No.3

WORK IN PROGRESS

Occasional articles on themes relevant to our Strong Neighbourhoods work. These can be results of research, evaluation or reflection. As the name implies, these articles are not meant to be the final word on a topic but rather a vehicle to illuminate specific aspects of our work, to share insight, invite discussion and encourage collective learning.

Please feel free to send us any thoughts, reactions or reflections on the article.

Agencies: A Way of Working in Neighbourhoods

Discussion Paper Prepared for
United Way of Calgary and Area

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INTRODUCTION

A neighbourhood, simply put, is a geographic location that is usually contained within recognizable boundaries where residents live in proximity to each other. Neighbourhood residents make use of common spaces (including parks, schools, stores, clubs and recreation facilities), form relationships with other residents and share common interests and experiences.

Neighbourhoods impact the well-being of individuals and families particularly in the areas of: child and adult health; child and adolescent development; adult income and employment; and family resiliency. Not all neighbourhoods develop equally and therefore change may be necessary to promote the health and wellbeing of neighbourhood residents in targeted neighbourhoods. Neighbourhood revitalization and prevention strategies hold the promise of offsetting decline and improving residents’ quality of life in these neighbourhoods.

In order for neighbourhood change to occur, residents need to be engaged in their own change efforts. This is the philosophy of community development. Community development has become known as a catch-all phrase referring to any involvement to “better” the community. In this paper, community development work is about a way of working in neighbourhoods that engages and supports residents more fully in addressing community issues and priorities as identified by residents. This approach stems from the belief that engaged individuals lead to engaged communities, and engaged communities become successful communities.

However, we know that neighbourhood change does not happen in a vacuum. Residents are not alone in neighbourhoods. Each neighbourhood context has varying assets, constraints and supports. When the constraints affecting a neighbourhood outweigh its assets and capacity, community development and change may not occur spontaneously. External agents of change may be required as catalysts to help engage, organize and mobilize resident change efforts. External agents can take many forms, for example grassroots organizations, not-for-profit agencies, local governments, to name a few. Therefore, we became curious about how agencies interested in neighbourhood work and currently providing services could be supportive partners in building strong neighbourhoods.

This discussion paper shares what we are learning about how agencies, our key partners in communities, can work effectively with communities toward neighbourhood change; specifically, what roles they may take and what internal factors may lend themselves to community development work. Our main question for our work is: what enabling factors assist the agencies to work within change efforts in a way that sees people as citizens, as equals and as partners?

After reviewing and synthesizing the practice literature and qualitative data around community development agencies, it became clear that there is no “one size fits all” model to support a neighbourhood change process. However, what emerged were fundamental themes that enabled agencies to act as effective change agents. In a pure community development process, agencies as external agents use a demand driven, participatory and flexible approach to build community capacity for change. For most of the paper we will talk about these themes in their purest sense. While we have come to understand that there may be a theoretical picture of external agencies in community development, we also acknowledge that the theoretical must meet the practical. Therefore, we will also discuss how agencies in their current realities and contexts can examine and reflect on the possibility of integrating aspects of community development into their work. Although we don’t expect agencies to be working from a purely community development approach, this discussion paper gives a foundation of some of the competencies and practices required of agencies delivering strength based services in a place-based neighbourhood context.

When reading this discussion paper, it is important to remember this is a work in progress. It is emergent, reflective and it remains exploratory. This paper is meant to invite discussion and encourage collective thinking as we continue to move forward in our neighbourhood work. Moreover, United Way is not endorsing this paper as a formula for funding or an investment strategy. This paper is solely meant to elicit critical thinking and thoughtful dialogue.
2.0 Background: United Way’s Neighbourhood Strategy

United Way of Calgary and Area is building a neighbourhood strategy to strengthen targeted neighbourhoods through community development that utilizes a place-based community capacity building approach. A place-based approach incorporates community engagement, program delivery, and policy development in a geographically defined community. A mix of approaches that combine local initiatives and programs with population, issue or broad approaches to achieve change for the local place is employed. The work is governed and implemented through collaboration with local groups and residents. This place-based approach encourages residents to effect positive change and contribute to the vibrancy of their neighbourhood.

