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A Maelstrom: Theories, Concepts, Models and Movements

The Vortex of Community Development Initiatives

Over the last two decades, deriving from the melange of evolving community development theories, concepts, and practices in response to pressures for communities to adapt to and manage change, there have been multiple and diverse attempts to assist communities in addressing the challenges and opportunities arising from social and economic shifts and developments. Yet the contemporary literature has, at best, been indiscriminate in its description, categorisation and evaluation of these diverse approaches to support community building and, as a result, reflects a lack of clarity and definition, and is a conceptual jungle.

With a primary focus on communities that are increasingly being challenged by new ways of understanding and interacting with the world, especially those that emphasise creativity as a primary stimulus for the generation of healthy, sustainable economies and communities, this chapter explores the viability and sustainability of the main species inhabiting the jungle. The first, and perhaps most significant of these, is community capacity building (CCB), which is a broad, all-encompassing approach to community development built on (i) community empowerment, (ii) the development of skills, knowledge and resources, (iii) strong social relationships, and (iv) the development

of strong networks within and between communities and organisations (Verity, 2007). CCB operates across many community services, including health, social welfare, family services, community services, environment, agriculture, tourism, local government and education (Hounslow, 2002). While the arts have not so far been explicitly linked to CCB, there have nevertheless been parallel arts-based approaches aimed at community development and capacity building. This chapter also probes the potential of the arts in community development in the context of three arts-based movements: (i) the community arts movement; (ii) community cultural development (CCD); and (iii) the evolving concept of creative communities. It concludes with a critical examination of CCB and the specific arts-based movements in terms of their potential for supporting contemporary community development.

Community Capacity Building (CCB)

What does CCB Mean?

Over the last two decades in particular, there has been a significant growth in interest in CCB and its potential role in supporting communities to develop, implement and sustain actions through which they can exercise control over their ongoing social, cultural and economic environments (Chapman & Kirk, 2001; Craig, 2007). The term, however, is an expansive one, which has been almost randomly applied to a diverse range of activities conducted in different settings for multiple purposes. It has been described as 'elusive, slippery, shifting, contested, muddled, ill-defined' (Chapman & Kirk, 2001, p. 8). CCB has also been described variously in the literature as a concept, a strategy, a process, and a value in and of itself; each approach provides part of the jigsaw that defines CCB (see Figure 2).

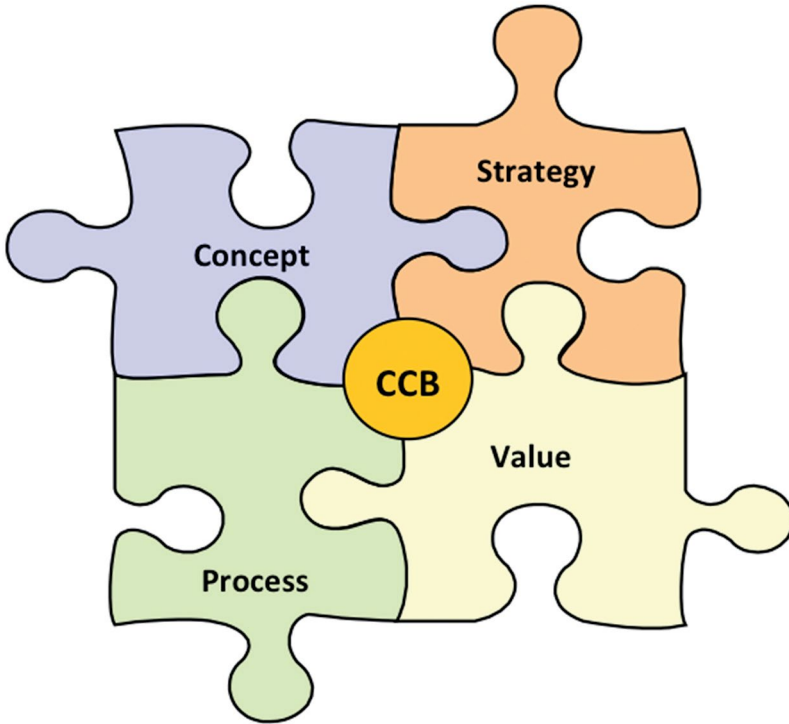


Figure 2. The CCB Jigsaw: Many Meanings for Different People.

Source: Author's research.

