Practice Insights

Issue 3: Community Resilience

iACD

International Association for Community Development
Association Internationale de Développement et D'Action Communautaires

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Our international Practice Insights publications are issued twice a year, each one focusing on a particular theme of relevance to community development. If you would like further information or to contribute to future editions, please contact anna.chworow@iacdglobal.org

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Editorial

Ingrid Burkett

'Resilience' is a concept that is increasingly used to refer to a community's ability to anticipate, survive, respond and recover in the face of disaster, decline and hardship. Originally the term was used to denote physical properties of materials such as timber or steel, and more recently it has been used by ecologists and environmentalists to refer to the ability of natural systems to recover from disease or destruction. Now policy makers and researchers are referring to 'community resilience' as a measure of our local and social ability to reduce risk and vulnerability in the face of adversity. This edition of Practice Insights delves into some key practical and critical issues around how the concept of community resilience is being used and can how it can inform community development practice and policy.

A 2011 report on Community Resilience from the Carnegie UK Trust written by Nick Wilding (who is also featured in one of the articles in this edition of PI) suggests that the very notion of community resilience is contested, with no agreed upon definition of the concept. This report argues that perhaps it is about 'future-proofing' communities "on the basis of agreed values" (Wilding, 2011; p.4). The perspectives shared in this issue of PI illustrate that there are indeed variations in how 'community resilience' is viewed; but that there are threads of commonality about 'what works' when communities face adversity and collectively respond to an uncertain future.

Several of these articles explore community resilience in the face of disaster – both as an aim of disaster preparedness, but also in response to disaster. They demonstrate that community resilience in the face of natural disaster requires both the building of horizontal connections and social capital across communities, and that vertical structures and authorities actually engage with and trust community led actions and community level responses.

Further, it is clear that collective approaches are equally important at a system and structural level, so that responses are integrated rather than siloed and bureaucratic. If resilience is the focus of a programmatic response, an understanding of community needs and strengths within the structures and services that engage with communities is just as critical as growing preparedness at the community level.

The nature of 'recovery' is also contested. Physical restoration of infrastructure may happen more quickly than emotional adjustment, particularly if a crisis has resulted in loss of life, not just property or livelihoods. It is important that the emotional response of communities is recognised and incorporated into community development processes, and that community workers are supported to work alongside people on this journey.

There are some great examples in this edition of following and harnessing the energy of communities in response to disaster. Sometimes the energy necessarily has to be on immediate needs and on ensuring the safety of people and securing infrastructure. But it is also important to encourage and support community-led action. Communities have a voice and a choice not just in relation to immediate responses but also in planning/designing recovery and rebuilding initiatives.

It is critical to recognize, however, that the things that divide communities do not necessarily disappear in the face of disaster and adversity, and that 'recovery' is not necessarily a logical outcome for all communities, nor for all within a community. Though often there is a natural 'community in adversity' response to the immediate crisis of natural disaster, structural inequalities, racism, class and cultural divisions can mean that some communities are further disadvantaged in processes of responses. The article by Andy Milne from the Scottish Urban Regeneration Forum urges critical reflection in relation to policy initiatives which aim to enhance community resilience.

Another contribution, from Nympheo, a rural community in Greece, points to another kind of crisis for communities, albeit a more insipid and slow moving one than that presented by natural disaster– that is, community decline. It asks us to consider how we can build cultural and economic resilience in our communities, future-proofing or actually re-imagining our communities into the future. This article, and the piece by Gill Musk and Nick Wilding about the transformation of Scotland's public services, suggest that 'resilience' is not only about awareness raising and responding to adversity, it is also about imagining and adaptively building towards new futures.

This edition of Practice Insights provides much food for thought in the current global environment and in the face of many local struggles. I found myself reflecting on the role of community development in building responses and resiliences in the face of not just natural disasters, but to the increasing array of manmade disasters – war, terrorism, industrial disasters or cultural devastation. For me, this issue raised more questions. I asked myself, how do we collectively prepare and respond to catastrophes that are caused by our fellow citizens, or when communities are destroyed or dispersed, or when the very fibre of humanity is threatened within communities? What helps us to tap into responses that build rather than divide communities? And what helps us to begin to reconnect to each other even if recovery seems a very long way off?

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The role of community development in building resilience in response to disasters: the Queensland experience

Lynda Shevellar, Meredith Connor and Peter Westoby

Internationally, understanding and enhancing community resilience in the face of national disasters has emerged as a high priority. This was keenly felt in Australia during the summer of 2010-11 when extreme weather events caused significant and widespread losses.

According to official reports "more than 320 of Australia's 559 local government areas were disaster declared as a result of flooding, storms, cyclones and fires, with many areas affected by more than one disaster... The 2010–11 disasters were, in financial and economic terms, some of the largest in Australia's history" (Government of Australia, 2012). In Queensland, more than 99% of the state was disaster-declared (Queensland Reconstruction Authority, 2011; ABS, 2012).

In 2011, as part of a comprehensive policy response to these disasters, the Australian and Queensland State Governments injected money into building individual and community resilience and improving effective governance in response to disasters. The Community and Development Engagement Initiative (CDEI) included the largest amount of funding into formal community development (CD) programs in recent years with the funding of 24 community development officers (CDOs) across Queensland for 24 months (from June 2011-June 2013).

As practitioner-academics located in Queensland, we sought to understand how the newly funded state CDOs helped to build capacity for future resilience from subsequent disasters.[1] We conducted interviews with 19 CDOs employed in the community resilience work across Queensland, as well as interviews with nine program stakeholders. What emerged were two very different conversations, which we will summarise here.

An appreciative inquiry

The first conversation was a highly appreciative one, reflecting the strengths-based intentions of the program. We heard of the highly constructive and creative community work that occurred. For example, it was evident that the CDOs drew upon communities' knowledge, expertise and experience to generate community capacity building projects that established and supported community groups and networks. One stakeholder, reflecting on the strengths of this process, commented: "People in our [community development] team are talking to the community groups and building those relationships and helping them so they've got a stronger relationship with the council, with each other, then with their own communities." [P20]

The kinds of initiatives supported by the CDOs were as varied as the communities themselves, and included community gardens, choirs, family fun days, markets, movies in the park, the establishment of Men's Sheds, youth and seniors events. Numerous practical products were also developed ranging from brochures and fridge magnets to USBs that provided information about disaster preparedness.

Culturally oriented CD was especially important in the recognition of resilience. Many CDOs worked with communities to produce outstanding arts projects to celebrate resilience and recovery. These included the creation of public art pieces (murals, mosaics, sculptures), facilitating art awards and exhibitions, musical events, theatre performances, photographic workshops, exhibitions and books, dance performances and workshops, history books and digital storytelling.

Other CDOs took a more social CD approach and focused on strengthening the ties between service providers and strengthening local organisations. As one CDO observed,

"Other community organisations and agencies have been exceptionally open to the CDEI initiative. They've been exceptionally good: Salvation Army, Red Cross. I have a working partnership with a range of organisations and I can say that they've been brilliant. Everyone has the same vision for recovery and resilience." [P4]

Other projects were future focused. For example, advancing social connectivity and networking skills was the driver behind the Fordham Park Alpha Jockey Club Inc. that held its first race meeting since 2002. The race day was seen as an opportunity for remote and rural community members to maintain vital social connections and to become actively involved in the process of sharing their skills, resources and networks to restore the dilapidated race course and facilities.