United Way plans to achieve neighbourhood change by supporting residents through a community development process: a Layering Strategy for resident led neighbourhood change. This layering strategy intentionally builds on community-level engagement of residents, as engagement serves as a foundational layer to building community capacity and supporting citizen-centered change.

More specifically, the four strategies or techniques that have emerged as promising practice in the fledgling field of place based community development work are – ENGAGE, ORGANIZE, MOBILIZE AND SUSTAIN. Together these comprise United Way of Calgary and Area’s change framework. These four key strategies combine to be mutually reinforcing. They support residents in identifying local needs and assets to address neighbourhood issues, while concurrently supporting local groups or organizations to influence broader systems and affect municipal, provincial, and national policy. The figure above illustrates the four layers of the neighbourhood strategy.

**Engage: Building trust, increasing resident involvement, developing common understanding of local assets and issues through dialogue**

**Organize: Strengthening local organizations and leadership; Building capacity for collective action and learning**

**Mobilize: Developing and pursuing local change agenda; Building capacity to mobilize, and engage systems and policies**

**Sustain: Building a community of leaders; Developing a support infrastructure for long-term neighbourhood change**

Neighbourhoods are stronger and more supportive:
- Stronger social cohesion
- More accessible and effective programs and amenities
- Better built and natural environment
- More vibrant local economic activity

**United Way** achieves neighbourhood change by supporting residents through a community development process
We know from the literature that for community development to be sustainable, it needs to be nestled within the community. It must unfold from the inside out, with residents in partnership with others in the community. We also know that in reality, communities in the early stages of community building often benefit from external catalysts to spur on community building as this does not always spontaneously develop from the grassroots. Development is often facilitated by external groups, and gradually needs to become authored and owned by the community.

We also know that agencies in neighbourhoods have varying mandates and utilize diverse approaches in their work. For instance, some agencies have been born out of a pure community development approach. As stated in the introduction, community development refers to a way of working in neighbourhoods that engages residents more fully in addressing community issues and priorities to better sustain community change. Other agencies work from a social programming mandate or a combination of social programming and community development in varying degrees. For the purpose of this discussion paper, we undertook an investigation around agencies and organizations who work solely from a community development mandate or who have a community development branch within their organization.

### 3.0 The Inquiry

The questions for us at this time are: what allows community development agencies to work effectively in communities and what would enable agencies, who may not traditionally work from a community development approach, to work as facilitators and partners with communities in change efforts? An inquiry was undertaken to understand how agencies work effectively with communities towards neighbourhood change using the above questions as the overarching inquiry framework.

Please note that while neighbourhoods are the unit of analysis for United Way’s neighbourhood strategy, for the most part, the theoretical investigation looked at communities as the unit of analysis. Because neighbourhoods could be considered a smaller geographic community, we believe the findings can be applied interchangeably. You will find the use of the word “community” throughout the theoretical sections and “neighbourhood” in the application sections.

The approach used to undertake this inquiry was a critical analysis of practitioners’ approaches to community development. Both practitioner interviews and practice literature informed this inquiry. The intention was to highlight best practices in order to integrate and move community development theory into practice.

First, leaders from organizations consciously working from this community development approach were interviewed: funders of community initiatives; experts in research and application of community development; and community development practitioners. Twelve key informant (n=12) interviews were undertaken. Several organizations had more than one person as part of the interview with fifteen people interviewed (n=15). The interviewees were from a wide field of community building efforts - international development (n=1), community-building initiatives in the United States (n=2), community development efforts in other parts of Canada (n=9) and small local organizations in Calgary (n=3). Secondly, grey (practice) literature related to this line of inquiry was reviewed. These sources were mined for their ‘on the ground experience’ and knowledge. Reports, documents and websites reviewed are included in the reference section at the end of this report.

### 4.0 Enabling Factors

First and foremost we learned that there is no “one size fits all” formula, approach or management model for place based community development work. Agencies doing community work come in all shapes, forms, and sizes. We learned it is more about the approach and organizational support for the approach that matters.

What seems to be key is that community development/community organizing benefits from “a way of working”: a community development approach, a philosophical orientation within a supportive structure. This is often in contrast to a customary service delivery organizational model. The following table courtesy of Mark Cabaj illustrates the central challenge in community work: the balancing of two approaches and the opposing tensions inherent in formal institutions and community environments.

