HARVARD FAMILY RESEARCH PROJECT

THE EVALUATION EXCHANGE:

Emerging Strategies in Evaluating Child and Family Services

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From The Director's Desk

Those of us who have watched social services over the years know that fundamental and exciting changes are occurring. Decreasing confidence in top-down, one-size-fits-all solutions to persistent problems and increasing disengagement of people from services and one another are once again leading to a focus on communities – local solutions to local problems. The possibilities of this focus for our most troubled communities are tremendous, both in terms of the social and economic changes and of empowering people and reconnecting them with one another – what Robert Putnam calls civic engagement. Our challenge as evaluators, policymakers, practitioners, and funders is how we begin to document and examine community-based initiatives (CBIs) in a way that enables us to learn all we can about them. Evaluation of CBIs, like CBIs themselves, requires flexibility, the inclusion of many voices, a willingness to try new approaches, and a desire to share practices and experiences with one another.

This issue of the Evaluation Exchange carries on a discussion of CBIs that we began in our Winter 1996 issue. In that issue, we identified challenges that face people seeking to understand CBIs, promising methodologies for studying CBIs, and evaluation work currently underway.

In this issue, we continue to offer a variety of viewpoints, perspectives, and practices. Our "Theory and Practice" article summarizes practices, observations, and challenges in evaluating CBIs based on the comments of nine CBI evaluators. The three articles in our "Promising Practices" section each address different aspects of evaluating CBIs, reminding me, and hopefully others, of how many facets there are to our practice. Sharon Milligan and her colleagues examine the application of a theories of change approach to the Cleveland Community-Building Initiative. Joe Hall and Marianne Cocchini write about evaluation as a learning enterprise for a CBI. Tom Kingsley discusses the work that the Urban Institute is doing on the establishment and use of community-based indicators. In our "Questions and Answers" section, we speak with Mercer Sullivan about the use of ethnography in studying CBIs. We highlight an ongoing evaluation of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation's Youth Initiatives Program in our "Evaluations to Watch" section. In "Spot-

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IN THIS ISSUE:

Community-Based Initiatives

light," HFRP researcher Louisa Lund summarizes findings from her recent paper on common themes in community development. Our "New and Noteworthy" and "Electronic Mailbox" identify publications and Web sites of interest. Finally, we have included an insert which provides information on other resources to assist those working on CBIs.

From the inception of this newsletter in 1995, we have sought to provide an interactive forum for exchanging ideas and practices among policymakers, practitioners, funders, and evaluators. I encourage readers to send us comments on the newsletter and suggestions about how we might strengthen it. I would like to thank all who have contributed their thoughts and writings to this issue. ✦

Evaluating CBIs: Facing the Challenges and Improving Practice

Interest in and support for local solutions to the nation's problems has grown tremendously in recent years. An alternative to fragmented, deficit-based, and top-down social and economic programs, community-based approaches offer the promise of more relevant, more integrated, and ultimately more sustainable programs.

The complexity, dynamism, and inclusiveness of community-based initiatives (CBIs) challenge both those who direct and staff them and those who study them.* Our Winter 1996 issue on CBIs discussed the challenges that executive directors face in meeting their own and funders' needs for information. The directors expressed concern about, among other things, identifying outcomes that can attend to the holistic approach of CBIs as well as the needs of multiple stakeholders, attributing results to initiative interventions, and building evaluation capacity so that they and their staff members can have information that is accessible, reliable, and timely.

This article discusses practices that evaluators of CBIs have used and lessons they have learned in addressing these challenges. HFRP solicited these insights in a set of focus group discussions with nine CBI evaluators. Their comments show that while much work remains to be done, there is a foundation of knowledge and experience upon which to build.

Identifying Outcomes

What outcomes are reasonable to expect from CBIs?

- *There are different categories of outcomes:* Evaluators point out that while specific outcomes vary by the nature of the initiative, it is important to be clear and realistic about both the level of outcomes to be achieved and the timeframe in which they are expected. Susan Stephens of the Center for Assessment and Policy Development noted three levels of outcomes: program outcomes which are directly related to the activities of a particular program; initiative-level outcomes which examine the extent to which the system is changing as a result of the initiative; and community-level outcomes which are the broader outcomes that take a long time to manifest themselves and which are often influenced by factors other than or in addition to the initiative. Stephens stressed that people frequently focus on community-level outcomes and are then frustrated by their inability to directly impact those; she suggests that to really understand what an initiative is doing, one needs to examine the initiative level.

What processes can be used to identify outcomes?

- *Facilitate a discussion of expectations:* An important first step in the process of identifying outcomes, evaluators point out, is clarifying stakeholders' expectations both for the initiative and the evaluation. This might include identifying evaluation questions as well as the outcomes that are desired. The evaluator often plays both a technical role, debriefing stakeholders about evaluation and providing guidance and structure to the study, as well as a facilitative role, helping others to discuss their viewpoints and reach consensus about their shared questions and expectations.
- *Examine outcomes that may have already been identified:* Evaluators note that in some cases, outcomes may have been identified during the planning for the initiative. Tom Burns of the OMG Center for Collaborative Learning points out that

*Many terms are used to describe the community-based approaches discussed in this article. For purposes of this article, the term "community-based initiatives" (CBIs) is used. The term "residents" refers to people living in the community. The term "staff" is used here to mean people holding positions in the service or management infrastructure, many of whom are often residents.

what the evaluator works with really depends on the extent and quality of this early work – how clearly the initiative was defined and how clearly people examined and understood the assumptions underlying it. Where this has not been done, Burns points out, evaluators have to work with initiative designers and other stakeholders to develop an outcomes framework.

- *Start with expectations for community-level outcomes:* Often within the CBI there tends to be a generally shared view of what the long-term, community-based outcomes are, evaluators observe. These are the outcomes that often resonate most with key stakeholders. While these may take time to clarify and prioritize, evaluators note the importance of having a broad framework of outcomes to garner interest and focus subsequent discussions about outcomes.
- *Use intermediate outcomes to link activities with long-term results:* Evaluators caution that since CBIs are complex and desired changes take a long time to manifest themselves, intermediate outcomes are needed to show the progress toward ultimate outcomes and the more direct results of the initiative. Anne Kubisch, of Aspen Institute, notes that while stakeholders can generally agree on the long-term results they want to see and can identify the immediate results of their activities, it is this intermediate level of outcome that is often the most difficult to articulate. Evaluators stress the importance of showing a relationship between intermediate results and longer-term expectations. The theory of change approach has emerged as a promising means to do so (see the following).
- *Be sure outcomes link to on-the-ground activities:* It is important to examine whether the outcomes – especially intermediate outcomes – can reasonably be achieved by the initiative's activities. Evaluators note that in some cases, initial outcomes have been guided by expectations about activities that are different from those actually funded and implemented. In these cases, evaluators have a responsibility to point out incongruities and work with stakeholders to identify those outcomes expected to be achieved by extant programs.
- *Balance process and results:* Identifying outcomes is a time consuming process. While the process can be used to build interest in and support for the evaluation, Dale Blyth, from the Search Institute, points out that it is important that the process not be so prolonged as to consume all the resources and energy of the community and the tolerance of funders. He suggests that evaluators not be shy about presenting their own ideas for the community to use as a starting point. David Chavis of the Association for the Study and Development of Community, reinforces this point, noting that some program approaches have already been tested, and evaluators and others need to be more willing to look at past experience and share their own experiences with one another.

