

Community Partnership Model

POOLE'S APPROACH TO COMMUNITY BUILDING

Community Intervention Models

Models discussed by Brueggeman:

- **Social Work Planning** (also known as Community Planning) - includes the development, expansion, and coordination of social services and social policies
- **Economic Development** involves “increasing productivity and efficiency by developing businesses that multiply and distribute economic resources to improve the financial situation of a locality.” – Brueggeman
- **Community Organization** (community organizing) “engages local residents seeking empowerment and self-determination in issues that affect their communities.” – Brueggeman
- **Community Development** evolved from blending economic development and community organization.

Building Community Capacity

Building Community Capacity is a model proposed by Chaskin et al, who define **community capacity** as the “interaction of human capital, organizational resources, and social capital existing within a given community that can be leveraged to solve collective problems and improve or maintain the well-being of that community.”

Building Community Capacity employs some combination of the following (depends on the circumstances):

- Leadership Development
- Organizational Development
- Community Organizing
- Interorganizational Collaboration

Community Building

Community Building (Ewalt, Freeman, and Poole) *marked an important shift in philosophy or approach to community interventions.*

- Previously, the role of the social worker was as the change agent. They mobilized residents via locality development, planning, socialization, etc.
- **Community building** *marked a shift from the social worker to the community as the change agent.* Now, the emphasis is on community members assuming roles in leadership of all phases of developing community capacity. **This is the shift from community organizing to community building.**

Community Building

Community building provides community members with opportunities to engage in the following activities:

- Defining community interests
- Defining assets that already exists
- Defining assets that are required
- Developing community capacity in governance
- Strengthening mutual helping processes toward shared responsibility
- Identifying and strengthening local leadership capabilities
- Improving participation of all populations, including youths, women, and people of color, in decision-making
- Reforming oppressive structures that are harmful to community well-being

Community Building

Community members are responsible for identifying and facilitating necessary improvements

Efforts are focused on the broader community

Requires organizations to work collaboratively instead of competitively

Accountability of organizations is shifted to community members, which:

- Recognizes the importance of community participation and accountability
- Ensures that community members are equal partners

Community Partnership Model

History of the Community Partnership Model

It is important to keep in mind that this is not a linear model. Rather, it is cyclical and the principles/steps are interrelated.

Poole's Community Partnership Model consists of six steps or action principles:

- Agenda Building
- Structure
- Analysis
- Ownership
- Technology
- Stewardship

Agenda Building

Agenda building is the first step or action principle in the community partnership model and involves initiation "of the process of getting a core group of citizens and professionals to place the issue on the community agenda" (Poole, 2001).

Traditionally, a group of people would agree that something was an issue, pursue placement on an agenda, and so on.

Specifically, Poole (2002) notes the need for representation from four areas: political, economic, moral, and technical. I would add consumers, especially those who experience the issues you are trying to address. If you ask Poole about this, he will tell you that this is implied.

The absence of critical representation leads to a lack of ownership or power, especially on behalf of the citizens, to hold the responsible institutions accountable for their actions or inactions.

Structure

The second action principle or step in the community partnership model is structure, which involves developing a structure that allows for citizen and professional involvement in the community building process (Poole, 2001).

Support for this is found in Poole's (1997) comment that "a community partnership structure fosters shared responsibility for local problems, prompts behavioral change in community institutions, and initiates and sustains reform efforts over time" (as cited in Poole 2002, p.542).

Key elements:

- Citizen involvement, leadership, and control (including sustainability)
- Staff support
- Balance membership and ensure equity in decision-making

Analysis

The **analysis** phase of the process requires the analysis of the issues and formulation of alternative solutions via community action research (participatory action research), which “seeks to improve the quality of decision-making through the careful collection of facts” (Poole, 2002, p. 542).

Action research is important because it focuses on obtaining the best information in the shortest amount of time, allowing for timely decision-making. It also involves community members in the process of planning, collecting, and analyzing the data, which increases **ownership** and sustainability (**stewardship**).

Additional benefits of action research include an increase in public knowledge/awareness/understanding of the issue(s) and it can help you identify additional community stakeholders and partners.

Ownership

Ownership is the fourth action principle and it involves establishing “community ownership of the issue and the solution.”

Community ownership occurs when the group has the ability to define the issue, identify the causes, and hold the local institutions accountable for solving the issue (Poole, 2001).

Everything you do to this point should be with the intent of building the community’s ownership of the issue(s) and solution(s). Doing so is the key to **sustaining** (stewardship) the efforts over the long-term.

A key indicator of community ownership is when the community and its members are willing to commit their time, money and other resources to efforts to address the issue(s). In other words, ***talk is cheap...***

Technology

The fifth action principle is **technology** or the identification, transference, and design of sound technology in order to implement the solution identified by the group (Poole, 2002).

In addition to program design and planning, this involves commitment of resources from the community.

- Willingness to commit resources signals ownership
- Unwillingness to commit resources suggests concerns with ownership
- You need to seek local resources even if you have funding source that will cover all of the expenses. Why?

Don't reinvent the wheel!

Stewardship

The final action principal is **stewardship**, which requires members of the partnership to implement the program or intervention and evaluate the outcomes. While doing so, they must demonstrate accountability, commitment, and constancy (Poole, 2002).

To understand this principal, we need to look at the definition of stewardship – “to hold something in trust for another, beginning with the willingness to be accountable to some larger body than ourselves” (Block, 1993 as cited in Poole, 2002).

Stewardship is the most challenging stage in the process as it requires perseverance, flexibility, optimism, humbleness, and commitment. It requires a group, a partnership, where members can rely on one another for assistance to get through the challenges. **Partnerships, ownership, accountability, and a willingness to be good stewards** are the keys to **sustaining** our efforts of over the long-term.

Stewardship

When thinking about **stewardship**, hopefully it is apparent that **leadership** is the foundation. You must have leaders who are oriented to being **good stewards**. There are several compatible leadership models, including transformational leadership, stewardship (Block), and servant leadership (Greenleaf).

Greenleaf points out that a servant leader is a servant first and a leader second. In other words, his/her primary motivation is to serve others rather than his/her own desire to serve in a leadership position. ***Take a moment to think about this. It truly is an important point. A profound one, in fact.***

The next slide is a summary of the characteristics of a servant leader from Greenleaf's perspective. I encourage you to look through them and think about how they fit with or compliment the Community Partnership Model.

Characteristics of a Servant Leader – Greenleaf

1. Constant search for excellence
2. Looks at what is best for others before considering his/her self-interest
3. Able to point the direction and articulate it to those who do not understand
4. Able to develop and elicit trust from others
5. Able to listen to and understand others (active listening)
6. Accepts and empathizes – never rejects (able to tolerate imperfection in others)
7. Possesses a sense for the unknowable and sees the unforeseeable (a loss of foresight leads to a loss of leadership)
8. Able to bridge the gap between what information is possessed and what information is needed
9. Needs to be in touch and is proactive
10. Open-minded
11. Critical thinker
12. Ability to persuade vs. coerce