

# What would it take for communities to become 'inclusive'...of, for and by people with mental illness?

## DIMENSIONS OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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and contributions by  
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Our Consumer Place is Australia's Mental Health Resource  
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# Acknowledgments

This work is dedicated to Merinda Epstein, friend, teacher, collaborator and co-writer, with gratitude for her sometimes impatient but loving patience with my sometimes lack of depth in understanding and feeling what it means to live in the midst of people who think they're the normal ones... More than sixty years later (too late...?), it helped me understand my adolescent impatience and powerlessness when living with a mentally-ill mother, a father who didn't get it even when doing his best and two sisters with whom i practiced an impotent silence for too many years...

Merinda and i created together a meeting place where irony could infuse and animate our conversations and where we could maintain an astonishing productivity, creating several books and other materials that could be helpful to generate communities, groups and conversations where diversity and difference are included as necessary and essential ingredients for survival on our ever-more fragile planet...

Whilst Merinda's spirit is all over the text, Vicky O'Dwyer and Jim Ife contributed substantially through literature searches and discussion to a much earlier and more limited version of this work written for a rather different purpose – i hope that they will find that i do them justice in this version and – again – express my gratitude to what they gifted to the book and to myself...

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This is **not** a volume about 'mental health', 'mental illness' or about those who suffer from such living conditions; that information is abundantly available elsewhere. Rather, the work attempts to address the question as to whether communities and other collective groupings **are worth being included into** for people-living-with-a-difference? So it really offers possible answers to a question about improving **being** community, about improving **the relational processes and systems we 'call' communities**, so that all – including those with 'mental issues' - may be and stay part of them and show how they can add to the essential diversity without which communities cannot not flourish or even survive...

It offers a thematically organised annotated literature review of useful material contributing to a better understanding of processes of exclusion by offering approaches and strategies aimed at changing and transforming such processes into their opposite: inclusion of persons with a difference – in this case, especially people suffering from mental illnesses. So, whilst there will be regular cross-references to them, it is *not* 'about' them.... But it is hoped that they will use the material to argue, fight and engage in processes enabling such inclusion.

Jacques Boulet

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# CHAPTER 1.

## *The role of community perceptions and social trust for healthy, resilient, engaged and inclusive communities*

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*Suppose that the goal of an education system is for people to work cooperatively in community while exploring their individual potential for creative participation in developing and maintaining a sustainable relationship with the natural world.*

*What would it look like?*

Brian Goodwin (2007:337)

*And now, suppose that the role of (local) government and local communities is... the same?*

*What would THAT look like...?*

# INTRODUCTION

This introductory statement offers a conceptual rationale for this book, dealing with the programmatic usefulness of 'Community Development' (CD) for the optimal inclusion of people with mental illness, or – as i<sup>1</sup> shall re-name it – of the '*development of community*' in the political-geographical areas in which persons with mental issues are expected to live. This remains a relevant issue, years – decades! - after the '*institutionalisation of deinstitutionalisation*' and the putative expectation that people with mental health conditions should be living in 'normal' communities and be included by those.

Indeed, this re-jigging of the sequence of the two nouns, 'community' and 'development', intends to be more than just an attempt at 'branding' a nifty (assumedly new) 'toolkit' of fail-proof techniques and applications of 'CD' (or any of its more recently branded 'models', e.g. *community building*, *community engagement*, *social capital*, *community capacity building*, *community resilience* or anything with '*place*' before the hyphen). Most of these 'innovative' models have come and gone, lingered a bit and left some traces here and there, created lots of unfulfilled expectations and hopes and, in essence, all have intended – and often pretended - to 'do' pretty much the same thing(s).

It may be beneficial to have a cursory look at *two of the main sources of misunderstanding* and, in many cases, of *conflict* between those who work at the 'coalface' with, and in, communities and those who announce, proclaim, fund, administer and 'govern' the infrastructure and processes meant to 'enable' the former to do their work.

One of the very common conceptual 'short-cuts' used to describe the uneasy relationship between 'community' and 'government' has been and remains the dichotomous pair of '*top-down vs. bottom-up*'. "*Community interventions of any kind [are]... situated – indeed, [are] created or 'enacted' - between two opposing force fields*" (Boulet, 2010:26-27) and can be summarised in the following figure:



1 Readers will notice that – except at the start of a sentence and in quotes - i resist the capitalisation of the first personal pronoun - the 'perpendicular pronoun' – in recognition of the rather pretentious and simply wrong cultural assumptions in western writing about the centrality of the speaking, writing or thinking author/subject – or more generally, of the individual person – in the entirety of the living and changing context and the complexity of the interconnections s-he reports on.



In my experience and after half a century of participation in CD practice, teaching and research, the above picture at least approximates an adequate representation of the relationship between

- *those who from a position of power and often from a position which rests on control over a vast (and growing, meanwhile 'global') scale across which this power is and can be exercised (e.g. the nation, the Empire, the state, multi-national corporations, the World Bank, the WTO, etc...) 'impose' their structures/culture/practices on people(s)*

*and*

- *those who **submit to or resist** this imposition (sometimes violently, sometimes pathologically, sometimes apathetically...), in 'communities' and/or individually, locally or across localities and based on their common interests (land, 'workers', homeless, unemployed, poor, (mentally) ill, women, young people, the displaced, those whose villages are flooded for the construction of dams, low-income consumers, etc....).*

This confusing and 'messy' set of power relationships means that the structural and operational positioning of Community Development (and of those who are expected to engage in 'practicing' it) **must** be fraught with inherent contradictions, tensions and frustrations, as each of the 'opposing' sides will have their own conception of what CD 'should be doing' and – indeed – should be 'about'.

Given the initially suggested conceptual/practical/intentional differences between 'community development' and the '*development of community*', it is not surprising that *being at cross-purposes* remains a frequent characteristic of the working modality of 'CD'. Indeed, 'community development' as it has traditionally been applied in the context of international development and 'aid' to 'Third World' societies, as well as with communities and groups or populations 'left behind' in 'developed' societies, intends to bring (assumedly) 'backward' or 'problematic' or 'disadvantaged' or 'excluded' communities and groups into the '*mainstream*' of modern society, as the highly suggestive ideologically saturated concept of 'development' or 'developing' conveys. Unfortunately, this conception locates CD in the proximity of 'welfare interventions' and critiques of this understanding have been numerous (again, in summary, see Boulet, 2010:24-26), even though its 'application' by countless government programs at all levels continues to hold sway, albeit to a much lesser degree at present, as it has about disappeared from the vocabulary of governments and philanthropists alike and even from the curricula of the university courses it used to be an important part of.

The '*development of community*', in contrast, focuses on *the nature of the specific relationship* suggested by the concept of 'community' and deplores the historical erosion of this relationship and its social and psychological consequences (Hardin's controversial *Tragedy of the Commons* and see also Ife, 2019 and Boulet, 2018). This understanding reflects on the 'proper place' of 'up-scaled' levels of government, counting on them to enable and assist the lower levels of governance (e.g. local councils) and local communities to discover and acknowledge their own strengths and to support them in their own attempts at becoming more resilient, self-reliant and '*able to sustain themselves*'. The growing destruction of the resilience of our natural environments, our living ecology, on which our survival depends also needs to be taken into account.

So, to repeat from the acknowledgement at the start of this book, this is **not** a volume

about 'mental health', 'mental illness' or about those who suffer from such living conditions; rather, it attempts to address the (admittedly rhetorical) question as to whether communities and other collective groupings **are worth being included into** for people-living-with-a-difference? So it really offers possible answers to a question about improvements to **being** community, to **improving the relational processes and systems we 'call' communities**, so that all – including those with 'mental issues' - may be and stay part of them.

Briefly introducing the content of this book; a thematically structured *Literature Review* is offered in the second chapter and the third deals with '*Principles and Dimensions of Community Development*', focused on the above indicated conception of CD as 'developing community'. The last chapter, '*Concepts and Tools for Community Development: towards more informed policy responses*', turns more practical without really intending to be a 'toolkit,' certainly not in the recipe-like way this is often understood.

The remainder of this introduction will further examine the role of *community perceptions* and *social trust* in the hoped-for or aspired-to inclusion of people with mental illness issues into the life of communities.

# ROLE OF COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS AND SOCIAL TRUST

***'It is more than the delivery of physical services  
that lead to people's satisfaction with the place in which they live'***

(Vitartas & Scott, 2006:2)

Being 'included' is first and foremost one element of being a recognised and 'empowered' part of a socio-political entity that claims being democratic. Maddox (2008:17) claims that democracy is a 'fragile form of Government' because it depends upon '*a high level of public trust in its institutions*' and thus is readily undermined when the public is not dealt with '*fairly and truthfully*'. Thus, telling the public the *truth* is an essential ingredient in maintaining trust, with legitimacy connected to citizens' perceptions about procedural fairness in the implementation of public policies (Rothstein, 2009). Trust is the belief that others, through their action or inaction, will contribute to one's wellbeing and refrain from inflicting damage upon oneself and others. It is the basis for co-operation and underpins successful interpersonal relationships. It is essential for successful *co-production* between communities and government (Ronson & Peterson, 2008), a co-production which in its political dimension is actually just another word for *democracy*. If an organisation is associated with a poor image or public perception, people are less likely to engage with it and they have great difficulties ignoring that public image once it has been established

For Uslaner (2002), trust derives from an optimistic world-view, a perception of the world as a good place that can be made better. Those who trust are more likely to give through charity and volunteering and are more supportive of the rights of groups that have faced, or are still facing, discrimination. Trusting societies are more likely to redistribute resources from the rich to the poor, to have more effective governments and support to decreasing economic inequality and insecurity. Thus, the type of social capital that 'trust' engenders benefits all and not just those invested in social justice. Such trust only emerges at the collective level and, according to Freitag and Buhlmann (2009:1538), '*a certain amount of trust is a prerequisite for the most basic cooperation in our economic, political and social relationships*' – in effect, there is no cooperation without trust.

'Citizens usually come into contact with the output side of the political system' and by those who implement policy '*far more frequently and intensively than they do with its input side*' (Rothstein, 2009). Public policy is enacted upon people in the '*human processing*' arenas of education, health care, social welfare and active labour market programs, at the behest of widely discretionary powers that are transferred to lower-level government officials responsible for implementing such policy (Rothstein, 2009:314). This is the '*coal face*', where citizens concretely encounter and experience the political system. Legitimacy, or rendering the government either legitimate or illegitimate (Bean, 2001), comes about in policy enactment through impartial or non-discriminatory behaviour, i.e. treating people *alike*, irrespective of personal relationships and personal likes and dislikes (Cupit, 2000 cited in Rothstein, 2009).

Political trust reflects attitudes towards '*political institutions and leaders in the public sphere*' and whether it would be reasonable to have confidence in reliable and affirmative experiences when using, and generally relating to, societal systems (Blunsdon & Reed, 2010). Government responses that undermine democracy, '*pass the buck*' or skirt responsibility for overall quality of life and prevention of ills, simply reinforce citizens' alienation and distrust. Thus, disrespecting or ignoring the 'relationship' between government employee and citizen or reducing it to a mere managerial one, leads to an overall deterioration of all aspects of democracy; as Kenny (2006) comments on the impact of neo-liberal inspired reforms and policies, the '*privileging of contractual relations over relations of mutuality*' weakens other dimensions of civil society such as trust, cooperation and solidarity.

Modern societies which produce situations of risk, render 'trust' in local and state decision-making highly salient (Blunsdon & Reed, 2010) and Dogan (2005), Holmberg (1996) and Bean (2001) found that in most established democracies, trust in representative democracy appears to be decreasing. A number of reasons for this democratic disengagement (Power Inquiry, 2006 cited in Butcher, 2007:63) can be put forward:

1. Citizens do not feel the democratic process offers them enough influence over decisions that determine the conditions of their lives;
2. The main political parties are perceived as lacking principles;
3. They are too similar in their prescriptions and policies;
4. Voting procedures are seen as inconvenient and unattractive and the electoral system is seen to lead to wasted votes;
5. People feel they lack knowledge and information on which to engage in politics.

When public confidence in societal institutions declines, significant consequences for society will include the loss of legitimacy of these institutions; an increased demand for institutional regulation by voters; increased levels of public scrutiny of the activities of institutions and institutional actors; difficulty in implementing public and social policy programs; and conservative policy development (Blunsdon & Reed, 2010). Maddox (2008:21) argues that when citizens are lied to, it tempts '*violent protest, possibly leading to anarchy*', signalling an '*end to democracy*'.

It is, of course, important to also try and understand why this loss of confidence in the state at all levels has grown so strongly over the last few decades; noting this decline of confidence since the 1980s, Murphy (2011:32) asks: '*Why is it that we have such a cowardly state, headed by apologists for inaction intent it seems on securing their personal well-being while the offices they hold fall into ever greater disrepute?*' His answer is rather unequivocal (and meanwhile shared by many): '*... we have politicians whose seeming main aim for being in government is to dismantle it so that the revenues of the state can be passed on to the private sector.*' So, loss of confidence – and therefore trust - in public institutions by the community is somewhat paradoxically but intrinsically related to the fact that the political system in most Western democracies has in an accelerated way over the last few decades given away the regulatory power it had over the private sector. Political influence is passed on from communities to companies, a process that has evolved over the last five centuries, starting with the invention of the company around the turn of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century... and undoing to a large degree the intentions of the then also emerging project of democracy (Boulet, 2010).

As citizens act on their *perceptions* of institutions, it is important that they perceive institutions as *'trustworthy in terms of fairness, competence and the ability to realise desirable outcomes'* (Blundson & Reed, 2010). Kenny argues that *'patience, humility, skill and, above all, respect for the community are essential when engaging with a community'* (2006:278) in order to build trust and counter cynicism. Freitag and Buhlmann (2009) argued that institutions who share power, integrate the minorities and reduce cultural, social and political distances, are the ones who promote generalised societal trust, which, in turn, promotes an *'inclusive and open society'*, increasing the likelihood of *'investment in the future'*, promotion of economic development, the fostering of societal happiness and a general feeling of well-being.

Trust is co-created deliberately and consciously in relationships. Where power is shared and minorities are integrated, public relations are built into the everyday activities of political body and indeed of any organisation. The more involvement people have in co-operative processes, the greater their psychological and physical well-being, the more motivated, productive, committed and supportive they are, the more they invest in their own resources, the less prejudiced and more tolerant toward others and more likely they are to help other people and be more effective at resolving conflicts (Sullivan, Snyder & Sullivan, 2008). Other benefits occur within and between groups, such as greater cohesiveness and ability to manage conflict and tension (Sullivan et al, 2008). Trust thus enables interactions to exist in a society; it assists with social co-operation and helps to provide local solutions to collective problems. Otherwise labour-intensive and high-cost band-aid solutions based on simplistic and punitive measures (Clark, 1998) are likely to result. Therefore, speaking directly to the needs of the public – especially those who are excluded and disadvantaged - and supporting collectives to devise and enact solutions to public problems is key to overcoming the cynicism and distrust that tends to stifle civil society and political engagement (Bay, 2008:46).

Trust is what brings strangers together, thus it is a part of the answer to the *'problem of strangeness in contemporary societies'* (Torche & Valenzuela, 2011:191). Open networks which offer individuals and groups new opportunities through generating altruism and notions of the *'right thing to do'*, enable trust to develop amongst strangers. Giving without expectation of receiving links people, creating a personal relationship - an alliance that overcomes strangeness and which overcomes the propensity for closed networks to exclude a sense of obligation to strangers. Supporting the formation of trust in a *'world of strangers'* disables people's capacity to neglect or harm strangers and allows the building of relations and friendships outside of bounded communities and intense ties. In contemporary societies populated by strangers, this experiential dimension of *'social capital'* cannot be disregarded, lest the benefits of the distinct and incommensurable social capital that arises from relationships between strangers are lost (ibid. p.193-194).

Clark (1998:2) asserts that local government has *'the ability to tailor solutions to local circumstances'* despite overarching policy and needs to do more in order to overturn the emphasis on customer-service models which articulate citizens as passive consumers, reframing them instead as *'active partners in the community'* with civic responsibilities. Vitartas & Scott (2006:6) highlight the responsibility of local governments to ensure that strong levels of trust exist in their communities in this climate of decreasing trust and *'particularly with community-minded residents and groups'*. Trustworthiness is

essential for trust to pervade society (Torche & Valenzuela, 2011:192) and emerges when a community, which includes *all* those with an interest in it, share an active set of moral values in such a way as to create expectations of reliably consistent and honest behaviour.

Trust as embedded in the universal ethic of personal responsibility rests on the assumption that *all* interaction partners keep the promises and commitments made to others (ibid. p.193). It allows government to work more efficiently. Freitag and Buhlmann (2009) conclude that countries whose authorities are seen as incorruptible, whose welfare state institutions reduce income disparities and whose political interests are represented in a manner proportional to their weight, these countries have citizens who are more likely to have trust in one another, including those with disabling living conditions.

*Citizen participation*, enabling a bottom-up foundation of planning is fundamental to the approach advocated in this set of writings. The outcome of policy deliberations and implementations will be co-produced between citizens and local government. A 'bottom-up' and 'human-scale' (Max-Neef, 1991) approach is one where local wisdom, knowledge and skills from below are privileged alongside the practice of 'horizontal' accountability (Ebrahim & Weisband, 2007). A participatory and deliberative democracy needs to be enacted with the focus on people's resources and on *chosen* rather than *imposed* participation; where people's *felt needs* and *interests* are identified and where their multiple realities are invited and respected. This is an approach in which the environment and sustainability processes are valued and where the facilitation of genuine participation and consensus becomes a necessary feature of a co-production process. The role of (local) government becomes *enabling* rather than regulatory, played out as an expression of the *subsidiarity principle* where super-ordinated instances of governance '*subside*' from intervening in the activities and affairs of communities and groups they can organise and fulfil themselves, but which they '*subsidise*' as an expression of their redistributive role in the maintenance of the '*common wealth*' of all citizens.

Thus *trust*, rather than being a category of *internal-individual psychological-attitudinal attribution*, should be understood as a *characteristic of relational quality* at work within interpersonal relationships as well as at more formalised levels of the relationships between the governing and the governed. Usually, the answer to the (often rhetorical) question: '*why don't you trust me...?*' should be '*because the relationship is not trust-worthy*'... rather than something missing in the emotional state of the one interrogated. Trust exists and persists in the daily realities and experiences of human relating, and the ways in which those who govern practice their relationship with those they govern will either create and maintain the pre-conditions for trust to exist or will fatally erode them thus killing-off trust. Voter reactions in recent elections clearly show that this remains the case, even in an era of profound cynicism about the state of Australian – and more generally, Western – democracy.

The last few years have certainly not improved the quality of democracy in general and in Australia in particular; after the 2019 election, Jim Ife (2019:61) wrote in the *New Community*:

*We must realise some uncomfortable things about Australia: its conservatism, its materialism, its individualism, its selfishness, its racism, its misogyny, its heteronormativity, its superficiality,*



*its anti-intellectualism. It is NOT the 'greatest country in the world' as our PM likes to say. This is not to blame the Australian people directly – there are many good people in this country who defy those generalisations, and generosity and goodwill still survive, though in diminished form – but it is rather to recognize and understand what has led us to this awfulness. The discursive power of neo-liberalism, of individual and corporate greed, of capitalism itself is at the heart of our many problems, has helped to create the awful society in which we live and also has helped to persuade many people that it is actually not awful, but a paradise of freedom, material wealth and democracy.*

Many have commented on the growing populism which is infecting and undermining our political processes and relationships; i have commented on the connection between the growing dominance of the social media and populism, suggesting that the former's ubiquitous nature and their penetrating power – subcutaneously - invades our personal awareness and our relationships, eroding them and the trust they could engender ... i concluded that chapter (Boulet, 2020):

*However necessary resistance against the various populisms invading our lifeworlds remains, the (re-)development of our communities should be the most important aspiration for community practitioners – in fact, it may be our best defence against populism. Carefully reconsidering the four characteristics of 'community' that are crucial to re-generate aware and socially productive forms of relating and of 'being' community may be useful here: creating shared time; inhabiting shared place/space; celebrating reciprocity; rebalancing self- and collective interest (Boulet, 2018). And, finally, in this 'community', non-human persons need to be included to survive our human-produced ecological challenges.*

Recent commentators have profoundly and critically examined the growing culture of narcissism in our societies and communities; Belgian psychiatrist Paul Verhaeghe (2014:249) shows how 'personal autonomy,' when detached from the *interdependence of all living beings*, creates an

*Individualism [that] has indeed gone too far in this day and age. People have been reduced to consumers who live in the illusion that they are unique and make their own choices. In actual fact, they are being made to think and behave alike to an extent that is previously unparalleled. Self-care has fallen by the wayside, because consumerism sweeps away any notions of self-control and restraint.*

And in such social-cultural environment, care and inclusion fall by the wayside, as Anne Manne poignantly describes it (2014:220):

*... applied to the relational world, homo economicus would be a self-interested, affectionless, ruthless narcissist. At the centre of this invisible world of care is a willingness to give time and attention to others. It requires a connected, communal self, cooperating with others for purposes larger than the self.... Yet in a narcissistic society such a person seems more and more like a strange island of selflessness in a sea of selfishness. Hardly surprising then, that this 'invisible heart' is under pressure. The neoliberal ideal does not really account for care, or for who does it or how it is paid for. On top of that, neoliberalism brings, as Richard Sennett observes, a new character ideal: of the unencumbered, economically self-sufficient individual. He vividly describes this new ideal as cruelty. This is because for so many it is an impossibility; too many are excluded from it.*

The recent introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme certainly did not do much to abate the fears expressed by the two previously quoted writers; it is thoroughly

individualistically oriented and build upon a 'marketised' service delivery system quite bereft of ideas of community involvement let alone funding to invest in improving communities' capabilities and preparedness to improve their inclusivity (see the New Community issue # 66, vol. 17(2) of July 2019 almost entirely dedicated to this issue). In this issue, Andrea Marks surveys *'How the Mental Health Community is bracing for the impact of Climate Change'* (pp.41-43) and warns that *'climate activism isn't a cure-all for serious mental distress... people get caught in an anxiety-action cycle by too much time immersed in the issue...'* Eco-anxiety – as the recent mega-fires have so vividly shown, now being joined by anxieties associated with the spreading coronavirus pandemic as i am writing this – whilst possibly overcome by community solidarity and collective strength also can strip us back to self-centred survivalist actions, including violent ones. In a recent chapter for a collection of 'post-anthropocentric social work' (Boulet, 2020b) i concluded:

*...as we face the demands of socio-ecological survival, humans – 'we' - need to urgently learn how the earth-commons wants us to live with 'it' and 'them,' a critical perspective for work that refers to itself as 'social' and commits itself to restore our capabilities to relate, indeed, to 'be' social. Goodall's (2019:4) Politics of the Common Good [suggests]: 'at the heart of the transition to a new economy lies the commons: the wealth we inherit and create together which includes the gifts of nature, civic infrastructure and knowledge in all its forms.'*

Searching for the optimal 'lever' to start and sustain this 'inclusive' process – people-living-with-difference into the human community and the human community into the ecological world that surrounds and sustains us – leads us to local government that remains 'closest' to the sites and events and opportunities in which the relational practice of community 'happens'. Of course, its relative lack of power within the 'big picture' of overall governmental systems in Australia may appear to eliminate or severely preclude the potential for the creation and enabling of the trust-full relationships i have been evoking. Still, many political sites and instances in which local government does exercise degrees of control remain; health, recreation, environment, housing, traffic and places for civil participation are just some of these. They still offer useful *experimental opportunities to practice and experience relationships with the citizenry where 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' can be dropped as inappropriate denominators to describe the co-operation and co-production between communities and government and where 'trustworthy' and 'trusting' can become truthful descriptors of their relationship, thus creating the preconditions for inclusion of the 'mentally other'.....*

And when local churches, businesses, organisations and agencies, streets and neighbourhoods join the relational efforts, the discouraging and disempowering dynamic of 'top-down vs bottom-up' may be slowly replaced by 'horizontal' relational efforts... 'Trust', like 'love' in Cornell West's terms, could then apply across the various levels of the private and the public and, slightly amending his wise words, i would propose with him that

***'tenderness is love/trust in private, justice is love/trust in public...'***

which remains the necessary 'mixture' for the creation and maintenance of worthwhile and inclusive life-worlds as i will explore those in the next sections.



# CHAPTER 2.

## A conceptually-structured review of Community Development and contextual literature

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*This struggle [for humanization]  
is possible only because  
dehumanisation, although a concrete  
historical fact, is not a given  
destiny but the result of an unjust  
order that engenders violence in  
the oppressors, which - in turn -  
dehumanizes the oppressed.*

(Freire, 1982)

# INTRODUCTION: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND RIGHT LIVELIHOOD

**'Action taken at the local level is now universally recognised as a requirement for the true achievement of global improvements in environmental health'**

(MacArthur, 2002:1)

This brief introductory statement highlights the main conceptual and practical emphases around which this literature review is organised. Rather than just creating an annotated listing of recent and relevant writings, it seems more appropriate to conceptually integrate readings into a set of crucial parameters, together offering a broad conceptual framework to reflectively look at Community Development related or -influenced policies and practices.

- **Right livelihood** embodies the notions of responsible living, giving and taking in our daily activities, all of which are constructed and performed with and within our local and global communities. In sum, it suggests a necessary re-connection with the **relational** dimension of human living to re-balance the overly individualistic tendencies at work through (post-)modern western living modalities and attitudes.
- **Creating capabilities** – in the words of Martha Nussbaum, who, together with Amartya Sen has given this approach much conceptual, policy and practical power – this suggests a policy approach which not only considers abilities as *'residing inside a person but also the freedoms and opportunities created by a combination of personal abilities and the political, social, and economic environment'* (Nussbaum, 2011:20). This is also the conceptual and practical location for the much misused (because psychologically 'abbreviated') concept of community *'resilience'* (see Deveson 2003).
- **Co-production** and **co-design** (Escobar, 2018; Wahl, 2016) are congruent elements of both the *right livelihood* and the *capabilities* approaches and they emphasise both the necessity to include ecological and sustainability considerations. They aim to transform public services in and for communities by involving citizens in equal and reciprocal relationships with professionals and others, working together to 'get things done'. *Co-production means delivering public services in an equal and reciprocal relationship between professionals, people using services, their families and their neighbours. Where activities are co-produced in this way, both services and neighbourhoods become far more effective agents of change* (Boyle and Harris, 2009:11). It also is the appropriate place to reflect on, and insert, the role of 'volunteers' and to re-think the nature of their work in terms of *'civil society work'* including efforts towards inclusion of potentially excluded groups and individuals (Boulet et al, 2008; Healey et al, 2006).
- **Community development** (CD) is a *philosophy of practice applicable to all human endeavours and which supports co-production and everybody's right to and potential for right livelihoods*. CD principles and practices must be applied critically – in order to escape centralised control by dominant ideologies and paradigms that improve the 'livelihood' of some at the expense of others (in most dimensions of their living). This is a process in which we are all immersed.

- Ultimately, CD – **the development of community** - is a **social or relational** practice (Westoby & Dowling, 2009), intending to reclaim our world as a *multidimensional social and ecologically diverse world*, rather than simply considering ourselves solely as 'economic' – and *therefore* - competing individual subjects and collectives. It encompasses comfortably the underlying philosophies suggested by the previously mentioned concepts of right livelihood and capabilities, mainly highlighting what has come to be understood as '*assets-based community development* – ABCD (Kretzmann & McKnight 1993 and 2005)
- Given its connection to 'territorial' or 'geographic' units – or 'places and spaces' – the *development of community* equally locates people in their intimate and essential connectivity with the local-global ecology; as the loss of 'community' is historically associated with the loss of the 'commons' – also in terms of its economic and ecological survival (Boulet, 2010; 2020b) - the reconstitution of a living, sustainable and responsible relationship with their environment is a must for local communities (see also Nussbaum, 2011:18, who explicitly includes the non-human in her understanding of justice based on capabilities).
- As community members experience their community environments as 'whole' persons, their physical, mental and social health being intrinsically interwoven with the overall health of their communities and the ecological health of the latter (see a great variety of publications from the World Health Organisation (WHO) about the 'social model of health', 'place-based health' and concepts like 'healthy cities' and others - also see previous note).
- Crucial to community development for right livelihoods and when used in the context of service delivery processes and systems, aiming at creating sustainable community-level impact is **a collaborative, multilevel and culturally-situated approach to community interventions** (Trickett, Beehler, Deutsch, Green, Hawe, McLeroy, Miller, Rapkin, Schensul, Schulz & Trimble, 2011) - such an intended and hoped for impact requires *co-production* as previously indicated. It also requires an understanding of community development not abbreviated to 'toolkit' status, but which considers it as '*inclusive social praxis*' or as a 'working principle' across all forms of social '*interaction with*' or '*service delivery*' to, communities and individuals.

