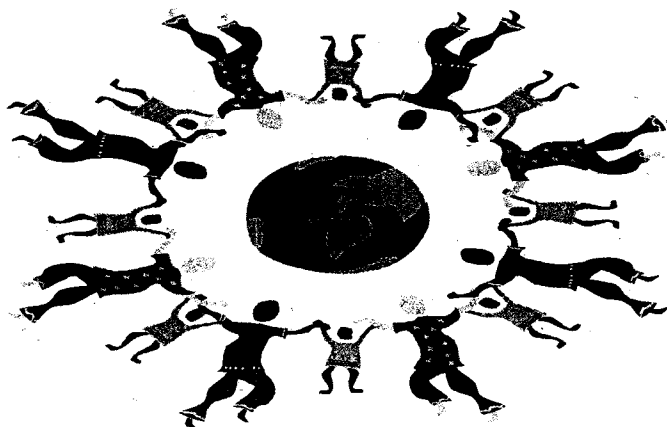*Step by Step...Paso a Paso...Stap voor Stap...*צעד אחר צעד

Resident Engagement and Leadership to Improve Results for Children and Youth, Families and Communities

AN INTERNATIONAL TOOL KIT

**A Product of an International Working Group
on Resident Engagement Strategies**

Sponsored by

THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

with support from

THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL POLICY

and

THE INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVE FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND
FAMILIES

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An International Tool Kit

I. **PURPOSE OF THE TOOL KIT**

Engaging Residents to Improve Results for Children and Youth, Families and Communities is a "Tool Kit" that is the product of an international working group composed of delegates from six participating nations – Chile, Ireland, Israel, The Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States. In 2002, the working group set out to identify and share the best examples of resident engagement in results-based work from their respective countries. Participants hoped the product of their work, this Tool Kit, would achieve three goals:

- To describe the overall *results-based* approaches on behalf of children and families that are being used in the participating nations, both at the local and national levels;

- To share information about effective strategies that are being used to ensure that residents are at the forefront of these efforts; and

- To make available the "tools"—i.e., the techniques, methods, processes, and products—that have facilitated resident leadership and engagement in each country.

A.   **The Importance of Resident Engagement and Leadership**

A results-based approach recognizes that outcomes for children and families have the best chance of succeeding when all parties in a community--agencies, parents, other community residents and leaders, schools, faith communities, business people, elected officials -- mobilize around a clearly defined set of results.

By...

> ...sticking to a clear set of outcomes,
>> ...measuring progress regularly,
>>> ...holding the data about results up for public view,
>>>> ...adjusting strategies accordingly, and

> *...budgeting and re-prioritizing funding based on
> what is really working...*

public officials and local communities are finding that they can make progress in improving the lives of children and families.

Without the meaningful and central involvement of parents and other community residents, efforts to achieve results are almost certain to fall short. Parents and community residents know best what their children experience and what is needed to ensure that they thrive. The wisdom, resources, guidance, and ownership of parents and community residents are essential elements toward creating successful community strategies to improve the lives of children and families.

Yet, too often, parents and residents are not given the opportunity to participate in community results processes. Or, they are given marginal roles in this work, for example, by being consulted once and then left out of important decisions. To change this pattern, the leaders of community-level, results-based work in several nations have decided to focus attention on the goals, strategies, and benefits of resident engagement and leadership.

Participating nations established a working group to combine their shared experience in increasing parent and resident involvement in community change efforts. The Tool Kit is intended by the working group to provide useful and practical information about mobilizing communities and engaging parents and residents in efforts to achieve positive results for children, youth and their families. The working group hopes that the information contained in the Tool Kit will contribute to the expansion and dissemination of knowledge internationally about placing families' and residents at the center of community results work.

B.   How the Tool Kit was Developed

The nations participating in the working group—Chile, Ireland, Israel, The Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States—have worked together for four years around the theme of *Building Strong Communities to Support Families*. Each of the participating nations has community-level experience with resident leadership and engagement.

A Steering Committee representing each nation, met in Amsterdam in March 2002 to establish goals and to organize the work. The Committee agreed to ask three person teams from each country -- including residents and others with experience in the strategies being sought -- to come together as the full working group. The full working group met at the Annie E. Casey Foundation offices in Baltimore in June 2002. At that

meeting, each international team shared "best examples" from their country, identified the main values and principles guiding the work, and analyzed the common threads that cut across national boundaries. Over the following year, the Steering Committee with support from the Center for the Study of Social Policy refined the results of that meeting into the Tool Kit.

C.   Audience for the Tool Kit

The Tool Kit is designed to assist residents and parents, as well as other practitioners and "change agents," who are working in community change initiatives that use a results-based framework. The Tool Kit suggests activities and resources that have proved useful on many levels for other communities that have sought authentic and sustained involvement of community residents.

In addition, the Tool Kit may be useful to policymakers, elected officials and members of public and private service agencies and community organizations who are promoting the well-being of children, families and neighborhoods; the case studies of projects and initiatives, in particular, may help them to see the value of working in partnership with residents.

D.   What is in the Tool Kit

The Tool Kit is organized as follows:

Section I, **Purpose of the Tool Kit,** describes why and how the Tool Kit was developed, its audience, content, suggestions for use and sponsors.

Section II, **Engaging Residents to Improve Results—A Growing Movement,** is an overview essay about resident engagement that proposes and explores three broad categories of engagement strategies featured in the Tool Kit:

- *Engaging residents as advocates*
- *Engaging residents to take action in their communities, and*
- *Engaging residents in community collaboratives and partnerships.*

Section III, **Principles for Resident Engagement and Leadership,** suggests core values that characterize resident engagement and leadership across national boundaries. The Steering Committee refined an initial, much longer list into four guiding principles which, it is hoped, capture the essence of this work. The principles are accompanied by examples and tools designed to help others self-assess their own efforts.

Section IV, **Engaging Residents-Case Studies from Around the World,** provides seven case studies that portray how real people in real settings bring these principles to life. Each case study examines the vision and goals of a community effort; the partners who are involved; the decision-making structures that are in place; the strategies and tools that are used for engaging community residents and others who are central in the work; and the results that are sought and achieved by each community.

Section V, **Activities, Strategies and Tools,** describes the specific, practical activities that have been used effectively by residents to mobilize their communities and improve results.

Section VI, **Working Group Members,** provides the list of working group participants and their contact information.

E.   Suggestions for Use: Adaptation, Not Adoption

The working group embraced the notion that change efforts work best when they build upon the uniqueness of each community. This approach ensures that attention is given to the culture, language, race and ethnicity and traditions of each city, community, and/or neighborhood. Users of the Tool Kit are strongly encouraged to see the examples and strategies that it contains within this context.

The Tool Kit shares activities that have been effective in specific environments and provides information and context to help other users apply these tools. The examples and strategies are not suggested for "adoption" but rather for "adaptation" to the uniqueness of each community, the capacities of its residents, and the results being targeted.

F.   Sponsors

This international work has been conducted collaboratively by The International Initiative for Children, Youth, and Families; the Center for the Study of Social Policy; and the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

The International Initiative for Children, Youth and Families is an international network of policymakers, managers, practitioners, and researchers involved in promoting effective policies and services for children, youth and families. During the past four years, the Initiative has convened three seminars, a study tour, and several resident exchanges to sponsor international learning on the theme of *Building Strong Communities to Support Families.* Special focus has been given to residents' leadership and roles

within this work. Six of the International Initiative's participating nations recommended teams for the working group.

Staff support for the working group was provided by the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) in the U.S. and the Institute for Care and Welfare (NIZW), a policy institute in The Netherlands. CSSP provides public policy analysis and technical assistance to help states and localities implement creative and effective strategies that support and strengthen families and build community capacity for improving the lives of vulnerable populations. CSSP staff took the lead role in assembling and refining the Tool Kit using the materials provided by each nation.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF) funded the working group. AECF is the largest philanthropy devoted to building better futures for disadvantaged children and their families in the United States. The primary mission of the Foundation is to foster public policies, human service reforms, and community supports that more effectively meet the needs of today's vulnerable children and families. Foundation staff and residents involved with the Foundation's *Making Connections* initiative participated in the working group. (*Making Connections*, a major component of AECF's Neighborhood Transformation/Family Development strategy, is conducted through partnerships with selected cities and neighborhoods in 22 cities to demonstrate how a broad cross section of constituencies can be mobilized to improve odds for families in tough neighborhoods.)

All of these organizations share the goal of helping to develop strong communities to support children, youth and families, and are committed to the importance of engaging residents and mobilizing communities for achieving better results.

II. ENGAGING RESIDENTS: A GROWING MOVEMENT

In the quest to improve conditions of well-being for children and families who live within vulnerable communities, there is a pronounced shift among local and national leaders to focus on building strong communities that will, in turn, support and promote strong families. With this shift in focus, communities have become an important stage for the battle against poor results. Central players on this stage are residents (parents, young people, elders and other community partners) who are being tapped as contributors to the analysis, planning and implementation of the family and community-strengthening agendas. Engaging residents as leaders has become an essential pathway to building strong communities. The growing acceptance of this trend is analogous to the now commonly held practice principle to engage families in service delivery planning with assistance from agency professionals. As such, resident engagement has become a mainstreamed approach, and residents are widely accepted sources of family and community strengthening solutions.

Because of the growing belief that resident engagement is a promising strategy for change, government, advocates, and policymakers are seeking the assistance of residents who live in troubled neighborhoods to advise, mobilize, and in many cases partner with traditional decision makers to achieve change. It is quite common now for federal, state, and municipal interventions to encourage, and often mandate that residents or other constituents be engaged in new initiatives to obtain resident support, voice their points of view, or act as partners to help achieve the desired outcomes. And, with more and more opportunities to get involved in changing their own circumstances, residents—on their own—are taking action to improve conditions and community supports. As they witness the collective impact they can make, they too are organizing themselves, co-opting their neighbors and plotting changes in things that matter to them.

The ways that residents are being engaged vary from state level commissions and boards, to monitoring child and family service systems. Residents are being sought by public agencies to provide advice on system and service reform and work as partners with child protection agencies to keep children safe within their communities. There also are growing numbers of community residents who are designing initiatives that seek to improve the network of supports that are available to them. Residents are working on large scale community building and economic development initiatives as well as successfully establishing new child care services, new jobs, affordable housing, and resident leadership programs.

While these strategies are gaining traction in the Unites States, they are not limited to U.S. borders. Due in part to international sharing and learning exchanges engaging residents to improve results is gaining momentum in European communities, and in North and South America. What is even more exciting is that international decision makers are looking to residents to offer their perspectives in the mix of voices and opinions that have traditionally shaped their direction and actions. In Portsmouth, England, Local Strategic Partnerships were developed to improve results for children and families and strong links have been made between partnership governing bodies at the community and local authority level. Initially these boards were limited to the review of community proposals but have grown into vehicles charged with developing neighborhood priorities with government funds. Most inspiring is that after years of a dictatorial rule, Chile has embarked in a Family Neighborhood and Municipal Strengthening Project that seeks to develop inclusive collaborative partnerships that engage and involve families making policy and program decisions that affect their own well-being and the quality of their neighborhoods.

In international forums, as in U.S. neighborhoods, the impetus for this growing outreach is about increasing the odds for greater success. It is about acknowledging that, even the most caring and well-connected agency workers alone simply do not have the insights or power to make change happen. Community change agents, philanthropies, and government agencies are learning that it is not just good public relations to say, *"families and residents are engaged or involved,"* it is also smart business. It is smart business because residents bring new fields of sight, history, knowledge, and culture to the planning and problem-solving table. Combining public resources and the desire for better outcomes, with residents' on-the-ground ingenuity and strong desire for an improved quality of life have become good policy.

Carefully Designing the Work to Engage Residents

Understanding the logic and theory about why it makes sense to engage residents is easy work. The challenge is to frame the context for resident engagement in a clearly identified and articulated way to eliminate possible ambiguity as participants begin the work. Important points to consider:

- **Engage residents around the results that will improve their lives.** There is a much greater likelihood of successfully engaging residents when there are clear answers to questions such as: *What results? Why? How? And, on what timeline?* Residents are quick to note that they tire of work agendas that don't directly benefit them or their families. Linking the desired changes that residents want directly to the work will increase the probability of their sustained involvement.

- **The degrees of engagement and involvement vary with purpose of the effort and the desired results.** The first task is to embrace resident engagement (and other grassroots constituency groups) as a means to yielding strategic information that will produce positive results. The next task is, in partnership with residents, to define what role they will play. Some organizations want to obtain resident's opinions while others want residents to take a permanent seat at the problem-solving and community change table. All of these strategies can be effective. Without a doubt having a grassroots perspective is better than not having it. Whether the intent is to seek resident advice or to create community partnerships to govern decisions, enlisting the community in the change process adds value.

  A necessary caution is the need for clarity and transparency about the purpose, intent and extent of the engagement. Avoid ambiguity about the role and tasks that residents are being asked to carry out. It is easy to make the mistake of over-stating (or under-stating) the role sought for residents. As one Israeli community collaborative partner advised, "we learned early how important it is to be very clear at the outset about the roles, responsibilities, and accountability of all the partners." Residents lament engagement experiences where they are told they will have control over decisions, funds, and strategies only to find out that final decisions are actually being made elsewhere. These types of missteps can seriously derail effective engagement outcomes.

- **There are many ways to achieve resident engagement.** This Tool Kit defines a set of strategies broadly and then offers case examples and capacity-building tools that can help the user determine which strategies may work under differing circumstances (the scope of work, context, etc.).

Three categories of engagement strategies are discussed below: 1) engaging residents as advocates and advisors; 2) mobilizing residents to take action in their communities; and 3) engaging residents in community collaboratives and partnerships.

Engaging Residents as Advocates and Advisors

Residents may act as advocates or advisors to a constituency group or group of decision makers who are authorized or empowered to take action on an identified issue. As advisors, residents may be asked to express their opinion on a particular project or initiative, describe services that they want, or provide feedback on the effectiveness of services, a plan, or a report. In these instances, the views of residents often bring credibility and respect to an effort. Sometimes developers and planners are required to seek resident input and endorsement before a project will be approved. In other

instances, residents who operate in an advocacy mode may offer their opinions even when they have not been sought.

Engaging residents in this way may typically involve focus groups, town hall meetings, surveys, interviews, or special convenings. The approach tends to seek the participation of any resident from a community or neighborhood and is not necessarily designed to *organize* the same residents. In fact, of all the categories, this strategy is often a one-time event, or a time limited event designed around a project that may take place over the course of several weeks or months. As part of the community development project in Larchville and Lisduggan in Waterford, Ireland, the Management Committee for the family services project agreed to develop a community needs assessment to ascertain what community members viewed as the most pressing issues needing attention. The committee used the information to form a baseline for monitoring progress.

The key to obtaining depth and momentum with this category of engagement is frequency of use. For example, convening residents through the *Informal Coffee Mornings* as they do in the Heel de Buurt neighborhood in Groningen, the Netherlands will have less value to residents if they only occur every eight months. Residents are being engaged as advisors to the project, and the regularly organized coffee mornings have established an informal structure for residents to meet, be informed, and discuss aspects of the project. In some cases, residents may ask to be kept "in the information loop" but most often, their involvement ends once the intent has been achieved: to obtain the residents point of view on the particular set of issues. For this reason, the involvement, while helpful, is viewed as advisory.

Engaging Residents to Mobilize and Re-Build Communities

Residents are sometimes engaged to mobilize their neighbors in efforts to re-build the social, economic, and cultural strength in communities. This category of engagement relies on the strength of resident leadership. Resident leadership may be tapped to address specific community needs or to take action identified by the community at large. For example, residents may be motivated to mobilize and organize themselves to stop crime through neighborhood watch groups or to remove unwanted groups and activities like organized crime, drugs, or gangs. The mobilization may target local infrastructure changes, ineffective leaders, offending organizations like industrial pollutants, or a set of results that the community desires. In these instances, the residents come together and organize themselves to direct attention to conditions that need to be improved or have suffered from years of isolation and neglect. In some cases, the residents are engaged as partners with state or local government and private partners, who share a common vision to make local improvements. Many examples of

this level of engagement emerged in the working group because it only takes a few resident leaders to mobilize their neighbors and demand change. Although this type of engagement might begin with resident action, attention to rebuilding communities eventually requires the endorsement of civic decision-makers, politicians, and local builders.

Resident action was key to changing conditions in Ballybeg, a poor neighborhood located on the outskirts of Waterford, Ireland. With support from the Irish government, Ballybeg began a community development program to target unemployment and Ireland's highest incidence of social welfare. Residents were mobilized to lead the community development program as both volunteers and workers. They have created tools to help residents gain long-term employment, and have established special supports for single parent families. Those involved in the Ballybeg project point to their ability to mobilize residents' interest and participation as central to their success.

Residents play a crucial leadership role in rebuilding projects and are often essential partners to ensuring that redevelopment plans respect the history, culture and majority voice of the people who have lived in these communities for years. When this perspective is not sought before hand, residents may organize themselves to establish a resident voice or to challenge development plans that have ignored their perspective. This mistake was frequently made in the past because leaders assumed that residents would welcome any change leaders believed would be an improvement. As awareness around these issues and sensitivities has heightened, especially regarding gentrification and displacement; civic leaders and builders have learned that organized resident support and on-going resident guidance can be a powerful ally. The ability to demonstrate that residents are engaged in the plans to re-design, and develop these projects can help to circumvent opposition, reduce costly court challenges, and public criticism that often accompanies urban renewal and change in traditionally vulnerable communities. Residents provide a key leadership role in community mobilization and rebuilding projects whether or not the residents are the catalyst for the change.

Engaging Residents in Community Collaboratives and Partnerships

Community collaboratives and partnerships are often formed with the full support of community and government agencies with a specific goal of enlisting community residents as decision makers and monitors over an agenda to improve a set of results. This category of engagement builds upon resident leadership skills to achieve community-based responsibility and accountability. This strategy is used when residents shift their attention to fundamental change; when they want to make a deeper impact on systemic changes; or, when they want to institutionalize change on a broader level to improve results. Sometimes these results are co-owned by government and the

community. Sometimes traditional decision makers engage residents to erect a set of strategies specifically because of a community's uniqueness or experience. Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) was formed eighteen years ago when residents of the neighborhood came together to revive their blighted community that had more vacant lots than resident homes. Since 1984, DSNI has grown to a community collaborative with 3,600 members who have successfully transformed vacant lots to new homes, gardens, parks and playgrounds. Today it is an international example of resident leadership, responsibility and action.

The desire is to utilize the experience and knowledge of residents on issues and to work together in partnership with other stakeholders to bridge the informal networks that exist in every community (family members, neighbors, the community support network including churches, civic and social groups) in order to establish a supportive community that is better equipped to strengthen families. For example, if a particular community or neighborhood has a higher incidence of children being removed from their homes to protect them from abuse and neglect, at a minimum it makes sense to engage the residents of that community in an advisory capacity to problem solve around effective strategies. However, engaging them as on-going partners specifically to improve the *neighborhood's* results in this area could have even greater impact. Resident partnerships are formed to take on the responsibility of improving a set of results, to monitor community conditions, and serve as an agent of accountability for the use of public agency resources and support.

Conclusion

Making the commitment to utilize the leadership of residents in community change efforts requires a long-term commitment and on-going resources, supports, and investments in capacity building. A much bigger challenge is to sustain resident participation over time. Sustaining resident involvement tends to depend, to a great extent on valuing resident contributions and acknowledging the sacrifices that are made when they take time from their families and personal lives. Quoting from one resident from Ireland's Lisduggan community, "I suppose the reason I continue to be involved is that I am valued as a person."

Another recommendation is to have patience. Residents note that many agency and government partners are too driven by budget cycles and agency demands for fast results. As one Portsmouth resident noted, "I'm far more patient with the process than they are [government]. I'm happy that we have a process to make things better for me and my children. As long as I see progress, I'm in a much better position than I was when nothing was happening." And, as stated by a resident from Santiago, "It is a slow process and one that will require patience, the willingness to try new things and learn

from our mistakes." In truth, the long-lasting benefits from resident engagement will come when residents can use skills that they've developed over time to address any condition they may want to change.

While it is good to engage residents as advisors, or to utilize them in community mobilization agendas, the real prize comes when residents can contribute their points of view in decision making. Attaining decision making authority comes with the acceptance of responsibility and accountability. Building resident leadership capabilities to partner with public agencies in decision making can connect the local wisdom of residents with the resources of government. Engaging residents in this way can be mutually beneficial for both sides of this partnership—producing better conditions for families and improved systems and services. It is by far, however, the more demanding agenda of work, requiring renewed skills for residents, agency workers, and policymakers. An Israeli resident described this challenge for all the partners when she explained, "We are learning how to work together collaboratively. At the beginning, the director felt she was the only one to make decisions. Today, she acknowledges that everyone gains when we work in partnership and are able to call on each other to help make better decisions."

Finally, no discussion about resident engagement (particularly in vulnerable neighborhoods) is complete without attention to issues of equity and respect. Although experience has shown that bringing residents together helps them make connections to their own sources of power, and this power is far more effective when used by a group of residents to take collective action. Helping residents to realize their innate potential is key to their participation in the process. Learning to appreciate resident input often means setting aside long held beliefs about what constitutes knowledge, what is professional attire and communication. The expertise being sought from residents is based upon their life experiences, hopes, and self-motivated desires. Resident's perspectives about what is necessary to improve conditions and strengthen families will most certainly challenge traditional ways of thinking, and that is exactly what is needed.

