

COMMUNITY BUILDING COMING OF AGE

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Preface

Community building: an idea that is beginning to resonate across a surprising range of America's leadership as the 20th century draws to a close. In mid-1995, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development jointly funded a project to broaden understanding of community building and its implications. The work of the project—implemented by the Development Training Institute (DTI) and the Urban Institute—centered around six seminars which examined the historic movements out of which today's community building practice is evolving. Seminar participants included community building practitioners, interested researchers, foundation representatives, and federal and local officials.

Project sponsors called for the preparation of two written products. The first is a book consisting of the papers commissioned for the seminars, and commentary presented at the seminars, along with additional essays that help to put these materials in context. Sponsors recognized that while the historic movements discussed are relevant to today's policy, no one volume exists telling their stories, and exploring interrelationships and directions, all in one place. The book should place community initiatives in perspective in a manner that can serve both as a guide to policy and practice and to orient a new generation of practitioners.

The project's second product is this monograph, which attempts to explain more cogently what community building is, and to develop recommendations on how it might best be supported. Here, we draw not only on discussions and papers from the seminars, but also on a small but growing literature describing recent community building efforts and contemplating their potentials.

This first draft of this monograph was prepared by a small team of DTI and Urban Institute staff who participated in the project (G. Thomas Kingsley, Joseph B. McNeely, and James O. Gibson). The draft was then presented for review to a core panel that had participated in all of the earlier seminars (see Annex A). The panel was convened for a full-day meeting to

offer comments, discuss options, and consider changes. We cannot say that all panel members fully endorse all that is said in this revised monograph, but there was broad support for its basic arguments and recommendations as now written.

We do not conclude here that community building is a panacea. Community building cannot provide all of the jobs or other opportunities that will be needed to diminish poverty and social isolation in this country. But there are many case experiences showing that community building initiatives can make an important difference in people's lives; that they can enhance opportunities for those now impoverished and, probably more important, equip them much more powerfully to take advantage of opportunities that become available to them. We think this is enough (even without a longer track record and more formal evaluation) to warrant describing the new convergence of ideas about community building clearly and disseminating them so they can be considered and scrutinized by a broad range of actors concerned with the future of our society.

**COMMUNITY
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Executive Summary

Community building's central theme is to obliterate feelings of dependency and to replace them with attitudes of self-reliance, self-confidence, and responsibility.

This monograph discusses a new approach that is emerging to help address the problems and opportunities of both impoverished inner-city neighborhoods and rural areas. Most of its practitioners are now calling it *community building*. It works by building *community* in individual neighborhoods: neighbors learning to rely on each other, working together on concrete tasks that take advantage of new self-awareness of their collective and individual assets and, in the process, creating human, family, and social capital that provides a new base for a more promising future and reconnection to America's mainstream.

It is not a uniformly defined methodology; different themes dominate its application in different places. It has not been fully evaluated or even tested at a broad scale. And it is not totally new—a number of its component techniques have been in use individually for decades.

Nonetheless, good reasons exist to describe the approach as significant, and to make people concerned with social policy across the country more aware of it. While advocates often disagree about the nuances of how community building should be applied, there is a growing consensus on a number of basic themes. Those themes are woven together in a way that sets the new community building apart quite clearly from neighborhood-based programs of the past. And community-building initiatives claim credit for many individual successes: stories of dramatic turnarounds in attitudes and accomplishments in seemingly hopeless environments. Stories that are striking, particularly given a public dialogue that has been so overwhelmingly pessimistic about the prospects for poor communities.

Probably the feature that most starkly contrasts community building with approaches to poverty alleviation that have been typical in America over the past half-century is that its primary aim is not simply giving more money, services, or other material benefits to the poor. While most of its advocates recognize a continuing need for considerable outside assistance (public and private), community building's central theme is to obliterate feelings of dependency and to replace them with attitudes of self-reliance, self-confidence, and responsibility. It gives high priority to establishing and

It may seem surprising that the successes described above have occurred in the context of today's urban poverty. By 1990, Americans had all but given up on the inner cities.

reinforcing sound values. And these are not ideas being imposed from the outside—they are what the leaders of distressed neighborhoods across the nation themselves are saying they want to see accomplished.

CONTEXT AND CONVERGENCE

Community building strategies can make a significant difference. There is now evidence of many cases where the residents of poor communities have dramatically changed their circumstances by organizing to assume responsibility for their own destinies. For example:

- In 1976, residents of a low-income Indianapolis community formed their own Development Corporation which has since trained a team of local residents in housing repair and rehabilitation that now earns fees from work in high-income areas to help support its ongoing refurbishment of housing in the community; converted an abandoned school into a successful rental project with affordable apartments; developed its own industrial park (which now houses 32 businesses); established a fund which has made more than \$1 million worth of venture capital loans to small firms in the community; established a day care cooperative and trained residents to provide affordable child care to neighbors who needed it; and established special service programs for teen parents, special-needs elderly and homeless, adults with chronic mental illness, and battered women.
- The tenants association of a Washington, D.C., public housing project took over the management of the project and set up a number of its own social service, educational, and economic development initiatives. Over its first four years of control, it increased rent collections by 77 percent; decreased the project vacancy rate from 18 percent to 5 percent; created 102 jobs for residents (10 on its own staff and 92 running other businesses it had started); and helped at least 132 residents get off of welfare. Seven years after it began, crimes had dropped from a 12 to 15 per month to an average of only 2. In the first 15 years of a campaign to further resident education, 700 project youth went on to college after high school (75 percent graduated).
- A community group in a low-income Baltimore neighborhood initiated an all-out war on the local drug trade through a variety of activities, often implemented in partnership with the police and other agencies. These included denying drug dealers the space to conduct their trade (boarding up abandoned buildings, fencing off alleys, etc.); conducting community cleanups and providing additional street lighting; communicating the community's intolerance of drugs (e.g., conducting vigils, holding marches); partnering with an outreach treatment program; and establishing positive alternatives for youth (e.g., special summer programs). Between 1993 and 1995, violent crime decreased by 52 percent and arrests for drugs in the community dropped by 80 percent.

Policy interest is growing because of an increased awareness of the importance of community. It may seem surprising that the successes described above have occurred in the context of today's urban poverty. By 1990, Americans had all but given up on the inner cities. Over the preceding decade the media had fed them accounts of seem-

ingly pervasive social disorder: vanishing two-parent families, mushrooming rates of teen-pregnancy, the crack epidemic, murders and other crimes, mounting gang disruption, schools out of control, welfare dependency, deepening unemployment and poverty.

Some began to believe that all of this was a product of a different culture—a different set of values—but that view has clearly been undermined.

- First, more evidence has indicated that the intensification of inner-city problems in the 1980s arose primarily due to a confluence of forces whose impacts became particularly damaging at that time; most important, the loss of manufacturing jobs in the cities (jobs that had once provided decent wages to low-skilled workers) and the loss of *community*. The latter occurred as large numbers of middle-income households of all races moved to the suburbs, breaking up neighborhood institutions and friendship networks and removing the role models increasingly recognized as critical to developing positive motivations for youth. While the white poor are reasonably spread through our metropolitan regions, racial segregation continues to keep poor people of color concentrated in inner-city neighborhoods, deepening their isolation from the mainstream society.
- Second, while the number of young people in poor neighborhoods who have fallen into debilitating life styles is far from trivial, surveys have shown that for the sizeable majority of residents in those neighborhoods there has been no change in underlying values or life-goals. There is still a strong desire to work for a living and to raise their children to be stable and productive members of society.
- Finally, studies suggested that the fact that our traditional social service system has not been very effective in addressing these problems may be more due to its own structural weaknesses—bureaucratically fragmented services delivered by outside professionals, intervening only in response to crises, seemingly incapable of the more holistic support needed for prevention—than attributes of those being served.

Interest in community-based approaches to addressing inner-city problems has been buttressed indirectly by the prominence of recent literature on the importance of stronger civil society and community life for America as a whole. This has emphasized that the existence of networks of nongovernmental civic institutions is vital to the performance of *governance* at all levels. But more basically, it has reminded us how critical neighborhood level institutions (e.g., associations, churches) and friendship networks are to families and children everywhere—neighbors who know and trust each other, watching over each others' children, maintaining and reinforcing values, providing mutual support in times of need, providing contacts to help each other find and take advantage of outside opportunities, and assuming responsibility for action when threats and opportunities affecting common interests arise.

Community-based initiatives are spreading and practice is beginning to converge around common themes. Major community improvement experiments managed by the federal government (e.g., Model Cities, the Community Action Program) were phased out in the 1970s. Since then, however, there has been a substantial expansion of *nongovernmental* initiatives in low-income communities, particularly after the Reagan-era cutbacks in urban assistance. The strengthening of local Community Development Corporations (CDCs)—which have focused on the construction and

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rehabilitation of housing—and the creation of strong national intermediaries to support CDC programs may be most noteworthy in this regard. But many other community-level associations have been created to address other issues: e.g., fighting drugs and crime, securing better social services, school improvement, finding and creating jobs, and confronting local governments and other outsiders on projects residents think would threaten their interests. National foundations have been prominent in funding these activities, but local business and philanthropic groups have also been important, as has indirect assistance through a number of special-purpose federal and state programs and block grants.

Although there are no precise measures, there are indications that community-based action is accelerating in the 1990s. There is also evidence that the approaches of practitioners who come out of very different backgrounds are beginning to converge. CDCs are now reaching out and working with residents to address a broad range of social issues beyond housing. Community organizers who once focused only on “fighting city hall” are now also working on constructive self-help projects and partnering with outside agencies. Neighborhood leaders are now working together with Police Departments on community policing programs and partnering with city agencies in social service delivery. National foundations are sponsoring *comprehensive community initiatives* in neighborhoods of several cities that attempt to bring together the many strands of the new approach. Local foundations (e.g., in Cleveland and Boston) have sponsored the development of city-wide strategies based on the community building approach and a number of city governments are adapting their own programs to work with community associations as partners.

COMMUNITY BUILDING THEMES

Looking over these experiences, we believe that seven themes define the essence of the new community building. They also show how today’s approaches contrast with narrower neighborhood programs of the past and help explain how they can work most effectively. Today’s community building needs to be:

(1) *Focused around specific improvement initiatives in a manner that reinforces values and builds social and human capital.* Like the leaders of past neighborhood initiatives, today’s community builders spend most of their time working with their neighbors on productive activities to which they give priority, whether it is cleaning up a vacant lot, planning a housing project, trying to improve school quality, or mounting a citizen’s patrol to prevent crime. But compared to their predecessors, they give more emphasis to broader objectives of such activities: building the friendships, mutual trust, institutions, and capacity that form the *social capital* that is, in turn, essential to fundamentally strengthening the lives of families and individual human beings. And they act purposefully to assure that opportunities to achieve these deeper objectives are taken advantage of. They value cleaning up a vacant lot and building a new housing project, but they will not be satisfied until they have created an environment in which children grow up strong so that no more of them will be lost to gangs and drugs.

(2) *Community-driven with broad resident involvement.* If social capital is to be built—if attitudes of dependency are to be replaced with those of self-reliance—community residents must largely do it for themselves. “Community participation” is not enough. The community must play the central role in devising and implementing



strategies for its own improvement. This does not mean that outside facilitators cannot help show them the way, or that they cannot accept outside help or accomplish goals by partnering with outside agencies, but neighborhood residents must feel that they “own” the improvement process. Success also depends on a substantial share of the residents being directly involved in that process. Community leaders must consistently reach out for broad involvement and avoid becoming a remote elite themselves.

(3) *Comprehensive, strategic and entrepreneurial.* Impoverished neighborhoods are beset by multiple, interrelated challenges. Ultimately, all of them (crime prevention, better education, jobs, physical improvement, etc.) need to be addressed. Continuing to specialize in only one or two over time is not likely to result in fundamental change—community building must be *comprehensive*. However, thinking comprehensively does not mean it is wise to try to do everything at the same time at the outset. Successful community building today often starts with an assessment of community assets (see below) and a brief planning phase, but it does not wait too long to move into action. It works entrepreneurially to identify and tackle one or two high priority issues and produce some results from those quickly (results build confidence and capacity). But as it does so, it is simultaneously rethinking and fleshing out a broader long-term vision and strategy, reassessing priorities and opportunities, and laying the groundwork for other linked initiatives that will create a comprehensive agenda over time.

(4) *Asset-based.* Planning community initiatives from the perspective of “solving problems” or “meeting needs” casts a negative tone on what should be an exciting capacity building venture. The alternative is to identify the community’s *assets* and develop plans that build on them. All distressed neighborhoods do have a substantial number of assets: the skills and entrepreneurial ideas of local residents, neighborhood businesses, churches and other community institutions, sports and social clubs. Even things you do not control directly (hospitals, vacant land, schools, libraries) can become your assets if you plan and partner as needed to take advantage of them. Moreover, the act of jointly inventorying assets is itself a powerful community organizing device that, by evidencing opportunities to change things, motivates collaboration and commitment to action.

(5) *Tailored to neighborhood scale and conditions.* The core unit for the new community building should be a *neighborhood* (usually 5,000 to 10,000 people) for two reasons. First, the natural face-to-face interactions that support friendships and mutual trust among most residents do not work as well at much above that scale. Second, even in the concentrated poverty areas of inner cities, neighborhood conditions vary substantially—planning only for larger areas is likely to miss nuances that are often critical to effective strategies (e.g., neighborhood A has a strong and supportive elementary school principal while neighborhood B, next door, does not, yet the drug trade is much more open and threatening in A than B). In preparing for community building in a city, it may well be advisable to set up resident-driven institutions that cover larger areas (clusters of neighborhoods), since individual neighborhoods are often too small a planning area for some functions (e.g., economic development, health care). But such entities need to keep the differences between their component neighborhoods in mind as they operate and recognize that those components need to develop their own sense of identity if social and human capital is to be built successfully.

Success also depends on a substantial share of the residents being directly involved in that process.



No one should expect that community building will be an immediate “sure winner” in every poor neighborhood where it is attempted.

(6) Collaboratively linked to the broader society to strengthen community institutions and enhance outside opportunities for residents. Community activists of the past sometimes conveyed the impression that they wanted to make inner-city neighborhoods self-contained and largely independent from the pernicious society around them. The tone was dominated by conflict. An important difference with today’s community builders is that they recognize that dream as self-defeating. They look proactively to end the devastating isolation of inner-city neighborhoods that has emerged in recent years. They mount initiatives to prepare their residents for work and link them to outside jobs, while at the same time trying to stimulate new business formation within their own boundaries. They look for opportunities to partner with outside institutions (social service agencies, police departments, local business and philanthropic groups, universities) in ways that will serve their own interests and strengthen their own internal institutions. This does not mean that there will never be conflict, but community builders will try to use conflict as a tool of a positive agenda rather than letting it become an end in itself. Their interaction with outside institutions also provides an opportunity to work toward changing the practices of those institutions so that they will become stronger partners and more sensitive to community interests in the future.

(7) Consciously changing institutional barriers and racism. Community building is not simply a matter of strengthening the connection between mainstream economic, political, and social institutions and those neighborhoods which have become isolated; it also requires all the institutions involved to give up “business as usual.” Community building by collaboratively linking the isolated community to mainstream structures provides the contact within which a demand for fundamental change can be proffered by those who need it most, and the relationships and mechanisms of collaboration within which change can be accomplished in a way that all parties involved meet their institutional needs. As in all relationships, the coming together is not without conflict, but community building efforts bring the best skills of organization development and conflict resolution to bear so that solution, rather than blame, is the focus and parties see in their differences assets they can contribute to the common endeavor. One strength of community building is that it focuses on concrete outcomes. Commitment to the product draws participants beyond conventional barriers. Since a great deal of the isolation of minority communities is the product of racial discrimination, race matters in community building efforts. Racial prejudice can neither be ignored nor made the centerpiece. Parties in successful community building are willing to recognize the pervasive influence of race, acknowledge its direct impact on particular issues under consideration, and address that impact directly as a step in moving toward progress on the issue. Not infrequently, the impact of race must be discussed openly and steps taken to change behaviors and attitudes that spring from racism. For the most part, successful community building efforts are addressing the impact of racism as part of their problem-solving effort in community building issues. In fact, it may be the focus on the solving of other problems which enables an engagement on race among stakeholders who otherwise might be reluctant to open the conversation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) A national campaign to further the new community building is warranted. The broad group of nongovernmental and governmental institutions already involved in the field should expand their efforts and find new ways to collaborate so that such a campaign can be mounted. Community building practice is spreading. Increasing adherence to the themes outlined above is giving it a new maturity and effectiveness. The trends suggest that the movement is coming of age. However, it is not yet broadly enough applied to adequately meet the challenges of poor communities that it is uniquely equipped to address. It makes abundant sense to mount a nationwide campaign to further such activity.

No one should expect that community building will be an immediate “sure winner” in every poor neighborhood where it is attempted. However, given a growing list of community building success stories and, perhaps more compellingly, the virtual consensus now about the failure of past programmatic alternatives, we judge that there is no reason to wait to further enhance its practice and spread the word about it. It is also important to recognize that furthering community building, in and of itself, does not imply any major reallocation of public budgets. Community building is an alternative approach that affects *how* funds available for poverty alleviation are spent, regardless of the level of funding available. Indeed, because it relies less on bureaucracies and gives more emphasis to *preventing* bad outcomes for families and children, the case can be made that it should be a more efficient mechanism for deploying resources than those currently in force.

We judge that community building should be furthered, however, by collaboration among private and public interests, and not through the creation of any single new federal program. Direct federal programs often bring with them a level of external control likely to stifle the local creativity and initiative upon which successful community building depends. What is needed is more intensified and cohesive effort, information sharing, flexibility, and collaboration among key national entities already operating in this field.

Such groups include the National Community Building Network (NCBN), the National Congress for Community Economic Development (NCCED), the United Way, the Congress of National Black Churches, the Aspen Roundtable, the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), the Development Training Institute (DTI), the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), the America Project, the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation, the Chapin Hall Center, the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, the Enterprise Foundation, the Urban Institute, the National Association of Neighborhood Centers, the Family Resource Coalition, and the Alliance for National Renewal (several more could easily be added).

In addition, major national foundations that have made commitments to improving poor communities should also be leading partners in this effort: for example, Annie E. Casey, Ford, Kauffman, Kellogg, J.D. and C.T. MacArthur, Mott, Pew Charitable Trusts, Rockefeller, and Surdna. And, indeed, the federal government should also be a partner.

We offer no definite plan for how these actors should organize themselves to develop a campaign to further community building—but only challenge them to find a way to do so. Clearly, early steps would have to include a series of convenings across groups in the spirit of partnership.

The campaign itself would have to focus on spurring and supporting action at the local level. It should help leaders in metropolitan areas across the country devise workable strategies to strengthen community building through local programs and organizations and collaborations among them. Local foundations should be called upon to convene leadership groups and support this initiative in their areas.

It is also important to recognize that furthering community building, in and of itself, does not imply any major reallocation of public budgets.

Community building cannot be expected to expand rapidly enough spontaneously. Needed is a growing cadre of committed individuals who are skilled at facilitating it.