The literature review describes and explores the conceptual and practical links between:

- community development,
- community and place,
- right and healthy livelihood,
- community-based service delivery through co-productive engagement, and
- the establishment of relationships which recognise people's capabilities whilst facilitating their immersion in collaborative, multilevel and culturally-situated practices and processes.

## RIGHT LIVELIHOOD

Conceptualising what a process of 'community regeneration' would need to lead towards should include the notion of *Right Livelihood*; right livelihood is about meaningful, socially and ecologically responsible living, about good and meaningful work and 'non-work' activities, relationships, attitudes, feelings, good health and about engaging in those forms of being/doing/having/ relating that have positive rather than destructive effects on our human and non-human neighbours, and on the earth itself.

*"Right livelihood depends on community—on the networks of relationship that give our lives and our work context. Activities and life choices undertaken without reference to others cannot be "right livelihood," no matter how "green" or "virtuous" they may appear. By the same token, a healthy community depends upon—cannot exist without—its members engaging in work that supports and is responsive to the whole, nurtures both the individual/family and the larger group, and interacts in a sustainable, regenerative way with the rest of the local and global webs of life." (Roth, 2011:11)*

And, as Roth continues, achieving 'right livelihood' is not easy in the modern world:

*Just as the deck often seems stacked against the development of genuine community of all types, it also seems stacked against right livelihood. Most available jobs within modern economies exist because they will allow someone to make money, not because they are socially or ecologically responsible or because they need to be done to create a better world. Most modern education is geared to prepare students to participate in this system, and is itself a part of it. In the face of a paradigm which elevates self-interest over service to the larger whole, individual accumulation over community—when the only way of meeting our own needs seems to be to engage in activities which come at the expense of others or of the earth—what are we to do? (ibid)*

'Right Livelihood' therefore, consists first and foremost in the recognition of the profound inequalities and injustices which are committed in an on-going way – intentionally and unintentionally – by and through our participation in the structures and processes which maintain these. And secondly, it consists in our deliberate and open commitment to doing something about the resulting exclusions. And just to place ourselves in a mind-set open for realistic possibilities for crafting such 'right livelihoods'-enabling places and communities, a very brief look back at two historical instances where the inclusion of people with mental health issues became a reality.

**Geel**, a small town in Flemish Belgium, has offered community care for the mentally ill for the last 800 years (<https://aeon.co/essays/geel-where-the-mentally-ill-are-welcomed-home>); for the people in Geel, the term '**mentally ill**' is never heard: even words such as 'psychiatric' and 'patient' are carefully hedged with finger-wagging and scare quotes. The **family care system**, as it's known, is resolutely non-medical. When boarders meet their new families, they do so, as they always have, without a backstory or clinical diagnosis. Geel's story does suggest that psychiatry's role could be limited, perhaps dramatically so: not at the centre of mental healthcare but on its periphery, as a backstop to the community where most of the regenerative relational work can in fact take place.

The **deinstitutionalisation 'movement' in Italy** – between the mid-1950s and the end of the 1970s - offered another example of how community, integration and regenerative approaches to mental health/illth are possible and successful; (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4430803/>). **Trieste** became a 'concrete utopia', a place where transformation could be touched, experienced, seen with your own eyes. Franco Basaglia, the main force behind

*the experiment, was not interested in creating another 'golden cage', or a Maxwell Jones-like therapeutic community. The key work was outside of the asylum, in the city of Trieste and across the province. It was time not just to break down the walls, but also to construct something entirely new, an alternative to the psychiatric hospital itself. Community housing, cooperatives, artistic engagements, they were all part of the regenerative process. The former 'inmates' changed their lives by the revolution in psychiatric care, they retook control of their own lives.*

So far these two concrete utopias... as this is not a work about mental illness/health but about the inclusion of people with mental issues in the community, having a sense of such 'lived experience' possibilities seems useful to include at the start of this literature review. We hope that these few references will inspire the reader to further investigate them.

## CREATING CAPABILITIES (AND RESILIENCE)

Contrasting the 'capabilities approach' with the very superficial and reductionist GNP-based understandings of established socio-economic policy-making, Martha Nussbaum states that the --

*"'Capabilities Approach' ... begins with a very simple question: What are people actually able to do and to be? What real opportunities are available to them? This question, though simple, is also complex, since the quality of a human life involves multiple elements whose relationship to one another needs close study." (2011:X)*

She prefers the term 'capabilities approach' to that of 'human development approach', which is how the initial formulations by Amartya Sen (1992; 1999; and with Nussbaum, 1993) came to be known and were being used in UN reporting and in the Journal of Human Development, published by the *Human Development and Capability Association*. The approach was initially especially understood to apply to so-called 'developing countries' and their (assumed) need to 'become developed' in the way in which the 'western' or industrialised world was assumed to (already) be. But, as Nussbaum states, (2011:X) *"[a]ll countries are 'developing countries'...: every nation has a lot of room for improvement in delivering an adequate equality of life to all its people."*

This approach is fundamentally concerned *"with entrenched social injustice and inequality, especially capability failures that are the result of discrimination or marginalization."* (p. 19) Nussbaum thus further develops Sen's approach into a foundational basis for a theory of (social) justice and, interestingly, as also applying to non-human species and ecology. The below list offers a summary of ten 'Central Capabilities' constituting a 'bare minimum' to satisfy the requirements of a life 'worthy of human dignity' (p. 32) and which should be at a *threshold level ... secured by any 'decent political order ... to all citizens'*:

- Life
- Bodily health
- Bodily integrity
- Senses, imagination, and thought
- Emotions
- Practical Reason
- Affiliation including being able to live with and towards others and having the social bases of

- *self-respect and non-humiliation*
- *Other species and the world of nature*
- *Play*
- *Control over one's material and political environment.*

This approach is also reminiscent of Manfred Max-Neef's and his colleagues' approach referred to as '*Human Scale Development*' (1991), emerging during the late 1970s and into the 1980s and for which Max-Neef was honoured with the Swedish '*Right Livelihood Award*' in 1987. Like Nussbaum's, the 'human scale' approach establishes first, a strong philosophical foundation upon which 'axiological' – or, as we now would call them, 'aspirational' – development goals or objectives are grafted; in this way discovering our common humanity offers a more solid starting point for considering the 'capabilities' essential for reaching right livelihood.

The notion of '*resilience*' also finds its conceptual and practical space within this framework of understanding '*capabilities*' as a term 'connecting' and allowing for the interpenetration of the personal/psychological/relational and the structural/systemic dimensions of human living:

**Resilience** is the long-term capacity of a **system** to deal with change and continue to develop. For an ecosystem such as a forest, this can involve dealing with storms, fires and pollution, while for a society it involves an ability to deal with political uncertainty or natural disasters in a way that is sustainable in the long-term. [www.stockholmresilience.org/.../whatisresilience](http://www.stockholmresilience.org/.../whatisresilience) (7/1/2012)

Complementary to this,

**Resilience** in psychology refers to the idea of an individual's tendency to cope with stress and adversity. This coping may result in the individual "bouncing back" to a previous state of normal functioning, or using the experience of exposure to adversity to produce a "steeling effect" and function better than expected (much like an inoculation gives one the capacity to cope well with future exposure to disease). Resilience is most commonly understood as a process, and not a trait of an individual... Most research now shows that resilience is the result of individuals being able to interact with their environments and the processes that either promote well-being or protect them against the overwhelming influence of risk factors. These processes can be individual coping strategies, or may be helped along by good families, schools, communities, and social policies that make resilience more likely to occur. In this sense "resilience" occurs when there are cumulative "protective factors". These factors are likely to play a more and more important role the greater the individual's exposure to cumulative "risk factors". The phrase "risk and resilience" in this area of study is quite common. (Wikipedia 7/12/2019)

The late Anne Deveson's (2003) *Resilience* offers a good overview of existing literature and quite effectively illustrates the interpenetration of personal psychology and the social – especially community - context. Nick Wilding (2011), for the now defunct *Fiery Spirits Community of Practice* stated quite appropriately that "Resilience' is a term that can look wildly different in different contexts and according to different developmental stages of community life. Likewise, 'community' is a contested idea that makes different kinds of sense according to the values, location and perspective of the reader' (p.4) and to the perspective of those living in the so described reality, one might add.



Nevertheless, and referring back to some of the early system thinkers who applied 'resilience thinking' to human systems (e.g. the authors of the successive volumes of 'Limits to Growth' since 1972, especially the late Donella Meadows), Fiery Spirits drew upon their thinking, describing resilience as *'the ability to self-organise [as] the strongest form of resilience'* and identified *diversity, modularity and feedback* as the three key aspects of any system's resilience (ibid. p. 20). They also combined the term 'resilience' and 'vulnerability' as *"opposite sides of the same coin, but both are relative terms. One has to ask what individuals, communities and systems are vulnerable or resilient to, and to what extent."* Based on their collaborative action research with numerous community action groups and a rather thorough literature review – especially examining existing toolkits from the several English-speaking 'heartlands' (p. 28) - they identified four emerging 'themes' or 'dimensions' of community resilience building, which they constructed as a *'resilience compass'*, assisting in both the assessment of community resilience and as a guiding framework for developmental work with communities. (p. 30 ff)

- Healthy people - supporting individuals' physical and psychological wellbeing;
- Inclusive, creative culture -- generating a positive, welcoming sense of place;
- Localised economy within ecological limits -- securing entrepreneurial community stewardship of local assets and institutions;
- Cross-community links -- fostering supportive connections between interdependent communities.

Largely confirming these assertions are the various articles collected in a free downloadable special issue of the *Health Promotion Journal of Australia* (December 2011; Vol. 22); Rae Walker et al (2011:10-11), reviewing an enormous volume of written work related to the impact of climate change on the health of populations – especially vulnerable groups like the elderly, children, the chronically and mentally unwell – posit that:

*"Community resilience is an important concept in climate change adaptation literature and has a foundation in social capital. A working definition of resilience is: 'the ability of a social system to respond and recover from disasters and includes those inherent conditions that allow the system to absorb impacts and cope with an event, as well as post-event, adaptive processes that facilitate the ability of the social system to reorganise, change and learn in response to a threat'... Linking social capital also creates community resilience through local mitigation and adaptation becomes more successful when embedded within broader regional, national and even global policy frameworks."*

The authors also mention that *"A number of agencies in health and community care have a tradition of community development work. This capacity within the sector can be linked to climate change adaptation either directly or by overtly seeking co-benefits within project with other priorities,"* and they go on to discuss the importance of *settings and supportive environments* as exemplified in the *Healthy Cities* and the *Health Promoting Schools* programs also being implemented in Australia with a considerable degree of success. Based on the Ottawa Charter of the WHO (1983), the key principles of the *Health Promoting Schools* program are:

1. *Equity and social justice*
2. *Participation and Empowerment*
3. *Supportive social and physical school environment*
4. *Linkage of health and education issues and systems.*

Finally, Care International focusing on 'development' in the co-called 'Third World,' suggested the following (in a meanwhile not-available URL):

*We see resilience as the ability of women and men, communities and societies, to resist, absorb and recover from shocks and stresses while retaining dignity, functionality and developing the ability to learn, cope with or adapt to hazards, stresses and change. CARE acts to empower local communities, especially women, to reduce their exposure to risk and strengthen their resilience. CARE believes that development, in whatever guise it takes, must lead to disaster resilience building. Shocks are increasing in frequency and intensity, and without major advances in household and community resilience, they will erode development gains. At community level, threats and hazards are often experienced as a single shock and not as a set of distinct problems. The solution must thus be in an integrated approach to resilience.*

From this point, it will become obvious how the discussion of 'Right Livelihood' and 'capabilities/resilience' thinking easily merges into the following section dealing with 'co-production'.

## **CO-PRODUCTION AND 'CIVIL SOCIETY WORK'**

Co-production demands the following elements for its realisation (Boyle et al, 2010):

- recognising people as assets;
- building on people's existing *capabilities*;
- privileging *mutuality and reciprocity*;
- engaging and building *peer support networks*;
- *blurring distinctions* between providers or professionals and consumers or recipients; and
- *facilitating* rather than delivering.

Both *right livelihood* and *co-production* support a paradigm shift *towards collaborative, multilevel, culturally situated interventions*, recognising that *both* contexts and individuals are influenced by interventions which can either increase or decrease personal and community capabilities and resilience for future problem solving and development (Trickett et al, 2011:1410) and, thus, equal access to right livelihood.

Co-production re-engages the social economy of family and neighbourhood (or the 'core economy'), which has been overlooked with increasingly negative consequences throughout the evolution of (western-capitalist) society and which can provide a sustainability balance to unchecked reliance on continuing economic growth with its consequent ecological and human damage. An example from the housing area may illustrate the process:

- Co-production can turn existing structures 'upside down', as it has in Taff Housing, a housing association with over a thousand homes in some of Cardiff's most disadvantaged housing estates, where tenants earn credits by volunteering time to help deliver the services of the housing association. These credits can be spent instead of cash to use in Cardiff's leisure services, rugby club and community arts centre.



The effect of co-production, where it happens,

*'is a huge shift of focus for public services. No longer obsessively looking inwards to targets and procedures, but increasingly looking outwards to local neighbourhoods to create supportive social networks, seeking out local energy where it exists to help deliver and broaden services, and seeing citizens for what they can do, not just what they need'. In this way, co-production 'makes strengthening the core economy of neighbourhood and family the central task of all public services' (Boyle & Harris, 2009).*

Community development – *the development of community* - enables co-production, which, in turn, assists in creating right livelihoods and fosters inclusion. To develop community through co-production, it is important to (Boyle et al, 2010):

- build the key features of co-production into existing services;
- change the systems and structures that underpin public services;
- make it everybody's business;
- shift the role of front-line staff;
- get the best out of 'personalised' services;
- put the right incentives in place;
- build co-production into the commissioning framework;
- give priority to prevention;
- encourage flexibility and collaborative working;
- measure what matters;
- launch more prototypes in new sectors; and
- embed co-production as the 'default' model through a 'co-production Guarantee'.

Co-production *'starts with the client and what they really want, rather than trying to fit them neatly into specific service packages or predetermined outcomes. **It is about relationships, not about 'services'*** (Boyle, Slay & Stephens, 2010:7). Whilst i would enlarge the language of 'client' to one of citizenship and that of 'wanting' to one of 'co-contribution', the reasons for this important shift towards a paradigm of collaborative, multilevel, culturally-situated interventions relate to

- the impossibility of *generalising* research given socio-culturally diverse communities;
- the limitations of individual level or single-issue interventions;
- pertinent questions about the sustainability and full impact of interventions;
- the ethics of research with whole and varied communities (Trickett et al, 2011).

Contributing to the perpetuation of social disadvantage and exclusion is, according to Boyle et al. (2010:6),

*'a bias towards top-down solutions, generating a 'them and us culture' where professionals do things for 'vulnerable' and 'needy' individuals; a preference for tackling the immediate problem, not the whole person; a blindness towards the assets and strengths of those on the receiving end of services, and a tendency to see the effects of poverty and inequality as a problem belonging to poor people, to be fixed by their becoming more 'resilient', rather than as a problem for society as a whole, in need of systemic change'. Such issues have limited the potential for 'beneficial combinations of interventions into more comprehensive, incremental, adaptable, and emergent initiatives for change over time and across individual projects, groups, and contexts' (Trickett et al, 2011:1411).*

In a 2007-8 research project on “*Strengthening Volunteering and Civic Participation*” commissioned by the (Melbourne) Eastern Metropolitan Region Management Forum and funded by the Victorian Government we argued for the need to move towards a

*‘...renewed and vigorous relationship between state and community, the latter consisting of active citizens who understand their role to go well beyond the obligatory rituals of voting and paying their taxes and who would understand their ‘volunteering’ activities as those ‘normal’ things one does with, for and to co-citizens and as stewards of their immediate environments. By implication, it would also recast the role of local government, the level of government closest to where people ‘live’ their primary sociality, and emphasise the need to invest it with resources and power to play that role adequately.’ (Boulet et al, 2008: )*

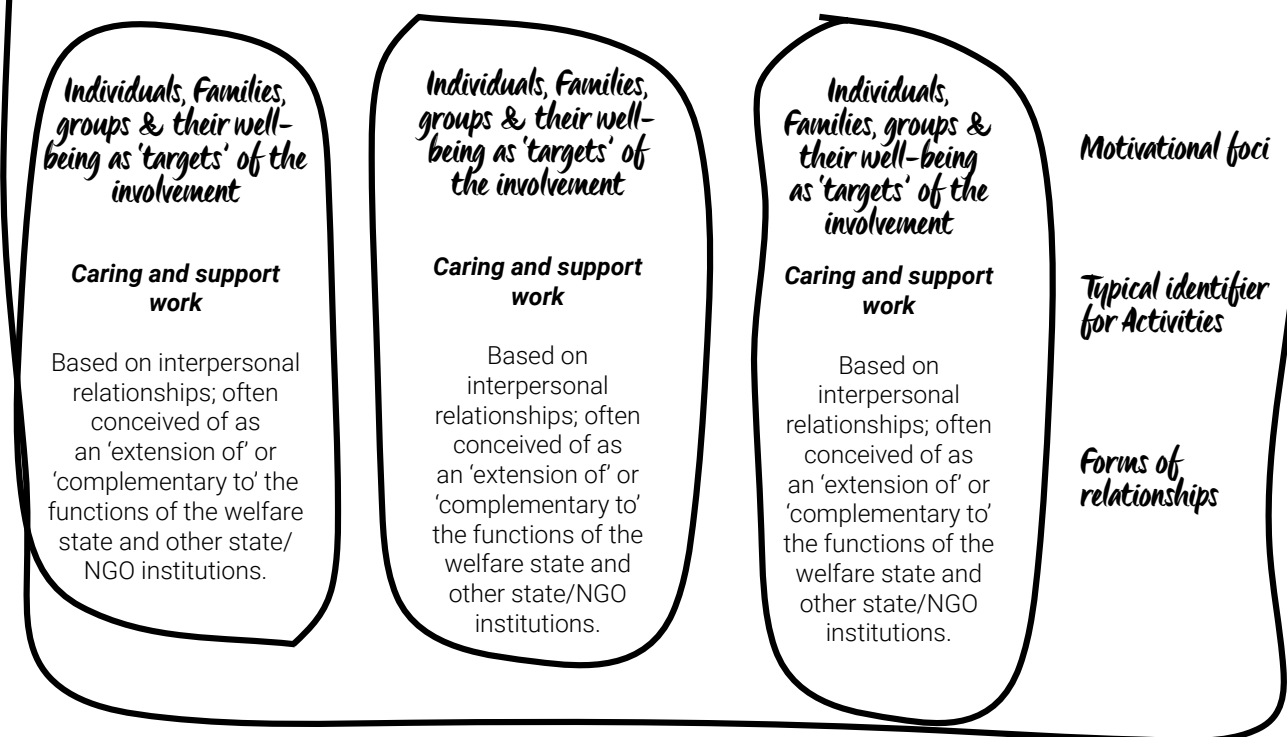
We developed a figure (see next page) representing the conceptual-practical integration proposed between three ‘domains’ of what we named ‘**civil society work**,’ including ‘traditional’ volunteering, a variety of modes of community ‘engagement’ and civic participation along a range of activities, from serving on voluntary community boards to participating in ‘Occupy’ or environmental activism activities or in **GetUp!** or **AVAAZ** global and local activism. Indeed, ‘inclusion’ into full citizenship and community membership ranges across the entire range of activities providing a person a sense of complete belonging and of responsibility for the wellbeing of the local community and of the earth and its multispecies. And what I have said about ‘co-production’ equally applies to ‘co-design’, a term which has emerged more recently; indeed, Daniel Wahl (2016:147) suggests:

*Any activity that involves a community, a business or an entire region in an open dialogue aiming to envision a more desirable future is the beginning of a design conversation that has the potential to become culturally transformative. ... Visioning together can serve as a catalyst for collective intelligence engaging all of us in a design-based conversation about a more meaningful and healthier future. Visioning processes educate and transform those involved in co-creating them.*

They therefore need to ‘include’ those who long to be ‘included’ in the full life of communities... to which Arturo Escobar (2018:5) would add:

*A fundamental aspect of autonomous design is the rethinking of community, or, perhaps more appropriately, the communal; this rekindled concern with the communal is in vogue in critical circles in Latin America and in the transition movements in Europe concerned with the relocalisation of food, energy, and the economy and with transition towns and commoning, among others. ... So... autonomy and the communal are at the centre of design.*

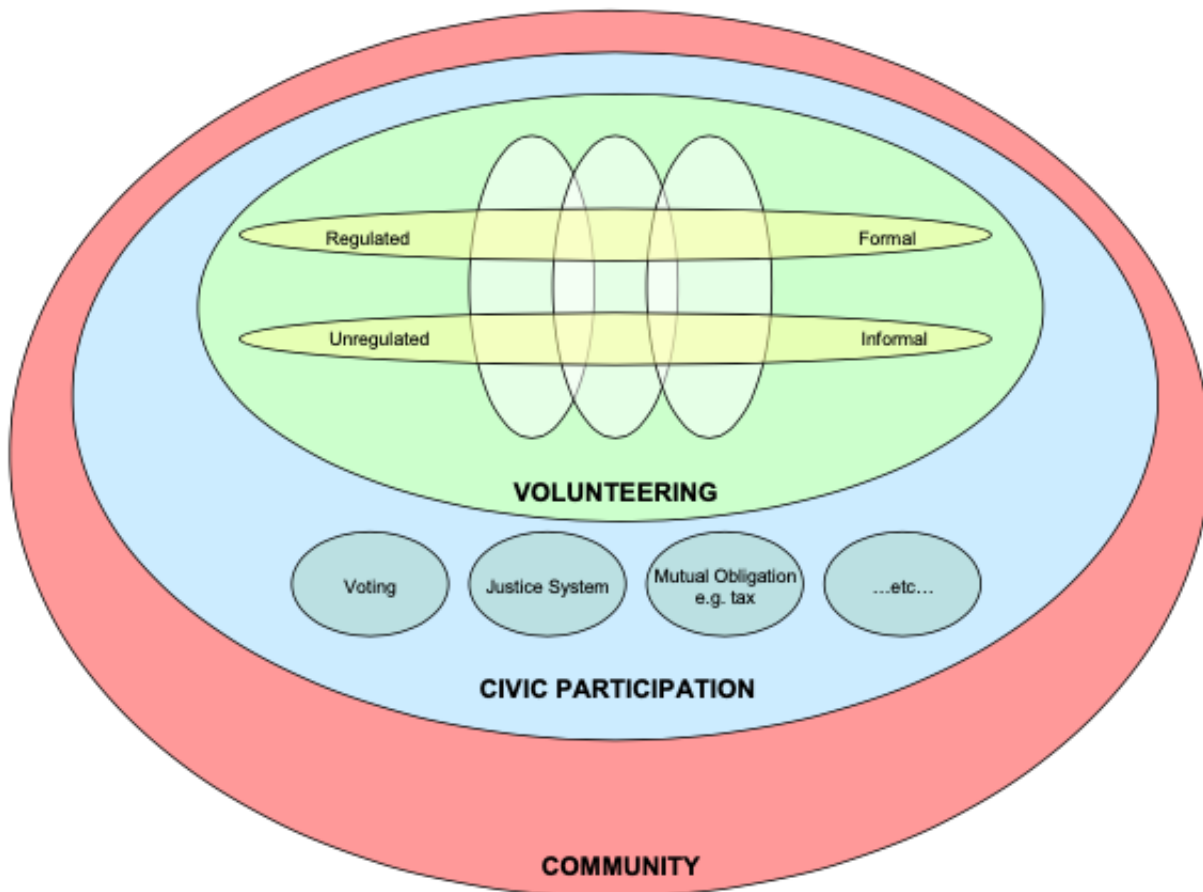
## Typology of Volunteering & Civic Participation as Civil Society 'work'



Based on conversations with almost 400 people involved in such activities across the Region, we distilled the following main five points:

- Bring back notions of '*public service*' by government to the community and the social ties that engender it (rather than imagining that relationship as a 'customer – provider' and, hence, a '*market exchange and economically abbreviated*' one).
- Give greater credence to *ties of primary sociality* within organisations & community whilst recognising basic Human Rights and opening up to a more cooperative federalism rather than the usual coercive model, favouring 'top-and-centre' that consequently strengthens the power of systems of *secondary sociality*.
- Develop new forms of 'trust' (an important ingredient of social capital) between those living and operating (in) institutions and sites of *primary sociality* and the state/government.
- Integrate conceptually, programmatically and in practice the three 'embodiments' of – what we would now call – **Civil Society Work**, i.e. volunteering, civic participation and community building/strengthening/development.
- Such integration – whilst only possible here as the integration of three distinguishable 'typologies' – needs to include a '*personal*' dimension, reflecting people's intentions and practices and a more *structural/organisational* dimension, reflecting the several types and kinds of relationships people engage in when they commit to working as volunteers, as community members and/or as 'active citizens'. (ibid.)

Reproduced below is a graphic representation of the 'locus' of 'volunteering' as 'civil society work' (the three 'blank' oval shapes as presented in the foregoing figure), elaborated in the course of the project with input from participants in the public presentations of the project 'findings' and 'recommendations'.



Boulet et al (2008) concluded their report with a quote by the well-known Canadian author, John Ralston Saul (2001:2,10). Having described a series of 'volunteering' activities he witnessed during the 2001 Canadian Week of Volunteering, he stated:

*'...what I have been describing is people participating in their society. This is the normal life of a responsible individual. The normal life of a conscientious citizen. And let me add a particular point: it's very, very important not to confuse volunteerism, volunteering, participating, ethical activity with what we used to call charity. As soon as you start talking about volunteering as a special sector, you are slipping towards something which would be confused with the traditional idea of charity. We have to be very careful about that. I always have printed in my mind the words of August Strindberg: "All charity is humiliation"...**So let me just end with this idea. We have the opportunity for a social project which actually could take the concept of volunteerism right into the heart of the concept of democracy and citizenship. It would reassert the idea of citizens' rights and citizens' obligations as the real meaning of the balanced structure of democracy.***

# A VISION OF COMMUNITY AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

***'Instead of looking at discussion as a stumbling block in the way of action, we think it an indispensable preliminary to any wise action at all'***

(Thucydides, 1910)

It would be useful to start this discussion by acknowledging that the concept of 'community' itself is much-debated and '*slippery*'; we do not have to re-iterate the many articles which have been written in this respect, except to mention that many of these discussions and studies are characterised by an 'objectivist' desire to 'define' community as an '*object of study*', rather than a living entity which exists because of on-going internal and external relationships and processes, indeed, because it *is* a '*living entity*'. Another, more pernicious use of 'community' occurs when the concept is inserted into phrases like '*out there in the community*' (especially by politicians pretending that they are (still) 'of the community') or when it is used to designate in the abstract anything and everything pertaining to '*social life*' and to be distinguished from life at the 'centre' of power, be that corporate or governmental, or even in corporatised NGOs.

