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# Family and Community Resilience: Models and Methods of Building Community Capacity

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Integrated Risk, Response, and Recovery Policy and Management:  
International Perspectives across Multiple Scales

Swiss Re Centre for Global Dialogue, Zurich, Switzerland

October 2010



# Acknowledgements

- Gary L. Bowen, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- Hugh Gladwin, Florida International University
- John Kiefer , University of New Orleans
- Lydia I. Marek, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
- James A. Martin, Bryn Mawr College
- Megan McCoy, The University of Georgia
- Betty Morrow, Florida International University
- Dennis K. Orthner, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill



# The Four Elements of Community Resilience

**Prepared, Integrated, and Responsive Communities**

Community Capacity

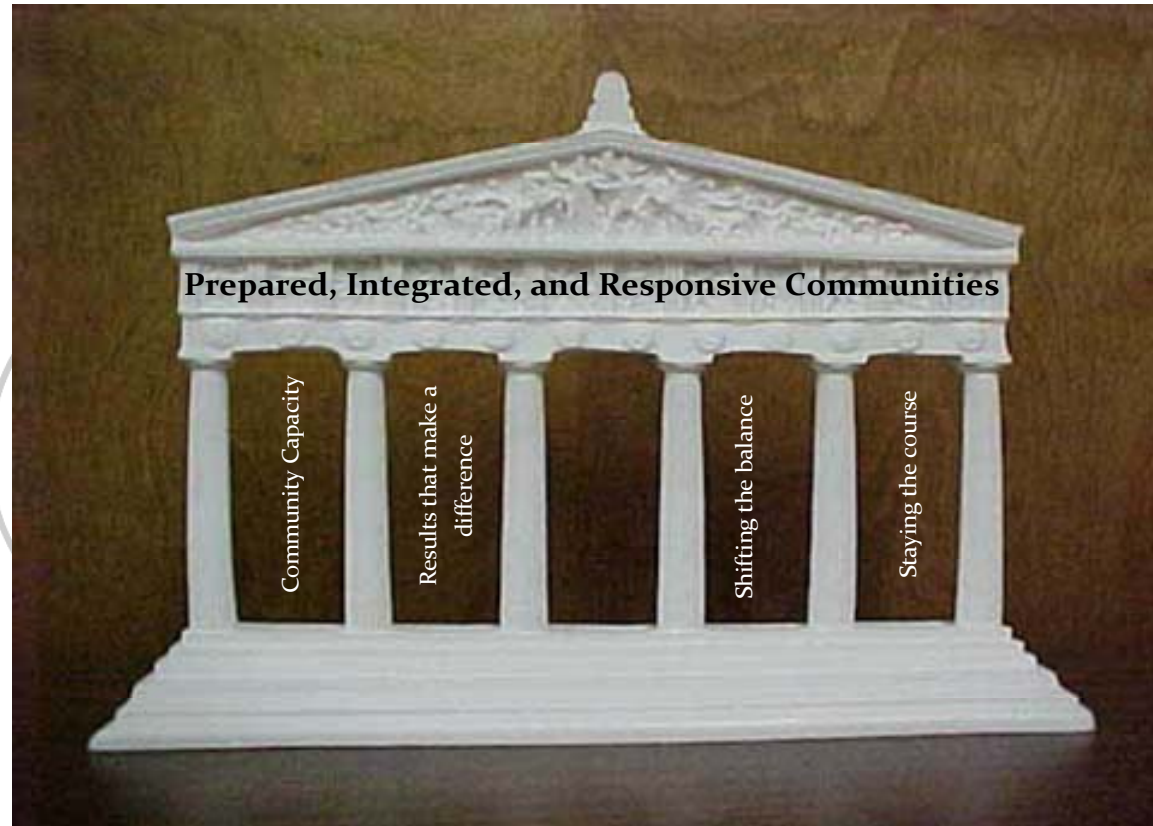
Results that make a  
difference

Shifting the balance

Staying the course

# The Four Elements of Community Resilience

- 1. Community capacity:**  
Elevating shared responsibility and collective competence
- 2. Working toward results that make a difference:** The landscape “at the end of the day”
- 3. Shifting the balance:**  
Enhancing resilience and accounting for vulnerabilities
- 4. Staying the course:**  
Sustaining benefits to individuals, families, and communities



# Understanding “Community”

- Community can be considered as a place, a target, and a force for prevention
  - *Place*: Boundaries, resources, and deficits. Peeling back the layers of the community. Uncover assets and liabilities
  - *Target*: Identifying community norms, networks, vulnerabilities, and strongholds.
  - *Force*: Mobilization of community members to enact change; ultimate change agents (Mancini, Nelson, Bowen, & Martin, 2006).