What is certain is that engaging residents requires consistency in commitment, a willingness to listen, and acceptance of bold new ideas. Achieving success with these efforts will surely take time, resilience and a focus on purpose that can only be achieved step-by-step.

III. PRINCIPLES FOR RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

Principles are values that serve to guide the implementation of a vision, the design of a project or initiative, and the articulation of effective practices to implement a project or initiative. These guiding values permeate every aspect of a project or initiative and, as such, they need to be safeguarded throughout its life. Usually, as principles are tested in practice, new insights and greater clarity are gained, leading in turn, to refinement of meaning and language in the principles themselves.

During the Baltimore exchange, participants shared and discussed the underlying values that guide their efforts. The result was the set of commonly agreed upon principles for engaging residents in mobilizing communities set forth in this section. This set of principles can be used as a tool for communities to self-assess their efforts to engage and build resident leadership.

Each of the nations in the working group has accumulated valuable experience and faced similar challenges in having residents be engaged in and/or central to this work. Their collective experience suggests that strong, visible, well-articulated principles bring cohesiveness and consistency to the daily actions and practices of groups of people working to build opportunities for children, youth and families. Specifically, principles can:

- o Identify and articulate the characteristics of a quality resident engagement process;

- o Convey the insights gained through the work of engaging residents to mobilize communities in each country, and affirm that a respectful and inclusive process is just as important as reaching the desired results; and

- o Make it easier for potential partners to join in the work of engaging residents in mobilizing communities towards results as they recognize that these principles reflect their own beliefs and values.

After much thought and discussion, the working group agreed that healthy and sustainable communities are more likely to be achieved when politicians, policymakers, institutions and organizations value resident engagement based on the following principles:

PRINCIPLE 1

❖ **Resident engagement must be grounded in equality and justice and include the rich diversity that exists in each community**

- Effective resident engagement work recognizes that multiple realities and diverse perspectives create richer and stronger communities.

- Effective resident engagement work is inclusive of all community members – children, youth, adults and elders.

- Effective resident engagement recognizes and builds upon the racial, ethnic, cultural traditions, and language diversity that exist in every community.

- Effective resident engagement helps residents to take responsibility for their own future and use their power to influence and support their community agenda to reach better child, youth and family results.

PRINCIPLE 2

❖ **Resident engagement must be based on respect for the wisdom, life experience, and collective knowledge of the community.**

- Residents are important experts in identifying their own needs, deciding issues, and creating solutions to reach better outcomes for their community.

- Effective resident engagement work begins with the knowledge of the community and builds on the strengths and assets of the community and its members.

- Better results at the community level are achieved when decisions are made based on information and knowledge obtained from the community and reflecting and incorporating the wisdom of local people.

PRINCIPLE 3

❖ **Resident engagement must build the capacity for residents, families and communities to drive the agenda.**

- Effective resident engagement work facilitates and builds resident leadership and decisionmaking skills to reach agreements on a shared vision, goals and actions towards results.

- Effective resident engagement strategies build community capacity to lead an open, continuous and flexible process focused on results and rewards, where:

  - Risk taking is encouraged
  - Mistakes are treated as learning opportunities, and
  - Time is built in for reflection and celebration.

PRINCIPLE 4

❖ **Resident engagement based on shared decision making and responsibility leads to better results at the community level.**

- Effective resident engagement strategies build partnerships with relevant stakeholders to achieve together what they cannot achieve apart.

- Effective resident engagement strategies take into account resident views in measuring success.

- Effective resident engagement strategies respect the need to strike a balance between product and the time needed to engage in a process of achieving results.

Effective resident engagement work makes sure that the partners find a common language.

Principles for Resident Engagement and Leadership
❖ **Grounded in Equality, Justice, and Diversity** Resident engagement must be grounded in equality and justice and include the rich diversity that exists in each community. ❖ **Respect for Collective Wisdom** Resident engagement must be based on respect for the wisdom, life experience, and collective knowledge of the community. ❖ **Build Capacity to Drive the Agenda** Resident engagement must build the capacity for residents, families, and communities to drive the agenda. ❖ **Shared Decision Making and Responsibility** Resident engagement based on shared decision making and responsibility leads to better results at the community level.

This set of principles can be used as a tool for communities to "self-assess" their efforts to engage residents and promote resident leadership.

Use the following checklist as a starting point. For each question you don't check, ask yourself:

- Would developing strategies to address this principle help us achieve the results we are seeking?

- If so, what resources and relationships do we have to build on to develop those strategies? What obstacles or barriers do we need to address?

- Who can we work with to develop strategies that are consistent with this principle?

	Principle 1: Grounded in equality, justice and diversity
	• Are residents in our initiative taking responsibility for their own future and using their power to influence the community agenda?
	• Do we have mechanisms in place to ensure that "multiple realities" and diverse perspectives are being taking into account?
	• Are we being inclusive of all resident members—children, youth, adults and elders?
	• Are we building upon the culture, traditions and language diversity that exists in the community?
	Principle 2: Based on respect for collective wisdom
	• Are residents having a role in identifying their own needs, deciding issues and creating solutions?
	• Are we building on the strengths and assets of the community and its members?
	• Are we making decisions based on information and knowledge obtained from the community and reflecting the wisdom of local people?
	Principle 3: Builds the capacity to drive the agenda
	• Are we facilitating and building resident leadership and decision making skills to reach agreements on a vision, goals and actions towards results?

	• Are we building community capacity to lead an open, continuous and flexible process focused on results and rewards?
	  o Are we encouraging risk taking?
	  o Are we treating mistakes as learning opportunities?
	  o Are we building time for reflection and celebration?

	Principle 4: Based on shared decision making and responsibility
	• Are we building partnerships with relevant stakeholders to work together to achieve results?
	• Are we taking resident views into account in measuring success?
	• Are we respecting the need to strike a balance between product and the time needed to engage in a process of achieving results?
	• Are we making sure that partners find a common language?

PRINCIPLES IN ACTION: COLLECTING EXAMPLES

Below are other examples of the principles and values that guide several initiatives featured in this Tool Kit:

Guiding Principles of
Making Connections – Denver, Colorado (USA)

❖ **We believe in the promotion of human dignity.**
Communities will promote human dignity and respect, protect basic human rights, and prevent exploitation of its members.

❖ **We believe in equalization of power.**
Residents will accumulate and express collective, inclusive and responsible power for the improvement of their families and communities.

❖ **We believe in transformed organizations and institutions.**
Residents will Effect transformative and sustainable change in community organizations, public and private institutions, and their communities.

Seven Principles that Guide the
San Bernardo Collaborative Santiago (Chile)

❖ Promote equality of opportunities
❖ Work with the participation of families and in their own communities
❖ Establish relationships of respect with the family and other community members
❖ Promote and support formal and informal family services and supports
❖ Support the decentralization of state activity and promote the strengthening of local government
❖ Recognize, capture and utilize as strengths the history, experiences and knowledge of the families and community
❖ Promote multiple opportunities for the various participants to work collaboratively, receive training and acquire new skills

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Guiding Principles of
Ballybeg Community Development Project, Waterford (Ireland)

❖ Respect for each individual and the contribution he or she can make
❖ Acceptance and celebration of differences
❖ Commitment to working on a confidential way and inspiring trust.
❖ Collective action towards social change
❖ Recognizing the importance of process as well as outcomes in all endeavors

Central Values of
The Heel De Buurt Project (The Netherlands)

❖ Working together in partnership
❖ Striving for inclusiveness and for equality among the partners
❖ Being responsive to community needs and wishes
❖ Being willing to give residents real influence and responsibility
❖ Actively promoting resident participation and leadership
❖ Encouraging clear and open communication among the partners
❖ Focusing on doing things differently instead of offering more of the same
❖ Turning ideas into concrete plans and being accountable for results

Guiding Values of
Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative
in Boston, Massachusetts (USA)

The following set of values serve as DSNI internal guidelines for distinguishing what is right from what is wrong and what is just from what is unjust. These principles are held tightly and are not changed or swayed by external forces.

❖ Collective resident leadership and control
❖ Linked community destiny
❖ Community political power and voice
❖ Mutual and shared responsibility and accountability
❖ Power in organized community
❖ Vibrant cultural diversity
❖ Community collaboration
❖ Fair and equal share of resources and opportunities
❖ Development without displacement
❖ High quality of life
❖ Individual and community entitlement
❖ Anything is possible

PRINCIPLES IN ACTION CONTINUED: COLLECTING EXAMPLES

A powerful way to make principles clear to stakeholders is to illustrate with examples how they are operationalized. The examples offered below from the projects in nations participating in the working group help give a clear sense of how real people in real settings are trying to breath some life into the principles that emerged in the Baltimore exchange through a set of activities.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT	EXAMPLES FROM THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING GROUP
❖ **Grounded in Equality, Justice and Diversity**	
• Recognizes that diverse perspectives create richer and stronger communities	• In Paulsgrove and Wymering, UK, the local partnership consists of a Community Board that has representatives from ethnic minority groups, from young people and from the disabled. Other mechanisms they use to bring in diverse perspectives are public meetings and focus groups with youth, ethnic minorities, elderly people and others.
• Inclusive of all community members	• The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative in Boston, U.S. uses a range of strategies to implement an inclusive community process. Its 29-member Board must include equal numbers of residents from each of the four ethnic groups represented in the neighborhood, as well as youth. The Initiative conducts business in the three dominant languages in the community—English, Spanish and Cape Verdean Creole.
• Builds upon the racial, ethnic, cultural traditions and language diversity in community	• *Making Connections*-Denver in the U.S. uses Story Circles, an adaptation from a theater-based model using the age-old tradition of story telling, as a powerful tool for recovering local histories, bridging cultures, identifying community issues and building a community of neighbors. It also has developed a website and newsletter with materials in the three predominant languages in the community—English, Spanish and Vietnamese.

• Residents take responsibility for their own future and use their power to influence the community agenda	• The Ballybeg CDP in Ireland has undertaken many local action research projects to inform and guide actions for improving the community. Local residents have been trained in fieldwork methods to carry out the research, and many are currently involved in projects and activities that grew out of their action research.

❖ Based on Respect for Collective Wisdom

• Recognizes residents as important experts	• Residents are at the center of the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative in Boston, U.S. They produced their own Declaration of Community Rights in which the first right is to shape the development of all plans, programs and policies likely to affect the quality of their lives as neighborhood residents.
• Begins with the knowledge of the community and builds on strengths of the community and its members	• The San Bernardo Collaborative in Chile first worked on developing a community resource map, which also gave the partners an opportunity to learn what each one was doing to support families in their neighborhoods. • The Community Needs Survey in Larchville/Lisdugan in Ireland grew out of the recognition that the city lacked objective information on what communities saw as the most pressing issues requiring attention. Resident representatives were involved in the design of the project and decisions about the goals and the range of issues to be explored via a resident questionnaire.
• Decisions are made based on information and knowledge obtained from the community and reflecting the wisdom of local people.	• One of the most effective approaches taken by the Paulsgrove and Wymering partnership in the UK has been to actively discuss issues with local residents through street surveys. Standing outside pubs, cafes and shops to actively engage people in conversation about what is happening and what they want to see happening seems to work best. Other strategies include resident surveys, public meetings and focus groups.

❖ Builds Residents' Capacity to Drive the Agenda

• Builds leadership and decision-making skills	• Heel de Buurt in the Netherlands has put in place a range of strategies to motivate and build the capacity of residents to participate in neighborhood strengthening efforts, including tailored workshops and courses for volunteers.
• Builds community capacity to lead an open, continuous and flexible process focused on results and rewards	• Community organizing is the key strategy that *Making Connections* – Denver has used for mobilizing the community to achieve results. Through this process, residents have taken the lead to collect data, create tools and develop the skills necessary to lead community change.
• Builds partnerships with stakeholders	• Caring Communities projects in Israel is breaking ground establishing partnerships between schools, parents and service providers to improve outcomes for families.
• Takes into account resident views in measuring success	• *Making Connections* –Denver residents actively participated in a community process involving other stakeholders to identify indicators and targets for measuring success in their efforts to achieve a core set of outcomes.
• Respects the need to strike balance between product and time needed for process	• Recognizing this tension, the San Bernardo Collaborative in Chile designed the Jornadas Familiares (Family Retreats), which engage residents and families in a process for reaching consensus on the results they want.
• Makes sure partners find a common language	• The San Bernardo Collaborative in Chile has effectively used a set of four questions with residents and other partners to organize the work.

- What can you take from these examples that can help move your local effort forward?

- What other examples can you add from your own community?

IV. ENGAGING RESIDENTS—CASE STUDIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

This section offers seven case studies — descriptions of community initiatives — illustrating the work that is taking place in the nations that helped to develop the Tool Kit. The examples span the developmental continuum from *"newly beginning"* to *"very mature."* Although each community described in this section is at a different stage of development, they all confirm one common message: *efforts to engage residents in local change are essential if such efforts are to meet real community needs, and if movement is to be sustained.* The case studies provide another common message as well. Resident engagement does not need to be laborious. Communities around the world are creatively and successfully engaging residents on many levels, and they are doing so with energy, passion, and a momentum that, once started, takes on a life of its own.

Effective strategies in one community do not necessarily yield success in another, especially when the cultures, perspectives, and infrastructures vary significantly. For this reason, the Tool Kit offers profiles of several different communities, showing that even vastly varied contexts, environments, politics, and partners can nurture this work.

Although differences exist among the community initiatives, the case studies reveal similarities among resident engagement efforts. Similar values guide the work in all the featured initiatives. Success, when it occurred, had no less impact in Portsmouth, England, than it did in Denver, Colorado. Communities as distant from each other as Hoogezand-Sappemeer in The Netherlands, San Bernardo in Santiago, Chile, and Jaffa in Israel face similar challenges in collecting and using resident-friendly data and building leadership capacity to support and sustain resident participation. The convergence around common ideas, strategies, and struggles generated excitement among the working group participants.

By compiling participants' stories and strategies into this Tool Kit, the working group hopes to broaden the dissemination of learning in individual nations and internationally. Hopefully, the strategies assembled here will help other people and other communities advance their own efforts and spark further action to mobilize residents to improve results.

The following case studies are included in this section:

CASE STUDY	DESCRIPTION
San Bernardo Community, Santiago **CHILE**	**Goal:** Families and community residents have a voice in municipal government efforts to strengthen services and the social fabric of their neighborhoods.
	Strategies: • Community resource mapping • Retreats with families • Four questions to organize the work • Training of family and neighborhood facilitators
	Partners: Central government institutions, community organizations, neighborhood units, businesses, support institutions. **Goal:**

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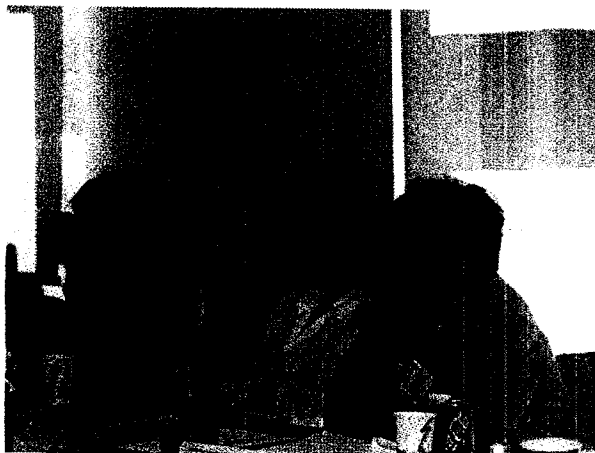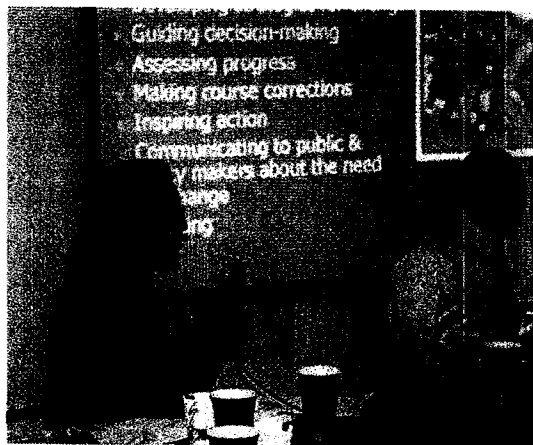
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	Partners: Central government institutions, community organizations, neighborhood units, businesses, support institutions.
Ballybeg Community, Waterford **IRELAND**	**Goal:** Work collectively with the people in the community to bring about social change driven by their own identification of needs and appropriate responses
	Strategies: • Action research projects • Working groups structure • Community survey/needs assessment
	Partners: local residents, voluntary agencies, government agencies
Jaffa, Tel Aviv & Gilo Neighborhood, Jerusalem **ISRAEL**	**Goal:** Build collaborative partnerships to create caring communities that meet the multiple needs of families using schools as the home base
	Strategies: • Parent surveys • Facilitated working session with partner members • Working groups
	Partners: parents, school staff, service providers, public officials, business people

Hoogezand-Sappemeer Community **THE NETHERLANDS**	**Goal:** Cement a new way of working in which residents are an equal partner at the table
	Strategies: • Informal coffee mornings • Doorway talks • Focus groups • Neighborhood parties • Round table talks • Resident exchanges • Tailored workshops and courses for resident volunteers
	Partners: Local residents, professionals from service agencies and municipal county officials
Paulsgrove and Wymering Communities, Portsmouth, England **UNITED KINGDOM**	**Goal:** Ensuring the maximum involvement of residents in all the decisions-making processes or provision of local services and facilities
	Strategies: • Street surveys • Public meetings • Focus groups
	Partners: A range of agencies and individuals including a diverse mix of residents, head teachers, social services and businesses organized in a Community Board
Dudley Street Neighborhood in Boston, Massachusetts **UNITED STATES**	**Goal:** Resident- led planning and community organizing for rebuilding the neighborhood based on what residents want
	Strategies: • Participatory community planning • Community visioning • Resident self-government structure • Processes and thinking tools for group decision making
	Partners: Over 3,600 resident members and partner organizations including community development corporations, other non-profit organizations, religious institutions, government agencies, banks, businesses and foundations.

Cole, Sun Valley, Baker and La Alma/Lincoln Park neighborhoods in Denver, Colorado **UNITED STATES**	**Goal:** Residents as central partners of a community change initiative to rebuild four neighborhoods
	Strategies: • Story circles • Block parties • Community website • One-on-one visits • Community-driven research
	Partners: Three neighborhood coalitions of residents and community organizations, 20 local and parent organizing committees, a Partners Group including representatives from local, state and federal government agencies, foundations and several non-profit organizations.

CHILE

Santiago

Se Hace Camino al Andar, Paso a Paso:
The Strengthening Families, Neighborhoods and Municipalities Project in San Bernardo

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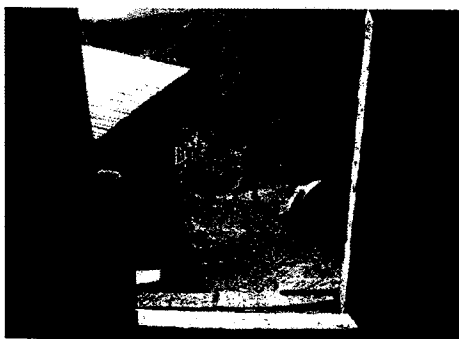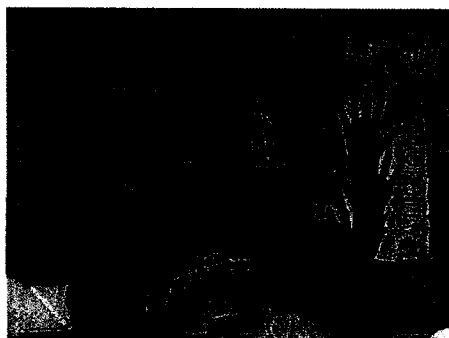
Introduction

In San Bernardo, a municipality of the greater Santiago metropolitan area inhabited by some of the most vulnerable sectors in the population, women now have greater access to health services allowing them to have mammograms to combat the high incidence of breast cancer in the community. This has been a result of a broad collaborative effort involving residents, community organizations, central and local government agencies that are working together to improve the well-being of children, youth and families in San Bernardo. As noted by the Chilean delegation that participated in the Baltimore Exchange, like the title of a well-known Latin American song, they are "blazing the trail

as they walk, step by step." The process started in 2001, when San Bernardo became one of two localities selected to participate in the Family, Neighborhood and Municipal Strengthening with Gender Perspective Project in Chile.

Background

After 17 years of dictatorship, Chile's new democracy is engaged in a powerful movement to engage families in the development of their communities. The Family, Neighborhood and Municipal Strengthening with Gender Perspective Project is one such effort. The project began in 2000 as a collaborative effort of several Chilean central government institutions, including programs from the Ministry of the Interior, Health, Education, Planning and Development, the National Women's Service (a cabinet level institution), and the Family Foundation (a public/private organization that sponsors a network of family resource centers).

Several of these institutions met in April 2000 during a national seminar that explored the "gender and municipal development" theme. As a result of the exchange of knowledge and experience during the seminar—attended by representatives from 25 municipalities involved in Chile's Municipal Strengthening pilot program (PROFIM)— the need to establish an inter-institutional alliance to support and build the capacity of municipal governments to strengthen services and the social fabric of their communities with a family and neighborhood strengthening approach became evident.