Ife (2002:80; 2016:97-125) identified 'community' by its accessible structures and interpersonal interactions at a scale readily controlled and used by individuals and groups who either will and/or can come to know each other. As well, inherent in community is a sense of belonging and acceptance, an allegiance and loyalty to its aims, thus offering opportunities to add new identities as non-consumers, members of collectives and active subjects (Ife, 2016:97-125). A sense of responsibility and obligation to actively participate in the 'life' and sustenance of one's community and livelihood is another important characteristic.

Watkins, Murphy & Cunningham (2003:6) conceptualise community as our *place of residence*, which is inherently and vitally important regardless of how long one resides in it, of one's age or financial or family status; it is a place in which '*we get ourselves together daily to deal with an uncertain world*' in which we '*find supports for raising a family, improving our health, understanding and communication with the outside world, and managing apprehension*' (ibid. p.1). It is conceptualised as the space in which things happen, from simply finding a friend or interests that enrich our lives, recovering from a serious illness, taking respite, learning, growing our own fruit trees, refining our sporting skills or experiencing or striving to experience a sense of belonging.

As we have many - and many important - needs for right livelihood met within our communities, communities themselves must be nurtured, resourced, respected and attended to and responsibility for them needs to be shared both from within and without. History supports the potential of people within neighbourhoods, when they come together, being able to improve their own communities and affect not only their local 'place', but their regional, state and even national contexts, including the highest levels of decision-making in society (Watkins, Murphy and Cunningham, 2003).

Without active and conscious investment and steps towards preservation, from within and without, communities and environments - and thus livelihoods - decline and suffer from the interactive and cumulative distress of erosion, eroded civic involvement, racial and ethnic intolerance, economic disparity and its sequelae of violence and injuries, crime and mental and physical illnesses, for example. Boyle and Harris (2009:11) asserted that *'when people are never asked to give anything back, and when the assets they represent are ignored or deliberately side-lined, they atrophy'*; they also identify such neglect of people's capabilities as a key insight into the failure of the welfare state (rather than the often-heard *'welfare-dependency'* accusations by conservative and neo-liberal commentators, which 'blame' the recipients for being apathetic, accusing them of 'rotting' the system or of being 'bludgers' and lacking a sense of 'mutual obligation').

CD thus argues for programs of *community* development (i.e. the *(re-)development of communities*) that seek to re-instate necessary structures of/for community, such as local services and clubs, extended family or church and interest groups, (i.e. collectives often eroded if not destroyed by capitalist industrial 'development') alongside already established community-based and professional services, in which community members themselves are invested. Part of the *'subsidiarity'* role of 'super-ordinated' governance systems and instances is to enable processes of community re-development to occur and be supported without taking the lead or sometimes even the initiative (more to this below; also, see Healey, Boulet and Boulet, 2006 and Boulet, Healey and Helton, 2008 referred to and quoted before).

As separate individuals, we are indeed powerless to change anything – not even many of our own personal choices, which are themselves constrained by the collectively-created and re-produced social and 'physical' world. Determined to reclaim and reposition the value of the *social and the collective* as a fundamental *'good'* (rather than an additional 'luxury'), CD – the *'development of community'* - acts as a social and relational practice countering the western bias favouring almost exclusively the economic and the individual, and balancing these with a sense of social and collective obligation (Ife, 2008 & 2016) to social, economic, political, cultural, environmental and personal/spiritual development, or, in other words, to right livelihood for all including the non-human species and the natural environment.

*'Development of community'* occurs when groups and individuals find they have shared interests or face common issues and congregate with the intention of initiating a change process *'from below'*, i.e. to realise that they do have – or can develop - the strengths, assets and resilience it takes to create necessary and desired changes in their livelihood(s) and capabilities. Complementary to working with *'real people on the ground'*, CD also commits to facilitating participation for co-production and to instigating the *structural and institutional transformations necessary for such a purpose*. *Deliberative and participatory* democratic processes – such as those associated with the creation and maintenance of a *'civil society'* – are core elements of community development, rather than remaining merely dependent on the *representative opportunities offered by existing political processes* and the often eroded values, pragmatic assumptions and power imbalances inherent in the latter.



Forging opportunities for co-production towards right livelihood is actually more easily said than done (or than conceived of by someone trapped in the dominant paradigm); the reason for this is that while we've been taught to think of ourselves as independent economic – especially 'consuming' and 're-productive' - units, *interconnection and relationship instead form the basis of all life on and with earth*. The social, economic and ecological worlds we create together are the ones we'll live in, and *when they are based on and reflect genuine interrelationship they are much more resilient*, as proven by Indigenous and traditional societies that lasted for thousands of years based on much more community- and otherwise relationally-focused models of livelihood (Wahl, 2016; Escobar, 2018).

Much of this, including present understandings of *resilience*, is grafted into a re-emerging understanding of *Relational Being* (Gergen 2009), informed by such diverse sources as quantum philosophy (Bohm, 1985), Indigenous wisdom (Bob Randall for Aboriginal Australia; Linda Tuhowai Smith for Maori New Zealand; Vine Deloria for the First Peoples in North America and many others; see also Boulet, 2018) and other non-western philosophical and practice approaches.

Although it is easy to forget this, because we are so immersed in them, the modern economies we live in are a '*flash in the pan*'—as are many of the assumptions upon which they rest. Ultimately, if we are to survive as a species, *right* livelihoods will be the only livelihoods available and attempts at imagining and anticipating '*Life Beyond Growth*' (ISHES, 2012) are proliferating and gradually taken more seriously by decisions and meaning-makers in – what David Korten (1996) terms – the *suicide economy*.

## PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT – AN INITIAL STATEMENT

**Ecological considerations** and **social justice** are – or should be - the two major foundational and complementary perspectives of CD in our current changing social, economic, political and environmental context. These perspectives underlie the here presented approaches to practising and analysing CD processes and their impact towards co-production for right livelihoods. Neither of these perspectives are sufficient on their own; they are indeed complementary and sometimes in tension.

The components of a **social justice** perspective – structures and discourses of disadvantage, inequality, power differentials, needs and rights, capabilities - are interdependent. Social justice principles demand a focus on empowerment *and* on the necessity to challenge oppressive structures and processes rather than reinforcing the existing order and associated conservative practices. Within a social justice perspective, oppressive social, political and economic orders - class, gender, race/ethnicity, ability, age and sexual preference - are revealed and their rectification demanded and – where possible – worked towards.

An **ecological** perspective is expressive of *holism, sustainability, diversity and equilibrium*; it reminds us to question the possibility and appropriateness of continuous economic growth and ever-increasing consumption as solutions to social problems and issues of right livelihood even whilst these are major contributors to the current environmental and social crises (Ife, 2002; 2016). Wilkinson (1996, cited in Henderson 2007a:121), questioning economic growth as a societal goal from an ecological perspective, suggested that

*'in its place we must operationalise values of human social and material emancipation, ensuring that narrower income differences extend dignity to all and so provide a material base conducive to the proper development of the social life of our societies'.*

**Change from below** is a primary principle for enacting social justice and ecological perspectives, as it supports the wise and good use of power; it incorporates valuing local knowledge, culture, resources, skills and processes (Ife, 2016). *'Local knowledge'*, in which multiple forms of knowledge take the stage, is often devalued in favour of the outside-expert, the consultant and *'best practice'*, based on assumed scientific knowledge. Local knowledge validates intuitive, historical, storied, flora and fauna, spiritual and folklore knowledge, all vitally important in processes feeding into the *development of community*; for example, knowledge of a local community's culture describes what the community deems *'the right thing to do'*, the protocols for engaging with the community, typical roles, social orders and values, which must all be worked with and within for a CD practice that supports co-production and co-design to be successful. The process of knowledge-sharing enables an appreciation and validation of *both* local and expert knowledge and leads to *'good /best possible practice in the given context'*.

Valuing local resources enables **self-reliance** and sustainable **community autonomy** alongside **inter-dependence** with outside communities – these being the objectives of CD. Valuing local skills not only empowers people but strengthens a community's self-reliance and openness to change – the motivation towards collaborative, multilevel, culturally-situated community interventions. Understood and accepted processes already used in the community, such as traditions of discussion and participation, are validated and understood as starting points, thus creating a platform of solidarity and inclusion from which to join and work with/in the community. The incorporation of community-lived experience united with theoretical lenses is important for genuine transformational dialogue, as well as the creation and sustenance of genuine and trustworthy bottom-up processes.

The **bottom-up** concept, which 'co-production' builds into the *'developing community for right livelihoods'* process, defies the neo-liberal idea that people who use services are *'drains on the system'*, instead considering them as *'hidden resources'* or, indeed, as persons possessing evolving capabilities. The citizens themselves are seen to *'provide the vital ingredients which allow public service professionals to be effective'* (Boyle & Harris, 2009:11) and, in fact, *'no service that ignores this resource can be efficient'*. Co-production and co-design – if practiced in an inclusive way - can potentially transform public services into efficient services, able to address human problems and meet urgent challenges and it is key to reforming public services – encouraging *'users to design and deliver services in equal partnership with professionals'* (Boyle, Coote, Sherwood & Slay, 2010:3).



A next and equally fundamental principle is that of **process**. Crucially, CD emphasises *process* rather than *outcome*, placing 'how we get there' as more important than trying to anticipate 'where we end up' (Ife, 2016). The ends can and should not be separated from the means; *the means do matter and should 'pre-figure' or be congruent with how we hope the end to be like*. Public and democratic participation and debate, for example, are both ends and means (many of our parliamentary debates thus being rather poor anticipations of, or models for, a civil culture worth working towards!). The process itself must reflect the perspectives of ecological and social justice (and decency), lest it undermine the actual goal. For the process to have integrity, the community itself must own, control and sustain it (Ife, 2016).

It is too easy to unquestioningly inherit *representative* democratic processes from large, complex and centralised societies, when at the local level the potential for *participatory* democratic processes exists, demanding adequate *de-centralisation* of power and access to resources. Indeed, as Rebecca Solnit (2009:308-9) concludes in the Epilogue to her impressive investigation of post-disaster community responses, institutional failure and '*unexpected joy, resourcefulness, and generosity that arise amid disaster's grief and disruption and considers their implications for everyday life – and for the coming era of increasingly common and intense calamity, natural, semi-natural, and man-made*' (from the dust jacket of the book):

*"The current global economic depression is itself a vast disaster. Grim though it is, it may also be a chance for decentralization, democratization, civic engagement, and emergent organization and ways of coping – or perhaps it is more accurate to say that it may demand these things as a means of survival. The more profound preparation for disaster must make a society more like that of disaster utopias in their brief flowering: more flexible and improvisational, more egalitarian and less hierarchical, with more room for meaningful roles and contributions from all members – and with a sense of membership. Civil society is what saves people and creates the immediate conditions for survival – rescue teams, field kitchens, concerned neighbours – and it is a preventative too, as the Chicago heat wave, Cuban hurricanes, and many other disasters have demonstrated."*

Elemental to contemporary CD approaches is, therefore, a focus on **change in society's institutions** (social justice and civil society perspectives) and it is always and necessarily *complementary to or in (reciprocal) support* of change in individuals (see also Boulet et al. 2008). Engaging and enabling co-production for right livelihoods, *developing community* shifts the focus to --

- people's resources as opposed to their problems;
- self-actualisation over stigmatisation;
- social change over social control;
- chosen rather than imposed participation;
- (horizontal) accountability to community and consumers as opposed to (professional) peers or (vertically) only to the 'sources' of funding;
- decisions being made by participants; and
- individuals determining their own life-styles without discriminatory and discretionary provisions (Ingamells, 2010:4).

This, of course, also requires a major rethink about the relationship between government, community and citizens; this is not the place to enter into a detailed discussion of the '**subsidiarity principle**' but a few brief references should suffice to add to the conceptual framework being promoted throughout this book (all the quotes from Boulet et al 2008):

'...the future development of relationships between 'community-based' bodies, the different levels of government ... therewith improve[ing] the relationship between institutions of primary and secondary 'sociality' ... we propose **subsidiarity** as a potentially useful concept, which recently had increased airing in policy circles. The **Subsidiarity Principle** '*...states that higher levels of government should only perform functions that cannot be effectively and efficiently undertaken by lower levels of government... [it] might involve a [constitutional] provision... that, unless amended by a referendum, decision making and administration is to be delegated to the most local practical level*' (Coghill cited in Lowell 2006:5) ... It posits that 'super-imposed' or 'up-scaled' government bodies or powers should **not** usurp the roles and functions better or sufficiently fulfilled by more localised or informal, non-governmental or '*primary sociality*' institutions, groups and bodies ...

The notions of '*subside*' and '*subsidise*' both derive from the Latin verb *subsidiere* (from which '*subsidiarity*' stems), the first referring to the '*holding back*' attitude governments should adopt when relating to the workings of institutions of primary sociality, whilst the second brings to the fore the continuing role of central and state governments and their institutions in *resourcing* the more primary 'bodies' who fulfil these functions. Indeed, central governments have the power to raise revenue and it is their role to **distribute that revenue equitably and justly** across their territory and the various groups of citizens according to their needs (see Zucker, 2001); it stands to reason, though, that this does not necessarily imply that they would be the '*best*' to '*deliver*' whatever is being 'distributed'.

The 1981 Webster's Third International Dictionary (Vol. III, p. 2279) calls *subsidiarity* a '*theory in sociology: functions which subordinate or local organizations perform effectively belong more properly to them than to a dominant central organisation*'. Importantly also, Lowell points out that '*[i]n a contemporary context, subsidiarity has a higher profile as a 'new political resource designed to protect local interests within the new internationalization of government' and features prominently in the European Union legislation*' (2006:5 and quoting Fletcher 1999:23).

Linking this revision of subsidiarity with a new '*public ethics*' of accountability from the global to the local level, Ebrahim and Weisband (2007:317) offer a central argument for 'co-production,' co-design, civic participation and by implication, for inclusion:

- A postmodern public ethics linked to accountability requires the development of meaningful participatory practices (i.e. where participants have **influence** and not simply voice);
- The ethical implications of global interdependencies are realized in practical terms by means of **accountability networking** as an organizational form;
- Transaction-cost efficiencies gleaned from networking and accountability contribute to governance in ways appropriate to the dynamics of postmodern civil society;
- Participatory practices must reflect diverse cultures and divergent institutional settings appropriate to the problematics of accountability measured in terms of the benefits of inter-subjective learning as well as benchmarked deficits.

To compensate for the deficits occasioned by inequalities in access and power and for the differences in benefits and costs experienced by groups of citizens given their relative distances from decision-making centres, they (2007:321) quote David Held (2004), who proposes that a

*'cosmopolitan multilateralism based on **the principles of global subsidiarity** must be developed. Held's vision of global accountability thus combines a kind of participatory praxis with a call for fluid concentric circles of governance to ensure inclusiveness, subsidiarity, and, by implication, greater accountability.'*

Further, with Kuper (2004), they assert that (2007:331):

*'sovereignty can and should be dispersed horizontally and vertically, to multiple levels and loci of authority, each exercising distinct and determinate power over kinds of human practice and resources, [and whilst]"**plurarchic sovereignty** is... limited on functional grounds by needs for efficacious coordinated action and democratic inclusion [which] ... give rise to **Principles of Distributive Subsidiarity and Democracy**... [which] connect the lines between citizen activism, networks, accountability, and postmodern public ethics.'*

And, more locally, Melbourne University's Sullivan confirmed the importance of this line of thinking in a report of an earlier meeting of the Centre for Public Policy; she summarises (the URL is not available anymore):

In addition, the content of accountability relationships and the importance attached to different kinds of content has shifted over time. In our 2002 book, *Working Across Boundaries*, Chris Skelcher and I identified three dimensions to accountability relationships: financial accountability (how money is spent), performance accountability (what interventions deliver) and democratic or public accountability (how decisions are made). We suggested that as governance and service delivery arrangements became more complex then ensuring accountability in each dimension would become correspondingly more difficult. However what we did not foresee was the way in which the development of evidence-informed policy making would influence these different dimensions. For example, the increasing attention paid to particular kinds of evidence e.g. 'hard' evidence and the attraction of particular approaches that promised to deliver that kind of evidence including 'value for money' approaches, **have resulted in the elevation of performance and financial accountability above democratic or public accountability**. And it is arguably the case that the contents of democratic processes for accountability are now comprised of evidence derived from financial and/or performance management systems, **with relatively little attention paid to other kinds of content e.g. citizen testimony**.

Thus, through participation via co-production and co-design based on the above principles of subsidiarity, justice and sustainability, community members can organise themselves to increase self-reliance, assert their rights and build their individual and community capabilities (Summerson Carr, 2004). Carson and Hart (2006:5) note that --

*"...when people are given extensive and accessible information and a chance to discuss their fears and concerns, they have the ability to grapple with quite complex material and to move toward consensus."*

With such empowerment, people are not only just 'being included'; they gain

*"collective control over their lives, so as to achieve their interests as a group and 'working with members of communities in a way that assists them to mobilise, and effectively exercise a greater degree of power when challenging the construction and maintenance of the social differences that shape their experience of disadvantage, exclusion and oppression" (Henderson, 2007:21).*

It is an approach through which CD workers seek to enhance the potential of people to act powerfully (cited in Vijayanthi, 2002). Raysmith (2005:23), in turn, identifies five elements that are required for the empowerment of local communities to become co-productive: *'communities are given more control over information, more control over relationships, more control over resources, more control over decision-making, and more control over skills'*, thus closely matching Ife's (2002:57-8) seven elements, including power over personal choices and life chances, the definition of need, ideas, institutions, resources, economic activity and reproduction.

Power is present in both decision-making, non-decision making and in discourses in which it both shapes and perpetuates taken-for-granted values, norms, *'common-sense'*, traditional beliefs and ideologies and perceptions of what is assumed to be *'natural'* and *'normal'*. By recognising the exercise of power and understanding that differential access to power accounts for the disadvantage, exclusion and oppression of some groups over others, power can be mobilised to achieve the resource distribution and service improvements that will identify, confront and reduce the *'isms'* that underlie discrimination and oppression – racism, sexism and ageism being just three of these. Instead, power can be operationalised to find common ground in situations of conflict in order to produce win-win resolutions. By *'dispersing'* power, goals are achieved *with* others and not at their expense. Such power can be found in the bonds and ties that hold people together in groups, communities, organisations and societies – the *'core'* economy - and which are vitally important for survival (Henderson, 2007). *'Power with'* aims to either *'reduce a conflict situation or move a project into a more secure, advantageous position in ways that do not disadvantage other 'players'*" (Henderson, 2007a:128).

At both the national and the *'grassroots'* levels, it is the focus on *co-production towards right livelihoods and capabilities* that provides opportunity for *inclusion* and *genuine empowerment*, realising people's potential as active subjects in politics (Shaw, 2006:32). Such potential is characterised by Lackey et al (1987:2) as the development of:

1. *Local groups with well-developed problem solving skills and a spirit of self-reliance;*
2. *A broad distribution of power in decision making, commitment to the community as a place to live, and broad participation in community affairs;*
3. *Leaders with community-wide vision and residents with a strong sense of community loyalty;*
4. *Effective collaboration in defining community needs and the ability to achieve a working consensus on goals and priorities;*
5. *Citizens with a broad repertoire of problem solving abilities who know how to acquire resources when faced with adversity;*
6. *Commitment to the community and a government that provides enabling support for the people; and*
7. *A formal or informal mechanism for exchange amongst conflicting groups.*

The development of these elements can be used as a litmus test to ascertain whether attempts to engage communities and make them '*inclusive*' are tokenistic and merely '*consultative*' or genuinely empowering co-production processes which provide a conduit for transformation of structures and livelihoods through confronting issues of power (Sen, 1997; Rifkin, 2003).

Community development practice must also work diligently within the present neo-liberal political and economic-rationalist climate while undertaking, at the same time, the partisan activities of community development. Community development practitioners must, therefore, be committed to on-going critical analysis in order to be able to challenge institutional modes and habits of operating and taken-for-granted professional-bureaucratic methods of managing and leading not-for profit, community and public organisations. '*Seeing the world from a critical perspective*' which '*involves questioning everyday experience*' (Ledwith, 2005:31) is of crucial importance as the power of any political order often resides in the unquestioned nature of the roles, practices, discourses and ideologies that govern our thoughts and actions (Shore, 2010). Such stance equally fits well in the present climate of growing awareness of the malfunctioning of the macro-political-economic system, as increasingly noticed and – experienced! – by those summarily identified as the '99%' in the 'Occupy' movements or as the 'Indignados' (in the double sense of '*being treated in undignified ways by the 'system'*' and '*being indignant*'), but much longer by globalised and localised movements like the '*World Social Forums*' and their respective ecological and 'community-economic' expressions, for example the Extinction Rebellion groups and initiatives and the more radical movements in the disability field.

## **CRITICAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Unfortunately, the discourse of economic *growth*, supplanting social and ecological justice, dominates our ways of talking, thinking, feeling and acting and thus serves to reinforce, reproduce and support itself, while simultaneously denying, disqualifying or silencing discourses that do not, thus constructing a powerful ideological dogma. Such a discourse is evident in how we choose where and how to live, where to shop and how to spend our time, when to employ others, which school to send our children to, the decision as to how many children one may have and so on. Law (1995, cited in House, 2010) claimed that discursive practices that serve to maintain the dominance of such a discourse undoubtedly benefit and thus increase the power of those persons who have access to its privileges. Thus, economic rationalism and the associated discourses of managerialism, competition, careerism, individualism, neo-liberalism and even of some '*community empowerment*' programs can be considered exercises of power, acting to maintain existing (dis-)advantages. And suffice it to merely state: they do not encourage or support inclusion of those considered 'less-productive'.

'Power', and whether it will be used wisely and well (Gini, 2004 cited in Maner & Mead, 2010), is 'core' to community development based on a critical social justice perspective. A critical CD lens reveals how rigid, disempowering and unsustainable structures of regulation and incentives for privatisation, 'nominally' designed to protect human rights, in fact invalidate them. Such practices are often covert in taken-for-granted notions of



tradition and the dominating discourses and need to be brought to the awareness of citizens and communities, lest they be both uncritically internalised *and* bestowed upon others.

Due to the taken-for-granted nature and dominance of economic-rationalist ideology in government policies, in media and everyday discourses and their associated self-perpetuating structures and processes dominating the practices of relating, governing, educating, competing, working, consuming etc. – to work within a CD framework requires a heightened capacity to shine a critical light on one's own and one's group's or agency's political, economic, ecological practices and assumptions about community and its place in the greater order of things. Community development practitioners need to '*search behind the political statements and policy guidelines for the ideas which inform them*', in order to '*make explicit the ideological and value beliefs of individuals*' and be prepared to risk the '*cut and thrust of disagreement and debate*' (Henderson, 2007a:130) to achieve goals *with* others rather than *at the expense of* others, and to initiate change in institutional and organisational functioning that enables this. Widening our understanding of *violence*, for example, to include structural, institutional, gendered, racial, spiritual, physical, emotional, financial and psychological violence, oppression and exclusion cues us into critically questioning taken-for-granted notions of nationalism, sectarianism, patriarchy, (neo-)colonialism, profit, control, justice, conflict and war (Ife, 2016).

Such critical thinking is not the preserve of any one professional or functional group in society (Butcher & Robertson, 2007) and must not only be incorporated within community building frameworks but also embedded within the consciousness of (senior) executives, bureaucrats and managers in our public (and increasingly privatised – cue NDIS!) services (Lekakis, 2005). Overarching political and economic ideologies are inherently incongruent with the goals of community development and this conflict is played out at all levels of government and in the 'places' where they are supposed to be effective. While the main reason for CD-inspired and sustained practice is '*to work for community change by enabling and resourcing community members to address felt community needs*' (Henderson, 2007:18), neo-liberal practices aim to control and monitor the 'other' (i.e. citizens) from the top down, until, inevitably, citizens are internalising and exercising this surveillance over and against themselves (House, 2010).

Critical analysis of CD practices reveals not only their potential benefits but also their deficiencies and weaknesses. Groups can develop from tight-knit pre-existing networks, such as leaders recruited from local elites and old-boy civic networks, which then powerfully exclude outsiders, minorities, the disabled or ill, the least organised and/or least educated, those who may benefit the most and could contribute from their largely unknown or deliberately ignored assets and capabilities. External resources may fail to be sought if there is too much emphasis on a local approach, limiting impact and resources (Midgley & Livermore, 1998, cited in Watkins Murphy and Cunningham, 2003 and see above my remarks about *the subsidiarity principle* and the 'justice' of distributing and committing resources to the efforts of institutions and groups of *primary sociality*). Thus, CD and the capacity for communities to self-organise may be misappropriated as an *alternative* rather than as a *supplement* to efforts to renew and/or strengthen communities and be used by governments or even philanthropy to justify withdrawal of funding and resources (Coleman, 1988 cited in Watkins Murphy & Cunningham, 2003; Putnam, 1993).

It is essential, therefore, to question and challenge 'top-down' and/or 'deficit-only' perspectives on communities and confront the structural reasons for social problems that are encountered, rather than 'blame' the former for their possible deficits or their lack of 'participation' i.e. through a neo-liberal lens of individualism and competition. Applied to the pace of development, critical CD practitioners evaluate whether the process and its pace is in tune with the community or the worker; providing the right conditions for CD in 'a world of deadlines, efficiency and outcomes, where good process is devalued and simply seen as a means to an end' (Ife, 2002:136; updated in 2016) is difficult for a CD worker to conceptualise and practice without critical reflection. This is all the more so given workers' often precarious location *between* the expectations of their employing agency and those of citizens (often seen and defined as 'clients/consumers/customers' by the employer) they work with and for (Boulet 2009). Critical awareness of the impact of the dominant ethic and principles of *competition* and *self-interest* as natural and desirable, for example, should also alert us to include the principles of *cooperation* and *altruism*, which are natural and desirable attributes of our species, as is the desire to include all in the process. Critical analysis of CD and its practise is vital to ensuring that both ends *and* means matter, as already suggested before.

In sum, '*community work cannot be simply reduced to a deterministic process... based on 'toolkits' for community consultation and recipes for 'building social capital', 'but must include the social practice of solidarity and political contestation'* (Westoby and Dowling, 2009:16). Community is constructed within relationships within strangers, friends, families and communities, thus structures and processes must be evaluated for their capacity to allow community building and encouraging people to work together and in ways in which all can contribute and depend upon each other to get things done (see Boulet et al, 2008 for an alternative 'paradigm' to understand community relationships: the '*gift relationship*' approach).

It seems, therefore, worthwhile to examine in more detail the nature of community as a '*relationship*', rather than an increasingly ephemeral 'something' referred to by everyone, but consciously experienced as such by few, or indeed, rather than a rather inert amalgam of presumably autonomous and self-centred individuals.

## THE RELATIONAL PARADIGM

***The healthy social life is found when in the mirror of each human soul the whole community finds its reflection, and when in the community the virtue of each one is living'***

(Steiner, 1979)

Alongside critical analysis and action, a focus on *building and/or restoring relationships*, regardless of its impact on outcomes, efficiencies or even best practice, *reconstructs citizenship and is foundational for community well-being, co-production and the attainment of right livelihoods inclusive of all regardless of their physical, mental or emotional state.*

From a relational paradigm, one --

*'sees the energies and capacities of citizens outside government as the greatest untapped resources for meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century. Any paradigm that excludes them by focusing primarily on political institutions is ineffective because it fails to take advantage of those resources and is immoral because it marginalises most of the world's people'. [Such a paradigm] 'broadens the focus of study from government and related political institutions – political parties, interest groups, lobbyists, and public opinion – to include citizens outside government', [because only citizens outside government can] 'transform conflictual relationships, modify human behaviour, and change political culture' (Saunders & Narayan Parker, 2011:35-6).*

Charlene Spretnak (2011:1) starts the first chapter ('Relational Revelations') in her newest book, *Relational Reality*, as follows:

*'Our hypermodern societies currently possess only a kindergarten-level understanding of the deeply relational nature of reality. It may seem unlikely that such advanced culture could have missed "the way the world works," but it was simply a matter of habit. Our cultural tendency has been to perceive the physical world as an aggregate of separate entities. We noticed some relationships between and among things, of course, but those seemed of marginal significance compared to what things are made of and how they function. The failure to notice that reality is inherently dynamic and interrelated at all levels – including substance and functioning – has caused a vast range of suffering...'*

And Spretnak goes on to describe a great variety of such suffering and how from various rather unsuspected corners a *'... growing stream of discoveries has begun to dislodge assumptions that have been in place for nearly four centuries about how we humans and the rest of the natural world function'* (p. 4).