Determining Attribution

- *Is attribution the right question?:* In discussing the issue of attribution, several evaluators raised the issue of whether the open, broader community contexts of CBIs lend themselves to discussions of attribution in the traditional evaluation sense. They stress that for these relatively new endeavors, alternative ways of understanding whether CBIs "work" may be necessary.

What promise do experimental and quasi-experimental designs hold for CBI evaluation?

- *CBIs pose a challenge to these approaches:* CBIs, the evaluators noted, do not lend themselves easily to experimental or quasi-experimental designs for several reasons. One of the greatest challenges is that the magnitude of changes that are seen as a result of CBI interventions is often very small. Another issue is that of the unit of analysis. Designs for attribution are easier when data are collected at the individual level; they are more difficult at the level of community. Additionally, since the power of attributional designs derives from the number of cases, if the unit is communities, the number will typically be small. Another question evaluators raise is whether there are truly comparable communities that can be randomly or nonrandomly assigned. Many people think there are not. Evaluators additionally stress the often high cost of doing experiments and question whether it is right to withhold services from a specific population.
- *In some instances, these designs can be appropriate:* Evaluators acknowledge, however, that experimental and quasi-experimental designs are feasible, and may be required, in some cases. For example, since CBIs are multi-level phenomena, these designs may be able to examine changes at the individual level. Some argue that comparison groups of communities situated on similar variables can be created in some instances. Stan Schneider of Metis Associates points out that trend data can be useful in examining the history of a community's performance before an initiative has begun and after it has been implemented.

What other techniques exist to address concerns about attribution?

- *Combine multiple sources of evidence for a confluence of results:* Evaluators point out the importance of using multiple evidence and multiple tools to strengthen the case for attribution. This means melding qualitative and quantitative data and using different analytical techniques. While evaluators acknowledge that one can always find fault with evaluation designs and data collection instruments, the use of multiple valid and reliable techniques can strengthen arguments about program impacts.
- *Use a theory of change approach to show progress:* Theory of change is emerging as a promising approach to answer concerns about showing program progress and perhaps making attributional arguments. While a theory of change approach does not allow for identification of a particular causal mechanism in a fine sense, it can enable the evaluator and others to argue that the logic fell into place and that the initiative is "on track." It is important, evaluators point out, that in using a theory of change approach, one be careful about distinguishing between incorrect implementation and faulty theory.
- *Systematically examine other factors that might influence outcomes:* We are only beginning to understand how CBIs work and to recognize that other factors may influence outcomes. Rafael Valdivieso, of the Academy for Educational Development, uses a logic model approach to identify and monitor factors in addition to the initiative that may affect an outcome.
- *Document early outcomes that lead to de-*

sired long-term results: Evaluation plays an important role in helping people learn about and improve community-based program approaches. Anne Kubisch observed that there is a growing recognition of the complexity and risk inherent in CBIs and, as a result, many are investing earlier in evaluation. She notes that this investment can help in setting forth a theory of change for early initiatives and help document the processes and early outcomes that are expected to lead to desired long-term results.

Building Evaluation Capacity and Learning in a Community

What does local evaluation capacity mean?

- *Stakeholders need to learn to ask questions and gather data to answer them:* In discussing what is meant by building capacity for evaluation at the community-level, Stan Schneider noted that evaluators often have very high expectations for the evaluation activities that a community can technically and fiscally undertake. He suggests that a more realistic expectation may be that residents and staff members must learn to ask their questions and make sure that they obtain valid and reliable data to answer the questions, and move to the next set of questions. Cindy Sipe, of Public/Private Ventures, notes that, in her experience, staff members and residents need to be able to track implementation – what kinds of things are they putting in place, who is getting exposed to them, and what resources are expended – and be able to use that information to guide how they are implementing the initiative.

What is needed for capacity to be built?

- *"Consumers" need to be educated and interested:* In order for evaluation capacity to exist at the local level, evaluators stress, residents and staff members need to understand that evaluation is intended to be a tool that can help them to understand their initiatives better. They point out that within CBIs, there are people who are interested in evaluation and people who are not; it is important to locate and work with those who have an interest in it. Beverly Parsons, of InSites, has found "inquiry teams" to be useful in engaging stakeholders; these teams, composed of opinion leaders and others, have the responsibility to "inquire" about and reflect on the initiative.
- *Internal and external pressures are needed for evaluation information:* Evaluators note that pressures for information can also be the impetus for the development of local evaluation capacity. Susan Stephens identified three such pressures: demands for accountability from funders or state agencies; desire for information on the part of a champion or leader; and/or public demand for information. She noted that while the evaluator often cannot create these pressures, he/she can be aware of them and advise the community entities about how they can respond to these pressures in an ongoing fashion. Rafael Valdivieso agreed, stressing the importance of having outcomes become part of the community psyche, captured in the media and internalized by the public.

What can one do to help build capacity?

- *Link members to other evaluation resources:* The evaluator can help increase capacity by being a vehicle by which staff members and residents can link to resources in the community that can help them do evaluation-related tasks. These resources include universities, advocacy groups, and individuals working with data in organizations such as the police department and the school system.
- *Focus on data use first and then on data generation:* Evaluators stress that community residents, especially leaders, need first to know how to use the data to advocate for change and improve the initiative. Thus, the key is getting stakeholders to talk about the information and examine it for themselves. One approach, described by Beverly Parsons, is to orient a discussion around survey results. In her work with one group, Parsons asked stakeholders – prior to sharing the results with them – what they thought a survey might show. She then presented the actual data, which were not consistent with expectations, and used those data to promote discussion about and generate more interest in the data.
- *Encourage community participation in data collection and interpretation:* Evaluators note the importance of getting staff members and community residents involved in the data collection to help build ownership of the evaluation and evaluation skills. In many CBIs, residents are trained to conduct community surveys, neighborhood inventories, or ethnographic research. Evaluators caution, however, that community involvement should not be left at the data collection phase. Residents and staff members need to be engaged as well in framing the questions, interpreting the results and figuring out what needs to be done on the basis of the information.

  Evaluators point out as well that evaluation expertise is needed to ensure data quality. It takes expertise, for example, to develop good questions to be included on community surveys. Evaluators should also take on the boring work – such as finalizing the questionnaire, entering data into the computer – while residents and staff members get involved in the more interesting aspects of data collection and analysis.
- *Produce timely and useful reports:* Reports that are immediately useful and user-friendly are important to provide an incentive for communities to become actively engaged in the evaluation. Rather than presenting "final" reports with all the interpretations, Cindy Sipe urged that evaluators share the data earlier with stakeholders to help ensure that they are then used as the basis for discussion. She uses short memos and oral presentations to disseminate information that is then used as a basis for discussion. Dale Blyth stressed that appealing to multiple learning styles is crucial: a two-page, text format for people who like to read; graphs for the visually and numerically inclined; and stories to illustrate the points for those who learn best that way.
- *Build tools to help residents collect and use information:* Evaluators suggest that evaluators can help build interest in evaluation and the development of evaluation capacity by creating and disseminating toolkits. These might include, for example, tools around staff assessment and leadership training. From his work, David Chavis has learned the importance of high-quality meeting minutes for both program management and data collection purposes. He has developed a kit to help community members improve the quality of the meeting minutes they take.
- *Begin early and stay involved:* Essential to helping build local capacity, Tom Burns notes, is early and continuous engagement by the evaluator – from the point of iden-

tifying the questions, to collecting the data, to assisting stakeholders to interpret results. He notes that while such work is essential, it is also time consuming and can be costly, in financial and human resource terms, to both the evaluator and the stakeholders.