Importantly, CDOs identified that, "restoring their sense of fun" [P10] was key to restoring community wellbeing. As one CDO commented, "You have to create a sense of community when the community's been fractured. And how do you do that? You make it fun. You get people involved, you connect them with your message that way." [P9] Another CDO observed, "A lot of people are saying, 'We're keen to keep educating and hearing these messages but can't

"You have to create a sense of community when the community's been fractured. And how do you do that? You make it fun."

we do it in a really fun way instead of being so serious?'" [P12] Such events included community festivals, street parties, community barbeques, high teas, and concerts.

A critical inquiry

The second conversation required a more complex and critical stance and led to the unhappy conclusion that CDOs build capacity for future resilience "with great difficulty", "in spite of the program" and sometimes, at great personal cost.

While CD is often undertaken in diverse environments, its role and practice in a post-disaster context is a relatively new and unexplored field that can create particular tensions and challenges (Ife, 2013). For instance, the stakeholders are different (emergency personnel and disaster management personnel embedded within local government). As infrastructure is being rebuilt, community workers find themselves engaging with a broader range of council programs and professionals (e.g. engineers, environment teams etc). The context is different. Community workers enter when people are raw and in grief and experiencing loss. While this may be true of other communities, the difference is that the impact is across the whole population. In this program, much of the focus was non-metropolitan. Furthermore, the extraordinary difficulty of recruiting people to work in regional, rural and remote areas of Australia meant that the officers employed did not all have experience or training in CD and some were not residents of the locality.

The positioning of the CDOs within a state government framework created an additional challenge. The time constraints and political nature of the program, involving all three layers of government; highly sensitive issues of death, grief, loss; economic fallout, and media attention all placed enormous pressure on CDOs to have highly visible aspects to their work.

Additionally, there was enormous pressure on CDOs to have clear, measurable outcomes. The program had extremely tight accountability mechanisms that most CDOs described as "onerous" and tools that placed emphasis upon quantity and outputs. Yet as one stakeholder reflected, "You're asking people to change their attitudes; you're asking people to break habits and make decisions for themselves, behavioural change – you can't measure that in the terms that a government bean counter can measure." [P26]

"You're asking people to change their attitudes; you're asking people to break habits and make decisions for themselves, behavioural change – you can't measure that in the terms that a government bean counter can measure."

Such experiences accord with a global shift in development where practice is being strongly driven by what is being called "the results agenda" (Eyben, 2013). There was little recognition in this space of the less tangible, organic processes of community work. This created a tension for CDOs who were caught between being responsive to the accountability/audit culture of government and the longer-term relational and partnership needs of community work. As one CDO explained,"CD is years, it's lifetimes, it's not, 'Here's a bucket of money for two years', it doesn't make an ongoing, sustainable community; it makes a short-term fix. It's been great, it's been a benefit and we've been able to do a lot but … two years isn't long enough, two years isn't anywhere near the time…" [P5]

What became clear is that while the program had many successes and certainly contributed to the resilience of communities, opportunities were also lost, and the work was made infinitely harder by the location of the role within local government, the time limited nature of the program, and the engagement of CDOs as an add-on, employed eight months after the disasters occurred. This meant that the CDOs often had no base from which to work, and had to build both the vertical and horizontal relationships necessary to even begin the work.

In conclusion

Given current predictions about climate change and the inevitable increase in both the frequency and severity of disasters, we suggest that community work cannot simply be viewed as an add-on to be implemented for political gain in times of crisis. Community development needs to be seen as an essential part of a disaster management response, but needs good thinking and a much longer-term investment if it is to realise its potential in this arena.

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1 We wish to acknowledge the Queensland Centre for Social Science Innovation for the funding, which made this research possible.

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IMAGE CREDITS
Flooding in Fernvale. Photos taken by local resident, Lynette Lynch, January 11, 2011

Community resilience

Jim Diers and Mary-Jane Rivers

In the aftermath of a disaster, people discover what is most important – their relationship with one another. That was certainly true with the 2011 Canterbury earthquakes in New Zealand. As one survivor put it, "It was a time when neighbours, family, friends and strangers stopped opening conversations with 'What school did you go to?' and replaced it with 'Are you OK? How can we help? Let's check on each other.'"

The ingredients of resilience: experiences from New Zealand and the USA

Christchurch is the largest city of New Zealand's south island, and the main city of Canterbury region. Following the earthquakes, neighbours came together throughout Christchurch to support one another and to create "Gapfiller" projects which transformed the sites of demolished buildings into creative community gathering places (www.gapfiller.org.nz).

One of these, on Colombo Street, consists of a wall painted as a chalkboard inviting visitors to share their poetry. Kirsty Dunn contributed the following poem that was so popular it now appears in permanent paint:

*Amidst the shards of glass
& twisted steel*

*Beside the fallen brick
& scattered concrete*

we began to understand

that there is beauty in the broken

Strangers do no live here anymore

While disasters tend to create an instant sense of community that is more typically built over time, resilience requires that strong communities be in place before a disaster. Too often, people discover the importance of community when it is too late.

In his book 'Heat Wave', Eric Klinenberg documents the serious consequences that a social capital deficit had for the health of Chicago's North Lawndale neighbourhood. North Lawndale is located adjacent to Little Village, a neighbourhood with a similar proportion of low-income seniors living alone. That similarity not withstanding, Little Village's busy streets and vibrant businesses fostered social connections, while North Lawndale's lack of commercial activity and high crime rate caused its residents to live in isolation. Klinenberg cites that isolation as the major reason why North Lawndale experienced a death rate ten times higher than Little Village's in the heat wave that claimed the lives of over 700 Chicagoans in 1995.[1]

Close to Christchurch, the village of Lyttelton demonstrated the resilience made possible by a well-connected community. Lyttelton has a population of only 3000, but has about 30 community associations including a timebank of 461 members. These residents know one another – their skills as well as their needs. Mutual support is a way of everyday life designed in as part of community systems.

So, when the earthquakes struck Lyttelton, the residents were prepared. Even though Civil Defence Lyttelton[2] (a government-managed operation) was deployed to central Christchurch, the community had abundant resources. These included: a Volunteer Fire Brigade to lead the response; an information centre which served as the hub; a volunteer-operated radio station for communication; and the timebank, churches, community house and other networks which provided volunteers and neighbours to check on elderly residents, remove dangerous chimneys, find accommodation, cook meals, handle donated supplies, meet a myriad of other needs, and create heart-shaped brooches to help lift people's spirits. (See Project Lyttelton: www.lyttelton.net.nz/.)

Earthquake damage Christchurch

Agencies and their professionals have key roles to play, but they are no substitute for strong communities:

• neighbours are typically the first responders, and they will be there for the long run
• volunteers can multiply the available resources
• community initiatives tend to be more spontaneous, innovative and 'owned'
• residents provide invaluable local knowledge and a more connected and holistic perspective
• a community instills the sense of belonging and spirit of hope that is critical to recovery
• active communities have a voice that can't be ignored if their needs aren't being addressed or their aspirations aren't being respected

What role can agencies play in helping people prepare for and respond to disasters?

