

Enhancing Community Development In Neighbourhood Centres

2021 FULL REPORT



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2021 Report

Abstract

This report documents 10 Conversations between Neighbourhood and Community Centres about community development. The initiative came from questions raised by Centres at the 2019 State CD Qld Community Development Conference.

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Acknowledgement

In the spirit of connection to place, connection to people and shared wisdom, we would like to respectfully acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Queensland communities. We acknowledge elders past, present and future. We acknowledge First Nations' unbroken custodianship of these lands and waters and value their wisdom and expertise of community and group processes.

Foreword

Our current state sometimes makes it hard to see the world around us in a positive light. The challenges of climate change, the health impacts of the pandemic and confronting stories of gender inequality seem insurmountable and beyond the control and influence of everyday people across our communities. But I am an optimist that we can tackle these big issues, let me explain why. Across this vast and diverse State are hundreds of community organisations, big and small, local, and state-wide.

They harness the commitment and energy of thousands of people who come to work every day to provide services and supports for vulnerable and marginalised people who seek direct supports and inclusion in community life. Over the last year, because of the impacts of the pandemic on our community, we have come to appreciate the foundational nature of these services to the wellbeing of our community and ultimately our economy. Although the service delivery efforts of community organisations should be seen as a source of optimism there is something askew in this picture and it is time to pay attention to it.

We know by our own experience services are not the only thing contributing to building health, wellbeing and thriving communities. Alongside services we know that relationships, place, citizen action, local problem solving, and local assets play a critical part in helping us to live meaningful lives. Indeed, for most of us, most of the time, our needs are met by the extent of our inclusion in these aspects of community life. I believe that it is time to pay more attention to the central importance of this in the lives of people and the organisations in our community who are well placed to do this.

This includes the organisations that are the central focus of this report, Neighbourhood Centres. Sure, Neighbourhood Centres deliver services, but they also work hard to include people in the fabric of community life, in local activity and action, in the spirit of inclusion. How they go about achieving these outcomes is both well-articulated in the methods of community development practice and still the subject of much discussion and exploration. This report contributes to this ongoing conversation, and I encourage you to read and reflect on what it might take to pay attention to a balance between helping people and helping them to help themselves.

Belinda Drew

CEO, Community Services Industry Alliance

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Key Highlights

Queensland's Neighbourhood Centres have incorporated unique Community Development Traditions throughout their history.

Growing across the state from the 1970's, Queensland's Neighbourhood Centres have a long association with Queensland's Community Development movement. This close relationship continues today through the Queensland Community Development Conference and the close relationship between QFCA, neighbourhood and community centres and Community Development Queensland.

Community Development in Neighbourhood Centres has been impacted by political forces, changing funding environments, and increasing demand for individual crisis work.

Policy and funding changes have significantly impacted Queensland's Neighbourhood Centres. The increased focus on service delivery to individuals experiencing crisis is another factor contributing to a decreased focus on Community Development work.

Neighbourhood Centre staff and volunteers need further Community Development education, training, mentoring and peer support.

Neighbourhood Centre staff from across the state have noted that a constraining factor for re-invigorating Community Development in the sector is the availability of education, training, supervision and peer mentoring in Community Development. Limited options exist in the state for Community Development qualifications.

The Neighbourhood Centre Sector workforce has identified ways to enhance and further Community Development alongside Service Delivery approaches.

Community Development can be enhanced in Queensland's Neighbourhood Centres by using participatory development methods within the sector, with the support of QFCA and the NCC member network. Three focus areas have been identified. These are; (1) Embedding Community Development in organisational structures; (2) increased opportunities for CD education, training and mentoring; and (3) Community Development in crisis interventions. First Nations also play an important role in the state's Community Development and Neighbourhood Centre Movement. Enhancing Community Development practice in NCCs is a core component of supporting effective place-based work in Queensland.

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Executive Summary

Background

What is Community Development (CD)? Are Queensland Neighbourhood Centres really doing it? Has it been lost? Is it still relevant today? If we wanted to strengthen this practice what kinds of support are available?

These are the questions that a gathering of 40 Neighbourhood and Community Centres (NCCs) raised at the Queensland Community Development Conference in 2019. Neighbourhood Centres do so much community-oriented work – yet this was a heartfelt question, so what did they mean?



Image: Queensland Community Development Conference 2019, Toowoomba

The NCCs requested Queensland Families and Communities Association (QFCA) to assist a sector wide conversation through which they could examine these questions. This flowed on from QFCA's 2019-22 strategic plan. Two relevant pillars of this plan include (1) highlighting the citizen-led, place based community development work of Neighbourhood and Community Centres, and (2) encouraging active leadership across Queensland NCCs, through creating opportunities for forums and training. One outcome of this strategy was that QFCA obtained funding from the Queensland Government to subsidise the attendance of NCCs at the Queensland Community Development conference.

In response to the subsequent gathering and request of NCCs at the conference, QFCA established a Community Development Sub-Committee which provided NCCs with authority to act in QFCA's name with accountability to QFCA Board. That Sub-Committee endorsed a pro bono offer from a group of senior community development practitioners, referred to as the CD Task Group, to engage interested NCC practitioners in conversation. Griffith University offered to document the conversations and provide feedback as a form of participatory research. The CD and Research task groups agreed to provide feedback to the CD Sub-Committee on:

- the conversations, including current practices in CD, those interested in enhancing CD practice, constraints and opportunities (from those who participate in the webinars) and what is required to move forward;
- the benefits, limitations and costs in using technology in participatory engagement processes;
- data to engage with government, other organisations, structures and the wider Neighbourhood Centre sector; and
- the sources drawn on in terms of understandings of community development.

The CD Sub-Committee authorised five webinars as a means of progressing the conversations between Centres. However, it soon became apparent that the conversation could be further elaborated by some additional processes. These included:

- a focus group with some of those NCCs who initially raised the issues;
- a mapping project to begin assessing the environment and other stakeholders; and
- a high level series of conversations with a small group of NCC managers about their organisational support for CD.

All of these smaller conversations relate to the same project, and they support the investigation into the Centres' initial set of questions, and so are reported in this document.

Conversations as Research

The research component of this project had ethics clearance from Griffith University, Ethics Reference Number 2020/533. Invitation went to all Queensland NCCs, emphasising that participation was entirely voluntary. All participants were informed that the conversations were being recorded and agreed to keep this in mind when speaking. Breakout groups within the sessions were not electronically recorded.

The research method draws on a tradition which sees conversation as a form of inquiry. It is particularly relevant where the question has come from research participants, and the conversation is a collaborative attempt to draw on their knowledge and experience in a meaning making process (Quinn Patton, 2009, Feldman, 1999¹). Community development,

¹ Patton, M. Q. (2009). Developmental evaluation compared with r&d. [Web Video]. Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=M81Xp9eRhv0

Feldman, A. (1999) The Role of Conversation in Collaborative Action Research, *Education Action Research* 7:1 125-147 publ online 2006 <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/09650799900200076>

like action research is a democratic activity that locates agency with the people who experience the issue or are asking the question.

The combination of conversation and research in this project offered a unique opportunity for participants to bring their everyday practice experience into dialogue with a specific way of understanding community development. It should be noted here that community development is a familiar concept in the world of Neighbourhood Centres, and many would suggest that what they do is community development. Yet, the question raised at the conference suggested that some Centres think they are missing something, and that perhaps there has been some confusion of terms.

Concept Clarification

A number of recent reports² have documented what NCCs do. Because NCCs report many of their activities using the term community development, for example, responding to community needs, community networking, community events, community needs assessment, there has been a tendency for the term Community Development to become the generic label embracing a range of community-oriented activities. These community-oriented activities that NCCs currently do are the hallmark of a strong Neighbourhood Centre. It is due to this community-oriented approach that NCCs are able to deliver \$4.08 of social value into Queensland communities for every \$1.00 of investment³. This is no mean feat, and surely something that should be acknowledged, understood, and shouted from the highest peaks.

To the CD Task Group, however, the term community development refers to a particular method and set of objectives⁴ which are citizen or community member led, which change people's experience of themselves and each other as contributing members of the local community, and importantly, in which the focus of change is some aspect of their community, and by extension, the forces acting upon that community. In this report, the method has been emphasised using the terms *Community Development Method*.

The Task Group understood that a very clear conceptualisation of CD would be required in order that NCCs might consider reclaiming or strengthening this dimension of practice alongside their existing Centre-based activities. This is achieved via a focus on a particular method which strings together a range of familiar practice skills, but in a particular sequence to pursue a strategic outcome. The strategic outcome anticipated within a CD method is the empowerment of community members to affect change locally as engaged citizens in a democracy. Community members are supported and enabled to act with each other on issues they and others experience. They gain skills and knowledge to progress changes which are of benefit to the community or a section of the community and are consistent with a social justice framework. Implicit here is that societies have a built-in tendency to privilege the demands and interests of the most powerful, articulate groups and when the majority of community members are passive in the face of this, the polarity in wealth, power and voice becomes exaggerated.

² ANHCA (2011) *Strengthening Local Communities*; QCOSS & QFCA (2017) *Neighbourhood Centre Consultation for the IMS Strategy*; Policy Innovation Hub (2019) *Neighbourhood and Community Centres: Strengthening Good Practice in Qld: Parts 1 and 2*. Griffith University.

³ QFCA (2020) *Neighbourhood Centre Survey Results 2020*.

⁴ Anthony Kelly & Peter Westoby named their 2018 book *Participatory Development Practice*, instead of community development practice to overcome this same problem.

This is consistent with NCC commitment to social justice and inclusion. However, Centres straddle government and its interests and the interests of community members in their day to day lives. They are both a government funded agency and a people's organisation. Some traditions of community development exploit the conflict inherent here, but the CD method explored in this report construes these different interests as opportunity for dialogue and negotiated change between citizens and between citizens, their government, or other entity impacting on community life. The pertinent point being that it is citizens, not Neighbourhood Centres, which are identifying, forming relationships around, and acting upon, the issues.

If a Centre is not only hearing the issues in community, but responding with a program that addresses the issues, this is locally responsive service delivery. This is a strength of NCCs but typically, it does not meet the requirement that people of the community own and address the issues. If a Centre is hearing the issues from people within and outside the Centre, and supporting people to come together to address the issues that they are most concerned about, then this meets the requirements of (i) people led change, and (ii) on issues of importance to them in their local community, and (iii) given that most issues in community are intricately linked to broader societal issues, it is likely that any change will bring benefit to a wider group of people. A trend across the human service sector has been to recruit community members as volunteers to deliver activities designed by the Centre. This shifts the role from citizens to volunteers, and it is not the same as citizens acting together to address their own concerns. People's agency as citizens and community members is central to this community development method.

The personal empowerment that happens in NCCs is a valuable step that can contribute to future community development action for change. The groups that operate within NCCs provide valuable experience in working as a group. Similarly, building a sense of community within a Neighbourhood Centre, can be a steppingstone towards people engaging beyond the Centre in dialogue and action towards broader community participation. These things, occurring within NCCs provide fertile ground for moving forward the issues that people are raising. It is often the case that in a trusting environment, people raise personal issues that have public implications, but they are not picked up because the practice method of hearing this and moving it forward as a public issue is not understood. In such cases an opportunity for enabling the community is missed, and an opportunity for progressing change on a difficult public issue is missed.

The QFCA Community Development Sub-Committee raised a pertinent question about the sources of Community Development drawn on in the webinars. This question can be approached via reference to traditions. There are several traditions of community development, for example:

- the nonviolent tradition with its roots in Gandhi's teachings,
- the community organising tradition which emerged from the work of Saul Alinsky,
- the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approach introduced in the early 1990s by John McKnight and John Kretzmann,
- the critical community education approach associated with the work of Paulo Freire,
- the Settlement House movement initiated by Jane Addams,
- feminist organising, social action and empowerment of women,
- LGBTQ organising,
- the L'Arche Communities established by Jean Vanier, and
- the approach that informed this project, which is sometimes called the participatory development approach, and known locally as the Queensland tradition.

All these traditions are alive in some form in Australia. All draw on philosophical roots, practice experience and practice-based theorising, so as to pursue effective action for

change. Each one of them requires a rigour of practice and study. There is some cross fertilisation between them in the contemporary environment, however, each retains its logic as a discrete practice. Whilst all are worthy, this short project can only do justice to one. The CD Task Group chose the Queensland Participatory Development approach because it has a clear methodology that can be learned, practised and reflected on. It has a history of success in this State. It has been taught in several Queensland universities, and has existing infrastructure and local trainers. Above all, it is suitable as an NCC method of practice, because it is nonconflictual, relationship based, and builds group strength across a local community overtime, making for strong community ties between groups and a mature capacity for local problem solving and development. It is a method that can become a practice, be shared, be reflected on, and added to as we learn.

Many forces have contributed to the constraints on CD as a professional and citizen practice. Community development method was a natural choice of practice approach when the first NCCs opened in Queensland in the 1970s. Most employed a CD worker who supported and enabled groups of community members to take up issues that they saw needed to be addressed in their communities, and often beyond. They focused especially on issues which were impacting the most disadvantaged members of the community – those most affected by regular flooding; those most affected by housing or job shortages; those most disadvantaged by each change of local planning or social and economic policy. They engaged with low income families wanting to access affordable food and housing and families looking for parenting support and child care. This work sometimes led to new services, and sometimes to local social change, but always the people involved gained new skills and relationships through their collective public efforts. From a social justice perspective, they supported communities to speak up for change at the structural level. NCCs were community managed, the processes were community led, and the outcomes were not only resolutions of some pressing issues, but increasing numbers of community-minded local people with the skills and commitment to work together for the benefit of the wider community.

Overtime as levels of crisis in local communities grew, and as funding became more tightly structured and targeted to specific services, Centres became increasingly involved in delivering services to individuals. Their staffing profile, Board profile and Management structure began to change. Many Centres have worked hard to retain their commitment to creating a sense of belonging for various groups within the Centre itself, devising new programs so the Centre can meet community needs and advocating for individuals experiencing injustice. Yet, increasingly, it is Centres, not communities who set the agendas, run the projects, deliver the services and do the advocacy.

Of particular note when considering constraints in the Queensland context was the period between 2012 and 2013. Queensland's community services sector was impacted by austerity measures implemented by the Newman Government after the Global Financial Crisis. Neighbourhood Centres were immediately impacted by having funding reduced by 10% and actively encouraged to pursue corporatised service delivery approaches to ensure financial sustainability. Reporting to funding bodies began to heavily emphasise "counting heads" with a focus on obtaining clear economic outcomes for individuals. The Carmody Report also recommended diverting a large amount of Child Safety and Family Support activity away from Government to the community sector. As these events occurred, on a national level the human services sector faced industrial turmoil as the result of the Equal Remuneration Order handed down by the Fair Work Commission.

Non-constitutional corporations (a term used in relation to the Federal Government's *Workplace Relations Act*) in Queensland were especially impacted by extra remuneration for employees due to other pay equity regulations in March and December 2012. This 'perfect

storm' of events throughout 2012 and 2013 changed the fundamental nature of many Neighbourhood Centres across Queensland. It led to staff losses and a search for funding opportunities to maintain viability. Centres began delivering services of all kinds, more corporatised approaches were adopted and some Centres amalgamated into larger non-profit companies limited by guarantee. The architecture of the Neighbourhood Centre sector across Queensland was changing in response to policy impacts. It is observed that services such as counselling and family support, now prominent in many of Queensland's Neighbourhood Centres, are a unique feature in Queensland, in comparison to Neighbourhood Houses in other states, which rarely offer case management style service delivery.

Facing the constraints and turning the situation around requires a concerted effort, best approached as a sector. The Neighbourhood Centre voice now has new opportunities to be heard, and NCCs are seeking information to inform their collective future. Throughout the webinar conversations it was important to provide insight into one CD methodology so that any decision to act has a base of understanding.

The Motivating Force

Why pay attention to community development and why now? For many Centres, the answer is a nagging feeling that something has been lost. At the Queensland Community Development Conference, NCC delegates caught a glimpse of what that something might be. Fortunately, NCCs have the support of QFCA and were able to use that moment as a doorway to further exploration.

Neighbourhood Centres are very connected within their communities; they respond to a huge diversity of needs, they offer a sense of belonging to people who are feeling alone and disempowered, but they see a growing world of pain and need beyond the Centre. Individual need has reached crisis proportions and servicing this need individual by individual is overwhelming the staffing and resources of Centres.

