

Selected References on Comprehensive Community Change

Prepared by Tom David

What is the most strategic way to transform poor communities? That question has stimulated a variety of initiatives from philanthropists since the days of Jane Addams' Hull House and the settlement house movement and the construction of schools for African American students across the segregated South by Julius Rosenwald and the Rockefeller Foundation's General Education Board. Is the best approach to build key institutions, to promote model programs, to create jobs by revitalizing the physical infrastructure, or to invest in the potential of individuals? In the 1990's a number of large foundations rejected categorical, program-focused approaches in favor of a more ambitious strategy that has come to be known as Comprehensive Community Initiatives or CCI's.

While they may differ from each other in some respects, CCI's tend to share a number of characteristics, including a focus on neighborhoods over an extended period of time. They also typically employ a multi-component, cross-disciplinary approach that might simultaneously include direct services, advocacy and public policy, leadership development, strategic communications, research and evaluation. At their heart, CCI's have sought to enhance individual and community capacity through a variety of efforts to promote civic engagement and build social capital. Their goal has been an audacious one: to "move the needle" on key community-wide indicators of well-being.

After 20 plus years of experimentation and the investment of hundreds of millions of philanthropic dollars in CCI's, there are many lessons we have learned and can continue to reflect upon. In the past, reports on foundation-funded programs such as these would have received limited public circulation at best. But there is now a growing body of knowledge about this challenging work. What follows is a list of selected resources on comprehensive community change efforts, all available for download free of charge.

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1. Annie E. Casey Foundation. **Community Change: Lessons from Making Connections**. 2013.

Available for download from: <http://www.aecf.org/resources/community-change-lessons-from-making-connections/>

Making Connections began in 22 places, focusing eventually on first 10, then seven sites. AECF invested in the initiative for more than 10 years and spent more than \$500 million. Strategies included strengthening 1) family connections to economic opportunity, 2) positive social networks and 3) trustable services and supports in local neighborhoods

and communities. For access to a series of detailed case studies and reflections on *Making Connections*, see: <http://www.diaristproject.org>

2. K. Beasley and K. Hebbeler, **A 10-year investment in Community Building to Improve Children's Health: Evaluation of the Community Partnerships for Healthy Children Initiative**. Sierra Health Foundation, 2004.

Available for download from: www.sierrahealth.org/publications

A capacity building initiative that engaged 31 primarily small rural communities to focus on the health of children from birth-8 and their families. It employed the Asset Based Community Development framework developed by Jody Kretzmann and John McKnight to mobilize residents to use community assets for the common good.

3. T. Behrens (ed.) **Comprehensive Community Initiatives**. Inaugural issue of **The Foundation Review**, 2009.

Articles can be viewed at: <http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/tfr/vol1/iss1/>

A valuable collection of descriptions and analyses of a number of foundation-sponsored place-based initiatives from across the country.

4. V. Borgonovi, et al. **Gaining Perspective: Lessons Learned from One Foundation's Exploratory Decade**. FSG, 2011.

Available for download from: www.nwaf.org/about/resources

A candid retrospective analysis of a ten-year place-based initiative by the Northwest Area Foundation to engage in innovative partnerships with entire communities to help reduce poverty. The report focuses on the Foundation's own ideas, processes, and practices in order to lift up lessons learned for peer funders and others.

5. P. Brophy and T. Waldron **The East Baltimore Revitalization Initiative: Innovative Philanthropic Financing for Community Change**. Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2014.

Available for download from: <http://www.aecf.org/resources/innovative-philanthropic-financing-for-community-change/>

An effort to transform an 88-acre area near the Johns Hopkins medical campus that has been hard hit by disinvestment and social problems. The report details transactions that helped finance the initiative and highlights the critical role innovative financing can play in complex redevelopment efforts. The report also offers lessons from these transactions

for the philanthropic community, local officials, developers and lenders involved in community development.

6. P. Brown and L. Fiester **Hard Lessons about Philanthropy and Community Change from the Neighborhood Improvement Initiative.** William & Flora Hewlett Foundation, 2007.

Available for download from: <http://www.hewlett.org/library/grantee-publication/hard-lessons-about-philanthropy-and-community-change-NII>

Retrospective analysis of a ten-year, multi-funder partnership led by the Hewlett Foundation to help three neighborhoods in the SF Bay Area develop new leaders, better services, more capable organizations and stronger connections to resources.

7. L. Fiester. **Good Neighborhoods, Good Schools and Skillman's Strategy for Place-Based Change.** Skillman Foundation, 2011.

Available for download from: <http://www.skillman.org/How-We-Work/Results-Evaluation/Evaluation-Reports>

A progress report on the early stages of the Skillman Foundation's place-based work to change the conditions for children and youth in six Detroit neighborhoods so that they are more likely to be safe, healthy, educated and prepared for adulthood.

8. D. Greenberg, et al. **The Promise of Comprehensive Community Development: Ten Years of Chicago's New Communities Program.** MDRC, 2014

Available for download from: <http://www.mdrc.org/publication/promise-comprehensive-community-development>

In partnership with the Local Support Initiatives Corporation/Chicago, the MacArthur Foundation's New Communities Program mobilized diverse stakeholders and assets in 14 Chicago neighborhoods to improve quality of life by addressing a comprehensive range of issues that included employment, health, housing and violence reduction.

9. S. Hebert. **Local Voices: On-the-ground Perspectives on Driving Community Change in the Making Connections Sites.** Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2014.

