



Creating caring and inclusive communities and a just society



Growing Communities Together

Exploring the role of social capital in improving outcomes for disadvantaged communities

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Background to the research



- The Benevolent Society's Growing Communities Together project
- Role of social capital in achieving positive outcomes for communities and tackling locational disadvantage
- The PLACE principals (Prevention, Long-term, Approach, Community owned, Evaluation)

“I guess it’s their background. Like if their parents are rough and they weren’t raised [well]”

“They just learn from the things that their parents have done...Because it’s the only role model they would have I suppose”

“I guess not everyone starts off like a dero or whatever, like you get caught up in the wrong crowd because of friends who change or whatever”

“They’re surrounded by it and they don’t have any other option”

Social Capital

- **Bonding** social capital refers to the social ties and networks within homogenous groups in a community
- **Bridging** social capital refers to connections and ties across diverse, heterogeneous groups
- **Linking** social capital occurs across power hierarchies
- **Trust and reciprocity**

Putnam (2000), Woolcock (1999), Woolcock and Narayan (2000)

Aims of the research

- Develop and pilot psychometrically sound tool to measure social capital and socio-economic outcomes
- Explore community members' perceptions of social capital and of their communities
- Conduct preliminary analyses to explore the relationships between levels of social capital and social and economic outcomes

Methodology

- School based survey of around 2000 primary and secondary school aged children and young people in two disadvantaged communities
- Qualitative research with teachers, children and young people
- Factor analysis and correlational analyses



Measuring social capital



Family

I always trust my family

Friends

I support my friends whenever they need it

Neighbours

I can ask my neighbours for a favour

Community/Institution

I trust my school to do what is best for me

Measuring outcomes

- Academic self concept
- Sense of belonging
- Perceived discrimination
- Perceptions of safety
- Mental health (secondary) and overall health
- Health behaviours
- Drug and alcohol use (secondary)

Headline findings



- Levels of social capital were higher with family and friends compared to neighbours and community
- Positive correlation between social capital and academic self-concept, school and community sense of belonging
- Negative correlation between social capital and mental health problems and perceived discrimination
- Strongest correlations between social capital (particularly friends) and belongingness
- Factor analysis demonstrated tool as psychometrically sound measure of social capital



ARC linkage



- 3 year project – TBS and UWS
- Research to explore impact of a range of interventions aiming to increase social capital of young people and their communities
- Longitudinal intervention study in six secondary schools
- Experimental design
- Link to Growing Communities Together

Contact



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