1. Don't organise people for disaster. Organise people for community.

Agencies of all kinds are starting to understand that strong communities are critical to their missions. As a result, each agency is attempting to organise communities around its own discrete function whether that is health, transportation, environment, care (for youth, older people, people with disabilities etc.), design, education, safety, resilience... and so much more.

Such a top-down approach is anti-community. No one has enough time to participate in all of these initiatives, so they are forced to choose. Most people choose not to get involved at all and those who do typically tire of waiting for a disaster and drop out.

Sustainable associations undertake a wide range of issues, projects and events.

It would be so much more effective and efficient if agencies of all kinds worked together in a neighbourhood or village with a focus on building community. Then, they could help to support the community around the people's own priorities. It's likely that emergency preparedness will be one of many items on the community's agenda. In the words of Lianne Dalziel, the Mayor of Christchurch and a former Member of Parliament representing East Christchurch, one of the areas worst affected by the earthquake: "We found that it was more important for people to have relationships with their neighbours than a stock of emergency supplies."

2. Don't let bureaucratic rules, procedures and a desire for standardisation destroy community initiative.

As Senior Sergeant Roy Appley of the New Brighton Police said, "The value of resilience is that it is organic and does not rely on rules or policies." A very good example of this is Sam Johnson, an undergraduate student at the University of Canterbury. Sam called the Civil Defence office after the September earthquake to volunteer his services. Following a lengthy interview, he was told that he had no skills to offer – "Leave it to the experts." Fortunately, Sam was not easily dissuaded and struck out on his own, using his social media skills to organise a Student Volunteer Army of thousands. As Sam said, "The official processes and manuals were stagnant, outdated and irrelevant to our generation's spontaneous, modern and impatient volunteers." (www.ucsva.org)

3. Don't just focus on the local – welcome and connect with external support.

The Student Army encouraged the 'Farmy Army' to form – made up of farmers and rural people beyond Christchurch who came to provide physical help with tractors, diggers and shovels. Largely unsung, New Zealand women's knitting skill was spontaneously harnessed. Thousands of women throughout the country knitted beanies for babies, toddlers and older people, teddy bears for toys, and knee rugs – among many other things. The Local Health Authority specifically put out a call for beanies. "Families are over the moon because it is really cold here", said a Christchurch woman, "and health practitioners can now see a tangible difference in people's wellbeing if they were kitted out in hand-knitted woolen clothes." And women's knitting creativity came out – much like the Lyttelton 'hearts'. Women knitted a

Galvanising action, Gapfiller

Kobe Community Centre work party

Kobe Memorial Park

Case Study

Jim visited Kobe, Japan after the 1995 earthquake. Residents had organised to oppose redevelopment plans that the local government had drafted with no community consultation. Community members developed their own plans and used them as a way to negotiate with government officials. Residents became invested in their ideas and formed associations to build and maintain projects including parks, community gardens, a community center, and a memorial to local earthquake victims.

Case Study

Tomi Ross lived in a beautiful Victorian house in the Kenwick neighbourhood of Lexington, Kentucky. While she was away, lightning struck and the house burned down. Neighbours salvaged whatever they could of Tomi's belongings, found her a place to stay nearby, and loaned her their furniture. Local children drew pictures of the old house which they presented to Tomi together with the proceeds from a lemonade stand. Tomi decided to rebuild a house on the site in the same Victorian style that the neighbours loved. When the house was completed, she erected a brass plaque that reads: "This home built with the support of loving neighbors and friends."

Acknowledging the support

Christmas nativity scene for a heavily damaged church for Christmas. Others knitted covers – with fun and heart warming messages – for shipping containers that had been placed to catch falling rocks and boulders. Facebook was the major connector for this organic organising![3]

Factors affecting community resilience

A 2013 study[4] of Christchurch's Community Resilience found 8 key factors that affected community resilience:

• community connectedness (top of the list), then
• the opportunity to get together
• community infrastructure – organisations, groups, meeting places etc.
• access to external support
• responsive, official decision-making processes
• people's wellbeing
• survival skills
• the extent of the adversity

The same study produced three main pieces of advice for building community resilience in disasters:

1. Encourage community-led action
2. Understand complexity and diversity
3. Develop and strengthen partnerships between communities and government

Organise people for community – listen, share, reciprocate, support people's strong desire to contribute, be a good neighbour and friend – together we can get through this. These are all aspects of community resilience. They are not 'nice to have' optional extras but the core of resilience.

In New Zealand, there is a Maori[5] saying which captures the essence of community resilience:

Nā tāku rourou, ka ora ai te iwi

which means

With your basket and my basket we will sustain the people

What happened next?

Since the earthquakes, many initiatives have become even stronger. Gapfiller has continued to grow and is now seen as an internationally leading edge approach. Christchurch hosted an international congress on 'adaptive urbanism', in late October 2014. 'Adaptive urbanism' is the practice of a city's inhabitants helping actively create, rather than passively consume, their environments. The Lyttelton Timebank has expanded its membership and role and now operates a community learning exchange – with learning on everything from how to use facebook to cheese making. Lyttelton locals wanted to keep a really important store – and co-operatively purchased their local grocery shop when the owners needed to sell after the earthquake.