During the planning phase of the project, the inter-institutional team agreed to a series of guiding principles and developed a plan for action. The group also reached consensus on the criteria for selecting two municipalities that would be invited to participate in the pilot project. The team looked for political will, strengths, resources and level of commitment to work in a project that required broad community participation and collaboration, diversity, parity and inclusiveness of all sectors. This process was completed with the selection of two municipalities, San Bernardo and Talcahuano, which began designing the project at the municipal level by mid-June 2001.

In September 2001, the Mayor of San Bernardo signed a formal agreement with the Ministry of the Interior and appointed the Department of Community Development and the Health and Education Corporation to lead the effort.

Vision and Goals

Vision of the San Bernardo Collaborative

"Families that improve their quality of life, creating spaces and opportunities where their doubts are respected and their needs are satisfied in a climate of respect, tolerance, love and participation."

The central purpose of the project is to strengthen families, neighborhoods and municipal governments with a gender perspective. During the initial phase of the work, the focus of the inter-institutional alliance was to support the collaboration of a broad group of stakeholders including municipal government, local NGO's, neighborhood associations, churches, schools, clinics, local development committees, parent school associations, and other family representatives. The emerging collaborative has been "blazing the trail as it walks, step by step." The first tasks the collaborative determined to accomplish include:

- Developing a community resource map, which gave them an opportunity to learn what each stakeholder was doing to support families in their neighborhoods;

- Building capacity to communicate and work collaboratively;

- Ensuring family representation and removing barriers for family participation in the group;

- Building consensus on the principles that would guide their work;

- Acquiring new skills to think and move towards an outcome-based approach to their work;

- Gathering baseline data to help understand what was the status of children, youth and families in each of the neighborhoods in the community

Guiding Principles

➤ *Seven Principles Guide the San Bernardo Process:*

- Promote equality of opportunities

- Work with the participation of families and in their own communities

- Establish relationships of respect with the family and other community members

- Promote and support formal and informal family services and supports

- Support the decentralization of state activity and promote the strengthening of local government

- Recognize, capture and utilize as strengths the history, experiences and knowledge of the families and community

- Promote multiple opportunities for the various participants to work collaboratively, receive training and acquire new skills

Partners and Structure

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Health and Educational Institutions
(Including two pre-schools, three schools, two mental health centers, a health clinic and a hospital)

Neighborhood Associations
(Including eight neighborhood associations)

Community Based-Organizations
(Including several women's groups, senior citizens' groups, a mother's group and a cultural center)

Local and State Agencies
(Including 14 police stations, the Maipo provincial government and the municipality of San Bernardo)

Businesses
(Including several bus and taxi services)

Strategies and Tools

❖ What strategies have been effective to engage/commit families in the work of the Local Development Committee in the El Manzano neighborhood in San Bernardo?

A group of community leaders representing the families in the San Bernardo Collaborative identified the following strategies as the most effective:

➢ On the Personal:

- Establish permanency in the relationships with families
- Welcome and recognize participation
- Promote personal development
- Gain the trust of people

➢ On Family:

- Work with the goals that the family defines
- Strengthen family employment and belonging in the community
- Access to culture

➢ On Community:

- Develop the identity and sense of belonging in the community
- Create a vision of what we desire for our community

➢ On How the Work is Done:

- Participate in defining the content
- Improve the quality of the meetings
- Develop the capacities of the families themselves to project the work towards the desired goals
- Provide continuity in the actions

➢ On Leadership Development:
- Support the development of new leaders
- Encourage personal experience and self-care

❖ Four Questions to Organize the Work

One critical step in the process has been to reach consensus on the desired results for all children in the community. The following questions, used with all the various actors and partners in the collaborative, have been very helpful to guide community conversations and to organize the work of the collaborative:

- What do we want for our boys, girls, youth and families?
- How will we know if we are achieving the results we want?
- What do we know that works to help us reach those results?
- How will we know if our activities and programs are working well?

❖ Jornadas con las Familias (Retreats with Families)

Another tool that has been very helpful for engaging community residents and families in the process of identifying and taking ownership for the results they want to achieve for children and families in the community have been are the *"Jornadas con Familias"* (Retreats with Families).

Over 300 people from all the five neighborhoods in San Bernardo took part in the first Jornada con Familias, a two-day event that staff and resident leaders held to respond to the first question: What do we want for our boys, girls, youth and families? Children and young people had their own meeting, bringing their results to the table on the second day of the retreat. Subsequent Jornadas con Familias were held in all five neighborhoods, resulting in a deeper understanding of what results residents wanted for children, youth and families. The main findings were that:

- Residents want to keep youth out of trouble by providing more training and employment opportunities, including those youth that are currently incarcerated;

- Residents want greater neighborhood safety through increasing participation of residents in neighborhood associations and through partnership with police; and

- Residents want to decrease domestic and youth violence through greater regulation of alcohol sales and through providing more spaces where youth can participate in sports and cultural events.

❖ Building Leadership and Community Capacity

Family and neighborhood facilitators have been trained to build the capacity of residents and municipal workers to lead democratic processes. In addition, these

facilitators run meetings of the collaborative, working groups, and family and neighborhood strengthening activities. They also support personal development of community leaders.

Recently, teams in each of the neighborhoods of San Bernardo, composed of residents and municipal government representatives, started to work on the results and strategies, addressing the question: What do we know works to help us reach those results? In this process they have also identified new challenges, such as the lack of regional data to provide to residents, and the lack of financial sustainability for the work.

As noted by the team who attended the international exchange in Baltimore, they are "blazing the trail as they go, step by step" guided by their vision that "families improve their quality of life by creating spaces and opportunities where their rights are respected and their wishes are satisfied in a climate of participation, love, tolerance and respect." It is a slow process, and one that requires patience, the willingness to try new things and learn from mistakes. But the people participating in the process are confident that they will move forward because their commitment to the process is deep and the results that they are seeking are powerful and clear.

Who to Contact

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IRELAND
Waterford

We Are Solid:
Ballybeg Community Development Project (CDP) and Larchville/Lisduggan Community Needs Survey

Quotes:

"As a single mother of 11 children my life was not easy. I did not get out of the house much. Sixteen years ago my neighbor got me involved in a women's group. When the CDP was formed I became a volunteer and later I was employed as a part-time administrator, thanks to the training opportunities that helped me to develop my skills. I do get out of the house now. I have met new people and feel much more confident in myself. "

<div align="right">Liz Rocket, Ballybeg resident active in CDP</div>

"Twelve years ago someone knocked on my door and asked me if I wanted to get involved in CDP. I was very nervous but decided to go to the first meeting. I first was a volunteer, then a member of the Voluntary Management Committee, and through the training and support I received, I was hired as a community development worker and, eventually, as the project manager. I gained confidence in my own ability, and as a result, I was able to contribute to the development of my community. Twelve years have passed and I am still here. I suppose the reason I continue to be involved is that I am valued as a person, in terms of my life experience. At CDP we recognize and celebrate everyone's contribution to the community at least twice a year."

<div align="right">Briege Dowling, resident and Project Manager, CDP</div>

Photos:

Launching of the action research project On the Way to Work on December 15, 1998

School children greeting the President of Ireland during the opening of the First Steps Creche on September 4, 2000.

Introduction

In October 2002, a group of residents from some of the most marginalized and disadvantaged communities in Waterford, Ireland, worked hand in hand with other stakeholders to host the third international resident seminar with delegations from Portsmouth, UK and Groningen, the Netherlands. The seminar focused on identifying strengths leading to action for improving results for their communities.

The Waterford team summed up their strengths as R_SOLID (*We Are Solid*), meaning that they:

- Are Resourceful
- Share a community Spirit
- Are well Organized
- Make use of Links with other services and individuals
- Are well Informed
- And embrace Diversity

In the midst of the uncertainty created by the recent reorganization of government agencies and programs, results-based accountability (RBA) proponents in Waterford are hoping they can draw from these community strengths to sustain the progress that has been made reaching out and involving people in disadvantaged communities to improve their neighborhoods. The experiences in Ballybeg and in Larchville/Lisduggan are highlighted in this case study.

➢ In Ballybeg, the Community Development Project has used action research over the last decade as a strategy for engaging residents in assessing community needs and developing options for action. As a direct result of the process used in Ballybeg there are many local residents involved in various projects dealing with issues such as employment, childcare, women's development, and education.

➢ In Larchville/Lisduggan—an area where there has been relatively little community development activity—government agencies worked in partnership with resident representatives on a community needs assessment in 2001. The assessment sought to identify what local people thought were the most important issues for their neighborhood and to foster resident involvement through participation in the survey.

Background

Ireland's results-based accountability (RBA) efforts were initially spearheaded by the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs after the Principal in charge of the Family Affairs Unit attended a policymakers meeting of the International Initiative in Petoskey, Michigan, in 1999. In April 2000, representatives from three "Family Services" pilot projects being developed by the Department in Waterford, Cork and Dublin attended an intensive seminar on the application of RBA. The overarching aim of the pilots was to improve the delivery of state services for families. The projects began exploring the application of RBA in their work and engaged in a process of turning the focus of their strategic planning from issues and problems to outcomes and results. However, both staff and departmental changes at the central government level have hampered progress.

On the ground, the RBA work has made the most progress in Waterford. In January 2001, a conference on outcomes accountability held in Waterford served as a catalyst to spark interest in results-based work locally. Important developments taking place since then include:

- The Waterford City Development Board included the application of RBA to its work as one of its strategic objectives.

- The design and completion of a community needs assessment in Larchville/Lisduggan. This work was done by a partnership between agencies, including the Department of Social and Family Affairs, the Health Board, City Council, the Gardai (police) and residents and community representatives. The results of the assessment are being evaluated with a view to applying the approach in other parts of Waterford.

- The link between Ballybeg's Community Development Project's (CDP) approach of reaching out to local people and the results-based efforts underway became apparent. The community development program focus has been on increasing capabilities in the community to engage in local development and to address the issues of concerned people living in poor communities. Because of its success involving residents in community development, a representative from the CDP was invited by the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs to participate in the international exchange on "Engaging Residents in Mobilizing Communities" in Baltimore, USA (June 2002).

- Residents and agency representatives from Ballybeg, Larchville/Lisduggan, and the Inner City participated in a series of international seminars with residents from Portsmouth (UK) and Groningen (the Netherlands) to exchange experiences on resident involvement on decision making. Work on applying the lessons learned in these exchanges to the Waterford situation is ongoing. The Department of Social and Family Affairs has hosted a number of follow-up workshops with the residents and agencies concerned, and work is underway on the development of a local website (www.waterfordinfo.com) to share information on projects and approaches.

- At the national level, efforts are underway to develop a network of those interested in results-based accountability with a view to disseminating its application more widely. The leaders of this effort have enlisted the support of the National Children's Office and the National Office of Social Inclusion (NISO) and they hope to also engage the recently established Family Support Agency in this work.

A.   Community Based Action Research in Ballybeg

The Ballybeg Estate

Built in 1976 on the outskirts of Waterford City, Ballybeg is a local authority estate that has more than 880 households with plans to build over 1,250 additional units in the next 10 years. The Ballybeg Community Development Project (CDP) was established in 1991 as part of a national community development program funded by the Irish Government. The program, which started in 1990, assists in the establishment of projects that provide a focal point for local community development activities. At present, there are some 140 projects that are either participating in the program or are in the process of being established.

Ballybeg's CDP began in response to the high level of disadvantage that local people experienced—the highest in the city of Waterford. Eight out of ten residents are dependent on some form of social welfare and there are very few services available to the community. With a population of approximately 4,000 people, Ballybeg has the greatest number of single parents in the city. While sixty percent of the population is under 25 years of age, there is no secondary school in the community nor are there any formal training facilities for young people.

Goals

The goals of the CDP in Ballybeg are to:

- Work collectively with local people in the community to bring about social change.
- Enable the local people to develop their own potential and, thus, improve the quality of their lives
- Identify and address the needs and issues of the community collectively.

Vision and Principles

The work of the CDP is based on the belief that people are in the best position to identify their own needs and community issues and can, when supported, develop appropriate responses to improve their situation.

> **Vision Statement**
>
> "The spirit of our project is to reach out to people in Ballybeg enabling them to believe in their own uniqueness, dignity, equality and the potential within themselves, their families and their communities.
>
> It is through sharing our hopes, joys, dreams and struggles in an inclusive way that we grow to value the richness of life and build a sense of togetherness and mutual support, which in turn will bring about change through collective action."

The following set of principles guides the activities of the CDP:

- ➤ Respect for each individual and the contribution each can make
- ➤ Acceptance and celebration of differences
- ➤ Commitment to working in a confidential way and inspiring trust
- ➤ Collective action towards social change
- ➤ Recognizing the importance of process as well as outcomes in all endeavors

Structure and Partners

A Voluntary Management Committee currently composed of six local residents (two of which are representatives from the working groups on education and childcare) and a voluntary agency (Regional Youth Services) manages the Ballybeg CDP. Anyone who is interested can join the committee, which is chaired by a local resident. The committee meets monthly to monitor the progress of the work and to review issues such as

staffing, financial accountability, legal matters, reviewing and planning and to keep the focus on the bigger vision of the project. The project employs about 30 staff, of which 10 are employed under the FAS Community Employment Scheme.

The CDP has a working group structure, which supports local people in creating and joining groups that work in a particular area of interest. The establishment of working groups resulted from an evaluation of the work undertaken by the Ballybeg CDP in 1997. It had become increasingly difficult to recruit new members to the Management Committee because of the growth and expansion of the work. Many local people expressed a fear about getting involved in the management of a large project that employed a number of staff. They felt they did not have the required skills. Out of this process came a recognition of the need for more local people to gain the skills to become involved in the work of the project.

Working groups were established as a means for people in the community to take more ownership of the work of the project by becoming involved in particular areas of work on a voluntary basis. A community development worker was hired to assist with the establishment of the working groups, recruiting a number of volunteers and providing them with opportunities to develop the skills needed for managing the various projects. A set of policies and guidelines for working groups were adopted to ensure that the working groups adhere to the principles and vision of the project, that there is some structure with regard to accountability and that the majority of representatives are local residents. The diagram below identifies the various working groups that operate currently.

Working Group Structure
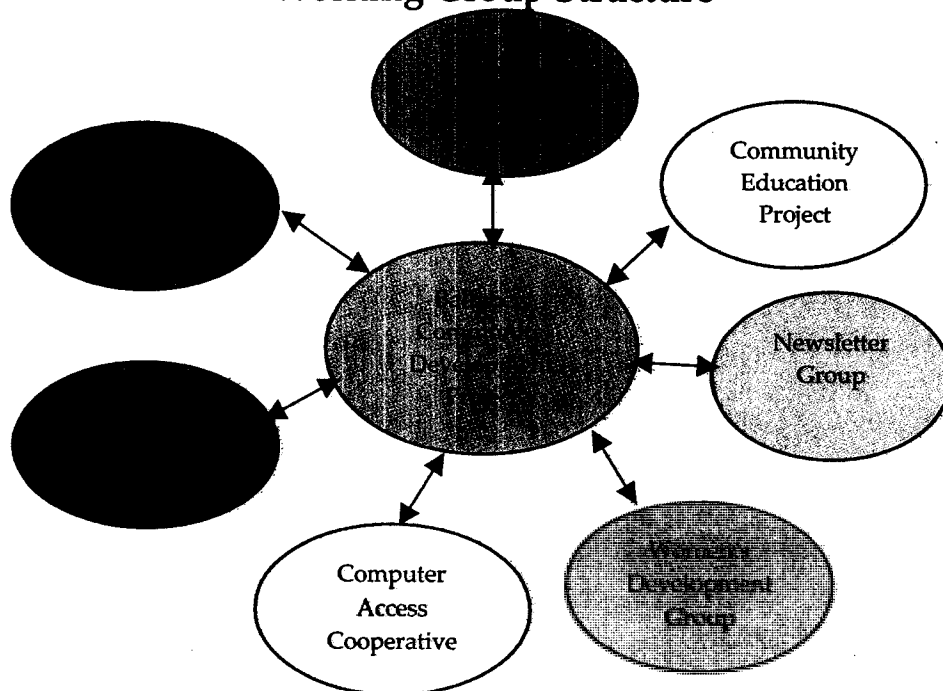
Strategies and Tools

CDP uses a community development approach that focuses on supporting local people to identify their issues and develop responses. Over the past decade, it has undertaken many action research projects locally to inform and guide actions for improving the community.

The process involves the following steps:

➤ A key issue is identified in consultation with local people

➤ A working group is established and the needs of the working group are identified, such as development of leadership skills, research and social analysis, and self-development.

➤ An action plan is developed with active involvement of residents in the community.

➤ Proposals for funding are developed and submitted to relevant agencies

➤ The project is established

The Key Project is an example of a locally developed response to the issue of very high unemployment in the neighborhood. It illustrates how action research has been used as a tool to identify and better understand local issues, build community capacity and develop responses that are in tune with the needs and aspirations of local people.

In 1996, the Management Committee became concerned about the high levels of unemployment in the area, with over 80percent of people dependent on state benefits. The CDP decided to launch a research project "On the Way to Work: A Community Based Action Research Project", with support from the nation's training authority under the community employment program. The later provided the necessary support to hire a group of locally unemployed people and train them in fieldwork methods to carry out the research.

The goals of the research project were to:

• Compile an unemployment profile of Ballybeg residents;

- Identify obstacles that local people face in trying to gain employment, including difficulties encountered when seeking information and problems associated with the application process;

- Investigate levels of involvement in job training programs, the perceived value of job training, and the levels of interest in community-based training; and

- Determine whether a locally-based independent information service would be used by the people of Ballybeg.

Direct responses from Ballybeg residents were obtained from 110 households through a door-to-door survey. The survey was administered to the household member who came to the door; many were spouses of unemployed men who did not regard themselves as part of the labor force due to family or other commitments. The majority, however, expressed their willingness to participate in job training opportunities, provided suitable courses and accompanying supports such as childcare be made available, to prepare for a return to the labor market.

The survey provided useful information about particular characteristics and circumstances in the Ballybeg area that require attention so that the problem of high unemployment among its residents can be addressed. For example, when asked to identify what they saw as the core barriers, respondents cited the image of Ballybeg among potential employers, the costs associated with the job application process and the general scarcity of employment. Other barriers to employment were identified such as the lack of appropriate qualifications, self-confidence, and skills to develop a resume or complete application forms. Women noted that they face additional barriers, in particular, a lack of affordable childcare facilities.

Results

As a result of CDP's efforts, there are many local people involved in various working groups and projects both on a voluntary capacity and as paid workers. For example, the information and process generated by the *On the way to Work* action research project has informed the development of several activities to help people in Ballybeg gain employment:

- The Key Project opened its doors to the community in May of 1997 as a resource center that offers access to labor market information, support services such as job application and information, and training and education at a local level.

- In 1998 the Key Project working group launched the Ballybeg Positive Project to provide special supports for long-term unemployed residents and to help single parents make concrete decisions around their own self-development.

- A Community Childcare Crèche was set up as a direct result of the needs analyses about facilities in the area conducted by the Comet working group. The crèche makes affordable childcare available to local people, supports the development of children, offers accredited training, and generates employment opportunities for trained childcare workers.

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B.   Community Needs Survey in Larchville/Lisduggan

Larchville/Lisduggan is another disadvantaged district of 585 households and 3000 residents in Waterford city. Following the conference on results-based accountability held in Waterford in January 2001, participants who were part of the management committee for the "family services" pilot project in Waterford—including representatives from government agencies, local family projects and voluntary organizations—agreed that one of the big gaps in the city was the lack of objective information on what communities regarded as the most important issues they wanted to address and the consequent lack of a baseline at the community level against which progress could be measured. The committee decided to develop a community needs assessment for the Larchville/Lisduggan neighborhood, an area where there had been relatively little community development activity.

The project recognized at the outset that the partnership of agencies and community is vital. Representatives of residents were involved in the design and management of the project. Together, they agreed on the goals for the project and identified the range of issues to be explored via a questionnaire administered to the residents.

The goals of the assessment were to find out what residents thought were the most important issues for the area and to foster involvement by residents through their participation in the survey. Specifically, the survey sought to:

- Capture residents views on a range of issues such as childcare, housing, employment, education, healthcare, youth work, substance misuse and crime and safety
- Help to focus debate and determine priorities
- Identify areas for improvement
- Set a baseline against which progress could be measured
- Enable comparisons across communities, if replicated

In contrast to Ballybeg, a private research agency rather than the residents themselves conducted the fieldwork. The findings captured the views of more than half of the households in the neighborhood and were used to identify priority areas to be addressed, with crime and safety being the top community concern. The assessment coincided with the introduction of RAPID, a central government initiative to focus resources on disadvantaged areas. The RAPID structure, which includes working groups representative of the community, is now being used to monitor progress in relation to the priority areas for action identified by local residents in the community survey.

