

Building Community to Make Change

David Chavis

A_S_D_C_

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Ever wonder?

- Why you don't ever see the headline:
"Psychic Wins Lottery"?
- Why Doctors call what they do "a practice"?
- Why lemon juice is made with artificial flavor, while dishwashing liquid is made with real lemons?

Ever wonder?

- Why there isn't mouse flavored cat food?
- Who tastes dog food when it has a "new & improved" flavor?
- Why they don't make the whole plane out of the material used for the indestructible black box?

Ever Wonder?

- What if you could do something even greater to promote healthier and safe communities?
- How you can connect to your community?
- How your community can connect with other cultures?
- How much risk are you willing to take to do this?

Four factors that most effect psychological, social, and physical well being

- Community;
- Connections to other networks for resources and exchange;
- Individual and collective control; and
- Adequate economic and other resources.

Since we knew that already, why aren't we spending most of our time doing these things?

- Because it means change
- There is a lot to learn
- It can be very risky

Community Development Strategy

- *Community,*
- *Connections,*
- *Control,*
- *Cash.;* and
- Collective action

Community

- Meeting needs;
- Sharing values;
- Membership;
- Influence; and
- A shared emotional connection.

Types of Communities

- Family
- Nation
- Faith
- Neighborhood
- Immigrant
- Youth
- Profession or vocation
- Economic

Connections

- Bonding (within community such as neighboring);
- Bridging (across communities); and
- Linking (with larger systems).

Control

- Ability and belief that individual can manage and control changes;
- Individual as participant in collective action;
- More control you feel, the more you are controlled by community norms;
- Results from increased capacity (knowledge, skills, resources, relations,)

Cash (Money)

- access to education and training for meaningful employment,
- access to employment opportunities that have growth potential,
- access to capital for investments in business homeownership, and
- financial literacy or management skills.

Collective Action

- Leads to collective power, resources, and hope.
- Through organized citizen lead efforts.
- Community leaders are people who represent their constituency and are accountable to their constituency.
- Influence larger systems.

Other Essential Factors to consider

- Capacity
- Culture
- Change Systems!

An Example

- BC Initiative
- City of 63,000
- Goals to increase economic self sufficiency and educational achievement
- Areas of concentrated poverty

Initial Program Components

- Mini-grants
- Neighborhood Connectors or Organizer
- Outreach and relationship building
- Access to community resources

Strategies for Getting Ready

- Build upon past work
- Develop capacity for collective action
- Develop resident-institutional partnerships
- Foster independence and sustainability
- Create a sense of possibility and efficacy

Community Connections Office Activities

- Educational Events and Materials
- Neighborhood Communication and Information
- Resident and Organizational/Institutional Relationship Building and Facilitation
- Block, Tenant, and Neighborhood Organizing Assistance

Results

- Institutions and organized citizens ready to work together
- Increased sense of community, efficacy, and safety in areas of greatest activity
- Incubated model economic development and educational efforts
- Changed policies, and increased participation in schools and civic affairs

Questions to use in evaluating and reflecting on our work

1. How is the work that I'm doing promoting community?
2. How am I developing connections with other communities and larger institutions that have resources and information that could benefit this community?
3. How much greater control do members of this community have over their environment and for holding their institutions accountable because of the work I am doing?
4. How does this work increase the cash and other resources available to communities as well as building up their ability to manage and sustain their economic growth?
5. How is what I am doing promoting working together to taking collective action to improve the community over responding to community conditions individually or relying on larger institutions to take care of community problems and needs?

Other Challenges

- Scope
- Scale
- Sustainability

Taking Risks

- Overcoming our own fears of power and conflict
- Becoming powerful
- Accepting that change cannot happen without conflict
- Deciding if it's worth it

Places to Start

- ***Get Together!*** Sector clusters or collaborations that look at what more they can do to promote workforce development, family economic support, and community investment for low income families
- ***Build Relations!*** In order to increase access and appropriateness of services, businesses, financial institutions, economic development and housing agencies, non-profits and other agencies can develop better relations with institutions and organizations that already have strong relations with low income families

Places to Start

- Work top-down and bottom-up

Places to Start

- Change policies that promote inequalities
- Develop policies that promote proper workforce development, family economic support, and community investment
- Encourage small neighborhood based strategies (e.g. childcare and food coops)

Ever wonder

Can we do this?

Yes we can!