1 http://www.ericklinenberg.com/books#heat-wave-a-social-autopsy-of-disaster-in-chicago
2 Civil Defence and Emergency Management is operated by central and local government. It carries the government responsibility for New Zealand communities' being resilient to hazards and disasters.
3 Personal communication: Sue Elliott, and www.stuff.co.nz/timaru-herald/news/5117014/ Rural-women-knit-to-beat-the-cold
4 Quigley and Watts: Building Community Resilience: Learning from the Canterbury Earthquakes, 2013; see: www.inspiringcommunities.org.nz
5 Maori are the first people known to have settled in Aotearoa, New Zealand, 1000 years before European settlers. They are the indigenous people and comprise approximately 15% of the overall population.
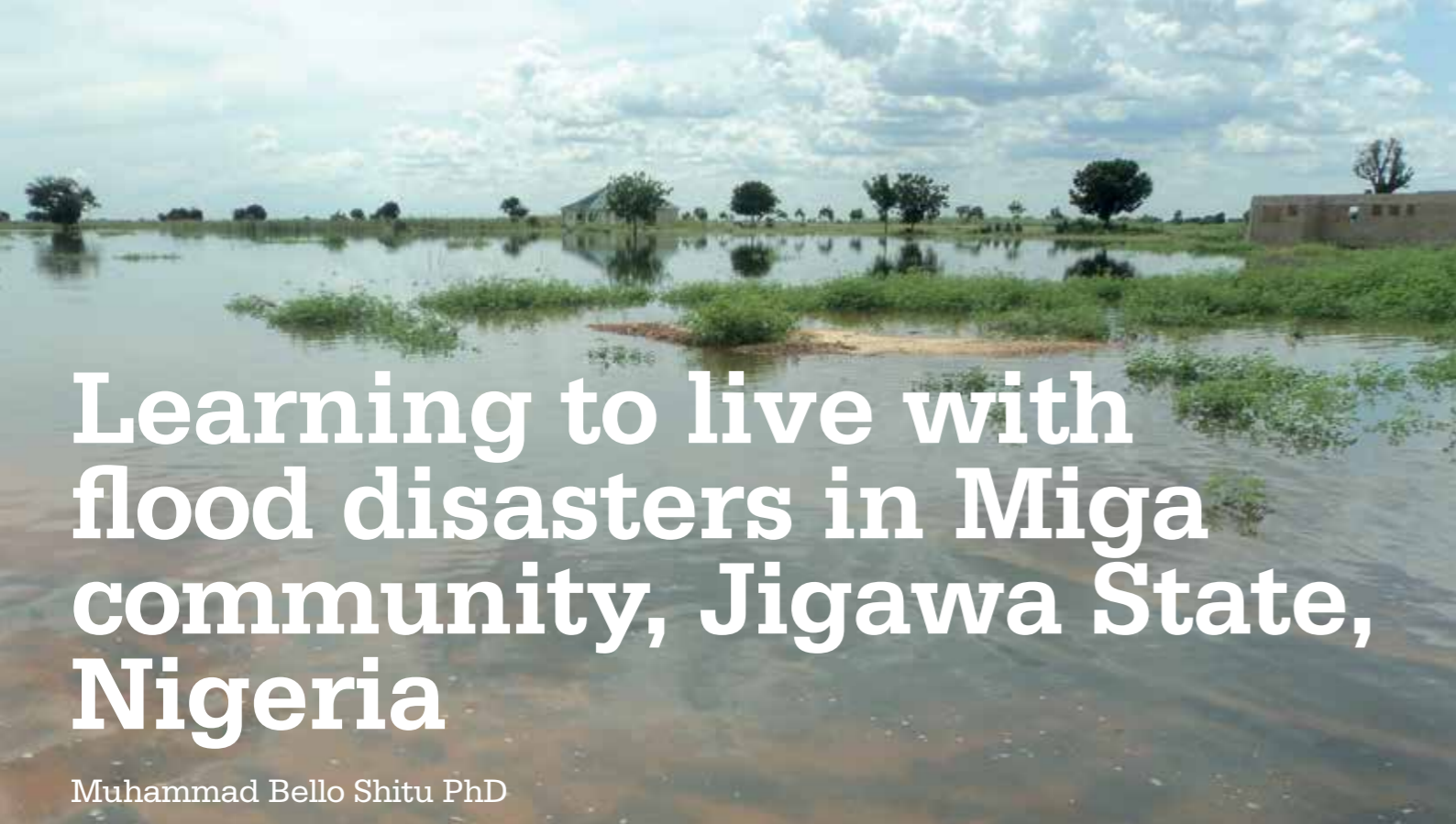
Learning to live with flood disasters in Miga community, Jigawa State, Nigeria

Muhammad Bello Shitu PhD

Miga Local Government Area of Jigawa State is one of the flood prone areas in Nigeria. It is located in the Sudan Savannah belt of Northern Nigeria, and lies within the Hadejia-Jama'are River Basin region. The people are mainly Hausa/Fulani engaged in farming and animal rearing as the dominant occupation. The area experience perennial flood disasters whose devastating effects had created extreme deprivations among the population. The 2012 flood disaster destroyed property estimated at over 100 mln Nigerian Niara ($65,000 USD) in Miga community and environs alone. Houses, markets, stores, office buildings, farmlands, crops, animals, schools, clinics were all affected by the floods.

In the past, flood situations forced all economic and social activities to a standstill while residents are waiting for intervention by government agencies at different levels. The Local Government Council also folds its arms in anticipation of some response from the state and Federal Government. A resident of Miga remarked "... waiting for external support has never helped us in the past. Sometimes the waiting is endless and when support comes it does not address the challenges we are facing. Moreover, government is concerned about giving us hand outs of food, mats, blankets; usually in insufficient quantities and distribution bedevilled by favouritism". Another member of the community Musa Ibrahim said "our livelihoods have been badly affected and, as strong and healthy as we are, we have been pauperised by the disaster and lukewarm attitude of public

functionaries". A mother of 5 children also shared her concerns on the issue, as she is of the view that whenever their community experience flooding which is a recurring phenomenon, women, girls and children suffer the most especially because they are left as refugees without support. She added that some of the youths and adult males migrate to the state capital Dutse town leaving them to cater for the children, the elderly and other people who have specific needs in the community. A teenage divorced woman lamented that it was the floods that caused her husband to abandon her for 14 months because her husband lost everything to the 2011 floods: his farmlands, crops, granary, two rooms and all his goats. Another young pregnant married lady said "It was after the serious flooding two years ago that I had to abandon schooling; we couldn't go to school because of the floods. I began to hawk Kolanuts to help my mother and the following year I was married off. I have since realized that one has to prepare for the floods."

Sometime in May 2012, some youths in the community discussing privately began to raise questions about how something needs to be done collectively to address the untold hardships people faced annually with the floods. A youth leader said "... one day in our 'majlis' [rest/discussion arena], a friend named Garba remarked, 'we can't continue like this, the time of flooding is fast approaching, we must start somewhere and do something within our capability to reduce the impact of the flood especially for our younger ones in school'". He went further to narrate that another colleague exclaimed, "This is time for action

not words, and we shouldn't wait for government, but seek for alternative solutions especially in relation to our farms and livestock." This discussion culminated in a consensus on mobilising other youths and all members of the community to prepare for the floods whenever it comes. Tasks were agreed and assigned after the informal meeting and a formal meeting was convened in June 2012 to discuss progress and the flood disaster management plans. He concluded in Hausa language by saying "gari ya waye mana, mu gane amfanin taimakon juna", meaning "for us it is a new dawn, we now know the value of self help and mutual support".

The seed of resilience was sown as people of Miga community began to anticipate what may likely happen after the flooding and had initiated some efforts to limit the negative influence of the floods on their livelihoods with the hope of continuing or starting a new life in spite of the imminent challenges.

> "gari ya waye mana, mu gane amfanin taimakon juna… for us it is a new dawn, we now know the value of self help and mutual support"

Muhammad Labaran, a nomadic herdsman in Miga, said that they began to experience heavy rainfall around the last week of August 2012 and, by the first week of September, it was clear to all that Miga

community would witness another flood. This was corroborated by Mallam Hamisu who said "The bed and basins of the Hadejia-Jama'are River had begun to swell to the brim and the imminent danger of swallowing our hard earned property, our animals and the weak is in sight". A community development officer with the Miga Local Government Council said the flood attack which used to be piece meal and intermittent in the previous years strike with full force precisely on September 17, 2012.