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ISRAEL

Tel Aviv and Jerusalem

Working Together:
Caring Communities Pilot Projects in Jaffa and Gilo

Photo(s):
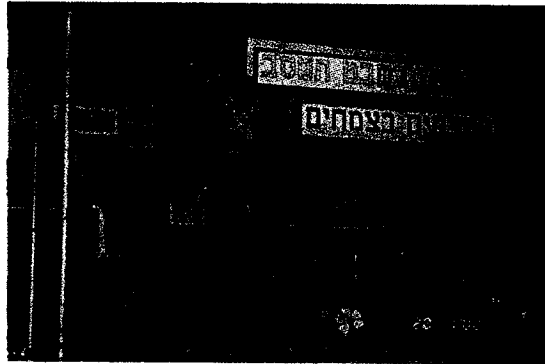
Quotes:

"The most important feature of Caring Communities is that parents, schools and service agencies are working together for the community and especially for the children. We think about the problems and want to solve them together. Each of us has a different perspective and experiences, and if we get together we can find the best solutions for those problems"

Judith Glazer, Gilo School parent

"Until you understand what a collaborative way of working can contribute to yourself it is very hard to share your power or resources. This is a slow process. We are learning. In Jaffa, for example, it took a while for the headmistress of the school to understand her role under Caring Communities. At the beginning she felt "I am the director, I am the one to decide. But today she acknowledges that it has been such a gain to get to know the others in the partnership, to build those relationships and be able to call on them and get their help when she needs it"

Judy Kirshenbaum, Ashalim program officer

Introduction

In 1999, Caring Communities pilot projects were launched in Jaffa, Tel Aviv and in Jerusalem, inspired by the Missouri Caring Communities model. The project was a tangible product of the energy, connections and learning generated during an international study tour in Israel. The study tour was coordinated by The International Initiative for Children, Youth and Families and the National Israeli Initiative for Children, Youth and Families and was hosted by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs in November 1998. The study tour was designed as an exchange of information, policies and programs to help local communities support the development of strong families in caring communities.

Caring Communities first started in Missouri in 1989 as a public/private partnership to address non-academic issues that prevent children from succeeding in school and impede the health and vitality of families. Early efforts also focused on the fragmentation of services and explored how to foster collaboration among service providers in an attempt to meet the multiple needs of families. Planners for the Caring Communities program chose the school as the central point of access for services for families because they provide a natural environment to make contact with parents and, thus, build relationships with families. Using schools as a home base also enables staff to examine and address issues in the local community, both in and outside the school, that affect children's educational success. Additionally, schools are a good place to track multiple, coordinated efforts.

Inspired by the lasting impact that Caring Communities has had upon various communities in the U.S., study tour participants from Israel who were working to foster a more integrated and collaborative approach launched Caring Communities pilot projects in three schools in Israel: the Weizman School in Jaffa, the Gilo and Um Tuba Schools in Jerusalem. In the Um Tuba School, the future of the project is uncertain. Cooperation among the various clans residing in the community has been brought to a halt after the murder of a young adolescent girl by a member of one of the clans.

This case study relates the experience in Jaffa and Gilo, where the Caring Communities projects have established active committees composed of school staff, parents, community leaders and service providers who are beginning to work together on issues they have identified for strengthening families and creating caring communities. As Judith Glazer, one of the active parents in the Gilo School noted, this process has taken more time and dedication than they had anticipated. As she put it, "These past few years we have been getting the soil ready and planting the seeds. I am very hopeful that next year our efforts will begin to bear fruit."

Background

At the international seminar on *Achieving Results: Policies that Make a Difference for Children, Families and Communities* held in Windsor, England in October 2002, Chaim Posner, the Director of the Division of Personal and Social Affairs in the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in Israel, described the processes that are taking place in Israel to change the way social services are delivered at both the national and local levels. The national government, working with many local communities, is deliberately trying new approaches, showing many different ways that national policy and local creativity can work together to improve results for children and families. He highlighted the energy and innovation that is generated by turning to solutions involving genuine partnerships with local communities. In the course of this work," Posner noted, "communities are changing. They are becoming stronger, and strategies that place more power with residents are increasing."

Israel has implemented a variety of pilot efforts and demonstration projects to show that this approach pays off. Each effort has a different "entry point' for change, but all incorporate one or more of three ingredients of a (1) result focused, (2) community, and/or resident-led mobilization, and (3) interagency collaboration. Increasingly, the projects try to incorporate all three of these characteristics. The pilot projects include:

- *Outcomes Accountability projects*, in four local communities;
- The *Kadima project*, in 42 local communities;
- *Community Strategy* development projects, now in four local communities;
- *Accessible Community* projects, in 30 local communities; and
- *Caring Community* projects, which were launched in three local communities.

Although the projects have different emphases, they share the goal of empowering individuals and communities to have greater control over the conditions influencing their lives and well-being to improve results for children, families and communities.

Context

Caring Communities pilot projects have been taking root in two school communities: Weizman School in Jaffa, Tel Aviv and the Gilo School in Jerusalem.

Weizman is a K-6 public elementary school located in a working class neighborhood that has witnessed a rising level of unemployment, especially among the Arabic

population. A large percentage of neighborhood residents depend on welfare, and drugs and crime are a growing problem. About 400 students from Jewish and Arabic families attend Weizman School, which is the only secular school remaining in the area. Some students come by bus, others who live near the school, walk. About 70 percent of the students come from Jewish families who want their children to attend a secular school. The other 30 percent come from Arabic families who want a better education for their children than is being offered in the Arabic public schools. In the past two years, Lev Jaffo, a secular Arabic public school adjacent to Weizman of comparatively similar academic quality has been growing. The two schools share the same playgrounds and, eventually, will share the same campus although they operate separately. The Arabic school will continue to teach classes in Arabic and the Weizman School in Hebrew.

Gilo School is one of five public elementary schools in the Gilo neighborhood of Jerusalem. The neighborhood was built after the 1967 Six Days War and is home to about 40,000 Jewish residents of mixed economic backgrounds and income levels, from welfare recipients to families who own large homes in the neighborhood. There are also a growing number of recent immigrant families moving into the area, especially from Russia. In recent years the neighborhood has experienced increasing economic and political distress. The Gilo school is situated near the border, and shootings and snipers in the surrounding area have made parents increasingly concerned about the safety of their children. About 250 Jewish students of diverse economic backgrounds attend Gilo School.

Vision and Goals

The Missouri Caring Communities model has several core principles that are also embraced by the pilots in Israel. Among them are:

- Services are school-based and school-linked.

- Referrals to services should be based first on the need of the individual child and eventually provide support for the entire family.

- Services are culturally competent and emphasize a "bottom-up" approach, where community members lead each effort.

- The model fosters collaboration among multiple agencies that provide early intervention and prevention services for children and families.

"Our vision is to create a caring community of families," said Aliya Kedem, chair of the International Initiative in Israel and member of the Caring Communities steering committee at the Weizman School in Jaffa. "We envision the school to become a community not of students but of families. The clients are the whole family and not just the students who attend the school. The principal is the principal of this community of families. What we ultimately want to achieve is the well-being of the families." When the Caring Communities project was launched the school was headed by a well-liked principal who had been in that position for 23 years. There was also a small but active parents group. The school and the local branch of the social services agency were working in an effort to provide more services to families, particularly regarding enrichment activities and saw Caring Communities as an opportunity to move their collaboration forward.

A central goal of the pilot projects in the two schools is building collaborative partnerships between stakeholders in the community to work on identifying and addressing issues of concern to the families in the school community. Judith Glazer, an active parent in Gilo School noted that "since Caring Communities started four years ago, we have had lots of meetings that have brought together parents, teachers from the school, and people from service and community organizations to talk about our concerns and wishes for the community. Before Caring Communities nobody knew what the other was doing. Now we work together on issues that we agree on. So we all share what we know and benefit from each others' experience and avoid duplication." One example is the decision to create and offer student camps that provide families with an alternative for their children to participate in safe organized activities during the Passover and other holiday breaks.

Partners and Structure

The main focus of Israel's Learning Communities during the first phase of the project has been to build partnerships among various stakeholders and work collaboratively to improve results for children and families in the community. Project leaders recognize that building such partnerships is a big challenge but the process is slowly changing the organizational culture, which traditionally does not operate in a collaborative manner. As Kedem noted, "schools are usually ready to bring in the parents as supporters, but they are not ready to have parents nor service providers involved as equal partners in the decision-making process."

In both sites, Caring Communities has organized steering committees composed of school staff, parents, service providers, business people and public officials. The

steering committees have ultimate decision-making power over programmatic and budget decisions. The school principal chairs the steering committee.

Caring Communities Partnership
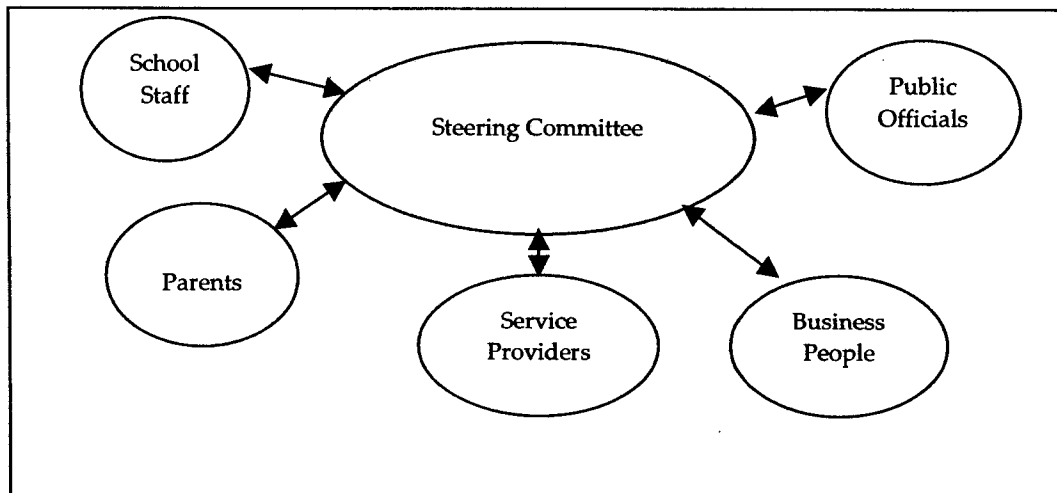
Getting business involved has been a major challenge, although Weizman has recently succeeded in recruiting representatives from local businesses for the steering committee, which is composed of 21 people who meet every 2-3 months. A smaller executive committee composed of two representatives from each of the partners meets more regularly and is responsible for ensuring the implementation of the programs decided upon by the steering committee. In addition, part-time Caring Communities coordinators have been hired in each of the sites.

While the Caring Communities pilots have succeeded in engaging parents and service agencies to have a more active and equal voice, they are still in the beginning stages of the process of building equal partnerships. Aliya Kedem noted that one of the lessons learned is the importance of being very clear at the outset about the roles, responsibilities and accountability of the various partners.

Strategies

During the initial phase, the focus of the projects was to bring stakeholders together to identify and prioritize the needs of the community that they wanted to work on. Since there were few data available at the neighborhood level the projects hired a research agency to conduct a parent survey that asked parents what they liked and what they wanted to change in their communities.

A series of facilitated working sessions with parents, school staff, service agents and community leaders was held to analyze the results of the survey and prioritize issues for action. This process culminated in the formation of several working committees in each of the schools. Each working group elaborated program proposals that were then approved by the full steering committee and submitted to Ashalim, a private foundation that focuses on children at risk, for funding. In the Weizman School, the groups have moved forward with implementing some of the programs during the past year and in the Gilo School they will start implementation of the proposed programs in September 2003.

Results

School staff and parents who have been actively involved appreciate the fact that they now have additional resources and programs for families available. However, without a baseline, the project cannot draw any firm conclusions about its outcomes. Aliya Kedem noted that one of the lessons learned from their experience is the importance of developing an early baseline to determine if the project really is making a difference.

In Gilo, during the 2002-2003 school year, three working committees met and elaborated program proposals that were approved by Ashalim and will be implemented during the next school year. The committees will work on the following priority areas:

- A Welfare Committee will work to organize holiday camps so that any family, but especially those can't afford it, can have access to organized protected activities for their children during the school breaks. They also will implement a Golden Heart program where parents are encouraged to contribute to the well-being of other families and children in the community by donating their time, expertise or resources. The original idea was to create a volunteer bank but it evolved into a program that enlists the parents and children in each classroom to organize an event or activity that will benefit the larger community, such as bake sales or other fundraisers.

- A Violence and Family Support Committee will develop programs to combat and prevent violence at school and at home. Activities include a special play program run with parent volunteers at the school library and a mediation program.

- A Free Time Committee will work on the production of a video about the community that will be produced by the families and a community-based organization that specializes in video production that is a partner in Caring

Communities. The committee will decide on the content of the video and they plan to air it on local television. The group hopes that the video will help strengthen the relationship between the participating partners and inform and motivate others to get involved in Caring Communities.

In Weizman, concrete accomplishments to date of the Caring Communities project include:

- A hotline, run by parents, that informs families about available services and programs for students and families and also serves as a signal to identify services that are inadequate.

- A special big brother/big sister mentoring program geared to support children at risk involves volunteers from the school and the larger community and is supervised by mental health specialists.

- A parents club, which offers parents an opportunity to come together and share and learn about their topics of concern. The group has met once a week for 18 weeks and at the request of the participating parents, meetings will continue during the coming school year. Parents noted that the club is a valuable source of both information and support.

Resources and Support

The pilot projects have been funded by Ashalim and have received additional support from a Joint Distribution Committee and the Jewish Federation of New York. It also has received governmental support from the Tel Aviv and Jerusalem municipalities, and from the Ministries of Labor and Social Affairs. The International Initiative has provided technical support.

Who to Contact

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The Netherlands
Hoogezand-Sappemeer

A New Way of Working:
The Heel de Buurt Project

Photos:

Note: Lukas and Renee will be sending photos

Quotes:

"Residents feel more responsibility for the quality of life in the neighborhood, and we have become the approachable key figures for local government and other professional agencies"

Frouke Kuiken, neighborhood resident

"Achieving results in solving community problems is now a common purpose in the neighborhood"

Mrs. G Smallenbroek, resident

"Heel de buurt has contributed to more mutual understanding between ethnic groups"

Nurhayat Çeliker, resident

"Talking with resident leaders in the community partnership is more effective than 30 hours of negotiating with individuals"

Hans Moorman, community police officer

Introduction

Most residents of Hoogezand-Sappemeer agree that Heel de Buurt is making a difference in their neighborhood. For the first time, residents are being taken seriously and their questions and problems are the starting point for the work of professional service providers and municipal policymakers and civil servants. They have an official place at the table making decisions on plans and activities for strengthening their neighborhood.

Heel de Buurt (the Whole Neighborhood) in the Dutch municipality Hoogezand-Sappemeer, in the northern province of Groningen, is an initiative launched with support from the national government in 1997 as one of ten pilot projects aimed at comprehensive neighborhood development. Intensive cooperation between residents, service agencies and local authorities has resulted in a new way of working in which the needs and wishes of the residents drive the agenda, new results-based methods are tested and a triangular cooperation structure between the three groups of stakeholders has been developed based on equality and partnership.

At this stage, the national government has withdrawn its support, but provincial and local authorities have decided to continue the project for another three years based on the positive results during the initial period. Meetings and gatherings of various kinds have served to actively engage residents. Cohesion among residents has increased. Relationships between resident groups and the other parties in the partnership, council and agencies, has improved. Attitudes and organizational cultures have started to change into a more cooperative approach, and the partnership has become a force to be reckoned with.

Background

The interest in outcomes accountability in the Netherlands was initially triggered by that country's active involvement in the activities of The International Initiative. Thijs Malmberg, then Director of Social Policies in the Dutch Ministry and co-founder of The International Initiative, supported a series of international gatherings in the 1990s to exchange innovative programs and strategies to deal with problems that families and children encountered. One of the "best practices" presented was the story of Vermont: the focus on shared outcomes, joint efforts to achieve these outcomes, quantitative indicators to demonstrate changes, involvement of all stakeholders at national and local levels, and a clear way of communicating results at all levels. The Vermont story appealed to the common sense of many people.

Outcomes accountability in the Netherlands is a relatively new concept, although elements of it have been practiced for quite some time. Successful projects are known in the field of residents' participation, of public-private partnership and community investment, but these are relatively isolated and do not, as a rule, have a focus on joint outcomes. In recent years, responsibility for human services and child and family services has devolved to the municipal level. While there is a movement towards a more comprehensive approach based on client needs and demands, service provision remains highly categorized. The active participation of residents at the neighborhood level in improving their living environment and conditions of well-being is encouraged,

but not yet widespread. The level of participation and the way in which youth, clients and residents can contribute to and decide on the delivery of services for their benefit are issues of active debate.

In 2000 Thea Meinema, senior adviser with the Netherlands Institute for Care and Welfare, had the opportunity to study Results Based Accountability (RBA) in the U.S. as an international fellow at the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Her report *Waar Resultaten Tellen: Results Based Accountability in de Verenigde Staten* (Where Results Count: Results Based Accountability in the U.S.) has been widely disseminated to encourage a more outcomes-based focus in local community development in the Netherlands.

In 2001, a national conference and two regional seminars on RBA were held in Groningen and Amsterdam. The national conference focused on the link between the local results-based agenda and the national policy emphasis on financial accountability. The regional seminars were aimed at involving all stakeholders—including residents—in the work at the local level.

In addition, residents from several municipalities in Groningen had the opportunity to participate in a series of international seminars with Portsmouth, United Kingdom, and Waterford, Ireland. The residents from Groningen hosted the second of these seminars (April 2002), which focused on sharing effective practices for strengthening the engagement of residents in community development processes. Among the participants in these exchanges were a group of residents who had been engaged in the Heel de Buurt initiative in Hoogezand-Sappemeer.

Seeking to achieve comprehensive neighborhood development, Heel de Buurt has been particularly successful in establishing a new way of working in Hoogezand-Sappemeer that is driven by the needs and aspirations of the residents and based on a partnership between residents, service agencies and local authorities.

Although the national government discontinued its support for the project after the initial phase, provincial and local authorities decided to continue it based on its positive results. At present, the approach is being replicated in 15 neighborhoods in six different cities in the province of Groningen. In May, 2003, residents from each of the neighborhoods got together for a provincial residents seminar to exchange experiences in resident involvement and discuss future plans for community development work in the region.

At the national level, the Ministry of Welfare, Health and Sports—the leading department in the field of social policies—has expressed some level of support for a more structured introduction of an outcomes-based approach. Two leading research

and development institutes in the field of social issues, the Verwey-Jonker Institute and the Netherlands Institute for Care and Welfare, have agreed to cooperate in supporting the dissemination of the ideas in the Netherlands. They are developing a project proposal that links the debate on accountability in social work with opportunities for engaging citizens and businesses more actively in social policy. The project focuses on an inventory of existing programs in which residents themselves have the means, resources, and responsibility for the effectiveness of investments in social well-being.

HEEL DE BUURT

Context

Hoogezand-Sappemeer is a small industrial city in the province of Groningen of 33,313 inhabitants. The majority of residents are from middle and working class backgrounds. About a quarter are young people (0 to 24 years-old), many of whom are leaving the community for study and employment elsewhere. About half of the residents are married and 11 percent are single parent families. There is a growing number of immigrants living in Hoogezand-Sappemeer. The average unemployment rate is 11 percent compared to 8.6 percent at the national level. About half of the people who work have jobs in industry although employment opportunities in this sector have been declining. Another third of the population have jobs in the commercial sector and 20 percent work in services. About 17 percent of the families depend on social services/welfare. The health conditions of the people in the community is below the national average, including high risk for heart failure diseases and high use of medications. Immigrants die 10 years earlier than the average population.

Vision and Goals

The vision of Heel de Buurt is that local residents, professionals from social service agencies, and civil servants and policymakers work together to create a sustainable, livable and healthy neighborhood. Together they undertake activities that increase the well-being of all residents in Hoogezand.

In Hoogezand, the Heel de Buurt mission is "to strengthen social cohesion in the neighborhood and to work from the bottom-up towards a 'healthy neighborhood' in a needs-based, community-centered and comprehensive manner." The aim is not to increase the number of projects and activities, but to go about them in a different way.

Guiding Principles

Heel de Buurt's efforts engaging residents are based on the belief that it is important for residents and organizations to continually search for new forms of mutual cooperation and to learn to practice these in a consistent fashion.

Central values espoused by the project are:

- Working together in partnership.
- Striving for inclusiveness and for equality among the partners.
- Being responsive to community needs and wishes.
- Being willing to give residents real influence and responsibility.
- Actively promoting resident participation and leadership.
- Encouraging clear and open communication among the partners.
- Focusing on doing things differently instead of offering more of the same.
- Turning ideas into concrete plans and being accountable for results.

Structure and Partners

As illustrated below, Heel de Buurt is based on a 'partnership triangle' in which the three main stakeholders in the neighborhood—municipal council, professional agencies and residents—have equal positions. Residents have long been a forgotten group in this triangle. The triangle structure established their role as valuable partners in the Heel de Buurt process.

Partnership Triangle
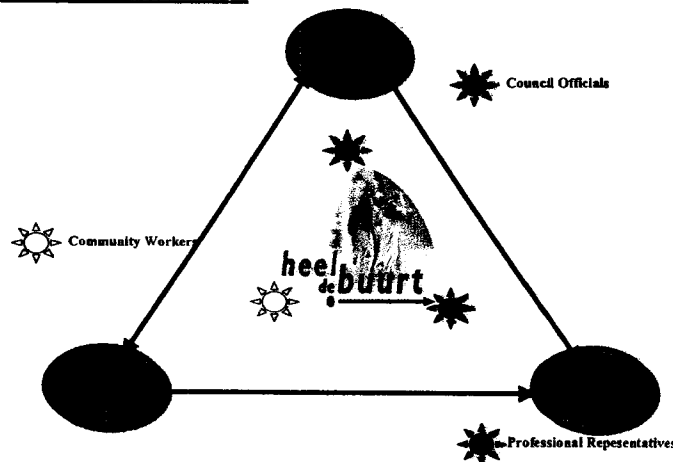
In Hoogezand-Sappemeer the partnership is governed by a steering committee composed of 46 members representing the municipality, local resident groups and organizations, and the agencies providing social work, healthcare and housing services to the community.