While these focus group discussions highlight the primary areas of concern in evaluating CBIs, they are only a beginning to an exploration of these topics. Knowledge about these will only grow as more CBI evaluations are conducted, new approaches are tried, and practices and lessons are shared among those working in this field. ✦

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The Evaluators

Dale Blyth: Director of Strategic Initiatives, Search Institute.

Tom Burns: Director, The OMG Center for Collaborative Learning.

David Chavis: President, Association for the Study and Development of Community.

Anne Kubisch: Director, Roundtable on Comprehensive Community Initiatives for Children and Families, Aspen Institute.

Beverly Anderson Parsons: Executive Director, InSites.

Stanley Schneider: Senior Research Associate and Executive Vice President, Metis Associates, Inc.

Cindy Sipe: Senior Policy Researcher, Public/Private Ventures.

Susan Stephens: Senior Policy Analyst, Center for Assessment and Policy Development.

Rafael Valdivieso: Vice President and Director of School and Community Services, Academy for Educational Development.

HFRP would like to thank those who contributed their experiences and insights.

Questions and Answers

Interview with Mercer Sullivan

Mercer Sullivan is Associate Professor of Criminal Justice at Rutgers University and Senior Research Fellow at the Vera Institute of Justice. He has worked and written extensively in the area of ethnography. We asked Dr. Sullivan to share with us insights and practices related to using ethnography to study community-based initiatives.

1) What does ethnography offer to the study of CBIs?

In the most general terms, ethnography is the best kind of research method to use for the purpose of exploring what the community element in CBIs is. Communities are not monolithic entities – there are different kinds of people in them and different social networks, even in seemingly homogenous groups – and understanding what is meant by community in practice is a notoriously difficult challenge. Ethnography, which grows out of the community studies traditions of anthropology and sociology, gives us a way to study community-level phenomena such as patterns of social networks, institutional infrastructure, the process of community change, and patterns of conflict and cooperation.

Traditional quantitative methods such as questionnaires and censuses can be used to gather information on communities and these methods can complement ethnography. However, it is difficult, in my opinion, to think about studying communities without going into them. You need to talk to the people in the community about the community and their lives in it.

It is important to recognize that ethnographic work is inductive. It is used for discovery and can help you to surface issues and questions about which you were not previously aware. If you already know the boxes that need to be filled in, you don't need ethnography.

> Ethnography is the best kind of research method to use for the purpose of exploring what the community element in CBIs is.

2) What does one need to consider when incorporating ethnography into the evaluation of CBIs?

When thinking about how to use ethnography in studies of CBIs, several factors need to be considered:

- *The level of intensity:* Ethnography is an intensive and potentially expensive effort if done correctly. While you can spend some days at a site and get some information, to understand the social fabric in a community, you need a trained person who can spend several months to a year and a half there. This requires a lot of resources. While there are ways to do ethnography with people already involved in the CBI, they need training and have to be willing to commit the time necessary to write field notes, conduct interviews, and analyze the data.

- *The relationships:* Ethnographers form relationships with the people involved in the CBI and thus, there is a need to think about the match between the ethnographer and the people in the CBI. A good match between ethnographer and community is important for generating community commitment to the research process. A bad match does not mean a bad ethnographer or a bad community; there just may not be a match. The process of matching the ethnographer with the community can be difficult. Some assume that you have to match on race and ethnicity, but that is not always the case. The ethnographer's knowledge, past experience, and commitment are also very important.

- *The feedback mechanisms:* Ethnographers frequently struggle with the desire to "go native" (which can undercut the objectivity of their research) and the need to maintain distance (which can undercut rapport with a community's residents). One way you can clarify your role is to set up feedback mechanisms. Setting up a structure for communication between the you and stakeholders helps to make clear that you are not working for the CBI but at the same time are not detached from it. This structure should be set up in the beginning of the study and may be renegotiated throughout it. I recommend that regular meetings be set up but that these not be daily since this might put you in the position of providing day-to-day judgements of the effort.

3) How does ethnography fit with other approaches to evaluating CBIs?

Ethnography is frequently used to complement other research methods. One of the more common ways to integrate research traditions is to use ethnography on the front end to feed into the construction of quantitative measures. For example, an understanding of local experiences helps in designing surveys. It can work the other way as well. You might, for example, do a survey which shows broad patterns that the researcher just cannot figure out. The researcher can then go back into the field and ask the community's residents what they think the results mean.

There are, also, however, questions that really can only reasonably be looked at with one type of method. Questions of history, for example, cannot easily be done with a survey – qualitative methods are better for obtaining a historical profile of a community. Large quantitative surveys, on the other hand, can provide information on patterns that people may not even be aware of.

The best approach is to use a "tool bag" that includes qualitative and quantitative methods. These methods reinforce one another in both discovering and validating information. Using both approaches triangulates findings and increases confidence in them. As I mentioned earlier, the inductive nature of ethnography makes it tremendously helpful at the stage of data analysis – it can help the researcher to identify important questions and is an invaluable resource for interpretation.

4) What are the challenges in using ethnography to evaluate CBIs and how can these be addressed?

- *Gathering comparable information across sites:* In many cases, information on communities is not comparable across the sites in the study. The history of each community, for example, is unique. To address this challenge in the studies that I have conducted, I have tried to supervise and coordinate the activities of the ethnographers in each site such that the chances of getting comparable data are maximized. If I see that one story is emerging at a site, I try to see if there are similar stories or different stories about the same thing at the other sites.

- *Identifying comparison sites:* Another challenge when evaluating community-based activities is the issue of comparison sites. Early on in the design of the evaluation, you need to think about whether you will look at a comparison site. As Hollister and Hill point out (*New approaches to evaluating community initiatives.* (1995). Washington, DC: Aspen Institute, pages 127-172), there are challenges to setting up even a quasi-experimental design. I have used a comparison site in one study. I used ethnography and quantitative methods to match sites. The ethnographic data came from interviews, expert opinion, and visual observation (such as housing stock). I complemented these data with census data on variables such as poverty levels, race, ethnicity, and housing type. However, due to resource constraints, I was not able to do a separate ethnography in the comparison sites. Thus, the qualitative information on the comparison sites had to come from the intervention sites.

- *Establishing credibility:* Ensuring that findings are credible, both internally and externally, is extremely challenging. Internal credibility is derived from the relationship that you have with people in the sites – do they believe that the information about their community is worthwhile? What might be missing? What distortions might exist? The issue of external credibility is very difficult. Although qualitative research can be laboriously and systematically executed, there is still skepticism about its credibility. It does not come with the same built-in scientific imprimatur as numeric results. This has to do, I think, with the fact that we are not used to seeing the same amount of qualitative research. If we did see more, people would begin to develop standards about what is good and credible. I think the answer is to support good work – the more good work that gets around, the more problems of external credibility will be reduced.

We need to find ways to deal with the demands for judgements about CBI success while preserving the individuality of each community that make us think these are endeavors worth studying in the first place.

5) What final thoughts can you share regarding ethnography as an approach to evaluating CBIs?

