

Building Local Capacity to Collaborate in Making Sustainable Social Changes for Seniors

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A Collaborative Approach to Ageing Model CAAM

✦ Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Grant
Modelling collaborative action at the local level to promote and optimise the ageing experience.

✦ Research Partners

✦ UQ – Australasian Centre on Ageing and UQ Boilerhouse Community Engagement Centre

✦ Ipswich City Council

✦ Gold Coast City Council

✦ Qld Department of Communities



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Presentation overview

- ✦ Research problem and aims
- ✦ Concepts, Methods and Data Sources
- ✦ Findings – related to
 - ✦ various forms of capital; and
 - ✦ key processes
- ✦ Building capacity to collaborate

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The issue

- ✦ Population ageing poses complex ('wicked') problems
- ✦ Benefits from working in collaborative networks that cross disciplines and involve a range of stakeholder organisations and groups at a number of levels.

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Research aims

This research aimed to:

- ✦ model the core elements of successful collaboration;
- ✦ analyse the core competencies and conditions required to work with others; and
- ✦ suggest how these might be fostered.

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Capacity to collaborate



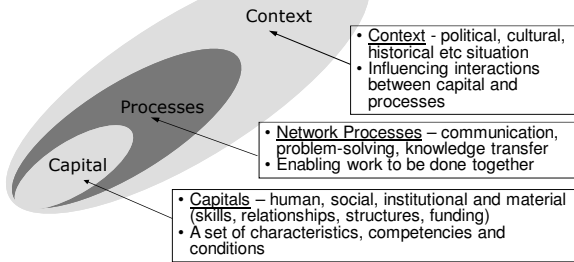
Definition

- ✦ A collection of characteristics and resources which, when *combined*, improve the ability of a network to work together in order to *address problems* in their community

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What is capacity to collaborate?

Synergy between three components that brings social change



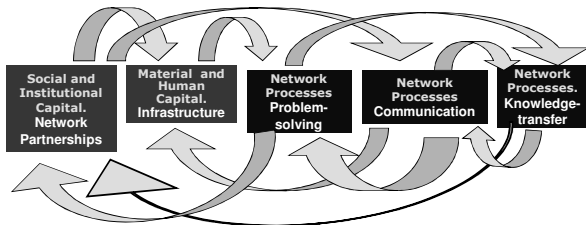
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Method

- ✦ An **action research** project in two communities in Qld where local networks (working action groups) have formed to enhance the ageing experience.
- ✦ Inherent complexity of collaborative networks → challenge of how to **gauge the capacity to collaborate** available within these local networks.
- ✦ Multiplicity of **frameworks and tools**, with domains and indicators of functioning.

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Measuring capacity to collaborate



Interwoven domains examined by Community Capacity Index (Bush, Dower & Mutch 2002)

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Data sources

Qualitative data generated in three ways:

- ✦ Five interviews at each site to give range of views
- ✦ Field notes, participant observation and materials from 2 workshops and one meeting at each site
- ✦ Reports and meeting notes from the workshops and meeting

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Results – various forms of capital

- | | |
|--|--|
| ✦ Human capital – e.g. skills | } Limited knowledge of funding sources and
Limited grant-writing skills |
| ✦ Material capital – e.g. resources invested or mobilised | |
| ✦ Social capital – relationships between groups and organisations | ✦ Trusting relationships but
✦ Key strategic allies not engaged |
| ✦ Institutional capital – structural form, leadership etc | ✦ Ad hoc, informal arrangements and
✦ Limited integration into mainstream of groups |

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Results - Network Processes

- ✦ **Ways of communicating**
 - ✦ Limited formal and informal internal communication
 - ✦ Struggled to include diverse perspectives
- ✦ **Learning and knowledge exchange**
 - ✦ Significant transfer early on – but not built on
 - ✦ ‘We know *what* knowledge we need to share, but not *how* to access or share it’
- ✦ **Ability to make decisions and solve problems**
 - ✦ Lacked ways of moving beyond identifying problems to agreeing on action to solve them
 - ✦ Little flexible adjusting of plans to local needs

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Building capacity to collaborate

- ✦ **Highlighted areas of development**
 - ✦ Skills in using the media
 - ✦ Problem-solving processes
 - ✦ Interaction between capital and processes – good communication skills not enough without strong processes and systems & v.v.
- ✦ **Strategies to build the capacity within the networks**
 - ✦ Skills development workshops (working with the media, grant-writing etc)
 - ✦ Facilitated knowledge transfer processes by field trips, speakers, project newsletter
 - ✦ Lobbying and advocacy to change the context

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Acknowledgements

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- ✦ The research findings do not necessarily represent the views of any of these Industry Partners

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