The work is often best viewed from a complexity lens with the ability to deal with uncertainty found in most community development endeavors. Given the tensions between the two approaches, the new way of working requires learning and, in some cases, relearning of how to build the capacity of neighbourhood residents and organizations to lead and produce changes.

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<th>TENDENCY OF FORMAL INSTITUTIONS</th>
<th>NATURE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT</th>
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Throughout the interviews and literature, a fundamental tenant emerged that distinguishes community work from service orientation. Community residents are recognized as agents of change, rather than just beneficiaries or clients as is often the case in our service delivery models. One then needs to understand how to work with residents in this way, as co-partners in the neighbourhood efforts.

Of course we know that having strong management practices within agencies provides for a solid organizational foundation. We also know this is not a sufficient precondition for creating exemplary community development agencies. What we found suggests that a more nuanced approach is optimal. This nuanced approach is more about an agency’s relationship to the community, listening to and working with the community, along with a combination of organizational creativity, innovation, and responsiveness. It requires the ability to execute, adapt, and evaluate how the work is playing out in practice with communities. It benefits from a model that is grounded in the assets of community and is responsive and accountable to the community. Agencies steeped in community work were often rooted in a collaborative, participatory, flexible approach that is relationship and resident driven. This approach may not always come naturally to service oriented agencies with funding obligations for a “social programming” mandate.

The findings from the research clustered around a number of enabling factors that supported the practice of community development within these agency structures. These are broad categories which collectively influence a way of working within organizations that support citizen driven change efforts in communities. The enabling factors include:

- Responsive, tailored solutions;
- Resident focused, asset based community engagement;
- Innovative leadership and skilled staff in an organization open to learning;
- Partnerships and collaborative approaches;
- Resident involved decision making; and
- Clearly articulated community focused mission, vision and values.

### 4.1 Responsive, Tailored Solutions

Community development is founded on the assumption that communities can be effective agents for change by influencing areas that affect their quality of life. When people are given the opportunity to work out their own problems, they can find solutions that have a more lasting effect than if they were not involved. Thus in community development initiatives, as external agents of change, it is prudent for agencies to work locally with those who live there to identify what the community sees as priorities for action and develop place-based solutions best suited to the particular characteristics of the community. Place-based strategies often cited as effective are: responsive to identified need; flexible and adaptable to varying community conditions; accessible, which reduces barriers to participation; and able to demonstrate accountability of service and system responsiveness to resident/user input. A mix of targeted community interventions (service oriented) and community development strategies (community building efforts: engagement, community organizing, capacity building and mobilization) are often required to produce lasting change.

Agencies who manage well in this environment are exceptionally adaptive and responsive as community work is often emergent, chaotic and messy. They respond to changing circumstances with one innovation after another, sometimes making mistakes but intentionally listening, course correcting, innovating, evaluating and learning, and modifying approaches as required. Making this adaptive shift from agency priorities to a more community driven agenda requires a conscious effort, as it is a role change for professionals from a provider of service to a facilitator of change. For this shift to happen there needs to be a deliberate plan, an understanding of how a shift can be made, and the will to do it.

Staff and management in community change efforts need to have competencies for emergent, resident focused efforts. This requires the:

- Ability to respond appropriately to community strengths;
- Technical skills necessary to do the specific work;
- Expertise to know when, and how to apply their competence; and,
- Organizational support and resources necessary to carry out the work.
4.2 Resident Focused, Asset Based Community Engagement

Successful community building as mentioned is centered on residents. For this to begin to happen a shift in how community members are viewed is necessary - residents viewed as citizens, not viewed as clients “in need of service” or communities “with problems.” A shift in how relationships are built is also necessary: relationships built on equality and shared power, not an “us or them” as service-recipients on the margin but as “we.” In community development work, residents become allies and partners. This is often described in the literature as relationships built on mutual reciprocity.

A philosophy of strength (openness to the assets, gifts, talents and resources of communities) is utilized as part of a resident based approach. An assumption, inherent in this philosophy, is that many of the ingredients to build strong communities are already in place; they need to be surfaced and harnessed. By focusing on assets and capacities rather than needs and deficiencies, energy is directed toward opportunities at the community level.