It is not just that the mode of, or funding for, service delivery is inadequate to the need, although most would say that it is, but also a range of policies, laws, institutions and attitudes in the broader society are exacerbating inequality, making it hard for communities to find common ground and posing a serious threat to the common good at local, state and national levels. Centres make a significant contribution to social cohesion, yet new generations are falling into poverty. The social justice commitment of Centres puts them into agreement with other authorities, for example, UNDP (2019), which says "Rising inequality is not a natural or inevitable condition. This means we can do something to change it!" (UNDP 2019)⁵. Working with their communities to go beyond alleviating immediate issues, so as to address broader structural issues, is something which resonates strongly with the social justice mission of Neighbourhood Centres, but which has fallen from common practice.

The Conversations

Between April and November 2020 ten conversations were hosted which brought together NCC personnel in a variety of ways. These included:

- Five webinar sessions for NCC personnel
- Three experimental learning sessions for Managers
- One Mapping session to examine who else might be experiencing or addressing similar issues, and
- One Focus Group, which reported to the group which originally raised the issue.

⁵ UNDP (2019). Addressing the Root Causes of Inequality.

<https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/blog/2019/addressing-the-root-causes-of-inequality.html>

THE WEBINARS

Five webinars⁶ were conducted by zoom with participants from across Queensland. Seventy participants from Neighbourhood Centres registered for the series and received the links to recordings. With more than one participant from some Centres, this represented 60% of all Queensland NCCs. Between 14 and 46 attended each session, and an unknown number watched the series of webinars online. Reasons for signing up for this project varied according to participants' experience of community development. Some wanted to understand what this practice is about, and consider its relevance, some thought they knew what it is about and thought maybe they are doing it, some wanted to know what each other is doing, and for some, who have studied and practiced over time, it is an important practice approach for NCCs and they want to encourage and support it as such. See Report Appendix 1 for further webinar content as recordings and resources.



Image: Webinar 1

Webinar 1 introduced a clear description of community development, and a story to illustrate it. This story, of community members successfully addressing an issue that they themselves articulated, can be viewed in the webinar video. The conversations following this input strongly affirmed the importance of this practice to the mission of NCCs. Most people identified that to their knowledge few NCCs are doing it – so, yes it is lost. From this very first conversation, participants began articulating the barriers in the present context which inhibit this practice:

Constraining Forces

- The funding regime does not support it;
- Managers and Boards do not understand it;
- We do not have the skills, knowledge or experience;
- There is limited education, training, mentoring, supervision available for this practice;
- The expectations around service delivery are very strong, both internally and externally;

⁶ The webinars can be viewed at <https://www.qfca.org.au/community-development-subcommittee>

- An established way of doing things operates within busy Centres, and people are reluctant to change;
- We are overwhelmed with the level of crisis, and vulnerable people need quick responses.

A poll following discussion in Webinar 1 asked: *Are NCCs an important part of local infrastructure which provides support for local people to gather and address issues of importance to them?*

Yes	They should be but often are not	No, this is not their role	Don't know
26	21	0	2
63%	51%	0	5%

Table 1: NCCs and CD

In **Webinar 2**, NCC practitioners provided an account of their recent efforts to turn around a project which had been a NCC initiative, led by NCC workers, to a community member owned project. Their account confirmed that there are barriers and they and participants discussed their processes of working around those barriers. NCC participants recognised that a CD approach is possible, and they teased out the elements of this story that made a difference:

Supportive Forces

- The manager supported it;
- The organisation encouraged creativity and cooperation;
- Two workers as a team supported each other to work rigorously with a method of CD practice;
- A mentor supported the work, assisting to pull out reflections on method, theory and practice implications;
- The community group were keen to tell their story and act on it, they were ready for the turnaround;
- Once a decision had been taken to change the practice, support and amplification came from unexpected places.

This celebratory story encouraged conversation and inspired hope.

Webinar 3 provided further resources in enabling community members to “own and progress” action on issues of importance to them. In this webinar a video by an external trainer, leading a workshop with NCCs in Tasmania, enabled Queensland NCCs to see that NCCs elsewhere are encountering and unpacking the relevance of similar CD material. This workshop video confirmed that CD is best thought of as a citizen practice, supported as required by professional staff. A second part of Webinar 3 included a story of a beginning practitioner who was coached to shift from a helper into a mode of deep, alongside listening. In this webinar, participants spoke enthusiastically about the importance of CD to NCCs. They identified with the issues discussed and were reminded of the value of sharing about practice, as a means of continuous practice development.

Webinar 4 moved the focus to the importance of structures in holding and maintaining a CD focus. It invited participants to think about the barriers they have raised and how they are discussed in their Neighbourhood Centres. This is a first step to moving the issues forward, both horizontally between Centres and vertically into QFCA and beyond.

In **Webinar 5**, the discussions of the previous webinars blossomed into a fully articulated desire to take action together to enable those Neighbourhood Centres and staff that wanted to more fully action a CD approach. Four participants volunteered to each carry forward one of the challenges and invite other NCCs into discussion and action. The four issues to be carried forward are: CD and individual crisis; CD training; a whole of organisation framework to support CD; peer support and mentoring of CD across NCCs. These groups will meet in 2021 and will consider how to use a CD approach in addressing such issues together. QFCA offered to promote and support this work.

The journey from Webinar 1 to Webinar 5 was certainly, for some people, a journey from fuzzy understanding to clarity of what a CD Method entails. They gained a shared recognition of its value to local communities, and expressed regret that the skill base is largely, but not completely, lost from the sector. Participants confirmed that this is a relevant practice for NCCs and for today's context. Participants could see that there is a detailed framework for practice, that has emerged from trial and error over many years, which needs to be learned and practiced with supportive oversight. As one practitioner said, "what if my community group wants to take action on something which upsets our funding body?" The method presented through the webinars is democratic, dialogical and powerful yet gentle enough to hold relationships through difference. Affected stakeholders are brought into the dialogue, issues are discussed and solutions negotiated, relationships are valued and maintained into the future. The method facilitates a shift in power dynamics, so that communities themselves can have access to the information, resources, decisions, and relationships that they need if they are to become active in the public domain. This cannot be achieved without organisational support each step of the way, even though the actual project, is and remains, a project of the community group, not a corporate project. There are many nuances in the method, which are critical to steering a path forward, and maintaining the relationships even where disagreement exists, participants recognised that both their NCC, themselves as staff, and their local community members have much to learn about the approach.

When teaching or learning the method, it can be helpful to see that there are two distinct movements: Ordering and Structuring. Ordering focuses on the building of relationships at the local level, the sharing of stories around issues of concern, the building of a sense of ownership as the action is carried into the public world. Structuring acknowledges that the public world is made up of organisations, governments and commercial structures. Working out which structures to engage with and how, in seeking and securing change requires a set of skills and knowledge which rarely come naturally to citizens, yet can be learned and harnessed for local purposes.

Disclaimer: Throughout the webinar conversations, participants appeared to accept this understanding of community development. It may be that some participants dropped out rather than propose alternative understandings or argue about the definition. A survey was sent to all who registered for the webinars to seek feedback on the form of community development that was proposed and the processes of unpacking it. Only two people responded who affirmed both the CD approach and the process.

LINKING UP THE CONVERSATIONS

As early as Webinar 1, participants were saying that in order to practice CD method, they needed more support from their manager. Managers who were part of the webinars, agreed that, although they supported community development in theory, they were unsure how better to support it in practice. Another constraint identified by participants was the difficulty of accessing community development training, supervision and mentoring. The CD Sub-Committee decided that a few additional conversations, that respond to the issues arising, could parallel the webinars, rather than wait until the webinars finished. They hosted a "Mapping Session" with a view to identifying other stakeholders who have an interest in

progressing CD method, particularly in the CD and CD training systems. This section reports on those additional conversations, as well as a conversation in which the Sub-Committee reported back to a focus group of those who had raised the initial issues at the conference. These additional conversations provided further stepping stones towards enabling NCCs to strengthen their CD focus, and each needs to be built on with further activity beyond the 2020 webinar project.

In summary there were:

- Five webinar discussions;
- Three experimental education sessions with managers delivered by Anthony Kelly;
- One mapping session to identify other stakeholders with an interest in CD and CD training;
- One focus group to provide feedback on the project from those who raised the issues at the CD Conference.

In reality, there were multiple other conversations happening within and between Neighbourhood Centres, Neighbourhood Centre staff, managers, QFCA and its CD Sub-Committee, and beyond, which were not available to the research, but which were creating interest and momentum.

Managers in Conversation

At the request of NCCs, and with a mandate from QFCA, endorsed by the Director General of Communities, Anthony Kelly⁷ facilitated an experimental educational conversation for a group of 6 managers of NCCs who have a commitment to enhancing the capacity of their organisation to carry a participatory development program and create an environment for both services and community development work to flourish.

The project was delivered over 3 Zoom sessions, approximately 2 hours in length held at the times appropriate for the participants. Some pre-reading was required. Managers have a key role in supporting the Board and funding bodies to understand what the organisation is doing and supporting staff in their developmental work with communities. Anthony Kelly invited the managers to consider the steps and stages of these roles, and their purpose at each point along the way.

From a manager's perspective, this is a vital part of any organisation taking on a CD approach, and managers reported that they found it stimulating and saw it as an important part of organisational as well as manager development. The content introduced through these discussions invited managers to think in new ways and consider new possibilities.

In feedback, they said: *"This was excellent"* and *"This was like a masterclass for managers!"*

"I appreciated the practical training approach that Tony took, which is so much more effective than just providing traditional educational content."

Also a very powerful quote by the Manager from a rural NCC:

"to have my knowledge and skill advancement to where I can articulate my own beliefs and goals better, has opened doors for me and boosts my confidence that i am on a path that is enabling empowerment for others"

⁷ Anthony Kelly was senior lecturer in community development at University of Queensland for many years. He has been instrumental in articulating the practice approach in a detailed, scholarly and accessible way, and has authored many works on the topic, including co-authoring the recent publication *Participatory Development Practice*, with Dr Peter Westoby.

Some managers reported that as a result of these sessions, they were very successful in engaging their staff and beginning to embed the CD learning in their organisation, whereas others found this difficult. Managers wanted more opportunities to share stories of participatory development in action. Many would like to see an induction and mentoring program for managers.

Mapping the Environment

The QFCA CD Sub-Committee hosted this conversation, which was central to the new Sub-Committee's role as well as linked to the webinar discussions. The stated and affirmed purpose was: *"How can we work together with people, organisations and other structures to strengthen CD practice in Neighbourhood Centres?"*

This first gathering aimed to identify key individuals and structures which share or intersect with this agenda:

- Shared interest in identifying key players (structures and individuals) who are connected to our agenda in Neighbourhood Centres (and beyond)
- Mapped current activity emerging from QFCA CD sub-committee (and task groups) and potential links with others;
- Started to identify key players (structures and individuals) who are connected to this agenda;
- Started a conversation about parallel processes under QFCA banner (diagram mapped these)
- Identified some potential collaborations:
 - i. O13 collaboration –organisations with whom we may share common interest/agendas/objectives;
 - ii. Establish who is working with the First Nation (FN) people in NCC's
 - iii. Training – identify who is offering what and where, and map this to need;
 - iv. Initial exploration of how a mapping software tool could assist in linking people who want to engage in peer support;

The group that met for this preliminary mapping session understood that this is just a beginning and further work will be required, including digital tools to support state-wide connection and peer support. They recommended that the QFCA CD Sub-Committee ensure this work is carried forward.

The CD Focus Group

This group met to discuss progress on the issue that they had raised at the CD Conference in 2019. Some of the focus group were not able to attend the webinars because of heavy work commitments but were following progress and keen to see ongoing action. The conversation within this group was both about the need for NCCs to adopt a CD approach and also about barriers. Training was a key issue for these participants. Common issues clearly exist across Neighbourhood Centres, which require further ongoing collective consideration if any change is to become possible.

DISCUSSION

In all there have been 10 opportunities for focussed conversation about the questions raised at the CD conference. There were also many informal conversations at every level and every point of the process. Within CD method, it is the conversations that lead to momentum and the relationships that can hold the change process.

CD Method as Relevant to NCCs: In all of these discussions, participants have agreed to a way of understanding community development as the work that Neighbourhood Centres do, or could do, to enable and support members of the local community to come together around issues of mutual importance, and to act on them together. All have agreed that this is relevant NCC work, that it matters greatly in the present context of growing inequality and community crises, that it is different from the work done with individuals experiencing crisis and is indeed different from the range of community-oriented work NCCs commonly do. NCCs identify that Community Development could however provide the context in which much of that other work gained added meaning, direction and impact. NCCs identified that the skills base for this particular work has largely been lost. A small number of NCCs have maintained a strong CD tradition but most have not.

What has been lost? When struggling to understand what has been lost in the absence of a local focus on community development method, NCCs fully appreciated that community members do feel a sense of agency and belonging within the Centre, but when community participants in NCCs raise wider issues that impact their personal lives, there may be an individual advocacy response, but rarely a community development response. The latter would indeed be appropriate where a number of people are struggling with the same issue. Similarly, when looking to place based or collective impact projects within local communities, the role for residents is rarely as strong as it could be, because residents do not feel they have the skills and experience to be serious participants. Centres recognise the value of skilled residents, yet many Centres do not themselves feel skilled or adequately resourced to take an ongoing CD approach.

NCCs identified a number of barriers to taking up the CD method, as described above, and four small groups have formed to discuss the barriers further and find ways beyond them. These groups are led by NCC practitioners who have prior experience with the CD method. The groups will follow the CD method in addressing the barriers. The conversations will start small, and then be expanded to include any interested NCCs. The task groups are not looking for a consultant to prepare a report on the issues or the way forward. That would be a quite different methodology. Rather, they will share with each other how the issues impact, they will explore the forcefields giving rise to the issues, they will look for points of possibility, opportunity, alliance and support and will act together for change. They will invite NCCs who want to participate in new opportunities and share their experience and support. It is a value of the ten discussions, that NCCs are not looking to QFCA to fix their issues for them, but are stepping up to host a change-oriented process with QFCA support.

CONCLUSION

The Conference Questions

This project has enabled interested NCC personnel to answer the questions that they raised at the 2019 CD Conference. For some who stayed with the process, there is an acceptance that it is useful to have such a method-based approach which reflects the values and principles. Participating NCCs agreed that it is relevant in today's context, that the structural constraints are significant, and that many of the skills and structural supports for CD have largely been lost. The constraints imposed on practice by a range of changes in policy and in funding practice have been significant. There have been new marketised opportunities, but these too have shifted the emphasis away from community. NCCs said that organisations, including managers and Boards need to understand and support CD and make an organisational commitment to it, which is reflected in policies and constitutions. There needs to be training, peer support and mentoring opportunities for staff, new ways of thinking about organisational frameworks and the kinds of crises that have overwhelmed many NCCs, and much more ongoing discussion between NCCs. Whilst Centres look to QFCA as a primary support for this work, they are not standing back, but offering to lead the way themselves.



Image: Neighbourhood Centre Community Gathering

QFCA CD Subcommittee Questions

The process also generated responses to the questions raised by the CD Sub-Committee. The substance of the full report deals in depth with extent of, interest in and the constraints and opportunities for CD in NCCs.

In relation to the CD Sub-Committee question about use of web based platforms, NCCs are clear that platforms like Zoom are critical to enabling NCCs to talk with each other, to learn from each other and to progress issues pertinent to them. They are affordable, widely available and, with practice, are becoming easy to use. They are accessible to remote, rural and regional NCCs. Across several QFCA projects throughout 2020, Zoom conferences enabled the Neighbourhood Centre voice to be heard. There are a few limitations in relation to break out groups, workshoping, relationship building and training, where an embodied presence allows deeper learning. On the whole however, NCCs are very positive about the technology.

Core CD Method

Whilst all practitioners use judgement and flexibility in relation to the requirements of any specific CD project, this approach has argued for a rigorous grasp of a core method. A core method enables daily practice, because CD, like any practice, grows in depth, understanding and skill every day that it is used. A core practice draws on an accumulated body of experience from those who have gone before, and it enables the work to be shared with colleagues and community members, it enables reflection, ongoing learning and can inform training and development. When this is missing, it leads to confusion rather than flexibility, and can increase idealism at the expense of action. This is not to dismiss other CD traditions, or the Centre-based work which NCCs do. All are important and have their place.

Project Outcomes

To summarise, during this project, QFCA has trialled a way of working which enables issues to be raised, discussed widely and progressed by members. This has had a number of outcomes:

- It has contributed to a core aspect of QFCA strategic plan being achieved;
- Along with other 2020 initiatives, it has affirmed QFCA as an innovative organisation;
- It has identified and enabled new leadership for the NCC sector, from within QFCA members;
- It has raised interest and understanding of Community Development across the NCC sector;
- NCCs have articulated a need for CD education, training, mentoring and peer support, and have raised their hands to lead this forward;
- NCC's have raised the need for discussion about the framing of individual crisis work within NCCs. The escalation of this overwhelms Centres and sidelines other necessary work. A new NCC-led group is forming to discuss whether and how it is possible to approach crisis work differently within a CD organisation (See Appendix 3); and
- A number of Centres are interested in exploring a whole-of-organisation framework which can provide the safety support and know-how at each level of CD practice. One NC will take the lead in this group (See Appendix 3).

