Community Capital: The Value of Connected Communities

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Contents

Connected Communities
- Theory of Change
- Connected Communities approach
- Community Capital: Social Dividends

Connected Communities West Cumbria
- Overview of West Cumbria
- Connected Communities: Application in West Cumbria
Connected Communities

Action research project to explore how the community dimension of people’s lives contributes to well-being and can be developed to analyse how different interventions build resilient, inclusive communities and empower individuals to take greater control of their lives through relationships based on shared concerns and mutual trust.
Centre for Citizenship and Community - who are we?

**UCLan** – research, evaluation, community engagement, courses

**Associate team** – health, social care and public services – senior experience in health, social care and public service sectors – commissioning, management, strategy, housing, leadership, service improvement design.

**RSA Connected Communities team** – action research, network analysis, policy development, thought leadership and organisational change supported by a multi-disciplinary network drawn from RSA’s Fellowship.

**Personal Social Services Research Unit (London School of Economics)** – extensive expertise in social services and health research, economic modelling; financial analysis.
Centre for Citizenship and Community – our key principles

Change through networks
Imaginative community networks are key to social action and new approaches to governance at all levels*

Social value capture
Community engagement is imperative to local empowerment and to unlocking the social value – the unseen assets – of community

Organising for inter-dependence
Building from ‘the multiple practices of reciprocity’ (Taylor); public services/communities; bonding and bridging communities; individuals and social networks

A culture of co-production
Public service organisations with a ‘literacy of community’, ‘complexity–capable’ co-production: design, development and delivery = innovation

(*SeeTapscott, RSA Journal Spring 2013)
Research portfolio 2015 -17 (since conclusion of Connected Communities programme)

1. ODESSA: 3 year international study on **ageing** in place with China and France (ESRC);
2. ‘Supports for Success’: Connected Communities input to **Young people** in communities programme through Wellesley Institute (Ontario Govt., funded think tank) and Toronto PH. (State Govt., pending);
3. **Connecting People** study, with University of York, (NIHR, SCC);
4. Housing and Community in Foleshill, Coventry: CC programme with Orbit Housing to **enable housing-led community engagement**.
5. Developing **community capacity** through a Connected Communities approach in Preston, (LA):
6. ‘Connected **Street Associations’** SAs; developing evidence base for SA’s, Kingstanding, Birmingham (BC?CCG)
7. Community Connectors, with Solent MIND, developing a **MH community connectors** programme Hants(LA);
8. Development partnership, Building Bridges, **Community Cohesion** project Pendle, NW England (BL, pending)
10. Empowering citizenship in young people: **intergenerational citizenship** in West Cumbria.
11. Evaluation of **national MH and Adult Learning pilots** with Ipsos MORI (Central Govt: BIS);
12. Prevention and Community Resilience: evaluating **older people’s community** funded services, Kirklees (LA);
13. **Personalisation**: assessment of integrated approach to uptake (MIND);
14. Establishing Connected Communities based care pathway for **people with LTCs**, N. Manchester (CCG)
Theory of change: Understand, Involve, Connect

We suggest that community capital can be grown through a way of working that follows the Connected Communities principles of *Understanding* the local situation, relationships and patterns of isolation, *Involving* people in creating a solution, and aiming to *Connect* people to one another to reduce isolation and create more connected communities.
Connected Communities Methodology

1. Steering Groups
2. Identify Key Gatekeepers
3. Recruit Community Researchers
4. Research Training
5. Research Design
6. Data Collection
7. Community Feedback
8. Co-production
9. Evaluation
A wellbeing dividend

- Feeling part of a community
- Greater life satisfaction due to enhanced relationships
- Social support protecting against harm to mental and physical health
An economic dividend

- Increased participation in work, training and volunteering
- Increased resilience and viability of community services
- Notional savings to public budgets through preventative demand management
A citizenship dividend

- Greater sense of empowerment
- More skills and access to work or education
- Collective agency – cooperating to get things done in society
A capacity dividend

- Benefits spread through networks rather than only helping individuals
- Influential change-makers can be identified to efficiently target greater returns on investment
- Connected individuals contribute to greater community capital – and benefit in turn from that increased capital
Connected Communities West Cumbria
An overview of West Cumbria

Geographically isolated

Post industrial area with Sellafield being a major employer

Polarised social demography

Pockets of very high deprivation

Limited services

Below regional and national averages of educational and employment
Connected Communities Methodology: Application in West Cumbria

Steering Groups → Identify key gatekeepers working with young people → Community engagement with young people → Community researcher training

Evaluation ← Co-production ← Community playback ← Data Collection ← Research Design
INDIVIDUAL IMPACT
- Improved well-being: Outcomes star (Quantitative)
- Improved educational performance: Attainment data and Attendance data (Quantitative)
- Enhanced Community Capital (Individual Level): Teacher survey (Mixed), Parent survey (Mixed), Young person’s interviews (Qualitative)

COMMUNITY IMPACT
- Enhanced Community Capital (Community Level): Improved capacity: Outcomes star/ Focus groups/ Interviews (Mixed)
- Improved citizenship: Outcomes star/ Focus groups/ Interviews (Mixed)
- Improved well-being: Outcomes star/ Focus groups/ Interviews (Mixed)

POLICY IMPACT
- Evidence from councillors: Statements, examples of policies impacted upon by work (Mixed)
- Evidence from presentations at meetings: Photos, statements, frequency of presentations (Mixed)
Identify key gatekeepers working with young people

Photo of Emma and Mark
Strong partnership working

- Shared values
- Clear roles
- Clear expectations
- Honesty
- Planning and debrief
- Agreed Communications
Community engagement with young people
And this is my community

Drugs
Powder Palace

NISA is good

Valley School, good

Chip shop & Chinese

Worried now; church is treated

Heroin park
Acid, arugula
Cattle rear

McCalls
Shops okay

Good old folks home

Very scary death
• Social network analysis
• Survey administration practice
• Survey content feedback
• Revised survey practice
Based in community centres

Took place during Easter holidays, 4 days per community

Supported by police officers and PCSOs

Participation rate:

Response rate:
Next Steps

- Complete data collection
- Data analysis
- Community playback
- Co-production
- Roll out
- Evaluation
Implications

Combined, these strands of research aim to compare and contrast ways of partnership working in projects aiming to promote *youth citizenship*, informing future research, policy and practice.

Results will complement existing research on the role of different *gatekeepers* in engaging and researching with less traditional sample populations.

Findings can add to the current literature on *participant led research* with young people, providing case studies publishable in peer reviewed journals.

Best practice can be developed and incorporated on a local and national level though *overcoming social challenges* and promoting *citizenship and engagement*. 
Thank you for your time. Any questions?

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