# Assumptions About Communities

- As collections of individuals and families, have community boundaries that are visible, as well as those that are not
- Have a life of their own, a personality, and an ability to self-determine
- Have the raw materials for being resilient, though often fail to access those materials in productive ways
- Can dramatically influence what individuals and families experience, from despair to vibrancy, and from stasis to growth, including preparedness
- Exhibit considerable diversity, as well as convergence



# Community Capacity

Elevating Shared Responsibility  
and Collective Competence



# Building Community Capacity

- Improve normative everyday life
- Respond effectively to crisis events, including natural and man-made disasters
- Goal: To find ways communities can build their resilience, be in greater control of what they experience as a collective, and “at the end of the day” determine that life is improved
- We locate capacity-building in a social organization framework because it exposes important layers in a community that can support resilience



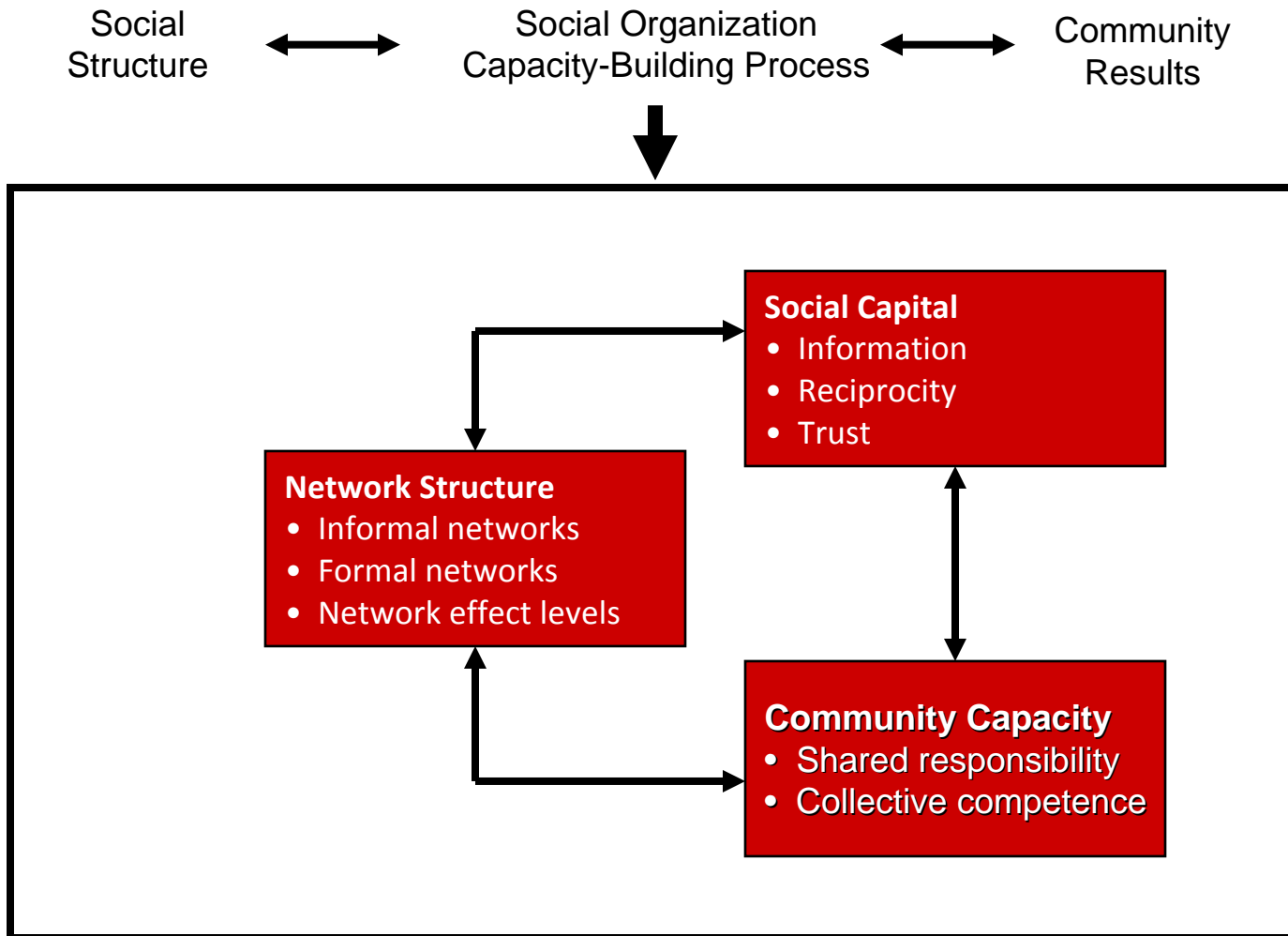


# In Conclusion.....



*It's all about networks.....  
and networks are all about connections.....  
and connections are all about relationships.*