For these outcomes to have sustainable impact, the work must continue, and this is the emphasis of the recommendations. This executive summary along with the full report and appendices will go to the QFCA Community Development Sub-Committee, for consideration and recommendation to QFCA Board.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The understanding of community development method as put forward in this report be adopted by the QFCA CD Sub-Committee and recommended to QFCA Board as an endorsed method to inform NCC practice, training, supervision and mentoring. (Note: this is not to suggest it is the only or best approach, but that it provides a coherent methodology which has sufficient existing infrastructure in Queensland to ensure access to training and support; where NCCs have adopted a different coherent CD methodology, perhaps developed in another State, it will become easier to identify and acknowledge this and draw connections between it and this recommended approach).
2. The QFCA CD Sub-Committee receives, reviews and endorses this report and recommends it to the QFCA Board;
3. The QFCA CD Sub-Committee develops a proposal to the Board that the work emerging from this project, carried by NCCs, be supported and resourced with both an allocation of staff time and a small amount of funds to enable the work to progress;
4. All emerging matters from the CD Sub-Committee and NCC work during 2020 be fed into the considerations of the QFCA 2023 Strategic Plan review;
5. QFCA consider how the CD agenda fits in the overall review of the organisation and how it can be sustainably embedded in the QFCA structure. For example, it may be important to review the objects and have a CD Standing Committee embedded in the constitution;
6. QFCA consider how leadership from amongst NCCs on issues that they have raised can be structured into the organisation so that leadership stays with the NCCs;
7. The webinar participants are recommending to the CD Sub-Committee that QFCA support and maintain the agenda of strengthening CD across NCCs, including:
 - Ongoing mapping of allies in strengthening CD;
 - Ongoing review of funding arrangements;
 - Ongoing strengthening of CD governance and management across Neighbourhood Centres;
 - Ongoing strengthening of CD and related practices; and
 - Development of an active program in relation to First Nations and NCCs.
8. QFCA intensify the dialogue with the Department of Communities and other government Departments, with a view to building a shared understanding of the outcomes that can be anticipated using the CD approach, what it takes to achieve those outcomes, and the various ways governments can support communities in their development; and
9. QFCA maintain advocacy over funding, including funding for research, development and evaluation so that the knowledge base of what can be achieved locally is expanded.

Enhancing Community Development In Neighbourhood Centres

1.0 BACKGROUND

At the Queensland Community Development (CD) Conference in Toowoomba at the end of 2019, forty Neighbourhood and Community Centres (NCCs) met and reflected on their experience in light of what they saw and heard at the conference. Their questions were:

- *Are we really doing community development?*
- *Has something been lost?*
- *What are the differences between service delivery and community development?
and*
- *which parts of the latter are we doing?*
- *Are there benefits to this approach?*
- *Is it possible or even desirable in the current context?*
- *If we want to strengthen this practice, what kinds of support will we need?*

The Toowoomba meeting requested QFCA to create a process to assist NCCs to think about these questions. This request was consistent with QFCA's [Strategic Plan](#) as well as its perceived obligation to its members. In order to ensure that Neighbourhood Centres have authority to progress their interests through their peak body, QFCA established a Community Development (CD) [Sub-Committee](#) for this purpose, and that Sub-Committee endorsed a pro bono offer from a group of senior community development practitioners, referred to as the *CD Task Group*, to engage interested NCC practitioners in conversation. The CD Sub-Committee prepared a brief for the task group, which was accepted.

Griffith University offered to parallel the process, tracking, and analysing the conversations, providing feedback to participants and documenting the outcomes. This documentation will ensure the detail of the conversation is shared more widely, agreements that emerge from the process are not lost and that NCCs have a clear pathway for further exploration of the relevance of Community Development within their organisational missions. The documentation (research) also provides QFCA with evidence to inform decision making and move agreements forward.

2.0 PROJECT PURPOSE

The Project had two purposes:

- (i) To engage NCCs in conversation about community development, with a view to coming to some mutual understandings about the questions raised at the conference;
- (ii) To document the conversation as research so as to provide a basis for action and change.

Five webinars were agreed to as a means of operationalising the purpose. It was recognised that there would be exploratory conversations with diverse small groups along the way and where possible, these too would be documented.

The QFCA CD Sub-Committee brief requested that as well as documenting the process the report cover material that would enable them to:

1. Understand the benefits, limitations, costs in using technology in participatory engagement processes;
2. Understand more about the sector; current practices in CD; those interested to enhance practice; what is required to move forward; barriers, constraints and opportunities (from those who participate in the webinars);
3. Provide research data to engage with government, other organisations, structures and the Neighbourhood Centre sector.

It also requested that the report indicate the sources drawn on in terms of understandings of community development.

This research report provides the QFCA CD Sub-Committee with a record of the project and response to the above questions.

The project commenced in July 2020 amidst COVID-19 restrictions, which presented a perfect opportunity to assess the usefulness of online platforms for holding cross-Queensland conversations on topics of interest to Neighbourhood Centres.

2.1 Conversation as Research

The research component of this project had ethics clearance from Griffith University, Ethics Reference Number 2020/533. Invitation went to all Queensland NCCs, emphasising that participation was entirely voluntary. All participants were informed that the conversations were being recorded and agreed to keep this in mind when speaking. Breakout groups within the sessions were not electronically recorded.

The research method draws on a tradition which sees conversation as a form of inquiry. It is particularly relevant where the question has come from research participants, and the conversation is a collaborative attempt to draw on their knowledge and experience in a meaning making process (Quinn Patton, 2009, Feldman, 1999⁸). Community development, like action research is a democratic activity that locates agency with the people who experience the issue or are asking the question.

The combination of conversation and research in this project offered a unique opportunity for participants to bring their everyday practice experience into dialogue with a specific way of understanding community development. It should be noted here, that community development is a familiar concept in the world of Neighbourhood Centres, and many would suggest that what they do is community development. Yet, the question raised at the conference suggested that some Centres think they are missing something, and that perhaps there has been some confusion of terms.

⁸ Patton, M. Q. (2009). Developmental evaluation compared with r&d. [Web Video]. Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=M81Xp9eRhv0

Feldman, A. (1999) The Role of Conversation in Collaborative Action Research, *Education Action Research* 7:1 125-147 publ online 2006 <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/09650799900200076>

3.0 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT METHOD

The QFCA CD Sub-Committee raised a pertinent question about the sources of Community Development drawn on in the webinars. This section responds to that question.

3.1 Traditions

The above question can be approached via reference to traditions. There are several traditions of community development, for example:

- the nonviolent tradition with its roots in Gandhi's teachings,
- the community organising tradition which emerged from the work of Saul Alinsky,
- the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approach introduced in the early 1990s by John McKnight and John Kretzmann,
- the critical community education approach associated with the work of Paulo Freire,
- the Settlement House movement initiated by Jane Addams,
- feminist organising, social action and empowerment of women,
- LGBTQ organising,
- the L'Arche Communities established by Jean Vanier, and
- the approach that informed this project, which is sometimes called the participatory development approach, and which is known locally as the Queensland tradition.

All of these traditions are alive in some form in Australia, all draw on philosophical roots, practice experience and practice-based theorising, so as to pursue effective action for change. Each one of them requires a rigour of practice and study. Whilst all are worthy, this short project can only do justice to one. We chose the Queensland participatory development approach because it has a clear methodology that can be learned, practised and reflected on. It has a history of success in this State. It has been taught in several Queensland universities, and has some existing infrastructure and local trainers. Above all, it is suitable as an NCC method of practice, because it is non conflictual, relationship based, and builds group strength across a local community overtime, making for strong community ties between groups and a mature capacity for local problem solving and development.

Some people argue for an eclectic practice which draws on different traditions and approaches as circumstances suggest, however others argue that it is best to understand one tradition and its practice method fully through practice experience before adding variations. This argument can be pursued more fully in the writings of local author Dr Peter Westoby (2014), and Anthony Kelly and Peter Westoby (2018).

In this QFCA project, the practice method drawn on has been most fully articulated by Anthony Kelly and was taught at University of Queensland for many years. Kelly drew on the practice of colleague Les Halliwell, and a number of philosophers and practitioners including Indian scholar Sugata Das Gupta and activist Ela Bhatt, both of whom worked intensively with the poor in India. He also drew on the experiences and biographies of many significant social change workers, in his ongoing efforts to articulate the method of practice in sufficient detail that it could be effectively taught and could provide a basis for reflecting on practice. Others have tested this method in practice, written about it and taught it. It provides a scaffolding for community organisations and practitioners to build on their skills and understandings in an ongoing way.

Characteristics of this approach which make it suited to Neighbourhood Centres are that it is relational, democratic, and emergent (Kelly & Westoby 2018). It is relational in that it views the democratic relations between people who are positioned differently in terms of power, as channels for dialogue and change. It is emergent in the sense that change emerges from the processes of relationship building, dialogue and genuine efforts to see from each other's perspective. The approach prompts a practice that emphasises working together for outcomes whilst maintaining the relationships. Step by step, problem situations are changed, in ways that would not be possible if community members were not actively engaged and if those with the power over decisions were not open to hearing. This approach requires deep local knowledge and relationships, and it builds on the trust developed over time between people at the local level, people in decision making positions and various others.

The approach starts wherever the people are at and builds their ownership of their concerns and action step by step. Along the way, people learn to work together, within public world processes, and with a growing recognition of how that public world works (or doesn't work).

Over the past forty or fifty years, a range of ideas and practices have shaped not only the political milieu but also people's imaginations in ways which have been unfavourable to community development, and indeed to community more generally. Individual self-reliance has been valued over collective responsibility, tightly targeted service delivery has shaped funding and social policy, and organisations have been pressured to move away from community association status to corporation. As we have seen on the global sphere, it is possible for the pendulum to swing so far in this direction that societies become polarised and distressed. The local impact, however, is that the external architecture to support community development is eroded, the organisational know-how is reduced, the number of skilled practitioners is reduced and saddest of all, community members lose trust in public processes, lower their expectations of their government, and barely believe that they themselves can make a difference through non-conflictual means.

As the participants in the webinar said: "Community development method is even more relevant than ever now!" Queensland is not alone in the endeavour to bring community and community development back into a more central focus.

The Scottish Community Development Centre, says:

"Community Development is a process where people come together to take action on what's important to them".

See their graphic "[Community development in 60 seconds](#)".

Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania has a [Community Development Toolkit](#) which emphasises:

"Community Development is not just service delivery; it is not a worker running a project for the community. It is drawing people together to unite and run with a possibility".

They go on to make it clear that this is about local people acting together on concerns or aspirations that they care about. *"They may seek expert advice, but this is considered along with other sources of information and with their own experience to make decisions that are right for them"* (NHT n.d.).

3.2 NCCs and Social Justice

Why pay attention to community development method and why now? For many Centres, the answer is a nagging feeling that something has been lost. Neighbourhood Centres offer a place of connection and belonging, as well as access to resources and services, to diverse people, with a particular emphasis on groups who would otherwise struggle. Yet, Centres are seeing more and more individuals who are in severe crisis and highly vulnerable. They have complex needs and have often been turned away from other services. Centres are recognising that responding to people one by one, consumes more time than is available. Moreover, most Centres see that a range of policies, laws, institutions and attitudes in the broader society are exacerbating inequality, making it hard for communities to find common ground and posing a serious threat to individuals and to the common good at local, state and national levels.

UNDP⁹ articulates this well:

Inequality provokes societies to move to the extremes, making it hard to find a common ground, posing a serious challenge to peace, security, and the social contracts of nations. Inequality then turns into an existential threat (op cit).

Many forces have contributed to the constraints on CD as a professional and citizen practice. Community development method was a natural choice of practice approach when the first NCCs opened in Queensland in the 1970s. Most employed a CD worker who supported and enabled groups of community members to take up issues that they saw needed to be addressed in their communities, and often beyond. They focused especially on issues which were impacting the most disadvantaged members of the community – those most affected by regular flooding; those most affected by housing or job shortages; those most disadvantaged by each change of local planning or social and economic policy. They engaged with low income families wanting to access affordable food and housing and families looking for parenting support and child care. This work sometimes led to new services, and sometimes to local social change, but always the people involved gained new skills and relationships through their collective public efforts. From a social justice perspective, NCCs supported communities to speak up for change at the structural level. NCCs were community managed, the processes were community led, and the outcomes were not only resolutions of some pressing issues, but increasing numbers of community-minded local people with the skills and commitment to work together for the benefit of the wider community.

In summary, the claim made in this project is that **community development is a set of practices and orientations which pursue social justice through fostering and facilitating the voices, interests, relationships, and problem-solving ability of people at the local level, acting together in the public realm**. The underpinning rationale is that at any time, on any issue there are various groups attempting to impact public decisions, but invariably, there are groups whose interests are acknowledged, and groups who rarely have a say. The latter are the groups who have had least access to decision makers, whose interests are often not articulated and who have the least social power. The aim is not for left out groups to pitch their interests against those of other groups. It is rather that local people develop awareness of, and responsiveness to, each other and the range of interests that impact their lives.

⁹ UNDP (2019). Addressing the Root Causes of Inequality.

<https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/blog/2019/addressing-the-root-causes-of-inequality.html>

Overtime, this means **the community** via its various groups, is increasingly strong, able, and clear on its diverse interests and able to progress them in broader decision-making forums.

The decision to frame conversation around a specific approach was also influenced by the fact that a number of recent studies of what Queensland NCCs do¹⁰, have identified a range of community-oriented practices: community networking, community needs assessment, community capacity building, community governance, relationships with local business, community events, which were reflected in the reports as Community Development. It is easy to see why many NCCs use the term community development as a generic descriptor. This is all highly important work, but it stops short of community development, as described here. We would call it all community work or community building. The additional dimension, that may have largely fallen off the agenda, is that of local people, coming together to initiate and drive change in their communities and beyond. In this work, staff time would be at the service of community members. Staff would help, support, enable, community members to do it for themselves. This is citizen work that teaches skills and understandings of the public world and contributes to increased structural justice and democracy. The outcome, whatever it is at a content level, will also include process outcomes of community members gaining experience, developing new relationships, learning skill and knowledge in public world work, and coming to “see” how their world works.

3.3 Practice Understandings

It is not enough to understand or accept what CD is, and its relevance to NCCs. The webinar conversations also emphasised a method of practice which has been found by many experienced practitioners to be effective in turning around service delivery expectations and enabling community members to build ownership of issues. It is discussed by Lathouras (2010)¹¹, who located the framework in terms of Neighbourhood Centres. In much more detail, Kelly & Westoby (2018), unpack the layers of practice and their implications. These authors use the label “participatory development practice” to get around the problem of multiple competing definitions of CD, and they have documented this method which has arisen and been tested by Queensland practitioners over the past fifty years, including in NCCs. The practice itself has a long tradition across the world, but it is in this State that it has been translated for contemporary practice in this way, and this is a valuable resource for any practice learning, mentoring and reflection.

Because issues are systemic – that is most of the enduring challenges that communities face are a result of how the broader social, economic, cultural, and political systems work, the response to those issues also needs to be systemic. For this reason, CD practice methods occur at multi-layered levels of an interactive system.

The smallest part of this interactive system is the practitioner’s self, and in fact, each community member’s self. Many of us have been shaped by the very forces which cause the problems that we and our communities face. In CD method terms we call this the

¹⁰ QCOSS, 2017, Queensland Neighbourhood Centres: Community Consultation Results Paper. <https://www.qcoss.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Neighbourhood-Centre-IMS-Report-FINAL-for-web-1.pdf>

Nicholas RE., 2017, *Neighbourhood Centre Initiative: Evidence Paper to Support the Investment Management Standards Process*. **Unpublished.**

Policy Innovation Hub (2018) *Neighbourhood & Community Centres: Strengthening Good Practice: Part 1 Conceptual basis and framework, Part 2 Applied framework and recommendations*. Griffith University. **Unpublished.**

¹¹ Lathouras, A. 2010. ‘Developmental Community Work: A Method’. In Ingamells, A., Lathouras, A., Wiseman, R., Westoby, P., Caniglia, F. *Community Development Practice: Stories, Method and Meaning*. Common Ground Publishing.

implicate structure – the internalised norms of the system, which if, unexamined and unacknowledged, reproduce the system. This is addressed in Webinar 2.