Using Figure 2 as a framework for a more detailed examination of extant CCB definitions, Table 4 draws on contemporary literature to encapsulate the range of definitional characteristics (see Appendix A).

This selection of definitions serves to illustrate just how loosely and broadly the term has been applied. Attempts to clarify and render the definitions of CCB more specific have typically involved the articulation of the characteristics and features of specific projects and activities. The contextual diversity of CCB projects and activities, including projects in health, community services, primary industries, government services and tourism, has further exacerbated the problems inherent in attempts to identify the core aspects of CCB (Hounslow, 2002). Rather than adding precision to definitions, the development over the past decade of a comprehensive practice-based

literature that largely reports on individual projects and programs loosely characterised as CCB has served only to add a further layer of confusion and vagueness.

Table 4. Definitional Characteristics of CCB.

Focus of CCB	Authors	Primary definitional focus of CCB
Concept	Jackson (1999)	CCB as a holistic balance of community assets to which the community has access.
	Duncan & Thomas (2001) Eng & Parker (1994) Hounslow (2002) Howe & Cleary (2001) Littlejohns & Thompson (2001)	Community empowerment concept.
Strategy	Cavaye (2000a)	Strategy for governments working with communities.
	Thompson & Pepperdine (2003)	Equity strategy to redress imbalances arising from change.
Process	Healy (2001)	Process to develop and strengthen social networks that can be applied to support disadvantaged communities.
	Healy & Hampshire (2002)	Problem-solving process for communities.
	Bryden, Watson, Storey & Van Alphen (1997)	Project management process.
	Henderson & Mayo (1998)	Education and training process.
	Purdue, Razaque, Hambleton & Stewart (2000)	Skill analysis process.
Value	Hawkes (2001)	A value in and of itself based on innovation, creativity and optimism.

Source: Author's research.

While fuzziness surrounding the meaning of a key term is unhelpful in many ways, certain positives can nevertheless be identified. Firstly, the scope and diversity of activities grouped under the CCB label reflect a rapidly growing interest in mechanisms to develop and sustain viable and dynamic communities that is no longer limited to researchers and practitioners but has extended to government agencies, not-for-profit organisations, and communities themselves (Chapman & Kirk, 2001; Craig, 2007). There is also a growing recognition of the limitations of interventionist and paternalistic approaches in

sustainable development of communities resulting in new arguments for the adoption of more inclusive practices, because community growth and development strategies must be contextualised and flexible enough to cater for the diversity that characterises individual communities (Mowbray, 2005). Lastly, and more significantly in terms of this research, problems with the specificity of CCB point to the multidimensional complexity of CCB — a reality that remains largely unacknowledged.

The current lack of precision in the application of the term may reduce the understanding and appreciation of linkages between projects and initiatives and thus limit the potential for collaboration and learning across and between projects. Although not yet acknowledged in the literature, it can be argued that the absence of clear purposes and directions may create significant barriers to the process of evaluating potential outcomes of CCB projects because performance indicators can seldom be specified.

Such diversity and complexity in both concept and practice suggests that, rather than seeking an overarching single definition, it may be more useful to tease out the concepts implicit in the term as a basis for action. To that end, it is possible to deduce from the literature the key characteristics of CCB. As a starting point, CCB's five key areas of influence on communities can be identified:

1. Community empowerment
2. Partnerships
3. Change management
4. Social capital
5. Economic empowerment.

Table 5 draws from the work of the major contributors to CCB research to identify key characteristics of each of the five spheres of influence.

Table 5. Domains and Characteristics of CCB.

Spheres of influence	Community empowerment	Change management	Partnerships	Social capital	Economic empowerment
Defining characteristics	Community ownership and control.	Change management strategies and processes.	Inter- and intra-community partnerships.	Community networking, coordination and cooperation.	Community empowerment through economic development.
Unique characteristics	Community ownership. Sense of community. Community competence. Community assets. Participation. Leadership. Resources. (Knowledge and skills.) Ongoing learning.	Community champions and leaders. Community values. Problem solving. Resources. Knowledge and skills. Critical reflection. Social networks.	Balance of assets (community and external). Role of external agencies. Role of government. Collaborative problem solving. Joint leadership.	Community structures. Equity. Resource mobilisation. Participation. Leadership. Problem assessment. Human and social resources. Program management.	Sense of community. Change management. Community assets. Business development. Financial capability.
Shared/common characteristics	Community involvement and empowerment. Addressing community disadvantage.	The interplay between social and economic capital. Collaboration and cooperation.		Recognition of community assets. Recognition of the need for innovation. Management of change.	
Key exponents	Duncan & Thomas (2000), Eng & Parker (1994), Hounslow (2002), Howe & Cleary (2001), Littlejohns & Thompson (2001)	Chanan, Glichrist & West (1999), Hawkes (2001)	Cavaye (2000a), Henderson & Mayo (1998), Jackson (1999)	Healy (2001), Healy & Hampshire (2002), Laverack (2001), Thompson & Pepperdine (2003)	Purdue, Razaque, Hambleton & Stewart. (2000)