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# Social Organization: Community Capacity

- Shared responsibility
  - For general welfare of the community and its individual members
  - Sentiments
- Collective competence
  - Taking collective action, confronting situations
- Assumptions
  - Concern directed at community as a whole and at particular elements, action is beyond expression of positive sentiments, action is proactive and reactive, action targeted at threats and at normative situations



# Social Organization: Social Capital

- Information, reciprocity, and trust
  - Aggregate of resources (information, opportunities, and instrumental support)
- Arise from reciprocal social relationships
- Results from participation in formal and informal settings
- Social capital observed in actions of civic groups, faith communities, and any number of community-based groups
- Increases odds of achieving results otherwise not attained



# Networks

- Primary ways through which community life is enacted
- Informal networks comprise web of relationships with friends, neighbors, work associates
- Formal networks associated with agencies and organizations
- Voluntary and obligatory relationships



# Functions of Informal Networks

- Emotional (to deal with despair and worry)
- Instrumental (to accomplish practical tasks)
- Informational (to achieve better decisions)
- Companionate (to spend time in a context for support)
- Validation (to support feeling worthwhile, competent, and hopeful)
- Contributes the power of interpersonal relationships to the mix (Cohen, Underwood, & Gottlieb, 2000).



# Significance of Formal Networks

- Mission of providing support programs and services
- Are stronger when they are diverse and comprehensive, when outreach is a primary activity, and when specific formal support entities collaborate (solving “silo”-related problems)
- Key role in supporting informal networks
- Contributes specialized expertise to the community resilience mix





# Intersection of Informal & Formal Networks

- First-order effects occur within a homogeneous network, such as in a single agency or among friends. Efforts to deal with an issue or problem are contained within the single network. Putnam (2000) discusses the idea of “bonding” that occurs within a network, and its importance for enacting change.
- Second-order effects occur among similar networks, such as between a family service agency and a community health center, or among contiguous neighborhoods.
- Third-order effects are derived from dissimilar networks, such as partnerships between community agencies and neighborhood groups, which expand Putnam’s idea of “bridging” from the individual to the community level. When there is agreement across disparate groups about desired community change, the resource base for mobilizing a community dramatically increases, as well as the probability for buffering challenge or adversity and for achieving desired community results.





# Intersection of Informal and Formal Networks

- When dissimilar networks focus on common issues, the odds increase of making positive differences in communities. It is within these networks that social capital develops and that community capacity evolves. In other words, networks provide the framework for social action because it is through networks that community members develop relationships and feel connected to one another.
- The optimal configuration and intersection of networks for achieving community resilience likely vary depending on the combination of adversities and challenges that the community faces. In some cases, formal networks may need to assume greater leadership and involvement than at other times. In other cases, informal networks may need to be mobilized and activated (Small & Supple, 2001).



# Social Organization: Community Results

- Consequences of effective social organization: Ultimate targets of intervention and prevention
- Desired results (examples, safety, health and well-being, family resilience, welfare of immigrant and refugee families)
- Community results not owned by any particular group but valued across community; contributed to by collection of groups, entities
- Program results aligned with particular agencies and what they “have say about”
- Identified results assist to determine leverage points for change
- Moves theory from interesting framework to theory of action
- Pragmatically, focus is on *managing results* rather than managing activities; important shift in program development and assessment from shotgun to directed initiatives



# Working Toward Results that Make a Difference

The Landscape “at the end of the  
day”



# Building Community Capacity and Managing Results

- In this framework “results” are significant
  - Disaster preparedness results
- Results management is a program planning and implementation scheme that parallels social organization and capacity-building
- Key point for prevention and intervention programs: *Program activities are ONLY useful to the extent they are TIED TO RESULTS*, i.e. change in behavior, knowledge, attitudes (Mancini, Huebner, McCollum, & Marek, 2005).