I think there is perhaps a far more fundamental issue that faces those who study and evaluate CBIs. I would describe this issue as the contradiction between the reasons why people are interested in community interventions and their conceptions of the standards by which those interventions are to be judged. In other words, we are interested in community interventions out of a conviction that each community is a unique place and that local involvement will lead to local solutions to local problems. But when we go in to study these things, we work with the mindset of finding the generalizable – the successful essence of things – so we can bottle it and send it to other places. We need to find ways to deal with the demands for judgements about CBI success while preserving the individuality of each community that make us think these are endeavors worth studying in the first place. ✦

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Implementing a Theories of Change Evaluation in the Cleveland Community-Building Initiative*

Comprehensive community initiatives have proven difficult to evaluate because they do not lend themselves to traditional experimental methods. Many audiences, however, are interested in whether these efforts are actually creating change and improving the lives of residents. A theories of change approach offers promise as a means to address the constraints of traditional evaluation techniques.

A theories of change approach makes explicit the short- and long-term outcomes of an initiative, the strategies pursued to achieve them, and the linkages between these. By doing so, it offers several advantages over traditional experimental methods. First, it can be applied to whole community interventions in which untreated control groups are not possible. Second, it makes explicit many of the assumptions about the ingredients of community and system change and how these are expected to improve conditions for residents and their local institutions. Finally, by tracking progress on the steps in the change process, it can provide corrective feedback that can help distinguish theory failure from implementation failure.

The Cleveland Community Building Initiative (CCBI), in collaboration with the Center on Urban Poverty and Social Change, has begun the process of implementing a theories of change approach to evaluation. CCBI seeks to strengthen communities and reverse persistent poverty in four areas of Cleveland by supporting individualized approaches shaped by community members. Each of the four areas, or villages, has a council which is representative of various stakeholders and is charged with developing action plans to address poverty in the local neighborhood. Village coordinators work with the village councils to develop and maintain the councils and to provide technical assistance. The CCBI Board of Trustees is responsible for supporting villages and providing linkages to necessary financial, intellectual, and technical expertise to implement the village-based agendas. The CCBI executive director has responsibility for managing CCBI's overall operations.

The components of the CCBI evaluation include: articulation of the theories of change; identification of key benchmarks for strategies and outcomes; collection of data; analyses to determine whether the theories need to be refined; modification of theories as needed; and provision of regular feedback to stakeholders on progress and results. Little is currently known about the procedures that should be used in identifying theories of change and in selecting elements of the theories to track in the evaluation. Since CCBI now has experience with these two steps in the evaluation process, it is possible to describe the methods used, their results, and lessons learned.

> A theories of change approach offers promise as a means to address the constraints of traditional evaluation techniques.

The CCBI evaluators used a four-step process to define CCBI's theories of change:

1) ***Determining key stakeholders whose theories need to be elicited:*** CCBI evaluators identified a number of key stakeholders who could help articulate the initiative's theories of change – the CCBI board and staff members, village councils and council coordinators, and the CCBI executive director.

2) ***Eliciting theories of change from these designated stakeholders:*** CCBI evaluators used various methods to help stakeholder groups to articulate the initiative's theory of change. Theory development began by soliciting the opinions of CCBI staff members through small group interviews; a separate interview with the executive director yielded his theory of change. The interviews consisted of a series of questions designed to elicit theories of change – beginning with conversation about short-term strategies and outcomes and then moving to intermediate and long-term outcomes. Evaluators diagramed these theories, solicited feedback, and made modifications.

The evaluators interviewed each board member separately to solicit his/her theory of change, including outcomes and accomplishments each viewed as important to CCBI, the specific activities each felt served as the means to achieve these, and the linkages or relationships among them. These individual theories were consolidated into one initial draft that was shared with the board and subsequently modified.

Focus groups were used to solicit the theories of change from each of the four village councils and where possible, evaluators tried to link the theory development process with the village's strategic planning process. Again, the theories were shared with the groups for refinement.

3) ***Examining the contributing stakeholders' theories for common and unique elements:*** Once the stakeholders' theories were developed, the CCBI evaluators had to compare and reconcile them. The evaluators incorporated the executive director's theory with those of the staff members – where common elements existed among the theories, no changes were made to the staff members' theories; strategies and outcomes suggested by the director but not included in the staff members' theories were added to the latter. The refined model was then shared with the staff members and the

* NOTE: While the term "theory of change" is typically used to identify the approach described herein, we use the term "theories of change" to acknowledge that multiple theories about the process of social change often operate.

director, and further refinements made. A similar approach was used to reconcile the board members' theories, which again was shared with the members and further refined.

4) ***Agreeing on the theory or theories which will guide the evaluation:*** The next task was to compare the theories among stakeholder groups to develop one theory for the initiative. Evaluators found that the staff members' and board members' theories contained more similarities than differences. Furthermore, village councils' theories seemed to provide more detail to the theories of the other two stakeholder groups.

The CCBI evaluation is now moving toward evaluating the early parts of the theory since these now have sufficient detail and consensus. The evaluators recognized that there was a need to simplify the theory in order to identify benchmarks by which to assess progress. The simplification process consisted of grouping elements into major strategies and outcomes, each of which could then be further specified for evaluation. The evaluators identified numerous benchmarks for each strategy that would need to be reviewed by stakeholders so they would be aware of and agree upon these visible signs of progress. CCBI staff and evaluators are also beginning to consider the possible indicators that will be used to examine long-term outcomes of the initiative as well as identifying possible data sources.

In trying to operationalize the theories of change concept in a community setting, the CCBI evaluation offers these preliminary lessons:

- ***Evaluators must take on new roles:*** A theories of change approach thrusts evaluators into new, less traditional roles. In this evaluation, evaluators as well as CCBI staff members, board members, and village councils were all collaborators and co-discoverers. The evaluator is a trainer and a facilitator as well as a technical advisor.

- ***Stakeholders must be committed:*** Theory development is an iterative process and requires substantial time and energy if it is to work. The stakeholders in the CCBI evaluation made a substantial time commitment to work with the evaluators throughout the iterative process to define the assumptions underlying the initiative.

- ***Group processes work best in theory development:*** The use of a group process not only helps to build consensus and to yield a common theory, but it also allows group members to see each other's perspectives more clearly. The CCBI experience suggests that groups be smaller than eight persons.

- ***Being explicit about the detailed steps along the pathway of change is difficult:*** Many missing links exist between the early strategies and long-term outcomes. While stakeholders have a fairly clear vision of what they want to see in their communities, the steps that would be necessary to achieve these outcomes are not yet clear. The CCBI evaluators anticipate that once members and village residents experience success with initial action projects, they will be able to revisit the long-term outcomes and begin to make choices about the pre-conditions for change.

- ***The distinction between process and outcomes is difficult to apply:*** The early work of CCBI, as most community initiatives, involves putting processes and structures into place that stakeholders believe will build the community. Within the theory, these are identified as strategies, the accomplishment of which is an early outcome. This might be, for example, putting into place a recruitment process for village council members which contributes to village council formation and operation. CCBI evaluators have tried to phrase many of the processes in terms of short-term outcomes that could be observed at a point in time as signs that they are accomplished well.

- ***Establishing standards and thresholds is difficult:*** In the field of CBIs, values and goals are not stated as clear thresholds or levels. The experience of practitioners may be a useful source of a threshold for what works, but experience is not always codified or readily available to evaluators. A knowledge base in this area needs to be developed.