Source: Author's research.

The shared or common features identified in Table 5 may be further compressed to distil seven key principles of CCB.

Key Principles of CCB

Seven identified key principles of CCB are presented in Table 6, referencing the identified five spheres of influence.

Table 6. Seven Key Principles of CCB.

CCB spheres of influence	CCB key principles
Community empowerment	1. Communities should be empowered to control their own futures. 2. CCB values equal opportunity and greater social equity.
Partnerships	3. CCB emphasises collaboration and the active participation of all stakeholders.
Change management	4. CCB focuses on the management of change in communities.
Social capital	5. CCB recognises and builds on existing community assets. 6. CCB values innovation and creativity.
Economic empowerment	7. CCB addresses the economic development needs of communities.

Source: Author's research.

Issues implicit in these seven principles distilled from the literature can be elaborated as follows.

Principle 1: Communities should be empowered to control their own futures

CCB recognises that solutions to problems are best developed and implemented by those closest to the problem as they have a detailed understanding of it as well as an acute appreciation of the potential and workability of solutions (Healy & Hampshire, 2002; Howe & Cleary, 2001; Mowbray, 2005).

Principle 2: CCB values greater social equity

CCB acknowledges that some communities have been or are in danger of being disadvantaged by economic, social and political change, and that action needs to be taken to redress imbalances arising from such changes. However, it also implicitly endorses the value of equal

opportunity and the desirability of greater social equity (Cavaye, 2000; Cavaye, 2000a; Cavaye, 2001; Hounslow, 2002; Thompson & Pepperdine, 2003).

Principle 3: CCB emphasises collaboration among all stakeholders

CCB emphasises active participation by all sectors of the community and a collaborative approach between communities and external stakeholders (Cavaye, 2000; Chapman & Kirk, 2001; Murphy & Thomas, 2002).

Principle 4: Effective change management approaches are crucial to CCB

CCB focuses on the management of change in communities and uses a range of change management processes to support communities (Chanan et al., 1999; Hawkes, 2001).

Principle 5: CCB recognises and builds on existing community assets

CCB is predicated on the conviction that all communities have tangible and intangible assets in the form of skills, knowledge, understandings and experiences. It respects these assets and recognises that approaches deriving from existing community capacities are more likely to be successful than those that adopt more traditional top-down, paternalistic and interventionist approaches (Cavaye, 2000; Howe & Cleary, 2001; Littlejohns & Thompson, 2001).

Principle 6: CCB values innovation and creativity

CCB values innovation, imagination, creativity and optimism (Hawkes, 2001; Williams, 2000).

Principle 7: CCB addresses the economic development needs of communities

CCB balances social capital with economic capital with an emphasis on particular skill requirements for communities, emphasising economic development and business development and drawing attention to the interplay between financial capacity, physical resources and assets, and human and social resources (Healy, 2001; Purdue et al., 2000).

While the seven principles provide a concise description of the platform on which CCB theories and practices are based, the following examination of the factors influencing CCB will highlight the continuing confusion surrounding its use and application in communities.

Operational Issues Influencing CCB

While it has been possible to distil these seven key principles of CCB, the strong theoretical underpinnings implicit in the principles have been substantially eroded by the association of the term with a myriad of diverse activities and initiatives. In fact, the term has been used in so many different ways by dissimilar groups to suit such a variety of purposes that the concept of CCB has become confused and convoluted. This threatens and undermines both the purposes and viability of many initiatives and programs. For example, it has been used by government departments responsible for funding community projects aimed at regeneration and growth in which little power and control may actually reside with communities (Cavaye, 2001; Cavaye, 2008). It has also been used by public, private and not-for-profit agencies seeking to work with communities to access specific funding sources to address issues that may or may not have originated from community demand (Chaskin, 2001). Thus the CCB principles relating to community control and empowerment have been seriously jeopardised. Laverack & Wallerstein (2001) have argued that the importance of community control and empowerment as a central theme of CCB has been overshadowed and eroded since the mid-1990s by a growing fascination with a plethora of related terms and concepts, such as community capacity, community competence, and community cohesiveness. The central message that communities should be able to exercise the power to make decisions, manage resources and control outcomes has been lost through an emerging preoccupation with skill development, resource allocation and intervention.