(2) Local governments should reorient their programs and operating style to make partnerships with community builders central to their agendas. A key objective of the campaign should be to provide information about community building to local public agencies—county welfare and social service agencies as well as city community development, public works, and police departments. Such agencies will have a significant impact on community building whatever they do. It is quite likely that they will undermine it if they either: (a) ignore it; or (b) try to take it over. The only positive alternative is partnership—arrangements in which local agencies allow communities to come to the table as independent (not dependent) collaborators. All collaborators should then take on clear performance obligations and hold each other accountable for results. Some localities are already moving in these directions. For example: allowing communities to set their own priorities for neighborhood service and public works investments; providing matching funds to enhance the financial feasibility of community development projects being financed largely by private sources; encouraging community groups to compete with other nonprofits to design and deliver an expanded array of social services delivered in their own neighborhoods; encouraging training and hiring of community residents (rather than outside workers) wherever possible in social service delivery and physical improvement initiatives. In many cities, however, considerable effort will be required to transform agency attitudes and practices to support this new style of operation.

(3) A high priority should be given to establishing (or strengthening) nongovernmental locally based intermediaries to support community building and community interests in all metropolitan areas. Community building cannot be expected to expand rapidly enough spontaneously. Needed is a growing cadre of committed individuals who are skilled at facilitating it—people who can encourage community action in neighborhoods and help it in process without dominating it themselves; people



the communities see as “being on their side”; people who can help represent community interests with outside entities and link them to outside resources. Who should employ these facilitators? National organizations are too far removed from the local action to guide this work sensitively. Local governments are better at playing the role of independent partner (sometimes their interests and those of the community will legitimately differ). The most promising alternative appears to be the establishment of *nongovernmental locally based intermediaries*. Organizations with such capabilities, in fact, already exist in a number of cities—often linked to a local community foundation or some other entity that is seen as a nonpartisan long-term stakeholder in the city’s future. The accomplishments of several are impressive. The campaign should encourage local leadership groups to strengthen those that exist and form new intermediaries where they are needed.

(4) National supporters should work to substantially strengthen training and technical assistance capacity for community building, and build public awareness of its importance. In addition to their campaign in local areas, the national foundations and interest groups, in partnership with federal agencies, are in a position to play the pivotal role in expanding nationwide capacity to train professionals and neighborhood leaders in community building. Many reputable training institutions that focus on neighborhood improvement already exist—the task is more one of helping to strengthen them, and furthering convergence around the new model of effective community building practice, than it is in establishing new institutions. But there are gaps: universities have done little to integrate community building themes and techniques into relevant graduate programs; the involvement of the nation’s community colleges, ideal sites for local training in this field, has been negligible to date; little attention has been paid to training government officials on the benefits they could gain from partnering with community groups or how they might best approach it. The foundations and national interest groups should work with these educational institutions and encourage them to do more. They should also call upon relevant professional associations to host sessions on community building in their annual meetings and to sponsor efforts to integrate relevant community building themes in their own professional practice. Finally, they should mount a national awareness campaign to better inform policy makers and the public at large about how community building works and the potential it has to offer.

(5) Federal and state governments should play a strong role as supporting partners in this initiative. Federal and state governments should lend their support to this effort as partners, but not as controlling partners. A good model is the way national support has been given to CDCs over the past decade: local neighborhood initiatives and national nongovernmental intermediaries played the leading role, and subsequently, the federal government provided financial and informational assistance without directing the strategy. Federal and state governments can provide financial help through several vehicles: (1) by funding block grants that give localities considerable latitude in expenditure decisions, but incorporate requirements for community involvement in decision making and the provision of some minimum level of support

There is an urgent need for governments at all levels to get on with reforms that make public, and publicly supported, systems that affect the lives of the poor work more effectively and equitably.

directly to community groups (this is what HUD is doing already in the Empowerment Zone and HOME programs); (2) by being one of many contributors to a national fund supporting the advancement of community building; and (3) by offering grants for specific innovative projects directly to community groups on a competitive basis. Federal and state governments can also support training and information clearing houses, and make use of the “bully pulpit” to encourage the support of others in advancing community building as a part of the campaign proposed here.

(6) *All supporters should find ways to nurture community building in individual neighborhoods, and avoid overwhelming it.* Community building tends to build neighborhood capacity in increments. Supporters need to recognize that such a process will take time and that, in any neighborhood, there will be setbacks along the way. Their goal should be to help “move it up a notch at a time.” They should learn how to help communities bounce back from interim failures and avoid being too “desperate for final outcomes” in the short term. They should fund it incrementally as well. In some of the best examples, funders have made their commitment to long-term support dependent on performance. Neighborhood leaders have understood that funding for the next increment of work would depend on their performance on the last. Needed is a new system of *social venture capitalists* who know how to provide incentives for results yet, as long as the process continues to offer promise, be willing to support mid-course corrections and have the patience to see it through.

CONCLUSIONS

Ironically, after a period when American social policy has with good reason given emphasis to “people based” strategies for addressing urban poverty (moving away from some of the more narrowly defined “place based” strategies of the past), community building is suggesting that, for a large portion of the nation’s poor, a new kind of concentrated initiative in individual neighborhoods may be extremely important to getting people-based objectives implemented effectively. Community building is an approach that integrates the best features of both place-based and people-based strategies.

This monograph does not conclude with a recommendation of large new federal or state funding programs to support community building per se. We think there is an urgent need for governments at all levels to get on with reforms that make public, and publicly supported, systems that affect the lives of the poor work more effectively and equitably; e.g., job training and placement, child care, schools, police, health services, public assistance, social services. Many of us think those systems, when reformed, will warrant higher levels of resources, not less; but that is not an issue we try to debate here.

Our recommendation is that those institutions adjust the way they do business to support and take advantage of the community building approach. And doing that, in and of itself, is not likely to be very expensive. Indeed, the case can be made that it could lead to nontrivial savings in dollar terms and, much more importantly, in human terms.

Community building depends on rebuilding a sense of hope. Our broader society, and the poor themselves, are now focused on gainful employment as the way out of poverty. If the economy does not produce the needed jobs, or if the jobs are there but they pay lower-than-poverty wages and there is no back-up support, or if the support programs and changes to legal and discriminatory barriers necessary for them to access job opportunities do not emerge, or if schools and other key public institutions are not strengthened—i.e., if there really is no hope—community building cannot help much. If, however, there is a realistic basis for hope, the case can be made that community building can be a valuable means to both motivate and help the poor to take advantage of it.



CHAPTER

1



Context and Convergence

Recent years have evidenced a growing number of initiatives in which the residents of poor neighborhoods themselves have made significant strides toward transforming conditions in their own communities. Many of these have been among the areas most severely devastated by the trends in the character of urban poverty in the 1980s.

This chapter introduces the new community building and explains the basis for increasing recognition of its importance. We begin by reviewing a few notable examples of community building practice—instances where the approach has had a significant impact. We then look back at the context of deepening poverty in our cities to try to understand why such successes have been possible. Finally, we review the growth of community-based initiatives and national support for them over the past two decades and show how practice that started out of quite disparate traditions now appears to be converging around common themes.

NOTABLE COMMUNITY-BASED INITIATIVES

Recent years have evidenced a growing number of initiatives in which the residents of poor neighborhoods themselves have made significant strides toward transforming conditions in their own communities. Many of these have been among the areas most severely devastated by the trends in the character of urban poverty in the 1980s—places, according to the conventional wisdom, where one might least expect them. Five examples illustrate the range of their accomplishments.

Eastside Community Investments, Inc., Indianapolis

The decline of industrial jobs in Indianapolis began to take its toll on the city's racially mixed Eastside community in the mid-1970s. The residents' association already established there held a series of neighborhood meetings which identified jobs and housing as the community's highest priorities. Their response was to form a community development corporation: Eastside Community Investments, Inc. (ECI). More than 500 residents served as incorporators. An economic development plan was developed and adopted by the ECI board in 1978.¹

An early objective, says Tom Creasser, ECI's first president, was initially to do a few visible projects in the community to prove the CDC concept. Important here was an effort that focused on housing repair (funded

Teams of local residents developed skills as painters, carpenters, and general contractors. In addition to their work within the community, they found ways to use these skills to leverage resources.

under the federal Community Services Administration and Comprehensive Employment Act, as well as the City of Indianapolis and the Lilly Endowment). Teams of local residents developed skills as painters, carpenters, and general contractors. In addition to their work within the community, they found ways to use these skills to leverage resources. “We bought cheap houses in good neighborhoods from HUD,” explains Creasser. “We repaired them—many didn’t require much work at all—sold them at a profit, and brought those profits back to ECI to subsidize housing in our own neighborhood.”

In 1984, ECI started three new projects that substantially expanded its scope and its impact. First, it established Circle Ventures, to make investments in new and small local businesses. Incorporated so it could borrow funds at very low rates from the Small Business Administration and obtaining additional support from the City and other sources, Circle Ventures has since made more than \$1 million worth of venture capital loans to small firms. Second, ECI became the first CDC nationally to develop its own industrial park. The 40 acre site, well located between a railway and interstate highway near downtown, was purchased and cleared with assistance from the federal Economic Development Administration. The investment paid off: the park now houses 32 businesses that provide a sizeable number of employment opportunities for community residents. Third, ECI began what was to become a sizeable program to provide affordable new rental housing in the community. The first project entailed the purchase and redevelopment of an abandoned elementary school.

While physical improvements have been key accomplishments, ECI has also given emphasis to a wide range of social services; e.g., establishing special service programs for teen parents, special needs elderly and homeless, adults with chronic mental illness, and battered women. One of its most impressive efforts in this vein was the development of the Eastside Day Care Homes Cooperative. In the late 1980s, ECI ran a series of community forums that evidenced the lack of adequate child care as a key issue. They then mounted surveys of existing child care arrangements in the community, finding that child care was already a booming cottage industry—128 day-care providers were operating in the community, only three of whom were licensed. What was needed was not a new facility staffed by outside professionals, but more modest help to upgrade the skills and facilities of those community residents already entering the field on an informal basis. ECI’s Homes Cooperative does just that. It offers a 9-week training program in home day care and assistance in home renovation, so that the community’s informal providers can upgrade the quality of their service and meet state standards.

Kenilworth-Parkside, Washington, D.C.

In some cases, successful initiatives are products of the spontaneous emergence of indigenous leadership. One of the most widely publicized examples occurred in Washington D.C.’s Kenilworth-Parkside Public Housing development.² In 1980, in the project was in serious disrepair and its lifestyle was dominated by drugs, crime, teenage pregnancy, and welfare dependency. One of the residents, Kimi Gray (herself a divorced African-American welfare mother) brought the tenants together around a successful campaign to get more of their children to go to college. This built mutual trust and confidence—enough so that as the next step the group convinced the mayor to allow them to take over the management of the project. In addition to setting up new systems for maintenance and management, again under Gray’s leadership, they also used a series of techniques to reinforce personal responsibility—including



mandatory classes on housekeeping, budgeting, home repair, and parenting, along with self-imposed fines and a tough policy of evicting tenants who did not play by the rules.

Tenant management began to visibly transform the project, both physically and socially, and built confidence to do more. The group established an after-school homework and tutorial program for children whose mothers worked full time; courses to help adults graduate from high school; contracts with outside doctors and a dentist to improve medical service to the project; an employment office to help residents find training and jobs; and several new tenant-owned businesses within the project (keeping both jobs and money within the community). After a long and hazardous fight (collaborating with the police), they removed the once-dominant drug trade from the area and, in 1990, bought the project outright from the local housing authority.

Results were substantial. An independent audit showed that over its first four years the Resident Management Corporation had increased rent collections by 77 percent; decreased the project vacancy rate from 18 percent to 5.4 percent; created 102 jobs for residents (10 on its staff and 92 running other businesses it had started); helped at least 132 residents get off of welfare; and saved the city at least \$785,000 over what it otherwise would have spent. Over its first seven years of operation, crimes dropped from 12 to 15 per month to an average of only 2. In the first 15 years after Gray began her campaign, 700 project youth had gone on to college after high school (75 percent graduated).

The Boyd-Booth Community, Baltimore

In the early 1990s, the Boyd-Booth community in southwest Baltimore seemed to be disintegrating under the effects of a virulent open-air drug market. A local newspaper account stated, “Residents of Boyd-Booth heard gunshots at night and found blood on their sidewalks in the morning. Many retreated into their homes, afraid to report violence to the police, afraid drug dealers would retaliate by burning them out, or worse . . . Most people who could leave, left . . . At a community association meeting, leaders of the association realized, tragically, that they were powerless.”³

Shortly after the appearance of this article, however, community leaders got angrier and recognized opportunities they had not seen before. They were far from powerless. They designed and implemented a six-point program that amounted to an all-out war on the drug trade. The program was developed by partnering with a number of outside institutions (the police and other city departments, the city-wide Citizens Planning and Housing Association, a local hospital, and the Community Law Center) and securing small grants from the Governor’s office, local foundations, and other sources.

The six points were: (1) denying drug dealers the space to conduct their trade (boarding up abandoned buildings, fencing off alleys, conducting community cleanups, etc.); (2) maximizing accountability and participation (holding marches, corresponding and meeting with landlords to secure their involvement, establishing relations with an outreach treatment program); (3) removing the sense of impunity (cooperating with the police to increase apprehension and arrest); (4) communicating community intolerance to drug dealers (conducting vigils, placing signs in windows, holding picnic/cookouts on drug corners); (5) providing positive alternatives (operating summer youth programs and other special activities for youth during the year); and (6) building community capacity (e.g., establishing corporate status for the community association).

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Community leaders were far from powerless. They designed and implemented a six-point program. Between 1993 and 1995 violent crime decreased by 52 percent and arrests for drugs in the community dropped by 80 percent.

The activity in Boyd-Booth had positive spillover effects and did not simply force a move of the trade to another area nearby.

NCC has always seen its mission as comprehensive, giving priority to employment and community social service strategies as well.

As a result of these activities, between 1993 and 1995 violent crime decreased by 52 percent and arrests for drugs in the community dropped by 80 percent. Analysis showed that crime also dropped significantly in surrounding neighborhoods as well; i.e., the activity in Boyd-Booth had positive spillover effects and did not simply force a move of the trade to another area nearby.

With its success in crime reduction, Boyd-Booth has since turned its attention to other issues in the neighborhood and expanded its collaboration with other organizations. With a CDC from a nearby neighborhood, it is beginning a homeownership promotion program and housing rehabilitation effort. With the city library system, it is beginning an after-school program for youth.

The New Community Corporation (NCC), Newark

Mass rebellion in Newark's Central Ward in the Summer of 1967 served as a wake-up call to many institutions. One of them was the Catholic Church, which helped local leaders of the resident African-American community form the New Communities Corporation (NCC) in the following year. NCC saw its charge as "improving the quality of life of the people of Newark to reflect individual dignity and personal achievement."⁴

NCC began with a focus on housing production. It partnered with outside institutions to raise initial capital, and planned its first project by a truly bottom-up process. A number of the intended occupants of the new project (public housing families) met one Saturday each month for over two years to learn about the process of developing housing and establish a sense of what they wanted in physical/functional terms; their conclusions became key determinants of the eventual design.

Before construction, however, they faced a battle. The estimated cost of the 120-unit project exceeded state standards for assisted housing (one state official said the design "looked too good for poor people"). NCC decided to fight for the original design even though doing so would surely delay development. In the process, they learned a great deal about how to "keep the pressure on" and, eventually, were allowed to proceed as they had planned. The project opened in 1975 and, with the skills and experience NCC had developed, it was able to compile five additional affordable housing projects (829 more units) over the next five years.

While housing development has been important, NCC has always seen its mission as more comprehensive, giving priority to employment and community social service strategies as well. A primary emphasis is hiring community residents (rather than outsiders) to staff its own functions. NCC's security force for its projects not only keeps crime rates low, but also provides 120 local jobs. Another 120 employment opportunities are provided by its domestic support program, which helps elderly residents with cooking and cleaning, and the separate full-service nursing home it developed yields an additional 200 jobs. NCC has also partnered with, and developed a facility for, Babyland Nursery, Inc., which provides infant day care for working mothers (180 jobs). NCC developed Harmony House in 1989—a transitional housing facility for previously homeless families which operates with state funding for job training and placement. Residents also receive government-funded health care, emergency food, and child care, all delivered by NCC.

In 1990, NCC was responsible for the development of a new neighborhood shopping facility, centered around a Pathmark supermarket. This project not only reduces costs for local consumers, but also serves as an intergenerational social center that brings together youth and senior citizens. The Pathmark store is one of the chain's most profitable on the East Coast. NCC retains a two-thirds share in the venture and uses its profits to support other community programs.

The Comprehensive Community Revitalization Program (CCRP), South Bronx

Since the 1960s, successive federal administrations poured funds for education and social services into New York City's South Bronx through traditional program mechanisms without much payoff. The Comprehensive Community Revitalization Program (CCRP), launched in 1992 with support from the Surdna Foundation, has relied on a quite different community building approach in that area—one that is already yielding more positive results. CCRP chose to work for comprehensive human services not through traditional social work and educational institutions, but through five existing Community Development Corporations (CDCs) that, by their housing development activity over the years, had become trusted by community residents. Community organizers were employed to develop broader resident involvement in both planning and implementation. Substantive consultants were used in a manner that supported and reinforced resident decision making, rather than replacing it.⁵

Rather than beginning with a prolonged planning period, CCRP emphasized moving quickly (to demonstrate results so as to make residents confident they could accomplish more). One early project that had substantial psychological impact entailed cleaning up, installing new lights, and mobilizing 60 neighborhood youths to paint murals in a formerly crime-ridden pedestrian tunnel that had become a *cause celebre* in the community.

But CCRP activities have been comprehensive and, typically, of much broader scope. The CDCs have already built new primary health facilities; developed and operated employment linkage and training initiatives; created a variety of child care programs; developed partnerships with neighborhood schools to enhance education quality; initiated neighborhood safety and crime reduction measures; and undertaken several economic development projects (including a sizeable new shopping center and a micro-enterprise loan program).

One of CCRP's most visible accomplishments has been its assistance in establishing the Mt. Hope Family Practice: a partnership between one of its constituent CDCs—the Mt. Hope Housing Company—and the Institute for Urban Family Health. While the neighborhood has had among the highest incidences of health problems in the country, health care services had always been fragmented and ineffectual. As a first step in addressing the issue, the Housing Company held intensive health education workshops in the community to build resident awareness of the importance of primary health care. The new Family Practice was then opened (in 1995), to provide a variety of relevant services (continuity of care, special services and referrals, health education and disease prevention). It employs a Spanish-speaking staff and makes special efforts to train and hire local residents for appropriate positions. The Practice accommodated 8,000 visits in 1995 and has developed the capacity to handle 16,000 visits annually thereafter.

More noteworthy perhaps is CCRP's growing emphasis on preparing residents for, and linking them to, employment opportunities. In the past CDCs have focused on job creation in small neighborhood businesses. CCRP's new Employment Service, in contrast, is concentrating even more on job training and the means of facilitating resident access to jobs outside of the community.

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CONTEXT: URBAN PROBLEMS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY

Given what the media has been showing them about the deepening problems of inner-city neighborhoods over the past two decades, many Americans may well be surprised that the successes described above could have occurred. But media images typically convey only a part of the story. In the paragraphs below we attempt a more complete explanation—one that starts by discussing the forces that caused a worsening of inner-city circumstances in the 1980s and then, presents evidence on the opportunity for positive directions for change.