The youth leader said their initial mobilisation efforts in May, June and July on the impending flood gave them some strength to mitigate the effects of the devastating flood. The youths had collected empty sacks/bags, foodstuff, blankets, mats and second hand clothings as gifts from volunteers, which were then put to use to cushion the effects of the September 17th floods. Those whose buildings were affected were promptly rescued and supported. Instead of waiting for tents from government, affected persons were moved into other houses where they were assisted by other families. The materials donated by community members before the floods were distributed equitably to those in difficult circumstances. Men, women, boys and girls all came out to collect sand and fill the empty bags/sacks so as to create protective cover in strategic locations. Several sand bags were produced at no financial costs to the community and were effectively used to avert serious catastrophes that otherwise would have been created by the flood. A primary school teacher commented thus "... the volume of water this time was close to five or six times more than that of 2011 but the impact on our dwelling places and activity centres in the community is not as bad as it was in 2011 because people use their time, resources, energy to support each

other in minimising the devastating effect that could have happened in 2012". He added that the Local Government Council was encouraged by the communal spirit shown by the people and they also came with their assistance, which was not the case in the past. It was reported by many residents that the Local Government Chairperson actively participated in the communal labour of fixing the sand bags as embankment to prevent water spill into the built up area.

> some people received some assistance from the state government… but this wouldn't have saved lives if not for the initial community response

Another unique innovative response by the community has to do with their concern for the children in school. In fact one of the key sectors seriously affected by the perennial flooding in the community is basic education (primary and junior secondary schooling) especially in terms of attendance, completion and quality, with girls being worst off in all situations. The people knew how floods in the past had kept their children out of school for months leading to drop outs and reduced learning time for the academic session.

The youths had vowed to address this challenge. Attention was focused on ensuring safety of the school buildings and the learners. Protective sand bags were placed around the flood prone areas near the school compound which housed both Miga Special Primary school and the Government Junior Secondary School Miga. The school pupils were also involved in collecting sand to reinforce the

embankments. One of the pupils interviewed said he was not forced to carry the sand but felt it a duty for him to support the community efforts towards safeguarding the school in the face of the flood. A girl in the upper primary class said "I don't want the school to be closed down because of the flood, so I am giving a helping hand so that we can continue with our studies...". The youth leader also said they were involved in some form of community counselling initiatives around coping with the stress created by the effects of the floods and on encouraging parents to allow their children to go to school, assuring them of their safety. A youth group were mobilised to stay around the school premises to assist learners coming to school while some volunteers went round homes to ask that pupils be sent to school.

A major challenge the community faced was their inability to simultaneously and collectively address the devastation on their farms. It was not possible to do anything at that time because all the farms were flooded and the security of their lives was threatened with the surge of the water into residential areas. Saving lives first was the overriding concern.

The resilience of Miga community in the face of the 2012 flood disaster using their skills, low cost and no cost resources was helpful in mitigating the effects of the flood. I was told that months later some people received some assistance from the state government but this wouldn't have saved lives if not for the initial community response.

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Community resilience work in Great Yarmouth:
a neighbourhood and community development approach

Holly Nottcutt and Jan Davis, Great Yarmouth Borough Council

Great Yarmouth, on Norfolk's east coast, England, has its fair share of local emergencies. In recent years these have included major fires, unexploded bombs, chlorine gas release, and severe property damage from high winds. A key concern is the town's vulnerability to a North Sea tidal surge, which is shared by many low-lying communities along the coast. Specific emergency plans are in place for widespread tidal flooding – this would be a major disaster for the town.

There are still people in the town who remember spending wet and cold nights on rooftops during the floods of January 1953 which claimed many lives along the east coast and many more in Holland. In November 2007 another major North Sea tidal surge threatened the town resulting in a major evacuation of residents to stay with friends and family or in rest centres located out of the flood zone. It was a close-run thing, with the water level only centimetres away from flooding large parts of the town, but the wind changed at the last minute and the danger abated.

With such a range of threats, experienced and potential, it is important for residents, businesses, elected members (locally elected politicians) and anyone involved in the town to have an awareness of the threats and an appreciation of how to respond "if the worst happens". Community resilience has therefore become an integral part of emergency planning in Great Yarmouth, and not considered an "add-on"; rather, it is seen as a two-way process of sharing information, views, opinion and guidance between the community and emergency responders, to foster mutual understanding and confidence.

With only one dedicated Emergency Planning Manager, we felt that for community resilience to be more formally

Cooking for resilience!

developed it had to be understood and supported by those already working within communities.

> There are still people in the town who remember spending wet and cold nights on rooftops during the floods of January 1953 which claimed many lives along the east coast and many more in Holland.

In rural areas in England, the focal point for developing 'community resilience' is often the Parish Council. They lead on it, create a local emergency plan, and submit the plan to the local authority – job done. In an urban community, without a parish council, we knew the approach had to be different. But importantly, we felt that it needed to be different, that there should be a significant emphasis on raising awareness, really building capacity and trust, and going beyond the completion of a plan by a few.

Great Yarmouth Borough Council has invested in community development for years, seeing it as a critical factor in supporting communities facing multiple challenges. Neighbourhood management programmes, established between 2006 and 2009, have been central to the coordination of statutory service provision and Community Development work, always ensuring local people are the ones setting priorities and making decisions.

The Community Development Workers (CDWs) aim to involve local people in making decisions about their street, estate, community, etc. In support of the street level work, a Neighbourhood Manager coordinates and involves relevant service providers along with residents to develop strategic and longer-term plans for the neighbourhood. In order to involve as many people as possible in leading and developing initiatives, significant attention has to be paid to ensuring that sufficient time is set aside for the forming and development of relationships. This is recognised as crucial to effective and meaningful engagement at the local community level.

'Participating' is often not an automatic step for some people. This is true particularly amongst those who previously have been less likely to engage with public services and/or social and community development initiatives. Just as it would take some time for a person you meet for the first time to become a good enough acquaintance to invite for dinner regularly, so it also takes time for people to gain enough familiarity or trust to become fully involved or even empowered to participate in developing local initiatives, such as Community Resilience.

> 'Participating' is often not an automatic step for some people. This is true particularly amongst those who previously have been less likely to engage with public services and/or social and community development initiatives.

As with the majority of communities, we have a hardworking and dedicated core

Local mums – creators of 'The Den' youth club

of local connectors – people in residents' associations, shopkeepers, community groups, local activists, church wardens, cadet and youth leaders, schools reps. This is a great group of people, and key individuals for inaugural conversations regarding resilience planning. However, through the work of the Neighbourhood Management programmes, we also have a heightened awareness that many other people could be involved but are not. Communities are often intimately connected, in ways that are less obvious to an outsider such as a local government officer. If these street level networks can be identified and supported to develop understanding in agendas, such as preparedness and community resilience, they will ultimately be stronger in times of extreme pressure or crises.

'Community resilience' isn't often the number one priority for communities, especially those living amongst significant challenge in their lives. Other day-to-day challenges like unemployment, low income, health, personal relationships, family management, drug and alcohol dependency, take priority. In developing this work, we knew that the majority of people would not queue up to come to a meeting about 'resilience'. And for many, what does that term even mean?

> 'Community resilience' isn't often the number one priority for communities, especially those living amongst significant challenge in their lives.

