

DIMENSIONS AND SUBDIMENSIONS OF COMMUNITY CAPACITY

FROM

An Attempt to Identify and Define the Dimensions of Community Capacity
to Provide a Basis for Measurement

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DIMENSIONS AND SUBDIMENSIONS OF COMMUNITY CAPACITY

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION that is characterized by:

- strong participant base
- diverse network that enables different interests to take collective action
- benefits overriding costs associated with participation
- citizen involvement in defining and resolving needs

LEADERSHIP that is characterized by:

- inclusion of formal and informal leaders
- providing direction and structure for participants
- encouraging participation from a diverse network of community participants
- implementing procedures for ensuring participation from all during group meetings and events
- facilitating the sharing of information and resources by participants and organizations
- shaping and cultivating the development of new leaders
- a responsive and accessible style
- the ability to focus on both task and process details
- receptivity to prudent innovation and risk taking
- connectedness to other leaders

SKILLS that are characterized by:

- the ability to engage constructively in group process, conflict resolution, collection and analysis of assessment data, problem-solving and program planning, intervention design and implementation, evaluation, resource mobilization, policy and media advocacy.
- the ability to resist opposing or undesirable influences.
- the ability to attain an optimal level of resource exchange (how much is being given and received)

RESOURCES that are characterized by:

- access and sharing of resources that are both internal and external to a community
- social capital, or the ability to generate trust, confidence, and cooperation
- the existence of communication channels within and outside of a community

SOCIAL & INTERORGANIZATIONAL NETWORKS that are characterized by:

- reciprocal links throughout the overall network
- frequent supportive interactions
- overlap with other networks within a community
- the ability to form new associations
- cooperative decision-making processes

SENSE OF COMMUNITY that is characterized by:

- high level of concern for community issues
- respect, generosity, and service to others
- sense of connection with the place and people
- fulfillment of needs through membership

UNDERSTANDING OF COMMUNITY HISTORY that is characterized by:

- awareness of important social, political, and economic changes that have occurred both recently or more distally
- awareness of the types of organizations, community groups, and community sectors that are present
- awareness of community standing relative to other communities

COMMUNITY POWER that is characterized by:

- the ability to create or resist change regarding community turf, interests, or experiences
- power with others, not control over them (non-zero-sum or win-win strategies)
- influence across a variety of domains or community contexts

COMMUNITY VALUES that are characterized by:

- clearly defined norms, standards, and attributes.
- consensus-building about values

CRITICAL REFLECTION that is characterized by:

- the ability to reflect on the assumptions underlying our and others' ideas and actions
- the ability to reason logically and scrutinize arguments for ambiguity
- the ability to understand how forces in the environment influence both individual and social behavior
- the ability for community organizations to self-analyze its efforts at change over time