The 1980s—Changes in the Character of Inner-City Poverty

The story has been told compellingly by William J. Wilson.⁶ His account begins by highlighting how global trends led to significant changes in the U.S. economy in the 1970s and 1980s. Manufacturing jobs, which had offered the most promising career paths for lower-skilled inner city residents, dropped significantly as a share of all employment nationwide, and the locational balance shifted notably. In metropolitan areas with the largest concentrations of poverty, manufacturing work has typically expanded in the suburbs, but either leveled off or suffered absolute declines in the cities. Given this trend, the availability of attractive job opportunities for inner-city youth without adequate education was bound to get worse.

But a second force also had a profound effect: mobility. There is a positive side to the equation—something history is likely to regard as an important achievement of American society in the last half of the 20th century. With rising incomes and the passage and enforcement of fair housing laws, large numbers of middle-income families of color were able to move out of the central cities to find better housing in the suburbs.

But that did not mean that the deeply rooted forces behind racial segregation had been overcome. Overall, America's poor have become more spatially concentrated. Research has shown, for example, that 5.6 percent of the nation's census tracts had poverty rates in excess of 40 percent in 1990, but such tracts accounted for 15.1 percent of the total population in poverty (up substantially from 11.4 percent in 1970), and almost all of them were in central cities.⁷ But this research masks an important contrast. Poor people who are white remain reasonably spread throughout our metropolitan regions. It was the poor of racial and ethnic minorities that wound up much more concentrated and isolated from the mainstream society.

The story of poor people of color left behind in our inner cities was devastating. The families that moved included most of those that had run businesses in the old neighborhoods or were otherwise regularly employed in jobs with reasonable wages. They were also those that had been the mainstays of traditional community institutions and social networks. After their departure, the young people left behind were growing up in a different world. They were deprived of the role models that healthy communities inherently rely on to guide future expectations for children. Their parents were deprived of the natural support networks that, among other things, help people access new job opportunities and the social "environment" that helps them do a better job of parenting; again, things that healthy communities take for granted.

Given this scenario, it should not be surprising that social problems accelerated, but other outside forces made matters worse. Changes in the United States economy meant job opportunities were drying up and fanning inner-city frustration. Most critical was the appearance of high-wage manufacturing jobs. Unlike previous decades, no

new middle class could grow up through those jobs to replace the more affluent families who had left the neighborhood. Being trapped would have been enough, but simultaneously life-debilitating drugs were being developed that would be affordable to the poor: the crack epidemic was the result. And dramatic reductions in the prices of handguns occurred at this time as well.

Much has since been written on the affects of all of this on poor neighborhoods.⁸ Young people see no realistic hope of “making it” through America’s traditional channels to success. They have little access to individual adults, groups of adults, and institutions that might show them the way. They turn to the options so readily available to them in their own environments—gangs, drugs, violence—because they are the only choices that seem accessible. Lisbeth Schorr⁹ characterizes the outcomes for many youth in these neighborhoods:

- These are the children who have been accumulating burdens from before birth, when their mothers’ health was not well cared for, nor was their own health as infants and small children. They are more vulnerable than others to stress, yet additional stresses are heaped on them as they grow, and they are far less likely to be protected against the effects of these stresses.
- These are the children growing up in families whose lives are out of control, with parents too drained to provide the consistent nurturance, structure, and stimulation that prepares other children for school and for life. They experience failure as soon as they enter the world outside the family (and often before) and rapidly become convinced that they are born to fail.
- These are the children whose experience of failure is compounded and reinforced by not learning the skills that schools are meant to teach, who soon become aware that the future holds little promise for them. Their prospects for a satisfying and well-paying job and for a stable family life seem bleak. Because they perceive a future that holds few attractions, they enter adolescence with no reason to believe that anything worthwhile will be lost by dropping out of school, committing crimes, or having babies as unmarried teenagers.

America’s Social Service Systems—An Inadequate Response

What about the systems of social service America provides to help poor children and families in these neighborhoods? There is a widely held view that they are failing in their mission at this point. Beyond the adequacy of their funding, many feel that the central problem lies in the bureaucratic fragmentation of services. A teacher may be sure that difficulties one of her students is having in school are due to problems at home rather than the capacity of the student, but reaching out to try to address those problems is outside of her job description. A specialist equipped to provide psychological counseling to a family on stress management finds out that their real problem is that they are about to be evicted and have nowhere else to go—a problem he or she is not authorized to work on.

Social service workers from various agencies keep dealing with the same families over and over as new emergencies occur in their lives. No one is assigned to look at each family’s circumstances holistically and design a package of assistance that would not only address their immediate problems more sensibly, but also build the foundation to *prevent* the recurring emergencies. Program rules and traditions—the carving out of entrenched substantive fiefdoms—makes it difficult if not impossible to accomplish that even if individual workers know that is what is most needed.

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By the late 1980s the term *underclass* was in vogue. Some, with reinforcement from a constant barrage of media images on the horrors of inner-city life, came to believe that the dependent poor simply had a different culture and values from the rest of the nation.

John Kretzmann and John McKnight go farther, suggesting that services provided by outside professionals in distressed neighborhoods can never be the whole answer—that, in fact, they can be counterproductive. As they see it, social service systems by nature tend to emphasize the negatives of inner-city life—problems and needs—rather than assets. Those systems treat neighborhood residents as clients rather than friends. Kretzmann and McKnight characterize this as a “needs-driven dead end” that only deepens attitudes of dependency and powerlessness.

... many lower income neighborhoods are now environments of service where behaviours are affected because residents come to believe that their well-being depends upon being a client. They begin to see themselves as people with special needs that can only be met by outsiders. They become consumers of services, with no incentives to be producers. Consumers of services focus vast amounts of creativity on the survival-motivated challenge of outwitting the “system,” or on finding ways—in the informal or even illegal economy—to bypass the system entirely.¹⁰

Appropriate Interventions Can Make a Difference

By the late 1980s, given the bleak circumstances and trends described above, it appeared that much of America had given up on the prospects of seriously ameliorating conditions in poor urban neighborhoods. The term *underclass* was in vogue. Some, with reinforcement from a constant barrage of media images on the horrors of inner-city life, came to believe that the dependent poor simply had a different culture and values from the rest of the nation. Even those who knew better seemed despondent. Lisbeth Schorr summarized the atmosphere this way:

Many Americans have soured on “throwing money” at human problems that seem only to get worse. They are not hard-hearted, but don’t want to be soft-headed either. Even when their compassion is aroused by moving stories of desperate families or neglected children, they feel helpless and are convinced that nothing can be done. Fear of actually doing harm while trying to do good, together with the threat of unmanageable costs, have paralyzed national policy-making.¹¹

Since that time, however, there has been increasing awareness of several facts and ways of looking at things that should shake this paralysis. Lisbeth Schorr’s own research leads off in this regard.¹² She demonstrates that knowledge about effective methods of assisting distressed families has advanced substantially in recent years and documents numerous case experiences showing how efforts that reach beyond the rigidities of the present service delivery system can pay off handsomely in turning people’s lives around. She concludes that, “It is a strange and tragic paradox that confidence in our collective ability to alter the destinies of vulnerable children has hit bottom just as scientific understanding of the processes of human development and the rich evidence of success in helping such children has reached a new high.”

Cutting across successful cases, she highlights several features they have in common: (1) they offer a broad spectrum of services that cross professional and bureaucratic boundaries—i.e., staff are not limited to offering only one service when others are clearly needed; (2) staff members and program rules are flexible—i.e., staff can use their own good judgement about the best mix and intensity of services to deal with the case at hand; (3) children are viewed in the context of their families and families in the context of their surroundings—e.g., teachers help parents impart a love of reading to their children; (4) staff are skilled and committed—i.e., they are perceived by those



they serve as people who care about them and respect them, people they can trust; (5) programs are coherent and easy to use; and (6) staff are able to redefine their roles to respond to severe, often unarticulated, needs.

Recognizing Common Aspirations and Values

The fact that more effective social service provision can make a difference is important, but it could not be expected to change much if the residents of poor communities were devoid of the basic values essential to building positive lives. There is no denying that serious problems exist. Many young people have grown up without a decent education and without developing those internal controls that cause them to care deeply about the damage they can inflict on others and themselves.

But such problems still remain in the minority in almost all poor neighborhoods. Considerable evidence has now undermined the myth that most residents of poor communities have substantially different core aspirations and values from those of mainstream America. To be sure, the environment in those neighborhoods makes it extremely difficult to raise children effectively and many are lost to positive life experiences for the reasons discussed earlier in this section. But that does not mean that the bulk of the residents of those neighborhoods do not recognize that as tragedy, do not abhor crime and drugs, or care deeply about good education for their children.

A particularly distorting misconception has been that most of the poor do not want to work. The evidence indicates that quite the reverse is true. For example, a 1989 survey of the poor in Boston found that: “Of all able-bodied poor respondents, 44 percent were working at the time they were interviewed, 38 percent said they would like to be working, 13 percent had a problem that prevented them from working (health problem, child care, other). Only about 5 percent could not give a reason or said they just did not want to work.”¹³ A national opinion poll has shown that 77 percent of welfare recipients (the same share as the general population) believe that welfare programs should require enrollment in job training and education programs; 92 percent of welfare recipients (compared with 94 percent of the general population) agree that “Welfare moms will gain self-respect by working and their children will learn the importance of work.”¹⁴

Growing Recognition of the Importance of Community and Social Capital

Many who retell William J. Wilson’s story of the effects of middle-class flight from inner-city neighborhoods emphasize the loss of role-models for the youth left behind. But clearly the loss was broader than that. Recent reflections on that loss have rekindled awareness of the importance of a healthy community to individuals of all ages. Strong communities transmit and reinforce values and standards of behaviour. Residents develop a sense of responsibility for each other—feelings of trust—and hold each other accountable. Children know that not only their own parents, but also their friends’ parents and others in the neighborhood (ranging from priests to shop owners), will be aware of the way they behave and care about it—powerful incentives to stay out of trouble.

But community does not only imply sanctions—it also brings mutual support. In contrast to the social isolation that characterizes many poor neighborhoods today, residents of healthy communities can and do turn to each other for help when the going gets rough. This sort of help can range all the way from a temporary financial assistance to just a shoulder to cry on. Research by Frank Furstenberg¹⁵ points out that

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there are always a few strong-willed parents who are able to keep their kids out of trouble even in the worst neighborhoods, but for the average parent, supportive neighborhood social networks are likely to be critical to outcomes. Active community institutions and social networks offer many other benefits as well—for example, the opportunity to talk with people you trust, and take advantage of their experience and contacts, when you are looking for a job or want to take out a loan from a bank. And individuals build confidence in themselves when they work with their neighbors and achieve some mutually shared objective.

One of Lisbeth Schorr's findings was that social assistance works best when it is delivered by someone you regard as a trusted friend. She shows that committed outside professionals who design their assistance flexibly and sensitively can make a real difference to troubled families. Still, it is difficult to imagine how such help alone could be sufficient or self-sustaining in neighborhoods where indigenous community ties and supports are nonexistent. Alternatively, in a neighborhood that has built back strong social networks and institutions, such assistance might well have more lasting value for those who need it, and it is likely that less would be required.

Can distressed neighborhoods that have lost the benefits of community build them back again on their own? It also may seem difficult to imagine that poor families, often with little formal education, living under extraordinary stress simply to survive, would give priority to attending community association meetings, let alone devoting time to their projects. But that is what has been happening in a sizeable number of recent community building initiatives. Typically, attendance has been disappointing at first, and in some cases conflicts and mistrust have frustrated progress. But in other cases, momentum has accelerated over time. Early participants learn that supportive neighbors can ease stress, help them solve their own problems, and instill hope for the future. And then the word spreads—success, and the new attitudes it engenders, become visible to everyone and more join in.

It is of interest that these initiatives are emerging in poor neighborhoods at a time when a number of researchers have been pointing out the importance of strengthening community in America generally; i.e., for nonpoor as well as poor neighborhoods. Societies that develop do so by building capital, rather than spending all of their time and resources on immediate gratification. They build physical capital (homes and factories) and human capital (education). But James Coleman has pointed out that they also rely significantly on the development of *social capital*—formal and informal associations and institutions of the types we have been discussing in this section.¹⁶ Robert Putnam notes that, "...social scientists of a neo-Tocquevillean bent have unearthed a wide range of empirical evidence that the quality of public life and the performance of social institutions (and not only in America) are indeed powerfully influenced by norms and networks of civic engagement."¹⁷

And these ideas are gaining prominence on the right as well as the left. Berger and Neuhaus,¹⁸ for example, see both sides of the liberal-conservative debate as it has been framed in the 20th century (solely focusing on the state vs. the individual) as missing the point in that they overlook the importance of *mediating structures* in society—institutions that often were dominating influences on day-to-day life historically. Rather than leaving the problem of poverty solely to government or private charity, they advocate *empowering poor people and communities* to address their own problems via stronger mediating institutions (neighborhood organizations, churches, friendship networks, etc.).

The Integration of People Policies and Place Policies

Some have asked, of course, why not avoid all of the work of rebuilding social capital in inner-city neighborhoods and move the poor out to other neighborhoods where stronger social capital already exists? Peter Edelman explains why this is not really an alternative, even to all who hold integration as an important ultimate goal.

If you are going to give people the wherewithal to get out of the inner city, you have to take the same steps and pursue the same policies for the inner city itself that you would take if you want to create a viable community there. You have to have good schools if people are going to be employable. You have to have accessible employment so people can acquire the resources to move if they want to. You have to have good housing and effective law enforcement and decent health care, and all of the other aspects of a safe and secure neighborhood and community if you are to give people sufficient security to even think about planning to get out.¹⁹

In other words, even if we had a fully effective set of people-based policies in America—e.g., an income maintenance system with the proper mix of assistance and incentives applied equitably across the nation—they would not be enough. There are certain types of “infrastructure” needed to equip people to take advantage of the opportunities our society has to offer that are definitionally place-based; e.g., decent schools, and effective community-level social networks and institutions. At present, such infrastructure is not at all equitably distributed. It is particularly lacking in poor neighborhoods, especially those in large cities. For them, work to strengthen or rebuild such place-based infrastructure may well be essential before sound people-based policies can be expected to have much effect.

THE GROWTH OF COMMUNITY-BASED INITIATIVES AND CONVERGENCE AROUND COMMON THEMES

In the 1960s, the federal government experimented with intensive community-based improvement initiatives, notably via the Community Action Program (CAP) and the Model Cities Program. A decade later, this approach had vanished from the federal support agenda. We do not have the space to document all of the reasons here, but it is clear that national policymakers came to see that a continuation of these programs would be potentially expensive—the phrase “gilding the ghetto” entered the vocabulary—and that, as somewhat narrowly defined place-based approaches, they would be insufficient in and of themselves to seriously address the problems of poverty in America.

While the federal government has not since reentered the field so directly, the period since then has witnessed a substantial expansion of *nongovernmental* action in community-based initiatives. This section reviews these trends and the way they have redefined themselves over time.

Community Development Corporations

Probably most prominent has been the growth of local nonprofit Community Development Corporations (CDCs). The number of CDCs nationally was negligible (almost certainly below 200) in the early-1970s. The first systematic attempt to inventory them documented that by 1989 at least 2,000 had completed at least one project,²⁰ but there are reasons to believe that even that figure represented an undercount, and it does

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Many CDCs started out either as the development arms of broader community revitalization initiatives, or by adopting a comprehensive anti-poverty mission themselves. Through the 1980s, however, available funding for the social service elements of their agendas was greatly diminished—sporadic at best.

Intermediaries have been credited with helping to transform what had been a highly fragmented array of small nonprofit housing providers into something approaching a full-fledged “production sector” on a national scale.

not include many others that existed but had not yet achieved any project completions. Growth had been slow at first, but accelerated in the 1980s. Reagan administration cutbacks in social programs prompted a fundamental shift in the grant-making strategies of the nation’s large philanthropic foundations toward poverty-related initiatives, and the CDCs were among the major beneficiaries of this trend.²¹

Many CDCs started out either as the development arms of broader community revitalization initiatives, or by adopting a comprehensive anti-poverty mission themselves. Through the 1980s, however, available funding for the social service elements of their agendas was greatly diminished—sporadic at best. It was extremely hard to sustain continuity in these fields. They found, on the other hand, given the long-term financing involved, they could develop and sustain momentum with construction projects. Accordingly, as it evolved, the work of the CDCs over this period has been heavily oriented to “bricks and mortar”—local commercial investments to spur community economic development, but more dominantly, the production and rehabilitation of low-cost housing. The sector is clearly mixed in terms of capacity, but a sizeable number of CDCs have become quite sophisticated housing developers, patching together financing and support from CDBG and other federal and state sources (notably the Low Income Housing Tax Credit) as well as foundations and leveraging considerable private investment as well. In 1990, nonprofit housing developers (mostly CDCs) accounted for 13 percent of all new federally supported housing production.²²

The strengthening and expansion of CDCs since the late 1970s owes much to the support they have received from several national nongovernmental intermediaries. Some national intermediaries provide training and technical assistance, like the Center for Community Change and the Development Training Institute (DTI). Others focus on public policy, industry development, and networking, like the National Congress for Community Economic Development and two dozen state-level associations.

Some intermediaries provide technical assistance, and direct financial support, and help CDCs link to city-wide governmental and financial institutions. With respect to low-income housing production, the most prominent have been the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) and the Enterprise Foundation. LISC was initially capitalized with \$10 million in 1979, half from the Ford Foundation and half from six corporations and one other foundation. It has since raised more than \$2 billion from 1,100 private sources to support 1,500 CDCs in 35 cities and regions. Enterprise was founded in 1983 by James Rouse. Through 1992, it had raised \$670 million in private capital for over 25,000 housing units produced by the local groups with which it is working.²³ LISC, Enterprise, and other intermediaries have been credited with helping to transform what had been a highly fragmented array of small nonprofit housing providers into something approaching a full-fledged “production sector” on a national scale.²⁴

CDCs have been among the first to recognize that housing is not the only, or even the most vital, ingredient in the mix of efforts needed to address the multi-faceted problems of distressed neighborhoods. Some CDCs have been able to mount more comprehensive strategies (see examples earlier in this section), but most, so far, have not been able to go very far in these directions. Still, few observers would deny the importance of their contributions to date. Housing was something they could get money for, and developing it was a way to build organizational skills and capacity. New projects both met real physical needs and brought pride and hope to the community along with jobs and skill development to neighborhood residents. And the movement has created a network of vital institutional assets in many neighborhoods whose institutional fabrics have otherwise all but been obliterated.

NeighborWorks and Other Housing Initiatives

Several other types of community improvement activities also expanded during the 1970s and 1980s. For example, a number of organizations outside of the CDC framework have also focused their work around the development and rehabilitation of affordable housing—for example, many churches and other faith-based organizations²⁵ and national entities like Habitat for Humanity and the National Council of La Raza.

A notable example is the approach implemented by the federally supported *Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation* and the 177 local nonprofits that comprise its NeighborWorks network. The Corporation provides technical assistance and training to its local partners, as well as funding designed to leverage considerably greater investment in neighborhood revitalization. In 1995 alone, for example, \$39 million in federal funding resulted in \$341 million in private, public, and philanthropic funds being reinvested in distressed neighborhoods. While it has motivated a variety of non-housing physical improvement projects as well, NeighborWorks has emphasized expanding homeownership in such communities. Three years into its recent campaign, 6,530 families had purchased their own homes—for 40 percent of them homeownership proved less, or only modestly more, costly than renting.