# Results Management Steps

- Assessment of family and community needs and assets, including those of informal and formal networks; negative and positive community characteristics should be exposed
- Determination of desired community results (example, better informed individuals and families); “owned” by the community and by various groups, neighborhoods, and organizations
- Determination of desired program results (what formal networks have say over); what will be different as a result of this program?
- Development of programs and activities
- Assessment of alignment of reaching desired results with programs and activities
- Reassessment of the “status quo” and the “end of the day”



# Characteristics of Results Management

- Focus on link between results and activities
- Results are clearly defined and serve as program direction guides
  - *At the end of the day*
- Focus also on what indicates results are being achieved
  - How do we know people are better informed?
- Continue activities that can be clearly tied to desired results
  - Is there good and logical alignment?
- Process is energized if there is *dissatisfaction with the status quo* and if there is clarity about the *end of the day desired results*



# Shifting the Balance

Enhancing Resilience and  
Accounting for Vulnerabilities



# Social Vulnerability

- Vulnerability describes pre-event, inherent characteristics or qualities of systems that create the potential for harm or differential ability to recover following a crises or hazard event (Cutter, et al., 2008).
- Social vulnerability is associated with economic, social, cultural, and/or political conditions that can limit available resources and response capacity of any social unit at any stage in a disaster cycle (Bolin & Stanford, 1998).
- Vulnerabilities are often clustered, rather than occur in isolation, therefore causing some individuals, families, neighborhoods, communities and nations to be highly vulnerable (Colten, Kates, & Laska, 2008).





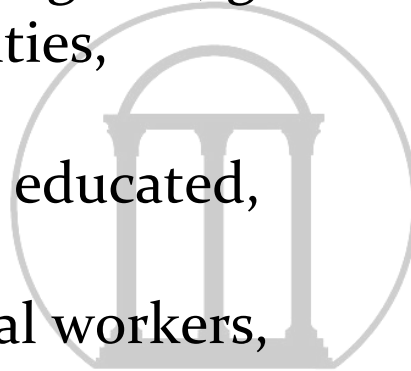
# Social Vulnerability

- Vulnerable community members are “populations whose members may have additional needs before, during, and after an incident in functional areas, including but not limited to: maintaining independence, communication, transportation, supervision and medical care” (FEMA, 2008, p. 4).
- Essential to effective emergency and disaster management is well-grounded knowledge about the community, including the extent to which vulnerable groups reside there, the geographical locations where they tend to cluster, and the specific nature of their vulnerabilities, including their potential needs in an emergency response (Morrow, 1999).



# Social Vulnerability

- Groups of people who are more likely to have disaster response difficulties include:
  - the poor,
  - minorities (including race, gender and class),
  - those with disabilities,
  - elderly people,
  - those who are less educated,
  - immigrants,
  - migrant or seasonal workers,
  - new residents,
  - tourists,
  - renters,
  - and people who live alone and/or are isolated from family and friends, such as the homeless



# Vulnerability, Resilience, and Resiliency

## *Resilience*

- Process of successfully overcoming adversity (individual)
- Family resilience is the process by which families are able to adapt and function competently following exposure to significant adversity or crises

## *Vulnerability*

- Experiences, situations, or characteristics that expose a person to additional negative experiences and results
- Risk
- Increase odds of poor results
- Internal and external elements
- Chronic and acute

## *Resiliency*

- Trait (individual)
- Family resiliency is capacity of family system to successfully navigate their life circumstances; equate with family strengths
- (Patterson, 2002; Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000)



# Resilience

- A community that maintains, regains, or established favorable community results over time despite adversity (clear crises) or positive challenges (more normative, everyday life events) is considered to be resilient.
- Building resilience is about establishing and sustaining community capacity.
- Understanding resilience includes: (1) identifying particular aspects of communities that are assets, noting which are especially strong (those moderately so, and those needing attention), (2) a focus on how community members understand and access these assets, and (3) analyses on how community resilience factors or assets have been “tested” in the past.



# Characteristics of a resilient community

- Formal networks know their roles prior to a crisis
- People in the community concur that coalescing is to their benefit
- Community members rely on social ties during an emergency
- Trusted information sources convey accurate and efficiently-accessed information
- The community has diverse resources at its disposal (Norris, Stevens, Pfefferbaum, Wyche, & Pfefferbaum, 2008).



# Staying the Course

Sustaining Benefits to Individuals,  
Families, and Communities



# Sustainability: A Matter of Responsibility

- *“We have a responsibility to our program recipients; they’ve had so many losses in their lives and for us to come in for a year or two or three and give them hope, only to have the program go away, we’ve just caused another loss and a further loss of hope in their lives” (Akerlund, 2000).*



# What is sustainability?

Sustainability is the capacity of programs to continuously respond to community issues. A sustained program maintains a focus consonant with its original goals and objectives, including the individuals, families, and communities it was originally intended to serve.