Further anomalies between the theoretical underpinnings of CCB and its application in various settings are evidenced by the current focus of projects and initiatives on social outcomes. These include improved community cohesiveness, the reconciliation of community diversity, the development of shared community values, and the development of community partnerships (Williams, 2000). The now pervasive links between the social sciences and CCB indicate that the current

dimensions of CCB have been strongly tipped in favour of social outcomes at the expense of economic outcomes (DeFilippis, 2001; Shaw & Carter, 2007). Some contemporary researchers have focused on the underlying tensions inherent in CCB programs. Hounslow (2002), for example, draws attention to several tensions and ambiguities. Firstly, there are not always local solutions to local problems, regardless of the strength of the community's capacity; some problems require state- or national-level changes in policies and resource allocation. Secondly, community is not a single or homogeneous entity as, within any community, there will be different viewpoints and interests potentially leading to conflict. Thirdly, there are sometimes significant tensions between the goals and outcomes set by government and other external organisations and those central to and preferred by local community organisations.

However, it has also been argued that CCB is an evolutionary theory subject to continuous development and refinement (Green & Haines, 2011; Li, 2006). For example, it has recently captured the attention of public policymakers and program planners as a strategy to complement a range of public policy directions and initiatives (Cavaye, 2008). Consequently, the language of CCB has been used to support objectives in government services including health, crime prevention, primary industries and community services. While this has added to confusion over the meaning and purpose of CCB, it has also expanded the term (Cavaye, 2008; Shaw, 2008). The most significant impact of this development has been the acceptance of a view of CCB that integrates the social and the economic:

community capacity building is about providing communities with the tools to help themselves, adopting a way of thinking that will add value to the social, economic and human resources that exist in each community. It is a bottom up, long-term process that integrates the various aspects of community well-being (economic, social, environmental and cultural) and improved quality of life is its main outcome (Smith, Littlejohns & Roy, 2003, p. 22).

Broadening the Concept of CCB

Arguments for the integration of social and economic objectives in community building highlight an interest in broadening the concept of CCB and developing a new framework for understanding,

implementing and evaluating CCB. However, as demonstrated, much of the contemporary literature lacks specificity and extensive work is required, especially regarding the interplay between different forms of capital, not just social and economic but also cultural, environmental and other forms of capital. Some researchers argue that most of the work undertaken during the last 30 years under the banner of CCB has simply involved recycled social insights and theories from 1960s community theory (Broughton & Chambers, 2001; Williams & Durrance, 2008). However, other researchers believe that, while there is a continuum, a qualitative shift has nevertheless occurred over the last decade (Green & Haines, 2011; James, Wrigley & Lonnqvist, 2009).

Researchers have identified three characteristics that differentiate current CCB approaches from earlier community development theories. Firstly, contemporary CCB places a far greater emphasis on collaborative approaches to tackling social and economic issues (Howe & Cleary, 2001). Secondly, contemporary approaches stress the explicit demands for place management rather than program-focused management and for a bottom-up approach to solving community problems (Howe & Cleary, 2001). Thirdly, current CCB places a far greater emphasis on the community itself in terms of needs identification, defining outcomes and initiating actions, rather than being mobilised to act solely by external agencies (Littlejohns & Thompson, 2001).

New Directions for CCB

The significant growth in interest in CCB over the last decade and the associated explosion in practice-based literature has created complexities and tensions that produce difficulties in (i) understanding and appreciating the connection between CCB projects, thereby limiting the potential for understanding and learning across and between projects (Craig, 2007), and (ii) setting benchmarks and performance indicators against which CCB programs can be successfully measured and evaluated (Laverack & Wallerstein, 2001; Smith et al., 2003). After a decade of intense activity, critical questions remain unanswered in the CCB literature. What long-term community outcomes from CCB can be identified? To what extent might CCB consolidate the power of government agencies and other institutions rather than serving the goal of empowering communities themselves? How might communities exercise more control over the activities of external CCB stakeholders?