Community Organizing

Recent community work, however, includes other focal points besides housing development. One of the most important is *community organizing*, which has traditionally emphasized mobilizing community residents to form their own identities, renew their interest in public life, and fight for their rights across a broad range of issues. Prominent groups here include ACORN, a national network of community organizations that is most known for its success in challenging bank redlining and the provision of housing counseling for prospective homeowners, and the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF). IAF was founded in 1940 by Saul Alinsky in Chicago. Nationwide, there are now 28 IAF organizations. It is particularly strong in Texas (with 10 organizations), spurred on by the successes of Communities Organized for Public Service (COPS) in San Antonio, founded in 1974. COPS had organized a series of winning campaigns to secure many new capital investments and redistribute substantial shares of public assistance funding for the city's low-income neighborhoods. The Texas IAF network overall has since played a leading role in utility reform, reform of the state's public education system, and an effort to ensure higher shares of state healthcare resources for the indigent.²⁶

Half a dozen national centers of training (e.g., the National Training and Information Center (NTIC), the Midwest Academy, the Organizing Training Center, and the Center for Third World Organizers) feed a growing demand for community organizers.

Settlement Houses

Another network of continued importance is the *settlement house movement*. Settlement houses were initially formed just over a century ago, when the economic draw of the industrial revolution coupled with mass immigration from Europe was creating urban slums on a sizeable scale. In contrast to those administering charity, settlement house workers lived inside the slums and dealt with their residents as neighbors, rather than clients. They also championed the interests of the poor nationally, being among the leading advocates for measures ranging from child labor laws to the

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recognition of labor unions. One of the movement's founders, Jane Addams, counseled that the settlement "should include the family and not be confined to the children; that it should in fact stir up the adults and leading citizens of any neighborhood to action for themselves and their poorer neighbors."²⁷ Over time, however, these ideas were largely pushed aside by the professionalization of social work and most of the remaining settlement houses themselves became "professionalized," but the movement nonetheless remains active in many cities.²⁸

The past decade has seen a broad movement among settlements to revive the empowerment approach of their origins, and to become engines for self-reliance for residents of their communities.

Convergence around Common Themes

The examples cited above clearly reflect differences in objectives, process, and style. A number of academic articles in the past several years have characterized the field as if it would be permanently composed of a number of differing (i.e., competing) approaches: settlement houses, community organizing, community development, comprehensive community initiatives, etc. These are in fact the "roots" we examined independently in the seminars conducted for this project.

One conclusion of this project's seminars, however, is that the old distinctions are at least beginning to lose their meaning. There are many signs that the work of community building practitioners who may have started from different places is now beginning to reflect common themes. Certainly, differences in emphasis remain, but absolute distinctions in practice and opinion are not as hard-edged as they used to be. In addition, other professionals that work in poor neighborhoods (e.g., social service providers, the police) are beginning to adapt their practices to recognize the importance of collaborating with indigenous community organizations.

- CDCs that once focused solely on building housing and retail facilities are now broadening their portfolios to include more intensive community organizing and initiatives to address job training, family support and crime prevention—i.e., along the lines of the New Communities Corporation and the CDCs participating in CCRP. The sector's largest intermediary, LISC, has established its own "community building program" to assist individual CDCs in expanding their missions in these ways.²⁹ The Development Training Institute (DTI) launched the first community building training program for CDC practitioners in 1993. CDC leaders generally see these directions as the "right thing to do," but they are also motivated by powerful financial incentives, recognizing that the millions of dollars they have invested in new housing in poor neighborhoods over the past decade are seriously threatened by the continued dominance of poverty and social disorder in those communities.
- As the Executive Director of St. Nicholas' Housing Corporation in Brooklyn said, "We rehabbed virtually every house in the neighborhood, and still haven't changed the community." So, St. Nicholas moved to add school reform, health care, and tenant organizing to their agenda.
- Practitioners rooted in "community organizing" have traditionally focused on mobilizing community residents to fight for their rights. This theme has not evaporated—some conflict with outside systems is appropriate and inevitable, even in today's community building. But many community orga-

nizers are broadening their methods to give more emphasis to positive developmental accomplishments within the community, and to include techniques of collaboration with (and cooptation of) outside parties where that now seems in the interest of longer-term neighborhood objectives.

- We noted earlier that the settlement houses established early in this century had moved away from their roots in community empowerment and toward a clinical social service approach. Today, dozens of settlement houses, particularly members of the Neighborhood Centers Association, have moved back to their origins in community building. In Cleveland, a citywide network of settlements is undertaking community mobilization and neighborhood leadership training as well as a job readiness and placement effort.³⁰ Grace Hill Settlement in St. Louis has become nationally known for its “time-dollars” system, formalizing neighbor’s bartering services. Grace Hill has also dramatically changed the foster care licensing and assignment system so that children are immediately placed in foster homes in their own neighborhood.
- Social service bureaucracies continue to be slow to change their ways, but there is evidence that many professionals within them recognize their existing systems are not responding effectively. There is now some momentum to adopt more flexible rules and take other steps to break down many of the old barri-

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The practice of crime control in American cities has already moved substantially toward the “community policing” model.



HUD has more recently given prominence to community-building directly in efforts to transform troubled public housing projects (the HOPE VI program). These reforms include physical change, but they also focus on strengthening tenant associations and supporting those associations in developing and running their own programs for job training and placement, reducing crime, and a host of family support services.

ers, so as to further “social service integration”—i.e., paying attention to the lessons learned by Schorr, cited earlier. In addition, a movement is emerging among family service providers to think through how they might revise their approaches to work more closely with community leaders and support community empowerment as a means of strengthening troubled families.³¹

- The practice of crime control in American cities has already moved substantially toward the “community policing” model: police officers being assigned to individual neighborhoods (rather than roving the whole city in their squad cars), working with community leaders to mobilize direct collaborative strategies to prevent crime, and collaborating with other agencies and residents to support broader community improvement.³²
- Several national foundations are directly sponsoring neighborhood improvement efforts in a number of cities which they call *comprehensive community building initiatives*, to clearly distinguish them from narrower, limited purpose, programs of the past. They recognize the development of resident involvement and leadership as central, and encourage developmental actions across the spectrum of possibilities based on how the residents themselves see their priorities. Prominent among these are three that work through CDCs: the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s *Rebuilding Communities Initiative* (five cities), the Ford Foundation’s *Neighborhood and Family Initiative* (four cities), and the CCRP in the South Bronx, initiated by the Surdna Foundation. Several others build on different community structures, or have created new ones: the Rockefeller Foundation’s *Community Planning and Action Program* (six cities),³³ the Enterprise Foundation’s *Community Building Partnership* in the Sandtown-Winchester neighborhood in Baltimore, and the multi-neighborhood *Atlanta Project* sponsored by the Carter Center, are also in this category. Prudence Brown, who has reviewed these efforts, indicates that in all 40 to 50 such initiatives have been launched over the past decade.³⁴ Foundations are also supporting the *Aspen Roundtable on Comprehensive Initiatives for Children and Families* in examining methods of evaluating these initiatives and assessing their progress.³⁵

In addition, the new community building does seem to be gaining recognition at higher levels. For example:

- Serious community involvement in planning and implementation was a requirement of the federal government’s *Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Community Program*, and the program’s guidebooks emphasize comprehensive resident-driven improvement efforts at the neighborhood level. HUD’s efforts to simplify and consolidate the plans local jurisdictions must prepare as a basis for funding also build on these themes.³⁶ HUD has more recently given prominence to community-building directly in efforts to transform troubled public housing projects (the HOPE VI program). These reforms include physical change (e.g., demolishing some of the worst high-rise buildings and replacing them with structures at a more human scale), but they also focus on strengthening tenant associations and supporting those associations in developing and running their own programs for job training and placement, reducing crime, and a host of family support services.³⁷

- Community building principles are increasingly evident in citywide improvement planning. A prominent example is the work of the *Cleveland Commission on Poverty* (sponsored by the Cleveland and Rockefeller Foundations).³⁸ The Commission's report, which recommended reorienting the city's whole strategy for inner-city revitalization around the community building approach, became the basis for the city's successful application for funding under the Empowerment Zone program, and is now into implementation. Similar principles have been advocated by a broad-based Boston Foundation initiative as the strategy for addressing poverty in that city.³⁹ In addition, Oakland and several other cities based their Empowerment Zone strategies heavily on community building themes. In all, the number of cities that have endorsed the community building approach explicitly remains fairly small, but a number of program actions elsewhere, de facto, seem to be moving in that direction. For example, Minneapolis has oriented a significant share of its capital spending around neighborhood improvement plans prepared by community associations.⁴⁰ Indianapolis, Richmond, and Charlotte have also significantly revised their operating styles and procedures to enhance involvement by community groups in city programs (see further discussion in Chapter 3).
- A new national intermediary was established in 1993 to support and further this movement: the *National Community Building Network* (NCBN)—a network made up mostly of community-driven intermediaries in 22 cities.⁴¹ NCBN holds recurrent meetings, promotes interchange between its members, shares information on approaches and techniques, and serves as an advocate on issues relevant to community building in national policy forums.

CHAPTER

2



Themes of the New Community Building

Individual elements of today's community building are not all new. It is the way they are packaged that sets it apart from earlier neighborhood-based approaches.

How does the new community building differ from neighborhood-based programs implemented in the past? This section looks more closely at the themes that define and distinguish it—explaining more clearly both what it is and how it can be made to work. As noted in the introduction, individual elements of today's community building are not all new. It is the way they are packaged—the way the themes are interrelated, the nuances of more sophisticated ways of applying them, and the lessons learned about what has worked over the years—that sets it apart from earlier neighborhood-based approaches.

The clearest statement of underlying *principles* is that developed and adopted by the National Community Building Network (NCBN). Eight such principles are defined as follows:⁴²

- *Integrate community development and human service strategies.* Traditional anti-poverty efforts have separated the “bricks and mortar” projects from those that help families and develop human capital; each approach needs the other to be successful.
- *Forge partnerships through collaboration.* Building community requires work by all sectors—local residents, community-based organizations, businesses, schools, religious institutions, health and social service agencies—in an atmosphere of trust, cooperation, and respect.
- *Build on community strengths.* Past efforts to improve urban life have too often addressed community deficits; our efforts build on local capacities and assets.
- *Start from local conditions.* There is no cookie-cutter approach to building community; the best efforts flow from and adapt to local realities.
- *Foster broad community participation.* Many urban programs have become professionalized and alienated from the people they serve; new programs and policies must be shaped by community residents.

- *Require racial equity.* Racism remains a barrier to a fair distribution of resources and opportunities in our society; our work promotes equity for all groups.
- *Value cultural strengths.* Our efforts promote the values and history of our many cultural traditions and ethnic groups.
- *Support families and children.* Strong families are the cornerstone of strong communities; our efforts help families help themselves.

The Panel for this project endorsed these principles, but felt there was a need for more complete guidance on how today's community building needs to work in practice if it is to be effective. Accordingly, the discussion led to the articulation of a set of seven *operating themes*—points that are consistent with the NCBN principles, but provide a more detailed statement of content in process. As we see it, community building needs to be:

- (1) *Focused on specific improvement initiatives in a manner that reinforces values and builds social and human capital;*
- (2) *Community driven with broad resident involvement;*
- (3) *Comprehensive, strategic, and entrepreneurial;*
- (4) *Asset-based;*
- (5) *Tailored to neighborhood scale and conditions;*
- (6) *Collaboratively linked to the broader society to strengthen community institutions and enhance outside opportunities for residents; and*
- (7) *consciously changing institutional barriers and racism.*

These operating themes are addressed next.

THEME 1: FOCUSED ON SPECIFIC IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES IN A MANNER THAT REINFORCES VALUES AND BUILDS SOCIAL AND HUMAN CAPITAL

Neighborhood residents involved in community building spend most of their time jointly working on productive activities that directly address the problems and opportunities to which they give high priority, whether it is cleaning up a vacant lot, planning a housing rehabilitation project, trying to improve school quality, or mounting a citizens patrol to prevent crime. As they do these things, they are automatically building social capital—developing friendships and mutual trust, sharing and strengthening common values, learning how to work together as a team to get things accomplished, building confidence that they can achieve meaningful results, and strengthening their own institutions. This capital then spills over into the future. After they complete one set of tasks, they are both more strongly motivated and bet-

The new community builders give a greater sense of primacy to social and human capital development than did many earlier neighborhood programs.

ter equipped to take on yet more demanding ones in the next stage. And other benefits come automatically, even if indirectly. Because they are colleagues in action, for example, neighborhood residents naturally feel more of an obligation to watch out for each others' children than they have felt before.

Building social capital is most importantly a means of building human capital—strengthening the capacities of individuals and families to overcome adversities and create and take advantage of opportunities. This is, after all, the bottom line with respect to the problems of distressed neighborhoods. The ultimate aim is not for society to become better equipped to deal with teen pregnancies, crime, gangs, drugs and child maltreatment after the fact, but to *prevent* these problems from emerging in the first place. Both stronger social and human capital would seem essential to achieving that end—stronger families in a new environment of hope and mutual support, getting their children on the right path from the start and keeping them there. Prevention is surely the key to enormous savings in human terms, and Lisbeth Schorr⁴³ cites numerous cases from her research to show that this is also true with respect to public costs. For example:

- Good family supports and services reduce the need for expensive out-of-home placement for children. The Homebuilders program (an effective intervention that helped resolve family problems so children could stay at home) led to direct savings from three to three-and-one-half times the (program) expenditure.
- ... An Urban Institute study ... found that a 50 percent decrease in births to women under the age of eighteen would result, in 1990, in a reduction of \$390 million in AFDC payments, \$160 million in Medicaid payments and \$170 million in food stamps.
- Good preschool experiences and a good start in elementary school reduce the need for special education services and improve other outcomes. ... An economic analysis of the Perry Preschool program ... found that its initial annual cost of \$5,000 per child resulted in a savings of several times that amount because of lower crime rates (\$3,000), reduced costs of special education (\$5,000) and public assistance (\$16,000), and the greater amount of taxes participants were expected to pay (\$5,000) in comparison to their non-preschool peers.

The point is that the new community builders give a greater sense of primacy to social and human capital development than did many earlier neighborhood programs. This does not mean that they have to be addressing these goals directly or talking about them explicitly all of the time. But they remain aware of their primacy and find ways to reinforce them or otherwise they will miss opportunities to achieve them as they proceed. This will affect, for example, the way they develop project initiatives. Today's community builders will more often reach out to involve a broad range of neighborhood residents in projects (using local youth to conduct surveys, mobilizing neighbors to develop the needed skills to serve as family counselors, making extra efforts to get residents involved in construction and clean-up projects) than rely only on professionals or even a limited number of experienced residents, even if doing so might seem to dampen short-term efficiency.

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Federal programs of the 1960s introduced a new emphasis on resident participation in improvement programs and stimulated the creation of some new entities that were actually run by the residents. But, by and large, outside professionals were still calling the shots—selecting the real priorities, controlling the budgets, taking the risks.

Building social capital will not be achieved unless the residents themselves are, as in most real world activities, truly in charge and accountable for results.

Residents are more aware of the realities of their own environments than outside professionals. They have a better sense of what will work and what will not work in those environments.

THEME 2: COMMUNITY DRIVEN WITH BROAD RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT

Federal programs of the 1960s (e.g., the Community Action Program, Model Cities) introduced a new emphasis on resident participation in improvement programs and stimulated the creation of some new entities that were actually run by the residents. But, by and large, outside professionals were still calling the shots—selecting the real priorities, controlling the budgets, taking the risks. Today’s community building, in contrast, sees resident groups playing a more central role in both planning and implementation.

We think the best term to denote the current trend is *community driven*. This conveys neither the indirect and nondefining role implied by the term “community participation,” nor the more inward-looking and absolutist role implied by the term “community controlled.”

Building social capital is the primary objective and it will not be achieved unless the residents themselves are, as in most real world activities, truly in charge and accountable for results. The leaders will learn more and build capacity more effectively if they fully understand that successes will be *their* successes, and failures will be seen as *their* failures. The residents have to believe that they “own” the process and must actually play a central role in decisions if they are to move away from dependency. More important, many case experiences suggest that resident-driven initiatives have a greater chance of success on technical grounds. Residents are more aware of the realities of their own environments than outside professionals. They have a better sense of what will work and what will not work in those environments. They will see practical opportunities for solving problems that outsiders have no basis for understanding.

This does not mean that outside entities (particularly funders) will not, or should not, play an influential role. But in community building today, *the community is the entrepreneur*. It is not likely, or advisable, for the community group’s program as a whole to be funded from only one source. The community is encouraged to diversify its sources of support and to develop clear strategies for negotiating the best deal it can with each of them. The community comes to the table in each case as an independent entity, rather than as the dependent one. There will no doubt be tensions in these relationships—there always are—but learning how to handle tensions with outside groups effectively is a key element in building community capacity and there are many community groups in the 1990s that have established this competence.

Kretzman and McKnight urge funders of community initiatives to offer their support in a form that spurs the development of resident capacity; i.e., by requiring community associations to develop their own proposals for assistance around specific improvement initiatives, and by specifying the required contents of those proposals such that residents are encouraged to identify their assets and devise creative ways to build on them.⁴⁴ This “Capacity Oriented Funding” approach has been used by the Tucson Community Foundation and the Community Foundation of Greater Memphis. It is an approach that gives neighborhood residents more latitude to use their own judgement in deciding what to do and how to do it, but holds them clearly accountable for producing on their commitments. The community group faces strong incentives to get its act together because it knows it risks the loss of future grants if it does not keep up its end of the bargain. Kretzman and McKnight also recognize the need for, and encourage, partnership between community groups and government agencies, but instead of seeing these as the old idea of “citizen participation” in government programs, they advocate sensitive and facilitative *government participation in citizen initiatives*.

Today's community building also recognizes that community groups still need substantial help from outside professionals, but here too the terms of engagement are changing. With respect to specialists (child care professionals, family counselors, construction managers), it is more likely that the community group itself will choose the providers and do the hiring. For example, tenants associations in some public housing projects are now forming their own 501(c)(3) corporations, and some housing authorities (e.g., Seattle, Philadelphia) are passing on available social service resources to those corporations for allocation. Within broad guidelines from the housing authority, the tenants' corporation selects the services it considers most important, contracts directly with the firms that provide those services, and is responsible for monitoring contractor compliance. Community managed health centers also, obviously, take on responsibility for hiring the health service professionals they need and for monitoring their performance.

Of course, it is important to note that while community management is not likely to eliminate the need for outside professionals, it is likely to reduce the neighborhood's reliance on them. The community association is much more likely to find ways to train neighborhood residents to handle jobs (child care, care for the elderly, entry-level health care positions, construction work, conducting surveys) that in the past have all too often gone to outsiders.

Community groups also still need help from outside professionals in overall program planning and management. The risk in this case is that seasoned professionals who know how to design and manage programs like these—from their own sense of urgency about producing results and the sheer force of their personalities and past experience—may come to dominate the process. This can happen even when the professional has been hired by the community group directly, but is more of a concern when he or she is on someone else's payroll. Addressing this critical relationship is a two-way street. On one hand, community leaders need strength and skill in using such help effectively without allowing it to erode their own sense of control. On the other hand, the professionals in this field need to adopt a new (more supportive and facilitative than directive) mode of operation, and there is considerable evidence that this is occurring.