The steering committee meets twice a year and constitutes the decision-making body of the partnership. A smaller group of members of the steering committee is responsible for the process and the coordination of activities. This group has 30 members who meet six times per year. In addition, small working groups, made up of representatives of the three partners in the triangle, assume responsibility for the actual implementation of the activities and plans decided upon.

The project has recognized that for the three groups of stakeholders to have an equal partnership the parties must:

- Learn to respect each other's position and contribution;
- Learn to work collaboratively;
- Define common goals;
- Develop a common language;
- Strive to maintain open communication;
- Be accountable for results; and
- Have a voice on resource and budget allocation.

The communication between these parties has been traditionally characterized by an atmosphere of distrust and complaints on the part of residents who did not feel they had a voice. Heel de Buurt recognized at the outset that to regain a position as equal partners residents needed to be actively supported and empowered. This support is offered by a project leader in the neighborhood, who is independent, i.e. not a representative of either the municipality or the agencies. Heel de Buurt has implemented a range of strategies, described in the section below, aimed at building the capacity and leadership of residents and promoting their active participation in neighborhood improvement efforts.

Strategies and Tools

Recognizing that residents quite often feel powerless and dissatisfied when it comes to dealing with the municipal council or service agencies, the project has developed and implemented several strategies and tools aimed at motivating residents and building their capacity to work and cooperate in strengthening their neighborhoods. These strategies include:

➤ **Informal coffee mornings in the neighborhood**

Informal coffee mornings have been a very helpful tool for bringing residents, community workers and professionals together to inform each other about the problems in the neighborhood. The project has found this form of communication extremely valuable when working with resident groups. It is easier to talk freely in a familiar and intimate environment than in bureaucratic settings or large groups.

➤ **Focus groups around specific issues**

Topical meetings can form a good medium to hear the hopes and concerns a residents' group has, while also providing a better understanding of ways for improving their skills.

➤ **Neighborhood cooperation as theatre**

Theatre is a powerful medium for identifying questions and concerns that residents have about the neighborhood and stimulating discussion with a wider section of the community. Theatre also can help people see that solutions can be found if both residents and service organizations approach each other with a new attitude. Stepping into each other's shoes using theatre and role-playing has helped people realize the difficulties and challenges experienced by other parties. Plays also have helped people in the neighborhood practice new forms of cooperation.

➤ **Tailored workshops**

Community workers have offered various workshops to help resident groups strengthen their position in the partnership. Themes have included, for example, strengthening the relationship towards affiliates, determining direction, strategy, and presentation. The course content can be set in advance or it can be tailored to address a question at hand. An example is a course where participants have gone house-to-house inviting people to discuss solutions for a problem in the neighborhood. This form of consultation delivers a lot of information in a short period of time and stimulates residents to be actively involved in an area of their interest.

➤ Residents' exchanges

In the same way that staff form organizations benefit from opportunities to look beyond the domain of their own work. Participation in resident exchanges on a national or international level have given local people new ideas and inspire them to carry on with their work. In organizing the resident exchanges, the project has preferred a format that provides participants with informal opportunities for getting to know one another while learning in a new environment.

➤ Neighborhood parties

In the project's experience, the best ideas are not born during meetings but during parties. Parties can help create an informal backdrop for discussions among different groups and residents to share information, generate new creative ideas, and get inspired. They often include fun activities, ranging from organizing a volleyball match to having a treasure hunt in the neighborhood. During one such event in Hoogezand 40 organizations took part in a treasure hunt in one of the neighborhoods. Some residents dressed as fortune tellers. Local people who came to see what was going on were, consequently, drawn into discussion with council members and professionals concerning the problems and opportunities for the neighborhood.

➤ Offering courses that residents want

The project regularly asks resident volunteers about courses they would like to take. In response, in the past three years, courses have been offered on topics such as creating leaflets, working in an outcomes-based manner at the neighborhood level, conducting effective meetings, presentation skills, negotiation skills, and computer classes. These courses have been primarily directed at active volunteers in the neighborhood and have been organized by the volunteers themselves. Among the challenges they have faced in the process are: finding teachers (through the Hanze College and the Work Projects Foundation), finding out what people really want (through surveys and informal conversations with other volunteers), and arranging finances (through the municipal council, neighborhood council and 'Heel de Buurt'). The courses have been offered in the evenings to facilitate resident attendance. Each course has consisted of four 3-hour sessions and all participants completing the courses have received certificates.

➢ **Theme evenings:**

The main goals of the theme evenings are to provide information about specific topics and to involve and activate the residents. There have been several different theme evenings in the neighborhood, such as: Healthy Neighborhood, Neighborhood Renewal, and Project Elderly 75+. The Association of Residents has organized the theme nights, which have been announced using flyers and the local newspaper that are distributed door to door. Residents have participated actively and attendance has been large.

➢ **The Future Workshops:**

The goals of the Future Workshops are to create awareness about what is good about the neighborhood and what should be improved, as well as to identify and engage residents who are willing to work more actively on neighborhood improvement efforts. There has been a series of three workshops in which residents have gotten together to address questions such as: What should the neighborhood look like after the renewal process? What is needed to create a livable and healthy neighborhood for present and future residents? Working on small groups, participants have been asked to write their wishes on cards and then sort out the answers by subjects. About 25-30 people have attended each session, and residents have asked many more questions than they used to.

➢ **Doorway Talks:**

Doorway Talks have been held in some of the neighborhoods. The goal of these talks was to find out more about the sentiments among the residents of the renewal areas, have the residents themselves talk about what is going on inside their entrance hall and in the direct surroundings of the residences. Before the meetings were held, all residents received a letter announcing the talks and explaining the intentions. Thereafter, one hall at a time, people were invited to attend a meeting. During the project, people have been kept informed by newsletters. A number of issues surfaced during these meetings, such as: cracks in the pavement, problems after the renewal, feelings of insecurity at night, etc. Furthermore, during the talks, the residents made many suggestions on issues that could be improved.

➢ **Roundtable Talk:**

The goal of the roundtable was for the different members in the partnership to gain a better understanding of each other's role and responsibilities, and to

improve communication and accountability among the partners (do whatever you say you'll do and show what you're doing).

It was an informal meeting, without an agenda, with the city council, politicians, institutions and residents. The meeting took half a day. During the meeting, everyone identified obstacles in the communication as well as making specific commitments for improvement.

Results

The results of the Heel de Buurt project in Hoogezand-Sappemeer are manifold. The Doorway Talks, for example, produced the following results:

- Residents' wishes, needs and concerns about the neighborhood were mapped and clarified.

- A report based on the meetings with residents was produced and distributed widely.

- In several instances, issues and concerns from residents were brought to the attention of particular agencies and were immediately taken care of.

- Residents of some entrance halls met or talked to each other for the first time and some proceeded to make agreements about improvements such as ways of keeping the place clean.

- Some residents have became involved in organizing a neighborhood festival.

Other concrete results of the project include:

- A local reporting station for all kinds of inconvenience and annoyance experienced by residents, where action is taken quickly by the appropriate agency, and new forms of cooperation and case management develop to share responsibility for solutions.

- Debates about values and codes of conduct with participants from diverse backgrounds, ages, and educational levels.

- A local health policy agenda based on the needs and wishes of residents, where the multifaceted approach is discussed and supported by active engagement of residents. The agenda, decided in the Heel de Buurt steering committee, focuses on a variety of aspects of public health, such as the hazards of smoking, obesity in young people and adults, and social safety.

The project structure has made it possible for residents to claim their rightful position and has made it easier for them to voice their concerns and demands. Resident volunteers attending the courses offered reports that they felt better prepared to stand up for themselves and work in a results-based manner, and they have improved their communication and relationships, not only with the council and the agencies, but also with other residents. Agencies, in turn, have learned that success of programs and methods increases when they are focused on the needs of residents and carried by residents. There is still a long way to go, but the enthusiasm and will to carry on is enormous.

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UNITED KINGDOM
Portsmouth

Minding the Gap:
Paulsgrove and Wymering Local Partnership

Quote(s):

[In Paulsgrove and Wymering], there is now a recognition that residents are empowered and will challenge the 'suits' [professionals]. The attitude of 'we know what you want' previously adopted by some professionals is no longer acceptable."

> Paulsgrove and Wymering community worker

"People told me I was crazy to move to this neighborhood, and that it was a dangerous place to be. They don't know the neighborhood like I do. This is a place where I have friends, where people help one another and where my children can have a good start in life."

> Paulsgrove and Wymering community resident

Introduction

Paulsgrove and Wymering, a post-war housing estate in the north of Portsmouth city in England and home to 18,000 people, is an inspiring example of what can be accomplished when communities work together to improve results for children and families. The construction of a new Healthy Living Centre for the community is a tangible example. There are significant health problems in the area and many residents expressed difficulties in accessing health care. Their initial hope to ensure better health care led to a more substantive plan to ensure community health and the adoption of a plan for a healthy living center that includes a community Cafe, an information service, a first aid and various community health services, mother and baby clinics, a crèche and rooms for use by community groups.

Paulsgrove and Wymering is one of the neediest areas in the city of Portsmouth. At the time of the application for round six of central government Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) funding, the Paulsgrove and Wymering ward fell within the worst off 10 percent

of wards nationally with deprivation levels exceeding the national average. The deeply entrenched poverty and high level of unemployment have exacerbated a range of social problems including low levels of educational attainment and high levels of crime and family breakdown.

Paulsgrove and Wymering also has the highest proportion of families with children and the highest proportion of 5-17 year-olds in the city. It has a well-established sense of identity and a range of shared needs and aspirations that have been consistently identified by local residents in extensive surveys undertaken over a number of years. As documented in a recent study on *Promoting Sustainable Communities* (Painter & Tempest, June 2003) a range of very valuable work is underway in Paulsgrove and Wymering that demonstrates ways in which residents have been increasingly able to take a lead role in regeneration efforts in the UK and the promotion of strong and sustainable communities.

Background

In Britain, government policy in recent years has been marked by concern for the poor outcomes of a large number of children who grow up in low-income families and disadvantaged neighborhoods. Since 1997, the Social Exclusion Unit has provided a central focus for government's continuing interest in child poverty, school truancy and exclusion, homelessness, teenage pregnancy and other such issues that do not fit within the responsibilities of any single agency, and have traditionally failed to receive the cross-departmental, multi-agency response they require. Initiatives such as *Sure Start* for pre-school children and their families and the *National Strategy for Neighborhood Renewal* aim to build stronger, healthier communities in targeted areas. Moreover, they not only seek to stimulate coordinated cross-agency action, but also to achieve sustainable changes through partnerships with local families and residents.

Through its involvement in the International Initiative on Children, Youth and Families, the UK began in 2000 to explore the application of a 'results-based' or 'outcomes-based approach' to policy and service provision. A paper written by the UK members of the network *(Better Results for Children and Families: Involving Communities in Planning Services Based on Outcomes, 2001)*, examines some of the challenges as well as examples of relevant local developments based on the principles of this approach.

One such example is the experience from neighborhood regeneration programs that shows that inviting people to meetings is not enough and that ways must also be found to invest in increasing the community's capacity for participation.

Portsmouth is a powerful example of how a city can effectively use resident engagement as one part of its strategies to improve results for children and families. Its Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) has received considerable recognition as a model of best practice in community initiative and neighborhood renewal. Strong links have been forged between partnership governing bodies at the community and the city/local authority level. In addition to Paulsgrove and Wymering, there are another four neighborhoods that have access to Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) funds. Each of these neighborhoods has a Community Board made up of a range of agencies and individuals including faith communities, head teachers, social services, businesses and residents. Each Community Board sends representatives to the Community Network which then elects sixteen people to serve in Portsmouth's LSP. Initially, the Community Boards had responsibility for approving or vetoing proposals, but increasingly communities are developing these boards to establish their own priorities for their neighborhoods and undertake community planning.

It is easy to pay lip service to the need to involve residents, parents and young people, while setting up what amounts to token exercises in consultation. Portsmouth is one case in the UK where there has been a deliberate, sustained and successful effort to engage and empower residents as part of the city's strategy to improve results for children, families and communities. A dual focus on clear results and authentic community participation has led to a different way of working in Portsmouth that is succeeding in closing the gaps in living conditions and opportunities that exist between the most deprived communities and the rest of the city. In October 2001, Portsmouth hosted the first of three international residents' seminars with Waterford (Ireland) and Groningen (The Netherlands), which are also pursuing an outcomes-based approach to share experiences and lessons on building strong communities from a residents' perspective.

Vision/ Goals

In Paulsgrove and Wymering, the Community Board's Children and Community Subgroup has adopted the following community outcomes as the goals that they are working to achieve together:

Children and young people should grow up:

- Having an equal say in any development
- Healthy
- Emotionally secure and confident
- Having succeeded as far as they can at school

- Having facilities and opportunities to play safely
- Having stayed out of trouble
- Living in a safe place
- Having opportunity to succeed in achieving their dreams

They have started the process of improving performance measures linked to what is important in the community by setting up a steering group looking at how you measure success.

Partners and Structure

The Paulsgrove and Wymering local partnership consists of a Community Board composed of 21 members with voting rights, including 15 residents of the neighborhood, one of whom must be a representative from the ethnic minority groups, one from young people, and one from the disabled. This mixture of residents and professionals who work in the area as well as local council members enhances the partnership work. The Community Board has set up a series of subgroups to deal with particular issues in the community, including: children and families, health, environment, and newspaper and publicity.

According to the report on *Promoting Sustainable Communities*, the Community Board in Paulsgrove and Wymering works extremely well and has a major role in ensuring the maximum involvement of residents in all the decision-making processes for provision of local services and facilities. There is now a clear transfer of power from the professional agencies to the local people. Establishing the right sort of partnership and making it as equal as possible has been a key factor for success.

The Paulsgrove and Wymering Community Board is currently looking at the community strategy for the area. The strategy will then be fed into the LSP and the Community Plan. It will also link into other strategies for the area like the Crime and Disorder Strategy. In this way, there is a clear approach to joint planning that is bottom up and cross agency. According to the Local Government Act 2000, the strategy needs to take an integrated approach to the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area. In particular, it needs to identify the priorities of communities in the local area, reflect these in a long-term vision for the community, identify a set of specific objectives and draw an action plan to achieve those objectives.

Strategies and Tools

Paulsgrove and Wymering has been very committed and innovative in its efforts to ensure community involvement and participation. Going back several years there has been a lot of consultation with residents about what they want for their communities. This information, together with statistics, has been used to identify the key issues for the community.

The range of mechanisms used in Paulsgrove and Wymering to define the priority concerns of the community and the issues that need to be addressed include:

- Analysis of previous resident surveys

- Street surveys of local residents

- Public meetings with residents and agency workers

- Focus groups with a range of groups including: young mothers, primary school students, teenagers, people with disabilities, ethnic minority groups, and older people.

The view of many professionals interviewed for the report on *Promoting Sustainable Communities* (2003) was that consultation with residents was not enough. People in many communities felt disempowered and there was a lot of apathy. They also considered that they had been 'surveyed to death'. In addition, sending leaflets or flyers was also not sufficient. Literacy problems were a key barrier for some people in the community.

The more effective approach taken by local workers in Paulsgrove and Wymering has been to actively discuss issues with local residents through street surveys. Standing outside pubs, cafes and shops to actively engage people in conversation about what is happening seems to work best. This approach not only involves getting residents' views but actively encouraging them to attend meetings as well as 'buddying people up' to assist them to become involved.

Involving residents in a local event, like a carnival, also has been a very effective method. It enables some people who don't feel they are able to contribute to get involved in the community and learn new skills. Making costumes, face painting, planning for the carnival are all activities which have brought people together and built their confidence and community spirit.

Important Factors When Involving and Engaging Residents

Interviews with Paulsgrove and Wymering residents and professionals conducted for the report on *Promoting Sustainable Communities* highlighted the following factors:

- Winning the hearts and minds of people.
- Being honest with people and realistic about what can be achieved.
- Seeing residents as a resource instead of a problem.
- Stop talking and start listening to what the community wants.
- Devising ways of involving people at whatever skill level is appropriate.
- Being open and imaginative about projects and different ways of doing things.
- Breaking down the 'them' and 'us' between the professionals and the residents through practices such as refraining from using jargon.
- Being patient even if it means going over the same ground several times
- Celebrating successes with residents and professionals.
- Delivering on promises made.
- Changing the balance of power so that communities have more ownership and control, including making decisions about how resources are utilized.

Resources and Support

The funding arrangements for the work on promoting sustainable communities come from a variety of sources including: public funding (such as SRB, Children's Fund, Department of Health, Sure Start, and local authority funding); European funding (European Social Fund and other EU funds); private funding (local businesses and developers) and charities (such as Children's Society and Community First).
Resources include money, staff, equipment and services. For example:

- Three staff positions—Regeneration manager, officer and assistant— have been vital in developing and implementing the strategy, including providing the advice needed as to how to obtain and match the funding.

- Another very important resource has been volunteers. An example is the Paulsgrove and Wymering Network that depends heavily on volunteers to run many activities to support families with children until age 14. As part of its program, the Network runs a support group with a free crèche, a young parents group, play sessions for young children and a variety of group events and courses seven days a week.

Results

In Paulsgrove and Wymering, a special effort is made to report progress being made in the community on a regular basis. This is accomplished through the *Insight, a* community paper, which also publishes other local news and information of interest to the community. One of the subgroups liked to the Community Board is responsible for producing the newspaper.

Working in partnership with the community has led to real improvements in several problem areas—such as inadequate access to jobs, training, leisure and health facilities, high crime, and poor educational attainment—consistently identified by residents as critical over a number of years.

Improvements that have been made include:

- The plan for a new Healthy Living Centre and other initiatives that target health issues has been an important community accomplishment.

- The development of the Paulsgrove Into Employment Project, in operation since September 2001, which has provided critical assistance to unemployed residents. In the first year of operation, the project conducted over 90 weeks of training, assisted many residents to prepare resumes and helped to place many of them into regular employment.

- A number of projects have been put in place to build the skills of people in the community, including the Aspire Project that gives secondary student access to the technical facilities available at the local college, the Intergeneration Project that brings together students at risk and older residents to work on specific projects or events, and the Community Access to IT, which encourages residents to gain skills and confidence using new technology. Its Cyber Café has been particularly popular with young people.

- Crime has been reduced by 19 percent through a combination of actions that include the purchasing and staffing of a community patrol vehicle, purchasing of mountain bikes for beat officers, setting up community policing schemes and a Paulgrove Shop Watch program, and establishing an Outdoor Education Project and a Preventing Youth Offending Project.

- Improvements to the physical environment through projects such as the New Leaf Project, which uses gardening as the focus for activities.

Who to Contact

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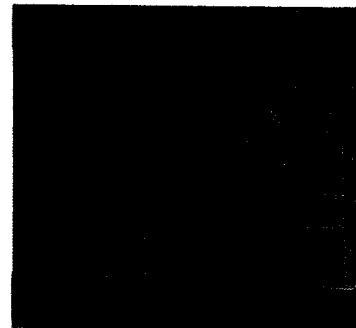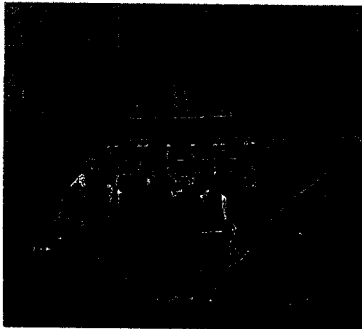E-mail: **Rob.Hutchinson@portsmouthcc.gov.uk**

UNITED STATES
Boston, Massachusetts

Working on the Village Vision:
The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative

Photo(s):

Introduction

The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) was formed in 1984 when residents of the Dudley neighborhood in Boston came together out of fear and anger to revive their neighborhood and protect it from outside speculators following its near devastation by years of arson, disinvestments, neglect and "redlining," where lenders participate in discriminatory housing practices. DSNI is an innovative resident-led planning and organizing community non-profit dedicated to rebuilding the neighborhood.

Today DSNI has grown into a collaborative effort of over 3,600 members, including residents and community partners concerned with revitalizing this culturally diverse neighborhood of 24,000 people and maintaining its character and affordability. The community's vision is embodied in the term "urban village," reflecting a vibrant neighborhood with strong social networks and sustainable physical and economic development.

Background

Located less than two miles from downtown Boston in Roxbury/North Dorchester, Dudley Street is one of the poorest neighborhoods in Boston. Its per capita income is less than half the income for the City of Boston and approximately one third of the area's population falls below the poverty line. Dudley street is also a multi-racial, multi-cultural and multi-lingual community of African American, Latino, Cape Verdean and white residents. It is also a remarkable reservoir of resident leadership, talent, spirit and determination.

DSNI was conceived in 1984 when nearly one-third of Dudley land lay vacant and scarred after years of disinvestment, arson and dumping. Partly through its diverse Board of Directors, Dudley Street and its community partners develop strategies will ensure that local residents are the primary beneficiaries of this economic potential and that environmental issues are addressed.

Since DSNI's first community meetings in 1985, 600 of 1,300 vacant lots have been transformed into nearly 300 new homes, a Town Commons, gardens, urban agriculture, parks and playgrounds; 300 housing units have been rehabbed. Business is growing. Rebuilding continues today.

Vision and Goals

DSNI's mission is "to empower Dudley residents to organize, plan for, create and control a vibrant, diverse, and high quality neighborhood in collaboration with community partners."

Urban Visioning Process

This poem together with an imaginary story was used by the DSNI Board and staff to help residents prepare for the Urban Visioning Process.

