



Cross-sectoral frameworks for community development in Western Australia

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Stories of community development

- Evaluating community strengthening projects in remote WA
- Talking to councils about race and reconciliation
- Pondering the ways of talking about community development with councillors, CEOs, Indigenous and non-Indigenous community development workers

Introduction

- Community services in WA funded & delivered by increasingly complex array of govt and non-govt organisations, as part of devolution of services to local government and non-govt sector
- ‘Whole-of-govt’ approaches to service delivery
- ‘Shared services’ – govt & non-govt sector to work collaboratively on service development

Introduction

- Proposed project seeks to understand the histories, cultures and institutional arrangements for community development/services in the non-government and local government sectors in WA
- Initiated by personal contacts between WA Local Government Association, in collaboration with LGCSA (WA), WACOSS & with ECU Centre for Social Research. Funded by Lotterywest.

Methodology

- Data collection:
- (A) Interviews with key stakeholders from non-govt and local govt sectors to determine:
- Understandings of the way in which community development/services are planned and operated in WA
- The history and current role of their agency in cd/cs
- Understandings of the role of local government in the planning & provision of cd/cs

Methodology

- (B) Case studies of cd/cs in the non-govt and local govt sectors – to provide an ethnographically rich description of the people, organisational cultures and community development activities of agencies from each sector.
- How do each of these agencies/organisations conceptualise cd/cs and how do their different histories and cultures influence the way they operate?

The context

- WACOSS survey of 77 agencies showed that between 2002-03 & 2003-04:
 - 50% of agencies reported inadequate funding to meet costs of service delivery
 - 63% using financial reserves to make up shortfalls in funding
 - 57% reported longer waiting lists than previous year
 - More than 40% not able to meet demand for services (WACOSS 2004)

The context

- WA local government increasingly involved in community services – by topping up funds to non-govt agencies or direct service provision
- In 2002/03 144 LGAs in WA spent:
 - \$11.5m on education
 - \$79.8m on welfare
 - \$310m on recreation & culture
- Expenditure on community services has increased significantly

Community services & LGAs

- *What's our role in community services/development?*
- Community services/development not legislated
- No systematic framework for the delivery of community services/development – continuum of approaches from corporate to community (Hornby 2000)
- *Whilst we all have an answer (about what they're doing in community development) it's a different answer (local government CD worker)*
- *Workers at all levels of employment...struggling with fundamental understandings of community development (Saggers et al 2003).*

WALGA Budget Submission 2006-07

- ***Program Title*** : Sustainable Decision-Making in a Culture for Change
- ***Objective 1***: To provide Local Government with mechanisms to incorporate sustainability within their decision-making and operations
- ***Objective 2***: To facilitate use of sustainable decision-making and the transition to a culture of sustainable governance.

Community development discourses

- Shaped by contextual factors including professional and organisational values, political ideology, institutional structure, local social and economic factors, broad policy shifts, and demographic make-up of local population
- Can see these as making up three contextualities: organisational form (norms and values, structure and processes of the organisation); practitioner discourse (language, ideas and concepts used by practitioners); and social and economic forces (Hudson 2004; Siggers et al 2004)

Community services: local government & non-government frameworks

- WALGA:
- *We have a vision that Local Government in WA will:*
 - *Be built on good governance, local leadership, democracy, community engagement and diversity;*
 - *Have the capacity to provide economically, socially and environmentally sustainable services and infrastructure that meets the needs of their communities*
 - *Priorities: aged, centralisation/decentralisation, community security, disabilities, emergency management, health, libraries, recreation, youth*

Community services: local government & non-government frameworks

- Previously (2001-05):
- To be a dynamic and substantial organisation valued by its members and respected by the community (others, government & competitors)

Community services: local government & non-government frameworks

■ WACOSS:

- *Since 1956, WACOSS has been developing and strengthening the non-government community services sector's capacity to assist all Western Australians.*
- *At the heart of its activities, lies the belief that the mark of a civilised community is the support and help it gives to those most in need.*

Organisational form -local government

- LGAS diverse, but largely...
- A site for the acquisition & maintenance of status, power and wealth, by controlling land and property development
- Municipalities help shape and distribute urban & regional amenities and the residential environment and domestic relations
- An institutional means for managing race and ethnic relations, also possibly for resisting colonial agendas

Organisational form- local government

- An organisational means to pursue other hegemonic agendas at the local level, often (though not always) implicated in the implementation of policies informed by economic fundamentalism (eg outsourcing)
- Is able to advocate over diverse social, economic and political issues beyond immediate local service delivery & represent constituents over national & international issues (Mowbray 2000,p.216).

Organisational form – non-government community services sector

- The sector is also diverse, probably more so than local govt. 200+ members who “share a vision of a socially just and sustainable Western Australian society where people care for each other and have access to the resources and opportunities required for their wellbeing”
- But vary from large to small faith-based services, to groups concerned with health, disability, the law, domestic violence, sexual issues, finances, Indigenous issues, substance misuse, refugees.

Organisational form – non-government community services sector

- Norms & values of these organisations & their practitioners probably very diverse (eg.around welfare to work issues)
- They are responding to social and economic forces around them in diverse ways (eg.outsourcing)
- Trend to shared services will force closer examination of these values
- Is there a similar continuum or orientations – from corporate to community-based?

Cross-sectoral frameworks for community development/services

- ‘Situated’ community development discourses – shaped by organisations, practitioners (workers, managers, elected members, CEOs), and environmental factors
- How do these multiple discourses of community development – drawing upon socially liberal and conservative views – impact upon cross-sectoral frameworks for community development/services in WA?

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