Available for download from: <http://www.aecf.org/resources/local-voices/>

Captures reflections of a diverse set of site leaders on how Making Connections made a difference in their communities.

10. B. Hecht. **Reflections on Living Cities' Integration Initiative.** Living Cities, 2014.

Available for download from: <http://www.livingcities.org/knowledge/>

Report on a major partnership among 22 foundations and financial institutions underwriting a cross-sector, multi-city effort to learn how to achieve "needle moving outcomes" for low-income people.

11. A.Kubisch, et al. **Resident-Centered Community Building: What Makes It Different?** The Aspen Institute and Jacobs Center for Neighborhood Innovation, 2012. Available for download from: <http://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/resident-centered-community-building-what-makes-it-different>

A report from the Connecting Communities Learning Exchange distills lessons and recommendations from resident activists and locally embedded change agents on how to engage communities in activism and change.

12. A.Kubisch et al. **Voices from the Field III: Lessons and Challenges from Two Decades of Community Change Efforts,** The Aspen Institute, 2010.

Available for download from: <http://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/voices-field-iii-lessons-challenges-two-decades-community-change-efforts>

The most recent of a series of three reports on the evolution of comprehensive community initiatives. The single most comprehensive and useful analysis of what has been learned from this work. The Appendix provides a chronological description of major place-based initiatives since the 1980's

13. M. McGrath (ed.) **Special Issue: Twenty Five Years of Healthy Communities (Parts I and II),** National Civic Review, 2013-2014.

Available for download from:
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ncr.v102.4/issuetoc>

These two special issues of the National Civic Review mark the 25-year-anniversary of the Healthy Communities movement in the U.S. The Healthy Communities movement has had a lasting impact on the way people in this country think and act when it comes to issues such as food, fitness, obesity, urban design, social equity and civic engagement. It features a noteworthy collection of articles by some of the pioneers and most influential leaders and voices in the field.

14. M. Macias. **Community Building to Drive Change: Strategies for the Atlanta Civic Site.** Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2014.

Available for download from: <http://www.aecf.org/resources/community-building-to-drive-change/>

For over 10 years, AECF has invested in a group of Atlanta neighborhoods rife with poverty. The paper shares key principles, strategies and tactics that the Foundation's Atlanta Civic Site team used for its community-building framework.

15. P. Pennekamp & A. Focke. **Philanthropy and the Regeneration of Community Democracy.** Kettering Foundation, 2013.

Available for download from: <http://kettering.org/publications/philanthropy-and-the-regeneration/>

An insightful and illuminating account of the authors' efforts to focus on community democracy as both a cultural choice and an organizing system for philanthropy, drawing on their experience with multiple funding partnerships in Humboldt and Del Norte counties in California.

16. D. Scheie **Smart Collaboration At The Grassroots Level: Emerging Lessons from Detroit's Community Connections Program.** Touchstone Center for Collaborative Inquiry, 2014.

Available for download from: <http://www.skillman.org/How-We-Work/Results-Evaluation/Evaluation-Reports>

A collaborative inquiry into the topic of smart collaboration among grassroots groups and others working for youth development and community improvement. The inquiry probed the experience and perspectives of 13 of the Skillman Foundation's Community Connections grantee groups known for effective and strategic collaboration.

17. W. Seldon, et al. **Needle-Moving Community Collaboratives: A Promising Approach to Addressing America's Biggest Challenges,** Bridgespan Group, 2012

Available for download from: <http://www.bridgespan.org/Services-and-Expertise/Expertise/Revitalizing-Communities/Section2/Needle-Moving-Community-Collaborative-s-A-Prom.aspx#.U-PbRGPk1R8>

The White House Council for Community Solutions enlisted Bridgespan to help identify effective needle-moving collaboratives (those that have achieved at least 10 percent progress in a community-wide metric), understand the keys to success, and recommend ways to drive more collective impact, particularly to address the challenges of disconnected youth.

18. N. Stone and R. Menezes, **Next Generation Community Revitalization: A Work in Progress**, Bridgespan Group, 2011.

Available for download from: <http://www.bridgespan.org/Publications-and-Tools/Revitalizing-Communities/Section2/Next-Generation-Community-Revitalization-A-Wor.aspx#.U-PZGmPk1R8>

A new wave of efforts designed to break the cycle of poverty have been sponsored by both private funders and by the federal government, based on some of the lessons learned from comprehensive change efforts around the country. This report highlights six emerging national networks, explores what makes them work, and warns of the risks that could make these efforts fail.

19. M. Turner, et al. **Tackling Persistent Poverty in Distressed Urban Neighborhoods**. The Urban Institute, 2014.

Available for download from: <http://www.urban.org/publications/413179.html>

An excellent summary of lessons learned and evolving practice in place-based interventions, and it offers a set of guiding principles for child-focused, place-conscious initiatives focused on persistent, intergenerational poverty. The most up-to-date and comprehensive resource on this topic at this writing.

20. B.C. Weitzman, et al. **Urban Health Initiative: Working to Ensure the Health and Safety of Children**. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation National Program Report, 2013

Available for download from: <http://www.rwjf.org/en/research-publications/find-rwjf-research/2013/06/urban-health-initiative--working-to-ensure-the-health-and-safety.html>

Analysis of a 10 year, \$63 million place-based initiative of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to improve community-wide health outcomes for children in 5 cities (Baltimore, Detroit, Oakland, Philadelphia and Richmond, VA).