Many of today's professionals in community building now see themselves first and foremost as *facilitators* rather than managers: people who know how to provide good professional advice and support, while reinforcing community leadership instead of eroding it. Facilitators can be tough and prod residents toward action, but the good ones know where to draw the line and approach it with a style that does not undermine the authority of those they are working for. Those who are playing this role in a number of prominent projects seem to have mastered it, and there is little doubt that the concept has become a strongly motivating one for the bulk of the professionals now working with communities or aspiring to do so.

Finally, perhaps the most important requisite under this theme is that the leaders of community building initiatives remain representative of neighborhood residents as a whole, and that residents retain a high rate of direct participation in the initiative's activities. To achieve these objectives, community associations often: (1) regularly distribute newsletters to all neighborhood residents on changing plans, progress, and upcoming events; (2) hold regular association meetings to which all residents are invited, with time on the agenda to allow their views to be heard, and other social gatherings to allow residents to get to know each other; (3) prepare an association statement of principles and strategy regarding involvement of resident in individual pro-

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Perhaps the most important requisite is that the leaders of community building initiatives remain representative of neighborhood residents as a whole, and that residents retain a high rate of direct participation in the initiative's activities.

Community leaders need to be both strategic and entrepreneurial. They may be working on only a few projects at any point, but they must be thinking constantly about how they can use their current work to catalyze action in other areas as next steps.

jects; (4) design improvement efforts so that a broad array of residents can participate and reach out to encourage their participation; and (4) provide some mechanism to allow all residents to have a voice in strategic plans and in selecting and validating association leadership.

Not all community associations give enough emphasis to these objectives, however. Even a popularly selected community leadership group, after a time, can become removed from its constituents and begin to act in a manner that is every bit as “top down” as outside agencies have acted in the past. If this occurs, progress in social capital building that spurs human capital development—again the prime purpose—is likely to be derailed.

This project's seminar participants felt that awareness of this concern should be heightened and a series of positive steps should be considered to guard against it. Most important in the long term is for the principle of maintaining representativeness and broad participation to simply become ingrained as one of the central tenets of the field. This will require attention in the curricula of all places that train community builders (professionals and resident leaders). It seems appropriate as well for funders to impose some process requirements to ensure it is adhered to.

THEME 3: COMPREHENSIVE, STRATEGIC, AND ENTREPRENEURIAL

Inner-city neighborhoods are typically beset with multiple and interrelated challenges. Ultimately, if community building in such neighborhoods is to succeed, it must address the full range of these challenges in an interconnected way; i.e. *comprehensively*. New housing developments will be ravaged unless crime and gang activity is brought under control. An excellent job training program will yield little payoff if the trainees cannot accept jobs because they cannot access adequate child care or because of recurrent illness due to the lack of adequate local health services. Good social service programs will be undermined if the neighborhood's physical appearance is not clean and orderly (recent research has shown that unmaintained buildings, trash, and graffiti are surprisingly strong signals that affect behaviour). Any rigidly defined single purpose initiative (i.e., one that expects to take on only one of these issues and not move beyond it) is not really community building by today's definition.

Prudence Brown suggests that comprehensive initiatives need to deal with all of the following aspects of community life:⁴⁵

- Economic opportunity and security: for example, job training and development; neighborhood based financial institutions such as credit unions, development banks, and revolving loan funds; income security programs; and commercial revitalization and development.
- Adequate physical development and infrastructure, including housing, transportation, and public amenities and services.
- Safety and security, such as community policing, land-use zoning, and crime prevention.
- Well functioning institutions and services, including schools, social and health services, libraries, sports leagues, and recreation.
- Social capital: promoting a rich social fabric and strong community voice.

But it is impossible (and inadvisable) to try to address all relevant issues at the same time. Community builders now see the principle of comprehensiveness as a “state of mind”—a mental attitude on the part of all participants—which guides their agenda as it unfolds. Community leaders need to be both *strategic* and *entrepreneurial*. They may be working on only a few projects at any point, but they must be thinking constantly about how they can use their current work to *catalyze* action in other areas as next steps. They need to always keep the interrelationships between spheres of activity in mind so that as they work on one of them they will quickly recognize strategic opportunities to motivate new “high-payoff” initiatives in others.

The old “textbook” approach to neighborhood improvement programs normally called for a “planning phase” followed by an “implementation phase.” Community building practitioners now see that approach as too rigid. They say the residents do need to develop some comprehensive *vision* of what they want the neighborhood to become and how to get there. It may well make sense to start with an inventory of community assets (see discussion below) and the development of a comprehensive strategy based on the results. But the initial planning should not take too long; it does not have to be “perfected” before you start. It is essential to get into some action projects quickly—even if small—to keep people motivated and show them they can accomplish things. Planning and implementation can, and ought to, proceed simultaneously and interactively throughout. Many successful leaders call their process “learn as you go.” The process resembles more a spiral than a straight line. The *vision* will be a more useful one if it is fleshed out over time, and adapted, based on what you learn as you proceed. It does not have to be spelled out in full before you begin to act.

Practitioners say that good community building initiatives may start in many different ways, but they have a similar operating style—comprehensive, strategic, and entrepreneurial—so that they wind up looking more similar over time. In a number of cases, they may begin only because one high-priority problem—perhaps gangs or drug dealers—has galvanized the residents into action. The right thing to do at that point is to focus on that issue and get that job done, but lay the groundwork for broader thinking and action as the initial victory is being won. Recall, that Kenilworth-Parkside’s ultimately comprehensive program started with a modest effort on just one front.

In other cases, it may make sense to start with a more comprehensive review of opportunities. But, again, it is worth mentioning the need to move into some form of action quickly. The first few meetings might revolve around a fresh look and community assets (see discussion below) and developing a sense of priorities (priorities are determined not only by how comparatively important different issues are, but also by the degree to which you can realistically move ahead to affect them in the short term). It may be that a sizeable group of neighbors feel that one issue is simply dominant; e.g., we can’t do anything else until we get the drug dealers out of the neighborhood. In that case, the next thing to do may be to put comprehensiveness on the back burner for a while and get into detailed planning and action for a “signature campaign” on that issue. As you do this, you may be aware that another group feels somewhat left out, because they were more interested in working on, say, helping to strengthen the local elementary school. If so, then as soon as the association’s top leadership gets the first signature campaign underway and delegated, it can shift its attention to working with a different group to start the next one. This is very much the way many of today’s best community building initiatives are operating.⁴⁶

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Practitioners say that good community building initiatives may start in many different ways, but they have a similar operating style—comprehensive, strategic, and entrepreneurial—so that they wind up looking more similar over time.

An idea that has become important in thinking about this emerging field is that, to be effective, community building needs to be asset-based.

Planning community initiatives only from the perspective of solving problems or meeting needs casts a negative tone on what should be an exciting and positive capacity building venture—it perpetuates feelings of dependency and is ultimately self-defeating.

THEME 4: ASSET-BASED

An idea that has become important in thinking about this emerging field is that, to be effective, community building needs to be *asset-based*. John Kretzmann and John McKnight, who have done most to think through this approach, have said that planning community initiatives only from the perspective of solving problems or meeting needs casts a negative tone on what should be an exciting and positive capacity building venture—it perpetuates feelings of dependency and is ultimately self-defeating.⁴⁷ In fact, all communities (even distressed urban neighborhoods) have a considerable number and range of assets on which they can build if they will only shift their mind-set and recognize them. Kretzmann and McKnight argue that community building should start by inventorying (mapping) these assets and then finding ways to take advantage of them (use them as the cornerstones) in designing action programs.

Kretzmann and McKnight suggest that assets occur in tiers, which relate to their priority in developing community programs. The first tier (termed primary building blocks) are *assets and capacities located inside the neighborhood and largely under neighborhood control*. These first include the assets of individuals: the skills, talents, and experience of the residents; businesses operating in the neighborhood; home-based enterprises; the personal income of the residents; and the “gifts of labeled people” (often unrecognized special skills and abilities of, for example, those who are labeled as “mentally ill, disabled, and elderly.” Organizational assets in this tier include: associations of businesses; citizens associations, cultural organizations; communications organizations; and religious organizations.

The next tier (secondary building blocks) are *assets within the community but largely controlled by outsiders*. For example: private and nonprofit organizations such as institutions of higher education, hospitals and social services agencies; physical resources such as vacant land, commercial and industrial structures, housing, and energy and waste resources; and public institutions and services such as public schools, the police, libraries, fire departments and parks.

The final tier (potential building blocks) are *resources originating outside the neighborhood and controlled by outsiders*. Examples here include welfare expenditures, public capital improvement expenditures, and public information.

Assets in the first tier can be acted on directly, while recognizing those in the latter tiers requires the community to devise strategies for influencing outsiders. Kretzmann and McKnight argue that the very act of inventorying assets changes the orientation of the planning process and increases its potential. It is itself a “community organizing device” that gives residents optimism and, by evidencing opportunities to “change things,” motivates participation, collaboration, and commitment to action.

This orientation does not imply, however, that it is wise to ignore (or never monitor) the truly serious problems that do exist in poor neighborhoods. It says simply that the dominant mode for community-based planning and action should be positive and constructive. In such an environment, it becomes possible to frankly recognize and deal with the problems without allowing the “negatives” to be seen as so debilitating that they immobilize action.

THEME 5: TAILORED TO NEIGHBORHOOD SCALE AND CONDITIONS

There are two reasons why community building has to take place at the neighborhood level. The first has to do with scale. City planners have traditionally seen a neigh-

neighborhood as a unit with around 5,000–6,000 people, roughly the size needed to support a single elementary school. This project's seminar participants suggested that community building works best at about that scale; certainly not as well in any area exceeding 10,000 population. The reason is that in larger areas you lose the frequent face-to-face interaction—the ability of people to really get to know each other—that is needed to establish mutual trust and mutual obligation. In other words, in areas with more people, it becomes more difficult to build social capital.

The second reason that community building needs to occur at a neighborhood scale is that units of that size in American cities are quite different from each other, and the differences are important in defining workable programs of action. Even among poor neighborhoods, conditions vary in important ways that suggest the need for considerable variation in strategy. Cleveland's Poverty Commission report, for example, cites research done at Case Western Reserve University that demonstrates this point.⁴⁸ The researchers first classified neighborhoods by the period in which they became “high poverty areas” (poverty rates in excess of 40 percent). They found:

- Areas in high-poverty status since 1970 had all of the signs of severe distress we have discussed in this monograph. Much of their original housing stock had been lost, they had the lowest incomes and high crime rates, and women and children dominated their resident populations. Here, fundamental efforts to reestablish order and build human capacity would be required.
- Those that had not entered the high-poverty group until 1980 showed many of the same signs but not to the same degree. They too had lost housing, but the substantial land areas left vacant held more promise for stable redevelopment in the short term. A larger portion of the population was male, suggesting greater opportunity for stabilizing families and the need for different strategies for employment training and job brokering.
- Areas that had not become high-poverty neighborhoods until 1990 were generally yet better off. They had retained more of their housing and a larger share of employed males and middle-age husband and wife families. Instead of having to rebuild social capital from scratch, residents could focus on strengthening and extending that which remained. They had a quite different and more promising set of potentials for economic development.

The authors of this study had examined a host of other indicators and cautioned that there were important differences even within these categories. Combining the implications of various indicators, it was clear that, based on the data alone, no one neighborhood's community building approach could be exactly like that for any other. And that is before considering differences in resident preferences, cultures, relationships, and institutional conditions which will always warrant further variations in strategy. In two neighborhoods that look nearly the same on paper, one will have a particular church or youth club with a set of interests and capacities that create opportunities that simply do not exist in the other. Neighborhood A has a strong and supportive elementary school principal while neighborhood B, next door, does not, yet the drug trade is much more open and threatening in A than B. Planning how to take best advantage of such opportunities requires sensitive knowledge of the people and the circumstances. Only residents of the neighborhood can do that. This is why community building could never be programmed effectively by planners from city hall, no matter how well meaning, let alone by federal officials.

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Planning how to take best advantage of such opportunities requires sensitive knowledge of the people and the circumstances.

The oratory of some community activists in the past seemed to imply that poor neighborhoods ought to secede from the broader society in which they are located. However, today's community builders generally recognize that this idea does not make much sense in practice.



In preparing for community building in a city, it may well be advisable to set up resident driven institutions that cover larger areas (clusters of neighborhoods), since individual neighborhoods are often too small for some functions (e.g., economic development, health care). Where shared objectives exist, collaboration between neighborhoods may be a much more powerful way to achieve them than relying solely on individual neighborhoods acting independently. But such collaborations need to keep the differences between their component neighborhoods in mind as they operate and recognize that those components need to develop their own sense of identity if social and human capital is to be built successfully.

THEME 6: COLLABORATIVELY LINKED TO THE BROADER SOCIETY TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS AND ENHANCE OUTSIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESIDENTS

The oratory of some community activists in the past seemed to imply that poor neighborhoods ought to, in effect, secede from the broader society in which they are located—cut the links and develop their own jobs and their own culture so that they become fully self-sufficient. There was something to this oratory in that it might shake people out of attitudes of dependency. However, today's community builders generally recognize that this idea does not make much sense in practice. For example, while neighborhoods should do all they can to develop their internal economies, very few residential neighborhoods anywhere can generate nearly enough jobs in total to support their residents. Henry Cisneros has written:

I am disturbed when people try to make strategic options appear to be in conflict when, in fact, they can be made to blend with a reasonable sense of balance. “People policies” and “place policies” are not polar opposites. I know of no serious integrationist who really thinks it would be best to move all low-income households out to the suburbs, thereby obliterating the still vital (if presently weakened) community assets and institutions that remain in the city. Alternatively, I know of no serious community builder who thinks it appropriate to build a wall around the community—to deny current residents permission to leave or to require that local workers accept jobs only from firms located within the community boundaries.

Healthy communities prepare their young residents to take advantage of the best opportunities they can, wherever they may be located. Because they have sustained important internal assets, many will stay, but it is to be expected that some will leave. A sizeable number of capable local workers will commute to outside jobs every day, but with strong internal assets, they will spend much of their enhanced paychecks in locally owned business establishments. And healthy communities also attract “new blood” from outside . . . The term “gentrification,” has, for good reason, become anathema to community builders. But suppose inner city communities actively planned to attract middle-income families back into their neighborhoods, and did it on their own terms without displacement.⁴⁹

Peter Marris points out that three forces are at work, simultaneously contributing to conditions in distressed neighborhoods: (a) sustained economic deprivation; (b) a failure of the mechanisms of social integration; and (c) individual and social pathologies that result from (a) and (b). He believes that community building should

be a formulation that encourages us to address all three—not a liberal ideology that focuses only on (a) and (b), nor a conservative one that focuses only on (c).⁵⁰ Arthur Naparstek defines a community building strategy as one that “combines a focus on place with an emphasis on self-help, without rejecting macro policies that are people-based strategies.” In other words, community builders have to deal with the broader society. The question is how they should approach it.

The first answer is, “proactively.” This term implies that the community cannot simply sit back and wait for what comes from outside—it ought to reach out and try to change things to the extent it can. Community leaders now more often recognize that one of their most serious problems is the devastating isolation of inner city neighborhoods that has emerged in recent years and that they need to find ways to end it. Kretzmann and McKnight’s asset-oriented approach says you should concentrate on your internal assets first, but then look to elements of the world outside that can become assets for the neighborhood, and deal with them as well.

To do this, should the community rely on conflict, collaboration, or confrontation? Here, the answer is to use all three, selecting the one that is likely to work best for the situation at hand. In the 1990s, community builders are more likely to emphasize collaboration (because they have found that is more likely to get results most often), but conflict is both inevitable and manageable. Confrontation is still sure to be an important tool in some instances. Recall from Section 1 that the New Communities Corporation was collaborating with government officials on a number of fronts, at the same time that it was engaged in a long and hard-fought struggle with them on the housing standards issue. The dramatic progress across the country in community reinvestment by major financial institutions is another example of confrontation leading to collaboration. Leading financial institutions have now changed underwriting practices and established specialized departments, thereby connecting better to communities while still making a profit.

An important arena in which inside-outside relationships are being given priority is the question of economic development and securing sufficient job opportunities for neighborhood residents. New roles and relationships have to be defined, and the best approach is likely to be a mix of direct action and partnerships. For example, one essential is helping local residents become better equipped to work and then helping them find jobs in the broader economy. In this case, the community may have a competitive advantage in taking on some aspects of the “preparation for work” side directly, but when it comes to linking them to outside job opportunities it is likely to make more sense for them to partner with a metropolitan-wide organization. Trying to take on too much—to try to control everything directly—could lead to such overextension that it could demolish the community’s capacity to address the basics that only it can do well.

However, a proactive reaching out—networking and partnering with institutions outside the neighborhood—does not imply that community leaders should be satisfied with “business as usual” from their outside partners. A community’s new involvement with outside partners offers an opportunity to educate those partners about the realities of what does and does not work in their neighborhoods and to exert influence on them to change practices that have been insensitive to those realities. In other words, being a partner does not mean community leaders cannot advise their new associates (e.g., local public agencies) on how they might change their operating procedures to support community results more effectively.

Community leaders now recognize that one of their most serious problems is the devastating isolation of inner city neighborhoods that has emerged in recent years and that they need to find ways to end it.

A community’s new involvement with outside partners offers an opportunity to educate those partners about the realities of what does and does not work in their neighborhoods and to exert influence on them to change practices that have been insensitive to those realities.

THEME 7: CONSCIOUSLY CHANGING INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS AND RACISM

Community building is not simply a matter of strengthening the connection between mainstream economic, political, and social institutions and those neighborhoods which have become isolated; it also requires all the institutions involved to give up “business as usual.” Community building by collaboratively linking the isolated community to mainstream structures provides the contact within which a demand for fundamental change can be proffered by those who need it most; and the relationships and mechanisms of collaboration within which change can be accomplished in a way that all parties involved meet their institutional needs. Confronted with a demand from parents, schools work out new forms of education through collaborations among educators, the community, parents, the private sector, and other public and nonprofit agencies. The famous success of the Beacon School and many charter schools is exactly a product of this process.

Financial institutions confronted by the community with a critical analysis of the community’s credit needs and the institution’s inadequate response work with community-based organizations, private and nonprofit developers, and the public sector to finance community development projects which serve the community’s needs, allow lenders to make a reasonable rate of return within risk parameters acceptable to them, and enable the public sector to leverage its grant money. Sometimes the large systems need to change system-wide, as in the successful reorganization of preschool education in the Oakland school system as facilitated by the Urban Strategies Council (discussed in Chapter 3). At other times, large institutions are drawn incrementally into change as in Grace Hill Settlement’s use of technology in a collaboration with the police and the foster care system to create a system of placing children in need of shelter in homes in that neighborhood.