The second part of the method is the micro layer of practice. This is the relationship building work with local people, the hearing of each other's stories, the readiness to act, the analysis they develop and the work of building their ownership of their own process of change. This is covered in some detail in webinars 1-3.

The third step of mezzo work is the process of acting together in the public world, encountering other actors, especially those with different views or more authority, and moving forward. This is touched on in webinars 1-3.

The fourth part of the work – the macro level, is about working with and through structures. This includes, in our case, the structure of the host neighbourhood centre and the structures that have a bearing on the issue, and any other structure that can support the change process. This is raised in Webinar 4.

In Webinar 5, the conversation was taken up by participants who want to progress these understandings in their own Neighbourhood Centre and across the sector.

These levels identify the locus of social change work to be considered. Observe an experienced practitioner in action and you will see that they are constantly considering the action that is needed at each level, so as to create a mobilisation which is system wide.

When teaching or learning the method, it can also be helpful to see that there are two distinct movements: **Ordering and Structuring**. Ordering focuses on the building of relationships at the local level, the sharing of stories around issues of concern, the building of a sense of ownership as the action is carried into the public world. Structuring acknowledges that the public world is made up of organisations, governments and commercial structures. Working out which structures to engage with and how, in seeking and securing change requires a set of skills and knowledge which rarely come naturally to citizens, yet can be learned and harnessed for local purposes.

In summary, Community Development Method is a social change process, advanced by local people working together on issues of shared concern, who seek to engage wider structures in the public world to secure social justice oriented outcomes of benefit to themselves, other people at the local level and beyond. Communities which are rich in groups that have this experience and know-how and which have network connections between groups will have a mature capacity for addressing issues of importance. By supporting and enabling such groups, NCCs have a vital democratic role to play.

4.0 THE WEBINARS

Five x 1.5 hour webinars were delivered between 22nd July and 4th November 2020. Zoom was used as the delivery platform. QFCA promoted the webinars to all Queensland NCCs.

4.1 Participation in the Webinars

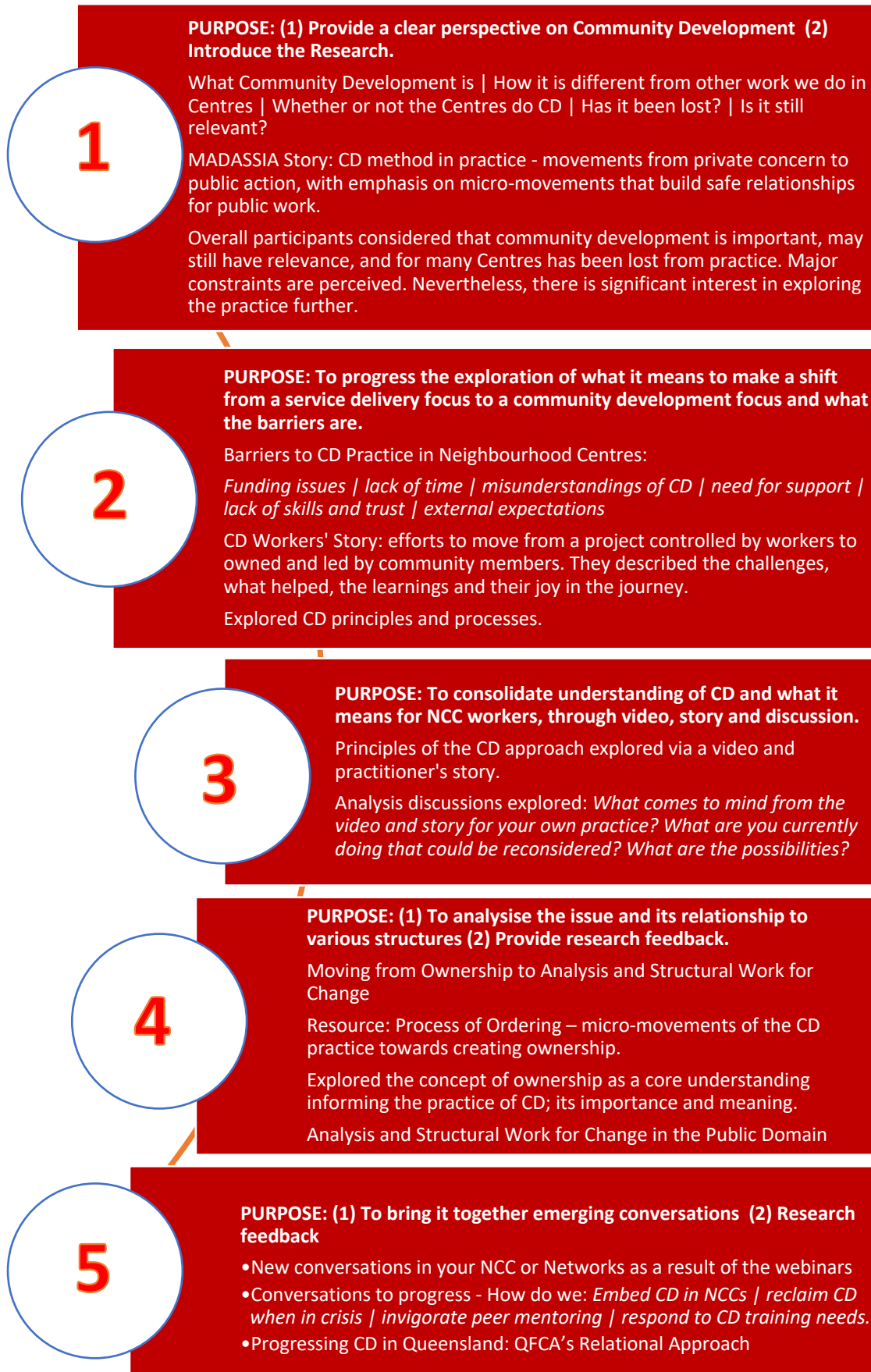
From initial registration for the webinars, it is evident that there is interest in this topic across Queensland. Seventy-three people registered from across Queensland. This included people from remote, rural, regional and urban Queensland, all of whom work in NCCs but with quite different roles and very different levels of experience with CD. The map following shows the spread of participation across Queensland.



Table 1: Participation by Webinar

WEBINAR NUMBER	1	2	3	4	5
ATTENDEES	47	28	25	20	21
NCC PARTICIPANTS	39	22	18	13	14

The purpose and content of each webinar is captured in the infographic as follows:



4.2 The Webinars and Purposeful Conversations

At the outset of the webinar series, people were asked what interest or question brought them to the webinars. In summary, five key themes emerge in relation to people's rationale for participation in the webinars:

- Wanting to understand what CD is;
- Wanting to understand whether NCCs are doing CD;
- Wanting to promote CD as a suitable practice for NCCs;
- Wanting to learn what CD each other is doing; and
- Wanting to discuss tough questions that arise from CD practice in the current context.

4.3 Webinar One

Purpose of Webinar One: Provide a clear perspective on Community Development Method so that in subsequent conversations we are all discussing the same thing. "If we succeed, you will know by the end of the session what community development method is, how it is different from other work we do in Centres, and whether you and your Centre do it or not".

The secondary purpose was to introduce the research with specific acknowledgement that the videorecording of the session would be available to all via the QFCA weblink. The overarching purpose of the five webinar sessions is for NCCs to collectively assess whether CD has contemporary relevance, whether it is part of their role, and what further infrastructure is needed to support that role.

As a warmup to the discussion of what community development is, people were invited to discuss in small groups the work in their Centre which is called community development.

What we do in the Centre that we call Community Development

The small group conversations confirmed that for some Centres almost everything is thought of as community development. In other words, this has become for them a generic term which identifies that they see much of their work as responsive to community need "we listen to people and try and find ways of responding to them". Activities such as "interagency networks", "financial literacy", "volunteer recruitment, support, management" are all seen as part of their community development. Many centres see their in-house community groups, such as playgroups, seniors' groups, mental health groups as CD. Some Centres which have maintained a tradition of community development, now say: "We do not call it community development unless it is citizen led".

If the range of community activities undertaken within NCCs are disaggregated, then it becomes clearer that there are several modalities of work, each of which achieves different purposes and requires different expertise. For example, "community-oriented service delivery" might distinguish NCC service delivery from more administrative forms of service delivery. "Community building" flags the importance within NCCs of supporting a range of processes and community groups that are inclusive, welcoming, and link people to each other around mutual interests. "Community governance" flags that there are dimensions to governance in a community-oriented organisation that differ from corporate governance. By naming these modalities it becomes easier to acknowledge them without resort to the term community development. Hence, a specific approach named community development can become more visible. Moreover, it becomes clear that there are very few education and training options across any of these NCC practice modalities.

The Provocation

The provocation for discussion in Webinar 1 was a practice story of a project that illustrated community development method in action. The story can be accessed via the [webinar video](#) along with some of the analysis emerging from the story. See Appendix 1.

In short, the practice account shows the movements of hearing the story, (in the first instance adults concerned that their young people do not want to work), talking it through until ready to invite others in, exploring the issue through to a recognition of the ways in which training structures do not work for this particular group of young people, identifying the structures involved, discussing the issue with them, and through a series of meetings and activities, achieving a significant shift in the available training, that enabled young people to progress through it to graduation and jobs. Each step of the CD method was identified and illustrated. The steps and stages were captured visually in a graphic.

NCC participants immediately responded to this depiction of a method of practice. They asked for a checklist that identified the various steps and stages. This was provided responded to via The Circles of Ownership Diagram and a supplementary video (see Dialogue 4 [Supplementary video – Circles of Ownership](#)).

Following the story, the storyteller emphasised: Workers are powerful people. We need to be conscious of that and acknowledge it or we will take over the process. It is the people's agenda, not our agenda, and not our organisation's agenda. Through our intentional presence, any power we as workers hold is made available to the community group. Each of our actions supports and enables people as they take tiny steps, even down to making that early phone call, not doing it for, but helping the group prepare and do it themselves.

An interview at the end of the story brought out that as well as the outcomes of the culturally appropriate training for young people and jobs, there were other important outcomes, that in community development method we call process outcomes. The women, who began as friends, added new dimensions to their relationships, so that they became colleagues in public world action. They developed a collective sense of power that enabled them to act in this context and will enable them to act in other contexts. In order to do this work, they needed to talk to all sorts of other people including government. This is big – speaking with people in authority makes us all nervous but to speak on behalf of your people and your organisation as they did – is an important experience. Then they also developed the skills for everyday public work – making decisions, keeping agreements, running meetings, keeping minutes, keeping everyone informed. Such a lot of skills for public work.

The storyteller responded – “Yes, leadership is developing in this story - leadership comes from doing. People have skills and through real life processes they build on them. The tendency is to give over to authority, rather than claim authority, but as citizens who undertake action and bring about change, they claim their proper authority”. Finally, she said: “Unless you have experienced this, it may be hard to imagine, but once you have experienced it you will never forget it”.

So, in summary:

- The people experiencing the issue or concern are at the centre of the work.
- Their skills, knowledge and wisdom are valued, used and built on every step of the way.
- They are in control of what actions are taken, and
- That is the point of the maxim: For the Community by the Community – “we did it ourselves”.

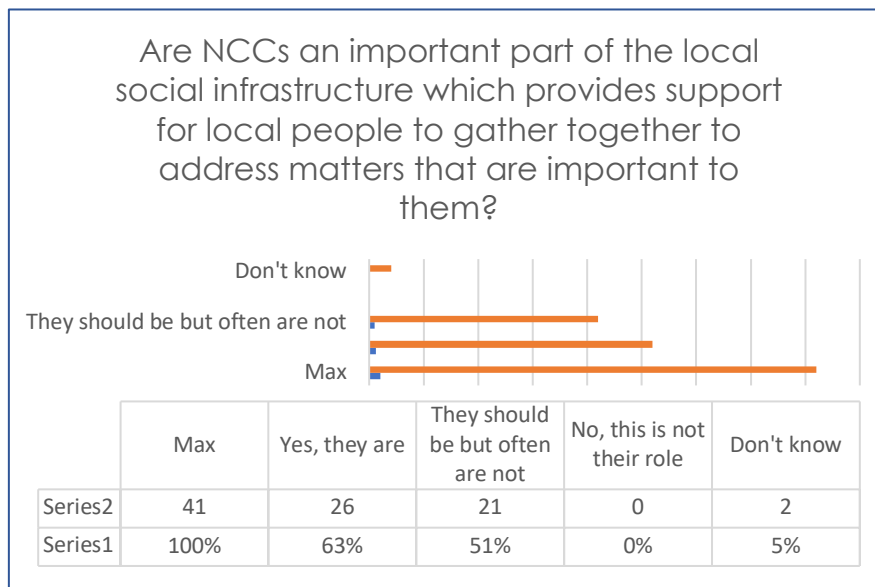
Points raised by participants:

- It has been good to reflect on doing with, not doing for.
- It would be helpful if Community Development is in the organisation's Strategic Plan and then able to be prioritised as part of the operations of the service.
- What if we work alongside people who have a gripe with the same level of government that fund us? Could funding be impacted if we were to work with these people when they are putting pressure on this same government?
- What I learned from today's presentation: Watch, really listen, build imperative relationships at their pace, and facilitate when they are ready to act. Service delivery (hand out) is a private response to pain, Community development (hand up) is a public response to pain. Reflect constantly. Find good mentors. Transfer the power we have to the people we serve. Don't negate their voice. See them as citizens of a community rather than clients.
- There is a lack of formal education options in Community Development method.

Final Discussion and poll:

You have now heard a more precise way of naming what CD method is. Do you think it has been lost and is it relevant today?

- ✚ “Yes, it has been lost” “There has been loss in terms of infrastructure, understandings, governance, support, funding, training”. “However, we can feel a shift and our group remains optimistic”.
- ✚ “Yes, it has been lost – organisations struggle at management, board and staff levels. Process outcomes are not understood, and this is something we need to work on. The everyday pressures keep us from this work, but there is a desire, and we want to get together with colleagues and work out how to move forward”.
- ✚ “In our own work and Centres we can use this approach to raise issues and work for change”.

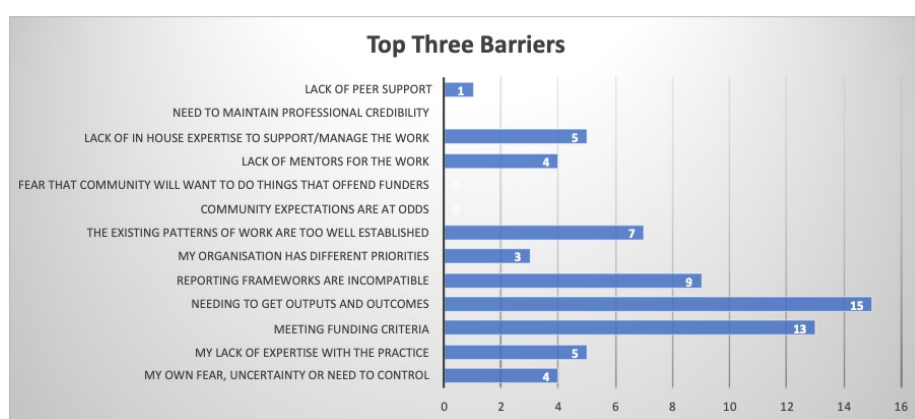


In summary, a number of Centres have maintained a CD focus, but on the whole, participants thought it has been lost from Neighbourhood Centres, and yet is still very relevant today.

Although participants could now see CD method, not as a replacement for their other service delivery and community work activities, but as a complement to them, they also articulated many barriers inhibiting a fuller approach. Perceived barriers relate to:

- Funding, accountability, reporting, planning, KPIs, funder expectations. Organisations need to self-fund CD activities.
- Level of crisis and vulnerability in the community – people expect an individual service response. The system is overloaded, crisis is deepening, demand far exceeds supply.
- Lack of staff confidence, skill, experience, and few options for education, training, mentoring, professional development in CD.
- Many organisations have little understanding or experience of CD at management, Board and staff levels, so the culture and mandate are not supportive of CD.

Webinar 2 used a poll to test the prevalence of these barriers:



In later webinar sessions participants began to reframe barriers in terms of actions they could take to address them, but this has involved a journey of rich conversations, which will continue beyond the webinars.

4.4 Webinar Two

The provocation in Webinar 2 was a presentation by two NCC staff on their efforts to turn around a project from a Centre initiated and led project to a community owned project. This story can be viewed on the Webinar 2 video¹².

