situation can be specified and, as happens with all successful community projects, relevant, local solutions can be woven from the diverse and complementary threads of the overall community fabric.

If there is one lasting lesson from our review of the literature on leadership, it is that there is no external answer that will substitute for the complex work of changing one's *own* situation (Mulford et al. in press). In stopping the exploration for the 'silver bullet', leaders will have started to break the chains of dependency. Realising that there is no answer can be quite liberating (Hargreaves & Fullan 1998). Leaders need to be learners. They need to craft their *own* theories of change, constantly testing them against the new situations (Hargreaves & Fullan 1998). The key here is getting a balance between continuity and constant change. Peters (1987) was right when he said that the core paradox in a world of massive change 'is fostering (creating) internal stability in order to encourage the pursuit of constant change (p. 395).' Stability for change, moving ahead without losing our roots, becomes the challenge.

It is not likely that much progress will be made over time in improving communities unless we accept the reality that those involved in leadership for the community should learn from the above lessons, especially the leadership categories related to contingency and learning (Mulford 1998). It needs to be different and needs to begin to invent its own practice. Communities need to develop their own theories and practices that emerge from and are central to what communities are like or want to be like, what communities are trying to enable, and what kinds of people communities serve (Bishop & Mulford in press; Sergiovanni 1996).

The actual future rural regional Australia will inherit is partly of its own making. Those able to act, those able to put the heart and soul back into their communities, will have developed cooperative and enabling processes in their community. Power is distributed along with the leadership, not vested in one authority figure. Previously, the underlying question has been, community for who? In the new situation, the basic question is community for what? The answer to this question provides the 'roots', the stability, from which to judge which change to embrace.

We cannot avoid change: indeed we may wish to seek, embrace and even thrive on it. Rural regional Australia must anticipate change as being one of the constants they will face. Whether these changes result in Frankensteins, or gentle, functional, collaborative and sustainable butterflies, depends, to a substantial extent, on the response of those in the

communities. Communities can continue to be on the receiving end, to be dependent, or they can *choose* to make a stand, together, to be empowered. The response can do no better than to remember the wise words written by a Chinese scholar in 604 BC:

> As for the best leaders,
> people do not notice their existence.
> The next best,
> the people honour and praise.
> The next,
> the people fear.
> The next,
> the people hate.
> When the best leader's work is done,
> the people say,
> 'we did it ourselves'.

* We attribute our use of the term 'enabling' to Mr Tony Smith, a researcher with the Centre for Research and Learning in Regional Australia, and thank him. Tony suggested that the word 'enabling' was the appropriate one for managing the contingencies of the situated nature of contemporary leadership.

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