- ***To be compelling, models will need to be fully specified:*** Frequent feedback of findings and opportunities to modify the theory will prove useful for program improvement. This information should help provide staff and residents the evidence they need to distinguish between strategies that are incompletely implemented and strategies that were done according to the standards but did not produce the desired changes in the community. It is less clear how to build a compelling case that the theory itself is powerful and valid – as it now stands, the theory is not adequate to account for competing explanations and the influence of factors is not included in the model. In the early stages of the evaluation, where most of the predicted effects are internal to the initiative itself, this is not as problematic. The later community and individual-level changes that are predicted, however, are much less internally controlled. Therefore, there is a need to specify the model fully so that the influence of external factors can be ruled out or explicitly brought into the change process.

The CCBI evaluation is a work in progress. This early work has helped identify both the struggles and the opportunities that can derive from using a theories of change approach. While considerable work remains to be done to address important methodological concerns, the early experience of CCBI demonstrates that the collaborative, iterative process of developing, implementing, and refining theories of change is a good fit with the way that CBIs work. ✦

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This article is based on a longer piece of the same title which will appear in New approaches to evaluating community initiatives, volume II: Theory, measurement and analysis, *(1997). Karen Fulbright-Anderson, Anne C. Kubisch, and James P. Connell (eds.), Washington, DC: Aspen Institute. For information, please contact: The Aspen Institute, Publications Office, P.O. Box 222, Houghton Lab Lane, Queenstown, MD 21658. Fax: (410) 827-9174.*

Neighborhood Indicators and Community Initiatives

Evaluators have long desired better data on the neighborhood contexts in which the programs they are assessing operate. The trouble is that assembling adequate neighborhood data has normally been prohibitively expensive. In assessing a drug prevention program, for example, one cannot rely only on data on the changing pattern of neighborhood drug use. One needs to know about a host of other neighborhood level changes – social, economic, and even physical – that may have interacted to influence that pattern. Additionally, since one wants to know how the neighborhood changes along all specific dimensions, year by year, as the program intervention is underway, data from the last census are seldom good enough.

In the past few years, however, the prospects for obtaining more substantial neighborhood information have improved markedly. Most local administrative agencies have now automated their record-keeping, and with the advent of computer-based address-matching, it is no longer an arduous task to add up totals for neighborhoods, defined in many ways. Depending on the files assembled, one can create and frequently update neighborhood indicators from data on jobs, births, deaths, crimes, incidences of illness, student school performance, openings and closings of public assistance cases, housing-code violations, building construction and demolition, changes in property values and taxes, toxic emissions, and a number of other topics.

Local institutions in at least six cities now collect data on a regular basis from a number of different agencies and integrate them into a neighborhood-level information system (the Atlanta Project, the Boston Foundation's Boston Persistent Poverty Project, the Center for Urban Poverty and Social Change at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, the Piton Foundation in Denver, the Urban Strategies Council in Oakland, and the Providence Plan). Because they maintain such systems, these institutions can provide one-stop shopping which offers enormous efficiency for a variety of local users. They are non-governmental entities, not seen as being aligned to any short-term political interests, and they emphasize careful data cleaning, maintenance of confidentiality, and responsible data use. Accordingly, they are positioned to maintain the trust of data providers and users over the long term. Because of much reduced costs due to automation and the ability to raise funds through a mix of fee income and general support from local businesses and foundations, these organizations are – or have definite potential to become – locally self-sustaining.

Perhaps more noteworthy, however, is that these organizations do not see themselves only as data suppliers or traditional research institutions. Rather, their primary aim is democratizing information – getting information directly to neighborhood groups and other local stakeholders, and helping them use it themselves, rather than having the analysis done for them by outside professionals.

> In the past few years … the prospects for obtaining more substantial neighborhood information have improved markedly.

In 1995, these six organizations formed a partnership with the Urban Institute to establish the National Neighborhood Indicators Project (NNIP). Funded by the Annie E. Casey and Rockefeller Foundations, NNIP activities currently include:

- Drawing on mutual experiences (and new field testing) to develop prototype approaches and tools for using information more effectively in community capacity building
- Finding innovative ways to use their data to support better local policymaking – for example, in designing local strategies to respond to welfare reform
- Assembling data from across their systems, and comparing patterns of change, to provide better insights as to what is actually happening to conditions in inner-city neighborhoods nationally in the 1990s
- Helping institutions in other cities develop similar systems and capacities for use.

The NNIP partners generally feel that the state of the art in using automated data in these ways is still in its infancy. Nonetheless, concrete applications in their cities have convinced them these approaches warrant further development.

The Atlanta Project, for example, has been working with several neighborhood groups over the past few years to prepare maps and tables showing parcel-level data on tax delinquency, code enforcement violations, and other property conditions. Just looking over the maps, community residents saw opportunities for action that they had not seen before. Their analyses became the basis for several initiatives: targeting assistance to elderly homeowners in jeopardy of losing their homes due to outstanding tax liens; selectively reinvesting in key community properties found to be ripe for redevelopment; working with city agencies to shift code enforcement strategies to crack down more effectively on absentee property owners with decaying and abandoned properties; and motivating the state legislature to pass new laws expediting foreclosure processes when communities are prepared to redevelop sites with nonprofit housing.

At the metropolitan level, another example is gaining national prominence. NNIP's partner in Cleveland (the Center for Urban Poverty and Social Change) began by working with automated data on welfare cases. Staff members examined the characteristics of different cohorts of county AFDC recipients and were able to estimate and map by census tract, those recipients that would be imminently vulnerable to losing benefits under welfare-reform time limits. They also used geographic data on employment to analyze and map spatial patterns of recent entry-level job openings in the area. They found that the residential locations of vulnerable AFDC recipients were tightly concentrated in space, mostly in a few inner-Cleveland neighborhoods, while the entry-level employment opportunities likely to be relevant for these prospective job-seekers were largely in metropolitan fringe areas. They went further to estimate tract level income losses likely to occur under welfare reform and to calculate commute times that would be required for AFDC recipients to access various shares of new entry-level jobs.

These basic findings were not surprising, but the contrasts were striking, and the fact that the analysts had been able actually to quantify and map this "spatial mismatch" made a critical difference. The maps they produced (with associated hard numbers by neighborhood) cast powerfully memorable images. They captured the attention of the local media and, then, of policymakers. In response, the state has since allocated substantial funding for transportation assistance in Cleveland's welfare-to-work efforts, and local transportation planners are working with the analysis team to test out alternative strategies for getting vulnerable recipients to jobs more rapidly. The team has since begun assembling related neighborhood data (e.g., on the locations and capacities of day-care centers and job-linkage services, and the pattern of rental housing affordability).

Again, preliminary indications are that the production of solid data that can serve as a basis for sensible response strategies may well prove to be a critical step in motivating local actors to develop such strategies. ✦

G. Thomas Kingsley
Director of the Center for Public Finance and Housing
The Urban Institute

A full description of the project is provided in Democratizing information: First year report of the national neighborhood indicators project *(1996). Washington, DC: The Urban Institute. 2100 M Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20037. Tel: (202) 857-8687.*

Promising Practices

Learner-Centered Evaluation Practice: The Banana Kelly Experience

The Banana Kelly organization began in 1977, when thirty residents gathered to stop the demolition of their homes along the banana-curved block of Kelly Street in the South Bronx. Founded, owned, and governed by local people, the organization today employs over 100 full-time staff members (90% community residents) and operates programs in housing, economic development, and education. Projects include the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY), school-based family support in three junior high schools, and a Banana Kelly Community Learning Center public high school. Last year, from over 800 nominations worldwide, the United Nations recognized Banana Kelly with one of six gold medal Best Practices awards for Improving the Living Environment.