Discussion following the story included:

- The migrant group expected staff to take the lead. It was difficult to turn this expectation around.
- Hard for the staff to step back from taking the lead.
- Staff took quite a journey in changing their own perspectives.
- People in the community may not have the skills and trust that they can do this. It is our role to help them develop the skills – it takes a lot longer and trusting they can do it.
- The culture of the organisation supported the enquiry and practice – supportive manager and a mentor – very helpful.
- Knowing who the people are who could be mentors for this work.

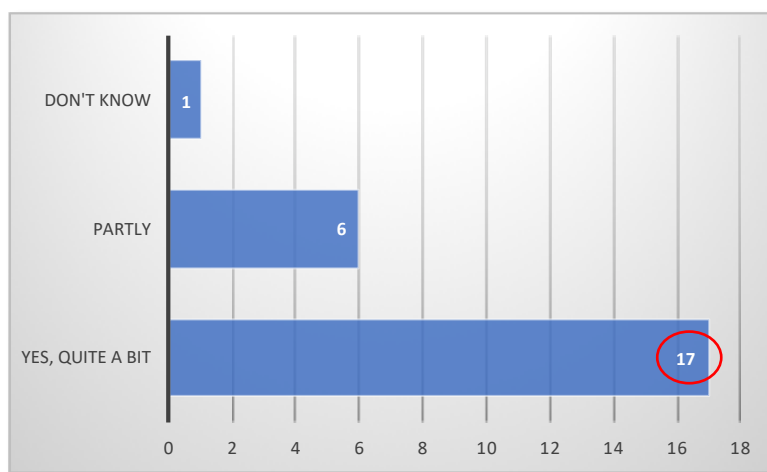
¹² The videos can all be found on the QFCA website at: <https://www.qfca.org.au/community-development-subcommittee>

- How do we know who is around who could be mentor for this work? How do we access them?
- Zoom makes this easier now.
- All part of the mix of service delivery and CD – it can be mixed up. What needs to be in place so we can have CD integrated into the service delivery?
- Training and mentoring are needed to make this happen.

Participants emphasised the need for a) organisational support, including from manager and Board, and b) the support of peers, c) education and training of staff, d) an experienced mentor and e) a group of community members who had sufficient trust in the Centre and its staff to go along with a process, that asked more of them, and which, as yet, they did not fully understand the benefits of.

Webinar 2 Poll

Did this second webinar enable you to further distinguish Community Development method from Service Delivery and other important community practices?



In summary, as well as further clarifying what CD method is, this webinar illustrated the practice efforts required to shift a project from something designed, led and owned by the NCC to something the community members own and progress. Participants grasped a new way of framing the role of the Neighbourhood Centre as enabling and supporting groups of people in the wider community to address problems in ways which enhance their wellbeing, increase their skills and relationships, amplify their voices, and raise their status.

4.5 Webinar Three

Webinar Three commenced with a reiteration that:

'We are exploring an understanding a method of CD as a practice approach informed by the following principles':

- The people experiencing the issues are at the centre of the work;
- They build new relationships with each other around the work;
- Their skills, knowledge and wisdom are valued and built on every step of the way;
- They are in control of what actions are taken;
- The work is for the people, by the people, so the people can say: "We did it ourselves".

Following this, as provocation for discussion, was a video of a workshop with Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania which Queenslanders Peter Westoby and Tina Lathouras facilitated.

Webinar participants watched the video and discussed in small groups. The following summary of points were reported by participants following their conversations with each other:

- I feel we have been pressured to becoming solution oriented. Have we forgotten the importance of the process?
- Not only community members, but also other agencies in the sector make us feel we have to fix things, WE have to have an agenda, we are on the line. This doesn't allow opportunity for deep discussion.
- We don't allow time for people to work and learn together.
- The consideration of allowing the time for the community to bring their issues is limited by the outputs requirements or barriers.
- If barriers could be put aside how could we work more developmentally?
- We do not get out into the community and listen any more.
- NCCs have become service hubs in their community. To actually challenge this, it feels like it will all be on us. Reframing of what an NCC is about. Bring about change. Deeper conversations are needed. Perhaps to invite people into our NCC.
- Supporting volunteers is a challenge – they need relationships, direction, support, encouragement and there is lots of other administrative work related to volunteer management.
- Everyone is so busy. We need authority to work with local people. Our time is one thing. We need to acknowledge that.
- How to get to the people who are not already involved is a major issue.
- Go to the people. My immediate reaction, it should start with me as a worker. Reframing from our board and management, what is expected? Should come through QFCA. Not sure how to progress.
- How do you progress this matter with QFCA what is the process to progress? When we look at the framework, we see it outside our organisations. How can we use the framework? Should we expect a service delivery response form QFCA or a Community Development response?
- Our key theme – the CD worker is not a fixer but connector.
- The Wow factor is people's voice, ownership and holding your agenda lightly!
- This is a very exciting much needed conversation about CD!
- It is something I studied but struggle to translate into practice in my work!
- I thought people/work places would support it, but find most people don't really understand it.
- But through these conversations I'm seeing that we could be doing more than we currently are. It's good to take a strong line on the approach in these conversations, you can always be flexible, but sometimes starting from an unclear base and then being flexible means, you just lose your way.
- Working through the CD movements uses a unique set of skills.

A second provocation was introduced:

A practitioner told a story of her own early days learning to enact CD method and being challenged about her inclination to “help” which interrupted her listening and was not at all helpful to the people she hoped to engage. This story is about the implicate layer of CD Practice – the impact a worker has on what can happen with a community group. Reflection helps build awareness of our own power and how we use it. The conversations following this story were very appreciative. Participants identified with the new worker's struggle to shift her own desire to help, and listen more deeply to the experience of others. Participants recognised that there are few practice forums in which practitioner learnings can be shared. “I think conversations of this kind really help – they validate and support”.

Again, constraints were raised around organisational support, expectations and being supported to learn.

4.6 Webinar Four

If developing a sense of ownership of their issue within a group of community members is a foundation step in CD method, then the next stage of the work is to identify the structures of the public world which have some mandate in relation to the issue. In progressing the issue through public structures, the importance of popular engagement with democratic public world structures is confirmed.

In Webinar 4 participants were invited into a hypothetical process, where they (as if they were community members with an issue) explore how it would be to raise within their own NCC one of the issues raised as barriers to CD in this series. Their own NCC would be the first structure of relevance to moving the issue forward. This raises for consideration; how do issues get raised within your Centre? If a person (staff or community member) wanted to raise an issue: What steps would they take? Who would they speak to? What would they say? Consider using the micro method explained in webinars 1-3, as you think about these questions.

Local structures are often a microcosm of the broader public world. In a living democracy, people and those who govern in their name would be connected by channels of communication which enable information to flow in both directions. Often these channels of communication lapse, and either or both sides forget the value of such communication. Trying to reopen them will provide insight into whether there are other reasons for the lapse, such as deliberate attempts to gain power and control, or lack of civic education of the population.

Just as, when working with a group of community members, it is important to remember that people do not create the issues they face, and similarly when staff experience practice constraints, it is often due to some structural barrier. Most issues are created by forces beyond any individual limitation, and the challenge is to work together to see what can be shifted in that forcefield.

Small group discussions raised many issues which are summarised below:

- It would be very helpful if our Boards/Management Committees had a better understanding of CD and its importance to our organisational mission.
- There are no pathways for community members to talk to Boards.
- If Boards endorsed CD as part of the repertoire of NC practices, then we would feel more supported to take it up.
- It is also important that managers encourage and support it. Some do not have the know-how.
- If it is part of whole of organisation approach, then peer support would be possible.
- All participants expressed the importance of ongoing professional development but were uncertain of the form it should take. Some had studied CD at university, within CD networks, in learning circles and with mentors, and still found it hard to embed in their organisation.
- Our organisation has CD embedded into their culture and strategic plan, yet the practice is still challenging, and practitioners can still feel alone (without adequate support) in their work.
- University learning and even professional development courses may not be helpful – once you know the theory, mentoring might be best.
- Appointing a CD worker is not enough, it needs to be an organisational approach.

- It's an approach which requires you to think outside the box, be creative, alongside community members – in relation to really tough issues, and at present with few sounding boards.

Despite the challenges however, participants were optimistic about change, they said:

NOW is the time!!! There is gathering of real energy to progress things. QFCA is interested, and organisations with experience are interested in supporting others.

Evaluation Question:

What is holding you in with this webinar process?

- I'm holding in because I am interested to be part of a movement to supporting people having a voice in their communities. I want to continue to learn with others how to make this happen!
- My organisation is discussing this and is very open to working with other NCs to help facilitate further opportunities for accessible mentoring and training around CD - it's part of our strategic plan to do this work and celebrate the expertise that is out there moving forward.
- I think it's very valuable, great opportunity for connection and learning with peers, it also feels like the time is 'ripe' to be doing this work together
- I've appreciated these webinars for the opportunity to connect with others working within the various complexities and constraints of community centre work. Learning from others is what brings me back!
- This process has been very important for me to articulate the difficulties for holding CD in Neighbourhood Centres - participation has really highlighted the multiple issues that are worth collaboration with others to ensure we can continue this movement.
- What's holding me in - hearing other's stories and collectively learning. Thanks also to the team.
- As an individual worker - passionate about CD work and always looking for opportunities to connect and learn from others and share practice wisdom, it is wonderful to see this desire for CD practice being reinvigorated and growing.
- It is really exciting too from an organisational level - it's part of the work we do in my Centre at the grassroots of our organisation, and sharing this is part of our strategic plan :).
- Holding in with the people - it's a long awaited opportunity.

4.7 Webinar Five

The floor was open to participants to share the conversations they have been having in their Neighbourhood Centre or with other colleagues about community development as a result of the webinars.

One participant opened the discussion:

I feel like I have been living in a desert for the past ten years trying to hold a vision of CD. To have a group of people here who are involved in this dialogue has been enormously enlivening and supportive. I now think there are opportunities for a wider network to connect on these things. Whilst our NCC does do CD work, there is so much more that could be done if we worked together as a sector. As I get older and see I have only so much energy left to do this work – I am very interested in succession- so that we can keep this growing and getting stronger – these are some of the questions for me and conversations I've been having with people in my networks.

Two participants reported:

We have been discussing how when a project starts as a CD project and people respond to it strongly, and then it turns into a service for the community, then that practitioners time can be taken up with that service, and lost to the CD work. In the past I have worked in places where if a service is needed following CD work, then there is a new worker to run that service, but in small organisations that is not possible.

A Participant added:

When Neighbourhood Centres first started, they employed CD workers, who went out into the community and heard what was happening. People said we need this or that, and gradually NC were dealing with the most vulnerable community members and the reception staff and volunteers were not skilled for that. So, organisations struggled to hold the CD framework.

Another participant responded:

That assumes they had a CD framework to start with. I have found that funding dictates often shape the practice and the values that inform practice, which shifts the organisation's values commitments. Only a few organisations have held on.

Participant:

I am very encouraged that QFCA are taking this up – as in our Centres we can get caught in the day to day busy-ness – often responding to this and that International Day of something – which is all appreciated by community members, but seems a bit like rearranging deck chairs.

Participant:

In my own Centre we have discussed that these locally provided services are so important. But we know the CD focus has gone by the wayside. It's not about letting go of services – but of having CD in parallel.

Participant:

Yes, some conversations say CD or Service Delivery, and that is not the point. But my sense is that when SD grew in response to crisis, NCC structural arrangements changed to reflect service delivery requirements and to increase their profile within the competitive grants regime. Then the structural arrangements no longer supported CD. It's a challenge worth discussing how a Centre might maintain structural arrangements that suit SD and CD.

4.7.1 QFCA And Community Development

A CD facilitator invited QFCA to speak to how social justice principles and CD method could be held in within the structures and processes of QFCA.

A QFCA staff member responded that QFCA as a structure, values multiple ways of working. Usual practice in peak bodies is that members raise an issue and peak body staff seek solutions on their behalf and this often results in a service to members. QFCA works differently. NCC, as members may raise issues, staff may help connect Centres that have shared issues. These Centres together can explore the issue and possible approaches. Together they can shape a way forward and act on it. Clearly this parallels the process of CD within an NCC, where a practitioner listens, links people and supports people to address the issue. QFCA can

work this way with NCC – the centres understand best what the issues are and what kinds of approaches will best address the issue.

CD facilitator: I am overjoyed to hear this from QFCA, I have waited many years for a peak to speak this way.

4.7.2 A Board Member Speaks

A participant spoke up about the ongoing struggle to hold in community development when there are so few supportive forces. Her input is reported in full, because it resonated with other Centres and played a role in mobilising support to act together on these issues.

“I am the President of the Neighbourhood Centre, I have probably been there for about 12 years, really because I want to hold that CD vision in the organisation and I haven’t found anyone to take it over. So, if anybody wants to, I’d be really happy to hand it over. We did in fact have a President initially who developed a community development framework for the organisation, and we have held that as a very important organisational document to inform the way that we do everything, whether it is service delivery or CD work.

Having the documents doesn’t mean it actually happens. But before I go on, I want to park that aside, because I want to say that I actually think a Neighbourhood Centre is such an important organisation in a community. I used to manage the youth program in Deception Bay. When I got there and saw the role of the Neighbourhood Centre, I thought I can’t do this work in this community unless I am partnering with them. At that time, we had a great CD worker there and the organisations worked beautifully together. So much could happen because we could use our organisational power to engage with the communities, to do what the community were asking for. Now, you know people come and go, so that’s one of the organisational issues. You know people move on and you get new people in and they do not necessarily understand that.

But, back to the point that NCCs have such an important leadership role and can make CD work happen if they hold that as its overall vision. And of course, service delivery can sit underneath that, so that’s my position. CD has to be the overarching (method). We are looking at ways of how we might put it in the constitution and embed it structurally in the organisation. I just want to give an example, when the COVID shut down came, we know we’ve got lots of services that have been established in the wake of the work of the NCC and the youth programs, but when COVID came along they all shut their doors, they walked out and we’re standing there going “What about the community, how do we empower the community to deal with this issue?”. So, our focus was on how we keep the doors open even though government’s telling us to shut down. We took a very different tack because of our commitment to working with the community. People volunteered and all sorts of things happened as a result of us doggedly saying we will not (shut down), we are not a service that will shut down, we are central in this community, even and specially in a crisis. As a President, we have great people on our Board but, CD well that’s Trish’s thing. Even though they are interested in it they don’t really get it, which is probably my fault. I haven’t taken them through training, so when I came along and got involved in this (Webinar series), oh gosh as sector we could really make a difference – we could organise board training around CD and why it is so important. And my other thing about CD is that CD helps the community resolve, and deal with its issues of poverty rather than us just being that charity model, that is a really important thing for the organisation to hold.

When you get new directors, some love CD and some don’t and so then how do you work with somebody who just is not in that paradigm and obviously that is through your recruitment

processes. But there are a whole lot of structural things you need to have in place – your recruitment process, your induction, your professional training there are so many things to get it happening. Then of course the CD worker is often not in a very senior position. We don't get a lot of funding, so structurally – how does a CD worker tell other senior staff how to do their job, in relation to the way that they focus and work with their clients? So, that is why it really has got to be very well held at the Board level, the Director level, and then across the staff in ongoing training, dialogue, part of the induction and stuff like that. We have not got all of this in place but in a way this process has inspired me to go, oh, there is a way through this action learning that we've been doing over 10 years, this is what we could actually aspire to, not only for our organisation but also for the sector.

So I am very keen for something to come out of this work so that we can keep having this dialogue and as an organisation I've already spoken to our Board and they're really keen that we stay engaged in this process and happy to put resources and time into supporting the sector to develop this.

If people want to contact me by all means do, just email, get my address from Chris Mundy (QFCA) and I am happy to hear from you.

Participant Responses:

- I really appreciate what everyone is saying – and I see the need for the focus to be across the organisation.
- People at reception, and volunteers all need to have the skills and understanding.
- There is importance of linking Boards across the regions into the future discussions.

4.7.3 Tasks Moving Forward

In the final webinar, when considering future directions, there was further discussion of the barriers to taking up CD as part of NCC practice. Some participants recognised that the CD method discussed through the webinars provided a way of moving forward to address the barriers. Participants expressed particular interest in working on certain topics, which resulted in four people identifying that they would be prepared to facilitate a group on one topic and would be very happy to have interested people join them. The four groups are listed here, and names and emails are available through QFCA. Each group will focus on its topic and the four groups will meet when ready to share progress.

Topic 1: A whole of organisation approach to embedding CD approach in NCCs.

My interest is in working with others to develop a framework for embedding a community development approach across all of an organisation's work, including Board, management, policy, induction, staff and volunteers.

Topic 2: A CD Approach to working with people who are going through crisis.