Imagine!

A village...with a family feeling
A welcome home where we get some healing
A place to drink some juice or herbal tea
With a theme of the month for all to see

A home for our village where people can play
And the rhythm of the seasons will mark each day
Where children will learn about their rights
And a place where there are no fights

Where we meet in a circle and go around
And everyone's voice can find its sound
Where we find a new way that comes from the heart
With an inclusive process right from the start

Where we respect one another and honor the earth
And all our relations through death and rebirth
A place where we help each other be strong
A place where we learn to change what's wrong

A place where we come to get involved
Where neighborhood problems can get resolved
With popular theater and cabaret
We'll show the world what we have to say

A place where we sing and dance together
Where festivals happen in inclement weather
Where people do yoga, aerobics, tai chi
And paint the pictures they want to see

Where everyone learns, regardless of age
And original plays are performed on the stage
Where fundraisers happen about every week
We'll work to help groups with the funding they seek

Where good food will be served in family style
And people will linger around for a while
A place where our spirits can freely roam
A place where we all can say, "Welcome home!"

Anonymous

DSNI work focuses on the following goals:

- RESIDENT EMPOWERMENT

  Support and strengthen resident leadership, organizing and training, and develop new tools to nurture "outside-the-box" thinking, community planning and development.

- ECONOMIC POWER

  Develop a thriving local economy with increased home and business ownership, job opportunities, investment, needed services and urban agriculture, and enhance community wealth.

- ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

  Foster healthy, sustainable development through soil and brownfield reclamation, de-leading, better regulation, solar energy, a community greenhouse and flourishing gardens and parks.

- CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

  Assist residents to organize for, influence and access to education, training, health care, child care, recreation, community centers, and other services and resources.

Guiding Principles

The following set of values serve as DSNI internal guidelines for "distinguishing what is right from what is wrong and what is just from what is unjust. These principles are held tightly and are not changed or swayed by external forces."

- ❖ Collective resident leadership and control
- ❖ Linked community destiny
- ❖ Community political power and voice
- ❖ Mutual and shared responsibility and accountability
- ❖ Power in organized community
- ❖ Vibrant cultural diversity

- ❖ Community collaboration
- ❖ Fair and equal share of resources and opportunities
- ❖ Development without displacement
- ❖ High quality of life
- ❖ Individual and community entitlement
- ❖ Anything is possible

Partners and Structure

DSNI works to implement resident-driven plans with partners including community development corporations, other non-profit organizations and religious institutions serving the neighborhood, banks, government agencies, businesses and foundations.

The composition of its Board of Directors and community election process are a way in which DSNI ensures an inclusive and transparent community process. DSNI is governed by a 29-member Board of Directors elected by the community. Community-wide board elections are held every two years at the DSNI Annual Meeting. As of 2002, there were 3,670 voting members including residents (15 years and older) agencies, religious organizations and merchants located within the DSNI area. Reflecting its multi-cultural membership, DSNI conducts business in three languages (English, Spanish and Cape Verdean Creole).

Adhering to its principles, the DSNI board is inclusive and diverse and is composed as follows:

- Twelve residents from the core area, with equal representation is provided for the community's four major cultures – African American, Cape Verdean, Latino and white.
- Five nonprofit agencies representing the health and human service fields
- Two community development corporations from the core area
- Two small businesses from the core area
- Two religious organizations from the core area
- Two youths from the core area (ages 15-18)
- Two nonprofit organizations or groups from the secondary area
- Two additional residents appointed by the newly elected board

DSNI Committees in 2003 consisted of:

- **Urban Agriculture/Open Space/Beautification Committee:** Responsible for developing strategies for keeping the overall neighborhood environment clean.

- **Board Development:** Addresses issues relevant to the development and functioning of the board as a high performing entity that takes responsibility for itself and its members.

- **Economic Power Work Group:** Responsible for creating the process leading to the strategies for defining what "Economic Power" means in the Dudley neighborhood.

- **Education:** Responsible for organizing and developing strategies for improving local schools and educational outcomes for neighborhood children, with a special focus on the new Orchard Gardens Pilot School.

- **Multicultural Festival:** Responsible for planning and organizing DSNI's annual celebration of cultural diversity and community life.

- **REAL (Roxbury Empowerment Adolescent Leaders):** DSNI and Cape Verdean Community Task Force's Youth Committee.

- **Resident Development Institute:** Responsible for capturing community learnings and standards in shareable forms, and for creating formal and informal resident leadership development opportunities. Currently working on RDI Leadership Competency series.

- **Sustainable Development:** Responsible for reviewing housing, open space, economic development and environmental projects proposed for the area. Subcommittees include: Urban Agriculture and Economic Development.

- **Solid Waste Work Group:** Monitors trash transfer and waste related to business in the community.

- **Urban Village Work Group:** Brings together all of DSNI's work to coordinate and maximize the neighborhood revitalization. The subcommittees are Family Outreach Committee (FOC), and Community Resources Collaboration Committee (CRCC).

- **Dudley Neighbors Inc. (DNI):** A community-controlled land trust that buys, owns, and leases land based on the community planning process, and uses its land control to preserve affordability.

- **Uphams Dudley Community Center Planning Committee:** In partnership with Bird St. Community Center, responsible for bringing the neighborhood's vision of a new Bird St. Center on Dudley and Clifton Streets to fruition.

Results

DSNI's major accomplishment has been, and continues to be, organizing and empowering the residents of the Dudley Street neighborhood to create a shared vision of the neighborhood and bring it to reality by creating strategic partnerships with individuals and organizations in the private, government, and nonprofit sectors.

As a result, the Dudley Street neighborhood has changed in many tangible ways since 1984. As documented in *Building on Success* (Sklar, 2002), beginning with the "Don't Dump on Us" campaign in 1986, DSNI cleaned up the vacant lots, closed down illegal, hazardous trash transfer stations and brought fresh air "literally and figuratively" to the neighborhood. In 1992, Dudley earned the City of Boston's Best Kept Neighborhood" Civic Award. To date, more than 300 of the 1,300 inherited abandoned parcels have been transformed into high quality affordable housing, a Town Commons and numerous community gardens, parks and playgrounds. Two new community centers serve the neighborhood: the Orchard Gardens Community Center and the more comprehensive Vine Street Community Center, with recreation, child care, after-school care, computer access, and other activities for all ages. The new Uphams-Dudley Community Center will be an even larger facility.

In the words of *Streets of Hope: The Fall and Rise of an Urban Neighborhood* (Medoff and Sklar, 1994): "Even more significantly, the neighborhood has changed most in intangible ways since 1984. Where there was once despair, there is hope. Where there was once isolation and fragmentation, there is strong neighborhood identity. Where there was once powerlessness, there is community control. Where there was once that 'perception of a future already looted,' there is a vision and plan of action. There is Dudley pride."

Strategies and Tools

As DSNI former President Najwa Abdul-Tawwab said on the occasion of DSNI's 15th anniversary, "I've always believed what's key about DSNI is the word 'initiative.' It

works to help people initiate. For 15 years we've been bringing 'impossible' dreams to life, and we're looking forward to achieving even more in our next 15 years."

Residents were able to develop such a plan because they were able to gain control over a significant portion of the 1,300 parcels of abandoned land that had come to characterize the neighborhood. They gained control by convincing the authorities in Boston's city government to take the unprecedented step of granting to the community the power of eminent domain. The eminent domain authority obtained by the community applies to the vacant land in a 60 acre area called the Triangle. In this way, Dudley residents acquired valuable assets and a "place at the table" during any discussions around the development of their community.

In order to achieve its goals, DSNI has worked to create:

> Inclusiveness, transparency, and accountability in the community process
> A vibrant community life and social networks
> Community guidance captured in standards and guidelines
> Resident Leadership Development Community Power
> Tools for resident decision making:
>> o Processes and thinking tools for collective decision making
>> o Data and information, creatively presented

Processes and thinking tools for group decision making include:

> Group facilitation skills
> Visioning processes
> Planning techniques
> Scenarios planning
> Developing community standards

Data and information are tools for residents in:

> Capturing and understanding the current situation
> Developing strategies for change
> Guiding decision making
> Assessing progress
> Making course corrections
> Inspiring action
> Communicating to the public and policymakers about the need for change
> Learning

Information is used as a community planning tool. When used in this way, it is important that the information be relevant, interactive and visual. Examples of visuals that DSNI has used include photos and panoramas of planning areas; maps with parcel delineations-public, private, vacant, housing, commercial, etc.; and three-dimensional models, such as a youth creating a wooden model.

Information is also a powerful tool for identifying and documenting problems and inspiring campaigns for change. An example is the creation of the Community Investment Coalition. One of the ways DSNI helped the process was by capturing in a simple and visual manner the results of a 1992 Federal Reserve Bank of Boston study showing that Black and Latino mortgage applicants were 60 percent more likely to be turned down than whites, and that high income minorities in Boston were more likely to be turned down than low-income whites.

Information is also used as a strategy development tool. Examples are the resident buying survey, the community technology survey and the Education Committee's school statistics survey.

Other powerful innovative ways in which DSNI is using data as a tool for empowering residents are:

- **Quantifying the qualitative.** For example, conducting resident surveys asking questions such as how much longer residents would like to live in the neighborhood or how they feel their neighborhood has changed, and giving this information back to the community using charts and other visuals.

- **Use of new technologies.** For example, using digital cameras and digital video storytelling to help residents plan, organize and make decisions.

- **Access to data.** For example, DSNI is organizing to make systems data available at the community level.

DSNI'S DECLARATION OF COMMUNITY RIGHTS

In the summer of 1993, DSNI's vision was crystallized again in a Declaration of Community Rights. The declaration, produced by the Human Development Committee, highlights fundamental DSNI objectives in all areas of community development. Streets of Hope

We — the youth, adults, seniors of African, Latin American, Caribbean, Native American, Asian and European ancestry — are the Dudley community. Nine years ago (1983), we were Boston's dumping ground and forgotten neighborhood. Today, we are on the rise! We are reclaiming our dignity, rebuilding housing and reknitting the fabric of our communities. Tomorrow, we realize our vision of a vibrant, culturally diverse neighborhood, where everyone is valued for their talents and contribution to the larger community. We, the residents of the Dudley area, dedicate and declare ourselves to the following:

- *We have the right to shape the development of all plans, programs and policies likely to affect the quality of our lives as neighborhood residents.*

- *We have the right to quality, affordable health care that is both accessible to all neighborhood residents and culturally sensitive.*

- *We have the right to control the development of neighborhood land in ways which insure adequate open space for parks, gardens, tot lots and a range of recreational uses.*

- *We have the right to live in a hazard-free environment that promotes the health and safety of our families.*

- *We have the right to celebrate the vibrant cultural diversity of the neighborhood through all artistic forms of expression.*
- *We have the right to education and training that will encourage our children, youth, adults and elders to meet their maximum potentials.*

- *We have the right to share in the jobs and prosperity created by economic development initiatives in metro-Boston generally, and in the neighborhood specifically.*

- *We have the right to quality and affordable housing in the neighborhood as both tenants and homeowners.*

- *We have the right to quality and affordable child care responsive to the distinct needs of the child and family as well as available in a home or center-based setting.*

- *We have the right to safe and accessible public transportation serving the neighborhood.*

- *We have the right to enjoy quality goods and services, made available through an active, neighborhood-based commercial district.*

- *We have the right to enjoy full spiritual and religious life in appropriate places of worship.*

- *We have the right to safety and security in our homes and in our neighborhoods.*

Who to Contact

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UNITED STATES
Denver, Colorado

Knowledge is Power:
Making Connections —Denver

Photos:

Tracey Saulters of *Making Connections* conducts Story Circles with women participating in Project WISE

Some 500 residents from the four *Making Connections'* neighborhoods participated in Story Circles in 2002.

Quotes:

"We all have a common goal and that is to build our collective power base to actually create and maintain change in Denver. Because our mission is so clear, it eliminates a lot of the tensions that often come up in other places."

CLN member

"The more definition you have on tasks and products, the less space you can afford to give to residents. You invite residents to join you on certain tasks as opposed to inviting residents to join you in a relationship from which the tasks will emerge. Our experience suggests that is a mistake."

LN member

"I'm constantly amazed at how powerful story circles are, not only in bringing residents together but in getting them to really open up talk about what's on their minds in terms of community."

Story Circle facilitator

"The seeds of change have been planted in the *Making Connections'* neighborhoods. The more residents listen to each other, find solutions and work together on these issues, the more we'll be able to see the connections between this productive engagement and community improvement."

<div align="right">MC local coordinator</div>

Introduction

A grandmother, two public housing residents, a couple of new immigrants, and a pastor are among a very diverse group of Denver residents who have adopted the maxim that 'knowledge is power'. The group, composed of residents from the four low-income neighborhoods included in the *Making Connections*—Denver (MC-D) initiative, makes up the Community Learning Network (CLN) that serves as the data and information arm of the initiative (*Connections*, Spring 2003)

"Our role is to connect residents and others involved in *Making Connections* to information, tools and skill-building opportunities" said Tracey Saulters, a local resident and CLN member who attended the international exchange on *Engaging Residents in Mobilizing Communities* in Baltimore, Maryland in June 2002.

Community organizing is the key strategy that MC-D has used for involving families in shaping the future of their communities. Since its beginning in 2000, the initiative has helped residents in each of the four neighborhoods come together and organize around issues that affect their lives, including safety, environmental issues, education, and affordable housing. *Making Connections* provides funding, training and technical support to these community-organizing efforts.

The Community Learning Network exemplifies the broad-based commitment in MC-D to developing resident leadership and deepening resident involvement in community change efforts. Residents took the lead to collect data, create tools, and develop the skills needed to support community change and improve the lives of families in their neighborhoods.

Background

Throughout the past decade, communities in the United States have experimented with new approaches to strengthen families and the neighborhoods in which they live. Many states are utilizing grants from federal sources, and from private sources such as foundations, to find new ways to provide community-led services. These new ways of

working are based on the belief that traditional supports for families, especially in the fields of health, human services, and education, have not met the challenges faced by families and children. Communities throughout the country have found that certain elements are key to developing effective community-led services: community-based decision making and collaboration; results-based accountability; resident and family participation; and innovative financial strategies.

Making Connections is the Annie E. Casey Foundation's initiative to improve outcomes for some of the nation's most vulnerable children and families. The initiative is conducted through deep and durable partnerships with selected cities and neighborhoods across the United States – currently 22 cities make up the broad *Making Connections* network. Several core ideas underlie *Making Connections*:

- *Making Connections* is based on the recognition that the greatest number of American children who suffer from "rotten outcomes" live in city neighborhoods that are in many ways cut off – disconnected – from the mainstream opportunities of American life. Thus, *Making Connections* is "place-based" – it focuses on specific neighborhoods in specific cities.

- *Making Connections* has a simple theory: that children do better when they grow up in strong families, and families do better when they live in supportive neighborhoods. Thus, *Making Connections* strategies are dually aimed at helping families obtain what they need to be strong, and helping neighborhoods gain the resources they need in order to support families well.

- *Making Connections* focuses on three major types of "connections" that help families grow stronger and achieve what they want for their children. The first of these is probably the most important in most families' eyes: helping families connect to economic opportunities and to jobs that provide income, assets, and an economic future. But this type of connection is unlikely without two others: strong connections to the social networks of kin, neighborhood groups and other informal ties that sustain families when times get tough, and to high quality, effective services and supports that help families reach their goals.

- *Making Connections* focuses on improving results for children and families in tough neighborhoods. Core results that *Making Connections* communities are mobilizing around include:

  - Families have increased earnings and income
  - Families have increased levels of assets

- Families, youth and neighborhoods increase their participation in civic life
- Families and neighborhoods have strong informal supports and networks
- Families have access to quality services and supports that work for them
- Children are healthy and ready to succeed in school.

Making Connections—**Denver** is working with four low-income neighborhoods: Cole, Sun Valley, La Alma/Lincoln Park and Baker. The population in these neighborhoods is highly diverse, including white, African-American, Latino (predominantly Mexican) and Asian (predominantly Vietnamese) residents. Bringing together people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds is a challenge anywhere. Yet, MC-D has succeeded in mobilizing and bringing residents from all these groups together in activities that range from creating a neighborhood action plan that outlines work they want to accomplish in several areas, to fighting for environmental justice, and forming parent organizing committees to improve their children's education.

Partners and Structure

Making Connections—Denver started over three years ago with a community organizing process to bring residents and organizations together to work in partnership, bringing their collective resources to bear on behalf of a community-driven agenda.

Historically, there were a number of comprehensive change initiatives in Denver that made important investments and provided building capacity in the city but these initiatives also had created their own set of tensions. One particular tension was the feeling among local people that their voices were not central in the design, development and implementation of these initiatives. MC-D, therefore, faced the added burden of rebuilding the trust of the community. Residents, in particular, were cautions about one more set of outsiders coming in with a vision of what was needed that wasn't informed by those who lived there. In order to build trust and "buy-in" from the community, the initiative had to demonstrate that it was willing to come into the project with a sense of flexibility and with a learning spirit.

As documented in *Building Leadership: Approaches and Strategies in Making Connections Communities*, (AECF 2003) the process of engaging resident leaders in Denver began with open-ended conversations with the community with no other strategy or goal other than to begin the process of meeting families and listening to their concerns and vision for the community. This approach was guided by the vision of starting with

families, not with systems. MC-D records all one–to-ones meetings and meetings of five or more persons. As of April 2003, more than 2,000 residents had participated in MC-D.

In each neighborhood, residents and neighborhood organizations have formed the following neighborhood coalitions to organize around issues that affect their lives.

- In Cole, members of the Cole Neighborhood Organizing Alliance have worked together to address public safety, restorative justice, education reform, and environmental safety and clean up.

- In Sun Valley, members of the Sun Valley Coalition have tackled affordable housing through the development of a land trust, public safety and beautification, digital divide issues, and early childhood learning.

- In La Alma/Lincoln Park and Baker, the Westside Vision Coalition has addressed neighborhood safety and beautification, leadership development in the public housing community, and is working on the creation of a 'mercado' (marketplace).

In addition to the neighborhood coalitions, there are over 20 local organizing and parent organizing committees in schools and throughout the four MC-D neighborhoods working to improve education, safety, health, and economic opportunities for families and children.

MC-D has also formed a Partners Group that helps bring institutions and agency resources to the initiative. The group includes representatives from local, state, and federal government agencies, foundations, and various nonprofit organizations. The partners group plans to develop, within the next couple of years, pilot projects that address systems change strategies in the areas of education, juvenile justice, child welfare, and family economic success.

Some partner organizations are rethinking their practices and the services they offer to be consistent with the principles that guide *Making Connections*. They now partner with residents, provide them with opportunities to have a say in what kinds of services are offered and help to move forward the community's own agenda. For example, breaking away from its organizational culture, Denver's Regional Transportation District—a large public entity—is working very closely with a coalition of community residents and organizations in the Alma/Lincoln Park neighborhood to decide how to develop a plot of land, and, seriously exploring an idea that came directly from the residents to build a mercado—or marketplace.

Guiding Principles

Early in 2001, MC-D embarked on a process to identify benchmarks by which they would hold themselves accountable. From this process grew a powerful set of guiding principles organized around three fundamental beliefs: the promotion of human dignity, the equalization of power, and the transformation of organizations and institutions (see box on next page)

Strategies and Tools

The engine that drives MC-D is community organizing. Several powerful strategies have been developed and used successfully for engaging residents in results-based work.

➤ **STORY CIRCLES**, an adaptation from a theater-based model using the age-old tradition of storytelling, have proven to be a powerful tool for:

- Recovering personal and neighborhood histories;
- Identifying and engaging a pool of potential community leaders;
- Documenting changes in community;
- Bridging cultures to understand the historical roots of divisions; and
- Building a community of neighbors.

Typically consisting of groups of 10 –12 residents, story circles are safe places for residents to speak and be heard, to build relationships, and to develop a common agenda on shared concerns. Out of the story circles also come strategies for dealing with the issues. Some 500 residents participated in story circles in 2002 alone. The circles were held in a variety of community locations, including schools, nonprofit agencies and public housing residences.

Story circles are entirely resident driven: the creators, trainers, and facilitators are all residents, including youth. Initially developed by resident members of the CLN to address the social isolation of residents living in the highly mobile and public housing that dominates the neighborhoods, story circles have evolved into strategic projects helping to organize residents on issues identified during the story circles. (See section on Tools for the Story Circle Tool Kit produced by the CLN.)

GUIDING PRINCIPLES *OF MAKING CONNECTIONS*—DENVER

1. **We believe in the promotion of human dignity.**

   Communities will promote human dignity and respect, protect basic human rights, and prevent exploitation of its members.

   We commit to:

   - Strengthen families' right to raise their children without fear, intimidation, or humiliation based on identity or poverty.

   - Formulate resident agendas that promote dignity and basic human rights, and prevent and address exploitation.

   - Organize residents and others to work together across racial, cultural, age, gender, language, class and other boundaries.

   - Strengthen authentic, deep relationships that are safe and supportive of personal and community healing.

2. **We believe in equalization of power.**

   Residents will accumulate and express collective, inclusive and responsible power for the improvement of their families and communities.

   We commit to:

   - Create opportunities for residents and other leaders to develop, practice and refine leadership skills and capacities.

   - Constantly broaden and deepen resident involvement.

   - Acknowledge the importance of learning, of having opportunities to learn, and of honoring the different learning styles reflected in the community, to achieving community change.

   - Strategically collect and use data and other information for planning and decision making.

- Insist that resident organizations are democratically controlled.