While the calls for institutional change and responsiveness to community have been hallmarks of community building since the early settlement houses, deliberate attempts to bring about change in the last 30 years have shown us just how difficult it is to structure and maintain a genuine community orientation in large public and private bureaucracies, whether a school system or a multi-state bank. Earlier, more confrontational approaches may have resulted in incremental change, but soon the activists were “back to the streets.” The collaborative approach to institutional change takes a longer time but is more sustainable and thoroughgoing. A community building effort draws all sides of the controversy together around a central set of values and binds the participants in relationships of mutual respect. As in all relationships, the coming together is not without conflict over differences, but community building efforts bring the best skills of organization development and conflict resolution to bear so that solution, rather than blame, is the focus and parties see in their differences assets they can contribute for the common endeavor. One strength of community building is that it focuses on concrete outcomes. Commitment to the product draws participants beyond conventional barriers. Community building is not looking to relationships for the sake of relationships but to productive working arrangements whether or not parties feel comfortable with or like each other.

Since a great deal of the isolation of minority communities is the product of racial discrimination, race matters in community building efforts. Racial prejudice and its more pernicious cousin, institutional racism, can neither be ignored nor made the centerpiece of the collaborative reconnection of the isolated community to the mainstream. Sensitivity is needed but is not the focal point. Rather, parties in successful community building are willing to recognize the pervasive influence of race,



acknowledge its direct impact on particular issues under consideration, and address that impact directly as a step in moving toward progress on the issue. Not infrequently, the impact of race must be discussed openly and steps taken to change behaviors and attitudes that spring from racism. Occasionally, community building efforts will launch a direct program of racial awareness, for example, to bring together different populations in the same community or to accommodate cultural and language difference in a common effort. For the most part, however, successful community building efforts are addressing the impact of racism as part of their problem-solving effort in community building issues. In fact, it may be the focus on the solving of other problems which enables an engagement on race among stakeholders who otherwise might be reluctant to open the conversation.



CHAPTER

3



Recommendations: Supporting Broader Application of Effective Community Building

While it is unlikely that any national effort could stimulate effective community building in all poor neighborhoods, we conclude that there is a reasonably good chance that such an effort could pay off in a significantly larger share of the communities in need that bringing community building to scale is clearly worth attempting.

We have seen that the community building approach has been responsible for impressive changes in a number of individual communities around the country and we have examined several points of view, principles, and operating strategies that help to explain those successes. But can community building become a more central component of a national strategy to address urban poverty?

The evidence is clear that in some devastated neighborhoods, charismatic leaders have emerged spontaneously to revitalize community spirit and circumstances. And in a number of others, skilled outside facilitators have helped even less forceful individuals organize their neighbors to accomplish a great deal. But in 1990 there were 7,002 high-poverty census tracts in the United States (neighborhood-sized areas with poverty rates in excess of 30 percent). Is it reasonable to expect that sound community building initiatives could be mounted in all, or even a dominant proportion of these neighborhoods?

While it is unlikely that any national effort could stimulate effective community building in all poor neighborhoods, we conclude that there is a reasonably good chance that such an effort could pay off in a significantly larger share of the communities in need that bringing community building to scale is clearly worth attempting. We offer six basic recommendations.

(1) A national campaign to further the new community building is warranted. The broad group of nongovernmental and governmental institutions already involved in the field should expand their efforts and find new ways to collaborate so that such a campaign can be mounted.

(2) Local governments should reorient their programs and operating style to make partnerships with community builders central to their agendas.

(3) A high priority should be given to establishing (or strengthening) non-governmental locally based intermediaries to support community building and community interests in all metropolitan areas.

(4) *National supporters should work to substantially strengthen training and technical assistance capacity for community building, and build public awareness of its importance.*

(5) *Federal and state governments should play a strong role as supporting partners in this initiative.*

(6) *All supporters should find ways to nurture community building in individual neighborhoods, and avoid overwhelming it.*

RECOMMENDATION 1: A NATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO FURTHER COMMUNITY BUILDING

A national campaign to further the new community building is warranted. The broad group of nongovernmental and governmental institutions already involved in the field should expand their efforts and find new ways to collaborate so that such a campaign can be mounted.

Our conclusion that a national effort to strengthen and expand the new community building approach in America's poor communities is warranted now is based on four considerations.

First, the track record—of both the earlier CDC development and the recent group of more comprehensive initiatives—shows that leaders have been found (or developed) and projects have succeeded in some of what might seem to be the least promising environments. In other words, there is nothing about the other distressed neighborhoods not yet exposed to community building to suggest that it cannot work there as well.

Second, while the institutional development challenge implied by a significant expansion of community building is formidable, there is no reason to believe it is insurmountable. Few would have predicted either the quantity or the quality of CDC development that has occurred in our cities over the past 15 years, yet it did occur. And this, along with other community-based initiatives, has established institutional capacities and networks that should provide a better starting point than existed even a few years ago.

Third, the new funds needed to expand community building itself—i.e., to pay for the services of more intermediaries, trainers and facilitators and to cover some basic level of operating support for community associations—are not likely to be unreasonable, even in our present budgetary environment. Certainly they will be quite small in relation to the outlays for public assistance, social and health services, public safety, and project development that account for the bulk of the cost of our nation's social support systems for the poor. Furthermore, community building focuses on trying to prevent social problems rather than only dealing with them after they occur—and that, if effective, should act to reduce, rather than expand, requirements for social support outlays over the long term.

Fourth, we recognize what may be a substantial risk of not trying. We hope our public systems will be reformed so that they will make a much more effective contribution to dealing with the social problems of our age. Even if they are, however, given the arguments and experiences discussed previously in this monograph, there is reason to doubt that they alone ultimately will work unless indigenous social capital is also rebuilt in our urban neighborhoods. And if social capital is to be rebuilt, the community building approach is certainly the most serious strategy on the table that might accomplish it.



Who Should Be Involved?

When we suggest mounting a new national initiative, many people are likely to think back automatically to the programs of the 1960s: the federal government provides the funding and passes it through to local governments which, in turn, support activities in individual communities. This is definitively *not* what we have in mind. Model Cities is, in fact, a bad model in several respects. Direct federal programs often imply a level of external control likely to stifle the local creativity and initiative upon which successful community building depends.

We have said in this monograph that there is a movement—largely nongovernmental—already underway. Its activities, institutions, and networks have developed substantially, particularly over the past 15 years, and while its components may have started from different places, they now appear to be converging around a set of common themes. We believe that this movement is now *coming of age*. What is proposed here is to find ways to reasonably accelerate this movement—to strengthen it, support its convergence, and expand it—not the adoption of any “new program.”

Required then is a further coming-together of existing institutions in the field. This does not imply the need to form any new institution, but rather the collaboration of existing ones around the shared purpose of expanding and strengthening community building across the country. The partners in it would include a broad range of national organizations that share similar (if not altogether uniform) goals—institutions like the National Community Building Network (NCBN), the National Congress for Community Economic Development (NCCED), the United Way, the Congress of National Black Churches, the Aspen Roundtable, the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), the Development Training Institute (DTI), the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), the America Project, the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation, the Chapin Hall Center, the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, the Enterprise Foundation, the Urban Institute, the National Association of Neighborhood Centers, the Family Resource Coalition, and the Alliance for National Renewal, among others.

In addition, major foundations that have made commitments to improving poor communities should also be leading partners in this effort: for example, Annie E. Casey, Ford, Kauffman, Kellogg, J.D. and C.T. MacArthur, Pew Charitable Trusts, Rockefeller, and Surdna. And, indeed, the federal government should also be a partner.

We offer no definite plan for how these actors should organize themselves to develop a campaign to further community building—but only challenge them to find a way to do so. Clearly, early steps would have to include a series of convenings across groups in the spirit of partnership. These sessions might first give the interest groups the chance to learn about the array of recent trends and developments in the field and to get to know each other better.

We judge that convenings like this, in and of themselves, will be an important step in furthering the convergence we have discussed here. We think this would promote increased recognition that what these groups have in common is much bigger and more important than the issues of style that have separated some of them in the past—increased recognition of the urgency of their shared objectives and that they will have considerably more power in addressing them if they try to do so collaboratively and in a mutually supportive manner than if they continue to move along with full independence.

This involvement of national interest groups as advisors to, and participants in, the campaign does not imply that they would be expected to change who they are, or what they do, to any significant extent. They all bring their own particular strengths and patterns of emphasis to the field. Rather, the point is that if they do jointly par-

Required is a further coming-together of existing institutions in the field. This does not imply the need to form any new institution, but rather the collaboration of existing ones around the shared purpose of expanding and strengthening community building across the country.

Urgently needed are more skilled facilitator/organizers, stronger, smarter, and more sensitive networks of institutions, and governmental and leadership frameworks at the local, state, and federal levels.

Fundamentally, the future of community building will depend on what happens at the local level. Actions by local governments, community groups themselves, and a variety of other local intermediary institutions will make the critical difference.

ticipate in the campaign, and begin to collaborate in other ways, they would represent a more powerful voice in support of effective community-level practice than exists at present.

Mounting a National Campaign

The acceleration of effective community building cannot be expected to occur automatically. Urgently needed are: (1) more skilled facilitator/organizers who can meet with local residents in individual neighborhoods, explain the approach, help get them started, and then find ways to support them (with the right things at the right time) as they move ahead; (2) stronger, smarter, and more sensitive networks of institutions at all levels to assist in providing that support directly; and (3) governmental and leadership frameworks at the local, state, and federal levels that adapt their own rules and programmatic behaviour to create an operating environment that is conducive to community initiative-taking.

The exact shape of a national campaign to address these needs should emerge out of the deliberations of the array of partners we have suggested should be involved in it. We suggest no definite prescriptions at this point. However, the following paragraphs offer some illustrative ideas about how such deliberations might help to stimulate discussion.

Most fundamentally, the future of community building will depend on what happens at the local level. Actions by local governments, community groups themselves, and a variety of other local intermediary institutions will make the critical difference. That is why we think the centerpiece of any viable national campaign to further effective community building (drawing participants and support from the foundations, interest groups, and federal agencies) would probably have to be an effort to influence local leadership. It might do so in a sequence something like the following:

- (1) The campaign managers might first offer the charge and challenge to local foundations and grant-makers in America's metropolitan areas to be the convenors of a local strategy development process in support of community building. Presentations on the potentials might be made at meetings of the Council on Foundations and background materials would be sent to regional associations of grant-makers and individual local foundations that might have the capacity to play this role.
- (2) Campaign managers would then enter into initial negotiations with the local foundations that expressed interest in this approach. To prepare, national participants and advisors would pool what they know about the institutional environments in each of America's major metropolitan environments where poverty is concentrated. They would identify areas of both comparative strength and weakness and they would share information on their own past activities in each locality, as a basis for proceeding in a manner that would be sensitive to the conditions in each area.
- (3) The local foundations would be asked to mobilize a broad range of local leaders (public and private) to participate in strategy formulation. Then based on a plan worked out in conjunction with the local foundation, campaign managers and national interest group representatives would visit each area, make presentations, and help to facilitate the strategy development

process. The campaign team would include highly qualified representatives of nationally respected institutions—they should have considerable stature and would be likely to receive a serious hearing.

- (4) Campaign team presentations would describe the themes of today's community building practice nationally, explain its advantages, give examples, and then discuss methods and techniques of furthering it that have proved successful in other localities. In all areas, the team would emphasize motivating change in two areas: (a) the reform of practices and operating styles of local government agencies to create an environment conducive to community building; and (b) the establishment (or strengthening) of non-governmental, locally based intermediaries to support community building more directly. (These two focal points are explained more fully in our second and third recommendations, discussed in detail below.)
- (5) Once the local strategy is developed, the campaign team might work in various ways to support it. Several of the national institutions suggested to participate already see working to strengthen local capacity for community-based improvement as central to their own missions. The context of local strategy formulation, with the backing of the all national campaign sponsors and participants, should in fact enhance their chances of success in this regard. The campaign, however, should be able to offer some funding (probably on a local-match basis) to support the implementation of the strategy as well—a topic to which we turn immediately below.

Mobilizing Resources

In furthering community building today, *money is not the first priority*—large injections of new funding could in fact be detrimental if they are provided in the wrong way and/or at the wrong time. Stronger emphasis needs to be on the provision of information, training, technical assistance, and access to networks, all provided in a manner that will *nurture* the process at street level. Nonetheless, there is a need to expand the financial resources available for community building itself, and doing so should also be a task of the national foundations and other campaign participants.

The theme of diversifying funding sources is important for individual community initiatives (see further discussion under Recommendation 6, below), and we think it makes sense at the national level as well. A great deal has been learned about the dangers of putting all of your eggs in one basket, particularly the federal one. In other words, resources to further community building should be mobilized from a variety of sources: governments (federal, state, and local) and the private sector (national foundations, local foundations, and other private groups).

We judge that, as a part of the campaign we have proposed, the national organizations involved would probably have to make a concerted effort to build a new diversified national fund to provide resources for local community building strategies and national support networks.

Clearly, there is a workable model for such an effort in the way funds have been mobilized for low-income housing production by CDCs and other nonprofits since 1980. The federal government had programs that could be accessed by the sector (the Low Income Housing Tax Credit, CDBG, HOME) but it did not promise to guarantee the sector's development overall. Nongovernmental actors had to get engaged, build a support network and mobilize other funds from other sources (e.g., founda-

In furthering community building today, money is not the first priority—large injections of new funding could in fact be detrimental if they are provided in the wrong way and/or at the wrong time.



Traditionally, the communities were often seen as simply clamoring for more resources and fighting city programs that did not suit them. However, community groups are now emphasizing taking on responsibility themselves for constructive action to address their city's most serious policy problems.

tions and private investors). Of course, except for its physical development projects, the expansion of community building per se would not be able to leverage private investment resources to the same extent, but the rest of the approach should generally be applicable. HUD does not try to “operate” the sector, but rather it is a partner to it. The delivery/support network incorporates a variety of nongovernmental actors, including both national and local intermediaries.

RECOMMENDATION 2: THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Local governments should reorient their programs and operating style to make partnerships with community builders central to their agendas.

The behavior of local agencies—county welfare and social service agencies as well as city community development, public works, and police departments—will have a significant impact on community building whatever they do. It is quite likely that they will undermine it if they either ignore it and proceed with business as usual or, alternatively, try to take it over and operate it themselves. As we see it, the only positive alternative is partnership. Local agencies should operate so that community groups come to the table as independent (not dependent) collaborators. All parties (agencies and community groups) should then take on clear performance obligations and hold each other accountable for results.

Is it reasonable to expect this to occur? In the past, local politicians and agency directors have often strongly resisted giving more power to communities. They have wanted to keep the control for themselves. Even community-elected city council representatives who fight for neighborhood interests have often wanted to direct the allocation of funds themselves rather than let community institutions have a significant role in decision making.

We do not expect such tendencies to go away easily. But there are new ways of looking at things that suggest it may be possible to diminish their effects. Most important, community groups are proposing to play a different role than politicians have seen them playing in the past. Traditionally, the communities were often seen as simply clamoring for more resources and fighting city programs that did not suit them. Those roles will not vanish entirely either. However, community groups are now emphasizing something else: *taking on responsibility themselves* for constructive action to address their city's most serious policy problems.

Local officials are often well aware that many of the programs dealing with the problems of poor neighborhoods that are operated through their own bureaucracies are not working very effectively. Today, they get almost all of the blame. Communities are saying: (1) if you give more responsibility to us, in partnership, there is a good chance things will work better; and (2) we will explicitly share in the blame for any failures as well as the credit for successes; i.e., we are willing to be held accountable. In short, sharing power and control with community groups in this new context may be more attractive politically than it has been in the past.

Some localities are already moving in these directions, and offer examples of how they might be implemented elsewhere. We first discuss overall approaches by city governments, and then deal with the special case of social services.

City Government Strategies for Community Involvement

Some cities seem to be working toward making their programs more “community sensitive.” These programs include public works, policing, and some other service programs, as well as traditional community development activities. This sometimes means decentralizing operating responsibilities within agencies and it almost always means giving community residents more of a voice in program planning and priority setting and finding ways to employ community residents directly in city-sponsored improvement and service initiatives.

In addition, city governments can support leadership training for community residents and other means to strengthen the capacities of community organizations. Cities can do this either directly or, more often, by partnering with other groups such as community foundations and locally based intermediaries established to support community building.

Indianapolis has been one of the most forward-thinking cities in this regard, under the leadership of Mayor Stephen Goldsmith. With the support of three national foundations, Goldsmith has spearheaded a *Neighborhood Empowerment Initiative* which provides leadership training for community residents and the services of a paid neighborhood coordinator to assist with community projects. The initiative is explicitly designed to develop “models for promoting grassroots involvement in city affairs” and to “increase the political savvy and clout of neighborhood leaders.”⁵¹ In addition, the city has shifted the focus of its redevelopment from the downtown area to seven targeted inner-city neighborhoods. This strategy entails partnerships between neighborhood improvement associations and local banks and nonprofit groups, as well as city government. Goldsmith has also implemented a plan to allow local churches, businesses, and nonprofits to bid on contracts to provide services, like park maintenance.⁵²

Richmond, Virginia, offers another example. City Manager Robert Bobb helped design Richmond’s *Neighborhood Team Process* in 1988. The city was divided into nine planning districts and monthly meetings have been held since then between neighborhood leaders and city staff to discuss city priorities (more than 1,000 citizens have participated). Yet another is Charlotte, North Carolina. Charlotte’s 60 neighborhoods have become the organizing units for local government. Neighborhood plans have been developed with substantial resident involvement, and city officials orient their activity around neighborhood-specific conditions and priorities. A “customer feedback system” keeps the plans relevant and is used as a basis for determining city officials’ compensation.

In chapter 1 we noted Minneapolis’ Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP)—a joint venture between residents, government, and the private sector. It encompasses 79 of Minneapolis’ 81 neighborhoods and uses government and private funds to leverage financing for plans for service delivery and revitalization initiatives. The plans are actually “Neighborhood Action Plans” developed collaboratively by residents and city/county agencies. The city puts money into the implementation of these plans directly (up to \$450,000 for some neighborhoods), but the communities also raise other funds to support the investments they have specified.⁵³

Community Involvement in Social Service Delivery

A possibly more difficult, yet more important, theme is allowing community groups to play a much larger role in social service delivery. Current social service bureaucracies are strong and many have proven resistant to change. Giving communities more

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power in social service delivery is often seen as threatening to them. Yet recent dissatisfaction with the fragmentation and rigidity of social service delivery systems is creating stronger mandates for reform in many urban areas.

There are many roles community associations can play. At the minimum, they can help to coordinate and integrate services delivered by outside providers. We noted in chapter 1 that government service systems have a hard time looking at individuals and families holistically and designing packages of services that address their actual (multiple) needs. Trained community residents could be the first contact for neighbors who are in need and, after examining their circumstances, referring them to a sensible mix of outside service agencies as appropriate given the case at hand. Some cities are supporting the development of multiservice centers within individual neighborhoods—places where troubled residents can go to get help regardless of the set of problems at hand. Those centers may be staffed by service professionals along with community residents who can facilitate linkage between residents and the professionals.

It is also possible, however, for community groups to play a much more commanding role; i.e., designing and operating service programs themselves, hiring outside professionals to work in key staff functions but also hiring community residents to do as much of the work as possible (giving them both employment and training to enhance future career potentials).

While major transformations of social services remain slow to emerge, change is occurring. Local governments are already farming out an increasing amount of their “hands-on” social service work to substantive nonprofits. Doing the same with community-based nonprofits is in many ways a difference in degree rather than in kind.