I am interested in pursuing in more depth the conversation about working with people who are vulnerable, in crisis – how we build ownership and a CD process when their situation is often so precarious.

Topic 3: Peer mentoring and learning circle in CD practice.

CD is at the core of my organisation's practice. It has long been part of the culture and part of the strategic plan. We want to share and celebrate CD practice. We are not able to offer training but are interested in CD learning circles and perhaps some peer mentoring.

Topic 4: Training for NCCs

QFCA, as part of their role, is already searching for training options and resources and will be speaking with people who have an interest in various kinds of training. NCCs are encouraged to contact QFCA regarding CD training.



Image: Training Partnership between QFCA, Coalition of Community Boards and Logan City Council for Community based Organisations.

BEYOND THE WEBINARS: LINKING UP CONVERSATIONS

A change of the kind being envisaged by webinar participants requires many conversations, both within and beyond Centres, between NCC staff and between NCC Boards, and between NCC managers. It may also require conversations with education and training organisations, and other CD networks to meet mentoring requirements. Additional conversations began to occur as early as Webinar 1. Participants were saying that in order to practice CD, they needed more focused support from their managers. Managers who were participating in the webinars agreed that, although they supported community development in theory, they were unsure how better to support it in practice. Rather than wait for this report, the QFCA CD Sub-Committee decided to begin organising a response to this, which is described below. Secondly, NCC participants were saying that it is hard to access CD education, training and mentoring. So, an initial “Mapping Session” was held to begin considering where the links and opportunities might be to develop momentum around CD and CD training. Also, the CD Sub-Committee hosted a follow up meeting of people who initiated this process from the 2019 conference. There was then a total of 10 formal sessions in which approximately 80 NCC personnel were in discussion about Community Development in NCCs:

- ✚ Five webinar discussions
- ✚ Three Manager sessions
- ✚ One mapping session
- ✚ One follow up session with NCCs who raised issues at the 2019 conference.

Behind the scenes, in Neighbourhood Centres, QFCA staff and Board, CD Sub-Committee members and associated allies beyond the immediate participants, there were countless conversations which could not be captured. Every conversation however is a contributing factor to carving out a pathway to, and momentum for, change.

5.1 Managers in Conversation & learning

At the request of NCCs, and with a mandate from QFCA, endorsed by the Director General of Communities, Anthony Kelly¹³ facilitated an experimental educational conversation for a group of 6 managers of NCCs who have a commitment to enhancing the capacity of their organisation to carry a participatory development program and create an environment for both services and community development work to flourish.

The project was delivered over 3 zoom sessions, approximately 2 hours in length held at the times appropriate for the participants. Some pre-reading was required. Managers have a key role in supporting the Board and funding bodies to understand what the organisation is doing and supporting staff in their developmental work with communities. Anthony Kelly invited the managers to consider the steps and stages of these roles, and their purpose at each point along the way.

The framing of these sessions can be viewed in Appendix 2. From a manager's perspective, this is a vital part of any organisation taking on a CD approach, and managers reported that they found it stimulating and saw it as an important part of organisational as well as manager development. The content introduced through these discussions invited managers to think in new ways and consider new possibilities.

In evaluation, the Manager's reported that they found the practical training very helpful and were pleased at how Anthony used this rather than a more conventional educational approach. Some began embedding CD in their organisations immediately, with staff cooperation. Others said they found it a "hard sell". Organisational readiness is important when considering change. Nevertheless, all identified that the role of manager is pivotal and thought mentoring for managers, induction for managers, and participation in more sessions where managers share stories of successful development action. Some were keen to discuss CD in their NCC network meetings. See Appendix 2.1

A full report of the session with Managers is forthcoming from QFCA.

5.2 Mapping the Environment

The QFCA CD Sub-Committee hosted this conversation, which was central to the new Sub-Committee's role as well as linked to the webinar discussions. The stated and affirmed purpose was: *"How can we work together with people, organisations and other structures to strengthen CD practice in Neighbourhood Centres?"*

This first gathering aimed to identify key individuals and structures which share or intersect with this agenda:

- Shared interest in identifying key players (structures and individuals) who are connected to our agenda in Neighbourhood Centres (and beyond)

¹³ Anthony Kelly was senior lecturer in community development at University of Queensland for many years. He has been instrumental in articulating the practice approach in a detailed, scholarly and accessible way, and has authored many works on the topic, including co-authoring the recent publication *Participatory Development Practice*, with Dr Peter Westoby.

- Mapped current activity emerging from QFCA CD sub-committee (and task groups) and potential links with others;
- Started to identify key players (structures and individuals) who are connected to this agenda;
- Started a conversation about parallel processes under QFCA banner (diagram mapped these)
- Identified some potential collaborations:
 - a) collaboration –organisations with whom we may share common interest/agendas/objectives;
 - b) Establish who is working with the First Nation (FN) people in NCC's
 - c) Training – identify who is offering what and where, and map this to need;
 - d) Initial exploration of how a mapping software tool could assist in linking people who want to engage in peer support;

The group that met for this mapping session understood that this is just a beginning and further work will be required to develop a shared understanding of context to inform multi stakeholder dialogue, with a view to cooperation and alliances. They recommended that the QFCA sub-committee ensure this work is carried forward. Further information is provided in Appendix 2.2.

5.3 The CD Focus Group

This group met to discuss progress on the issue that they had raised at the CD Conference in 2019. Some of the focus group had not been able to attend the webinars because of heavy work commitments but are following progress and keen to see ongoing action. The conversation within this group was both about the need for NCCs to adopt a CD approach and also about barriers. Common issues clearly exist across Neighbourhood Centres, which require further ongoing collective consideration if any change is to become possible. For more detail see Appendix 2.3

6.0 DISCUSSION

These 10 conversations which occurred as part of the CD Sub-Committee work through 2020, mean that new and rich connections and conversations are occurring within and across NCCs. It will be important that QFCA and the CD Sub-Committee support the continuation of these conversations, to enable them to mature into collaborative action to enhance the already substantial roles of Centres.

The present document has reported the conversational process. The facilitators put forward an understanding of community development as a practice which supports and enables people in the local community to work with each other to act on issues of concern or unmet aspirations. The movement can often start when a participant within the Centre raises a personal issue, which clearly has impact on the wider public. This moves the locus of action out of the Centre and into the community. The Neighbourhood Centre lends part of its power, resources, relationships, to members of the community, and in doing so, enhances the capacity of both the centre and the community members.

The method of practice promotes relationships across different structures and stakeholders, so that, although there may be conflicting interests, each seeks a resolution that benefits the other, and themselves, moving things forward, little by little. Each maintains the relationship, even if a fully satisfactory outcome is not possible. Networks of relationship, trust and

understanding are built across diverse parts of the community and into the wider society. Slowly communities are built which people want to be part of.

In the absence of community development, the likelihood of the following impacts is heightened:

1. Local people cannot see ways of changing things which bother them;
2. Local people have lost the sense of being part of their local community;
3. Local people feel forgotten by decision makers;
4. Local people may lack the relationships and networks that open pathways to seeing new opportunities that make a difference;
5. Antagonisms grow between different groups in the community;
6. Opportunities, even very small ones, that could make a difference, cannot arise or be seen in the absence of active engagement;
7. Conflict becomes frightening– people would rather report a neighbour to an authority than engage with them about an issue;
8. Skills of talking through differences atrophy;
9. Neighbourhood disputes escalate to a status disproportionate to the issues;
10. Public world skills are lost to the people;
11. Dependence increases, people become clients, forgetting that it could be possible to work with others for change;
12. Citizenship is undermined; people become vulnerable to decisions that are not in their interests;
13. When it comes to place-based and collective impact initiatives, professional and commercial interests are further empowered, but local community members do not feel their voices are heard or that there is a place for them;
14. Solutions get imposed from above without proper input from the people affected;
15. Governments listen to powerful lobby groups and privilege their interests;
16. Relationships between people and their government are undermined, and cynicism grows;
17. Channels for working together, talking to decision makers, learning together, contributing to a stronger and more just world break down;
18. Poverty, exclusion, disadvantage, exploitation, grow, often unnoticed by the wider population.

Of course, community development is not an easy fix for any of this. However, NCCs are well positioned locally to promote and support a practice which constantly and proactively weaves the webs of involvement and support that enable active, strong and engaged communities.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PROJECT

7.1 Implications for QFCA

What does all of this mean for QFCA? To summarise, during this project, QFCA has adopted a way of working which enables issues to be raised, discussed widely and progressed by members. QFCA established a CD sub-committee as the best vehicle to carry forward the action being proposed by the members. This has had a number of outcomes:

- It has contributed to core aspects of QFCA strategic plan being achieved.
- It has affirmed QFCA as an innovative organisation.
- It has identified and enabled new leadership for the NCC sector, from within QFCA members.
- It has raised interest and understanding of Community Development across the NCC sector.

- NCCs have articulated a need for CD education, training, peer support and mentoring, and QFCA are taking the lead here, but with NCC leadership on various aspects of it, e.g. peer mentoring between Centres.
- NCC's have raised the need for discussion about the framing of individual crisis work within NCCs. The escalation of this overwhelms Centres and sidelines other necessary work. A new group is forming to discuss whether and how it is possible to approach crisis work differently within a CD organisation.
- A number of centres are interested in exploring a whole-of-organisation framework which can provide the safety support and know-how at each level of CD practice. One NC will take the lead in this group, with QFCA support.
- QFCA has made it possible for people with expertise, who value NCCs, to contribute meaningfully to the organisation and its members.

These things may not be unprecedented, but they have coalesced into a powerful way of working through this project. As QFCA approaches its new planning period, it may be helpful to draw on this experience when reflecting on a new way of working as a peak body.

Structuring the new work in an open and democratic way which is supportive of new leadership and integrates with other QFCA sector development work contributes to sustainability.

QFCA Board has the task of bringing all of its members up to date with the project and its recommendations and considering what strategic priority to give to this dimension of the work.

QFCA staff hours will almost certainly be required to enable and support the NCCs which take on tasks of addressing the barriers and progressing the conversations into action.

7.2 Implications for NCCs

What does all of this mean for Neighbourhood and Community Centres? Some NCCs will be taking up roles in building momentum around the adoption or reinvigoration of CD within the sector. Their experience of the practice, and what it means to both communities and to the organisation itself will be indispensable to the wider NCC sector. We know that this is a commitment of scarce resources, on their part, and we also hope that they will be able to pull in support, from the CD Sub-Committee and QFCA more broadly, and also perhaps from unexpected places. There is more on these task groups who have offered to carry forward work on some of the barriers to implementing CD method in NCCs at Appendix 3.

Some NCCs will take this learning into their organisations and embark on a new journey. This is very exciting, and they too will find the support they need.

Not all NCCs will embrace community development, for all sorts of reasons, yet they too may dip in and out of processes so that they can continue to make informed decisions.

A new narrative of CD in NCCs is emerging, and it will grow with every step. It is a narrative of importance to NCCs and to many beyond. This is an ongoing story, and it will want to be told.

7.3 Implications for State and Federal departments

What does all this mean for Department of Communities and State and Federal Departments? It can be anticipated that the Department of Communities and QFCA will have many discussions about the movement that is beginning to occur across NCCs. This is likely to interest Queensland State Government given that the Queensland Plan envisions communities that are significantly different to today's communities.

The complete versions of the Queensland Plan state a thirty-year vision of:

In 2044, community spirit will not be a goal, it will be a way of life. Our communities will be open, welcoming and inclusive of everyone. They will work to change disadvantage and create opportunity. They will set an example to the world. Our communities will be vibrant places where we value the contribution of every Queenslanders and find opportunities to enrich the lives of others. Functioning as hubs, they will connect people across the state and across the globe.

NCCs already make a contribution to achieving this, yet how many Queensland communities are experiencing the conditions inferred here? So many factors beyond the local complicate people's lives. Often the ways in which these factors impact locally are not visible to government. In embracing community development, in managing many of the hubs, NCCs are a key partner, bringing communities and government into conversation with each other for enhanced understanding and change. The more genuinely Federal and State governments embrace CD, particularly in relation to NCCs and develop their understanding of it in a substantial way, the better will be the alignment of purpose.

If place-based infrastructure is a priority of Qld Government, then NCCs are perfectly positioned at local level to bring communities into the process. There has been significant investment in NCC physical infrastructure, but physical infrastructure is only part of the infrastructure requirements for a strong and innovative sector. Training, evaluation, research and ongoing development are not things that individual Centres can provide – rather they require investment at the sector level.

8.0 CONCLUSION

This section refers back to the questions that NCCs raised at the Conference, and the brief from the QFCA CD Sub-Committee. It summarises the responses to those questions.

8.1 Responding to NCC questions raised at the CD Conference

At the outset, participant questions were: *Are we really doing community development? Has something been lost? What are the differences between service delivery and community development, and which parts of the latter are we doing? Are there benefits to this approach? Is it possible or even desirable in the current context, and if we want to strengthen this practice, what kinds of support would we need?*

Following the webinars, participant feedback indicated that the stories and videos spoke to something that even those least experienced in CD heard and responded to, and could imagine as part of their practice. The webinar content and discussions have created interest in CD. Those participants who had least experience of CD gained a clear understanding of what CD is, and its core difference from the other important work that they do. The most experienced of the CD participants expressed relief that QFCA has taken this issue up, and is building support around it, for even they find the practice difficult in the current environment and would welcome a sector wide approach and some shared frameworks and close interest from experienced others.

There was significant agreement amongst webinar participants that CD, and particularly understanding of the method illustrated in the webinars, have been lost to a predominant extent from Neighbourhood Centres. Centres do a lot of critically important work, which benefits people of their communities in many ways. They are well positioned to include CD in their practice, but there are many constraints.

The discussions confirmed that many NCC workers do not really have the option of taking a CD approach because they have no professional education, training or experience in the community development and their Centre is unable to offer support or encouragement. It

also confirmed the insight from Webinar 2 that a few Centres have CD frameworks, a supportive culture and experienced CD practitioners. This is a definite resource and strength within the sector.

Participants agreed that if they want to strengthen this form of practice, then the barriers and constraints need to be addressed. This is best approached by working collectively as a sector, working through the QFCA CD Sub-Committee. Four groups were formed, headed by those with CD experience in NCC. QFCA will promote to all NCCs the opportunity to work with these groups. The groups will meet in early 2021.

The approach taken does not enable generalisations across all Queensland NCCs. Those who attended some, but not all webinars, may or may not share the interest that was generated across the webinar series. A survey was sent to all NCCs at the end of the webinars however, only two responses were received which were both very supportive of the process and its outcomes. It is apparent that those who participated feel they have answered their own questions and now see new opportunities for working together to reinforce collective efforts to progress CD within NCCs.

8.2 Response to QFCA Sub-Committee Questions

The QFCA Community Development sub-committee brief requested that as well as documenting the process the report cover material that would enable them to:

1. Understand the benefits, limitations, costs in using technology in participatory engagement processes.
2. Understand more about the sector; current practices in CD; those interested to enhance practice; what is required to move forward; barriers, constraints, and opportunities (from those who participate in the webinars).
3. Research data to engage with government, other organisations, structures, and the Neighbourhood Centre sector.

They also requested that the report indicate the sources drawn on in terms of understandings of community development.

8.2.1 Use of Online Platforms for learning & discussion

Whilst fitting any extra activities into their daily work is challenging, participants across the State were pleased to have the opportunity to connect for 1.5 hours without travel time. Centres do have the technology to participate. Their comments are below:

Participant Comments:

- Online allows regional and remote centres to participate in more discussions. Face to face tends to be south east focussed.
- I really like that there is no travel time and how accessible it is for everyone by having online forums.
- Good point, and as someone who grew up in a regional area in Victoria, I know how all media can feel metro centric when regional areas have so much going for them and so much of interest.
- I love Zoom because you can be so much more inclusive. That has been the gift of COVID-19 - using Zoom has made it possible to be more inclusive.
- COVID-19 has been great to connect us in so many spaces and meet so many great people who can help us move forward
- Zoom has limitations in terms of hosting participatory workshops.

8.2.2 The Sector and CD

The Brief: *Understand more about the sector; current practices in CD; those interested to enhance practice; what is required to move forward; barriers, constraints and opportunities (from those who participate in the webinars).*

This report identifies, as have previous reports, that NCCs do a great deal of community-oriented work. A reason that their service delivery is so effective is that they network well in their communities to provide locally relevant responses to clients and to open opportunities. They build community within and between Centre-based groups and they host various social and community events. Most Centres contribute to personal empowerment, family well-being and inclusive groups. Often Centres group all of this under the generic term community development.