- Build a sustainable, organized resident power base.

- Formulate a resident agenda that measurably improves the quality of life for families and children in multiple ways.

3. **We believe in transformed organizations and institutions.**

Residents will affect transformative and sustainable change in community organizations, public and private institutions, and their communities.

We commit to:

- Insist upon the responsible use of power to influence and support the communities' agendas.

- Provide opportunities to build sustainable relationships between families, and between families and the organizations that serve them.

- Support resident access to and ability to influence the decision-making processes of organizations and institutions that affect their families' economic and social well-being.

- Increase or redirect public and private resources to reflect resident priorities.

- Promote the primacy of resident power in matters affecting their communities.

➤ **BLOCK PARTIES** are another strategy that has been recognized as a very positive and powerful tool for people to connect on their blocks to build stronger, safer and more cohesive communities. With the support of the CLN, one of the residents developed a block party tool kit to share her knowledge and experience so that others are able organize a block party in their own neighborhoods. The tool kit contains guidelines for planning a block party, budgeting information, fundraising ideas, sample forms like invitations and flyers, and even the form request for street closure required by the city of Denver.

> **ONE-ON-ONE VISITS** are another tool that has proven very effective in engaging and mobilizing residents around issues of common concern. The data collected to date show that 1,367 individuals have been engaged through one-on ones. "One-on-ones" have been a useful tool for engaging new immigrants, especially many monolingual Spanish-speaking families. In the Westside, for example, the one-on-one visits with Latino families encouraged many of them to participate in the action planning retreat, the Mercado meetings, the neighborhood clean up and other activities.

One-on-ones are a key tool in mobilizing parents in the Transforming Schools Initiative (formerly known as the Northeast Denver Parents Organizing in Education or NEDPOE). Organizers interview parents to find out what issues parents are most concerned about, and then invite them to attend the parent organizing meetings. Approximately 280 parents have joined parent organizing committees at seven elementary and middle schools within the Manual High School feeder pattern. In 2002, NEDPOE held four public meetings, known as "actions", with officials and hundreds of parents, Spanish and English-speaking, attending each one.

The Community Learning Network

The Community Learning Network (CLN) is the data and information arm of the initiative. It supports the organizing efforts by gathering information that is useful to the community, and assists residents in their own data gathering. The CLN is led by a group of 12 residents from each of the four neighborhoods. The group has decision-making power over both funds and processes. It has control over initiative's funds that they sub-grant to other resident leaders or community partners, and decides what research gets done to support MC-D, as well as who does it.

The CLN work is guided by principles for community-driven research (see box on next page) consistent with the MC-D guiding principles. The principles serve as a signal that the initiative is truly resident-driven, as well as a vehicle to influence how other community change efforts in the city perceive the relationships they build with residents.

CLN GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR COMMUNITY-DRIVEN RESEARCH

1. Research and evaluation projects must address the needs of the community as identified and prioritized by the community itself. Projects should actively incorporate ongoing organizing and community-building efforts in the community in the design, implementation, and follow-up actions or activities.

2. Residents should be in decision-making roles in the design and implementation of the research or evaluation project. These roles might include selection of contract personnel or organization to carry out the activities, approval of tools or instruments being developed on behalf of community, decisions about how to enter and engage the community, and decisions about when, what and how to communicate the projects and lessons learned back to community.

3. To avoid duplication, competition, or exploitation of community residents, all projects should build upon and learn from other research projects already completed or underway in the same community.

4. When paid opportunities are made available, first priority should go to residents of the same neighborhood who have or can develop the necessary skills and capacities to competently carry out the work.

5. As community members are investing significant amounts of unpaid time in efforts to improve their community, contract personnel or organizations should be prepared to make some commitment of time or other resource, without the expectation of payment, as a condition of their grant or contract.

6. Projects must respect and address the socio-economic, cultural and family needs of the community including, providing opportunities at times convenient to the community, translating all materials or public meetings into the primary languages spoken in the community, and promoting participation by providing for the needs of family members such as child care.

7. All research and evaluation projects should have, as a core component, the building of new knowledge or skills among residents or other community stakeholders who can then apply those skills in an ongoing way for the improvement of their community.

8. The knowledge gained through the research or evaluation project must be communicated back to the larger community including, but not limited to, those who participated in the research or evaluation project.

9. Protecting for confidentiality, all data, instruments, materials, and other tools developed should remain the property of the community to use, as they see fit, without cost or other barrier.

Goals

The goals of the network are to:

1. **Collect data and information about the four *Making Connections* neighborhoods.** To achieve this goal, the CLN analyzes and releases data from the data warehouse, the 2000 Census, the Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF) household survey and other sources. It also sponsors a number of neighborhood data collection efforts, such as neighborhood or issue specific surveys, focus groups or other community dialogues.

2. **Capture the lessons learned from the work of *Making Connections*.** For example, the CLN created the project diary and other data collection tools to track participation and progress of MC-D. It created the Flexible Evaluation Fund, a grant pool providing small grants to MC-D partner organizations or coalitions to implement their own evaluation and research projects. More recently, the CLN is working to develop and implement the MC-D local evaluation.

3. **Build the skills and abilities of residents to be leaders in their communities.** To achieve this goal, the CLN administers funds allowing community leaders and partners to attend training or participate in other skill-building activities. For example, it has sponsored community leaders to attend grant writing and other training workshops in areas such as resident leadership facilitation and training of trainers.

4. **Create and incubate new models and new tools to support community change.** In addition to developing a state of the art website for the initiative that has materials in the three predominant languages in the community (English, Spanish and Vietnamese), resident members of the CLN have created powerful tools for resident engagement such as story circles and block parties, and have developed

tool kits available in the MC-D website so that other residents and communities can adapt and use those tools in their particular communities.

(www.makingconnectionsdenver.org/Documents/StoryCircleToolkit)

Results

Since its creation, the CLN has supported new research and data collection efforts in the MC-D neighborhoods, released fact sheets and reports, held community forums, built new tools, developed or sponsored training and other skill-building opportunities for residents, and informed the development of a local evaluation strategy for the initiative. Examples of concrete accomplishments include:

- Through their work to address the digital divide, they built the MC-D website, (www.makingconnectionsdenver.org) which is produced in English, Spanish and has many postings in Vietnamese.

- They implemented the first ever comprehensive assessment of technology access and resources in their neighborhoods.

- They developed a highly successful Story Circle model, engaging hundreds of youth and adults in a variety of entirely resident created and controlled Story Circle projects, now operating in public housing complexes, schools, and throughout the *Making Connection'* neighborhoods.

- They released multilingual fact sheets that included 2000 Census data for each of the neighborhoods.

- They developed a small grants program to support other residents in data-gathering projects.

Resources and Support

➤ Since it inception, the primary role of *Making Connections* in Denver has been to help residents in each of the neighborhoods come together and organize around issues that affect their lives. The support provided by the initiative includes:

- Funding the continued organizing of these groups, primarily by paying the salaries of community organizers.

- Funding and garnering funding from other partners to support the specific projects and activities that develop out of the neighborhood organizing.

- Providing technical assistance to the people involved.

- Providing administrative support for the initiative, including managing the finances and communications, as well as general office-type support.

➤ The research staff of The Piton Foundation, one of the key *Making Connections –* Denver partners, provides technical assistance to the Community Learning Network.

Who to Contact

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V. TOOLS FOR ENGAGING RESIDENTS

Assessment: Principles and Beliefs — Tool.01

A community-adapted assessment for rating strategies to engage residents. The qualifiers focus on empowerment, respect, responsibility, and involvement. Use this assessment to discover how well you are doing and in what areas you need to improve.

Strategy: Asset Mapping — Tool.02

An information gathering process carried out by residents to uncover a community's unique gifts and potential. The process turns residents' attention from a deficit viewpoint to the assets within their community. The data collected using this approach are critical to developing targeted strategies for improving results.

Strategy: Block Party — Tool.03

Guidelines and ideas for informally bringing neighbors together. Relationships that are developed can later translate to mutual support and neighborhood problem solving. Also includes a website address for a "Block Party Tool Kit."

Strategy: Community Website — Tool.04

A starting point for planning a community website. Includes characteristics of effective and user-friendly sites and an example showing how one community website is organized. Website technology, an effective communication strategy, connects residents with other residents, and with events and resources.

Strategy: Exchange Seminars — Tool.05

Activities and ways to use these large group meetings to foster information sharing and relationship building. Exchange seminars bring together residents from diverse groups to learn from each other's experiences with improving results.

Strategy: Family Circles — Tool.06

Steps for organizing and facilitating a series of family circles (also, referred to as "Neighborhood Circles," and similar to "Story Circles"). Includes examples and guidelines that have proven to be effective.

Strategy: Informal Meetings — Tool.07

Examples and guidelines for informal meetings. Use the examples as a jumping off point for your own creative ideas for engaging and mobilizing residents.

Strategy: More Formal Meetings

Examples and characteristics of various meeting formats and meeting organization techniques. Includes roundtable meetings, focus groups, a starter list of non-traditional roles for participants, and an assessment to rate how well your meeting engaged residents. (The assessment also may be used as a pre-meeting planning tool.)

Strategy: Role-Play

"How-to" steps for using role-play to gain insight about another's actions and perspective. Given an issue or scenario, players take on roles different from their own. Includes guidelines for getting the most from the role-play experience.

Strategy: Sticker Parade

A description and steps for this colorful information gathering process. Sticker parades are interactive and engaging, and a good way to display ideas visually. The input can be easily grouped and categorized.

Strategy: Story Circles

Similar to family circles, story circles present a process for bringing residents together to share opinions and discuss issues. Includes steps for facilitating the process, guidelines, and examples from communities who have successfully used this approach.

Strategy: Surveys

Basics about surveys with the underlying premise that residents need to be involved throughout the process. Includes when to involve residents, steps, guidelines, and community examples.

Checklist: What Do Families Want?

A community-developed list of qualities deemed important to families in the San Bernardo Collaborative in Chile. Use this checklist as a way to assess the underpinning qualities of your strategies and activities for engaging residents.

Checklist: Sustaining Resident Involvement

A list of ideas for keeping residents interested and involved with community work. The list is a starting point. Use it to develop and implement more specific strategies for your community.

Checklist: Preparing Residents for International Work

A planning checklist of ideas and considerations to ensure that residents from a variety of countries and diverse cultures make the most of the event and their international work. The checklist is organized into "before," "during," and "after" sections.

Results—How does this strategy help to mobilize the community to improve results?

This assessment tool gives you the opportunity to step back and see how you are doing. You may be engaging residents, but are you fostering their empowerment, accountability, and responsibility? Resident involvement must be meaningful if it is to be sustained over a long enough period of time to affect results.

Assessment Tool

Do your resident engagement strategies and interactions foster empowerment, respect, responsibility, and involvement? Use the following assessment to rate how well you have translated your principles and beliefs into your engagement strategies on a scale from 1-5 with one meaning "not at all" to five meaning "very much so."

Our engagement strategies…	1	2	3	4	5
Bring residents and others together across racial, cultural, age, gender, language, class and other boundaries.					
Strengthen authentic, deep relationships that are safe and supportive of personal and community healing.					
Create opportunities for residents to develop, practice, and refine leadership skills.					
Constantly broaden and deepen community involvement.					
Acknowledge the importance of learning and honor different learning styles.					
Formulate resident agendas that promote dignity and basic human rights, and prevent and address exploitation.					
Support residents' ability to access, take part in, and influence decision making.					
Promote the primacy of resident power in matters affecting their neighborhoods and communities.					

Key: 1 = Not at all; 2 = Not very well; 3 = Okay; 4 = Pretty well; 5 = Very much so

These principles and beliefs were taken in part from *Making Connections*-Denver Guiding Principles.

Results—How does this strategy mobilize the community to improve results?

Every community has a unique combination of assets upon which to build its future.

* ❖ Every resident has gifts and skills.
* ❖ Every neighborhood has informal associations.
* ❖ Every community has formal institutions.

Often deficits in disadvantaged communities are so noticeable that residents fail to see the community's value and power. "Asset mapping" changes this mindset by turning residents' attention to the "plus side"—the community's unique gifts, no matter the circumstances. This is a critical beginning step toward understanding that a community _does_ have the potential to make a difference.

Purpose—How does asset mapping engage residents?

* ❖ Residents are valuable "mappers:"
  * ◆ They know the neighborhood and neighbors recognize them.
  * ◆ They speak the language of their neighbors.

* ❖ The asset mapping process:
  * ◆ Uncovers residents' gifts and skills, including potential neighborhood leaders.
  * ◆ Mobilizes residents as they realize the value of their contributions.

Process—How does it work?

Asset mapping is something like a treasure hunt; "mappers" seek to uncover valuable neighborhood resources that may not be obvious.
* ❖ Conduct one-on-one interviews.
* ❖ Conduct telephone surveys.
* ❖ Discuss individual assets in small group and/or informal settings.
* ❖ Use a survey instrument.
* ❖ Check newspapers, local directories, and community associations.
* ❖ Talk with local shopkeepers, barbers, community service workers, faith leaders, librarians, parks and recreation staff.

* Probe beyond the "typical" institutions. Ask, for example, what other assets the local school provides?

Guidelines—What makes it effective?

* Use maps and graphics to show locations of assets.
* Organize findings into easy-to-understand summaries for residents and other community members.
* Be alert for "unexpected benefits" of asset mapping, e.g., residents taking on other leadership roles.
* If possible, place the data collected in a database that can be accessed by others.

Example: The San Bernardo Collaborative in Santiago, Chile

Among the first accomplishments of the San Bernardo Collaborative was the completion of a community resource map, which gave different stakeholders in the community an opportunity to learn about what each one was doing to support families in the target neighborhoods.

Example: Community Youth Mapping Project

A unique approach to gathering data was developed by the Center for Youth Development and Policy Research at the Academy for Educational Development (AED). The idea is to let youth discover and record data themselves. With the assistance of adults in the planning process, including training in team building, conflict resolution, and interviewing skills, youth "mappers" collected data about community resources. The information focused on assets for youth such as after-school activities, employment centers, teen centers, and drug and alcohol treatment centers. This information was entered into a first-of-its-kind database for youth services.

For More Information...

Refer to *Learning Guide 2: Setting a Community Agenda from the Building Capacity for Local Decisionmaking* series, Center for the Study of Social Policy.

Results—How does this strategy help to mobilize the community to improve results?

Block parties bring residents together in an informal, safe, and culturally responsive way. These gatherings allow for families and residents—including children and adults of all ages—to interact in a relaxed yet festive atmosphere.

Block parties are organized _for_ neighbors _by_ neighbors. The informal working relationships can easily become more formal working relationships when needed to address larger community issues. And, keep in mind, the creative problem-solving potential of an informal group of residents discussing an issue while good food is cooking on the grill!

Purpose—How do block parties engage residents?

Residents have opportunities to get to know each other in a casual, informal atmosphere without going far from their front door! Most block parties have food, games, music, and entertainment for residents of all ages.

Process—How do they work?

1. An individual or a small group initiates the planning.
2. Others are engaged to help with planning. Dates, time, and location are selected. Flyers and invitations are created and distributed.
3. Fundraising plans are implemented; grant money may be available.
4. Signatures are obtained for street closing and arrangements are made for blockade barriers.
5. On the day of the party, residents are asked to bring chairs, tables, grills, barbecue, and potluck dishes.

Guidelines—What makes them effective?

❖ The party should be visible and easy to access.
   • The best way to do that is by closing off the street to traffic and having the party in the street. This also makes the party public—it is open to everybody.
   • If the street cannot be closed, have the party in a series of front yards. Backyards do not have the same "feel" of including everybody.

- ❖ Have games with prizes for children and adults.
- ❖ Photograph the event.
- ❖ Invite police officers, neighborhood officials, shopkeepers, and/or firemen.

Example: *Making Connections*-Denver, Baker Neighborhood

Residents in *Making Connections* – Denver, Colorado (U.S.) are using block parties very effectively as a community organizing tool. Block parties have been recognized as a very positive and powerful way for people to connect on their blocks to build stronger, safer and more cohesive communities," said Suzanne Gruba, a long time resident of the Baker neighborhood. Suzanne, who has organized many block parties, also developed a block party tool kit with the support from the *Making Connection'* Community Learning Network.

The Block Party Tool Kit, available in the *Making Connections* – Denver website, consists of two sections: one for an individual organizing his or her own block party and another for someone organizing a neighborhood-wide event with several parties, like Gruba did in the Baker neighborhood in Denver.

For More Information...

Access the *Making Connections*-Denver website at:
http:\www.makingconnectionsdenver.org for the Block Party Tool Kit. The Tool Kit contains guidelines for planning a block party, budgeting, fundraising, and sample forms.

Results — How does this strategy mobilize the community to improve results?

Community websites give residents with access to computers and the Internet a place to obtain information, and if the website is engaging, opportunities to get involved with other residents through the site's interactive capabilities. Residents without access can visit libraries or resource centers. For individual residents, the very act of using this technology builds their marketable skills.

A community website is a far-reaching communication tool that presents one solution for residents who feel isolated. The website can be as simple as a place to announce community events, or it can grow into a means to link residents to both formal and informal community resources and supports.

Purpose — How do community websites engage residents?

The key purpose of many community websites is to provide information about community events and meetings. In addition, websites have the potential of engaging residents through forums and "online chats."

Process — How do they work?

1. Resident accesses the website via a browser.
2. Once at the website, the resident navigates the site, locating areas of interest.
3. If a forum is available, the resident can follow prompts to be able to contribute comments/questions and/or respond to comments/questions from other residents.

Guidelines — What makes them effective?

Effective and "user-friendly" websites are:
❖ Easy to access and easy to use.
❖ Excellent for referencing information through a series of links.
❖ Responsive to providing the information that the user is looking for.
❖ Not cluttered with too much text, too many fonts, distracting graphics.
❖ Not bogged down by complicated pictures/graphics that take a long time to load.

❖ Not frustrating because of navigation errors, or the user just "can't get back."

Example: *Making Connections*-**Denver**

Making Connections-Denver's website is for its four neighborhoods. The site is bilingual (English/Spanish) and has many documents available in Vietnamese.

This site is organized in the following manner:

1) The user sees a welcome page that prompts the user to select a neighborhood.

2) On the neighborhood page, the then can select from among three columns of information.

    A. Calendar and Events (left column)
    B. News and News Links (center column)
    C. Information Links (right column)

3) The user can access the forum for community comments and "chats" and the calendar of events by clicking the Calendar and Events column.

4) The user is asked, by way of a pop-up window, if he or she would like to subscribe to a neighborhood newsletter.

For More Information...

Review a number of websites, try them out, and see which are most effective for your needs. Visit the Annie E. Casey Foundation site at http:\\www.aecf.org and navigate to the *Making Connections* section. Once you select "Site Network," you will be shown a map. Select a *Making Connections* site. For example, the page about Denver provides a link to their website embedded in the text about the Denver neighborhoods.

Results—How does this strategy mobilize the community to improve results?

Much like the term, "exchange" implies, these gatherings provide opportunities for residents, who are actively engaged in their communities, to share strategies and experiences for improving results. Effective seminars bring together diverse groups so residents are introduced to ideas beyond their typical scope of reference.

Most often when the seminars are over, participants leave feeling stimulated and recharged for their work at home. They continue to remain in touch with other participants, and therefore, the process of sharing information and ideas is ongoing.

Purpose—How do exchange seminars engage residents?

Exchange seminars:

❖ Set and follow a resident agenda for the discussion of issues around engagement, mobilization, leadership, partnership, and ownership.

❖ Create an international network of resident groups who feel empowered by their exchange of experiences and views.

❖ Collect and develop a set of methods, approaches, programs, and capacity-building experiences.

Process—How do they work?

❖ Residents in the host community, each in turn, host the seminar.

❖ Costs are shared—the visiting groups pay for travel and the hosting group pays program costs.

❖ Each participating group decides the composition of the group with the condition that residents are in the majority.

❖ Residents set the agenda for the exchanges and discussions.

❖ A variety of events are planned to give participants opportunities to get to know each other in different settings.

❖ Typically, the exchanges take place over the weekend, from Friday noon to Sunday noon.

Guidelines—What makes them effective?

❖ A balance among the number of residents, workers, and officials in the delegation.

❖ A strong representation across the community, i.e., youth, residents from other ethnic or cultural backgrounds.

❖ A balance between more formal events/meetings and informal recreational activities.

- Formal events might include programs with general presentations, workshops based on given themes, visits to various communities, exercises to set priorities for the next exchange, and an overall evaluation.

- Informal activities might include receptions, dinners, musical and dance performances, ecumenical church services, visits to neighborhoods and community landmarks, time to explore the city.

❖ Activities for gathering and prioritizing issues, e.g. a "Sticker Parade."

❖ Discussion about ways residents-participants can continue to share ideas after the seminar is over.

Example: International Resident Exchange Seminars

An ongoing exchange of resident groups from Portsmouth, Groningen, and Waterford has proven to be an effective way for these communities to share developments related to results-based accountability with an emphasis on resident involvement. A "three-leg" exchange took place starting with the first seminar in Portsmouth (October 2001), a second seminar in Groningen (April 2002) and a third seminar in Waterford (October 2002). Discussion and planning from one seminar set the agenda for the next.

The success of these exchange seminars can be summed up by the remarks from one of the residents-participants:

The opportunity to participate in the International Exchange has given local residents a flavor of life outside Portsmouth. It has encouraged them to look at wider issues and to realize that all too often communities have similar, if not identical, problems and that cannot be solved without a joint effort and real community involvement.