Evaluation is an integral part of our work at Banana Kelly. While the funding sources of our programs are usually focused singularly on the success of a specific activity, our outcomes also include human, community, and organizational development. Thus, for our organization, evaluation involves not only program or even organization effectiveness, but also personal growth and development. In this model of evaluation, we learn how to design and operate good programs with our neighbors and learn how to innovate and excel as leaders by creating new knowledge.

We work closely with an evaluator who combines appreciative inquiry, assets-based assessment, and organizational learning strategies with qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods. She is simultaneously Teacher, Coach, and Mentor. She is a member of the Banana Kelly family, and a partner, but she remains outside the organization and its day-to-day work. By using evaluation techniques that are learner-centered (see box), she creates natural opportunities for us to learn.

For example, by welcoming people into the community through an appreciative entry process, the evaluator surfaces their skills, talents, dreams, best beliefs, and opinions of themselves, valuing from the start the "best of what is." This is critical, as it helps people to reassess past negative experiences with education and evaluation, while offering the possibility of learning as a tool for lifelong growth, community development, and new opportunities for meaningful work. By creating the incentive and space for individuals to raise and share their tacit knowledge and values with others, she enables us continually to create a common language and knowledge base. She captures the learning in our language and sends it back to us and others with a sense of authorship that moves us forward.

ELEMENTS OF A LEARNER-CENTERED EVALUATION PRACTICE

Providing an appreciative entry into a project or program: valuing who we are, what we bring to the program, and what we can learn from each other

Establishing an appreciative baseline from which to measure growth and chart change: creating an inventory of assets of the individuals involved; their knowledge, skills, and values; what gives life to the organization; and its work in the community

Learning through a developmental cycle of reflection, experimentation, and action

Holding learning meetings: including appreciative self-assessment, peer assessment, and program performance assessment

Designing learning inventories: what we know and how we know it and how we can transfer the knowledge to others

Conducting focus groups: bringing the whole system of stakeholders into the room

Surfacing our tacit operative assumptions: staying close to the "so what" of the project and what we mean by success, as the basis for building program propositions and hypotheses

Developing profiles in practice: case studies of a program in action

Documenting practice: capturing the lessons learned "in our own words"

Julio's experience, described below, is one example of this practice in action.

A Banana Kelly evaluation story

In 1991, Banana Kelly acquired a building from the City of New York and rehabilitated it with private funds. The success of this investment was defined by the outside funding source in terms of the following questions: How well is the building maintained? How efficiently are rents collected? How high or low is the vacancy rate? How much do the investors receive for tax credits? While these indicators are very important to the community and the tenants as well, they are only the point of departure for reaching the long lasting outcomes of community-building work, namely, human and organizational development.

Five years ago, Julio (not his real name) and his two children moved into this building. Julio had experienced homelessness and drug addiction, but was ready to make positive changes in his life. He was soon hired as a Community Trainer with Banana Kelly's Family and Community Enrichment (FACE) program, leaving a job downtown in the garment industry that paid a higher salary. He participated in a variety of interactions that are key to our evaluation model: focus groups; conversations in the hallway; asset-based program planning; reflection sessions; and the documentation and dissemination of ideas – in his own words, within and outside the community. Through these fora, Julio was introduced to external models and theories, methods, organizations, and practices that were applicable to his work.

The evaluator worked closely with Julio and others to identify their tacit knowledge about their practice, which helped integrate their personal development with community development. She pulled together for us the elements of our practice, clarifying the underlying logic of the model, which we then shared with a broad audience, from the local community, to Washington, D.C., to the U.N.

At the building's tenant association meetings and during the time that Julio was a member of the Banana Kelly advisory board, the evaluator listened and provided feedback on what Julio was learning and contributing in a community context. These early meetings allowed Julio to see that his ability to get other tenants involved was not simply his "personality" but a skills-set he had learned over time – and more importantly, through systematic, reflective evaluation practice – and was something he could teach others. He was encouraged to evaluate his projects and practice. He also began to seek new arenas and answers for his questions through classes, training, and workshops in HIV/AIDS education, financed by the organization's commitment to training and development.

> Evaluation is as much a part of our daily practice – a core function of Banana Kelly – as housing management or economic development.

Julio soon gained access to many levels of the NYC HIV/AIDS community. He met people who introduced the possibility of Banana Kelly's operating a major demonstration grant in conjunction with university researchers. Julio's passion and leadership moved him beyond his role as a community trainer – he was now pushing the programmatic boundaries of Banana Kelly to include a community-building model for people living with HIV/AIDS. He pulled together a powerful team composed of professional and community-based staff members, outside consultants, and evaluators. His mission was to integrate the Banana Kelly model and learning practice into HIV/AIDS programming. He quickly identified the critical short-term outcomes for the demonstration programs and what Banana Kelly needed to learn to create an integrated service and development model for people living with AIDS. Using the evaluators' observations, data collection, and learning meetings and their frequent "discussions-on-the-run" to get into the real outcomes of the project – as well as identifying a strategic role for himself as project champion – Julio ensured the long-term success for AIDS programs at Banana Kelly.

Today, five years after the opening of Julio's building, we are still discussing and learning from that initial investment in our community – information that is unfortunately not often appreciated.

Our experience, the successes that we have seen in our programs, and the achievements of residents and staff members such as Julio, provide strong evidence that evaluation can move from a position of passive objectivity and aggressive accountability toward a much more rewarding, meaningful role in community-building. The artificial limits of traditional project evaluation are such that intended and unintended outcomes cannot be wholly documented, integrated, disseminated, and put to use across the organization or community – especially within the fertile learning areas found in "the life after" program funding.

We have made a large investment in evaluation, an investment that surprises many people. For us, evaluation is not a "frill" or a luxury. Evaluation is as much a part of our daily practice – a core function of Banana Kelly – as housing management or economic development. We could not succeed without it. ✦

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President/Chief Operating Office
Banana Kelly International

Marianne Cocchini
Founder
AER/MAC Consulting

Training Institutes: June 13-17, 1998
Orlando, Florida

Developing Local Systems of Care in a Managed Care Environment for Children and Adolescents with Serious Emotional Disturbances and their Families.

These institutes feature in-depth, practical information on how to develop, organize, and operate coordinated, community-based systems of care for children and their families, with a special emphasis on managed care. They are funded by the Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. For more information, contact the National Technical Assistance Center for Children' Mental Health at Georgetown University, 3307 M Street, NW., Suite 401, Washington, DC 20007. Tel: (202) 887-5000.

Evaluating the Kellogg Youth Initiative Partnerships

In 1987, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation made a long-term commitment to work with three geographic areas of Michigan to help improve the lives of young people. The 20-year Kellogg Youth Initiative Partnerships Program (KYIP) is designed to work in partnership with these three areas, to provide opportunities for each to develop and implement programs uniquely suited to the needs of its residents. In 1995, the Foundation Board adopted a Framework for the Future, which established positive youth development (rather than a deficit-based approach) as KYIP's guiding philosophy, set forth five broad goals, and laid out six strategies for achieving them.