In this project, this work might all be called community work or community building, but the work that may have largely fallen off the agenda, is that of local people, coming together to initiate and drive change in their communities and beyond. In this work, staff time is at the service of community members in their role as active citizens. Staff help, support, enable, community members to do it for themselves. This is citizen work that teaches skills and understandings of the public world and contributes to increased structural justice and “thick” democracy. The outcome, whatever it is at a content level, will also include process outcomes of community members gaining experience, developing new relationships, learning skill and knowledge in public world work, and coming to “see” how their world works. This is the level of community empowerment.

Participants agreed that this is relevant but saw many barriers to incorporating it. Barriers include funding constraints, lack of organisational support and know-how, and lack of community development mentoring, training and support for CD workers. Further, participants raised that Centres have an established way of doing things which is hard to change, particularly given reductions in staff hours and that NCCs have become a critical port of call for people in crisis to an extent which is overwhelming for some Centres.

At no time is it claimed that all centres should be adopting this CD method, or that CD is more important than the many other activities NCCs already do. However, NCCs, are, of all organisational kinds, best positioned to add CD method to their repertoire. They are locally positioned, they know their communities, they generally are a trusted entity in the community. However, either additional resources are needed, or some current work has to be directed elsewhere.

8.2.3 Research data

Increasingly governments want NCCs to encourage development of skills and resources which strengthen communities. This report and previous reports affirm that Centre based community activities are strengthening for individuals, families and groups who are involved in the Centre. The second dimension of strengthening communities, however, is the work which is undertaken beyond the Centre, in the community, where residents are empowered to address issues at the local level before they impact on so many people that crises ensue. Residents must own this work, that is part of the strengthening of the community base. NCCs use their resources, staff, know-how, physical facilities, legal cover, insurances, to enable and support active citizen led change. The core contribution of this project is that NCCs themselves are willing to engage with each other, QFCA, government and other bodies to develop the kinds of infrastructure and support that would make this kind of work possible.

The social value of NCCs has been computed as \$4.08 return on every \$1.00 invested by the Department of Communities (QFCA, 2020). These are organisations that perform to an unusual standard. They have been stretching themselves to make up for the negative impacts of natural events and policy shortfalls. If we want to see them strong into the future, further investment is of highest importance.

8.2.4 The Sources of Community Development

This question was fully addressed in Section 3 of this report.

9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

10. The understanding of community development method as put forward in this report be adopted by the QFCA CD Sub-Committee and recommended to QFCA Board as an endorsed method to inform NCC practice, training, peer learning and mentoring. (Note: this is not to suggest it is the only or best approach, but that it provides a coherent methodology which has sufficient existing infrastructure in Queensland to ensure access to training and support); where NCCs have adopted a different coherent CD methodology, perhaps developed in another State, juxtaposing this with an explicit Qld CD methodology will make it easier to acknowledge, draw similarities and differences between the two, and learn from them.
11. The QFCA CD Sub-Committee receives, reviews and endorses this report and recommends it to the QFCA Board;
12. The QFCA CD Sub-Committee develops a proposal to the Board that the work emerging from this project, carried by NCCs, be supported and resourced with both an allocation of staff time and a small amount of funds to enable the work to progress;
13. All emerging matters from the CD Sub-Committee and NCC work during 2020 be fed into the considerations of the QFCA 2021 Strategic Plan review;
14. QFCA consider how the CD agenda fits in the overall review of the organisation and how it can be sustainably embedded in the QFCA structure. For example, it may be important to have a CD Standing Committee embedded in the constitution;
15. QFCA consider how leadership from amongst NCCs on issues that they have raised can be structured into the organisation so that leadership stays with the NCCs;
16. The webinar participants are recommending to the CD sub-committee that QFCA support and maintain the agenda of strengthening CD across NCCs, including:
 - Ongoing mapping of allies in strengthening CD
 - Ongoing review of funding arrangements
 - Ongoing strengthening of CD governance and management across Neighbourhood Centres
 - Ongoing strengthening of CD and related practices
 - Development of an active program in relation to First Nations and NCCs.
17. QFCA intensify the dialogue with the Department of Communities and other government Departments, with a view to building a shared understanding of the outcomes that can be anticipated using the CD approach, what it takes to achieve those outcomes, and the various ways governments can support communities in their development;
18. QFCA maintain advocacy over funding, including funding for research, development and evaluation so that the knowledge base of what can be achieved locally is expanded.

APPENDIX 1: WEBINAR SERIES VIDEO RECORDINGS AND RESOURCES

The entire content on the webinar series 'Community Development in Neighbourhood Centres' is accessible on [the QFCA CD Sub-Committee web page: www.qfca.org.au/community-development-subcommittee](http://www.qfca.org.au/community-development-subcommittee)

This content includes:

- Video recordings of the 5 webinars
- Summary documents of the 5 webinars
- Dialogue 4: 'Circles of Ownership' supplementary video and diagram
- Dialogue 5: 'QFCA Relationships Diagram' supplementary video and diagram

The MADASSIA story was told to provide a clear example of the method of community development in practice.

The video recording of the MADASSIA story can be found on [the QFCA website as part of the 'Community Development in Neighbourhood Centres – Dialogue 1' \(19.34 – 53.10\): www.qfca.org.au/community-development-subcommittee](http://www.qfca.org.au/community-development-subcommittee)

APPENDIX 2: ADDITIONAL CONVERSATIONS

2.1 Experimental Educational Conversation with Managers

Implementing a developmental program in your organisation – exploring a methodology

Overview:

Anthony Kelly facilitated an experimental educational conversational process for a group of 6 directors/managers of NCCs who have a commitment in enhancing their understanding of the capacity and structures to promote and carry a participatory development program in their Neighbourhood Centre and create an environment for both services and community development work to flourish. This project was approved by QFCA and endorsed by the Director General of Department of Communities.

The project was delivered over 3 zoom sessions, approximately 2 hours in length held at the times appropriate for the participants. Some pre reading was required. The process was conversational exploring matters relevant to today's context.

Background to the project

The purpose of the QFCA CD subcommittee is to forward community development practice in NCC as was mandated by the NCC workshop at the recent Toowoomba CD conference. Participants at the workshop identified:

The service delivery method of work has become dominant, and the sector has lost knowledge and understanding of CD practice. In particular, it was said that the differences and similarities between Service Delivery and Community Development are not clearly understood; there is confusion as to what is 'Community Development'.

The participants also identified that service delivery and community development should be working hand in hand

One of the key activities of the subcommittee is to engage with senior practitioners to seek their support and expertise in furthering this work. Discussions were held with Anthony Kelly who has been involved in developmental work and training for over 40 years. In these discussions he shared his observations and what he heard at the conference:

- a. That Directors/Managers position are the most important position in NCCs in furthering CD practice in NCCs.
- b. Directors/Managers indicated they were struggling on how to pick up a developmental agenda and build a project or program.
- c. An experimental educational process using technology could support and inform the sector and government on the value of ongoing support for these positions if CD practice is to be enhanced.

The objectives of the Education Project:

1. To help community centre managers understand the difference between a service delivery program and a participatory program;
2. To help community centre managers identify pressure point in their organisation where service delivery is failing and use those pressure points as potential beginning points of a participatory program;

3. To help community centre managers understand how a participatory program supplements/complements but does not replace service delivery;
4. To help community centre managers prepare their organisation to carry a participatory program;
5. To help community centre managers put a consistent case to government for a participatory program especially in those areas where service delivery is failing; and
6. To help community centre managers record and report this work to government.

Objective of session 1 and 2:

To build an understanding of the micro method of CD work as the foundation of a developmental agenda in a NC. To identify the pressure points (crisis demands) within the organisation as a starting point in building a developmental agenda.

Content for the session:

In order to prepare for a developmental agenda to be carried in the organisation, a whole new way of dealing with pressure points needs to be prepared, without in any way diminishing the importance of service delivery whilst at the same time fully appreciating its limits.

- How do we prepare our worker/volunteer emotionally and intellectually to explain that this is not a e.g. housing service, and deal with the frustration and disappointment in all parties associated with that information?
- How do we prepare our worker/volunteer to understand that at this very point their most important contribution has an opportunity to begin? This is the very beginning point of a developmental program.
- How do we help our worker/volunteer understand that a development program is built on people's assets and skills and not by trying to fill their deficits?
- How do we make the situation safe and comfortable for our worker/volunteer and person to hear their story?
- How do we help our worker/volunteer not be overwhelmed by the multiple problems and keep their mind on their main task?
- How do we help our worker/volunteer ask some good questions to begin to hear the story?
- How do we help our worker/volunteer hear, acknowledge and treasure the skills and resources that have been part of the person survival to this point?
- How do we help our worker/volunteer ask whether they would like to hear other people talk of their best tips in surviving?
- How do we help our worker/volunteer ask whether they would like to share their story, especially their tips, with others in a similar situation?
- How do we help our worker/volunteer finish a session with warmth, perhaps with a glimpse of future intentions, all completed with safe boundaries in place?
- How do we help our worker/volunteer report back to the organisation and debrief?
- After a time, how do we help our worker/volunteer and the organisation pick if there are common patterns of those people's resources that we can all support and strengthen
- Good developmental programs all have support, storytelling and training built into their DNA.

This is the work of micro method. If the demand was there it is possible to move to mezzo method where groups can be a very powerful force for good but always one step at a time. The foundation stone is good micro work and if this is well done, even if it goes no further, it has added to the quantum of human kindness.

Objective of Session 3:

To build an understanding of the dimensions which require attention in order to prepare an organisation for a participatory development program and to begin the journey moving forward.

Content for the session:

- How do we prepare the various points of authority within the organisation at board, staff/volunteer and community levels to understand the difference between a service delivery and a participatory development program?
- How do we clarify the roles and responsibilities of those people, at those different levels?
- How do we select people at board, staff/volunteer and community level to carry the work of the program?
- How do we establish support, supervision and training for those people at those different levels?
- How do we explain, implement and stabilise the intake process from the initial exploratory activity cycle, through the group stage, to the celebration and recognition of a peoples' organisation?

- How do we establish the budget and operational guidelines for a participatory program at the different stages of maturation, from intake through to ongoing mature operation of a peoples' organisation?
- How do we document this process for accountability, funding and education purposes?

Feedback

From a manager's perspective, these discussions are a vital part of any organisation taking on a CD approach, and managers reported that they found the sessions stimulating and saw them as an important part of organisational as well as manager development. The content introduced through the discussions invited managers to think in new ways and consider new possibilities.

In feedback, they said: "This was excellent" and "This was like a masterclass for managers!"

"I appreciated the practical training approach that Tony took, which is so much more effective than just providing traditional educational content."

Also, a very powerful quote by the Manager from a rural NCC:

"to have my knowledge and skill advancement to where I can articulate my own beliefs and goals better, has opened doors for me and boosts my confidence that I am on a path that is enabling empowerment for others"

Some managers reported that as a result of these sessions, they were very successful in engaging their staff and beginning to embed the CD learning in their organisation, whereas others found this difficult. Managers wanted more opportunities to share stories of participatory development in action. Many would like to see an induction and mentoring program for managers.

Appendix 2.2 Mapping Sessions

The QFCA CD sub-committee hosted this conversation about context, which was central to the new sub-committee's role as well as linked to the webinar discussions. The stated purpose was: "How can we work together with people and organisations/structures to strengthen CD practice in neighbourhood centres".

Purpose statement affirmed by participants: "How can we work together with people and organisations/structures to strengthen CD practice in neighbourhood centres"

- Shared interest in identifying key players (structures and individuals) who are connected to our agenda in neighbourhood centres (and beyond?)
- We mapped current activity emerging from QFCA CD sub-committee (and task groups) and potential links with others; (this mapping was presented in webinar 5)
- We started to identify key players (structures and individuals) who are connected to the emerging CD agenda
- Started a conversation about parallel processes under QFCA banner (also highlighted in Webinar 5)
- Identified some potential collaborations:
 - i.O-1-3 collaboration –organisations with whom we may share common interest/agendas/objectives
 - ii.Who's working with the First Nations (FN) people in NC's
 - iii.Training – identified the need to map who's doing what and where
 - iv.Started to explore how mapping software tool can assist us in Linking people who want to engage in peer support

Potential collaborations

i. Collaboration 0-1-3:

Objective: to get organisations together around a common agenda to support CD practice in NC's

How to strengthen Neighbourhood Centres', management committees' (role in community development, knowledge of community development);

How to ready communities for new Neighbourhood Centre facilities and Hubs;

How to help government understand the community development methodology and its outcomes;

Engage with QFCA – government – Griffith – COCB -Community alliance – Logan together; Key individuals were also listed.

Government: QFCA is currently working with government around the reporting framework – Neighbourhood enhancement strategy (there's a reference group list to be developed).

Actions:

1. Engage key people as listed in minutes.
Test interest in a task group in February 2021
2. Explore what Neighbourhood Centres are doing with First Nation people?
Map FN activity in CD landscape
Neighbourhood Centres know to hold a First Nations focus:
 - Kuranda- Men's Shed
 - Benarrawa - funding project around language
 - West End - Community plus – Kylie
 - Nambour Community Centre
 - Maleny community Centre
3. Community development training for those Neighbourhood Centres and management committees that want it;
Map what's happening in this space: CDQ, Praxis, Uni, TAFE
What is on the drawing board – e.g. QFCA
4. Mapping Software
Key question - What can software mapping do for us?
Potential starting point – Experiment with mapping for peer support. We know there are people who have expressed need/interest on CD Conversations webinars. Follow up with them.
Actions:
 - Explore software tools
 - Map the parameters required for software mapping
 - Link Peer Mentoring task group and others

The group that met for this mapping session understood that this is just a beginning and further work will be required to develop a shared understanding of context to inform multi stakeholder dialogue, with a view to cooperation and alliances. They recommended that the QFCA sub-committee ensure this work is carried forward.

Appendix 2.3 Focus Group From CD Conference 2019

This group met to discuss progress on the issue that they had raised at the CD Conference in 2019. Some of the focus group have not been able to attend the webinars because of heavy work commitments but are following progress and keen to see ongoing action. The conversation within this group was both about the need for NCCs to adopt a CD approach and also about barriers. Common issues clearly exist across Neighbourhood Centres, which require further ongoing collective consideration if any change is to become possible.

Meeting Notes: CD Conference 2019 Participant Focus Group 7/10/2020

See Minutes for participant information.

Purpose:

- Provide an opportunity for a group of participants from the Community Development (CD) workshop at the 2019 CD Conference to hear back about progress on their request to QFCA to facilitate Neighbourhood Centres to collectively explore the dwindling practice of community development in Neighbourhood Centres (NC's).

Permission was given to record this discussion for inclusion in the research – 'CD Conversations- a participatory research project.'

Background

Provided some background from QFCA, reporting back to the meeting about how QFCA has taken up the mandate from the CD Conference 2019.

Sharing updates since the 2019 CD Conference.

Participants share their thoughts about the conference gathering and what's coming up for them around the practice of CD in NC's.

Comments on the Conference:

- The content of the CD conference was not in line with community development; it was more in line with service delivery. The practice people were talking about was not working alongside people.
- The conference demonstrated a lack of awareness of what community development.
- It was heartening to have the discussion at the workshop. My hope is that future conferences will give us an opportunity to connect with each other around CD practice.

NCC's and Organisations:

- Boards don't typically have CD backgrounds. They are more diverse in terms of business skills now but that we only have few allies on the board who understand community development.
- NCC staff are diverse too but community development has been stripped from the workforce.
- At one NCC they have maintained a culture of doing solely community development. "We have made an intentional choice to stay as a small organisation. The challenges for us – we are so small we don't have admin support; keeping the organisation up and running; work to support a diversely skilled (for corporate governance) management committee; the few long-standing management committee members who understand community development makes a difference".
- Facilitating the culture is vital – we put a lot into that. We feel a sense of solidarity. It's a safe space to bring people.
- There's a lot of opportunity in our community to think how to build a new focus in community development. We don't have community people knocking on our doors seeking support for community development projects, so we need to be intentional to engage with community. The board has identified our values and strategic priorities - sustainability and developing the team, it is up to us to implement using whatever method.

The Competing Challenges:

- There's a lot to do in Neighbourhood Centres and having the time to meet increasing demand is already a problem.
- The challenge is the increase in demand for emergency relief and the tension between service delivery and community development.
- Neighbourhood centres are funded to deliver services. There is a desire to engage community but the funding model does not point in that direction.
- Perception about reporting (can be an artificial barrier).
- We could be better at telling the story in reports to government.

Dept of Communities:

- In the past, CD was driven out of the sector and for a while it became a dirty word to use. Now the Department has changed its perspective and community development is appreciated. The DG of Communities said "the process is just as important as the outcome". She said she wants Neighbourhood Centres to go back to being Neighbourhood Centres and leave other support services to the actual organisations that exist/are funded to provide those services e.g. housing support/advocacy etc.