So, whilst keeping the resilience agenda firmly in our consciousness, we have ensured our focus is on *what local people care about* (whatever that might be!). This has ranged from local crime, to dog fouling and litter, to having a good old community party. But all the time, we are forming relationships, trying to build trust, and joining the dots. For example, on meeting a group of mums fed up with youth antisocial behaviour, we supported them to significantly reduce the problems through starting a youth club. In doing so they have increased their own self esteem and confidence, grown their own networks and become more connected with others in their community, and have become key 'go-to' people in their neighbourhood for a multitude of enquiries. Critically these networks, ones that we may not ever really become embedded within as 'non-residents', are there, are stronger, and are naturally triggered into action when a key local priority emerges.

So what has this got to do with Community Resilience? These mums, and

'Are you prepared?' parade

others in similar projects, were eventually introduced to the Community Resilience agenda by the CDW, and consequently became founding members of the Emergency Planning group. This group has now run awareness-raising campaigns, written a community plan, worked with local schools, and held community events, subtly, gradually but continuously delivering small anecdotes to others in the community about preparedness and resilience. Importantly, they have developed an understanding of the significance of the link between themselves and others in the community they are in contact with via their networks. They, and others like them, are now not only better informed of the risks to their neighbourhoods, but importantly much better prepared to respond and manage in an emergency. Their networks, nurtured and grown through Community Development action, will likely one day be 'activated' should the worst happen like a tidal surge, and as a result manage and recover better, collectively.

Key points:

- Community development work is the cornerstone to building capacity within communities, particularly neighbourhoods suffering from significant levels of disadvantage and increasing challenge.

- Engage on topics, particularly shared ones, which are a priority to people in small neighbourhoods that people identify with as being 'their area'. Unless there has just been a recent disaster or emergency, this is unlikely to be 'Community Resilience' or 'Emergency Planning'. But that's ok. It's the engagement, building on familiarity, and the development of trust that is important.

- This approach is often time-consuming – over several years – but flags up the importance of a long term approach to Community Development Work, with Community Resilience embedded within it.

- "But we don't have neighbourhood programmes". It doesn't matter. Not all the groups in Great Yarmouth are supported by Neighbourhood Management. In every local area – ward, parish, or similar – there are people working within communities. They might be housing officers, benefits advisors, school-parent liaison workers, church wardens, or bingo callers at the community centre. Whoever they are, they are best placed to strike up new relationships, and build upon any existing ones.

- If possible, identify and work with existing networks of people. There is no need to start afresh or to duplicate effort. Work together with other organisations so that Community Associations, Fire Safety volunteers, Home Watch, and so on are supporting and complementing one another, not competing for volunteers.

- Community Resilience doesn't need to be confined to the emergency room, to emergency planners, or to people with a background in emergency response. A partnership with emergency planners will provide the knowledge, support and links with emergency responders to underpin the community resilience work. But it can, perhaps should, include anyone who works within communities, and it needs to be as many as possible.

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Resilience, inequality and resistance

Andy Milne

Resilience certainly seems to be the word of the moment in the UK, and it is an interesting one. Taken alongside 'austerity' measures and paranoid propaganda about 'foreigners' in all their imaginary forms, it sounds like a distorted echo of those amusingly naive 1940s public service announcements that English comedian Harry Enfield used to parody: *"Keep calm and carry on. Things may get a bit bumpy old chap but don't mind the destruction all around you. Keep your chin up and your head down. Above all, don't rock the boat. Just remember, we're all in this together!"*

Spirit of the times

The true spirit of resilience that was distilled in the shared experience of real adversity during World War II was strong enough to spark substantial progress in UK social policy and national regeneration. It seems ironic that those same constructions of social and economic solidarity are now under attack in the current more home generated crisis.

Whatever its cause, as with almost any calamity anywhere, it is the people with the least who lose the most. And still, it is the poorest communities that the repeated calls for ever more 'resilience' are directed at. The current spin is that greater resilience will help recreate the vital shared spirit that we lost somewhere in the heady excesses of unregulated, debt fuelled, consumerist greed over the last three decades. The catch is that the people who are being urged to show the most resilience now, didn't even get invited to that party.

The current spin is that greater resilience will help recreate the vital shared spirit that we lost somewhere n the heady excesses of unregulated, debt fuelled, consumerist greed over the last three decades.

Ironies aside

As Scotland's independent regeneration network, SURF (Scottish Urban Regeneration Forum) has a strong interest in where the solutions for more successful regeneration might be found. All ironies aside, the unique assets of otherwise disadvantaged communities are certainly part of the solution. That knowledge, experience and energy has been ignored for too long. The upside of the current resilience zeitgeist is that how we can best foster and link those resources is finally being brought centre stage in all sorts of policy forums.

For instance, the new Scottish Government policy on 'Resilience' for disaster planning in instances like floods, explosions, epidemics etc. (www.scotland. gov.uk/Publications/2013/04/2901/1) is strong on the importance of drawing on vital community knowledge and networks at times of emergency. But it goes further. The 4th point of the executive summary states: "creating local activism is key to long-term success".

Now, I had always understood that in such crises the authorities would prefer if we stayed at home and waited for the 'all clear'. But here, in its crisis planning, the Scottish Government is not just hoping for conventional community engagement, but is urging the creation of 'local activism'.

The upside of the current resilience zeitgeist is that how we can best foster and link those [community] resources is finally being brought centre stage in all sorts of policy forums.

Such a refreshingly positive view of communities reminds me of the British Red Cross 'Resilience' conference held in London in April. A senior civil servant set out how the UK Government identified and planned for a range of emergency risks including earthquakes, terrorist attacks and public disorder. However, he was rightly challenged on the omission of a real threat which is top of the concerns of the UN emergency planning team, i.e. economic inequality.

The UK government neglects to identify this clear and present risk despite the fact that Britain is now the fourth most unequal society in the developed world. It's not as if the problem is not already well understood. The 2009 SURF Annual Lecture featured Professor Kate Pickett and her widely referenced book 'The Spirit Level'. It provided exhaustive detail on the impact of increasing inequality on all aspects of our neighbourhoods and personal lives. Interested readers can

still view the transcript in the Knowledge Centre on the SURF website at www.scotregen.co.uk.

Myths and realities

More recently, the increasing scale of geographic and economic inequalities was highlighted in the Financial Times in March 2013. It reported that the value of property in the 10 richest London boroughs was greater than that of all of the property in Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland combined. This startling statistic may not be unrelated to another one which IPPR North produced in November 2012. It showed that while the capital investment in physical infrastructure in London was over £2,300 per head of population, in the North East region of England it was £5 per head. Yes, that's right, about what you'd expect to pay for a pint of Newcastle Brown beer and a couple of packets of crisps.

Resilience is certainly an important aspect of community well-being, but adequate investment is vital. Back in Scotland, where we do at least seem to be interested in these things, Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon (at the time Cabinet Secretary), recently spoke at a SURF conference on the myths and realities around the links between 'Infrastructure Investment and Social Benefit'. Houses as homes, not just investments, is a key part of our understanding of what makes a community resilient.

Andy Milne is Chief Executive of Scotland's independent regeneration network, SURF (Scottish Urban Regeneration Forum)

Transforming Scotland's public services from the inside out

Gill Musk and Nick Wilding

In an interview with IACD's Gill Musk, Nick Wilding, Workforce Innovation Programme Manager at the Scottish Social Services Council, describes an initiative called 'Skilled Workers, Skilled Citizens', which aims to tackle the need for public service reform from the inside out.