The Foundation has contracted with the Academy for Educational Development (AED) to conduct an evaluation of the initiative in the remaining ten years. The evaluation will produce both formative and summative findings. AED's work with KYIP will pursue levels of analysis that speak to the sites, the Foundation, and broader audiences to illuminate how KYIP has experienced successes and encountered challenges over a number of years. The evaluation is being conducted in partnership with the Foundation and the three sites – including their foundation staff members, their Site Advisory Councils (SACs), service providers, and residents – and other KYIP collaborators.

The basis of the evaluation approach for KYIP has been the articulation of a theory of change. Working over several months, KYIP staff members, the SACs, and the evaluators articulated the theory of change for KYIP, including the longer- and shorter-term outcomes to be achieved, and the indicators used to track progress. The theory of change serves as the basis for the outcome, process, and context evaluations of KYIP.

- *Outcome Evaluation:* A relatively simple theory of change guides KYIP: If KYIP can create and sustain the conditions within a community that promote positive youth development, then increases in positive youth outcomes and decreases in problem behaviors are likely. In translating this theory into a usable program and evaluation model, KYIP staff, the SACs, and evaluators agreed to a set of 11 outcomes in four broad domains: youth, adult, organizational, and community. Outcomes related to adults (for example, those related to increased adult involvement and interest in youth) and organizational change (for example, functioning and collaborative organizations to serve youth) are considered early and intermediate outcomes, necessary to achieve longer-term youth and community outcomes. For each of these 11 outcomes, a set of indicators has been identified to monitor progress. Data for these indicators will be collected through: a community organizational survey; an adult survey; a youth survey; focus group discussions; and extant data analysis. Recognizing that identifying and using comparison communities is not feasible for this evaluation, AED is using a pre- and post-KYIP Framework evaluation design to assess KYIP sites' achievement of Framework goals.

- *Process Evaluation:* The process evaluation will examine the degree to which the strategies and scope of work described in the Framework for the Future and each site's strategic plans are actually comparable to what is reported and observed in the sites. Using data from surveys, site visits, meetings, and correspondence, evaluators will examine what is occurring at the sites. This will be helpful to the Foundation in monitoring the overall progress of the KYIP partnerships and can be used to identify and then address program-wide technical assistance needs.

- *Context Evaluation:* In addition to examining the implementation of KYIP and its outcomes, evaluators will also examine the context of the larger social and economic factors within which KYIP is operating to clarify the extent to which changes in outcome data are related to the initiative rather than other factors. This includes analysis of the demographic and socioeconomic factors that affect both participation in KYIP and its outcomes; unintended outcomes; and factors such as other public or private programs or economic fluctuations in a local industry or local economy that could affect KYIP outcomes.

Analysis of qualitative and quantitative data will occur at two levels. First, data will be interpreted at the site level within the context of each site's specific conditions. However, site-level analyses will not be conducted for comparative purposes. Analyses will also be conducted at the initiative level, serving the purpose of a cluster evaluation. These analyses will address the implementation and utility of the common framework and strategies of all three sites, as well as the suitability of the overall initiative to bring a new vision of youth development to the respective communities. ✦

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Comprehensive Community Development and Family Support: An HFRP Report Highlights Central Themes and Common Ground

The well-being of individuals cannot be ensured separately from the well-being of families and communities. Many traditional government programs designed to remedy disadvantage, however, focus on individuals without regard to the communities or the families in which they live. In contrast to this piecemeal approach, the practice of comprehensive community development builds on the idea that neighborhoods are like ecosystems, interconnected so that the health of each part depends on the well-being of the whole. Comprehensive community development, rather than addressing problems as isolated phenomena, pursues three goals simultaneously: individual empowerment, neighborhood development, and political action.

Eight Themes in Comprehensive Community Development: An Annotated Bibliography, recently published by HFRP, reviews the current literature related to comprehensive community development, highlighting the potential for collaboration between family support and community development programs.

It presents an annotated bibliography of recent community-development and family-support resources and an overview of this literature organized according to the following eight core practices:

- ***Supporting families:*** Community-based family support programs focus on how good parenting can be facilitated or frustrated by the economic and social environments in which parents find themselves. In turn, family circumstances may determine the extent to which individuals can take advantages of opportunities that exist in their communities. Family support programs take a variety of forms in connection with other aspects of community development, from informal parenting groups to formal programs that aid families in difficulties; all of them, however, take a proactive, broad-based approach to helping families, emphasizing accessibility and partnership.

- ***Thinking in terms of assets:*** Asset-based community development draws upon and develops the strengths and resources of neighborhoods, families, and individuals. Focusing on using and developing assets encourages residents to set and pursue their own goals for community development and for their own lives. In practice, an assets-based approach could include activities ranging from making an inventory of already existing community resources to helping individuals, families, and neighborhoods develop their own capital, for example, in the form of savings for education or home ownership.

> Community development organizations which pursue a comprehensive approach must balance process … with the need to produce visible short-term results

- ***Seeing the big picture:*** Although comprehensive community development, by definition, focuses on local projects, it benefits from an awareness of the larger context in which it works: the city, the country, even the world economy. This perspective allows communities to tailor their projects to suit economic conditions and possibilities and think about the ways in which their efforts might fit into a larger aim of improving whole cities.

- ***Working collaboratively:*** Working collaboratively means sharing expertise, talents, and resources in pursuit of a common goal. Collaboration can be an important tool in developing the wide range of services and opportunities for neighborhood residents that accord with a comprehensive view of community development. Collaborating organizations can concentrate on their own area(s) of expertise and conserve resources by avoiding duplication of services within a community.

- ***Balancing process and product:*** Community development organizations which pursue a comprehensive approach must balance process – the attempt to build community in ways which empower residents to sustain progress over the long term – with the need to produce visible short-term results, or product. Process involves planning, community organizing, and the development of collaborative, democratic, and accountable systems of governance. Product, in contrast, is represented concretely by newly built or renovated and well-managed buildings as well as other visible, successful events and programs, from expanded child care services to reclaimed parks.

- ***Building unity from diversity:*** Community development, by definition, grows out of an area in which people have something in common – at the least, residence in the same geographical area. It works by trying to transform this shared location into a stronger bond of shared goals and experiences. However, the emphasis on building connections need not imply an insistence on homogeneity. All communities are diverse in some way, whether through racial, ethnic, class, or age differences. Ignoring diversity risks excluding members of the community from the development process. Taking the claims of diversity seriously points to the importance of actively addressing the linguistic and cultural gulfs that may exist both within a community and between the community and the staff members that become involved in community development efforts.

- ***Drawing on multiple sources of funding:*** Practitioners of comprehensive community development typically construct a kind of mosaic of different sources of funding, including the federal government, state and local governments, local and national foundations, and corporations. While having diverse sources of funding may increase flexibility, cobbling together a budget from a wide range of sources makes fund raising a time-consuming and expensive activity.