Barriers:

- Barriers – time to do CD practice because staff are overwhelmed by the demand to respond to service delivery especially emergency relief and crises.
- There's some resistance people didn't want to change the way things were being done (within a service delivery framework).

Education and Training:

- Do we need to re-train?
- "What's required is training and professional development".
- I am wondering if CDQ (CD conference conveners) could potentially form an alliance QFCA to consider offering biannual event focussed on training in the CD Conference off-year.

What QFCA has been doing:

QFCA has responded to the call from the conference to re-enliven community development in Neighbourhood Centres. Mapping the journey through 2020 shows just how many conversations and relationships around CD have occurred. **See Webinar 5 summary and video for the mapping diagrams.**

Discussion

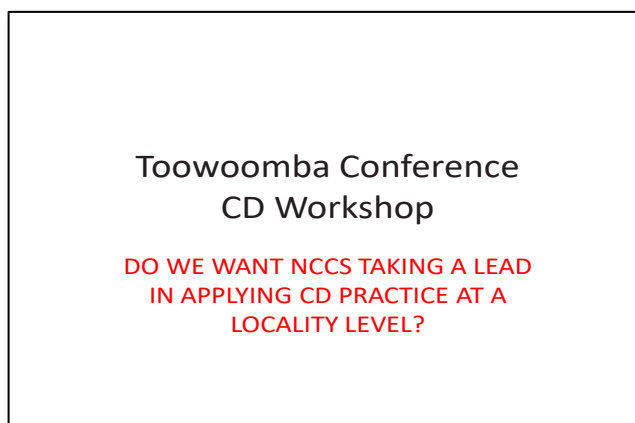
- Participants asked a few questions about webinars and what practitioners need.
- What mechanisms are available for people who want to change things; where did the management committee and board sit?
- How do the NC management committees get on board within Q FCA to be part of this movement for change?

- Participant: 'I'm hoping through this process we can build ownership for people's concerns in geographic communities'.
- Participant: We need to learn about community development in this context – we need education opportunities. Example: the timing of training events needs to be considered. To progress we need to be more prepared and structured to support participation.
- Participant: The webinars have been valuable– sharing experiences in stories. There needs to be continuity in people sharing their stories.
- Participant: Agreed, saying solid workers need to have the space to share their stories and experiences because the work can be complex and changes over time.
- Participant: It might be timely for the organisations via the management committee or board to write to QFCA to let them know they would like to have some webinars continue for workers. There was no take up of the suggestion.
- Participant: Who are our key supporters – we need to analyse this.
 - Who else do we need to get on board?
 - How do we articulate the benefit to the organisation of continuing webinars etc; and how this will improve the work.
 - Strategic Plans play a role.
 Participant: Conversations (talking about webinars). Maybe not the best approach?
 - We need to maximise use of time.
 - We need more structured sessions – guided conversations to develop a community development mindset; more content.
- Participant: Opportunities for peer support.
 - Continuity of engagement in the sector around CD to build my momentum in practice.

Where to from here?

- (1) Group request to keep them informed moving forward
- (2) Convenor will take this request to the QFCA sub-committee and share the ideas raised today
- (3) The notes will be included in the research report data.

Below are notes from the NCC session at the CDQld Conference 2019.



THEMES

1. Many NCs focus on service delivery and CD practice knowledge and skills have been lost.
2. Accessible professional development & CD support for NC is required.
3. Reporting framework for CD practice is required.
4. Service delivery and Community Development work should be working hand in hand.

AGREEMENTS

Chris Mundy and Jenny Ryan agreed to carry these to QFCA

1. Agreement on the themes
2. QFCA should form an alliance with CD Qld and Praxis to progress these matters. To form a CD sub committee to further CD in NC
3. QFCA should report on the progress through the newsletter
4. Those present want to continue to be engaged

APPENDIX 3: NOTES FOR EMERGING TASK GROUPS

These notes are collations from the webinars to support the efforts of those groups which will progress the work on barriers to enacting CD Method in NCCs.

Appendix 3.1 A whole of organisation approach to embedding CD

The following notes were drawn up by a participant in the project, who drew on the various conversations to map areas for consideration by NCCs wanting to consider a whole of organisation framework to support community development.

Aim: Develop a shared vision on how we embed CD practice in Neighbourhood Centres

1. Neighbourhood Centres

Management Committee

- Ongoing CD training
- Organisational structure – Embed CD in Constitution, Framework.

Director/CEO/Manager- Ensure CD informs:

- Recruitment
- Induction
- Performance Review - KPIs
- Support/mentoring and supervision

CD worker - Ensure CD informs:

- Recruitment
- Induction
- Performance review - KPIs
- Practice

Other staff

Support/mentoring and supervision

Organisational documents - Embed CD in all core documents:

- Framework
- Action Plan to framework
- Policy
- Procedures

Organisational support - Make available to all personnel

- Ongoing - Mentoring, Training
- Community of Practice - learning group

2. QFCA Sector

Pursue whole of sector strategy

- Ongoing - Mentoring, Training
- Community of Practice - learning group
- Development of organisational kit for all NC - policies and procedures
- Practice support
- How do we develop a Community of Practice for CD?
- CD overarching all forms of community work and service delivery
- How to develop a CD operational plan.

3. Government

- What is the role of Government in enabling this to happen?
- Is there professional development for government staff?
- Do contract staff understand CD?

4. Learning Institutions/Universities

- What is the role of learning institutions in making this happen?
- Adequate CD focus within various programs
- CD Placements and supervision

5. CD Queensland

- What role for that network?

APPENDIX 3.2 Community Development, Crisis and Vulnerable People

	Webinar Participants Input Around Working with crisis Demand as Barrier to CD	Thoughts/Reflections
Webinar 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Acknowledgement of the unique nature of NC's and their relation to local areas and people. ✓ Barriers: TIME, FUNDING, REPORTING. ✓ Pressure to provide services. ✓ Pressure to do service delivery ✓ CD not well developed at any level including: Community members, Staff, Board, funding bodies. ✓ Daily rush to meet needs of people in crisis. ✓ NC's are not well set up for CD if we understand that CD is about working with community people on their agendas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ NC's unique place in working with people at a local level. ✓ Holding the pressure to meet need, provide services, funding requirements, reporting. ✓ Time, pressures, increased need places workers and centres holding a conflicting space that is ever changing as communities change.
Webinar 2	<p>Barriers to Adopting CD Practice in NC's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ TIME ✓ Too pressed for time ✓ Government funding barely covers the cost of running the centre ✓ We get caught up on reacting to crisis need and little time to be proactive, dig deeper, build deeper connections. ✓ Enormity of need walking through the door – impossible not to respond to this. ✓ Funding cuts meant loss of staff hours. ✓ Big demand on staff in regional areas where there are too few other services. <p>Expectations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ SD has become such a dominant expectation affecting: Community expectations/ expectations of funders/ expectations of external service providers/ expectation of our organisation. <p>Lack of Understanding of CD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Misunderstanding of CD as an outcome rather than an approach an approach adopted across an organisation to range of outcomes. ✓ Community members not in the right place to work with you – too traumatised / sense of agency depleted / do not understand CD approach / strong expectation of SD. ✓ Lack of skills and trust in the CD process. ✓ External expectations NC's will provide services rather than CD. ✓ CD is identified as a process not a program. ✓ What if we work alongside people who have a gripe with the same level of government that funds us? ✓ Could funding be impacted if we were to work with these people when they are putting pressure on this same level of government. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Work of NC's shaped by political processes. ✓ Growth in NC's to date has been a political response not a program or need response. ✓ Government gives funding and if not happy will take it away. ✓ Meeting need appears to shape a practice response that is a SD model. <p>CD not seen as a response to need, crisis or disaster. SD dominant practice model.</p> <p>People receive a service or product, not viewed as having agency or a role in the development or change process.</p> <p>Loss of tradition and/or history about CD practice in NC's.</p>
Webinar 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Predict the work – we are required to develop work plans for the next 12 months – feels rigid takes away the ability to respond to what comes up in the community. ✓ Structure – makes us feel we have to have an agenda (otherwise) we are on the line! ✓ Opportunity for deep discussion is difficult. ✓ Definitely locked into the rigid rather than what people need or want. ✓ Often feel we need to have solution ✓ We could learn through critical conversations ✓ Community bring their issues – allowing time for this – this is limited by the outputs required – linked to funding. ✓ NC's become service hubs – how to actually challenge this. ✓ Deeper conversations are needed. ✓ Volunteers to support (CD approach) is a challenge. ✓ Need authority to work with local people. ✓ Not a fixer but a connector. ✓ Being intentional in this approach – listen / capacity to have conversations/ bring people together. ✓ Importance of active listening. ✓ Being aware of yourself – “not putting my problem-solving hat on.” ✓ CD work - complex and challenging / solutions have to up creatively with people / practice is often quite lonely. 	<p>Allowing time for the developmental work.</p> <p>It appears that people see CD as another thing they need to do instead of seeing it as the overall practice approach.</p>
Webinar 4	<p>Crisis: Dramatic increase in crisis demand for individualised service responses – leaves little time for CD. NCC's become organised around crisis.</p> <p>Feelings of ownership and readiness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The increase in crisis focus everyday takes time away from building ownership. ✓ Our NC's core business has become disaster response and recovery. From a CD perspective, it has brought many opportunities E.g. funding, staff ✓ Crisis poses a challenge for NC's to take a CD approach when people are at crisis point and focus on need and basic needs for survival. ✓ In our NC – extra COVID-19 money has reduced requirement for crisis support. ✓ Changes in job titles to have CD in them, has brought recognition of the work, including being included in CD Strategy development within the local Council, hence linking with the structures. ✓ Understanding and support from management committees is important for how we can do CD ✓ To do CD is largely up to the individual. <p>Part 2. Opportunities to progress the issue in your immediate context (your NCC)</p> <p>Increase in crisis focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Connecting dots and drawing the lines between when 	<p>Skill development Development of a CD practice framework needed</p> <p>Permission and space not necessary a time thing but space to think differently about the work – CD is the way we work.</p>

	<p>organisations come from a community mind-set more so than individualistic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Working with other's ideas ✓ Identify the importance of relationship building and overcoming the barrier of not having enough time. Makes time to call one group a week to keep connections open with various groups in town. Working with what others are doing and what ideas they have. Then they turn up with opportunities to work together. "As a CD worker, it makes my work easier to do this". ✓ Working at the first layer, linking with other groups, is found to be the easiest way to work. It's not a magic thing and it's not about you. <p>Part 3. Your group reflection on this step in the CD process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Think outside the box and include everyone. Think big, think connected. ✓ Structurally, partnerships need to be a way of working. Emphasise the importance of organisations networking and working together. ✓ Broader community members/groups with a CD mind-set or community intentions could see opportunities to come together to develop initiatives to support those in need, which may broaden and/or shift approaches in/with broader structures. ✓ Break the practice down to being human, being authentic. There are some barriers with the fear of losing power, and fear by workers of not doing the right way or the right thing. <p>Example, one organisation has asked people who are homeless and accessing ER, for their opinion and ideas and to be part of collective decision making of how else to support them and the issues.</p>	
Webinar 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Workers get stuck into being deliverers of services. CD can stream into service delivery model. Good work with community members to identify needs, problems, aspirations turns into NC initiating a service intended to address that need. ✓ Balance between holding CD and support for those who come in with service-related needs. ✓ Increase in community-based work with local communities – running this parallel with SD. ✓ Being pushed in SD – reshaped the over-arching structural arrangements in ways that do not work for CD. ✓ Shift structural approach and arrangements in ways that support CD. ✓ Have people fluent in working across both. 	

APPENDIX 3.3 Notes for Task Group addressing CD Education, Training & Mentoring

	A gathering of material from the webinar participants to inform further discussion about Community Development Education, Training, Mentoring.	Thoughts/Reflections
Webinar One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ There are few CD education options. ✓ Education & Professional Development opportunities are limited. 	Training and mentoring are needed and being asked for.
Webinar Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ There is lack of in-house expertise and support. ✓ Hard for staff to step back from service delivery ✓ Also need to turn around community members' expectations of the worker and their role. ✓ Need to understand what a CD process or work is and what is service delivery with a CD approach? ✓ Need examples of CD practice in other NC's. ✓ How to intentionally do CD work while overcoming barriers. ✓ Increase understanding of CD as a process ✓ Need access to mentors. 	How workers negotiate the space and time for training mentoring collaboration etc. People appear to be asking for training and but support to make ongoing sense of their own practice and opportunities to bring in CD practice. – Supervision or mentoring or collaboration with other centres around practice.
Webinar Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Practitioner lens where does it land – People as problems or valuing peoples own agency. ✓ Make sense of what people and workers are seeing in practice. ✓ Making sense of what to do and how to work with others. ✓ Transforming current work approaches into CD practice approach. ✓ Current work shaped by – solution / outcome driven practice. ✓ Plan for the next 12 months feels rigid and takes away ability to be responsive. ✓ How to have critical conversations ✓ Make time for deeper conversations with people. ✓ Workers feel that they are on the line if they do not perform to organisation's understanding of the workers' role. ✓ We need time to learn. Time for people to work & learn ✓ Time for community to bring their issues. ✓ How do we work more developmentally? ✓ Being intentional. ✓ Something I studied but struggle to translate into practice in my work. ✓ "Go to the people" – immediately my reaction is it should come from the worker. Reframing from our Board & Management what is expected of the work. ✓ Need for analysis – understanding of power. 	<p>Need for shift in understanding of own practice.</p> <p>What is my practice lens? What is shaping my practice – skills/values/thinking/drivers?</p> <p>Analysis skills, Observation skills. Collaborative conversations about practice.</p> <p>Sense making about own practice – connection to CD practice. Micro method/practice, dialogue, critical conversations. Board and management need to support CD practice approach. Break down workers' isolation build connection around practice.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Not putting my problem-solving hat on. ✓ Default position is to 'help'. ✓ Importance to create space to honour deep listening to what people have to share – allow time for this to unfold. ✓ Conversations like this help – they validate and support. ✓ Practice is often lonely. Someone to take a close interest in what they are doing and what is coming up. 															
Webinar Four	<p>Barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Time ✓ Busy -ness ✓ Affordability ✓ Tensions around being a one worker NHC. <p>Training & mentoring is largely unavailable. Can't see professional development opportunities.</p> <p>Connecting with others in terms of understanding about CD development. Peer learning, community of practice. Formal study v's professional development New workers have few pathways; experienced workers need more support. Have learned from various sources, including University, CD networks, community members, peers and mentors, but still face big challenges in contemporary context – where communities all want different things. Organisations can't necessarily afford for staff to go to the CD Conference, or to access training, or to cover their time off work to do so. There is a lack of understanding broadly of what CD is, so that you can use precious resources to access what you think will be CD training and it is not CD at all. Always a tension is that we have lots of community members who come in with issues, and gradually feel supported and a growing sense of belonging, but not ready to take the next step, and that needs lots of input. Two or more organisations are experienced and could offer support. We have QFCA who can support this. There is real energy to progress things. Now is the time!!</p>	<p>Structures need to support CD practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Planning ✓ Boards ✓ Managers ✓ Other workers <p>Access to Mentors to explore practice.</p> <p>Do NHC's see themselves as spaces for citizen led change or service Hubs or both?</p>														
Webinar Five	<p>Polling: Poll4 (18 Participants)</p> <p>Would continued use of online platforms be useful for the development of your CD practice and/or addressing CD related issues? Please tick any relevant purposes (Multiple Choice):</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td>NC's sharing stories and learning</td> <td style="text-align: right;">89%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CD Seminars</td> <td style="text-align: right;">89%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CD Training</td> <td style="text-align: right;">94%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Project Mentoring</td> <td style="text-align: right;">72%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Practice Mentoring</td> <td style="text-align: right;">61%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Professional Supervision</td> <td style="text-align: right;">72%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>NC's addressing common issues</td> <td style="text-align: right;">89%</td> </tr> </table>	NC's sharing stories and learning	89%	CD Seminars	89%	CD Training	94%	Project Mentoring	72%	Practice Mentoring	61%	Professional Supervision	72%	NC's addressing common issues	89%	<p>Pretty clear about what people are interested in.</p> <p>Need to hold on to working with the smaller group who are interested in this work.</p> <p>Leadership/ Leaders have emerged from the sector. They are looking for a voice and ownership.</p> <p>How do we foster and stabilise voice and ownership with emerging leaders in the sector?</p> <p>How do we continue an action learning process?</p>
NC's sharing stories and learning	89%															
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