Residents are engaged in and help drive community change efforts. Resident engagement should not be seen as separate from the agency but embedded in it, part of their work. Community residents are agents of change, rather than just beneficiaries of service. Engaging residents and building their collective capacity to work together helps strengthen residents’ ability to:

- Identify, prioritize, and address issues of concern in their neighbourhood;
- Have influence at planning and decision making tables;
- Form relationships built on mutual reciprocity, trust, respect, inclusion, and diversity;
- Thicken social networks (groups of people connected by a set of social relationships);
- Participate in and take on leadership roles in community efforts; and,
- Contribute to the stability of grassroots resident–led organizations.

An intentional engagement process connecting and building relationships with community members through multiple paths is required. What we have learned through our own early engagement work is to connect with those: already engaged (often faith, ethnicity); on the brink of an idea; in isolated situations; who like to “drop in”; who attend special events (often need to be invited/asked); and/or who come out for issues (may come and go). However, special attention (and strategies) is required for residents who are not connected to encourage participation and ensure voices are heard.

4.3 Innovative Leadership and Skilled Staff in an Organization Open to Learning

Community building requires a management infrastructure and organizational culture that supports innovative, creative leaders who can work within a community wide agenda from a systems lens. This necessitates leadership, both at the board and senior staff levels that can:

- Move beyond their own internal focus to work within a community vision;
- Lead but also share leadership. Distributing leadership within their organization through external partners and residents: walk alongside the community in the development of a vision for community change;
- Manage from a change/systems lens: see the big picture (maintain the vision), understand how all the pieces contribute to an overall strategy (think strategically about connections) and be able to communicate the vision;
- Be open to moving in new directions: ensure agencies don’t get stuck in rigidity traps; and
- Be accountable to constituents and community members.

Commitment to the on-going development of skilled, knowledgeable staff (including those who lead neighbourhood groups) is crucial to building capacity within community-based organizations. There needs to be an organizational learning culture that values “learning while doing” - a continuous iterative process that positions evaluation as a tool for improving practices and nurturing change with evaluation becoming the collective responsibility of all stakeholders.

Agency roles in community work emerge, evolve and “ebb and flow” over time. Often these roles include: coordination, connecting, facilitating, supporting, mentoring, advising, monitoring process and keeping an eye on the big picture. Roles change and vary depending on a myriad of community factors: readiness; level of trust; phase of community building; amount of community organizing already in place; community strengths and needs; and, community leadership in place. Community work requires allowance for flexible staffing arrangements to meet the realities of community life.

Practitioners act as facilitators and partners in a community change process and bring the following characteristics:

- A “glass half full” versus the “glass half empty” perspective;
- A relationship driven practice;
Flexible and responsive approaches yet can “push/pull” when needed - push people to drive the process but pull people to harness motivation, knowledge, wisdom, and creativity; and

Lead by stepping back.

4.4 Partnerships and Collaborative Approaches

Many of the things residents are dealing with and want to work on often lay outside the control of the geographic area; for example, changes to systems and policies that adversely affect their lives. Thus collaboration enables agencies and communities to pursue agendas beyond the reach of any one organization or community and can help community members access the necessary support and resources for their collective action.

Collaboration requires diverse people, agencies and organizations working together, and within their spheres of influence, toward community change. This requires a complex web of relationships: residents, funders, intermediaries, neighborhood organizations, public sector agencies, private sector financial institutions and consultants. The literature talks about how both horizontal & vertical collaboration is required in three interdependent levels:

- Residents;
- Bridge builders: individuals, agencies/organizations who act as navigators between residents and “systems of support”; and
- “Systems of support”: groups, government, organizations, educational institutions, businesses, etc., at local, regional and national levels, that make policy decisions.