In 2011 the Christie Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services made radical proposals for reforming public services in Scotland. In an age of declining resources and escalating need, their report pointed out that services were completely unsustainable if they carried along the same track. Moreover, it highlighted mounting evidence that switching resources into prevention could both save money and create the conditions where more resilient communities could emerge. It signposted that services should become more integrated, and embed assets approaches in the way they work. The question was: how to achieve this?

This is how 'Skilled Workers, Skilled Citizens' came about. Nick explains the process: "We are supporting pioneers across public services in Scotland who are attempting to transform how their organisations do workforce development. In an age of 'co-production' – where users of services are ever more engaged in designing and running their services – traditional ideas about who the workforce is, and how they can best learn how to do their work well, are being challenged."Increasingly, organisations are talking about trusting workers to take initiative; of bringing 'our whole selves' to work; and of supporting us to develop our emotional intelligence alongside the ability to enable people to help themselves. But are these just words? What does it take to create organisations where these things happen as a matter of course?

> "In order for people to feel they are trusted, the traditional cultures and structures of our organisations need to support this change"

"In order for people to feel they are trusted, the traditional cultures and structures of our organisations need to support this change. Otherwise, a pattern of a few extraordinary people bucking the system will remain, with little evidence that entire organisations are being transformed to be in service of shifting power for the design and delivery of services towards citizens. As part of a much wider reform programme of public service reform in Scotland, we are focusing on discovering, celebrating and sharing radical practice and ideas about changing how learning happens."

> "we are focusing on discovering, celebrating and sharing radical practice and ideas about changing how learning happens."

In our conversation, we talked over some of the significant challenges to achieving enduring cultural change: decades of institutional history and habits, including a policy environment that continues to perpetuate a 'targets' culture which can mitigate against preventative, assets-focussed approaches.

Nick has been encouraged, however, by his findings so far: "Now a year into the programme, we have been surprised by how many people have, often under the radar, already been developing what we might call an 'assets approach' to workforce development – although they may not be using this language. We have found that these people share some clear, common values: developing trusting relationships everywhere, building on the strengths and untapped potential of everyone, and of

professionals letting go of power and control in deciding how services develop and run. Ultimately, we are connecting people who share a common purpose in creating the conditions for all of us to play our full part in creating more vibrant, resilient communities.

> "[these pioneers] share some clear, common values: developing trusting relationships everywhere, building on the strengths and untapped potential of everyone, and of professionals letting go of power and control in deciding how services develop and run."

"So far, we have about twenty very diverse public service organisations getting involved – from local authorities to Police Scotland; from providers of services for people with learning disabilities to university schools; and from the Scottish Government to Scottish Natural Heritage."

Three examples:

- East Ayrshire Council have established a Vibrant Communities department, which explicitly seeks to take a community assets approach. This is a new unit in the local authority, formed by bringing together over 100 staff with existing strengths in community development and assets approaches – to support community-led neighbourhood planning and transfer of council assets to community

stewardship; and also to offer colleagues right across the council to become assets practitioners whatever their roles.

- Threshold Glasgow is a voluntary sector organisation which has for a long time been undertaking local authority contracts to support people with learning disabilities. Since 2009 it's been actively transforming itself into what's called a 'customer-led' service. When you walk in the front door, Threshold's own version of Sherry Arnstein's Ladder of Participation is there, visually demonstrating the roles that customers play in the management of the organisation. Threshold is now working with its parent organisation, Crossreach, as it seeks to follow a similar path with its many other services across Scotland.

> "…bringing people together to find a strong common voice, by sharing and reflecting together on what works in practice… This is resilience building in action!"

- Scottish Natural Heritage is tasked to conserve Scotland's nature – and has traditionally focussed on the strengths of its staff – often scientists with specialist know-how about protecting wild areas. Increasingly however, SNH staff need to be skilful in relating with community planning partners. As a Skilled Workers, Skilled Citizens pioneer

site, SNH is asking how it can 'open up' and re-skill its workforce to become much, much better at 'the people stuff'.

Nick comments, "I came to this work having spent 5 years with the Carnegie UK Trust, developing a Community of Practice for rurally-based community resilience pioneers across the UK and Ireland. This Community of Practice (www.fieryspirits.com) in 2011 produced a handbook of some of that community's knowledge, 'Exploring Community Resilience'. That work demonstrated for me the power of bringing people together to find a strong common voice, by sharing and reflecting together on what works in practice. This is resilience building in action! With Skilled Workers, Skilled Citizens, there is now an opportunity to take a similar approach towards enabling public sector organisations on the first steps towards transforming themselves.

"I've been amazed at some of the conversations I've had over the last few months… working in this way is showing that there are people with great integrity, courage and passion working in every area of public life in Scotland. They give me real hope that this as a movement might achieve big things."

We're curious to know of how publicly funded organisations have gone on similar journeys, and in particular how their approach to developing their own people to work in assets-based ways. What kinds of mechanisms help people to learn how to do things differently? To contribute your ideas contact Anna Chworow anna.chworow@iacdglobal.org

The Vibrant Communities team. Photo courtesy of East Ayrshire Council

Useful Reads

'Exploring Community Resilience' by Nick Wilding is handbook for community development practitioners. It explores practical, tested approaches to building community resilience, and references case studies and resources on the subject from around the world. Finally, it proposes a framework – compass of community resilience – to help assess and guide the development of community's capacity to deal with change. The handbook is available under a Creative Commons 3.0 licence from www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/publications/2011/exploring-community-resilience.

'Enabling City' is a toolkit showcasing pioneering initiatives in urban sustainability and open governance. Written by an Italian researcher Chiara Camponeschi, it explores a new way of thinking about urban communities and change. The publication presents cities as alive, dynamic, collaborative spaces where local communities and neighbourhoods become hubs of social innovation and creative problem-solving. The book is available under a Creative Commons 2.0 licence from www.enablingcity.com.

'Practical Action to Build Community Resilience' is a report published by Joseph Rowntree Foundation as part of the Climate Change and Social Justice programme. It evaluates the impact of the Good Life Initiative, which aimed to help the residents of the low-income community of New Earswick, UK to engage with issues of environmental sustainability. The report highlights the practical actions undertaken as part of the initiative, and relates lesson learned to theoretical and policy contexts. Both the summary and the full report are available from www.jrf.org.uk/publications/practical-action-build-community-resilience.

Resilience.org is an information clearinghouse for resources focused on building community resilience. Supported by the Post Carbon Institute, the website forms a library of news articles, documents, video and audio resources for community activists and practitioners. To explore more, please visit www.resilience.org.

Community resilience, cultural identity and heritage: Nympheo, Greece and the HISTCAPE project

Kostas Karamarkos, Rand Eppich, Alexandra Kulmer and Juan Carlos Espada

Rural communities everywhere are often susceptible to long, slow declines. Industries fail, agriculture is no longer economically viable and the younger generations move to cities in search of better opportunities. Such was the case with Nympheo in the remote northwestern mountains of Greece. Originally one of the best known and largest regional centres of silversmith in the 19th century, by the 1980s the village was nearly deserted with fewer than 80 inhabitants. Now Nympheo is a thriving active community that in 2000 won the European Union Renaissance Village Distinction Award.