Within a relational paradigm, social, political and economic life can be understood *'as a cumulative, multilevel, open-ended process of continuous interaction'* (Sanders & Parker, 2011:37) - everything happens within the context of relationships within communities, be they strong, weak, top-down or bottom-up, respectful or exploitative relationships. The *solidarity* that enables one, one's own (local) community and that of others (globally) to a *'right livelihood'* is built or co-created within *relationships* and through *relating*. In privileging relationships, the focus is *'on the subtle and dynamic processes of valuing and nurturing relationships between people'* (Westoby and Dowling, 2009:10).

The core of successful CD relies on networks of relationships in which trust and reciprocity are engendered and power and control enacted for the benefit of all. Watkins, Murphy and Cunningham (2003) claim that *'individual relationships grow and multiply, beget attachment, and contribute to maintaining the underlying web of cohesion'*, providing a platform or foundation from which residents/citizens can take on oppressive, excluding or non-responsive structures and organisations. Leaders and employees working according to CD's ecological and social justice principles aim to assist communities and other collectives as they identify interests, issues, strengths, problems and needs within the various dimensions of their livelihood and – if required - facilitate their collective attainment or resolution through co-production (Mayo, 2002; Kenny, 2006). Such practitioners work for and with communities not as experts but as *equals* - because they are aware of Aboriginal activist Lilla Watson's wise words: *"if you have come here to help*



*me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together*"<sup>2</sup>. To work towards enhancing the 'right livelihood' of communities and their members, CD aims to catalyse and facilitate people's active participation and sharing of responsibility in decisions and processes that affect their livelihood *and* that of others.

Adding a philosophical/practical lens of '*relationship*' (or, in the formulation of Kenneth Gergen, the lens of '*Relational Being*', the title of his latest book, 2009) to evaluating one's actions and impact is a significant and meaningful progression to privileging humanity, collectivity and community and inserting them into the ethics and practicalities of 'running' the 'business' of government or organisations – in fact, of all collective decision making. It also leads to the reconstruction of citizenship, the reclamation of political and economic space by the community and the localisation of the global system (Korten, 1986; Boulet, 2010)).

Engagement with the local community is an end in and of itself and a deliberate focus on relationships (Schluter & Lee, 2009) offers an opportunity to replace the dignity and the inhumanity eroded by the unchecked impositions of capitalist exploitation, bureaucratic rationality and individualism. Regardless of the person, the policy or the program, how things are implemented depends upon the local and daily interactions and relationships with and between all who are involved (Storey, 2004; Gergen, 2009); policies, procedures and programs are only of value if they work '*in real relationships between real people*' (Schluter and Lee, 2009:20). Every aspect of organisational and community functioning occurs in the context of relationships, fundamental for quality of life, yet mostly taken-for-granted, translated into '*contractual*' terms (Schluter and Lee, 2009) or simply ignored.

Whilst relational capabilities tend to be taken for granted, they require a deliberate orientation toward learning about and from others, whereby one waits and withholds one's own agenda and the impulse to tell, until one understands the context, topic and the 'others' – especially those usually excluded – (to be) involved in the relational process (Arnett et al., 2009, cited in Westoby & Dowling:10). The process of dialogue and deliberation or '*inter-thinking*' and thinking together '*for collectively making sense of experience and solving problems*' (Mercer, 2000 cited in Butcher 2007a) are central to the transformational intentions of co-production and co-design towards right livelihood. Westoby and Dowling (2009:11) argue for '*deconstructive movements*', '*depth*' and '*attentiveness*', in order to do no harm in our complex world. The authors instructed workers not only '*firstly to listen deeply to what the other has to say, but secondly, to make oneself present to the other*' without filtering out '*the unwanted responses*' and taking '*time to build connections and understand others*' with curiosity (ibid, p. 12); and what surprises one can encounter when those excluded for whatever reason 'suddenly' prove to be fonts of wisdom, creativity and offer answers to previously unasked questions.

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2 This quote has served as a motto for many activist groups in Australia and elsewhere, including **United Students Against Sweatshops**. A possible origin for the quote is a speech given by Watson at the 1985 **United Nations** Decade for Women Conference in **Nairobi**. Watson has said of this quote that she was '*not comfortable being credited for something that had been born of a collective process*' and prefers that it be credited to '*Aboriginal activists group, Queensland, 1970s*'. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lilla\\_Watson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lilla_Watson) downloaded 3/10/2011

Such relating requires a capability for *interiority* – the direct, *participatory immersion* in any situation in order to recognise, appreciate and understand any given occasion, and this requires *empathy*, *genuineness* and *sensitivity*. Intentionally listening to people's stories, understanding their concerns and engaging with their agendas, creates the potential to find common ground (Westoby & Dowling, 2009:11). The skill of interiority allows an '*understanding of the way things are done in a particular community, and action within these terms of reference*' (Kenny, 2006:284), which, in turn, respects the inherent dignity of the people with whom one is working in any situation (Floyd & Hayward, 2008). Such respect comes through development of a genuine interest in the nature of the direct experience of engaging with others and the outcome of that engagement in terms of the meaning that arises for the person or people encountering it (Floyd & Hayward, 2008). This humanising and de-economising of social relations requires a personal and professional agenda of '*solidarity, hospitality and depth*' (Westoby & Dowling, 2009:10) and is the only one that can lead to meaningful inclusion.

Concluding with Spretnak (2011:203)

*'The old ideal of the Absolutely Autonomous Individual denied the relational reality of our selves and the world. The new – and very ancient – perception of the self in dynamic, relational context is far more healthy, creative, and responsible. This is the liberation the Earth Community has been waiting for us to achieve.'*

## Organisational process and change

What applies to community does so equally to organisations: "*The affirming flow of relationship is a major source of vitality, and from this flow may spring commitment, direction, and bonding. It is so in classrooms, on teams, in neighbourhoods, and in formal organisations.*" (Gergen, 2009:316) Gergen points out that – paradoxically – the attempt to maintain what 'works' in an organisation may lead to a solidification – or even 'rigidification' – of the relationships and thus to the destruction of their vitality (ibid. 316-7 and ff.), especially when unequal power structures lead to the suppression of voices, when cultural differences both within the organisation and between the organisation and its working context are not recognised. This is of utmost importance for CD, as the working context within which the *development of community* operates is often highly contradictory and conflict-laden as we have suggested before (Boulet, 2010; London Edinburgh Weekend Return Group, 1980 – their famous *In and Against the State*; Brent, 2009). For many community workers, the relationship with bureaucracies which they are either working in or have to deal with in the course of their engagement with their communities is utterly fraught, and the literature is replete with sometimes heart-breaking examples of failures of initially excellent CD projects and processes.

Gergen pleads for seeing and practicing organisational decision making as '*relational coordination*' and the organisation itself as '*a potentially fluid field of meaning-making*' (p. 320-2). He asserts that, from a relational perspective,

*"the inadequacy of the pyramidal structure is most glaring. Decisions made on high are typically monological. They do not issue from the relational clusters that create the realities and values through which daily work is accomplished. The decisions are imposed on this process... Within the various clusters, orders from elsewhere may not be accepted as reasonable and desirable; they may in fact be constructed as 'mindless', 'insensitive', 'punitive,' or 'misguided'. There may*

*be forced compliance within the clusters, but the stage is set for negative vitality."*

How well do we recognise these realities in the context of bureaucratic and economic-rationally-justified decision-making and 'leadership'? As to the latter, Gergen suggests the need to move '*from leadership to Relational Leading*'; as the myth of the '*lone ranger*' type leader certainly continues to hold sway in our corporations and in many institutional contexts which seemingly have been forced to follow or imitate their model (and their quite extraordinary and outrageous pricing!), but he (p. 333) asserts that

*"...Abandoned are the endless and often contradictory lists of what it takes to be a good leader. In their place we find increasing emphasis on collaboration, empowerment, dialogue, horizontal decision-making, sharing, distribution, networking, continuous learning and connectivity. In effect, there now exists a cadre of organizational scholars and practitioners who variously reflect a deep concern with relational process. In my view, we may usefully replace the concept of leadership with that of **relational leading**... If significant movement is to take place within an organization, it will emerge from the generative exchange among participants."*

Gergen refers to the rapid spread of the *appreciative inquiry* approach (Cooperrider et al, 2000 and many more contributions to what has become a veritable global movement) as applied to decision making. This approach has certainly had a profound effect in the context of working with communities; indeed, it is strongly linked with the 'asset-based' or 'strength-based' approaches as advocated by Kretzmann and McKnight, (1993 and 2005); McKnight and Block, (2010); Block, (2009).

Gareth Morgan's (1986) *Images of Organisation* remains a good summary of the optimal parameters for creating socially and productively sustainable as well as publicly and internally accountable organisational processes; he posits the need to create organisational environments which encourage *holistic* and *interconnected* processes to unfold:

- **getting the whole into the parts;**
- **creating connectivity and redundancy;**
- **creating simultaneously specialisation and generalisation;**
- **creating a capacity to self-organise.**

The operative features of an organisation successfully adopting these parameters require it to aim:

- for a *redundancy of functions* rather than desperately trying to avoid the redundancy of parts;
- for the *requisite variety or diversity of organisational 'answers'* to the variety and differentiation of environmental demands rather than 'consolidating' into a few 'standard' responses;
- to describe jobs and performance tasks using *minimum critical specification* rather than over-specifying them (and refer to them as 'outcomes' rather than 'outputs');
- to create your organisation's capability for 'learning to learn'.

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# SUSTAINABILITY

To conclude this section on '*relational being*', a last word on our (i.e. our personal, community and organisational – and indeed, global) **ability to sustain** our world and our human existence within it, usually metamorphosed into a *noun* of assumed *instrumental* 'capacity' or '**sustainability**'. In the course of Borderlands' past evaluation and consulting practice, it has become evident that our ways of conceptualising sustainability – i.e. *that which it would take for us as a species to survive with dignity in a supporting environment* – are rather underdeveloped, one-sided/instrumental and reductionist. In addition, as with the use of the notion of '*inclusion*', it is important to reflect on whether the '*things*' we value and the '*ways of being and relating*' we are at present engaged in, really would '*deserve*' to be '*sustained*' – just like we need to ask ourselves whether our communities are worth '*being included into*' for those who at present are deemed to be excluded, or 'disadvantaged' or 'discriminated against'. In other words, when planning to 'do something' about sustainability, inclusion, capabilities or anything deemed to be necessary in the context of '*developing our communities*', we need frameworks of reflection and planning which allow us to **critically assess our present and existing ways of being, doing, having, relating and becoming** and which may be – to a large degree – co-producing and maintaining the predicaments we're attempting to address and – sometimes pretending to – '*do something*' about.

The following insert summarises Borderlands' (see [www.borderlands.org.au](http://www.borderlands.org.au)) attempt to enlarge and deepen our understanding of these concepts and we share it here as it very much links to what we have discussed before about our *capability to relate*.

The below reflective-evaluative framework is a '*people-focused*' way of looking at sustainability and well-being rather than mainly and narrowly focusing on the *material* and *structural* aspects of our ecological and social predicaments. It proposes to look at ways of creating the 'big' and 'small' changes and transformations we all know we need to achieve to save our-selves-and-the-planet. 'Sustainability' has – unfortunately and to a too large degree – become a 'noun' – or a 'fixed' attribute of a 'system' or an undertaking – rather than a **verb** and is too much associated with the 'things' which need changing or with the production and use of these 'things' and much less with the 'human' – personal, social and beyond-human and 'active' – side of the deep transformations we need to engender.

**The Six Elements of Sustainability** listed below are all crucial in sustaining and increasing communities' and individuals' '**ability to sustain**' their initiatives and their attempts at 'transformational change', their attempts at being 'inclusive' and in working towards personal and social wellbeing of and for all, towards social justice and towards a balanced relationship with the ecology they inhabit **now and in the long term**. These 'elements' have emerged from the on-going work of Borderlands consultants in various local, national and international evaluation contexts and have been purposefully used as operational and planning devices in many projects we have participated in.

In order of importance, they are:

Individuals', community members' and/or program participants' **personal and collective deepening awareness** of their situation and the availability of adequate information and knowledge – and wisdom – about how the program, the project or the initiative they commit to might contribute to their '*ability to sustain*' and '*be well*' and '*inclusive*' in their livelihood and the social and ecological context they inhabit;

The **everyday practices-within-context** individuals and community members or program/project participants engage in; the imperative to engage and assist participants in deep reflection about the ways in which they 'run' their daily lives and the commensurability of their daily practices, actions or activities with the intentions of the inclusive program/transformational project under consideration;

The absolute imperative of creating, developing and maintaining/sustaining – or possibly *restoring* - **relationships** participants are enmeshed in within the social context (home, family, work and neighbourhood, networks) and the ecology they are part of. This has to encompass an examination of the patterns of mutual responsibility and commitment, of the time and duration and shared spaces we 'relate' in and through as well as the modalities through which we relate 'deeply' if at all... The reciprocity and personal sacrifice we commit to when in relationship – both with other humans and with the non-human – are important aspects to help us judge the quality and sustenance derived from our 'inclusive relating';

The creation, development and maintenance of a **social culture of community, responsibility and commitment**, rather than limiting the focus to individual achievement and 'progress'; this is especially essential in initiatives invoking locality and 'place-based' dimensions (including participants' relationship with the place/locale they inhabit and the inclusion of all) as essential ingredients of their intended impact. It is also essential to examine and deal with the tensions inherent in the (western) focus on individualism as the solely relevant agency responsible for creating wellbeing and life-satisfaction, moving towards a more collectivised understanding and practice of wellbeing and right livelihood. As well, Western culture is probably the most *wasteful* of all human cultures which have ever covered the face of the globe... and we need to address this and transform it into cultural modes of frugality, preservation, re-use, etc...;

The establishment and maintenance of **systems and processes** that support the previous four elements of awareness, practices, relationships and resources and their on-going availability and 'health';

The availability of and access to relevant **resources** (material, financial, spatial, personal/social 'energy', leadership and time) to support the previous elements in an on-going manner.

After this more conceptual set of explorations, we now move to several *operational and practical considerations* flowing from these.

## THE PRACTICE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ITS ASSERTIONS

In this final practice-focused section of the literature review, we will examine three major sub-themes:

- attitudinal, intellectual and perceptual attributes, prerequisites and 'assertions' for community workers and their employing agencies;
- relational and participatory decision-making strategies between communities and local councils and other governments and relevant agencies;
- ambits and processes of community involvement and development.

### Attitudinal, intellectual and perceptual attributes, prerequisites and 'assertions' for community workers and their employing organisation

We would like to start this section of our explorations of relevant and recent literary contributions to Community Development practice and theory by a brief selection of



'assertions' or 'practice theory' statements and elaborations which attempt to 'translate' some of the more conceptual material interpreted above into **practice- and policy-relevant orientations** (see Schön's and Argyris' early statements about 'theory-in-use' and 'espoused theory' and their interlinking; Schön, 1983).

One initial caution is necessary; like many '*practice approaches*', '*methods and techniques*', '*models*' and – generally - '*interventions into human affairs*' (whether in terms of working with individuals, groups, families or communities and on a societal or organisational level, e.g. in the context of 'policy making'), '*the development of community*' has become severely *instrumentalised* in the hands of many 'specialists', course instructors and – especially – in the countless 'toolkits' now available. Much of this work is largely understood as mainly a set of technical devices to be applied to an assumed objective reality '*out there*', obeying predetermined 'steps' in a (mostly) linear process and for which one has to be trained and – usually – have gained some form of accreditation. Much of what has been discussed before obviously mitigates against such a conception, especially the strength- or asset-based approaches to CD, which require practitioners to **first** come to know those strengths/assets and **then**, in a participatory mode, **work together** with the community – **wherever this may take them**. Indeed, in many instances, Freire's adage '*we make the road while walking*' applies to such work (Horton & Freire, 1990).

Further, we also react against a conception of Community Development which allows it to be understood as the '*task*' of a certain '*unit*' or '*division*' within a government department or an agency, or as the domain of certain '*specialists*' who, having been especially trained, will '*do*' CD, whilst everyone else in the department/agency continues to '*do*' their labour-divided and specialist '*interventions*' or '*performances*' in which they have been trained and for which they are paid ... often times doing '*case*'-work, building '*roads, swings and roundabouts*', organising events and festivals, managing volunteer, etc.

Against such compartmentalisation and 'silo-ing', we suggest that community development – the '*development of community*' - should be rather understood as a '**working principle**' or a **generic task** for **all** who are in some way involved in working with people to realise/implement programs or range of programs of an agency, a local council or department or of any organisation, really.

A **principle**, by definition, is a basic or essential quality according to which one orients one's actions and relational practice; it also indicates the reason or rationale why one acts the way one does. A principle, thus, is a general 'axiom' which is derived from a generalised set of '*ways of doing things*', laws or regulations, experiences and (often assumed) essential characteristics of the living reality with which one interacts and which serves both in theoretical work and in practical activity as a **guide or blueprint**. It is therefore qualitatively different from a '*method*', the latter being a more or less '*planned procedure*', a more or less structured and often linear 'step-wise' activity, which is thought to be conducive to the achievement of a certain goal (which we now usually but wrongly call an '*outcome*', which is not an inherent part of the method, but to which the method is a '*means*'). A method, therefore, as applied to social work, community development, medical interventions or teaching, urban development etc., tends to be thought of as *instrumental* and (*value*) *neutral* or *objective* and it often omits (and is forced to omit) *reflection* on important dimensions of the relationship between the 'service recipient'



(citizens) – those we want to ‘include’ in the community - and the ‘service provider’ (government or agency workers and their respective bureaucracies), as discussed above.

A **principle** is situated *obliquely* to methods as it indicates a *basis* or a **multi-faceted foundation** to which methods are to be related and into which they need to be operationally integrated or embedded. A **working** principle, consequently, implies that, like a *working definition*, the principle is not yet ready, not yet completely elaborated; it is continuously in the process of refinement, of re-direction, of being *en-acted*. As societal reality proceeds through human action and interaction, the *working principle* becomes part of that process, is dialectically related to it; it is preliminary and yet orients and directs action and is simultaneously changed by it. While working *with* or ‘imbued’ by the principle, it will prove its *truth*, its *validity*; it will be reflected upon, transformed and further verified as it develops in the relational practice it is applied to. Hence, a *working principle* of community development (like the *working principle* associated with other intervention modalities, e.g. working with individuals or ‘cases’, group work) is a general *maxim*, which assists in orienting professional (or ‘service delivery’ or policy-based) action(s) or interactions in and across the most differentiated fields of practice. A working principle thus should bring **integrating** power in several ways. It should integrate/translate between:

- *theory and practice*
- *different methodical/technical approaches*
- *diverse (social) scientific disciplines*
- ‘into’ and with the ‘on-going-ness’ of *daily living* of those we relate/interact with in the course of our work.

Appendix One offers some further thoughts about **aspects** of the working principle through which the several ‘translations’ we have suggested in this brief discussion can be put to work.

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Trickett et al (2011:1411-2) elucidated four *primary assertions* basic to efforts to *develop community*, especially linked to improving the health and wellbeing of citizens and ensure their inclusion – these could thus be thought of as *basic orientations or practice assumptions* – indeed, elements of the *working principle of community development*, underlying all work with communities, individuals and groups within the realm of – in this instance - a local council.

The **first assertion** is that the goals of community interventions that address health disparities aim to ‘*strengthen the health and welfare of communities and to enhance existing local community capability to promote future community health and welfare*’. This assertion enshrines the importance of a *social justice* perspective – i.e. of the necessity of ‘inclusion’ - as previously discussed. It emphasises the importance of structural and policy factors affecting community life and recognising community capability as a central organising concept.

The **second assertion** is that ‘*community interventions are best conceptualised as complex interactions between the structure, processes and goals of the intervention and the community system or systems affected by it*’. It is essential to privilege the knowledge of the host

community and to systemically consider the structural and interpersonal relationships between the intervention, the community components and the development and success of the intervention; again, this has been referred to above as inherent in the '*strength-based*' and inclusive orientation of CD.

The **third assertion** is that '*the creation of empowering collaborative processes whereby community members play key roles as members of the intervention team throughout the intervention is essential for achieving long-term, sustainable community impact*'. The privileging of inclusive relating and knowledge sharing between community researchers, workers and communities with the goal of addressing inequalities underlying health disparities is essential. This has previously been addressed as 'co-production'.

The **fourth assertion** is that '*culture pervades all aspects of community interventions*'. This situates interventions in their historical and current cultural context, from which they can then flow. The lasting impact of historical traumas and ensuing reverberations, mistrust and antagonism need to be understood; thus, those working with the community must respect and immerse themselves in the daily life of the groups of interest for the purposes of facilitating truly collaborative and inclusive interventions that are *context-centred* as opposed to intervention-centred. This assumption has reverberated throughout the earlier conceptual explorations but deserves repetition as it so often forgotten in top-down implementation processes.

Further to the last assertion, Van Til (2011:14) adds that

*"communication among human beings enmeshed in deep and longstanding conflicts rooted in ethnicity, culture, and historical violence is often Hobbesian in nature: nasty, brutish and short; [it, therefore,] often takes a third party to convince individuals caught in the net of noise and hatred that entering into a dialogue can be in both their interests"*.

Unfortunately, community development practitioners working for local councils and other government instances increasingly find that they have less time to spend in direct contact with communities due to the contracting-out of services, service delivery by volunteer and community organisations and, given the time limitations imposed on funding regimes, having less time to develop true partnerships. It is more important than ever for community practitioners to adopt an *open-minded, reflective and thoughtful approach to co-producing and co-designing with people* – one in which careful attention is given to the context in which actions take place and the ways in which different contexts are apt to give rise to different (and often conflicting) assumptions and perspectives. According to Butcher (2007a:59-60), it is important for workers (and, indeed, managers and all personnel concerned with community development projects) to develop:

1. *An ability to analyse and evaluate your own beliefs* in order to develop the most accurate beliefs possible;
2. *An ability to view situations from different perspectives* in order to develop in-depth understanding;
3. *A willingness to support viewpoints with reasons and evidence* in order to arrive at thoughtful, well-substantiated conclusions;
4. *A capacity to critically appraise the personal 'lenses'* that shape and influence the way we perceive the world; and
5. *A skilfulness in synthesising information* in order to reach informed conclusions.

This type of reflection – very commensurable with the *integrative aspect* of the above discussed *working principle of community development* (see also Appendix One) - enables an awareness of one's own values and beliefs which may limit the establishment of co-productive and inclusive relationships with citizens. Operating from a known and firm value- and assumptions-base, in which a fundamental commitment to social justice, sustainability and inclusion is made conscious and embedded, leads to respectful, empowering and anti-oppressive forms of interactions and interventions. It is these values and attributes that each participant and 'stakeholder' must review and critique as part of any CD-related operation, outcome and evaluation.

Westoby (2008) describes *stepping back, pausing and then purposefully engaging* with the 'insider' perspectives of the Southern Sudanese refugees he was engaged with during their re-settling period. This reflexive urge shifted the locus of control to the Sudanese leadership, in which Westoby became a participant in a process steered by some of the key Sudanese workers. Through reflexivity, privileging 'insider' perspectives, a dialogical method, an eliciting stance and a highlighting of the cultural, communal and political resources available, a *'service relationship'* turned into a *'developmental relationship'* with a mutual agreement to try and do *'something together'* (Westoby, 2008:485). Unlike 'curiosity', reflection involves probing, questioning and querying conventions, exploring outside of one's comfort zone, reviewing, evaluating and so on.

The goal of such critical practice is the development of a critical consciousness that embraces *'a set of theoretical assumptions, a commitment to social justice and a particular set of dispositions on the part of the practitioner'* (Butcher, 2007a:53). *Theoretically*, it assumes that *'human beings are collectively 'interdependent' with one another'* and that their 'human' nature necessarily arises as a social-relational product, shaped as a consequence of both 'community' and 'citizenship'.

*Practically*, it suggests that, when creating responses to human distress or social precariousness (Standing, 2011 – the author uses the term *'precarity'*, meanwhile quite common in the European discourses), we need to refocus on *collective and interdependent* responses rather than solely on the *individual person*, as illustrated in Farbotko's & Waitt's (2011:15-6) project on *residential air-conditioning and climate change*. The project was a response to the period of extreme heat *before* the catastrophic Victorian bushfires in 2009 which led to hundreds of deaths amongst older citizens across Southern Australia; rather than suggesting 'residential' and individualised air-conditioning,

***'collective cooling practices'*** need to be researched and promoted more extensively; ... a more active attempt to create community-based cool spaces is needed. Work is particularly needed with management of libraries, community centres, shops and other air-conditioned public places, to advance, help manage and evaluate the practice of collective cooling, it should be recognized that policies that position residential air-conditioning as able to 'solve' the problem of heat-stress work against those who advocate for better health through building collective cooling capacity, and may increase rather than decrease heat-related vulnerability.'

In addition to a necessary shift in perception, it is essential to understand that while humans can *'jointly develop and shape patterns of social relationships and social*

*institutions in a considered and potentially rational manner,' all our efforts are shaped by our socialisation into 'taken-for-granted' assumptions and philosophical views and they are thus often influenced by unconscious and 'organic' factors.*

Critical theorising, action and reflection are the antidotes to inadvertently subverting the ecological, social justice and inclusive principles of community development and thus undermining the emergence and development of a true civil and sustainable/sustaining society. Through critical theorising, one not only comes to understand present-day social relationships, but other ways in which social relationships and institutions can exist. This

1. *Helps practitioners to see the way that things can be different from what they (seemingly) are,*
2. *Offers an understanding of what needs to change,*
3. *Suggests a strategy for change that will be 'empowering' while also addressing the problems of disadvantage, exclusion and oppression in the communities with which they work (Butcher, 2007a:66).*

## **RELATIONAL AND PARTICIPATORY DECISION-MAKING STRATEGIES BETWEEN COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL COUNCILS**

The potential for critical and participatory community action requires a shift of perspective towards one that is *collaborative, multilevel and culturally and relationally situated*. Such a perspective harnesses three interdependent principles: *representativeness, deliberativeness and influence* for authentic community engagement, participation and co-production. Carson and Hart (2006:1) posit that

*...representativeness can be 'achieved through random selection, deliberativeness ... through moderated in-depth discussion and influence ... through contractual agreements between facilitators, participants and sponsors'.*

Activists, in this case, are not viewed as representatives of the entire community and are encouraged to adopt the role of an expert, for example, where there is a requirement for representativeness. Participatory methods cast in a collaborative framework, such as '*citizens' juries, consensus conferences, deliberative polls and televotes*', hold promise for enhanced representativeness and '*offer the added benefit of creating deliberative spaces for sound decision making*' (Carson, 2001:7). To ascertain what the community thinks about an issue, representativeness, based on the random selection of participants in which each member of a community has a statistically equal probability of being selected to take part, is essential. Such methods are '*distinctive because they involve typical citizens who are not aligned to interest groups or engaged in lobbying or policy making*' (Carson & Hart, 2006:1). Search conferences, planning cells, focus groups, charrettes and residents' feedback registers/panels are additional innovative random selection methods for consultation. Crucial, of course, remains the *impact* of the voices of the participants in decision-making processes and outcomes.