Collaborating for community change does necessitate organizations to understand, commit, support and be willing to engage and work within these multiple levels. Aligning all of these players requires significant investment in people and time to build relationships. This is not an easy task and is met with mixed results. The literature talks about the need to integrate and shift to new habits of thinking, acting, and collaborating in partnerships. Some things that help with this that were identified include:

- Common mission;
- Articulated self interests and shared ownership of effort with mutual investment in outcomes;
- Equality in the relationships with shared decision making;
- Ability to understand various perspectives;
- Negotiated roles and responsibilities;
- Clear accountability process for each party; and
- Someone to keep an eye on the many “balls up in the air” and the glue that holds it together.

4.5 Resident Involved Decision Making

What is interesting in community development work is that the community is encouraged to take an active role in determining and participating in governance structures, processes and mechanisms that guide community change efforts. Community members know their own community and can advise on what would work for their context and situation. This necessitates considering creative (often out of the box) options to manage the community wide work.

Significant time and support is needed to create governance structures and mechanisms to best meet the needs of the particular community context. Residents are provided with opportunities to have a voice in shaping decision making in formal and/or informal ways. Residents are supported to sit on agency boards and committees of agencies in meaningful ways. This necessitates capacity building for both parties, residents and agency staff, to ensure they have the skills to do the work and to work together.

Flexible policies and procedures within an agency need to be developed to guide planning, decision making and implementation in resident driven endeavors. Finding this organizational balance is not easy. Having residents involved often tests the will and capacity of agencies to be responsive to the rhythm of community (which contrasts the often slower more predictable agency rhythms). Many agencies interviewed describe having to think and adapt on their feet, being comfortable with learning as they go, and their on-going adaptation of policy and procedures. These agency processes benefit from having the:

- Capacity to change and respond to the emergent and evolving nature of community work;
- Ability to vary depending on neighbourhood contexts: their history, collective strengths, capacities, and needs; and,
- Flexibility to reduce barriers to participation, increase timely responses, and allow for negotiated roles, responsibilities, outcomes, etc. with the community.
4.6 Clearly Articulated Community Focused Mission, Vision and Values

The complexity of communities, where there is no one set model or one single best neighbourhood approach, benefits from agencies with a clear and articulated mission, vision, values/principles, and goals. Agencies grounded in a way of working with community that values residents and a community development approach of engagement, organization and mobilization are a benefit to their community.

This philosophical framework is often a shift for an agency from an internal agency focus to a community-centered focus, which sees residents as partners in community building efforts. This framework recognizes residents’ assets and capacities and reflects a commitment to serving the public that in turn is accountable to the public.

This framework becomes a living document that help agencies (and people within them) center on what is important and provides internal consistency between philosophy and practice (how the work is approached, the type of practice undertaken and decision making processes). This can be tough, as agencies need to grapple with the reality that in community development work, accountability rests not only on its senior leaders and Board of Directors but also on its community constituents.

5.0 Application to Practice

In the preceding sections we discussed the enabling factors that allow an agency to undertake a community development approach from a theoretical perspective. What has been presented is not meant to be prescriptive but is meant to stimulate conversation and dialogue about how theory meets reality. How can theory translate into practice? How can agencies, within their current contexts, integrate aspects of community development into their work with residents?

The intention of this discussion paper is to help agencies reflect on what they are currently doing, identify some possible ways of working differently in neighbourhoods, and potentially identify some strategies on how to get there. To reiterate, achievement of this community development way of working should not be misunderstood as a formula for funding or an investment strategy, but merely a reflective learning opportunity - a time to pause and ask how your work might contribute to a neighbourhood agenda.

There are many ways to work in neighbourhoods. We know that a mix of targeted community interventions (service oriented) and community development strategies (community building efforts: engagement, community organizing, capacity building and mobilization) are often required to produce lasting change. There is no one “right way.” It takes multiple players working together in different ways to collectively impact change at a community level.

The interviews and literature suggest some current ways agencies operate within community contexts:

- Agencies with a sole mandate of community development;
- Agencies with mixed models where there is a dedicated community development arm along with a service delivery arm;
- Agencies who add a community development component to existing services/programs often as a tool for reaching/engaging the harder to reach; and/or,
- Collaborative/constellation types of platforms, where collaborative space with agencies and community are created to work together to build a vibrant and resilient community; these are often called community-based collaborations: agencies, organizations and community members working toward a common goal(s).