Such questions lead to further questions about how communities might become self-sustaining. Who will judge if/when they become so? By what criteria? How will power be exercised in communities? What are the factors affecting the capacity of communities to meet their needs and resolve issues?

Unanswered questions coupled with continuing confusion and ambiguity around CCB suggest an urgent need for a new framework to underpin a fresh logic for planning, supporting and sustaining CCB. Such a logic might provide renewed energy around the why of CCB; clarity about the what of CCB; a rethink of the who of CCB; and a revolution about the how of CCB. It is sometimes the case that CCB programs and projects are narrowly focused and fail to recognise that many programs do not operate in a policy vacuum (West, 2009).

CCB is part of a wider policy agenda supporting civic participation, decentralisation and local service delivery (Taylor, 2000; Wilson, 1997; Yarnet, 2000). However, Duncan & Thomas (2000) believe that the most significant policy factors impacting on CCB have yet to emerge fully. They observe that many current programs are developing in ad hoc and non-strategic ways and argue that, unless programs are more effectively linked to wider policy agendas, they may lead to disenchantment among communities and the consequent waste of valuable resources. Chapman & Kirk (2001) identify a range of policy drivers that support CCB, including the reduction in poverty, the alleviation of social exclusion, the creation of an equal and just society, modernisation of local government, the establishment of balanced, stable and cohesive communities, promotion of effective partnerships, community networking, community economic development, and the improvement of local service delivery. CCB programs and initiatives would benefit from a deeper understanding and appreciation of why and how CCB is important locally, nationally and internationally.

While CCB is a term popular with communities, researchers and governments, its meaning is often misunderstood. As already indicated, the pervasive links between the social sciences and CCB have resulted in the dimensions of capacity building being strongly tipped in favour of social outcomes in terms of improved community cohesiveness, reconciliation of community diversity, development of shared community values, and development of community

partnerships. However, over the last five years, CCB has captured the attention of public policymakers and program managers as an overarching strategy to complement a range of policy directions and initiatives. The language of CCB has been used to support objectives in government services, including health, crime prevention, primary industries and community services. The diverse contexts in which the language of CCB has been adopted has, at one level, contributed to confusion over its meaning and function; yet, on another level, it has added breadth and depth to the concept. These developments highlight the continuing evolution towards a framework for understanding, implementing and evaluating CCB.

Given that another key feature of CCB is the interaction needed for building relationships between people and organisations within communities, between separate communities, and between communities and external agencies, clarity around the roles and responsibilities of these people is paramount to successful CCB design and implementation. CCB rarely takes place without some form of facilitation, usually in the form of project officers or community development workers. In their study of sustainable communities pilot projects, Carley & Kirk (1999) found that the role of project officer was vital in supporting CCB. The project officer's ability to act as a catalyst for local action, in coordinating necessary support from alternative sources, and in creating linkages with key agencies was critical to the success of the initiative (Carley & Kirk, 1999).

The use of the project officer or community development worker is also a key feature in the literature on community involvement in rural development (Bryden et al., 1997). While the work of the project officer is well documented in CCB literature, more work is required to clarify the roles and responsibilities of other people and agencies involved in CCB programs, including government officers and agencies, funding bodies, community groups and others. Another key issue around the who of CCB is the potential for disruption of the balance between communities and other stakeholders as a result of the involvement of external stakeholders in CCB activities. There is a critical difference between communities taking action and communities being mobilised to act, which is not always explicitly recognised.

A revolution around the how of CCB must acknowledge the power relationships that exist between external professionals and local residents. In many cases, partnerships in CCB have been forged simply as a consequence of funding opportunities that specify community involvement as a funding criterion rather than due to a strategy for community empowerment. Community involvement has often played a narrow and largely functional handmaiden role, concerned merely with achieving externally imposed criteria. The evolution of CCB has moved from its original emphasis on community empowerment, and later community mobilisation, to a more refined understanding that effective community improvement requires engaging those who are experiencing problems directly — and in ways where meaningful decision making is shared.

CCB has enormous potential to mobilise communities to achieve self-reliance and ongoing sustainable community improvements. As yet, the literature has failed to communicate an integrated view of CCB. There is an ongoing need to research CCB in a more all-encompassing manner to consolidate strategies and approaches that recognise the existing abilities, attitudes, skills and resources available to communities as they provide the key to improving their economic and social futures.