Public *deliberation* or '*sustained dialogue*' requires a belief that it may succeed and a belief that in the human process of deliberating conflictual relationships change (Van Til, 2011). Such deliberation is a form of structured human interaction able to address, name and

frame issues of mutual concern. Importantly, after co-chairing *'the public peace process'* in non-official dialogue with the community outside of the government, Saunders (2009, cited in Van Til, 2011:14) recognised that *"citizens talking in-depth together can become a microcosm of their communities, experiencing a change in relationships and then learning to design political actions and interactions that can change their larger bodies politic"*. With deliberation, citizens make tough choices from three or four options, about basic purposes and directions for their communities and their country by reasoning and talking together. Deliberation or sustained dialogue offers a place to *'dive into'* *'wicked'* problems –

*'Beginning with compassionate listening, dialogue can dissolve boundaries between people, heal relationships, and release unprecedented creativity. Dialogue can result in a wellspring of new social intelligence previously unimagined. Dialogue moves us out of our isolated existence and beyond our restricted views. We begin to understand diversity in perception, in meaning, in expression – in people. With this authentic speaking and authentic listening to each other, to Earth, to Life, together we can invent a way of living that works for the benefit of all'* (Van Til, 2011:18).

Such deliberation requires an *'elevation of the art of negotiation and the skills of listening and communicating'* to *'a higher level than is common for most managers, practitioners and community leaders'* (Henderson, 2007a:128). Major strategies to develop such CD knowledge and skills include external group and individual consultation and coaching alongside peer supervision, within and across departments and between government and non-government organisations. The addition of *co-production* and *relationships* to the *'performance dashboard'* or key performance indicators (KPIs) of all municipal or government actors is recommended, as it is through such channels that right livelihoods can be worked towards. The inadequacies of government in addressing the wicked problems contributing to poor livelihoods - the electoral cycle, politicians' fear of policy difference and their parties' obligations to vested interests (unions, corporations, donors), a dedication to debate and being adversarial – all this has citizens losing faith and trust in their elected representatives. Carson's (2011:40) proposal of a deliberating *'mini-public'* or microcosm of an entire population, created by using random selection and transparent procedures, *'helps build confidence among citizens that the mini-public consists of 'people like me' and that the decision-making is in good hands'*, i.e. *'beyond vested interests and political ambition'*. Carson's (2001) *Four-step Procedure for Consulting* (Figure 1 below) aims to facilitate such deliberation; in this procedure, the expert role or activist is sandwiched between representative groups of citizens who establish the vision, then later test the acceptability of expert and activist advice against their own values.

Using the principles of *representativeness*, *deliberativeness* and *influence*, common and understandable suspicions can be allayed that offers of participation by those in power are tokenistic or manipulative, dominated by *'the incensed'* and *'the articulate'* and silenced by confidentiality requirements commercial or not. The following ten principles may assist our understanding of public preferences and concerns and how to incorporate them into our decision-making, as an integral part of a democratic, electoral process. Effective community consultation will gain from making it (Carson & Gelber, 2001)

- *timely;*
- *inclusive;*
- *community-focussed;*
- *interactive and deliberative;*
- *effective; making it matter;*
- *well-facilitated;*
- *open, fair and subject to evaluation;*
- *cost effective;*
- *flexible*
- *collaboration across all decision-making levels.*

Alannah MacTiernan, when Minister for Planning and Infrastructure in Western Australia, convened more *mini-publics* than perhaps any minister in the world. These mini-publics helped to resolve controversial road, rail and land-use planning matters and she acted on the recommendations of many of them (Carson, 2011:41). Jim Soorly, when mayor of Brisbane City Council invited all residents to an ongoing dialogue about the future direction of the city. While 600 people were expected, 6500 people participated and formed a reference group or people's panel. Returnable surveys, the results of which were published in a newsletter, information, conferences, public meetings and research groups were made available to this cross-section of residents on issues such as public transport and development along the Brisbane River.

Lathouras (2010) cites an example from Nambour Community Service which moved the private service delivered activity of individual budgetary counselling into the public arena via a 6-week course in which the individuals who needed the information replaced the workers as the educators and shared their lived experience and knowledge. Over time, a savings and loan circle organically evolved into which participants' money was pooled to fund no-interest loans with 2 years to repay.

Below, i insert Carson's (1999) ideal-typical '*Four Step Procedure for Consulting*', even if it still implicitly seems to suggest that the 'initiative' comes 'from the top' rather than visually suggesting the possibility of a true dialogue based on a spirit of equality and mutual responsiveness. The final sub-section will address this issue more directly.



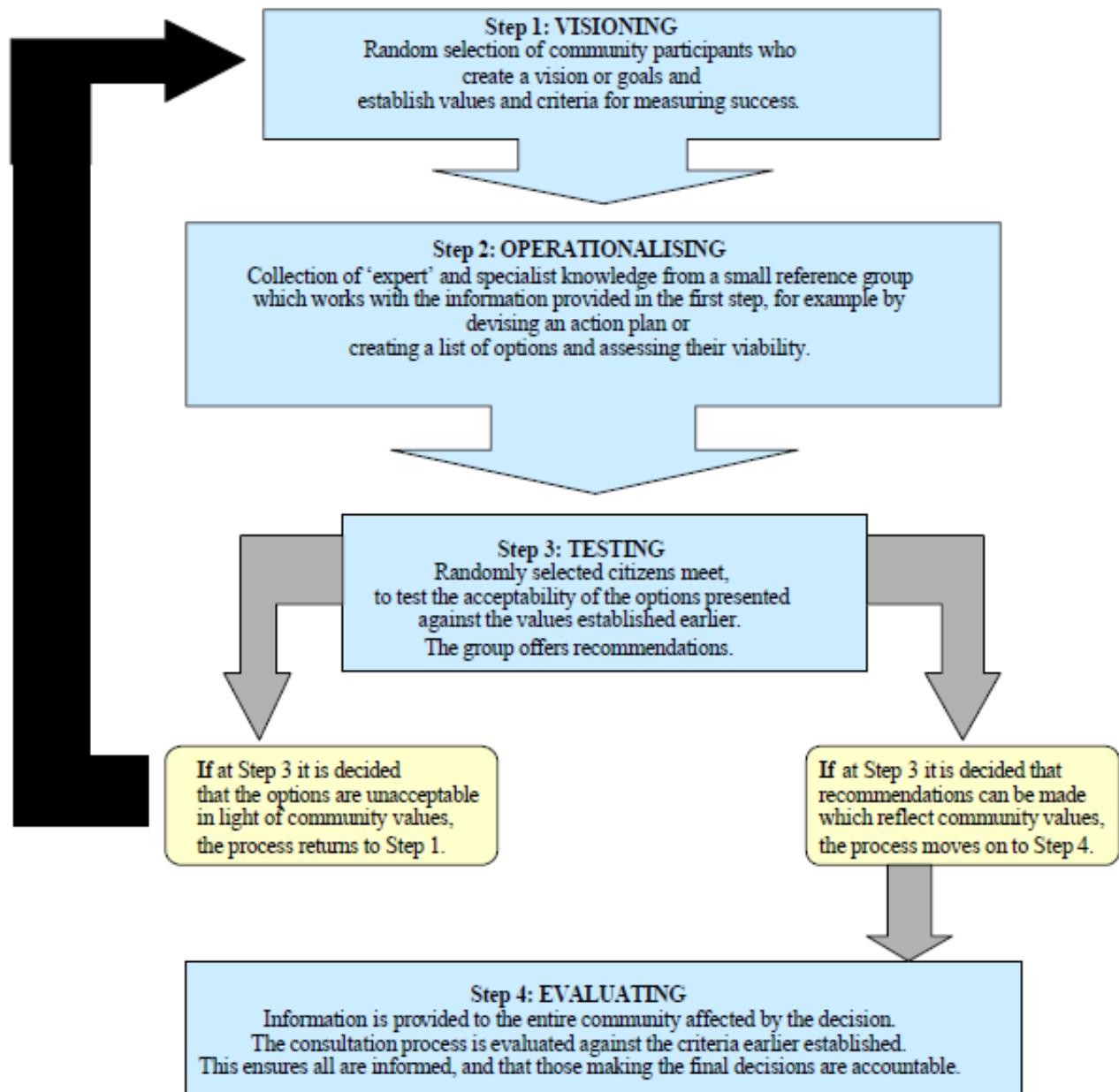


FIGURE 1 Four-step Procedure for Consulting (Carson 1999)

# AMBITS AND PROCESSES OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Any recognition of the determinants for right livelihood demands a conceptual shift in which community development theory, principles and values are comprehensively incorporated into community practice by **all sectors** (e.g. architecture, infrastructure, urban planning, environment, hospitals, industry, education, primary health care) and community practitioners (politicians, government, council and public servants, citizen activists, community workers, managers of community programs, etc). These theories and values stand in stark contrast to the overriding neo-liberal individualist, economic rationalist and managerialist theories and values that currently dominate practice and practitioners (and their governing institutions) need to be alert to these inherent conflicts in order to conscientiously practise *community* development in such a context.

If anything, the eruption of popular protests - from the Northern African and Middle-Eastern shores to the Latin American movements and the North American and European Occupy and Indignados articulations of the '99%' with their justified sense of disenfranchisement and betrayal by the '1%' and the systems which govern and exploit the former and sustain and protect the latter and the later and ongoing protests focusing on the environment and 'extinction' - these events and processes should have created in the minds and hearts of all of us a sense that – indeed – something is rotten in the land of neo-liberalism, economic rationalism and the wilful destruction of our ecology.

Stewart (already in 1986, cited in Bolton, Fleming & Elias, 2008) stated that there is -

*a clear need to bring about changes in the mindset, ethos and organisational culture of local authorities in order to achieve effective local governance. How effective such changes are, is evident in the attitude of local councils to public consultation and empowerment...*

and in the extent of pluralism and diffusion of power deliberately created and supported at a local levels (Jones, 2002, cited in Bolton, Fleming & Elias, 2008). Holding and proclaiming community development attitudes and engaging in commensurate practices only *symbolically* or *rhetorically* risks obstructing 'bottom-up' community development principles – people **will** notice! On the other hand, holding a committed attitude towards the devolution of decision-making, building community development principles into the culture, structure and processes across all levels at which council and other government officers and members work will enhance all elements of democratic and sustainable processes leading to 'right livelihood' (Bolton, Fleming & Elias, 2008).

As mentioned throughout, the practice of *developing community* towards inclusive co-production and for strengthening existing capabilities towards right livelihood is based upon the perspectives of *social justice* and *ecological* imperatives. It includes concepts such as deep listening, interiority, critical reflection and action, empowerment and participation. Relational as well as collaborative, multilevel, culturally situated community intervention paradigms must be incorporated. Such principles, directions and concepts support practitioners to move beyond a conception of practice as a method, technique or instrumental competence (Henderson, 2007 and see our earlier discussion). Importantly, all this requires a focus on developing the types of relationships foundational to effective

CD; such relationships are based on self-awareness of one's own taken-for-granted knowledge, willingness to be trustworthy, moral and ethical, and the development of attitudes which facilitate reciprocity, equity and empowerment.

Communities supporting *right livelihood* are built when “residents driven by their desires to explore opportunities and reduce personal and community distress push themselves beyond the individual relationships of the social fabric to form stable intense networks built on mutual interests within the context of wider social systems” (Coleman, 1988, cited in Watkins Murphy & Cunningham, 2003:201). As already suggested, *CD for right livelihood*, rests upon notions of strengthening ‘civil society’, i.e., strengthening the structures that people themselves initiate and establish, based on their own individual/collective interests and need for right livelihood, as opposed to just being a government program or initiative (Ife, 2002). Finally – and obviously - the potential of community development to assist citizens in their striving to achieve right livelihood also rests on the presence of *subsidiary principles and policies* in order for economic capital to benefit *all* of society and for the common wealth to be distributed evenly and justly across all segments of society.

John McKnight and Peter Block (2010) have organised their work, *The Abundant Community: Awakening the Power of Families and Neighbourhood*, in two sections; the first section addresses and analyses our ‘modern descent’ from a status of Citizen to one of a mere Consumer whilst the second section deploys the characteristics of a deliberate decision of ‘*choosing a satisfied life*’ and the third section helps with ways and means of ‘*creating Abundance*’. They develop three ‘*Universal Properties*’ any community should awaken to so as to become powerful and capable; a community of abundance excels in the *giving of gifts, the presence of association and the compassion of hospitality* (p. 5)

They identify seven ‘*Elements of Satisfaction*’ which grow out of the life and actions of an abundant community. They are well-worth summarising in full (pp. 2 – 5)

- *Our neighbourhoods are the primary source of our **Health**;*
- *Whether we are **Safe** and **Secure** in our neighbourhood is largely within our domain;*
- *The future of our earth – the **Environment** – is a major local responsibility;*
- *In our neighbourhood and villages, we have the power to build a resilient **Economy**;*
- *We are coming to see that we have a profound local responsibility for the **Food** we eat;*
- *We are local people who must raise our **Children**;*
- *Locally, we are the site of **Care**.*

They conclude their work (p. 148) with a quote from Lois Smidt (from *BeyondWelfare.org*):

*A great community creates conditions where people can fall in love.  
It is a place where we can make a fuss about one another.  
A place where we can ask, “How did I ever live without you?”*

Amplifying the need to build a **resilient local economy** can only be cursorily referred to here; suffice it to mention the spreading *Transition Town* movement (Hopkins, 2009), the spreading ‘*social enterprise*’ movement and the various ‘sub’ movements in this, notably the ‘*100 miles*’ and - even more localist (backyard!) - food procurement movements (Krupp, 2009; Allen, 2012); local and regional ‘*community currency*’ movements are multiplying right across the world and *cooperative* and *co-housing* initiatives multiply rapidly across the ‘developed’ world (for an overview, see Boulet, 2010; see below,

Hallsmith and Lietaer, 2011; Nadeau and Thompson, 1996; Doppelt, 2012; Eisenstein, 2011; Tasch, 2008; Shuman, 2012; Greco, 2009; Cortese, 2011).

Ezio Manzini (2011:216) identifies 'three main innovation streams' at the intersection of which many opportunities emerge: '**green innovation** driven by the increased evidence of planetary limits, the **spread of networks** driven by new information and communication technologies based on distributed, open, peer-to-peer organisation and the emerging **social economy** driven by the need to tackle very complex social and environmental problems.' He proposes (p. 224) *The SLOC Scenario*; SLOC incorporating the four adjectives of **small, local, open and connected**, the second definitely comprising 'inclusion':

*"[to] generate a holistic vision of how society could be, they are also comprehensible since their meanings and implications can be easily understood by everybody and they are also viable, because they are supported by major drivers of change – that is by the complex relationships between globalisation and localisation, the power of the internet and the adoption of new forms of organisation that SLOC makes possible."*

In *Toward a Monetary Democracy*, the final chapter of their seminal book, *Creating Wealth: growing local economies with local currencies*, Hallsmith and Lietaer (2011) offer a neat summary of the 'fate' of local governments in their attempts at creating sustainable local economies. Again, it is worthwhile quoting in full (p. 207-8):

*"Local governments all over the world are struggling to promote economic development to provide better jobs for their citizens, to create a more valuable tax base and to improve municipal services. Yet the ways in which local governments pursue economic development often inadvertently undermines the long-term security of their community. The money and time spent recruiting large, outside companies (in the hope of driving economic growth) often backfires, leading instead to the closure of locally-owned businesses, while at the same time redirecting profits from the local community to those of large corporations."*

*The resulting trends are well-known – large, big-box stores undermine small, downtown shops. The pressure of higher insurance rates, labor costs and regulations, increased shipping costs and the lack of economies of scale push more and more small businesses into the 'failed' column every year. When this happens, local municipalities are left with a lower revenue base, which in turn drives up taxes, the costs of water and sewer fees and road maintenance for the local population. When their low-income residents can't pay, municipal officials have few alternatives except to discontinue services or initiate tax sales on properties."*

*Other troubling trends exacerbate the problem. Fewer people are joining civic and religious organizations, traditionally the glue that holds communities together. The pervasiveness of television and isolating entertainments like video games and computers undermine the social structures that supported community life in the past. New ideas and new institutions are needed to reinvigorate the social system and get people back out into the community, connecting with each other and creating networks of support for everyone."*

Whilst Hallsmith and Lietaer are especially using this contextual and historical analysis to argue for and demonstrate the beneficial role *local or community currency systems* ('LETS') can play in halting the above trends, the multiple implications of the process they describe touch upon many issues and factors already discussed in this literature review. Nadeau and Thompson (1996), for example, offer a wide variety of domains where – as the title of their book suggests - *Cooperation Works!* From agricultural coops,

to small businesses (even before they were referred to as 'social enterprises!') along 'main street', consumer coops and employee-owned businesses, cooperative and co-housing projects, credit unions and services by and for people with disabilities, local green energy cooperatives (see the Hepburn Wind Power for a local example; Lane, 2011) and a myriad other examples of interweaving the *development of community* with local economic development initiatives. Nadeau and Thompson devote a special chapter to the role of local councils in all of this – including the issue of inclusion of marginal groups and individuals - and conclude (p. 177):

*"Cooperation works for local governments. It isn't just for farmers or consumers. When local public officials are able to put aside their differences with nearby units of government, good things happen ... we have looked at a variety of different kinds of local government cooperatives that make purchases together, share services, sell recyclable materials and use interactive telecommunications as an educational resources. What these varied examples have in common is a group of public officials who have decided that they can meet the needs of local citizens and taxpayers more effectively by joining forces than by charging off on their own. Despite these successful examples... communities in the US have barely scratched the surface of the potential for local government cooperation. This approach to shared services could be a powerful resource for rejuvenating urban and rural areas alike; for stimulating creative local solutions to economic and social problems; and for reclaiming a central role for decision-making by local governments and citizens in their own communities."*

Community members, in order to reach such a potential, require a strengthening of relationships both to their individual 'selves' but also to others, to animals and to the earth. Social obligation and reciprocity, social solidarity and community inclusion have been the leitmotifs in our thematic review of recent literature. With the here cited authors, we argue for and hope to contribute to a critical CD literacy and knowledge for all those involved in (and working with and for) communities in order to attenuate the dominating neo-liberal agenda and associated reduction of the meaning of citizenship, in which our identity turns into that of mere 'taxpayers' – **we strenuously resist the concept of a democracy of taxpayers**. CD literacy and its discourse, must be incorporated *equally and alongside* economic, political, corporate and management literacy into everyday professional and political practice.

We would like to conclude this annotated literature review with two excerpts which very well illustrate the approach needed when seeking to 'come to know' community and communities, '*community*' indicating the more *qualitative characteristics* of the phenomenon which is at the core of this exploration, '*communities*' indicating the *diverse concreteness* of each particular instance of the phenomenon.

Jeremy Brent (2009:98), having been immersed in his local community of Southmead (Bristol, UK), writes as follows:

*"Looking at knowledge about Southmead that comes from Southmead involves a very different approach to that of certain strands of sociology that are summarised thus in a book on community: 'The analysis of any problem in sociology cannot make people's opinions of that problem its point of departure' (Bell and Newby, 1971). Instead, it involves what Steve Pile and Nigel Thrift call a politics of location, 'a politics that makes no claims to second guessing others' experience, but still allows people to speak for themselves..."*



... and this is how they have spoken about themselves, through a community arts project, *Life Lines*, a community stage play involving 150 local people over an entire year and performed in 1994 (pp 105-6)

*'Life Lines ends with a song, **A Sense of Belonging**, with its chorus, **'Southmead is all about people'**, a humanistic reaction to the objectification of outsider knowledge... The play built what Phil Cohen calls a 'nationalism of the neighbourhood'... It is easy to criticise what was a major piece of work that used up enormous amounts of energy, displayed the deep hurt that exists among people in Southmead and was a reassertion of themselves, using Habermas' words, as 'communicatively acting subjects' (bearing in mind the different meaning of the word 'act'). The arcadian and utopian messages of the play are important ingredients of popular accounts of the area, and the idea of community as performance in which people are actors hints at a possible way of describing the uncertain phenomenon of community.'*

And it is this 'sense of belonging' which Peter Block (2009) picks up in the introduction to the first Part of his *Community: the structure of belonging* (p. 9-10) --

*"The social fabric of community is formed from an expanding shared **sense of belonging**. It is shaped by the idea that only when we are connected and care for the well-being of the whole that a civil and democratic society is created...*

*What makes community building so complex is that it occurs in an infinite number of small steps, sometimes in quiet moments that we notice out of the corner of our eye. It calls for us to treat as important many things that we thought were incidental. An afterthought becomes the point; a comment made in passing defines who we are more than all that came before. If the artist is one who captures the nuance of experience, then this is whom each of us must become. The need to see through the eye of the artist reflects the intimate nature of community, even if it is occurring among large groups of people.*

*The key to creating or transforming community, then, is to see the power in the small but important elements of being with others. The shift we seek needs to be embodied in each invitation we make, each relationship we encounter, and each meeting we attend. For at the most operational and practical level, after all the thinking about policy, strategy, mission, and milestones, it gets down to this: How are we going to be when we gather together? What this means is that theory devolves down to these everyday questions out of which community is actually lived: Whom do I choose to invite into the room? What is the conversation that I both become and engage in with those people? And when there are more than two of us together at the same time, how do we create a communal structure that moves action forward? It is in these kinds of questions that accountability is chosen and care for the well-being of the whole is embodied. Individual transformation is not the point; weaving and strengthening the fabric of community is a collective effort and starts from a shift in our mindsets about our connectedness."*



## CONCLUDING COMMENTS...

### TO BE BACK AND KNOW THE PLACE FOR THE FIRST TIME...

***We shall never cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time.***

(T. S. Eliot)

As a tentative conclusion to this literature review chapter – and minding Eliot's wise words - all of what i have been exploring in the previous sixty pages is really not very new or revolutionary... In spite of our (post?) modern predilection for 'innovative' and 'cutting edge' approaches, i have returned to a place of ancient 'home truths'... a place of which we, given our peripatetic lifestyles, have even forgotten the proper words for... So i take recourse to two African mottos to express it:

- one proverb has it that: *"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together"*... could it therefore be that our addiction to speed and other forms of restlessness are both products and causes of our growing loneliness and exclusion of the vulnerable and the 'other'? And that *'going slow'* whilst savouring, celebrating and protecting our social and ecological relationships and by becoming more aware of their importance is the only way to assure the survival of the species beyond the next generation?
- and the concept of *Ubuntu* – as explained by Desmond Tutu – suggests:

*"Ubuntu speaks particularly about the fact that you can't exist as a human being in isolation. It speaks about our interconnectedness. You can't be human all by yourself, and when you have this quality – Ubuntu – you are known for your generosity. **We think of ourselves far too frequently as just individuals, separated from one another, whereas you are connected and what you do affects the whole world.** When you do well, it spreads out; it is for the whole of humanity."*

Or as Katia Rotar, a Borderlands volunteer, learned whilst working in South Africa: *"Umntu ngumntu ngabantu"* which quite simply means: **a person is a person through other people**. Many Indigenous voices from across the globe have added their much ignored, often forgotten and suppressed wisdom to this, as have Buddhist, Tao, Hindu, Sufi and other spiritualities. But, as Baroness and then Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher opined in 1987...

*"I think we've been through a period where too many people have been given to understand that if they have a problem, it's the government's job to cope with it. "I have a problem, I'll get a grant." "I'm homeless, the government must house me." They're casting their problem on society. **And, you know, there is no such thing as society. There are individual men and women, and there are families.**"*

Given the seeming acceptance of the underlying philosophy of neo-liberalism and economic rationalism, it's probably no wonder that it has taken (and still takes) so many years to bring Ms Thatcher and her epigones to their senses or otherwise challenge them; and it would probably be too much to ask them to read Braeckman's (2008:29) *'The closing of the civic mind: Marcel Gauchet on the 'society of individuals'* where he points

out that ‘...*There is something basically wrong with this particular kind of society [as] expressed by this formula, **for a ‘society of individuals’ is an oxymoron...***’

Meanwhile, some quick Google browses – and some more laborious excursions in the vast community development literature, both locally and internationally - would introduce readers to a whole universe of readings about how we lost community and our often flawed and misdirected attempts to regain it. In fact, even the early sociologists – the much quoted and often little understood Durkheim, Tönnies, Simmel, Mauss, Weber, the sociologists of the Chicago School during the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries - described both the loss of ‘community’ they witnessed during that time and the personal and social consequences (alienation, anomie, etc) that this loss engendered.

Across the historical discourses surrounding community development and its many derivatives and side-tracks, we have witnessed waves of ‘re-discovery’ of the importance of ‘community’, often in a rather euphoric ‘**social capital**’ or ‘**community building, community strengthening, capacity-building**’ state-of-mind after Putnam’s (1993) writings from the early-90s based initially on his ‘discoveries’ of communities and their ‘bridging/bonding/...’ potential in Italy and then similarly across the Anglo-Saxon world. But many of these – especially when applied by governments and charities – misunderstood the CD approach as one which would only be useful to bring ‘the disadvantaged’ – through their own efforts, of course – more into the proximity of society’s ‘mainstream’. And the paradoxical intention of ‘community’ development thus often turned into – sometimes thinly veiled - attempts to lead those who could not adapt to the ‘normal’ individualised ways of living into such ways, in the process saving the welfare state the costs of ‘expensive’ (individualised) services and their delivery (see the long-standing and often reiterated critique of state-sponsored CD of Mowbray and Bryson, 1981; the term ‘*Community as the spray-on solution*’ they coined still reverberates).

And yet... and yet... as Boulet (2010) has shown, the sense that something quite important had gone missing from our ways of being and living has not abated as have the attempts at re-inventing ‘community’ (or indeed, at returning to some earlier states of collective togetherness), which all points to a need to re-think it not as some rather abstract figment of some socialist dreamer’s imagination but as a vital and existentially primordial relational and – indeed! – psychological precondition for inclusive ‘right livelihood’ and ‘human capability’ as previously discussed.