- ***Focusing on youth:*** Community programs which focus on youth may take a number of forms, from employment and training to recreation. Such programs may aim not only to serve youth, but also to engage them as stakeholders in the process of governance and to realize their potential as assets for the community by involving them in community development efforts. The future of community development efforts rests on successfully cultivating leadership skills and commitment to the community in the next generation. ✦

Louisa Lund
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***Eight Themes in Comprehensive Community Development: An Annotated Bibliography*, is now available from HFRP publications. Contact the Publications Office at (617) 496-4304 to order. [Themes] 28 pages. $7.00**

Electronic Mailbox

Community Toolbox
http://ctb.lsi.ukans.edu/
The Community Toolbox is designed to promote community health and development by connecting people, ideas, and resources. The Web site includes tools (such as "how-to" materials; linkages to other information, people, funding and resources; exchange network for individuals to share experiences; and inspirational quotes to "help sustain work in communities"), information on publications, and the Technical Assistance and Community Documentation and Evaluation System.

The Best Practices Database
http://www.bestpractices.org
This searchable database, sponsored by The Together Foundation and United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, stores proven solutions to common urban problems facing communities throughout the world. Projects featured in the database address many issues of concern, including poverty, economic development, social services, housing and land use, and urban governance. Users can view summaries of innovative projects by geographic region or project initiative.

CINet
http://www.rprogress.org/program/cinet_progsum.html
The Community Indicators Network (CINet) of Redefining Progress (RP) is managing the RP-CINET listserve for CINet participants and others interested in designing, developing, or researching community indicators. The goal of RP-CINET is to provide a forum to link existing emerging community indicators projects, to exchange ideas and information in the field of community indicators, and collectively to support the growing number of community indicators initiatives in the United States and worldwide. RP-CINET is managed using Majordomo, an automated mailing list software. The list is closed and unmoderated. To subscribe, send a message to Majordomo@igc.org with the following message in the body of the text: subscribe rp-cinet. After your message is received, you will receive a welcome message explaining the RP-CINET protocol.

The Alliance for National Renewal
http://www.ncl.org/anr
The Alliance for National Renewal (ANR) connects people and organizations for community renewal. Their Web site works toward this goal by offering stories of community renewal on topics that include children, youth, and families, economic development, civic infrastructure, education, and community diversity. The site also offers an extensive list of resources for community builders.

The U.S. Census Bureau Data Access Tools
http://www.census.gov/main/www/access.html
The Census Bureau offers a series of user-friendly tools for extracting and displaying a wealth of information on communities across the United States. The interactive software on this site allows users to generate detailed maps with self-selected statistical information.

CIESIN U.S. Demography Home Page
http://www.ciesin.org/datasets/us-demog/us-demog-home.html
As part of an effort to support the efforts of decision makers, programs, scientists, and the public, this site provides simple access to demographic information across the United States. Users can link to national data sources, on-line supporting documentation, and methods or tools for extracting data.

CINet Web Page
http://www.rprogress.org
This Web page, produced by the Community Indicators Network of Redefining Progress, facilitates communication and information-sharing among community groups, professionals, and academics. A searchable database of over 100 community indicators projects will provide users with valuable project information on publications and upcoming events. ✦

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We regret that we cannot provide copies of the materials listed below. If you are interested in obtaining any of these resources, please contact the publisher or authoring organization directly.

Dewar, Thomas. (1997). *A guide to evaluating asset-based community development: Lessons, challenges, and opportunities*. *A community building workbook*. Evanston, IL: The Asset-Based Community Development Institute, Northwestern University. This document provides guidance about how evaluation strategies can more actually improve the work of community builders. It identifies and clarifies the most important issues and dilemmas that come up in trying to evaluate community-building projects and suggests ten important principles for those wishing to implement evaluation strategies which are appropriate for this work.

Fulbright-Anderson, Karen, Kubisch, Anne C., and Connell, James P. (1997). *New approaches to evaluating community initiatives, Volume II: Theory, measurement, and analysis*. Washington, DC: Aspen Institute. This volume explores the contribution a theory of change approach to evaluation makes to the fields of community revitalization and human development. An introductory paper provides an overview of the approach, followed by a set of papers by evaluators describing their experiences carrying out a theory of change evaluation. Other papers discuss the challenges associated with measuring community change and with collecting community-level data and the problem of causality in complex community initiatives.

Redefining Progress. (1997) *The community indicators handbook*. *Measuring progress toward healthy & sustainable communities*. San Francisco, CA: author. This handbook aims to assist communities in developing new measures of their overall health and well-being. It presents communities with how-to's and resources for tailoring an indicator project to their specific needs. Appendices include a directory of indicator projects nationwide, sample menus of categories and indicators, and a collection of useful data sources and organizational resources.

Rogers, Susan. (1997). *Engaging and empowering community and program staff in evaluation*. Washington, DC: Academy for Educational Development. This paper, used as a basis for a presentation at an evaluation forum entitled *Critical Issues in HIV Prevention Evaluation*, examines the issue of including staff and community members in evaluation. The paper discusses several ways of conducting evaluations as a context for discussing approaches to engaging and empowering community and program staff members, including utilization-focused evaluation, empowerment evaluation, and the HIV prevention collaborative institute.

Rossi, Peter H. (1998 forthcoming). Evaluating community development programs: Problems and prospects. In Ferguson, Ronald & Dickens, William. (Eds.) *Community Development Programs*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institute. This chapter describes current evaluation research in the area of comprehensive community initiatives, including policy formation evaluation research, diagnostic program research, and impact and efficiency research. It includes a discussion of the issues that arise in evaluating community development programs, discusses the prospects for developing practical CDP evaluation procedures, and sets forth a series of topics for which further research is necessary. It criticizes current non-experimental impact assessment evaluations as being flawed and advocates for random experiments using communities as the unit of analysis. It also strongly supports the use of process evaluations for program improvement but not for impact assessment.

W.W. Kellogg Foundation. (1997). *Evaluation Handbook for W.K. Kellogg Foundation Grantees*. Battle Creek, MI: author. This handbook provides a framework for thinking about evaluation as a relevant and useful program tool. Part One presents an overview of the Foundation's philosophy and expectations for evaluation, a summary of the most important characteristics of the Foundation's evaluation approach, a review of the historical context of evaluation, and an overview of the Foundation's three levels of evaluation (project-level evaluation; cluster evaluation; and program and policymaking evaluation). Part Two provides a blueprint for planning, designing, and conducting project-level evaluation, using case study examples. To order a copy of the handbook, contact Collateral Management Company, (616) 964-0700. Ask for Item #1203.

Walsh, Joan. (1997 January). *Stories of renewal: Community building and the future of urban America*. New York: The Rockefeller Foundation. This report uses five case studies of community building projects to illustrate issues such as: engaging with government systems such as schools, welfare departments, and the criminal justice system; building local institutions; investing in outreach and organizing; involving the corporate sector; and developing new structures of governance and participation. The report highlights lessons about community-building, and includes a discussion of the importance of leadership and of facing racial issues constructively.

The Wingspread Journal. This journal is published quarterly by The Johnson Foundation. Each issue reports on one of the Foundation's four program priorities: enhancing learning productivity; developing civil and civic community; encouraging the involvement of adults in the lives of children and youth; and fostering sustainable community development. To receive a free subscription, call (414) 681-3351, fax: (414)681-3327, or e-mail: <wingsprd@execpc.com>. ✦

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HFRP announces the publication of the following new reports in its FAMILIES MATTER series, which provides a training framework for family-centered child care and its application in community colleges and child care resource and referral agencies.

• **Parent-Provider Partnerships.** 1998. M. Parker Anderson. This paper discusses how to work with children and families from diverse backgrounds, as well as some of the challenging issues raised by working with families having differing values, cultural norms, and experiences. [PROVFM] 23 pages. $7.00

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