

the accumulation of social capital within a community and the way the BR&E program taps into all the elements of social capital.

Understanding social capital within community/government policy networks, by A. Walker, *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand*, no.22, Jul 2004, pp. 1-18.

There is an increasing need for joined-up government and joint working between agencies and across sectors in order to address "wicked" social problems and improve policy outcomes. Consequently, it has become imperative to understand the nature of policy network settings, and also the endogenous and exogenous factors that positively and negatively impact on interagency and intra-agency collaboration. From senior managers to front-line workers needing to work collaboratively

to achieve outcomes, knowing the types of relationships people have with other agencies may assist in identifying where greater time could be spent improving existing relationships or making new ones. While it is easy to assume that more coordination and cooperation will automatically lead to better and more efficient policy outcomes, collaboration can often be resource intensive, slow the whole process down and actually inhibit the achievement of policy outcomes. Therefore, if agencies are going to invest time and money in collaborative efforts, they need some assurance that such investment will pay dividends. The policy implications for using network analysis within a social capital framework to study policy networks and partnerships are discussed in this article. The paper concludes by describing how

a policy network/social capital framework approach could be used to examine the Strengthening Families interagency case management process used in New Zealand. (Journal abstract)

Social justice

The place of social justice in strengths-based social welfare work, by E. Reimer & D. Nixon, *Children Australia*, vol.29, no.2, 2004, pp. 14-19.

This paper attempts to unpack strengths-based practice in social welfare in order to reveal the location of social justice within such an approach. Firstly, this paper will briefly explore the origins of a strengths approach, including historical development of the approach, mentioning some specific practice theories. The paper will then investigate the concepts, using Jim Ife's (1998) model

of a social justice perspective in community development to achieve this. The two approaches will then be discussed in terms of how they should be used together to support not only positive casework, but effective social action, using the work of UnitingCare Burnside as examples. (Journal abstract)

Sustainability

Sustaining community-based programs for families, conceptualization and measurement, by J. Mancini & L. Marek, *Family Relations*, vol. 53, no. 4, July 2004, pp. 339-347.

This article describes a conceptual model for evaluating community-based program sustainability. The model has three components, elements needed for sustainability, middle-range program results and an ultimate result of sustainability.

PHILANTHROPY SUPPORTING EARLY INTERVENTION

After just two years, a new charitable foundation is demonstrating how it is living up to its commitment to making a real difference in the lives of children and young people. The Early Learnings report was launched by Telstra Foundation Director, Mr Bill Scales, AO, in Melbourne on Friday 22 October 2004.

Early Learnings reported the study a study of 14 innovative community-based projects undertaken for the Telstra Foundation by a team of researchers from the Stronger Families Learning Exchange at the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Early Learnings showcases the positive results that can be achieved when issues are tackled early or when people with passion and commitment see a need and are determined that children have better chances in life.

The report features ten family strengthening projects and four that promote the importance of early literacy and language development. The projects are different from one another in their settings and purposes. However, they all show that establishing trust and developing strong partnerships are the cornerstones of introducing a new way of thinking and doing.

For example:

- A national support network for siblings of children with disabilities has been established in recognition of the family stresses and difficulties that such children are grappling with.
- Children and their carers are dealing with the grief of losing a parent or family member to illicit drugs through an innovative therapy program.



Pictured at the launch of the Early Learnings report are members of the Stronger Families Learning Exchange research team with Telstra Foundation Manager (Fiona Moore) and Telstra Senior Program Officer (Georgia Symmons). From left: Liz Orr, Marlene Burchill, Fiona Moore (Telstra), Colleen Turner, Anne Garrow, Margo Northey, Ellen Fish and Georgia Symmons (Telstra).

- Another organisation has been able to expand a help-line established by a parent of children with disabilities into a nation-wide service. Now parents throughout Australia are supporting each other and reducing their sense of isolation and despair.
- In one region a collaboration between health and family support services is providing ongoing supports for mothers with illicit drug issues, developing a proactive approach that has significantly reduced the number of babies born with withdrawal symptoms and being removed into out of home care.
- In another region, schools are working with community organisations and providing greater coordinated supports for children with complex problems and their families.

Emerging literacy programs for pre-schoolers are much more than just early reading programs.

Such programs are assisting the early detection of toddlers' sensory problems (such as hearing difficulties) that may otherwise go undiagnosed until school, and reducing isolation and linking families with other community supports and services. Literacy programs provide a non-stigmatising way to provide basic resources for all children, and families are confidently using local community infrastructure such as libraries for the first time. Parents involved in an early literacy project have gained the confidence to return to study and gain formal qualifications, and schools are forging stronger links with their communities by making their facilities available for playgroups and parent support programs.

The full Early Learnings report, as well as information about Telstra Foundation grants and application processes, are available online at www.telstrafoundation.com.