One instance of such rethinking and ‘re-practicing’ – and thankfully saved from historical oblivion – is the so-called ‘*Peckham Experiment*’ that started in London between the wars (and thus well before the concept of ‘*social capital*’ was invented in a seemingly desperate need to adopt economically ‘acceptable’ nomenclature for the work we do...) and which went on for several years after the Second World War ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Peckham\\_Experiment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Peckham_Experiment)) (see also Duncan, 1985 and Lewis & Brookes, 1983). Two medical doctors,

*“Williamson and Pearse recruited 950 local families to be part of “The Peckham Experiment”. Paying one shilling (5 pence) a week, they had access to a range of activities such as physical exercise, swimming, games and workshops. Members underwent a medical examination once a year and they were monitored throughout the year as they participated in the Centre’s events. Central to Scott Williamson’s philosophy was the belief that, left to themselves, people would*

***spontaneously begin to organize in a creative way, and this happened, the members initiating a wide range of sporting, social and cultural activities using the facilities offered by the Centre."***

A better example of the effect of a 'subsidiary' experiment and the stimulation of citizen action 'from below' would be rather hard to find; meanwhile, as already mentioned, a body of literature and international discourse is evolving after disasters around 'community resilience' (Solnit, 2009) and many very foundational questions are being asked again... and will be asked after the disastrous bushfires and floods in late-2019 and early-2020 in Australia – not to speak about the Coronavirus pandemic sweeping across the entire world. Joining Miller (2011), I would love to know: 'why a world that wants and needs community doesn't get it?' ... Miller wonders further:

*"I believe that people the world over long for community. While that assertion is just about impossible to test, a number of indicators point in that direction. Social alienation seems to me widespread, with large numbers of people dissatisfied with the prevailing way the world is organized. They may have radically different visions of an ideal world, but a fair number, it is reasonable to guess, see lack of community as a cause of much of the restlessness and anomie we see all around us. The kinds of community that can bring meaning into life are many, but it is another fair guess that more than a few of those longing for community see intentional community as something that could put meaning and fulfilment into their lives."*

It does seem as if we have to reinvent history once in every while, as this final comment from John Feffer (2012) illustrates; he muses after racist/ethno-phobic killings in the US and in France (and such musings need to become permanent acts, it seems, as the mass-murders continue unabated, recently right at our doorstep, in New Zealand, committed by an Australian ...):

*"These deaths are, on the face of it, quite different: a hate crime, a serial killing, and an act of vigilantism. But underlying these three tragedies is a notion of violated borders, of trespass. The message behind all three is this: **you should not be here, you are not one of us**, and your death shall serve as a warning.*

*Trespass is originally an economic term intimately connected to evolving concepts of public and private space. In the late medieval period in England, wealthy landholders began to fence off common lands to increase the pasturage for their flocks of sheep. This enclosure movement, privatization avant la lettre, created a new class of dispossessed, of those who did not belong. The word "trespass" – to enter private property without permission – comes from this period of late-Middle Ages. Fences marked off the newly enclosed property. You could not enter without the permission of the owner or his agents. And scaffolds appeared throughout England to punish those thrown off the land who were forced to steal because they had no other means of subsistence.*

Whilst this is not the only operating force behind exclusion, discrimination and worse, it powerfully intersects with stigmatisation and exclusion processes based on ethnicity and race, ability, sexual preference, belief and more 'othering' factors. Feffer goes on to refer to Stephen Greenblatt's 2009 *The Swerve*, in which he shows how Thomas More's *Utopia* derives from the experience of this rampant violence and oppression of the disenfranchised:

*"We too are living at a time of gibbets and enclosures, of death penalties and gated communities, of state violence and privatization. The United States has become a country*

of wealthy enclaves, neighbourhood watches, and charter schools. Widening inequality has directly contributed to the deterioration of any sense of the public good. The drive for minimal government has reduced the capacity of public servants to ensure basic services and security. The erosion of the middle class has not only reduced the tax base, it has weakened political support for programs that aspire to universality. **"Ill fares the land,"** wrote Oliver Goldsmith in his 1770 poem "The Deserted Village," **"to hast'ning ill a prey/Where wealth accumulates, and men decay."**

And i make no apologies for concluding this literature review agreeing with Feffer... and by asking ourselves how Australia, and indeed, our cities, compare:

*"The European Union was supposed to be a borderless space. But the old dream of an ever more prosperous and economically equitable regional arrangement has come up hard against economic downturn and polarization. The United States was supposed to be a country without the class barriers of feudal Europe. But the old dream of a growing middle class and the relatively stable politics that accompany it cannot survive in the austerity liberalism and anti-government conservatism of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. When our notion of the common good, of commonwealth, begins to disintegrate, all that is left are tribes defending their turf, standing their ground, enclosing their land.*

**We are living now in a new world of enclosures. We are building our fences ever higher. We are patrolling our borders with ever more sophisticated weaponry. And we are punishing any and all who trespass. The victims of these recent killings are the collateral damage of these border wars."**

**And if there ever was a reason to return to trust and work for the inclusion of all, this must be it!**

# CHAPTER 3.

## Principles and Dimensions of the Development of Community

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*This is the nature of humanity:  
Destroying all it establishes  
Establishing all it destroys  
Until the day it repents.*

Murad Mikha'il

*(Adapted and amplified from Jim Ife's books (2002 & 2016))*

# INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the 'development of community' is to re-establish 'community' as one location (or site or 'instance') of significant human experience and realisation of human need, rather than just being a word one uses to refer to amorphous social groupings, 'out there' somewhere in a 'public sphere'. It is mainly used as a more meaningful alternative to remaining reliant on the larger, more inhuman and less accessible structures of the welfare state, the global economy, bureaucracy, professional elites and so on (Ife, 2002:160). In the present globalising – especially urbanised – environments, healthy and resilient communities don't and can't exist on their own; they need *enabling structures and processes*, complementing the resilience residents/citizens bring to their communities. Such processes and structures – on all levels of governance - are to be initiated and sustained by supportive social policies and resource (re)distribution, based on the '*subsidiarity principle*'<sup>3</sup> (and see Literature Review above).

'**Principles**' of community development thus provide a framework through which the 'practice' of community development can be planned and can take place. As a philosophy of practice, community development – *the development of community* - itself becomes a '*working principle*,' a praxis to be applied within and reverberating throughout the context of all interactions between Council, its divisions and departments and its officers and the individuals, groups and communities they deal with day-to-day as well as in the development of policies and programs. The principles and dimensions of the *development of community* can thus be applied to *all* of our human endeavours, not just to programs explicitly labelled as 'community development'. It is an approach to working, living and sustaining progressive change as well as a way of thinking, as opposed to a 'program' that someone 'runs'. As such, the following principles and dimensions are there for **everybody and across all levels of operation**: health and mental professionals, librarians, community members, planners, roads-, parks- and recycling personnel, recreation workers, youth workers, child care workers, and so on.

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<sup>3</sup> The **Subsidiarity Principle** '...states that higher levels of government should only perform functions that cannot be effectively and efficiently undertaken by lower levels of government... [it] might involve a [constitutional] provision... that, unless amended by a referendum, decision making and administration is to be delegated to the most local practical level' (Boulet et al, 2008)



## 'BOTTOM-UP' DEVELOPMENT

Community development – the *development of community* - suggests a 'bottom-up' process, reliant upon and valuing local knowledge, the wisdom, skills and understandings of local citizens. While '*managerialism*' holds that problems are best resolved by good management which imposes order and predictability and even coercion, **bottom-up community** development holds that problems are best resolved by those affected by them through collaboration, creativity and initiative. It perhaps time that we leave the vocabulary of 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' aside as they continue to suggest the omnipresence and even necessity of the present hierarchical systems. Admittedly, the scale upon which decisions now are being made is global, but trying to prepare for inclusive, sustainable and regenerative relational and local alternatives – which we must – it's probably time to try out words like 'horizontal' relationships or to replace 'upscaling' with 'sidescaling' as a strategy to grow our initiatives...

As Manfred Max-Neef (1991) suggested, it is an approach more suitable to *human-scale* development, including environmental and economic concerns, than top-down and managerialist approaches. And this, of course, assumes that community development supports ...

## VALUING WISDOM, KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS 'FROM BELOW'

Valuing the wisdom, knowledge and skills of community members first is an essential part of *bottom-up development*. This is in stark contrast to the '*get a consultant*' mentality, which often ignores community experience and wisdom – or reduced it to a brief survey. Privileging local knowledge as legitimate knowledge ensures *contextualised* thus *effective* 'development of community' processes. Enabling the local voice to initiate, drive and set the agenda as opposed to reacting and putting up with the agenda is the goal.

Wisdom – which goes well beyond 'mere' knowledge, information and skills - also requires the inclusion of *spirituality*; a key element of the experience of humanity, *spirituality*, whether engaged in via individual pursuits or through organised institutions, serves to connect people to each other and the natural world. Space must be allowed for the expression of spirituality in a variety of forms in which its strength in a community is expressed through the inclusivity these forms display. Community development can encourage inter-faith dialogue, including the voice and experiences of Indigenous traditions, wisdom and knowledge and their being integral parts of the spirit which connects and includes all people and offers ways of meaningfully including the 'non-human' in our considerations for sustainable community living.

This acknowledgement also refers to the following principle...

## SELF-RELIANCE, AUTONOMY AND INTERDEPENDENCE

Applied to communities, self-reliance means developing and growing wisdom, skills, knowledge, expertise and resources within the community rather than depending fully on other communities and 'outside' or 'up-scaled' authorities. Self-reliance and autonomy are appropriate when referring to communities rather than applying them to individuals. Thus, our interdependence with or dependence upon each other, our need for reciprocity and our acknowledgement of the important elements of the 'gift economy' (often wrongly and in a belittling way referred to as the 'informal' economy...) still essential for our survival are recognised, affirmed, celebrated and encouraged.

'The Next Wave' suggests that we need a

*"Resurgence of Community" because 'In losing touch with our communities we don't just lose dinner with the neighbours, we lose the creative capacity of people in groups. Our collective ideas grow into solutions, groups, co-ops and organisations and develop our collective voice.'*

From self-reliance and interdependence, it is only one small step to ...

## ECOLOGY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability requires a long-term perspective, thus foresight into the future must challenge us to consider resources, the physical environment, required processes and structures and impending challenges. Because we live in a finite world, the harmfulness of economic growth at-all-costs is a crucial consideration, the nature of the relationships between humans and the natural world requiring rethinking in order for the development of community to be part of the solution.

Environmental threats, such as toxic wastes, harmful air pollution, declining fisheries, drought and natural disasters are important focal points for community organisation, not only for serving the environment but building community solidarity and identity. Real change towards an environmentally safe and sustainable future must come from the grassroots due to the limiting realities of political process and the mechanisms of international diplomacy. Rather than seeking answers from science and count on 'progress,' - which has over the past few centuries committed increasing violence upon the natural world - seeking the wisdom of Indigenous people in particular, can re-establish ecological and spiritual relationships between the natural world and humanity – for all of our survival.

As 'This Next Wave' posits:

*"Nature nourishes us; from our spiritual, emotional and intellectual learning to meeting our material needs. But our relationship with nature has deteriorated to a narrow view of how we can exploit it. It is now well acknowledged that we need to find a more respectful relationship with nature."*

To assist in achieving this, the following six elements of sustainability are offered for consideration; they link clearly with several other principles mentioned before and after and have been more fully described in the literature review document:

1. Addressing and increasing people's **awareness (personal and collective)** about the linkages between their ways of living and their ecological consequences;
2. Improving and enhancing the everyday **practices** on the part of community members (and those active in the communities);
3. The creation and maintenance of **relationships** between people living locally and between people operating across organisational structures relevant to the daily life in the community, including the discovery and development of adequate capacities for and patterns of **local leadership**;
4. The development and maintenance of a **social culture of community, responsibility and commitment** which, in turn, sustains all the previous and following elements of sustainability. Culture is understood as the framework of **meaning** and of **meaning giving** in the community or group and thus, obviously, includes reference to **spirituality** and its role in people's well-being;
5. The strengthening of existing - and the establishment and maintenance of new - **systems and processes** that support awareness raising, newly developing practices and relationships newly built and to be developed;
6. Development of accessible **resources** (material, financial, spatial, personal/social 'energy', leadership and time) to support the previous elements.

Our ability to sustain requires the careful maintenance and further development of ...

## DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVENESS

Exposure to other ideas, views, cultures and practices in a diverse and inclusive community supports a more robust and enriching community. Both threatening and exciting, diversity offers an alternative to the creation of poorer and meaner, scapegoated, oppressed and disadvantaged groups. The resentment, anger and suspicion of members of these groups and of members of others towards these groups, continues a cycle of fear, to which inclusiveness and the acceptance of difference provides the antidote.

Discussing the 'tension' between efficiency – and its tendency force 'streamlining' or 'mainstreaming' programs mostly as cost-saving devices - and maintaining diversity and inclusion, Bernard Lietaer explains ([http://www.lietaer.com/images/White\\_Paper\\_on\\_Systemic\\_Bank\\_Crises\\_December.pdf](http://www.lietaer.com/images/White_Paper_on_Systemic_Bank_Crises_December.pdf)):

*"In general, a system's resilience is enhanced by more diversity and more connections, because there are more channels to fall back on in times of trouble or change. Efficiency, on the other hand, increases through streamlining, which usually means reducing diversity and connectivity... Because both are indispensable for long-term sustainability and health, the healthiest flow systems are those that maintain an optimal balance between these two opposing pulls".*

Applying principles of Permaculture to the nature, creation and sustenance of resilient communities, this short 'definition' may help (Holmgren and Mollison, various):

*... permaculture is the conscious design and maintenance of agriculturally productive ecosystems which have the **diversity, stability and resilience of natural ecosystems**. It is the harmonious integration of landscape and people providing their food, energy, shelter, and other material and non-material needs in a sustainable way... The philosophy behind permaculture is one of working with, rather than against nature; of protracted and thoughtful observation rather than protracted and thoughtless action; of looking at systems in all their functions rather than asking only one yield of them; and of allowing systems to demonstrate their own evolutions.*

The latter sentence also refers to ...

## THE IMPORTANCE OF PROCESS

How results are achieved is important; it doesn't have to be a military operation of tactics and strategy, targeting and overcoming. Valuing *process firmly alongside outcomes* places people's lives firmly in the decision-making picture, centrally re-instating the *ethical and practical link between means and ends*. As such, an emphasis on process is imperative and, in fact, more important than the outcomes which are trusted to naturally emerge from sound process. You ensure a good process and trust so that a good outcome will be an assured consequence.

Which, in turn, should lead to and maintain...

## ORGANIC CHANGE

The development of community 'from the bottom-up' produces change slowly and in a number of dimensions simultaneously, even imperceptibly. Multiple, small, incremental changes are relied upon to ultimately produce qualitative and quantitative results. CD ensures, ultimately, significant change without disastrous human and other consequences often inherent in radical change; its processes cannot be hurried, lest processes be compromised fatally, at great cost.

This is especially important if our communities will become more prone to climate change-induced volatility and disasters; '*resilience*' is the qualitative capacity of a system, community or society potentially exposed to hazards to adapt, by resisting or changing in order to reach and maintain an acceptable level of functioning and structure. This is determined by the degree to which the social system is capable of *organising itself* to increase its capacity for learning from past disasters and from present arrangements for better future protection and to improve risk reduction measures.

A focus on not just 'coping with' but *preventing and preparing* for crises, high stress and traumatic situations that have or have threatened to place communities, families, life and limbs at risk, can powerfully stimulate the development of community. Local community level memorial services, volunteer fire and emergency services, rebuilding projects auspiced under CD principles can significantly strengthen communities' resilience.

*A 'Culture of resilience' – according to This Next Wave – juxtaposes with our 'striving for efficiency; to make something faster, quicker and cheaper. But by increasing efficiency we are losing something else... buildings are uglier, products more flimsy, our food less tasty... Something made 'efficiently' may satisfy in the short term, but often won't adapt to change. The impacts of climate change are coming thick and fast; we need to develop a culture that acknowledges the dangers of efficiency and values resilience.'*

It is only one short conceptual step from 'organic' change to ...

## **PARTICIPATION**

People can readily see through sham participation and consultation processes. For participation to work, people must have a genuine opportunity for meaningful input, and this must be clearly evident. Due to the impact of the dominant individual consumerism discourse and inaccessibility to and/or unacceptability of forms of participation, community participation has been weakened if not totally eroded. However, there are many ways for people to participate, from chairing meetings to making supper or facilitating a deliberative democracy, to participating in a global internet-based action and all are equally valuable and significant contributions.

Concerned with *relationships of power*, the *political* aspect of community development focuses on the way decisions are made and the process of decision-making. Within the community, developing forms of participatory democracy are essential for good community development to ensure high levels of participation and community ownership of decisions. Between the community and the larger society, skills and knowledge in submission writing, tendering, lobbying, networking, media, social action, civil disobedience etc. developed amongst a broad group of community members can be nurtured. And the theme of inclusion which reverberated throughout the previous chapters of this book has illustrated the importance of dealing with the structures of power.

And since 'participation' usually requires us to 'deal' with other people, community development needs to think about ...

## **CONSENSUS/COOPERATION AND CONFLICT/COMPETITION**

Conflict and competition cannot produce fair, just and plural outcomes. Community development strives to achieve consensus and cooperation wherever possible, resisting the cultural, structural and institutional violence associated with capitalism, especially in its western version based on past and present colonialism and global exploitation.

This also involves reversing the trend of merely being spectators at sport, listeners at concerts and/or audience members at theatres, and both supporting and participating in local drama, music, interest and hobby groups, dance, art, media and craft and performance participation. Supporting social events associated with competitive games and events as well, provides opportunity for people from different backgrounds to meet in a spirit of dialogue and to learn from and about each other. This works to attenuate

the dominance of a competitive and individualistic culture within community. Critiquing, sharing, constructing and reconstructing a community's heritage, traditions, pride, shame and myths can also be a valuable cultural development process.

## DEFINITION OF NEED

A community is engaged in defining its own needs – traditionally referred to as 'felt needs' - and then working to have those needs met. It is a human right to define one's needs and have a voice in defining one's community's needs. The analysis of needs *from below* is central for operating with respect of human rights.

'*Strength-based*' approaches to community development (or '*asset-based*' community development, often abbreviated as ABCD; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993, 2005) are often juxtaposed to 'needs' approaches, the latter sometimes wrongly identified as 'deficit-based' and ignoring the strengths present in communities. Manfred Max-Neef (1991), however, points at the active, change oriented and creative *potential* of needs (as distinct from 'desires' or wants' which are often imposed in the context of consumerist individualism) as the necessary energy to 'drive' people to undertake steps to realise the requisite responses and to mobilise their capacities – indeed, their strengths – to address whatever their 'felt needs' drive them to.

Communities will have strengths and weaknesses and the issues communities face will differ over time, but community development processes can help identify and address the former and, as shown in the literature review, the principles inherent in processes engendering the development of community can be applied across the times.

We also refer here to our discussion of *capabilities* in the literature review and the philosophical underpinnings given to it by Sen and Nussbaum.

## THE GLOBAL AND THE LOCAL

Local problems have global dimensions; communities are impacted upon by global circumstances and local events have often global reverberations, especially economically and ecologically. Global connectedness increases the potential of community groups to become more powerful and influential, informed and expert, and able to educate and raise consciousness well beyond a local community's own boundaries. Both inseparable, thinking and acting done locally, has global as well as local impacts – the neologism of '**glocal**' attempting to express that interpenetration.

From an economic perspective, the development of community eschews the idea of economic development as a rationalist or fundamentalist priority which is primarily determined by global processes; even a healthy national or global economy does not automatically assure equality of prosperity – let alone inclusion of all - within community. Community-based economic development, which seeks to establish a local economy in a form that is less dependent upon external forces and is locally sustainable and inclusive, minimises the adverse effects of economic-rationalist and neo-liberal inspired economic



development on local communities. Buffered from the fickle global economy, radical economic community development can be enabled to provide sustainable alternatives.

Communities also need places to share: the development of community requires spaces for people to be social, which assist and allow them to spend time together and 'use' each other as resources, in order to develop the social bonds and ties that create community. Non-threatening, friendly and convenient environments that enable participation of any sort, provide opportunities where participation in and of itself can be valued, regardless of outcomes. This requires a focus on the non-economic aspects of people's lives, i.e. the mutual interactions between people.

As 'This Next Wave' adds under the title of **The Commons**:

*More and more people... less and less space. 'Owning' space on this planet exacerbates the divisions between those with money and those without. Public spaces play a vital role in creating equitable and healthy communities; however, they are often treated carelessly. How do we encourage shared spaces that we all have an equal right to use and equal responsibility to care for?*

## **THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY AS POST-MODERN AND POST-COLONIAL**

Community development is not neat and certain; it cannot be if we are to validate multiple realities within and among communities. From a post-modern frame, community development accepts and even encourages and welcomes difference, chaos and unpredictability. It is compatible with a bottom-up approach that supports community members to construct and reconstruct their reality, as opposed to having to adhere to the single truth of managerialism, elites, consultants, professionals and even the law, constructing reality from 'above.'

Development of community from the bottom-up equally questions the dominance of the white, Western, patriarchal world-view of self-evident superiority. Remembering that community development is founded on the value of wisdom from below, derived from the community itself, guards against colonialist practice, either understood as the imposition of managerial or other power-saturated modes of being and relating or, internationally and cross-culturally, as imposing the modern and dominant-western ways of thinking and 'en-acting' personal and social ways of being and relating.

## **STRUCTURAL ISSUES AND SOCIAL JUSTICE**

Frameworks for community development require a social justice and/or human rights framework lest practice violates social justice principles and entrenches oppressive or unfair practices such as excluding minorities or 'peripheral' groups or individuals. Community development must rest on a value, ethical/moral or ideological base. Any program that does not specifically address the structural inequalities and exclusionary tendencies of class, gender, race, ethnicity, ability, age or sexuality is likely to reinforce and entrench such forms and divisions of structural disadvantage rather than challenge them.



# CHAPTER 4.

## Concepts and Tools for the Development of Community: towards more informed policy responses

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***"If the only tool one learns to use is a hammer...  
Everything around becomes a nail..."***

Anon

***"Al andar se hace camino..."  
"By walking one makes the road..."***

From Antonio Machado (1912)  
- and applied to processes of  
social change by Paulo Freire in  
conversation with Myles Horton  
(1987 and 1990)

# INTRODUCTION

The fourth and last section of this reflective work about the development of inclusive communities offers two explorations;

- first, a '*Working Principle of Community Development*' proposing an 'intermediate' level of *problem posing/reflection/planning* allowing translations between theory, principles and values and the practice contexts in which community development – understood as the '*development of community*' - is to be introduced or 'applied';
- second, a series of concepts and tools useful for incorporating CD principles into a local council area's policies and program practices.

It is hoped that this section will succeed in connecting the three previous ones as intended by the formulation of the 'working principle'.

## A WORKING PRINCIPLE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

This final chapter starts by reconnecting with a section of the first chapter, the literature review of this book:

"A **working** principle, consequently, implies that, like a *working definition*, the principle is not yet ready, not yet completely elaborated; it is continuously in the process of refinement, of re-direction, of being *en-acted*. As societal reality proceeds through human action and interaction, the *working principle* becomes part of that process, is dialectically related to it; it is preliminary and yet orients and directs action and is simultaneously changed by it. While working *with* or 'imbued' by the principle, it will prove its *truth*, its *validity*; it will be reflected upon, transformed and further verified as it develops in the relational practice it is applied to. Hence, a *working principle* of community development (like the *working principle* associated with other intervention modalities, e.g. working with individuals or 'cases', group work) is a general *maxim*, which assists in orienting professional (or 'service delivery' or policy-based) action(s) or interventions in and across the most differentiated fields of practice. A working principle thus should offer *integrating* power in several ways. It should integrate

*theory and practice\_*

*different methodical/technical approaches*

*diverse (social) scientific disciplines.*

*the 'on-going-ness' of daily living of those we relate with in the course of our work...*

In the appendix of that chapter, i developed the notion of a '*working principle*' as an approach towards engaging in processes of '*reflection in action*' and, to that purpose, identified three interrelated aspects: the *integrative* and *processual* aspects, the former dealing with societal/structural reflections and goal formulations and the latter with action-theoretical ones. A third or '*operational*' aspect was introduced as a '**mediating frame or context**' in which the understandings from the two previous aspects could be made **practically appropriate to the specific site or context of policy, program practice or 'intervention'**.

Such a working context should include the total action margin in its general and its specific features, and in consideration of the legal-institutional conditions operating at the many relevant levels, the living circumstances and praxis of the communities and the capabilities of the '*social interventionists*' – sometimes known as '*community development workers*', but, as we have argued throughout and will again below, of all those who professionally or otherwise are engaged in the implementation of social or public programs and policies and thus are working in the context of civil society endeavours. In sum, this includes everyone working in and with people living in the 'public' space amorphously referred to as '*the community*'...

The primary goal of CD – or the *development of community* - entails the *emancipation* of the members of the community. *Emancipation* is conceived as a person's or a collective's development towards a situation in which awareness of their own societal position and situation increasingly guides individual and collective actions in a less distorted way. Such a situation will equally be characterised by a growing degree of active *participation* and hence *inclusion* in community life and in the structural contexts which condition it. Emancipation and participation are dialectically related, in that they presuppose and evoke each other.

This orientation posits that *structural* (contextual) and *personal* (of the 'agents' participating in the process) articulations *simultaneously* and *interactively* constitute the content and form of community development and associated 'interventions': it is necessary that, on the one hand, through consciousness raising activities, individuals and collectivities be supported in developing and enhancing their personal capabilities, eventually leading them to self-expression and self-motivated action towards right livelihood. It is, on the other hand, equally imperative to engage, together with the community, in changing the conditions and determinants preventing the en-acting and development of such capabilities.

In sum, within such conceptualisation, a '*community*' presents itself as:

- a historical, spatial and relational specification of societal-existential conditions of individuals and collectivities, i.e. a concrete *living place* or *life world*;
- a place of social (inter-)action and a possibility for political action; and
- a medium for learning-and-appropriation processes, to be adapted to, and emerging from, the specific capabilities of its members.

While generally avoiding definitions, since they often are too rigid and often miss their *practical* point, i nevertheless attempt to offer a *working definition* of the *development of community*, to serve as a basis for further practical/theoretical elaboration and dialogue, and as a gauge to 'assessing' the potential for the elaboration of the operational or working context below.

***The development of community, as a working principle of all social and professional 'interventions', intends to support individuals and groups of a spatial-historical community to engage in a self-determined developmental process, so that***

- ***they are increasingly capable of contributing to and of exerting influence on the internal and external structuration of their community;***

- **they will become more capable of (intentionally) reversing and correcting the alienation from their life world, which is a product of the increasing segregation of the domains of acting (work, consumption, recreation, socialization, etc.) and the inequalities structuring their livelihoods;**
- **they will learn to reciprocally adapt interpersonal and ecological relationships, which are being distorted and threatened by detrimental global and local social and ecological processes, in particular those which are accessible within their concrete living environment and therefore can serve as exemplars for involvement in broader areas of social implication.**

As mentioned before in the literature review section, I argue against an understanding of CD whereby a professional community development worker or 'officer' (or indeed, a separate 'department' of CD) is 'added' to the existing staff establishment (for example, in a local council but equally in other governmental or NGOs organisations), expecting him/her/them to 'do' and be responsible for the specifically described 'CD job' or 'program' *in addition* to all other agency staff or departments who continue to engage in their own 'specialist' work. As so often the case, he/she/they will then eventually be (mis-)used as 'coordinators', regularly sitting *between* all chairs and 'usefully' employed to write grant applications or 'represent' the Council or their agency at coordination or 'partnership' meetings with numbers of others similarly sent by their respective organisations – and in too many cases without any authority or real capability to engage with 'real' people...

We contend that many community-oriented projects failed or quietly disappeared because CD was conceived as being *separate, and to be separated from*, the rest of the overall social 'intervention' the organisation was involved in (or funded for, which suggests that the funding bodies and the policies they base their funding on are as 'culpable' as those who run the programs...). I continue to maintain, however, that CD – the *development of community* – should not be seen as a single profession or as a special method to be 'applied' by specialists or as a quasi-self-contained 'program' or a (usually three years lasting) project – 'pilot' or otherwise. While reductionist conceptions of 'case work' or other individual- and group-methods only tend to pay fleeting – if any – attention to the 'community' their clients belong to – or indeed, to its absence in their clients' life, – a structurally-abstract notion of 'community' often has little reference to those who are assumed to constitute it, who en-act it through their living/acting/relating/etc. In this way, they ignore the available individual and collective capabilities and responsibilities to transforming their living ways and conditions towards *right livelihood*.

And this is the point where the **operational aspect** of the working principle of the development of community may offer avenues of 'application' across many areas and fields within which the array of social interventions by agencies or departments (are projected to) take place. In order to allow for the orchestration of different forms of social intervention within a '*working context of development of community*', we developed three specific but complementary *modes* of community development.<sup>4</sup> They offer both *entry-points* for reflection and inclusion of community contexts into on-going practice in specific areas of (Council-based or auspiced) service engagement and – vice versa –

<sup>4</sup> First formulations of this occurred in (then West) Germany where one of us was living and working between 1970 and 1980; see Boulet & Bolz, 1972; Boulet, Krauss and Oelschlaegel, 1980; reprint 2019; Boulet 1985).



suggest specific issues or areas of possible/necessary practice involvement in grounding agency or government involvement in service delivery as '*community-based*' or as oriented towards '*community involvement*'.

## THREE MODES OF DEVELOPING COMMUNITY: TERRITORIAL, FUNCTIONAL AND CATEGORICAL

The different modes of developing community suggested by the notions of territorial, functional and categorical community development do not designate different 'types' of communities. Rather, they all relate to spatially and physically identifiable and subjectively perceived communities – people's 'life worlds' - and they primarily should be seen as framing devices for reflective practice, allowing for an integrated and integrating approach to all community-based or -oriented practices and thus offering a strategic arrangement of social-spatial entities seen and conceived as '*(inter-)action and relational fields*'.

I organise the interpretive description of the different modes of community development in a recurrent pattern, first circumscribing the *social object* of the specific mode and then turning to the symptomatic issues (problems, strengths and capabilities) it is ideally conceived addressed to work with or 'solve'; the elaboration of specific goals and interaction capabilities concludes the exploration of each mode. Finally, it should be noted that the main orientation of the three operational modes of the 'working principle of developing community' in the below examples of application has been skewed towards the social/welfare domain of service delivery and professional (inter)action as this was the context in which the approach originally emerged; it should be apparent, however, that application across the areas of health, recreation, culture, amenities, traffic, etc. can be easily added to the array of examples provided.