It is important to note that one way of working is not better than another. There is not a hierarchy. All can potentially contribute to neighbourhood efforts. However what is foundational to working in neighbourhoods is: – engaging residents, building on assets, and community organizing. It is about what the various players collectively (and intentionally) bring to the table to support residents in their community-building efforts.

When preparing for next steps in neighbourhood work, United Way is interested in exploring neighbourhood work more deeply with agencies. United Way would like to understand what roles/contributions agencies are taking or could take in neighbourhoods. Some possible roles and contributions are:

- Providing specific programs and services as identified and informed by residents;
- Providing customized programs and services to strengthen and expand social support networks; and facilitating resident participation in neighbourhood networks and change initiatives;
- Partnering in local neighbourhood change efforts to develop and implement intentional resident engagement strategies as part of a local neighbourhood strategy.
Again, no one role/contribution trumps another. The diversity collectively contributes to building the capacity of residents to take on neighbourhood change efforts. Intention and coordination of the collective efforts of all players with residents is key.

This exploration and dialogue with agencies would provide an opportunity to obtain a sense of where an agency is at in their understanding, commitment, willingness and ability to work within a neighbourhood change context. Also, agencies could determine their strengths and gaps, areas for improvement and possible areas for further capacity building in working from a neighbourhood approach.

### 6.0 Guiding Questions

An agency conversation guide based on the agency enabling factors (noted in Section 4) has been developed and will be useful for conversations by United Way of Calgary and Area with partner agencies working in neighbourhoods. This tool is meant to stimulate dialogue and thinking about current and potential agency roles and contributions in neighbourhood work. It will provide a baseline (where agencies are currently at), obtain a sense of the role(s) they may want take in neighbourhood work and begin to understand what may be needed to move forward in this work (capacity building needs). This is not a one-off conversation but one of many as United Way explores possible partner agencies, their roles and contributions in neighborhoods. This conversation guide will be reflected on and modified, based on agency feedback and local context.

It is important to remember that it is a guide only and not meant to be prescriptive. Not all questions need to be asked, some may be more relevant based on what is already known about an agency’s work and other questions may emerge as the conversation flows. The following questions are related to the six enabling factors and may help to unpack what community development might look like in current practice, reflect on some of the areas of tension and identify capacity building opportunities.

#### Conversation Guide

**Responsive, Tailored Solutions**

**Current State**

- What work is the agency currently doing in neighbourhoods? What issues are addressed? Who identifies the issue(s)?
- What is the agency mandate: program delivery, community development (CD) or both?
- If there is mix of service and CD work, how is this managed structurally: is CD a separate arm or is it an add-on to regular service/programming? Describe the CD work undertaken.

**Responsive and Tailored**

- How does the agency respond to residents’ concerns, issues and desires? Ask for stories.
- What are the community strategies?
- What tensions arise as a result of working within a CD approach? Explore this.
- How does the agency work with a community agenda that may be different than the agency agenda? Ask the agency to talk about a time that the agency values or agenda conflicted with a community agenda.

**Possibilities**

- If there were no barriers to implementing a CD approach, what would the agency like to do in neighbourhoods? What supports would you need to do this?

**Resident Focused, Asset Based, Community Engagement**

**Asset-based**

- How does the agency describe a strength-based perspective? How is it used in practice? Provide examples.

**Engagement**

- How does recruitment and engagement of residents occur in their agency?
- How are residents involved in various ways in the agency? What are their roles? At what levels of the agency?
- How are social networks supported? How are residents involved in network building?
What have been the challenges of getting residents involved and meaningfully engaged? How have these challenges been tackled?

What are some of the skills needed to engage people in their communities, and keep them engaged?

What types of support would be most beneficial to the agency’s capacity to engage residents more fully?

Innovative Leadership and Skilled Staff in an Organization Open to Learning

Innovative Leadership

What is the management infrastructure at the agency?

What is the leadership style? Ask for examples.

How does the organization support their leaders? Ask for examples.

Ask for a story of when agency leaders worked within a community wide agenda.

Ask how leaders manage from a change/systems lens. Explore responses.

Skilled Staff

What are the roles of staff? What does this look like in CD work?

Culture of Learning

Ask for examples of the overall organizational learning plan – board, leadership and staff.