For More Information...

Refer to the report *International Resident Exchange Seminars* (International Initiative for Children, Youth and Families, 2002)

Family Circles, sometimes called "Neighborhood Circles," grew from a study circle approach to address a critical public issue, such as race relations, education, or health care. Family Circles build on this model, engaging residents in facilitated discussions and "calls to action" related to their neighborhoods.

Results—How does this strategy mobilize the community to improve results?

A Family Circle generates energy, connections, and support within a small group. Using a structured approach, Family Circles encourage dialogue and interaction among those most affected by community issues—residents!

Residents share their opinions and exchange ideas about resources. Their voices are heard and valued; confidence is built. With this foundation, it is likely that the positive effects of this small group will expand to the broader community.

Purpose—How do Family Circles engage residents?

Family Circles:

❖ Give residents a voice. Residents are listened to, which translates into being valued and respected.

❖ Help residents find resources for themselves and their children as connections are made among neighbors.

❖ Give residents the initiative to take action. Residents have support; they know that others will be backing them up.

❖ Build social networks and give residents opportunities to get to know each other.

❖ Offer new opportunities as participation opens new doors and leads to new relationships.

❖ Easily adapt to local interests and concerns.

Process—How do they work?

❖ Typically, 8-12 residents gather for two hours weekly in the evening for four weeks.

❖ The circle is convened by a neutral facilitator(s) in a safe location.

❖ Residents and their children socialize over a light meal. Afterward, the adults join the discussion circle while the children play.

❖ The facilitator(s) pose questions, such as:
- What is our neighborhood like for children and families?
- What do families face in our neighborhood?
- How can we make our neighborhood a better place for children and families?
- How can we make a difference—what can we do?

❖ A celebration is held when the series of circles is complete.

Guidelines—What makes them effective?

❖ Preserving the key elements of the circles: neutral facilitator; multiple sessions; use of a guide for discussion questions; safe gathering place; food and childcare; and celebration event.

❖ Being flexible and supporting neighborhood sponsors.

❖ Using a team of two facilitators; providing them with the skills and resources to do the job effectively.

❖ Being ready to support residents' action priorities.

Example: Des Moines Neighborhood Circles and Seattle Study Circles

Des Moines uses an outreach approach to recruit neighborhood sponsors including schools, places of worship, service agencies, neighborhood associations, and refugee agencies. Recognizing the growing immigrant and refugee population, Des Moines focused on recruiting efforts in these areas. The result, as of June 2001, was more than 140 residents involved in Family Circles.

In Seattle, the circles also involved immigrant and refugee groups. Recognizing their unique concerns, the study circles were an attempt to learn more about what family strengthening meant to each ethic group. The circles met as needed and had access to a pool of flexible dollars to be spent on family strengthening activities. One resident noted, *"...when people come together, even if they are from different backgrounds, the end product is for one goal. Everyone wants a safe, healthy family and society as a whole."*

For More Information...

A Discussion Guide for questions: *Building Strong Neighborhoods for Families and Children.*

Results—How does this strategy mobilize the community to improve results?

Formal meetings evoke the image of rules and procedures; informal meetings have a sense of spontaneity. Which format is best suited to "thinking outside the box," or beyond the typical solutions to issues? The answer to this question is obvious.

Along with the potential for creative problem solving, informal meetings bring residents together, particularly residents who are unaccustomed to meetings, or find them distasteful. An ongoing coffee break, front (or back) door chats, casually encourage residents to move beyond their own household into the neighborhood and the larger community.

Purpose—How do they engage residents?

With informal meetings:
❖ Residents are in a well-know environment so it is easier to talk freely.
❖ Some residents meet each other for the first time; relationships are formed.
❖ Residents' motivation to work together cooperatively is strengthened.

Process—How do they work?

Informal meetings emerge in a variety of forms, such as:
❖ Morning gatherings over coffee in the neighborhood.
❖ Doorway talks—announcing the informal meetings in advance; then visiting residents and inviting them to discuss current concerns.

Guidelines—What makes them effective?

❖ In the neighborhood.
❖ Inclusive, everyone is invited.
❖ Open or no agenda, although the meeting may be around a certain topic.
❖ Stimulating with open communication among all parties.
❖ Showing residents what happened to the information gathered.

Example: Hoogezand-Sappemeer, The Netherlands

In some neighborhoods that were up for renewal, "doorway talks" were held to hear residents' views. A letter providing information about the intention of the visits was sent in advance, and one hall at a time, people were invited to informal meetings. The result of the meeting was that of a number of topics important to residents surfaced as a result of these meetings. After the series of meetings, residents' wishes and needs were mapped out, and a report was prepared to share on the residents' ideas with the appropriate institutions problems.

Example: Portsmouth, England, United Kingdom

Street surveys have been one of the most effective approaches to resident involvement taken by local workers in Paulsgrove and Wymering, Portsmouth. Standing outside pubs, cafes, and shops, a street survey facilitates a discussion about what is happening in the community among local residents. They have used this approach effectively, not only get residents' views but to invite them to attend meetings and "buddy people up' to encourage their involvement in efforts to revitalize the neighborhood.

Results—How does this strategy mobilize the community to improve results?

Often, meetings need to be more formal to accomplish specific tasks. However, the format for these meetings can be purposefully designed to engage and mobilize residents in community work. The key is to organize the meeting room, the agenda, the decision-making processes, and the roles residents assume, in a way that gives each meeting participant an equal voice. Shared responsibility and accountability go hand-in-hand toward affecting results.

Round Table Meetings

- ❖ Each participant has equal standing.
- ❖ Mix residents, community organizers, and high-level officials at one table.
- ❖ Provide open-ended discussion questions.
- ❖ Use a round-robin approach for sharing ideas.
- ❖ Each participant has the option to "pass."

Focus Groups

Characteristics of focus groups:
- ❖ Gathers opinions or perspectives on various topics. Originally, focus groups were used for marketing purposes, bringing together a group of typical users for a new product.
- ❖ 8-10 participants, usually a group that shares a common characteristic, e.g., youth, residents, parents with preschool children.
- ❖ Uses facilitator; records comments.
- ❖ Open-ended questions are posed. Participants respond in turn.

Non-Traditional Roles

Establish non-traditional roles for meeting participants, rather than "president," "treasurer," etc.
- ❖ Facilitator or moderator who moves the agenda along.
- ❖ Timekeeper who keeps track of agreed upon time for discussing each issue.
- ❖ Doorkeeper who greets participants and helps latecomers catch up.

❖ Peacekeeper who reminds the group of common goals when tempers flare, or celebrates when things are going well.

Example—

A resident that wants to know what to expect before a meeting asks questions such as the following:

Where and when is the meeting?
Who will be there? Will I be the only parent in a room of professionals?
What is my role? Why was I invited? What am I supposed to wear? How do I find out about reimbursement or other supports for attending?

For more information...

Refer to the six Learning Guides in the *Building Capacity for Local Decisionmaking* series, Center for the Study of Social Policy, especially *Learning Guide 2: Working with Members* and *Learning Guide 3: Setting a Community Agenda.*

Strategy: More Formal Meetings (Continued)

Assessment

Use the following table to rate your meeting. How interactive was it? How well did it engage residents in the meeting process? Note: You may also want to use the checklist *before* the meeting to ensure that your planning touched on all aspects of an effective meeting.

Rate each statement using the following scale:

Scale: 1 = Not at all; 2 = Not very well; 3 = Okay; 4 = Pretty well; 5 = Very much so

How engaging was our meeting?	1	2	3	4	5
The invitation clearly stated the meeting's purpose and logistics (where, when, how long).					
Our invitation was personable. (e.g., a phone call, door-to-door invitation).					
The meeting place was comfortable and familiar to residents, preferably in the neighborhood.					
Roles for residents encouraged and supported active participation.					
We had nametags and used creative ways to help residents identify other meeting participants.					
The meeting agenda was resident-driven.					
We had refreshments and time for socializing.					
We made plans for children, transportation, and special needs for people with disabilities.					
Differences of opinion were nurtured and respected.					
There was a climate of openness; residents seemed to be able to speak freely.					
The starting and ending time for the meeting was honored.					
We planned "next steps" and/or discussed how the information gathered in this meeting would be used.					

Results—How does this strategy help to mobilize the community to improve results?

Role-play, sometimes referred to as "theater," allows a resident to walk in another person's shoes. This strategy can be used in a variety of settings and problem-solving situations, helping all parties gain insight about each other's perspectives.

This greater understanding of issues and people's actions can help residents to develop relevant and meaningful ways to engage others, and to develop effective strategies for improving results.

Purpose—How does role-play engage residents?

Role-play engages residents by:
❖ Bringing issues and questions out into the open.
❖ By allowing one person to "take on" another person's problems.
❖ Bringing up viewpoints that were never considered.
❖ Encouraging new forms of cooperation.

Process—How does it work?

1. A moderator or a facilitator guides the process.
2. A topic is presented, e.g., planning a neighborhood park.
3. Roles are designated, e.g., a resident may assume the role of the city council member, and a city council member may assume the role of a resident. There could be a role for everyone involved associated with the park.
4. A scenario is given to start the dialogue, e.g., *Plans for our new park are stalled because this part of the budget did not pass. What are our next steps?*
5. Players "act out" the scenario staying in their designated roles.
6. Observers watch the interaction.
7. After a period of time, players come out of their roles; everyone debriefs the experience.
8. Players tell how they felt in their role. Were they able to see another perspective?
9. Observers present their insights.

Strategy: Role-Play (Continued)

Guidelines—What makes it effective?

- ❖ Everyone should have something to do—either players or observers.
- ❖ Maintain a relaxed and playful atmosphere.
- ❖ There may be a series of role-plays with participants taking turns as players or observers.
- ❖ Observers may need prompting, or something to look for.
- ❖ Document insights, either with audiotape or by having a person list insights on chart paper.
- ❖ Always debrief, or discuss, the experience after the role-play.

Example: Nazareth, Israel

Representatives of municipal departments, along with leaders of services in the city, gathered in the office of the director manager of the municipality. Each member had to take on an additional role and suggest what he or she would like to see as success for the issue of unemployment. By taking on new roles, and therefore new perspectives, the directors became very creative. Many original ideas evolved from this exercise.

A "Sticker Parade" uses a wonderful assortment of notes with gummed backing to collect information from residents. This approach, referred to by a variety of different terms, visually organizes preferences and ideas. This instant feedback gives residents a quick view of the information gathered.

Results—How does this strategy help to mobilize the community to improve results?

A sticker parade is an information gathering process that capitalizes on resident-participants' input. It is high-energy and maximum involvement, yet at the same time, participants contribute when they are ready.

The question posed to the group can vary—it may be simple or complex. In the end, ideas jump-start other ideas, along with a visual representation of the input.

Purpose—How do Sticker Parades engage residents?

❖ Each resident gets involved with the activity at his or her own pace and without conditions to the number of ideas contributed. (Some residents may only add one "sticker," while another may contribute many "stickers.")
❖ Residents build upon each other's ideas and contributions.
❖ Momentum and interaction build as the "parade" unfolds.

Process—How do they work?

1. A question is posed to the group.
2. Each resident writes responses, one response per "sticker," and places it by the question.
3. Afterwards, responses may be sorted and organized into subtopics for each question.

   Variations:
   • Given a posted list of concerns, residents prioritize the importance of a concern by posting a "sticker" of a given color next to the concern.
   • Given a timeline of events, each resident posts "stickers" with what needs to be addressed within a particular timeframe.

Guidelines—What makes them effective?

* ❖ Selecting "stickers" of different sizes, shapes and colors for a specific purpose, e.g., colors for priority (most important...least important), many colors for a "parade" effect, large notes for sentences or phrases, smaller notes for one or two words.
* ❖ Having an open physical space so residents can move around freely and interact throughout the activity.

Example: International Residents' Exchange Seminars

A Sticker Parade is a central activity of the international residents' exchange seminars* The "parade" is used to shape the agenda for the next seminar. At the final seminar session, each participant is invited to respond to questions. Responses are stuck on a board underneath the posted questions using "sticker" notes in a variety of colors. At one seminar, more than 500 notes provided vibrant proof of residents' active involvement! The responses were sorted into subject groups, the five most important actions/issues were identified. This information was used to develop the program for the next seminar.

Questions from the first seminar:

* How do residents achieve real influence?
* What problems and barriers do residents face?
* How do they overcome these?

More information about these exchanges is found in the report *International Resident Exchange Seminars* (International Initiative for Children, Youth and Families, 2002) by Thea Meinema, Senior Adviser with the Netherlands Institute for Care and Welfare.

Results—How does this strategy help to mobilize the community to improve results?

"Story circles" is a structured approach that uses the age-old tradition of storytelling as a way to bring people together, build relationships, and engage residents in result-based work. People gather in small groups, and with the guidance of a trained facilitator, discuss opinions around a targeted theme. The process ends with "a call to action."

Purpose—How do Story Circles engage residents?

Through facilitated interaction, Story Circles:
❖ Increase communication among residents.
❖ Recover personal and neighborhood histories.
❖ Build relationships and understanding.
❖ Identify issues that affect residents, families, youth, and children.
❖ Build a pool of potential community leaders.
❖ Document changes in the community.
❖ Bridge cultures to understand historical roots of divisions.
❖ Connect residents to organizing efforts to improve results.
❖ Create a stronger sense of community.

Process—How do they work?

❖ Typically, a Story Circle is comprised of 10-12 residents.
❖ A Story Circle session takes about 60-90 minutes.
❖ There are five parts to a Story Circle:
1. Introduction: Facilitator introduces him or herself and presents guidelines.
2. Questions:
   ▪ Warm-Up Question(s): Residents introduce themselves and give brief responses to the question(s). A sense of trust and respect is established.
   ▪ Focus Questions: These questions target a specific theme, concern, or issue, e.g., "If you could change one thing in the community today, what would you change?"
3. Reflection: Residents consider all the comments and answers to questions.

4. Call to Action: The group is asked to formulate solutions to the issues that were raised.

5. Closing: Residents are thanked; announcements are made.

Guidelines — What makes them effective?

❖ Story Circles are resident-driven—trainers and facilitators are all residents, including youth.

❖ Residents sit in a circle—all are equal partners.

❖ Respect is demonstrated through:
  - Minimizing distractions.
  - Not leaving the circle once it has started.
  - Practicing active listening and making eye contact.
  - Being non-judgmental.
  - Not interrupting when someone is speaking.
  - Understanding that everyone's time is valuable.
  - Maintaining confidentiality of the stories.

❖ The facilitator will give a certain amount of time to each question. There is a timekeeper.

❖ Residents can "pass" but will also have another chance to talk after everyone else has a turn.

❖ Session will be audiotaped for documentation purposes, but residents can request the tape to be turned off for portions of stories.

Example: *Making Connections*—Denver

Story Circles were initially developed by resident members of the Community Learning Network (CLN)—the data and information arm of the *Making Connections*-Denver Initiative in Colorado, U.S. The Story Circle strategy is a tool that creates a safe opportunity for residents to be heard, build relationships, and develop a common agenda on shared concerns. Over 500 residents participated in Story Circles in 2002!

For More Information...

Access the *Making Connections*-Denver website at:
http:\\www.makingconnectionsdenver.org. In the right-hand column, "More Information," click on Community Learning Network. Look for the Story Circles Tool Kit.

Results — How does this strategy help to mobilize the community to improve results?

Surveys come in many different forms, yet they all have the same general purpose — gathering information. However, surveys can do more than collect data; they can involve residents in the process of designing, collecting, compiling, and interpreting. This winning combination of community data plus residents playing key roles is critical to improving results.

Purpose — How do surveys engage residents?

The underlying attitude about surveys and collecting data will affect how much surveys involve residents. If a survey is viewed simply as "getting something from somebody," it will not be as engaging as "partnering to accomplish something." To make the most of engaging residents, include them in:

❖ Developing the survey items.
❖ Collecting the information.
❖ Interpreting the data collected.
❖ Reporting the results.
❖ Making decisions about how the data is used.

Process — How do they work?

1. Clarify the goal or the purpose of the survey. What do you want to know?
2. Determine the questions that will give you the information to help you answer that question.
3. Plan the survey format and how the information will be collected.
4. Collect the information.
5. Compile and analyze the information.
6. Report the findings.

Strategy: Surveys (Continued)

Guidelines—What makes them effective?

Having a small group of residents "try-out," or work with developing the survey questions. The language needs to be clear and understandable to residents.

- ❖ Selecting an approach that works with the audience for the survey. Ask, what will work best (telephone survey; door-to-door; e-mail; table outside a shopping center)?
- ❖ Reporting the findings in straightforward language. Consider a poster-like format.

Example: Ballybeg Community Development Project

In 1996, the Community Development Project in the Ballybeg Estate of Waterford, Ireland, launched a community-based action research project—On the Way to Work—to address the problem of very high unemployment in the area. Responses from Ballybeg residents were obtained by means of a household survey, which was administered by a group of locally unemployed people who were trained in fieldwork methods. A total of 110 households were involved in the research. The survey provided information about the characteristics, obstacles, needs and interests of unemployed people in the community, and informed decisions about ways to support unemployed residents resulting in the establishment of the Key Project, a special project to take action on this issue.

Example: Caring Community Project in Israel

Three schools were part of this pilot project: (1) the Weizman school in Tel-Aviv-Jaffa, (2) the Gilo school in Jerusalem, and (3) the Um Tuba school in Jerusalem. In the Weizman and Gilo Schools, parent surveys were used to learn more about the needs of the community, especially because there were almost no data at the neighborhood level. Issues were identified, highlighting concerns about violence and support for families. As a result, programs are now being developed to address some of these needs. There still remains, however, the challenge of involving more residents and reaching agreement on outcomes and measures.

Results—How does this checklist help to mobilize the community to improve results?

This checklist was developed by a group of community leaders representing families in the San Bernardo Collaborative in Chile. The items on the list were noted by these families to be important to them and important to their involvement with community work. When you review the list, you will notice that these qualities are universal to most groups of residents.

Use this checklist to help ensure that your strategies and activities have the qualities that engage residents. Use the blank spaces for additional items from residents in your community.

On a Personal Level	
	A sense of permanency in relationships
	Being welcomed and their participation recognized
	Opportunities for personal development
	Being able to trust others
For their Families	
	Being able to define goals to work toward
	Opportunities to strengthen employment
	A sense of belonging for the family within the community
	Access to cultural activities
With Regard to the Community	
	A sense of identity and belonging in the community
	A vision of what is desired for the community

On How the Work is Accomplished	
	Participation in defining the content and context
	Improvement in the quality of meetings
	Development and capacity-building opportunities
	Continuity in actions and strategies
Related to Leadership Development	
	Support for their leadership development
	Opportunities for personal growth and self-sufficiency

Results—How can this list help to mobilize the community to improve results?

Community work needs attention and involvement over time. Once residents are involved, how is their interest sustained? The following checklist is a compilation of ideas. Discuss these ideas with residents and add to the list. Then use the list to develop and implement strategies to sustain residents' contributions.

Once residents are involved with community work, how is their interest sustained in the long run? Use the following checklist as a jumping off point for developing and implementing strategies to sustain residents' contributions.

✓	Ideas for Sustaining Involvement
	Build trust between residents, and between higher-level organizational leaders.
	Become aware of residents' motivation or self-interest. Why are residents involved? Nurture these needs.
	Avoid isolation; build neighborhood and community networks—forums for sharing ideas and "what works."
	Include one-on-one as well as large group networking and exchanges.
	Recognize that there are different learning curves. New ways of working require new and different levels of understanding, knowledge, and skills.
	Recruit men and youth, as well as women for volunteer work.
	Develop leadership skills and build capacity. Consider a variety of opportunities, e.g., mentoring, workshops, and seminars.
	Supply practical support, e.g., help with childcare, transportation, and technology.
	Provide supports and strategies for taking care of self, stress, and demands.
	Recognize and honor accomplishments, even small wins. Celebrate!

Results—How does this checklist help to mobilize the community to improve results?

Exchanges among residents from a variety of countries and across diverse cultures are invaluable. Consider the impact of sharing ideas, as well as the realization that communities around the world are all interested in the same fundamental results for their communities.

Yet, for residents' experiences to have a lasting impact—one that will affect strategies back in their communities—there needs to be careful planning to make sure that mix-ups do not overshadow the positive aspects of the events.

Various organizations, such as the United Nations, bring people together from different countries to address global issues. This exchange usually involves high-level policy makers and is often "business as usual." Bringing together residents from different countries, however, is equally as valuable, yet may require careful considerations to help them get the most from this experience.

Use this checklist as you plan for supporting residents before, during, and after the event.

✓	Before the Event, help residents...
	Document their community strategies in order to share them at the event.
	Obtain visas and make travel arrangements.
	Get information on expected weather and the kind of clothes they need to bring.
	Get the supports they need to have in place at home so they can travel.
	During the Event...
	Ensure that residents are fully included in all activities.
	Provide information on international calling and local transportation.
	Have key terms available in different languages.
	Avoid jargon that may exclude residents or may not translate well.

	Show or demonstrate strategies, rather than simply talk about them.
	Acknowledge and highlight community assets, rather than deficits.
	Provide lots of opportunities for residents to talk with each other.
	Include neighborhood and site visits and meetings with local residents
	Provide structured time to sort out experiences and lessons learned.
	After the Event...
	Provide ideas and a tool kit for sharing experiences once residents return home.
	Ensure that residents remain "at the table."
	Figure out ways to "pass the baton" so the demands of travel do not fall on a small group.

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