What has made the difference? How has this community rebounded? What are the secrets of Nympheo's resilience?

In the early 1990s, the remaining community members along with former residents and surrounding communities banded together and began to take matters into their own hands. They built upon Nympheo's three major assets: the surrounding natural landscape and wildlife, the historic village architecture and, most importantly, the community's intense pride of place. They recognised their rich natural and architectural heritage and had a strong desire to protect and preserve their community. Volunteers groups were organised and began to protect the surrounding forests, clear the streets and repair the roofs, stone walls and windows of the village.

Gradually the community's effort and vision attracted influential individuals and institutions. Many well-known civil engineers, architects and mechanical engineers donated their time and expertise to continue the projects in Nympheo adding to the volunteer effort. Public electricity and telecommunications companies responded with in-kind contributions. The YMCA of Thessaloniki established a summer youth village retreat from individual donations. A non-profit, non-governmental organisation, ARCTUROS, founded the European Centre for Protection of the Brown Bear (www.arcturos.gr), the mountains surrounding Nympheo being one of the last refuges of wild brown bears in Europe. The historic school house in the centre of Nympheo was renovated and adapted to

hold offices, an interpretative centre, meeting rooms and a museum (http://nymfaio.gr/web/).

In October 1994 a local self-governing party, 'New Perspective', was elected to administer the community. Together with the residents they developed a formal Strategic Plan for the continued restoration and enhancement of Nympheo. The main objectives are the sustainable development and resilience of their community. The priorities in the plan included:
1 Conservation and respect for the natural surroundings – forestsand wildlife
2 Protection and enhancement of their architectural and archaeological heritage
3 Recognition and promotion of the community´s traditions, customs and history
4 Connection to surrounding communities and region
5 Reliable and responsible public advocacy and information dissemination

Slowly, Nympheo made a comeback. The community rejected the idea of economic growth for its own sake but envisioned a development model based on environmental protection and historic preservation. Soon people recognised the quality of life that the village and surrounding landscape offered, some who had moved away returned or became weekend residents and visitors began to discover the village. New arrivals came to settle and the repair or construction of new homes began in harmony with the existing traditional structures.

Today, Nympheo is doing well and is known throughout Greece for the community´s efforts.

> The community rejected the idea of economic growth for its own sake but envisioned a development model based on environmental protection and historic preservation.

The community has undertaken nearly 50 major projects since the late 1990s including the Museum of Gold and Silver, Folklore and History, which was inaugurated in 2000 and located in an historic building. Nympheo has been classified as a landscape of outstanding natural beauty and the village is protected by the Hellenic Ministry of Culture to preserve its unique architectural integrity. Several cultural events are held throughout the year associated with local regional

Nympheo in winter. Image courtesy of ARCTUROS ©2013
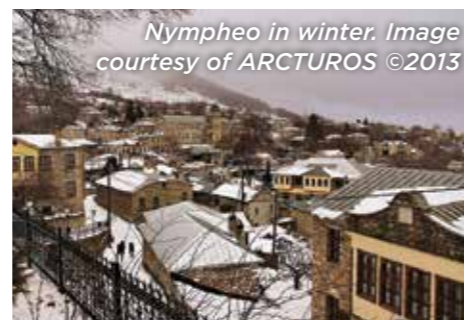
agricultural products and a local women's group has formed a commercial cooperative to collectively produce, market and sell homemade sweets, needlework handcrafts and traditional recipes. The village has also engaged the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the University of West Macedonia to hold lectures and courses in the village on history, art, architecture and nature.

But the community is remaining vigilant: there are continuing challenges and threats. They regularly hold community meetings to discuss ongoing or proposed projects, new problems and potential sources of funding. They have begun to develop tourist activities such as hiking, horseback riding and ecotourism; several historic homes have been converted to small hotels and restaurants. The community remains cautious of tourism and its potential impact, so have taken steps to carefully manage and monitor its successful and sustainable implementation.

The recovery of Nympheo would not have been possible without the concern and action of the local community followed by the formation of volunteer groups and finally professional then institutional support. The success of Nympheo has given confidence to other communities to create plans and act beyond the usual support and guidance from 'top-down' central government. Nature, the historic environment and strong pride of place were critical to Nympheo's identity and community resilience.

> The recovery of Nympheo would not have been possible without the concern and action of the local community followed by the formation of volunteer groups and finally professional then institutional support.

The example of Nympheo reveals an innovative approach to protect cultural values by community support and therefore was identified as a good practice from the Region of Western Macedonia within the interregional cooperation project, HISTCAPE (www.histcape.eu/). The project is part of the INTERREG IVC Programme (www.interreg4c.eu/) financed by the European Union's Regional Development Fund to help regions of Europe share their knowledge and transfer experience to improve regional policies.

Volunteers working at the ARCTUROS centre for the protection of the Brown Bear in Europe. Image courtesy of Antonis Douramanis ©2013

HISTCAPE focuses on cultural heritage and historic assets in small rural communities. While most of Europe's population is concentrated in large settlements, over 80% of its territory is rural in character. These rural landscapes are home to a scattered pattern of smaller historic towns and villages, like the rural community Nympheo. The HISTCAPE project is addressing the challenges and problems of these communities which have traditionally acted as focal points of economic activity and are now under serious threat. The idea of HISTCAPE is to create fresh perspectives geared towards the creation of new tools and policies adapted for the sustainable management, development and protection of smaller communities.

The project is doing this by investigating, identifying and evaluating good practice examples, transferring them to policy recommendations and testing new policy instruments through pilot implementations. The project is following a strict methodology for identifying and evaluating good practice and is now beginning to share preliminary results. A guidebook and articles are currently being written that highlight experiences and successes such as Nympheo. The project team is made up of 12 partners from across Europe, including regional authorities, universities and a research consultancy.

In the winter of 2012 an international conference was held in Nympheo. It brought together community members, project partners and invited experts to conduct exercises and investigate firsthand their success. Local community volunteers and leaders spoke of the 'bottom-up' Nympheo Process, their successes and

failures, and plans for the future. Team partners from other regions of Europe discussed how the Nympheo example could help them in their communities.

Good community practice in the conservation of urban settlements and their surrounding landscapes, like those of Nympheo, can serve as examples for improving governance, economic development and sustainable tourism management. However, good innovative examples are often difficult to uncover and harder to comprehend. Many occur simply by chance, are the work of dedicated individuals, difficult to transfer or regionally specific. Some of the greatest challenges are uncovering the formulas that make these good practice successful and then adapting them for implementation elsewhere in communities facing similar problems. The HISTCAPE project is doing just this. The project is bringing together regions to share successes and failures, discuss problems and barriers. The project partners are collecting good practice examples which will serve as the basis for developing new policies for sustainable management of landscapes and small communities.

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Registered in Scotland as a charity, number SC 036090
IACD has consultative status with the United Nations.

Publication produced
with the kind support of:

The Scottish Government