Is there a staff and volunteer development plan to support CD perspectives/practices?

What types of support would be beneficial to contribute to management/staff skilled in a CD approach?

Partnerships/Collaborative Approaches

Weaving a Web of Relationships

Ask the agency to describe their partnerships and collaborative approaches with examples.

Collaborative Strengths and Challenges

How does collaboration add value to their work? What are the challenges of working collaboratively?

What supports do you need to work collaboratively in a comprehensive way?

Resident Involved Decision Making

Governance Structure

What is the agency governance structure?

How are residents given a voice in decision-making?

What thought has been given to how the community members could be involved in decision making roles regarding governance structure/mechanisms for community action efforts? What do you do if it is tough to find community members interested in more of a leadership role(s)?

Mechanisms and Processes

How does the agency manage/deal with resident driven CD work in practical terms - reducing barriers to participation, ensuring timely responses, and negotiating roles, responsibilities, outcomes, etc. with the community?

What are the internal mechanisms/processes to facilitate and guide participative planning, decisions, action, reflective learning?

What are the inherent challenges to working within a CD agenda? Can these be remedied? If so, how?

Clearly Articulated Community Focused Mission, Vision and Values

Philosophical Framework

What is the stated agency philosophical framework: vision, mission, values/principles, goals?

How does the framework play out in practice? Provide examples of the lived philosophy.

Public Accountability

Who is the agency accountable to: Board of Directors? Community members? Recipients of service? Others?
7.0 Conclusion

This discussion paper presented a high level synthesis of what we are learning and what is emerging from the literature and qualitative data around how agencies may be able to support neighbourhood change efforts with residents from a community development perspective.

Six broad categories of agency enabling factors were suggested with the hope that this would invite meaningful dialogue and encourage collective thinking on how agencies could work as facilitators and partners with communities in neighbourhood change efforts. The enabling characteristics presented provide an overall picture, a more theoretical analysis of what an agency doing neighbourhood work could consider when undertaking community development as part of neighbourhood change efforts.

Our next steps will be an exploration with agencies on the practical realities and application of community development within current neighbourhood contexts. As we continue this work, we can fine-tune our understanding and collective knowledge around what is working in practice in our neighbourhoods with residents. This discussion paper is a work in progress, emergent as the neighbourhood work unfolds, and meant to evoke thoughtful reflection.
References (sorted by initiative or group)

**Action for Neighbourhood Change websites:**

- **Home:** [http://www.anccommunity.ca/index_english.html](http://www.anccommunity.ca/index_english.html)
- **Resources:**
  - **Tools (all three resources can be found at the link below):**
    - Community Capacity Building Resources for Neighbourhood Renewal
    - A Guide for Neighbourhood Planning


Annie E. Casey Foundation

**The Annie E Casey Foundation**

The Annie E Casey Foundation website:


**Felt, Henry. Five Videos on Social Networking in the AECF:** [http://feltco.com/currentprojects/aecfsocialnetworks.html](http://feltco.com/currentprojects/aecfsocialnetworks.html)


Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change


Asset Based Community Development Institute
ABCD website:
- Publications: http://www.abcdinstitute.org/publications/
- Resources: http://www.abcdinstitute.org/resources/


The City of Calgary
The City of Calgary, FCSS:
- FCSS Research Briefs: http://content.calgary.ca/CCA/City+Hall/Business+Units/Community+and+Neighbourhood+Services/FCSS/Research+Briefs.htm


Coady International Institute
Coady International Institute websites:
- The Coady: http://coady.stfx.ca/coady/
- Our Work - Asset Based Community Development: http://coady.stfx.ca/work/abcd/


Four Worlds International


Kettering Foundation and The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation


Neighborhood Funders Group


Tamarack Institute for Community Engagement

The Tamarack website:
- About Tamarack: http://tamarackcommunity.ca/g1s2.html
- Learning Centre: http://tamarackcommunity.ca/g3.php
- Vibrant Communities: http://tamarackcommunity.ca/g2.php


United Way of Halifax Region

United Way Halifax website:


United Way of Toronto and ANC Sites

United Way Toronto website:
- Action for Neighbourhood Change: http://www.unitedwaytoronto.com/whatWeDo/ANC.php