- Programs ebb and flow and wax and wane regarding the breadth and depth of their programming. Some contract and others expand, whereas other maintain original program activities.
- Some become aligned with other organizations and established institutions, whereas others maintain their independence.
- Certain programs offer the same prevention activities for years, and others introduce difference activities that remain focused on their general goals and objectives.





# Key Element

The key element of sustainability is providing continued benefits, regardless of particular activities delivered or the format (institutionalization versus independence) in which they are delivered. Thus it is more important to sustain benefits to families and communities than to sustain program activities per se” (Mancini & Marek, 2004, pp. 339-340).



# Visualizing Sustainability: Factors and Patterns



# Looking Forward

Networks, Connections, and  
Relationships



# In Conclusion.....

- *It's all about networks...and networks are all about connections...and connections are all about relationships.*



# Community Capacity-building elements

- Who we know
- How well we know each other
- How close we feel to them
- Our experience with them
- What we expect of them
- What we do together of importance
- Quality of life in our communities
- Strength of informal networks
- Keeping vulnerability at the center of the equation
- Nature of efforts to improve community life
- How programs and professionals help families and communities
- How we can sustain what is good and helpful
- The best way to bring about change
- Shared responsibility and collective competence



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# Appendix

## Bridging Research and Practice: The Case of Evaluation Research



# Bridging the Gap between Scientist and Practitioners

- Although, in theory, it appears that evaluation research is a natural complement to program delivery, program development and service delivery tend to work at cross-purposes with program evaluation. Evaluators and program professionals may have basic differences in emphasis and direction that lead to a poor fit between them. On the one hand, program professionals may feel that evaluation research is an obstacle to their work and a required activity that must be endured. The term “diverted” may even be used in discussing resources earmarked for evaluation of programs.
- At first glance, the worlds of program professionals and evaluators may seem quite separate. However, there are common issues whose resolution will enhance both program development and research on programs. Program professionals and evaluators have a great deal to learn from each other. As that learning occurs, both program delivery and evaluation research will benefit.



# Bridging the Gap

- Overall, a productive partnership is one that values partnership goals, in addition to whatever goals individuals may have. A primary partnership value for evaluators and program professionals to embrace is that it is mainly through collaboration that an evaluation will achieve the promise of validly assessing program process and effects, and will be ultimately useful to program professionals. Questions of context, evaluability, and utility of the evaluation are more readily addressed when this value is shared.



# What Scientists Need to Know

- Evaluators assume that what they are interested in will stand still long enough to be scrutinized. Moreover, it is assumed that what evaluators wish to observe will have defined borders and be easily visible. Evaluators must recognize that programs lend themselves toward fuzziness rather than textbook clarity because it is difficult to precisely quantify an intervention that is occurring in a fluid environment. Who can say what the exact “dosage” is of a program that is delivered in various ways by various people to various customers?
- Evaluators must be mindful that program professionals care most about delivering their program to those for whom it is designed. If program changes need to be made midstream, those changes may be made with little consideration given to the evaluation plan. Program professionals care relatively more about what works and less about what can be consistently and systematically researched. Evaluators must be prepared to shift their designs and methods accordingly while at the same time working with program professionals for the purpose of keeping goals focused as much as possible.
- It is common for evaluation reports to be read by few; their results, therefore, are used by even fewer. Evaluation approaches should be in response to an agreed-upon set of program purposes and results and, as such, evaluation results must be tied into program needs from the beginning. What distinguishes evaluation research from research in general is its focus on generating results that examine and enable programs, rather than the production of information for its own sake.



# What Practitioners Need to know

- Because there are substantial pressures on program professionals to field their program as quickly as possible to address community issues, it may seem that the demands of research are obstructive. Program planners should recognize that their goals are not at odds with those of evaluators. Good evaluation research requires that program results be defined, that methods to achieve those goals be articulated, and that there is a match between what is expected of a program and what is actually done in that program. These requirements are extremely helpful to program planning and implementation.
- While the process of gathering data may seem daunting and inconvenient to program professionals, it should be recognized that the information evaluation research generates can become significant for the process of justifying programs and for soliciting funds and community support.
- Because of the rapidity with which programs develop and change, there is always a need for some “handles” that will help in knowing how to effectively manage them. Evaluation information can meet this need and can provide community professionals with a road map for fine-tuning their programs. A primary goal and outcome of program research is the documentation of “lessons learned” about program characteristics, implementation, liabilities, and benefits. Such information can be invaluable for both replication and future program planning.
- For more information on evaluation research and bridging the gap between scientists and practitioners see Mancini, Marek, Byrne, Huebner (2004).