In some places, bold changes along these lines are taking place. Los Angeles County, for example, in the face of rapidly heightening rates of child abuse and neglect, has substantially reformed its approach to child welfare. In the new system, the County contracts with a nongovernmental “lead agency” in a given neighborhood and assigns that agency first-line responsibility for handling the care and monitoring of troubled families. So far 25 “neighborhood networks” have been set up in this way. The lead agencies vary depending on which group has the strongest potential for such work in the neighborhood—responsibilities may be assigned to churches, community associations, or even neighborhood boys clubs. New York City is considering a similar approach.⁵⁴

RECOMMENDATION 3: THE IMPORTANCE OF NONGOVERNMENTAL, LOCALLY BASED INTERMEDIARIES

A high priority should be given to establishing (or strengthening) *nongovernmental, locally based intermediaries* to support community building and community interests in all metropolitan areas.

We have suggested that the most important requirement to expand community building at this point is for more capable people to act as facilitators—“coaches” if you will—to work with individual neighborhood groups. Who should these individuals be? It does not make sense for federal, or even state, officials to try to take on this role. Similarly, it would not be realistic for all of them to be employees of national foundations. As noted earlier, major foundations have done an admirable job in sup-

porting individual community building initiatives and in drawing lessons from them. But even given the way these foundations see their own role, let alone the logistical implications, this could never be a model for broad-scale expansion.

It seems to us that most of the people who facilitate the expansion of community building in individual neighborhoods have to be employed by *local* institutions—people who are trained in facilitation and community building principles, but are also sensitively aware of local social, economic, and political circumstances and pay attention to how they change from day-to-day; people who work for institutions that also understand local conditions and see themselves first as long-term stakeholders in the future of their own metropolis. National institutions, no matter how well motivated, are too far removed from the action and should not view themselves as a part of “us” in the local environment.

Locally Based Community Building Intermediaries and the Changing Local Context

As noted above, agencies of local government can create hospitable environments for community building and serve as effective partners with community groups in many initiatives. But another type of local institution is needed if community building practice is to reach its potential. Community groups need some city-level entity that they trust to represent their interests (sometimes in opposition to agencies of government even though the overall emphasis may be on attempting to negotiate collaborative partnerships with public agencies and other local institutions). We think a high priority is warranted for the creation (and/or strengthening) of one or more *nongovernmental, locally based intermediaries* in each metropolis. These are institutions that would work at all levels to support community building: helping new community associations to get organized and providing technical assistance and facilitation services to them, but also representing them and dealing on their behalf with the broader society.

There is evidence that, in many metropolitan areas, the local institutional/decision making context is changing to accommodate (if not encourage) new institutions like these. Not too long ago, it was thought that consideration of public issues in a city should occur primarily through government channels, recognizing that local “power elites” often had considerable influence on outcomes behind the scenes. Today, there is movement toward more open dialogues and action programs involving a broader range of actors.

Allan Wallis has reviewed recent developments in regional governance in a number of U.S. metropolitan areas.⁵⁵ He sees: “(1) significantly increased and direct involvement of the private and nonprofit sectors on a regional scale; (2) a new type of elected leadership that is more willing to negotiate and partner in efforts to build a *metropolitan* community; and (3) increasing use of facilitated decision-making processes to help establish shared visions, resolve conflicts, and develop consensus regarding regional interests.”

He emphasizes that the new leadership coalitions and networks often represent some impressive bridge-building between groups that have often been at odds in the past (for example, business leaders, community groups, nonprofit social service providers, and government agencies). Most seem to be reaching out for inclusiveness; e.g., by including representatives from inner-city communities on their boards. For a number of them, regional economic development and job generation are priority themes, but many give high priority to programs addressing the issue of persistent

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poverty.⁵⁶ Of the latter, some are oriented around strategic planning processes involving a number of newer nonprofit interest groups and service providers, along with more established institutions, like the United Way and relevant public agencies.

In a growing number of areas, a key actor in these coalitions is a local philanthropic *community foundation*. Community foundations are generally respected as nonpartisan, and their objectives focus on improving the quality of life in their areas over the long term. Many of them have moved beyond their traditional forms of giving (e.g., to the arts) and are now playing an active role, as catalyst as well as funder, in a variety of new social service and urban improvement efforts, often in collaboration with community groups. And community foundations now appear to be the fastest growing component of philanthropy in America. In 1994, they received more than \$1 billion in donations—50 percent more than in 1993—pushing their total assets nationally to \$10.4 billion.⁵⁷ It seems to us that community foundations are often likely to be the most attractive entities to sponsor (and play a central role in overseeing) local intermediaries set up to support community building.

Functions of Locally Based Community Building Intermediaries

In fact, city- or area-wide community building intermediaries of the kind we have in mind already exist in a number of U.S. cities. Together, they illustrate what can be accomplished. One that works closely in support of community groups is the *Fund for the City of New York*. Others include the Baltimore's *Citizen's Planning and Housing Association*, Boston's *Persistent Poverty Project* (in effect, a branch of the Boston Foundation), Denver's *Piton Foundation*, and Oakland's *Urban Strategies Council* (supported by both local community foundations and the Rockefeller Foundation).⁵⁸

The style of these groups is to work strategically and entrepreneurially to further community interests, but they work hard to earn and maintain the respect and trust of citywide leadership groups and local governments as well. For example, with respect to "hot" political issues, they generally avoid taking sides and try to play a balanced role in informing the debate. We have said that the basic function of such intermediaries is to support the strengthening of community building in individual neighborhoods, but all perform many other functions as well, such as:

- Convening community representatives and citywide interests and agencies to discuss issues that are important to poor neighborhoods, and participating in mobilizing collaborations to respond to them.
- Helping citywide leadership coalitions prepare visions and strategic plans for their cities. (For example, all of those listed above participated in preparing their city's application for the Empowerment Zone program and several are now playing the central role in monitoring its performance.) The Urban Strategies Council played a leading role in forming Oakland's application, recruiting young community residents to gather baseline data and then converting them into responsible players in implementation.
- Using their convening ability to further inclusiveness and understanding; i.e., providing opportunities for relevant players (from the communities and from outside entities) to the same table, so they get to know each other.
- Mobilizing and operating citywide leadership training programs for community residents. The Piton Foundation's program has been an important model in this regard.⁵⁹

- Providing services to assist in conflict resolution.
- Working with the local media to get news about achievements in poor communities out to the general public and providing facts to counter distorted images about those neighborhoods.

All of these support organizations, in fact, rely on the provision of reliable *information* as a key tool to accomplish their objectives. Each of them has developed and operates a sophisticated computer-based information system on changing neighborhood conditions. The fact that they can assemble the most reliable data relevant to community change issues quickly, and reach out to provide the data to those at all levels in decision making, has clearly enhanced their influence in their own cities.⁶⁰ They also make a special effort to get information in the hands of community builders in individual neighborhoods and help them learn how to use it.

An Example: The Urban Strategies Council

An illustration of the way the Urban Strategies Council (USC) has used its information capacity to further reforms may help to solidify understanding of the potential of locally based intermediaries.⁶¹ In 1990, the USC and the superintendent of the Oakland Unified School District recognized a common challenge. The school system and the city's array of social service agencies were not dealing with children holistically. Students' difficulties at school often emanated from problems at home, but the efforts of the schools and other agencies to help were fragmented and sometimes contradictory. They normally become involved only at times of crisis, rather than working coherently to address root causes so as to prevent crises.

Because of the recognition of its advanced data processing capabilities, and the fact that it already had some of the relevant information on hand, the USC was able to secure, process, and link school and social agency data files for the students of one elementary school and their families. The results were presented to agency representatives in a 1991 meeting called "The Same Client." The results on the overlap of service provision were striking and motivated agreement to conduct a similar study for a much larger population (students at eight schools). In 1992, USC published the results in the report *Partnership for Change*. They showed that almost two out of three students used public services, and more than a third used at least two different services. It also documented that the system was investing much more in crisis services than prevention, and that there were important differences in the nature of service needs and provision for different racial groups.

Study findings were presented to the County Board of Supervisors and other high level officials, but their most important use was in the work of Oakland's Interagency Group (convened and facilitated by USC). The process established new working relationships between representatives of different agencies and forced them to recognize their common challenge. They had to "acquaint themselves with agencies outside of their normal scope of work" in defining the questions they hoped the data-match would answer, and then, after the results were in, "discuss the kinds of joint action they might undertake, patterns of service use, relationships among agencies, and the ultimate effectiveness of existing programs."

The process resulted in the idea of redeploying staff from different agencies to form a "Family Support Team" around individual schools. The Team would "develop new collaborative strategies for working with troubled families, taking on the crisis

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situations most taxing for schools, and leaving school resources to be focused on prevention, on establishing more positive activities, and on outreach to parents.” This concept has since been tested in several schools and wider-scale implementation is underway. USC continues to be involved in monitoring performance and providing ongoing guidance and support.

RECOMMENDATION 4: COLLABORATION FOR NATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING

National supporters should work to substantially strengthen training and technical assistance capacity for community building, and build public awareness of its importance.

Expanding Capacity for Training and Technical Assistance

Expanding capacity for training and technical assistance is fundamental to an effort to expand effective community building practice. This should be a major role for the collaboration of national foundations and interest groups that come together for this purpose. Again, however, the job is not one of starting from scratch. A number of qualified training/technical assistance institutions already exist in fields related to community building. The effort should focus on how best to build onto these existing capabilities.

The starting point should be to get representatives of these institutions together to talk about what they have in common, and work toward more convergence in themes, assess their current capacities, and examine how, in partnership, they might best expand them. Leaders of the national collaboration should attend these meetings, participate in forming the strategy, and then make plans for how they can support it.

The expansion of training capacity is required in three areas. First, there is the need to train community residents—in leadership, and in all other technical and association development capabilities that community building requires. This is a task that cannot be performed well from national, or even regional, centers. Most of it will have to occur at the local level. Some training for neighborhood leaders could certainly be provided by the locally based community building intermediaries we have advocated (after they have themselves been trained as trainers by one or more of the qualified national firms and institutions in the field). However, in many cities, it might make more sense for the local intermediary to make arrangements for this type of training to be delivered by a local community college.

Throughout the nation, community colleges are extremely important assets for the poor, but they have seldom taken advantage of the opportunities that exist for them to assist neighborhood improvement initiatives directly. National level training institutions and collaboration leaders could mount a campaign to encourage community colleges to develop courses in community building for local residents, and then provide model curricula, clearing house services, and other assistance to help them do so.

The second type of training that needs to be expanded is for the professionals who will staff new and growing locally based intermediaries and serve as facilitators of community building in individual neighborhoods. As noted, there are a number of competent institutions that now provide training in community organization and neighborhood improvement processes. These already regularly adapt their curricula as the field develops and further improvements can be anticipated as the implications

of the themes discussed in chapter 2 and the role of locally based intermediaries are more fully developed and understood. However, we also see the need for our nation's major universities (particularly its urban universities) to provide additional training capacity for the field. At present, there are very few universities that offer courses on community building practice, attempt to integrate community building themes in relevant professional curricula, or provide certificate programs for students that may be interested in career opportunities in community building. It is particularly important that schools of social work rethink their curricula along these lines, but schools of urban planning and public policy might well either partner in such efforts or offer relevant course work independently as it may relate to their own disciplines.

Third, there is a need to train managers of entities that provide services to the poor (public agencies and nonprofits) and other public administrators on the benefits and techniques of partnering with community groups in service delivery. National supporters should mount a concerted effort to press schools of social work, public administration, planning, and other university settings in which social agency personnel are trained to incorporate materials on community building and methods of involving community residents in social service provision into their curricula. This should be emphasized not only in masters-level professional programs, but also in regular in-service training programs for professionals already at work in these fields.

Managers of the campaign should also call upon relevant professional associations to host sessions on community building in their annual meetings and to sponsor other initiatives to integrate relevant community building themes in their own professional practice. Such groups include, for example, the National Association of Social Workers, the International City and County Managers Association, and the American Planning Association.

Building a New National Awareness

Another key task of the collaboration of national foundations and interest groups should be to develop a serious campaign to better educate America's public about the real problems and opportunities of poor communities and about the potentials of community building in addressing them. Throughout this monograph, we have discussed instances where the media, often by telling only a part of the story, have distorted the public's understanding of today's poverty, its causes, and its potential solutions. Normally, the bad news is all that is covered. The success stories of community building, however, ought to be newsworthy as well. But not enough effort is being made at present to research them adequately, express them in forms appropriate for broad presentation, and ensure that they are circulated to media representatives.

RECOMMENDATION 5: ROLES OF FEDERAL AND STATE GOVERNMENTS

Federal and state governments should play a strong role as supporting partners in this initiative.

We have argued that efforts to further effective community building should not take the form of a federal government program. For the same reasons, state governments should not be the primary actors in this mission. However, if the sponsorship

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and design of such an effort comes primarily from private foundations and interest groups, and funding for it is diversified, there are clearly benefits to be gained from federal and state agencies serving in the role of supportive partners.

There are a number of things such agencies could do to help. For example, they could provide support for training, information clearing houses, and monitoring and research. Also, they can make use of the "bully pulpit," along with other means at their disposal, to encourage the local governments and various private entities to provide resources for community based initiatives and to modify their standard practices in ways that facilitate community action. In addition, such agencies can also provide financial support themselves. And there is no reason for their funding to flow through just one channel. There are at least three options:

Requiring that some share of their block grants to state and local governments be used to support community initiatives. In social services, as well as in housing production, local governments are increasingly relying on nonprofits as delivery mechanisms without federal or state nudging, but some federal pressure could be helpful, at least initially, to expedite the trend. HUD's HOME program (a flexible block grant to localities for housing) already encourages the development of the community nonprofit delivery sector by requiring that localities spend a minimum level through Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs). This approach could also be applied to other types of initiatives community builders may want to undertake; e.g., crime prevention, health services, social services. This would be difficult in social services at present but it becomes more of an option as the trend toward block grants and the delegation of more flexibility to state and local actors moves forward. We recognize that care would have to be taken in this approach in setting reasonable (not too ambitious) minimums, and in the design of serious but noncumbersome accountability systems. As noted, the federal Empowerment Zone program also incorporated relevant "process requirements," primarily that local community groups be seriously involved in program planning.

Direct competitive grants to community groups. Here, community groups submit proposals to federal or state agencies to fund specific activities and a limited number of awards are made. Peter Drier discusses two federal programs that already operate in this way: the John Heinz Neighborhood Development Program (formerly operated by HUD) which was used to support a variety of community-based initiatives; and the Technical Assistant Grant (TAG) Program (operated by EPA) to support communities in performing evaluations of Superfund sites.⁶² In programs like these, the grants are typically small and given for a well-defined purpose with fairly clear expectations as to results (they do not imply much risk for the federal government). Communities have to demonstrate that they have some administrative capacity and the ability to prepare a sound project concept if they expect to win in the competition.

Federal and state contributions to a nongovernment-operated community building support fund. The model here is the National Community Development Initiative (NCDI). NCDI was mounted by several national foundations to provide additional support for local nonprofit housing production. HUD has contributed to it (\$20 million so far) but it is only one of many funders, and has not attempted to (nor is it in a position to) control the way the Initiative operates. The basic idea is that when there is a sound nongovernmental system operating in the public interest and focused on

national policy objectives, and that system has reasonable internal controls and accountability, the government should be able to contribute to expand it without elaborate oversight.

It would seem appropriate for some share of the funds from most of these sources to be devoted to building the support network (intermediaries, technical assistance and training entities, research and evaluation) in addition to supporting local community building initiatives directly.

At the federal level, we see the need for the President to expand the emphasis on implementing community building principles to reach beyond Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities, either by broadening the mandate of the community Empowerment Board or by elevating support for community building as a part of the functions of the National Performance Review. This effort should draw on already existing experiences at the national level in the Empowerment Zone, HOPE VI, and Consolidated Plan efforts at HUD; welfare reform, the Office of Community Services, Neighborhood Centers and healthy community programs at HHS; community schools and education reform efforts at Education; community anti-crime efforts at Justice; and community-based job placement, training, and employee support programs at Labor.

RECOMMENDATION 6: NURTURING COMMUNITY BUILDING IN INDIVIDUAL NEIGHBORHOODS

Supporters should find ways to *nurture* community building in individual neighborhoods, not overwhelm it.

In considering how best to support community building overall, it makes sense to start by thinking about the way it needs to work in individual neighborhoods. When looking for new places to provide assistance, it is important to remember that virtually all neighborhoods have been exposed to some form of organizing, i.e., they have some institutions (churches, clubs, etc.) that have tried to do something to improve conditions in the past. The starting point is to learn that history and learn who the players are.

Community builders understand that a neighborhood's starting phase—when a few interested people and/or institutions have been identified that want to do something but little is yet underway—is the one that must be handled most sensitively. Supporters need to recognize that the building of ultimately sound relationships and programs will take time. They need to provide pressure for results along the way to keep it going, but not too big a push at any one time. Their goal should continually be to “move it up a notch.” There are many stories of community initiatives that had outstanding success in their work with, say, 5 families, but collapsed when they tried immediately thereafter to apply the same techniques to 100 families. Supporters also need to recognize there will be conflicts and setbacks as they proceed. They need to avoid being too desperate for outcomes and establishing timing expectations with overly “hard edges.”

Moreover, supporters need to recognize that there will be failures. They need to remember that most small businesses started in America fail, yet the overall system succeeds. Entrepreneurs learn from their mistakes, try again, and ultimately a large share of them make it. One of the most important skills is helping nascent community initiatives regroup and rebound when morale is low after they have suffered a serious

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Supporters need to recognize that there will be failures. One of the most important skills is helping nascent community initiatives regroup and rebound when morale is low after they have suffered a serious blow.

New funding is sought as new campaigns and projects are planned out. No one—neither the community nor the funders—needs to get locked into a long-term agenda that precludes serious mid-course corrections.

blow. What the field needs is, in effect, a set of *social venture capitalists* with enough patience to see this kind of a process through to ultimate payoffs, recognizing again that it will take time.

The way that funding is provided involves a sensitive balance. If the community does not feel there is a high probability that it will garner reasonable levels of support over the long term, it will not try to mount an agenda that is ambitious enough. On the other hand, if it feels substantial long term funding is guaranteed at the outset, it may not have strong enough incentives to produce results. Focus group discussions convened by the Aspen Roundtable in 1995 reflected the need for sophistication in achieving a workable mix:⁶³

Several participants across groups suggest that putting all the money up front is not in the interest of either the funder or the planning group. For an initiative, a sudden influx of money can distort the planning process and . . . lead to a focus on allocation of dollars rather than the development of a collaborative process and a shared strategic plan. Several funders and Comprehensive Community Initiative directors suggest that a series of grants for planning, organizational development, capacity-building, and implementation, given out on the basis of mutually agreed-upon evidence of short-term progress, is in the best interest of both parties. In fact, some suggest that it is not even necessary for major funding to flow in the early stages of an initiatives, that funding should instead serve as an incentive for action and reward for progress . . . the important element is the commitment of . . . long term support, not necessarily the up-front allocation of those dollars.

These remarks reflect positions that have moved considerably beyond what one might have heard from community advocates even in the recent past. They indicate a new awareness of the need to get the incentives right, so that the primary actors—the community groups themselves—will feel an appropriate mix of hope and pressure to perform. They pattern funding streams in a manner that is consistent with the operating style of the new community builders themselves—a sort of *strategic incrementalism* in which you learn from both success and mistakes and adjust the program as you go, without making final commitments too far out in front.