### A. TERRITORIAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The **social object** of reflection and professional interaction in this mode is constituted by the community as a *socio-political-ecological territory*. This 'place' can be considered as a relatively autonomous social-spatial entity, its inhabitants collectively subjected to a range of similar socio-ecological living conditions and perceived both from within and without as a *relatively* homogeneous entity (notwithstanding the often great differences between the 'units' – e.g. 'nuclear families' - making up that entity). The latter characteristic implies - to varying degrees and qualifications - identification by inhabitants/residents with 'their' place or territory. Notions ordinarily associated with such a place are, amongst others: milieu, neighbourhood, city quarter, community, village, locality, 'block', or even 'street', etc.

**Discursive descriptions** of this mode of developing community could include (at least) some of the following factors:

- the dialectical relationship and reciprocity between 'place' and inhabitants' experience of it;
- spatial determinants of personal and social identity;
- internal and external socio-political relationships and networks;
- structuration of communication, within and without;

- city planning, architectural and ecological factors;
- specific data about members of the 'local' community;
- pragmatic qualifiers including: 'new towns', 'city/neighbourhood renewal', 'slum', etc., representing clues about the constitution of the spatial entity, directing analysis and interpretation of action-relevant phenomena (some of this is certainly assumed to be contained in the momentarily fashionable notion of 'place-based' programs).

**Issues** to which this mode of developing community offers a specific response by seeking to activate present capabilities, include

- the increasing alienation of the community – its individual members as well as collectively - from its immediate environment as well as from its overall socio-ecological context;
- the concurrent erosion of social and personal identity;
- the deterioration of relational and communicative processes and awareness;
- the pervasiveness of '*pseudo-privacy*' and the disappearance of a communitarian sphere or public space for (inter)action and expression of who we are and what we stand for;
- the shrinking of possibilities for positive identification and appropriation of local spaces and places as existential markers of 'who we are' as persons.

**Goals** for professional, voluntary and policy efforts within the mode of territorial community development include the creation and development of social and political '*public spheres*' where the expression of relational and communicative capabilities of community members can be enabled and become 'infectious'. Furthermore, obtaining or acquiring as much decision-making power related to as many societal domains as possible (i.e. not just focused on the fact of living together in one geographic area and being subjected to similar formal-political processes and ecological realities, but also reaching out to areas tangential to the domain of societal production, for example, the utilization of public lands, the rights associated with private property, planning and implementation of public transportation and traffic, energy, land use for trade, consumption, recreation, the practice of citizenship, etc.)

As local council and other government and agency services and their administrative-political processes and powers are implicated in the reproduction of human labour and citizenship capabilities (mainly through activities related to socialisation, re-socialisation, rehabilitation and care but also in the creation and maintenance of amenities and utilities), territorial community development should play a positive role in transcending the customary segregations of social interventions (the silo-ing of departments and divisions). Indeed, most institutional processes inherent in government and associated operations can be 'grafted' onto a territorial approach towards developing community and thus assist in 'realising' the space- and place-oriented dimension of all its delivery of physical and social services, right in the neighbourhood/community where people live. The community, then, could become (again) a powerful medium effectively counteracting processes of centralisation, substituting them with services delivered under the control of citizens/recipients and/or with their active participation – see co-production - as capable individuals and groups.

**Instruments or techniques** for attaining such goals are, amongst others:

- neighbourhood or community newspapers;
- arts, cultural and recreational events, fairs and festivals as well as activities ongoing over time; establishment of information systems at community level;

- development of and participation in activities related to media, including the proliferating social media;
- establishment and support of and respect for internal decision making mechanisms, including viable and controllable delegation structures;
- active and critical involvement with local and non-local political groups, personalities and representative systems and active monitoring of economic developments influencing the life world of the community.

## B. FUNCTIONAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The **social object** of reflection and professional interaction in the mode of functional community development is constituted by the specific living conditions essential for satisfying the *reproductive needs* of the members of the specific community (*reproduction* is used here in the twofold sense of direct reproduction or restoration of *used* labour force, e.g. recreation, consumption of resources necessary for biological survival, shelter, etc., and of long-term intergenerational reproduction, in particular socialisation). This again refers to such factors conditioning (both enabling and limiting) the lives of the totality of the inhabitants of the community, albeit with individual and group-specific differences (e.g. defined by class, age, gender, specific characteristics like ethnicity/race, disabilities, etc.). For want of a better term, we refer to such factors *functions* of community, as they are essential for its *functioning*. They are usually institutionalised within formal organisational configurations (e.g. local councils; regional constellations) and serve as delivery, enabling or otherwise performative, systems understandable as the 'service function' of the community. Notions ordinarily associated with and particular relevant for this mode of community interaction are:

- housing and housing conditions and their affordability;
- transportation and traffic;
- provisions for consumption;
- education/training opportunities;
- opportunities and provisions of socialisation;
- recreational, cultural (including faith and spiritual) and health services and amenities;
- work and employment.

**Discursive descriptions** within this mode of community development may include some, all of, or more than, the following:

- political, economic and legal determinants of housing, transport, etc.;
- local and super-ordinated power structures determining their provision or lack of;
- formal and informal political and economic influence;
- data related to the structure of community provisions as well as its functional needs-structure;
- economic-financial state of local public households and their organisation;
- relationships between public and private service provision systems.

Of particular importance are the areas of social reproduction in which existing inequalities are felt most directly in people's life circumstances and trajectories (housing, schooling, recreation, health, etc. areas, sometimes referred to as domains of '*disparity*').

These domains also present as central factors supporting the *legitimacy* of political (and economic) systems and regimes and translate into the loyalty of citizens to their elected or appointed leadership, especially but not only in systems characterised as 'democratic free market' based.

**Issues** that this mode of developing community can respond to more specifically include:

- the absence or loss of important functions previously taken care of by the local community and its networks, mainly caused by processes of resource centralisation (for example, the closing of many community health-care services, to the benefit of huge centralised medical *bastions*);
- closing of schools, the professionalisation of care – or its 'semi-professionalisation' through formal volunteering 'systems', etc.;
- the inherent loss of *urbanity* and the decay of the quality of living;
- gaps in the provision of services and stagnation of their development, if not their total elimination, because of the imperative of profit-generation in the private sector and the emergence of more urgent needs of system-stabilisation on the part of the public sector (especially in an era of economic rationalism, cost and spending cuts, GFC and its local reverberations);
- the widening formal and substantial interference on the part of centralising decision-making systems in the structuration of educational-and-socialisation institutions and in their basic organisational configurations ('micro-management' by funding bodies);
- the lack of organising- and conflict endurance capabilities on the part of those who are primarily and most fundamentally disadvantaged by the existing functional *disparities* (the lower-classes, marginal groups, the excluded, the poor, women, recent migrants, etc.);
- the difficulty of establishing long-range-perspectives in strategies and actions;
- differences in the subjective experience and objective incidence of the above issues, occasioned by divisive and alienating processes operating on all levels of social structuration, relationships and (inter)action.

**Goals** for professional, administrative and policy efforts within the mode of functional community development, in addition to directly or indirectly addressing the above mentioned issues, include:

- the capability-focused and developmental organisation of the affected segments of the population;
- provision of services for those who are temporarily or chronically unable to utilise needed functions and amenities, whether they are locally available or not;
- the systemic establishment of new, or the transformation of existing, institutional configurations composing the local network of provisions, *systemic* in the sense that they are to be oriented to the objective and subjective needs of the local people (or its affected segments and groups) and organised in such a way that they can be controlled by those whom they are supposed to serve (in schools, health services, child care, provisions for youth, etc.);
- decentralisation of provision and creation of learning-possibilities for the affected groups and community members.

As council and other government services and their other administrative-political processes and powers are implicated in social reproduction of people's capabilities to improve their livelihoods, the functional dimension of community development is eminently suited to integrate the local realisation of many performances of the social welfare state, without the common segregation involved in daily service delivery.

Socialisation-, re-socialisation-, rehabilitation-, benefit- and care-related services, then, which in some form are already being delivered through or engaged in by local instances as well as regional and state-based ones, need to be encompassed by functional community development. The aim should be to enhance the quantity and quality of such services, to improve recipients' and beneficiaries' participation, to complement the available services with others, addressing newly emerging or previously unmet needs, fully through processes of co-production and re-design as previously discussed in the literature review.

For example, provision for the aged living in the community as well as community-based housing alternatives for those who cannot afford home ownership or high-cost private rentals or those who prefer to live in cooperative housing modalities; community mental health services; community re-socialisation – e.g. *restorative justice work* - efforts for delinquents and crime prevention; extracurricular activities in schools, neighbourhood houses and community centres and similar are clearly to be *grafted in the community*, both organisationally and from the point of view of their content, so that they are realised with the highest possible specificity in response to the capabilities of the community and its members. This will most probably meet intense resistance on the part of the established centralised, bureaucratic and specialised delivery-systems (and the associated professionals!), necessitating special conflict management and risk-taking skills.

The functional mode of developing community, to be sure, constitutes a central part of many well-established and traditional projects across 'developed' countries as they historically did, and at present still do, in Australia. More often than not, the approach was imbued with a distinctive *flair* in relation to other forms and institutional approaches of social and welfare work 'delivery': it was intended to represent the *political edge* of social and welfare work, often based on human rights and 'left' ideas, carrying the banner of its tradition of as well as potential towards social change. Much of that political emphasis was indeed nourished by the hope that the population in need could be politicised on the basis of the functional deficiencies of, and inequalities experienced in, service provision and living circumstances or on the basis of the disparities between their availability for the privileged and underprivileged groups.

By now – and the 'occupy' and 'indignados' and other resistance and protest movements notwithstanding - we have learned how overly naïve (because one-dimensional) those hopes have been: it became clear how much of a 're-education of the masses' would be needed to provide them with the necessary understanding and endurance to follow through with their justified demands and actions. We have also learned from the experiences with *consciousness building* approaches based on Paulo Freire's work, how much *patience* is needed with such approaches, often a luxury given the imposed timeframes when conflicts arise around issues associated with disadvantage and inequality. And it has to be said that *populism* increasingly saturating our democratic systems is not making this work easier... The next mode of community development, the *categorical*, attempts to provide a more systemic answer to this issue.

Careful attention needs to be given to the *institutional* framework in which community development workers and volunteers are expected to operate: the pressures of the antagonisms in which they *by necessity* are operating (see Boulet, 2010, quoted in the

introduction to this work) might easily lead to conflict and personal burnout; indeed, their task often consists in working *between* the members of the community and their legitimate claims and the existing structures of service provision and their institutional determinants, replete as they are with power differentials and often undemocratic procedures and (assumed) economic imperatives.

**Instruments or techniques** for achieving such goals and for initiating requisite processes are, amongst others:

- 'activating interviews' or self-surveys by community members or engagement in processes of Participatory Action Research;
- committee work;
- working with parents related to school or day care centres;
- house visits as well as public meetings;
- working with existing action groups or assisting in their coming about;
- enhancing *citizens' initiatives*;
- simulation and planning games;
- learning of, and experimenting with, forms of cooperation/coordination/ organisation; delegation and division of work and power;
- organisation of groups based on objective interests and needs;
- learning to communicate with administrations and to endure conflict-strategies as well as processes of restorative justice; information and media work;
- organisation and establishment of more permanent and responsible committees dealing with the different *functions* necessary to maintain or improve the livelihood of the community and its various groups and individual members;
- political representation and participation efforts with locals.

## C. CATEGORICAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The **social object** of reflection and professional or volunteer interaction within the mode of *categorical community development* is constituted by such groups or members of the community distinguished by socio-biological criteria, such as age, gender, ethnicity, origin, ability, etc. The categorical mode of developing community, therefore, is primarily *person(s)-oriented*, in the sense that the specific capabilities, possibilities, needs and problems of the respective groups and their realisation become the focal point for social interaction, which is often recreational, educational or socio-cultural ('*community arts*' or '*animation*' or '*spiritual*') in character. Helping to constitute a healthy social and personal identity and a less-distorted identification with the own group and, in a mediated fashion, with the entire community, are additional justifications for categorical community development. This mode of community development recognises that, in addition to a person's identification with 'place' or with certain life circumstances (e.g. 'being poor', or 'homeless' or in 'ill health'), s-he also identifies with, and is a member of, a 'peer'-group based on certain characteristics or interests, however tenuous that identification may happen to be. It should be obvious to the reader that this mode of developing community could more specifically address the interactions – vertically and horizontally – aiming at *inclusion* of excluded groups and individuals as frequently referred to in the first chapter.



Quite self-evident group formations based on age (e.g. children, youth, adult, and senior citizen groups) could be complemented by autonomous groups and programs by and for women, migrant and refugees, ethnic groups, depending on the specific constellations and composition of the community.

**Discursive descriptions** of this dimension of community could – at least – include some of the following:

- age- and gender-specific socialisation and needs/interests, peer groups;
- developmental-psychological factors;
- generation- and class-specific needs;
- hetero-cultural habits, needs, problems;
- communication between people of similar and of different ages, colours, backgrounds;
- deviance and stigmatisation related to categories of community members;
- family constellations;
- quantitative and qualitative data about the representation of the different categories of and in the community; their different issues, capabilities and potential.

**Issues** that this mode of developing community can more specifically respond to include:

- the loss of identity and of ego-strength, as they manifest themselves specifically for different categories of community members and often result (amplified by *structural* factors) in deviance and stigma;
- alienation of self-consciousness and the loss of inner-directedness in all aspects of the life-world; the homogenisation, commodification and commercialisation of the entire experiential space, certainly amplified by the rapid spread of the social media;
- the increasing loss of personal autonomy, in particular in the area of socialisation as well as the necessary failure of so-called *compensatory* interventions as they don't address the real causes of people's lacking or untapped capabilities;
- the loss of a sense of reality due to the influence of advertising, mass media and other manipulations of human perception;
- compensatory withdrawal into artificial (*narcissistic*) inner worlds or aggressive reactions to the threatening outer-world (again, increasingly amplified by the spread of electronic and 'social' media);
- loss of the competence to act *beyond* the structurations as they are prescribed on all societal levels;
- neutralisation of experiential competence by means of surrogate experiences;
- fragmentation of social areas of acting and experience and their fixation in people's consciousness;
- people's increasing incapability to act in solidarity with one another and the erosion of their capability to relate.

**Goals** for professional, administrative and policy efforts within the mode of categorical community development, in addition to directly or indirectly addressing the issues mentioned above, include:

- disclosing learning possibilities and creating *experiential spaces*, through which inhibited, buried and oppressed human capabilities and potentials could reactivate and develop;
- *community space* becomes an experimental field in which strategic acting for change in different areas of the life-world (in particular those pertaining to the world of work as well as the private sphere of the family) and the social relationships governing it, can be learned and tried out;
- learning to alter destructive ways of handling conflicts and substituting them with solidarity

or restorative ways of behaving and acting on the basis of conscious compromising between and equalizing of particularistic interests;

- learning to act collectively and towards the elimination of segregation.

The two previously discussed modes of community development are strategically complemented by categorical work: the latter usually is conceived within a long-term perspective and is not so much exposed to direct pressures for *political* action. This allows for developing organisational "*potential*" which can be mobilised if the need for political action emerges at some point in time. Other goals include: working on the '*worlds of pain*' – traumas directly or indirectly resulting from experiences in domains of production or reproduction or even primary socialisation; training in self-determination or self-management, shared decision making, meaningful division of work.

Explicated categorical community development again converges with many services delivered at local council level but also by other levels of government and the private sector and their administrative-political processes and powers implicated in the social reproduction of people's capabilities for improving their livelihoods; in particular those focusing on (re)socialisation, here understood as consciousness-raising and reintegrating – including - individuals and groups from marginality into the *body* of the community. The restoration of the working capacity of community members (e.g. by means of recreational activity) is equally a categorical goal community development shares with other government programs and interventions, especially in the community or public health environment. Specific forms of social intervention and policy to be integrated in the categorical mode of community development include

- pedagogical intervention with children and youth;
- street work;
- some traditional forms of settlement work;
- adult education and recreational activities for adults;
- work with senior citizens;
- socio-cultural animation.

**Instruments** and **techniques** for achieving such goals include:  
recreational or neighbourhood facilities and socio-cultural centres;

- playgrounds;
- club work;
- *open houses* or *drop-ins*;
- *closed* groups with limited access;
- interest- or capability-enhancement groups;
- neighbourhood exploration;
- city or neighbourhood games;
- categorical and inter-categorical festivals and fair or events;
- categorical meetings with other similar groups from outside the community.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

The following scheme displays the integration of the three modes of developing community. It should be repeated that the suggested operational context implies **no specialist type of professional intervention or interaction**. It offers a **working context** and should primarily serve to reintegrate the existing institutional and practical fragmentation of governmental and other agencies' place-based interventions and service provisions and to resolve the unfruitful *hegemonic* disputes sometimes raging between the different professions or departments arguing for control or 'leadership' of the program.

It does, of course, not exclude a professional community development worker; on the contrary, both institutional and 'alternative' or even voluntary community workers could find their niche in such a context. It is furthermore imperative to attempt and start initiatives in *all three modes at once*, lest the practical/reflective/integrative power of the approach and the operational framework be lost.

Finally, the learning/educational foundation of this framework of interaction/ reflection is explicitly *Freirean*, not only through its orientation to the everyday-life-world-and-experiences of the members of the community but also based on the premise that social learning is mainly, if not only, possible through actively and consciously changing the objective determinants of that life-world, especially through processes of mutual adaptation with, and to, the surrounding and global ecology.

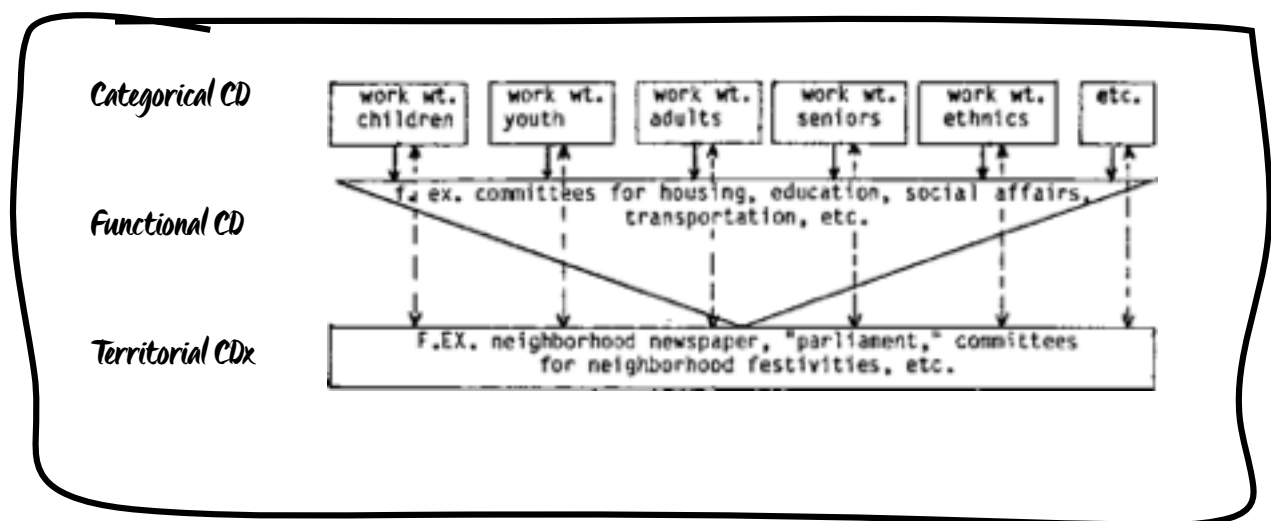


Figure 1. Integration of the three modes of developing community

## CONCEPTS AND TOOLS FOR POLICY RESPONSES INCORPORATING CD-BASED APPROACHES

As already mentioned several times, there are multiple pressures on community development practitioners and policy makers wishing to espouse community development (CD) principles within the present political, economic and managerial environment and culture; indeed, much of that culture actually *devalues* CD principles as they contradict, or are in opposition to, many of the premises on which economic rationalism and neo-liberalism are based. As we have repeatedly and explicitly argued, it is crucial for all working in their various capacities with local citizens and intending to do so in a democratic and participatory manner, to adopt a critical approach to current thinking and approaches and incorporate community development values, theories and practice approaches into their philosophy and working approaches. Without insight into one's own power-saturated practices one may perpetuate a *'political economy which ensures a one way flow of benefits, the subjects being the perpetual losers in a zero-sum game and the rulers the beneficiaries'* (Nandy, 1983:30). What is done in the name of community development often *'is subject to the vision of the self-defined practitioner or practicing institution'* (Toomey, 2009:182) and without critical reflection, may not result in the development of community at all.

Similar to what we argued above when developing the concept of the *'working principle of community development'*, Shanahan (2005:3) asserts that local government needs to make community strengthening a value that underpins all of the work done in local government, because *'strengthening civil society and its capacity to participate in all matters of civil economic, social and political life is the most important instrument [that can be used to create an inclusive society] of all'* (Kirby, 2002, cited in Shanahan, 2005:4). Whilst many *'toolkits'* and *'how to'* manuals are available promising to guide the community development practitioner or policy-maker, they mostly appear overly instrumental and unreflective, or they focus on a single or a few technical aspects of the approach, rarely if ever engaging in the careful and critical analysis and reflection we have continued to suggest is an essential ingredient in *any* attempt at stimulating citizens' involvement.

## A REFLECTION ON THE ROLE OF THE DEVELOPING COMMUNITY 'WORKER'

We have already discussed elements of the role of the community development worker (which does include unpaid 'workers') in the literature review under the heading of *The Practice of Community Development and its assertions*. Through a community development lens, *citizens' empowerment* and the *mobilisation of their capabilities towards right livelihood, individually and collectively*, are the ultimate purposes of the work and roles undertaken by workers, administrators and policy makers. They must be subject to critical reflection as to whether impediments to this aim have wittingly or unwittingly been infused in the process of implementing and using the procedures of any 'toolkit' or practice 'prescription'. Using Toomey's (2009) work for a critical look at the potential of the practices inherent in a variety of roles in the pursuit of empowerment

reveals the potential for disempowerment within the more traditional roles – *rescuer, provider, moderniser or liberator*.

As a '*rescuer*', a worker's role is to provide aid, assistance and medical and/or emergency relief to those in need and in times of crisis. Such a role is important to ensure the survival of people who '*are unable to help themselves due to severe physical limitations*' (Toomey, 2009:184). Such a role, however, dis-empowers when directed at those not (any more) in need of rescue. Indeed, expressed in economic terms, any decrease in 'demand' decreases local 'supply', leaving the community with less resources and less reserves for when the next crisis hits; in more social-psychological and relational terms, undue rescuing will contribute to passivity, erode the necessary *interdependence* of the community and actually increase or at least maintain the need to be 'rescued' (Lekoko & Merwe 2006 in Toomey, 2009:185). We have already pointed at the notion of *co-production* to suggest an alternative to the 'rescuer' approach and we can add here the *restorative practices* approach, which would adhere to similar premises (<https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-d&q=restorative+practice>).

In the '*provider*' role, the focus is on giving the '*gift*' of charity to those '*less fortunate*', whether they are in crisis or not. Donating for buildings and infrastructure and 'sponsoring' children in Africa, for example, can be disempowering if one is doing so 'for' people instead of assisting them in doing things by and for themselves and helping by focusing on the process. Gift-giving outside of systems of real reciprocity maintains inequalities, simplifies the issues people are facing and reinforces local people's perception and feelings that their own efforts and strengths are inadequate and that it is '*more effective to wait for a donor than to exercise ones own initiative*' (Vincent, 2004, in Toomey, 2009:185-186).

In the role of a '*moderniser*' – a typical role in international development discourses but also when considering or implementing 'interventions' into the life situations of groups who have 'stayed back' in developed countries (remember the infamous 'intervention' into Indigenous communities during the Howard government) - one assists a group in taking up new technologies, accessing state-led credit, in 'modernising' educational systems and processes, emphasising 'enterprise' and 'income generating' strategies and such like. Such action is, however, prone to create all manner of unintended social, economic and ecological consequences as well as running the risk of devaluing the existing strengths of the local community – let alone the danger of being culturally inappropriate and - therefore - being resisted or undermined. Those for whom the scheme was supposed to be beneficial would very likely still be unable to access the full benefits of participation in the 'mainstream' economy or in important decision-making processes which determine their livelihood (Lappé, 1998 in Toomey, 2009:186).

In the role of a '*liberator*', community practitioners will '*educate the masses*', undertake political activism and stand and fight in solidarity with the poor, the excluded, disadvantaged or disenfranchised. Acting from the bottom-up, liberators perceive the reality of oppression as a limiting situation which offers opportunities for transformation and social change (Freire, 1973 in Toomey, 2009:188). Whilst the objective of empowerment needs to be recognised and valued, without critical analysis and careful consideration of strategies and actions *with* those who are the subjects of the oppressive conditions, however, such activism can also '*polarize issues, divide populations and act*

*in itself as a tyrannical force ... denying people the right to make up their own minds and disputing the validity of their perceptions'* (Toomey, 2009:188).

The role of a '*catalyst*' is an alternative and non-traditional one in the process of developing community agency; a catalyst aims to '*help communities build their own capacities for identifying and solving problems, emphasizing autonomous action and self-reliance*' (Datta, 2007 in Toomey, 2009:189), some of the main ingredients we have earlier identified in our literature review and in the previous chapter of this book. Responsibility for the continued pursuit of transformation and change is, however, not the role of the catalyst. Catalyst action takes the form of bringing new ideas, information, beliefs and perceptions, identifying questions, questioning the taken-for-granted, sharing experiences and '*planting seeds*'. One could imagine the '*locus of action*' of the catalyst in the '*middle*' of the community and *walking alongside* the relevant groups and members involved in the processes which constitute the development of community towards right livelihood.

The '*facilitator*' role in community development practice seems less involved than that of a catalyst; as a facilitator, one brings people together, particularly where there has been division, aiding the organisational process and offering an objective – or at least, an '*outside*' - perspective (Toomey, 2009:190) on community-derived goals. Any actions taken aim to support citizens' decision-making, negotiation and conflict resolution processes so as to achieve a workable consensus. One problem with a facilitator role is that the community development worker will both consider him/herself and be considered by the community as a '*process technician*' rather than sharing sufficiently the experiences and processes the community itself engages in.

Finally, an '*ally*' acts in support of empowering individuals, groups or community, expressing solidarity and strengthening friendships from a basis of respect and collective action (Toomey, 2009:191), whilst an '*advocate*' role can be seen to be more political in assisting them in formal decision making or propaganda processes, for example through writing, using social media, publishing reports and, indeed, marching in solidarity alongside people (see Land, 2015). An advocate will, as Toomey suggests (2009:188), '*bring local issues into the global arena for broader change*'.

Henderson (2007:1) argues that it is important that those working with citizens have access to resources that will enable and equip them to think and work critically; to use theory and to reflect on their practice in the context of the prevailing policy, social and economic climate in order to continue to work for '*social justice through empowering and transformative practice*'. It is vital that CD practitioners fully understand the implications of the roles that they are invited to play and thus have conscious awareness of their consequences when interacting with communities (Toomey, 2009). This requires a preparedness to undertake critical self-examination, take risks in disclosing '*our weaknesses, our failings, our shortcomings, our dilemmas, the constraints, the politics,*' and asking '*how do we do this better*' (Shanahan, 2005:3) in order to enhance long-term performance (Lake, 2009). Becoming critical requires one to:

1. Clarify and question personal, professional, organisational and political values;
2. Identify underlying assumptions or dominant narratives in the discourses of practitioners and others;



3. *Challenge dominant discourses that are disempowering;*
4. *Be honest about the power relations in situations, while working towards greater equality; and*
5. *Pay attention to the whole context in which the practice takes place* (Banks, 2007:146).

Such a critique must occur across divisions and silos which are 'at work' in local councils and many organisations and departments working with citizens and their communities (transport, housing, amenities, events, planning teams) and can be supported and facilitated by consultant or peer supervision, practitioner dialogue and debate within a community of practitioners (e.g. community development team), reflective writing (think-act-reflect from multiple perspectives) in facilitated groups, diarising or undertaking learning journals, all provide opportunities for becoming a critical community development practitioners. Critical CD supervision, according to Banks (2007:147), challenges and questions those working with the community by:

1. *Asking for accounts of practice that fully contextualise significant pieces of work, events, situations or relationships (identifying all the actors involved and lines of power for example);*
2. *Encouraging them to locate themselves in the context and the action taking place, identifying their own influence and power;*
3. *Encouraging them to identify their own values and motivations; and*
4. *Linking analysis of practice to relevant theories and concepts.*

Banks (2007:151) also offers an outline for reflective writing for ethical practice:

1. *Briefly describe what happened (the key events, people, circumstances);*
2. *Identify the ethical issues involved and comment on them (for example: people's right to space and who chooses that space, and freedom from harassment; equality of opportunity; fairness in the use of resources; professional duties and responsibilities);*
3. *Contextualise your account in relation to broader geographical, policy, theory and practice considerations (for example: area-based policies for tackling multiple deprivation, local power structures and networks, dominant discourses); and*
4. *Reflections:*
  - a) *Reflect on what action was taken and/or could have been taken. Why was it taken? What could have been done differently? Locate the action in terms of the relevant contextual factors;*
  - b) *Reflect on your role (including your own power/lack of power) and your emotions;*
  - c) *Reflect on what you have learnt from analysing and reflecting on this situation/event; and*
  - d) *What further action do you need to take in relation to this situation or similar ones in the future?*

There exist several reflective frameworks for critical developing community practice and i offer some detail from some selected examples, slightly modifying them to fit with the ideas and language and nomenclature we have developed in the other sections of this report.

McIntyre (1996) addresses the preliminary and early stages of a process of CD; whilst he continues to focus on 'problems', i have added concepts like 'capabilities' and 'right livelihood' and others to the following list.

**'Problem' definition:**

- Has a needs/capabilities/strengths/assets assessment been undertaken? If so how and by whom? Was it done in a 'participatory' or 'the expert' way?
- If it is agreed that there's a 'problem' or an 'issue', was a shared mission for the project worked out?
- How was the process (developmental casework, group work, networking and social action) for developing community decided upon?
- How was the site and focus of 'action' (geographical, e.g. enclave, neighbourhood, institutional, club; non- geographically-based interest or lobby group or 'category' of local citizens) chosen and decided upon?
- Were the 'stakeholders' and their perceived interests and agendas identified? Did important differences exist in terms of their respective 'power'? Were their experiences and perceptions drawn out and acknowledged?
- While existing arenas for community (inter)action were expanded, were new ones created or are existing interventions undermined, whether they are formal or informal?
- In whose opinion was there a 'need'? And was there sufficient attention given to participants and the community's capabilities?
- What is the nature of involvement of the 'worker'?
- Does the worker understand the socio-, political and economic context in which s-he is working?
- Are all stakeholders equally keen on the worker's involvement?
- Are the social networks of the participants and their interests in the 'project' or the development of community being well understood? Where are the points of overlap and break down in the social networks?
- In whose opinion will the project be a success or a failure?

***Social analysis contributing to a better understanding of the context and the area of CD involvement can only occur when one knows or is aware what lenses are being worn by the various stakeholders:***

- Do some of the participants understand the broader political context of what (sometimes) appears to only be a private problem?
- Has iterative feedback across groups been undertaken? Ideas generated within one group are shared with the next group so they can consider them and add suggestions. Stories and ideas of participants from different groups are recorded and shared with other groups, whose responses in the form of criticisms and agreements are noted and shared until areas of integration emerge (McIntyre, 1996).
- If weaker interests have more to gain from deliberative forums than powerful groups, has an assurance been gained that the involvement of the less powerful by learning about the citizens' forum procedures and the need for problems to be tackled cooperatively will ensure that the weaker groups will be effectively 'heard'? For example, will they have adequate resources to participate; are there delineated public and political incentives and mutual dependence, assuring that the forum is the main route to policy/issue input; are strongly reinforced social norms regarding behaviour established (e.g. moderate, well-behaved, professional and consensual tone that discourages lobbying and adversarial processes); etc.? (Hendricks, 2006)
- Are pluralist or non-pluralist values reflected in the adopted process; i.e. are the many voices in society allowed to debate and develop a consensus (Staples, 2006, cited in Bay, 2008:48)?
- Are workers and Council administrators acting upon the unquestionable and inescapable political ethic of responsibility for the other (connectedness) in as far as their existing and future practices are concerned (as givers and receivers of trust; Beasley & Bacchi, 2007)?

## **Participation:**

Shanahan (2005) has developed a series of '*Hard Questions*' to be posed regularly to oneself as a CD worker or during group/peer supervision or consultation and discussion sessions:

- How does one sustain the interest of people involved and convince them to stick around and have faith that the process can be just as empowering as the outcomes?
- How does one reach out to communities of interest, who may not yet have any links with their locality?
- How does one drive an agenda of community strengthening and capability discovery in an area of high disadvantage?
- Are resources being wasted on fanciful, full of jargon, government-imposed policies and programs that simply cannot have any positive impact on the underlying inequalities in society?
- Are the minds of 'critical' community workers too closed to the vast opportunities made available by Governments, to really work closely with our communities to figure out the best way forward together? (Shanahan, 2005:4-5).
- How are workers navigating the challenge of communicating their intentions to citizens who often are not experiences disadvantage in the same terms as workers?
- How are workers and members of governing bodies positioning themselves so as to make themselves receptive to the interests, intentions and voices of others? Are they able to 'bracket' their established understanding of the community's reality?
- How are workers finding *common* spaces amidst these potentially conflicting transactions?
- Have more people been invited to become involved?

## **Policy Analysis:**

Becoming critical and reflective means asking important questions about the policy that is being or is to be implemented and of which the CD approach is an expression:

- What knowledge claims are evident (or obscured) in the relevant policy episode?
- How are/were the policy issues represented (and how could they have been represented)?
- What political and cultural values inform these representations (and whose values are represented and whose are not)?
- What follows from these representations (what is obscured from these representations)?
- What research has been used to substantiate knowledge claims (what research has been ignored)? How has that research been carried out? Was it participatory or 'expert-led'?
- What is the complete history, background and context of the policy issue (whose voices are now hidden or ignored)?
- What are the politics of the policy issue (who is likely to gain or lose from the policy implementation and ensuing actions)?
- Who has influence (who is writing about it, whose opinion is being heard and whose isn't)?

## **Reflexive thinking: a grab-bag of possible (self- and group) reflective prompts:**

- Who controlled the information, agenda, meetings, concessions?
- Is the worker also in a monitoring or surveillance role when working with the community?
- Who is considered 'problematic' and why? What other 'categorisations' of community members have been made or are 'common'?
- What values (private property, individualism, performativity, work ethic) underpin the project/policy/plan/language used and who will not be mobilised by these values?
- Who is framed as deserving and who is framed as undeserving?

- Whose voices were listened to, whose voices weren't listened to or only paid lip service to?
- How are community practitioners governed, both as a group and individually; do they govern themselves and each other and how (Connor, 2011)?
- Is there an assumption that people are motivated by the rewards and costs of actions and by the profits they can make or that participants in the process of CD are to be enabled to shape their social circumstances and are aiming for right livelihood (Connor, 2011)?
- Who is construed as the agent for change – the people or the program/policy and its 'officers'? Are the community and its members constructed as passive objects or as active participants in creating progressive change (Emejulu, 2010)?
- Consider how power is enacted: is it power 'over', 'with' or 'from within'?
- Who decided upon the norms of conduct that characterise '*responsible healthy communities*'; i.e. are people being transformed into the workers' desired norms or is the policy to citizens' needs and capabilities?
- Has the issue been looked at through a range of different lenses: crisis management, structural change, conflict, consensus, restorative justice and practice; humanist; feminist?
- Has 'exegetic thinking' been applied (i.e. has each of De Bono's 6 hats been worn to ensure that the arrogance of bigotry and absolutes is avoided; knowledge and facts, feelings and intuition, cautiousness and judging, benefits and feasibility, creative and speculative, overview and meta-cognitive hats) (McIntyre, 1996)? Have ontological and epistemological reflection been applied and have the implications of the associated assumptions of the chosen perspective on self, users, definitions, solutions been reflected upon (McIntyre, 1996)?
- Are workers attempting to 'liberate' the 'oppressed' members of the community or is the intention to support, and advocate for, their capability to liberate themselves as individuals and groups. Or are they rather deliberating to improve the public image of the Council (e.g. as a public relations activity), distribute the 'right' information (educate the public with the 'correct' information), elicit public opinion ('test the atmosphere'), to facilitate reform (e.g. facilitate public engagement), or to avoid the costs of non-participation (e.g. negative publicity)?
- Is public deliberation being avoided to secure power or the status quo (e.g. undermine the process), to avoid uncertainty or lack of control, co-option (e.g. into something pre-determined), 'politics' (e.g. minimise conflict and confrontation) or lack of resources?
- Are workers sufficiently informed about or sensitive towards the possible destructiveness of their involvement or the policy which underpins it? How would it feel to be identified as a recipient of this policy/program? How would it feel to be on the receiving end of this policy/program?
- Do workers prefer to be *implementers* of programs/policy and why? Do they enjoy being in a position of power, of *being* a fixer instead of one in need of fixing? What about workers' own need for control, to 'know' what's best? Do workers and administrators rather wish to keep themselves separate (behind a desk/holding management meetings, etc.) from the community they are working with/for? What makes them want to sort things out for others, to play the role of parent or an '*I'm an OK person*? What makes one want to be of such importance in his/her role, in their community/in Government? Can workers get in touch with those 'not good enough parts' of themselves to recognise what might be helpful to themselves, to acknowledge their own capacity for identifying what they need for their own support and for their own right livelihood?
- Is workers' practice informed by relatively traditional, '*technicist*' perspectives on community work, focusing on *managing* social problems and *containing* social need? Or, alternatively, how far is their practice informed by more 'transformational' perspectives, geared not only towards meeting social needs, but also addressing the causes of oppression and discrimination and promoting community empowerment (Mayo, 2006)?
- And last but certainly not least: how is 'community' defined or understood? Is it a structural definition or form (buildings, services, place), or a description of its content or substance (social solidarity, interdependence and reciprocal ties of mutual obligation), or a *living relationship*? How would workers describe a sense of community, a good community, a

struggling community? Is it egalitarian or organised hierarchically? What is the definition and conceptualisation of community that they are operating from? When would they say that 'community' was *occurring*? How do they think community *ought* to be? What are the gains and what are the losses associated with the 'community' they define and conceptualise? What are the boundaries around 'community' and who is 'in' and who is 'out'; who is deserving and who is undeserving? Is it a romanticised (as it should be) or realistic (as it could be) community? Are the 'ties' of community substituting for decent living conditions and equality; or are they indeed roads to 'right livelihood'?

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As Manfred Max-Neef and his colleagues argue in their *Human Scale Development* (1991) approach: solutions which respond to more than one '*fundamental need*' (of humans and of other species and of the general ecology) should be preferred to those which only (aim to) satisfy a singular need. Smith and Max-Neef – in *Economics Unmasked* (2011:187) – conclude their work with the following and i join them, making it my valedictory wish for any council, government body or agency and their developing community officers, workers and managers – and indeed all who attempt to serve their community and make it a sustainable and good place to be:

***"We end with a final note of advice to those who always want to know how to implement good ideas: make an effort and try to discover what is beyond what you see. There is always much more happening if you awaken all your senses. We may still discover that a better world is possible."***







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# APPENDIX ONE

## IACD Guiding Principles for Community Development

The **International Association for Community Development** is the only global network of community development practitioners, activists, educators, researchers and policy analysts working toward social justice through sustainable community development methods, tools and processes. IACD has made substantial progress with concrete results over the past four years, built on a solid foundation extending back 59 years.

We are well positioned with our Strategic Plan to move forward working together to address the challenges and exciting opportunities that lie ahead. We will continue to provide a strong voice for community development at the international and regional levels and to serve and support our members and the broader community of practice in the years ahead.

For more information or to contact IACD, please see our website [www.iacdglobal.org](http://www.iacdglobal.org)

- 1. Local Leadership:** The community plays the leadership role in its own development.
- 2. Government Supporting Role:** Government actively facilitates and supports community development through the provision of information, expertise, guidance, and other resources, as appropriate.
- 3. Collaborative Approach:** Community development builds on co-operation, coordination and collaboration between communities, government and the private sector.
- 4. Sustainable Balance:** Community development builds on a balanced approach that addresses and integrates economic, social, environmental and cultural considerations.
- 5. Respect for Local Values:** Community values are understood and respected.
- 6. Diversity, Equality & Social Inclusion:** All community members, regardless of gender, age, ability, race, culture, language, sexual orientation, or social and economic status are empowered and engaged in the community development process and are able to access its social and economic benefits.
- 7. Transparency and Accountability:** Community development encourages transparency, accountability, participation and evidence-based decision-making.
- 8. Partnerships and Shared Interests:** Community development engages the necessary partners in the community and from government.
- 9. Common Vision:** Community members work together to define a common vision for the future.
- 10. Focus on Community Assets:** Community development is built on existing community capacity and assets.
- 11. Volunteerism:** Community development values, respects, nurtures and encourages volunteerism.

## APPENDIX TWO: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AS A WORKING PRINCIPLE

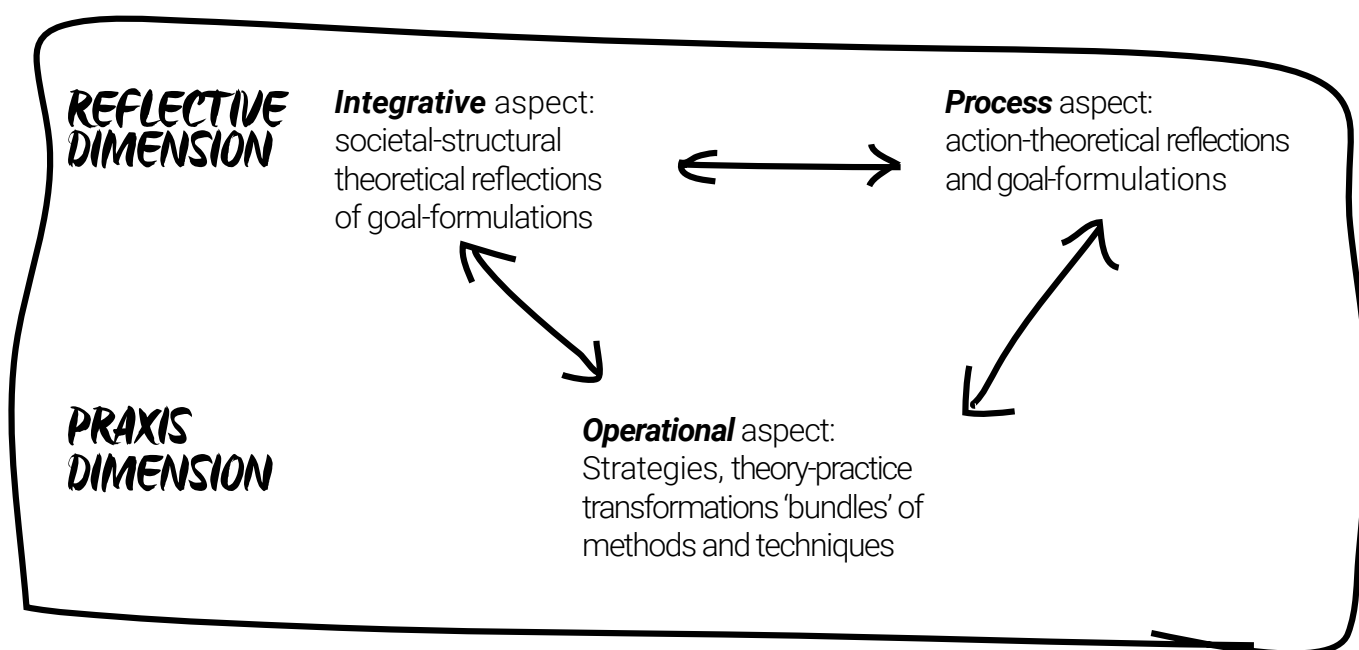
The *practical/philosophical* basis of a '**working principle**' encompasses three interrelated aspects:

First, the **integrative aspect** relates to the **objective** dimension of community interventions; it relates to the citizens with whom and the (problem) living areas within which the workers/interventionists, according to their institutional involvement/determination, (have to) work. This means, more precisely, that it is essential to analyse the *common basis* of social and community interventions, i.e. the societal conditions and determinants of workers' actions and interactions, in regard to their fundamental characteristics and to their phenomenal or symptomatic realisations. A necessary starting point for any intervention should be the analysis of the own situation of the community development worker/interventionist/'counterpart' in his/her relation to/ with the 'client'/'customer'/'consumer'/'citizen'. In order to accomplish this, we mostly rely on the contributions of the social and human sciences, which, unfortunately, tend to investigate human beings largely in a segmented fashion, as a *homo economicus* ('capitalistis?'), a *political* or a *psychological* being, or a biological entity, but not as the *ensemble or totality of societal relationships* (Marx somehow anticipating quantum philosophy?). Our ongoing attempts at overcoming this segmentation and the associated segregation of the different methods of researching and working with the '*human fragments*' which 'reify' this segmentation even further, must become the basis of both reflection on and action/intervention in any community context.

Second, the **process aspect** indicates the fact that any relationship between person/nature and between person/person - and therefore also any intervention-based relationship, has a **historical** dimension. Social and community action and interventions take place in situations which are themselves products of historical processes (e.g. the general history of a people; the history of a community; personal and collective biographies; class history). In addition, such interventions have their own (institutionalised) history and any individual interaction has its own situational/historical dimension, imbuing it with a *process* character. This implies that interventions have to be incorporated in the *ongoing social process*, clearly differentiating a '**working principle**' from many case-, group- or community-work '*methodical procedures*', which tend to approach clients/participants as if they (and their living circumstances) had no antecedents, had no past, and, in addition, as if they were incompetent or even non-existent as '*actors*' (something we have pointed out in the context of our discussion of '*asset-based*' approaches). It is *people who create their own history and societal development* which remain inconceivable without human *action*, both individual and collective. The process aspect of social and community intervention (understood as a '**working principle**') thus requires a complementary understanding (in theory and epistemology) of human action, not isolated from the objective structures and conditions of society addressed in the previous paragraph, but *dialectically related to them*, such that the existing structural relationships and material living conditions are constantly being created and changed by human action, which, in turn, is conditioned by those relationships and material conditions. The tension in this reciprocal, dialectical relationship is the very '*operant*' force to be incorporated in social and community intervention.

'Working principles' under girding social 'interventions' thus become *multidimensional active 'praxis' transformations of societal reality, in that they not only project the interventionist's own actions and activities, but equally conceive of clients/citizens as competent individual and collective beings, actively transforming 'their' societal reality.*

Third, the **operational aspect**, relating to concrete 'procedures' and contextual realities and practicalities of the 'interventions' associated with a 'working principle' themselves. It is here that the two previous aspects obtain their '**concretisation**' or '**positive reification**', as they are being 'applied' within a concrete-objective and inter-subjective set of relationships, through concrete action and interaction. It is within the operational aspect that the provisional 'results' of workers' structural-societal and action-theoretical reflection and interpretation will be applied and tested in concrete interventions and activities. Through the operational aspect of the working principle, the historically developed as well as actually emerging methods and techniques of social and community intervention, with their own specificity and commonality, are to be 'translated' from and related to the structural and action goals derived from reflective work associated with the two previous aspects. The following figure represents this complex interrelationship:





## APPENDIX THREE: CD TOOLS

(please note that some of the below sites are not accessible anymore; in a next version of this book they will be updated.)

### **Participation:**

Public Services Inside Out: Putting co-production into practice, 2010, by Boyle, Slay and Stephens, [research@nesta.org.au](mailto:research@nesta.org.au)

The Challenge of Co-Production: How equal partnerships between professionals and the public are crucial to improving public service, [research@nesta.org.au](mailto:research@nesta.org.au)

Right Here, Right Now: Taking co-production into the mainstream, [research@nesta.org.au](mailto:research@nesta.org.au)

Active Democracy: Citizen participation in decision making  
<http://www.activedemocracy.net/articles.htm>

Making Headway; Building Your Community; How to Get Started: An Asset Based Community Development Toolkit, Central Coast Community Congress Working Party, 2003,

[http://www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/Making\\_Headway\\_ToolKit.pdf](http://www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/Making_Headway_ToolKit.pdf)

International Association for Public Participation, 2006, Public Participation Tool, Techniques to Share Information, International Association for Public Participation, Colorado, USA.

[http://iap2.affiniscape.com/associations/4748/files/06Dec\\_Toolbox.pdf](http://iap2.affiniscape.com/associations/4748/files/06Dec_Toolbox.pdf)

[www.bankofideas.com.au](http://www.bankofideas.com.au)

[www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au](http://www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au)

[www.northwestern.edu/ipr/abcdiscussgroup.html](http://www.northwestern.edu/ipr/abcdiscussgroup.html)

[http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/default/HealthServicesandFoodMultimedia/Improving\\_Community\\_Participation\\_at\\_COPP\\_-\\_A\\_Too.pdf](http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/default/HealthServicesandFoodMultimedia/Improving_Community_Participation_at_COPP_-_A_Too.pdf)

International Association for Public Participation: [www.iap2.org](http://www.iap2.org). or <http://pin.org/>

### **Community Development Organisations/Journals:**

The New Community (Australia) [www.newcq.org](http://www.newcq.org)

Community Development Journal <http://www.3.oup.co.uk/cdj/>

<http://www.iacdglobel.org/>

[http://www.communitybuilding.vic.gov.au/programs/major\\_programs/](http://www.communitybuilding.vic.gov.au/programs/major_programs/)

<http://www.ourcommunity.com.au>

### **Community Tool Box:**

<http://ctb.ku.edu/>

<http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/~media/ResourceCentre/PublicationsandResources/General/PowerContents.ashx>

### **Consultation/Consensus:**

21<sup>st</sup> Century Dialogue <http://www.21stcenturydialogue.com/>

Australia's first consensus conference:

<http://www.abc.net.au/science/slab/consconf/splash.htm> or [www.choice.com.au](http://www.choice.com.au)



Brisbane City Council's community consultation techniques on line:  
[www.brisbane.qld.gov.au](http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au)  
 Centre for Deliberative polling:  
<http://www.la.utexas.edu/research/delpol/cdpindex.html>  
 Community Consultation Checklist  
<http://www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/arp/comcon.html>  
 Consensus Conference in Denmark on agricultural production:  
<http://www.tekno.dk/eng/publicat/f941gree.htm>  
 Consensus Conference in New Zealand on plant biotechnology:  
<http://www.consumerorg.nz/tech/index.html>  
 Fremantle community consultation online: [www.fremantle.wa.gov.au](http://www.fremantle.wa.gov.au)  
 National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation <http://ncdd.org/rc/>  
 Northern Rivers Regional Strategy: <http://www.nrrs.org.au>  
 The Loka Institute's page on US citizens' panels <http://www.loka.org/pages/panel.html>  
 The Loka Institute's page on worldwide consensus conferences  
<http://www.loka.org/pages/worldpanels.html>  
 UK Government's people's panel web site: <http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/servicefirst/>  
 Consult Your Community: A handbook. A guide to using the residents' feedback register  
[www.hydra.org.au/activedemocracy/](http://www.hydra.org.au/activedemocracy/)  
 Ideas for Community Consultation: A discussion on principles and procedures for making  
 consultation work [www.duap.nsw.gov.au](http://www.duap.nsw.gov.au)  
 Teledemocracy Action News + Network (TAN+N)  
<http://www.auburn.edu/tann/homepage.htm>  
 The Jefferson Centre for New Democratic Processes <http://www.jefferson-center.org/>

### **Books:**

Becker, Ted & Slaton, Christa D. (2000) *The Future of Teledemocracy*, Westpower, Connecticut, Praeger.  
 Blaug, Ricardo (1999) *Democracy, Real and Ideal Discourse Ethics and Radical Politics*, Albany, State University of New York Press.  
 Carson, Lyn & Martin, Brian (1999) *Random Selection in Politics*, Westport, CT, Praeger Publishers.  
 Coote, N. & Lenaghan, J. (1997) *Citizen's Juries: Theory into Practice*, Institute for Public Policy Research, London  
 Emery, Merrelyn & Purser, Ronald E. (1996) *The Search Conference: A Powerful Method for Planning Organisational Change and Community Action*, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass Publishers.  
 Renn, O., WEbler, T., Wiedemann, P. (1995) *Fairness and Competence in Citizen Participation, Technology Risk and Society*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, The Netherlands.  
 Sarkissian, Wendy & Walsh, Kevin (eds) (1994) *Community Participation in Practice: Casebook*, institute for Science and Technology Policy, Murdoch University.  
 Seargeant, John & Steele, Jane/. (1998) *Consulting the Public: Guidelines and Good Practice*, Policy Studies Institute, London. <http://www.psi.org.uk/>

## APPENDIX FOUR: CRITICAL THINKING

### **Critical Thinking**

Gleeson and Low (2000 cited in Ingamells, 2006:238) ask community practitioners to question whether the trajectory they are following is 'towards 'corporatisation, commercialisation and privatisation' of the public world and whether co-modification of private worlds can be intercepted locally and transformed, or whether the new community policies simply localize the processes of shaping subjects who have aspirations for such a world?'

What is the rationale for intervention? Are we re-enacting the developing world taking over and developing the underdeveloped world? Is the move based on division into developed and underdeveloped? Are you domesticating or liberating, reconciling people to their world or remaking the world (Kymlicka, 2002, cited in Shaw, 2006).

Does the group have the resources available to achieve the proposed 'development' or will they inevitably fail? What is visible and on the flip side, what is being made invisible as their underdevelopment is focused on? Is the problem being adapted to the policy or vice versa e.g. poor planning and structural poverty addressed through privatisation or increasing regulation for example (Ingamells, 2006).

- Is health and wellbeing coming from neo-liberal punitive displays (zero-tolerance policing, anti-social behaviour orders, child curfews, parenting orders etc), or coming from developing a collective sense of wellbeing, promoting social capital and social cohesion, treating people with respect and dignity (Workman, 2010).
- Has a health and health inequality impact assessment been conducted on all policies and plans (Macintyre & Ellaway, 1999)?
- Is the policy more about containment and control or more about inclusiveness and empowerment (Mowbray, 2010)?
- Is the policy fostering self-reliance and local enterprise as a 'framework for community development'? If so, are you operating in an 'entrepreneurial culture' in which you psychologically prepare and heighten an individuals capacity to act on their own behalf, without consideration of the structural constraints that restrict the potential of such action, and simply adding to the burden of responsibility being devolved to local people?
- Are unequal power relations ignored?
- Does the policy/program challenge government or corporate interests, or the distribution of wealth and power – or is it apolitical?
- Are performance measures tied to budgets, timelines and milestones rather than relational, social or environmental impacts?
- Is the community expected to experience empowerment through being 'listened to' or having its views actually operationalised?

- Are reforms related to efficiency and effectiveness or social impacts and outcomes? Are community development positions and influences separate from land use planning, local tax and revenue, economic policy, housing, amenities and transport i.e. concentrating attention away from the state?
- Are you being governed: 'watched, inspected, spied upon, directed, law-driven, numbered, regulated, enrolled, indoctrinated, preached at, controlled, checked, estimated, valued, censured, commanded; all by creatures who have neither the right nor the wisdom nor the virtue to do so' (Proudhon, 1851/1923 cited in Shore, 2010, p. 18) or governing others?
- Are you or your constituents' *'work units to be incentivised and measured'* rather than *'people to be encouraged and developed'* (Shore, 2010, p. 27)?