The community might start with a fairly modest grant from a core funder to get organized and do some planning, with a promise of more if things go well. It then plans its first signature campaign and perhaps secures funding for that from another source (at that point, when that particular campaign has been thought through, it is possible to specify realistic performance benchmarks about which they would not have known enough to develop in a more general planning exercise at the start). New funding is sought as new campaigns and projects are planned out. No one—neither the community nor the funders—needs to get locked into a long-term agenda that precludes serious mid-course corrections. This style also reflects what has become a key maxim in all branches of management of late. That is, higher levels (the funders) should negotiate the results they expect from those doing the work (the community), but let the workers use their own creativity in determining how to achieve those results, without heavy oversight from outside.

The approach is also based on understanding that problems have emerged when community groups have come to rely on one dominant source for support. That source inevitably sees itself as responsible for results overall and exerts pressures to control the agenda that the community is not in a position to fully resist. The community is, once again, dependent. Peter Drier, for example, recognizes the importance of communities partnering with local governments and notes that a growing

number of local agencies have learned to work with community groups constructively, but even so, he says: “experience suggests that community organizations are most effective when they are independent from local government so that the partnership is based on mutual respect and reciprocity, not dependency.”⁶⁴ To some extent, the same problems can be anticipated if the community is dependent predominantly on any single donor (even a foundation)—diversity of support is a sound objective.



Appendix

Community Building Series

Panelists and Staff

- Garland Allen**, Office of Policy Development and Research, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington, D.C.
- Patricia Arnaudo**, Office of Resident Initiatives, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington, D.C.
- Catherine Bessant**, Senior Vice President, Nation's Bank.
- Angela Glover Blackwell**, Vice President, the Rockefeller Foundation, New York, NY.
- Sheryll D. Cashin**, Federal Empowerment Board, Washington, D.C.
- Morton Coleman**, University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work, Pittsburgh, PA.
- Angela Duran**, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C.
- Peter Edelman**, Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C.
- Ronald Ferguson**, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.
- Rodney Fernandez**, Executive Director, Cabrillo Economic Development Corporation, Saticoy, CA.
- Jane Fortson**, Senior Fellow, Progress and Freedom Foundation, Washington, D.C.
- David Garrison**, Intergovernmental Affairs, Office of the Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C.
- James O. Gibson**, Senior Associate, the Urban Institute, and Director, D.C. Agenda Project, Washington, D.C.
- Chet Hewitt**, Program Officer, the Rockefeller Foundation, New York, NY.
- Sandra Jibrell**, Associate Director, Annie E. Casey Foundation, Baltimore, MD.
- James Johnson**, PhD, Director, Kenan Center Urban Enterprise Corps/Durham Scholar, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC.
- G. Thomas Kingsley**, Director, Center for Public Finance and Housing, the Urban Institute, Washington, D.C.

George Knight, Executive Director, Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation, Washington, D.C.

Joe McNeely, President, Development Training Institute, Inc., Baltimore, MD.

Jonathan Miller, Office of Congressman Joseph Kennedy, Washington, D.C.

Susan Motley, Senior Program Officer, John D. And Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Chicago, IL.

Gus Newport, Consultant, Oakland, CA.

Jeffrey Nugent, Vice President, Development Training Institute, Baltimore, MD.

George E. Peterson, Senior Fellow, The Urban Institute, Washington, D.C.

Ann Rosewater, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C.

James Scheibel, Vice President and Director, Americorp/VISTA, Corporation for National Services, Washington, D.C.

Alice Shabecoff, Consultant, Chevy Chase, MD.

John Simmons, Office of Community Planning and Development, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington, D.C.

Michael Smith, Director, Department of Local Affairs, Governor's Community Partnership Office, State of Colorado, Denver, CO.

Donald Sykes, Director, Office of Community Services, Washington, D.C.

Margery Austin Turner, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Research, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington, D.C.

Maria Valera, Research Assistant, the Urban Institute, Washington, D.C.

Kenneth C. Williams, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Grant Programs, Office of Community Planning and Development, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington, D.C.

Garland Yates, Senior Program Associate, Annie E. Casey Foundation, Baltimore, MD.

Note: Titles reflect the positions participants held at the time of the project.

Notes

1. This account is derived from Carol Steinbach, “Community Based Development Organizations: A New Industry Emerges” (draft paper prepared for Development Training Institute/Urban Institute Seminar Series on community building, October 1995).

2. Documented by David Osborne and Ted Gaebler in *Reinventing Government* (New York: Plume, 1992, 59–65).

3. This account is drawn from the Baltimore Citizens Planning and Housing Association *Training Manual* (Baltimore: Citizens Planning and Housing Association, 1995).

4. Documented in Pratt Institute Center for Community and Environmental Development, *CDC Profiles* (Community Development Corporation Oral History Project, New York, NY: Pratt Institute Center for Community and Environmental Development, June 1995).

5. Sources include: OMG, Inc., *Second Annual Assessment Report: Comprehensive Community Revitalization Program in the South Bronx* (New York, NY: Comprehensive Community Revitalization Program, June 1995); Xavier de Souza Briggs, Anita Miller, and John Shapiro, “Planning for Community Building: CCRP in the South Bronx,” *Planners’ Casebook* (Chicago IL: American Institute of Certified Planners, Winter 1996); Mitchell Sviridoff and William Ryan, “Investing in Community: Lessons and Implications of the Comprehensive Community Revitalization Program” (draft paper, January 1996).

6. William J. Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987). For amplification, see Adele V. Harrell and George E. Peterson, eds., *Crime, Drugs, and Social Isolation: Barriers to Urban Opportunity* (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute Press, 1992).

7. Ronald B. Mincy and Susan J. Weiner, “The Underclass in the 1980s: Changing Concept, Constant Reality” (Research Paper, Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, July 1993).

8. See, for example, eds., Adele V. Harrell and George E. Peterson, eds., *Crime, Drugs, and Social Isolation: Barriers to Urban Opportunity* (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute Press, 1992).

9. Lisbeth B. Schorr, *Within Our Reach: Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage* (with Daniel Schorr, New York, NY: Anchor Press Doubleday, 1988, 31).
10. John P. Kretzmann and John L. McKnight, *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing Community Assets* (Evanston, IL: Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research, Northwestern University, 1993).
11. Lisbeth B. Schorr, *Within Our Reach: Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage*, xvii.
12. Ibid.
13. The survey entailed interviews with a representative sample of Boston households (excluding college students and other households with no member between 18 and 60 years of age; 16,916 households were contacted and participated in brief screening interviews, and 1,968 were interviewed in more depth. Paul Osterman was the Chief Investigator responsible for survey design and implementation. The results are documented in Boston Persistent Poverty Project, *In the Midst of Plenty: A Profile of Boston and Its Poor* (Boston, MA: The Boston Foundation, December, 1989).
14. Steve Farkas and Jean Johnson, *The Values We Live By: What Americans Want from Welfare Reform* (Washington, DC: The Public Agenda, 1996).
15. Frank F. Furstenberg, Jr., "How Families Manage Risk and Opportunity in Dangerous Neighborhoods." In William J. Wilson, ed., *Sociology and the Public Agenda*. (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1993.)
16. James Coleman, "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital." *American Journal of Sociology* (Supplement) 94, S95–S210, 1988, and *The Foundations of Social Theory*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990, 300–321.
17. Robert D. Putnam, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," in *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 1993, 65–78.
18. Peter L. Berger and Richard John Neuhaus, *To Empower People: From State to Civil Society*. Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute Press, 1996.
19. Peter B. Edelman, "Dealing With Race and Ethnicity in Urban Change Strategies." In American Writing Corporation, ed., *Building Strong Communities: Strategies for Change (Conference Report)* (Cleveland, OH: Annie E. Casey, Ford, and Rockefeller Foundations, 1992).
20. National Congress for Community Economic Development, *Against All Odds: The Achievements of Community Based Development Organizations* (Washington, DC: National Congress for Community Economic Development, 1989)
21. The story of the CDCs and related intermediaries is documented in Neal R. Pierce and Carol F. Steinbach, *Corrective Capitalism: The Rise of America's Community Development Corporations* (New York, NY: Ford Foundation, 1987), Avis C. Vidal, *Rebuilding Communities: A National Study of Urban Community Development Corporations* (New York, NY: Graduate School of Management and Urban Policy, New School for Social Research, 1992), and Christopher Walker, et al., *The Status and Prospects of the Nonprofit Housing Sector* (Report prepared for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, April 1995).
22. Walker et al., 1995.
23. Mitchell Sviridoff, "The Seeds of Urban Revival." *The Public Interest*, Winter 1994, 82–103.
24. Walker et al., 1995.
25. See, for example, Henry G. Cisneros, *Higher Ground: Faith Communities and Community Building* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, February 1996).

26. Texas IAF Network, *Texas IAF Network: Vision, Values, Action* (Austin, TX: Texas IAF Network, 1990).

27. The model for the movement was Toynbee Hall in London's East Side Slum, founded by Rev. Samuel Barnett, which was visited by those who transported the idea to the United States; most prominently, Jane Addams of Hull House in Chicago, and Stanton Coit, of Neighborhood Guild (now University Settlement), in New York. Rollie Smith, "Community Building in Settlement Houses" (draft paper prepared for Development Training Institute/Urban Institute Seminar Series on community building, March 1996).

28. See P.R. Popple and L.H. Leighninger, *Social Work, Social Welfare, and American Society* (Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 1990), A. K. Johnson, "Linking Professionalism and Community Organization: A Scholar/Advocate Approach" (*Journal of Community Practice*, Binghamton, NY: Hayworth Press, 1994), and B. Weissbourd, "A Brief History of Family Support Programs" (S. L. Kagan, D. R. Powell, B. Weissbourd, and E. F. Zigler, eds., *American Family Support Programs: Perspectives and Prospects*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987).

29. M. Leiterman and J. Stillman, *Building Community* (New York, NY: Local Initiatives Support Corporation, 1993).

30. Rollie Smith, "Community Building in Settlement Houses" (draft paper prepared for Development Training Institute/Urban Institute Seminar Series on community building, March 1996).

31. Elena Cohen, Theodora Ooms, and John Hutchings, *Comprehensive Community-Building Initiatives: A Strategy to Strengthen Family Capital*. (Background Briefing Report. Washington, D.C.: Family Impact Seminar, 1996.)

32. Dan A. Lewis, "Crime and Community: Continuities, Contradictions, and Complexities" (*Cityscape*, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2;2, 95–120, May 1996).

33. The Annie E. Casey Foundation cities are Boston, Chicago, Detroit, Miami, and Washington DC. The Ford Foundation cities are Detroit, Hartford, Memphis and Milwaukee. The Rockefeller Foundation Program has operated in Boston, Cleveland, Denver, Oakland, San Antonio, and Washington, DC.

34. Prudence Brown, "Comprehensive Neighborhood-Based Initiatives" (*Cityscape*, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2;2, 161–176, May 1996).

35. See James P. Connel, Anne E. Kubisch, Lisbeth B. Schorr, and Carol H. Weiss, eds., *New Approaches to Evaluating Community Initiatives: Concepts, Methods, and Contexts* (Washington, DC: The Aspen Institute, 1995); and Aspen Roundtable, *Voices From the Field: Learning From Comprehensive Community Initiatives*. (Washington, DC: The Aspen Institute, 1996).

36. See *The President's Community Enterprise Board, Building Communities Together: Guidebook for Community-Based Strategic Planning for Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities*. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, January 1994), and American Institute of Architects, *Vision/Reality: The Consolidated Plan* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, March 1994).

37. Arthur Naparstek, Dennis Dooley, and Robin Smith, *Community Building in Public Housing: The Key to Sustainable Independence* (Washington, DC: Aspen Systems Corporation and the Urban Institute, forthcoming).

38. Cleveland Foundation Commission on Poverty, *The Cleveland Community-Building Initiative: The Report and Recommendations of the Cleveland Foundation Commission on Poverty* (Cleveland, OH: Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences, Case Western Reserve University, 1992).

39. Boston Persistent Poverty Project, *To Make Our City Whole: A Report on the Work of The Strategy Development Group of the Boston Persistent Poverty Project* (Boston: The Boston Foundation, February 1994).

40. Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program, *Building Community by Building Partnerships: The Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program Progress Report* (Minneapolis, MN: City of Minneapolis, 1995).

41. The cities in the network include: Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Denver, Detroit, Hartford, Kansas City, Little Rock, Los Angeles, Memphis, Miami, Milwaukee, New York, Oakland, Philadelphia, Phoenix, San Antonio, San Juan, Savannah, and Washington, D.C.

42. National Community Building Network, *NCBN Overview* (Oakland, CA: National Community Building Network, October 1996).

43. Lisbeth B. Schorr, *Within Our Reach: Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage*, 271–272.

44. John P. Kretzmann and John L. McKnight, *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing Community Assets*, 355–366.

45. Prudence Brown, “Comprehensive Neighborhood-Based Initiatives” (*Cityscape*, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2;2, 161–176, May 1996)

46. See, for example, the discussion of the CCRP experience in Mitchell Sviridoff and William Ryan, “Investing in Community: Lessons and Implications of the Comprehensive Community Revitalization Program” (draft paper, January 1996).

47. John P. Kretzmann and John L. McKnight, *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing Community Assets*.

48. Cleveland Foundation Commission on Poverty, *The Cleveland Community-Building Initiative: The Report and Recommendations of the Cleveland Foundation Commission on Poverty* (Cleveland: Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences, Case Western Reserve University, 1992). The cited study was Claudia J. Coulton, Julian Chow, and Shanta Pandey, *Analysis of Poverty and Related Conditions in Cleveland Area Neighborhoods*. (Cleveland: Center for Urban Poverty and Social Change, Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences, Case Western Reserve University, 1990).

49. Henry G. Cisneros, *Higher Ground: Faith Communities and Community Building* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, February 1996).

50. Peter Marris with Maria Jackson, *Strategy and Context: Reflections on the Community Planning and Action Program* (New York, NY: The Rockefeller Foundation, March 1991).

51. Curtis Johnson, “Renewing Community” (Special Section, *Governing*, July 1995).

52. *Ibid.*

53. Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program, *Building Community by Building Partnerships: The Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program Progress Report* (Minneapolis, MN: City of Minneapolis, 1995).

54. Joe Sexton, “Child Welfare Chief Provides a Glimpse at Decentralization” (*New York Times*, September 8, 1996).

55. Allan D. Wallis, "The Third Wave: Current Trends in Regional Governance," *National Civic Review*, Summer–Fall 1994, 290–309.

56. Other accounts of the work of these coalitions and others are found in Neal R. Pierce, with Curtis Johnson and John Stuart Hall, *Citistates: How Urban America Can Prosper in a Competitive World* (Washington, DC: Seven Locks Press, 1993), and Joseph Stillman, *Making the Connection: Economic Development, Workforce Development, and Urban Poverty* (New York, NY: The Conservation Company, 1994). A useful assessment of recent efforts by private corporations to play a more direct role in urban problems has been provided by George E. Peterson and Dana R. Sunblad, *Corporations as Partners in Strengthening Urban Communities* (Urban Institute Report. New York, NY: The Conference Board, Inc., 1994).

57. Jennifer Moore, "Gifts to Community Funds Top \$1 Billion Last Year," *Chronicle of Philanthropy*, September, 1995.

58. Joan Walsh, "Urban Strategies Council" (draft paper prepared for Development Training Institute/Urban Institute Seminar Series on community building, 1995).

59. Piton Foundation Poverty Program, *Neighborhood Leadership Program: Today's Neighbors, Tomorrow's Leaders* (Denver, CO: The Piton Foundation, 1996)

60. All of these local intermediaries except the Fund for the City of New York have recently become partners in the *National Neighborhood Indicators Project*. This project, managed by the Urban Institute, aims to both improve tools for bringing information to bear in a practical way in local policy making, and to spread this capability to other cities.

61. This example is more fully documented in Maria Campbell Casey, "Using Data as an Advocacy Tool: What it Takes" (*Georgia Academy Journal*, Summer 1995, 7–15).

62. Peter Drier, "Community Empowerment Strategies: The Limits and Potentials of Community Organizing in Urban Neighborhoods" (*Cityscape*, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2;2, 141–142, May 1996).

63. Aspen Roundtable, *Voices From the Field: Learning From Comprehensive Community Initiatives* (Draft). (Washington, D.C.: The Aspen Institute, 1996).

64. Peter Drier, "Community Empowerment Strategies: The Limits and Potentials of Community Organizing in Urban Neighborhoods" (*Cityscape*, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2;2, 121–160, May 1996). Drier also cites a number of references illustrating the tensions that can arise between local governments and communities in development initiatives.

About the Authors

G. Thomas Kingsley is director of the Center for Public Finance and Housing at the Urban Institute, where he manages a staff of researchers working on projects addressing policy issues in housing, local community and economic development, transportation, infrastructure, and local public finance. Mr. Kingsley has personally directed several major policy research programs, including testing the market effects of housing allowance programs (1974–80, the HUD-sponsored Housing Assistance Supply Experiment) and analyzing the structure and potentials of metropolitan Cleveland’s economy (1980–82, for the Cleveland Foundation). He was also co-director for the Ford Foundation sponsored Urban Opportunity Program, which produced four books on the status of urban policy issues in America in the early 1990s. Since 1995, he has been manager of the National Neighborhood Indicators Project, a foundation-sponsored initiative to expand the development of advanced data systems for local policy analysis and community building. He previously served as director of the Rand Corporation’s Housing and Urban Policy Program, and as assistant administrator for the New York City Housing and Development Administration, where he was responsible for the agency’s budgeting and policy analysis functions.

Joseph B. McNeely is the founder and president of the Development Training Institute, a 15-year-old national nonprofit institute considered to be the nation’s premier trainer of community-based organizations in the area of neighborhood redevelopment and community-based economic development. He has helped design and been a trainer in DTI’s successful programs for banks and financial institutions, foundations and a wide variety of human service nonprofit organizations. During the Carter Administration, Mr. McNeely was the director of the Office of Neighborhood Development at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and liaison to the National Neighborhood Commission. He was founding director of Baltimore’s Southeast Community Organization (SECO), a nationally respected community development corporation. He is a nationally recognized expert on neighborhood revitalization strategies. He lectures, trains and writes frequently on these topics and teaches graduate courses in these

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James O. Gibson has served, since June 1994, as project director of the D.C. Agenda Project, a private sector initiative to develop broadly supported initiatives to address fiscal and governance problems facing the District of Columbia. He has also been a senior associate at the Urban Institute since January 1993. At the Institute he has focused on civil rights policies, community development, urban governance, economic and social opportunities, and antipoverty strategies. Mr. Gibson was director of the Equal Opportunity Program at the Rockefeller Foundation from 1986 through 1992. He has been active in urban affairs, community development, race relations and economic development over three decades. Before joining the Rockefeller Foundation in January 1986, he served as president of the Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation in Washington, D.C. Other positions include assistant city administrator for Planning and Development for the city of Washington, D.C. and executive associate of the Potomac Institute. He has held consultant positions with many federal, municipal and private sector agencies; presidential appointments include the President's National Commission on Rural Poverty and the National Capital Planning Commission.