Arts-Based Approaches to Community Building

The Role of the Arts in Community Development and Capacity Building

While the evolution of CCB over the last two decades has intersected with many community services and impacted on several industry sectors, it has not connected with the arts in any discernable way. This may be explained partly because the development and growth of a separate and specific community arts movement has, to a degree, paralleled the growing interest in and application of CCB in communities. However, while CCB has operated from a primary focus on communities and their challenges and needs, the community arts movement places its central emphasis on the value of the arts

and artists and their role in communities. CCB has operated across a range of services and industry sectors while the community arts movement has mostly focused specifically on the arts and cultural industries (Hawkins, 1993). The next section traces the evolution of the arts in community development from the community arts movement to the evolution of the concept and practice of community cultural development (CCD) and finally to the newly articulated creative communities. It also examines the ongoing potential of these arts-based movements to support community development and capacity building.

Hallmarks of the Community Arts Movement

The term 'community arts' was first coined during the late 1960s and spawned a movement that grew rapidly initially in the United States and then spread to Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Australia (Hawkins, 1993). The original community arts movement was centred strongly on the arts and focused primarily on artistic activity in a community setting (Hawkins, 1993). Since the late 1960s, community arts practice has been strongly founded in the belief that cultural meaning, expression and creativity reside within a community and that the task of the community artist is to assist community members 'free their imaginations and give form to their creativity' (Goldbard, 1993, p. 2). While specialist individual artists were vital to the movement, collaboration between artists and others was also considered central to the practice of community arts. Examples of early community arts projects outlined in Table 7 reflect what were, at the time, new and somewhat radical approaches focusing on whole-of-community involvement in the arts by emphasising access and participation. In this way, these examples also reflect the political ideals of the 1970s and illustrate what was essentially a move towards the democratisation of the arts rather than dominantly a movement to support community development (Hawkins, 1993).

Table 7. Overview of Selected Community Arts Projects.

Name of initiative	Date	Country	Background and purpose of initiative	Positioning of the arts	Outcomes	Issues	Source
San Francisco Neighborhood Arts Program (NAP)	1967	USA	<p>Regarded as a founder and exemplar of community-based arts. At a time of social and racial unrest the US Government was keen to fund projects to occupy young people in constructive pursuits – things like creating murals, learning and performing music, putting on street festivals, and so on.</p>	<p>Provided arts-based services to San Franciscan neighbourhoods. Focused on poor and underprivileged neighbourhoods. A key driving principle was to use the arts to provide new opportunities for communities to grow and learn.</p>	<p>Exposure of the arts to neighbourhoods relatively untouched by art. Use of government grant money to support small-scale community projects like murals and street festivals. Provision of arts-based education and training. Increase employment opportunities for artists.</p>	<p>The short-term success of NAP represented an historical moment in time when government agencies saw community arts as a valid tool for engaging communities in self-education and self-activation. Issues included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability of activities after government grants subsided. • Seen by government as a highly visible, often effective and always colourful way to achieve community outcomes. • Changing government priorities in mid-1980s meant that funding disappeared. • Project folded. 	Goldbard, 1993
Jam Factory	1974	Australia	<p>Established with government funding in 1974 to assist, train, guide, challenge, empower, and promote community artists. Name derives from location in a disused jam factory. One of the earliest examples of art and artists reclaiming an abandoned building.</p>	<p>Art as core activity. A major centre for the design, production, exhibition and sale of work by leading and emerging Australian artists and designers.</p>	<p>The Jam Factory outcomes included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of income streams for community artists. • Training and employment opportunities for artists and designers. • Provision of funding to support arts and artists from sales, services and creative business initiatives. 	<p>Sustainable over more than three decades. Government financial support continues but the factory has moved towards more financially sustainable models. Original aims of empowerment and promotion of emerging artists have been challenged as demands increase for sales and returns on investment.</p>	www.jamfactory.com.au

Name of initiative	Date	Country	Background and purpose of initiative	Positioning of the arts	Outcomes	Issues	Source
Fusion Arts Centre – Oxford Arts Agency	1980	United Kingdom	One of the first community arts organisations in the UK. Originally called 'Bloomin' Arts', established by three committed people who initially developed a program of participative performance events in the local parks. Organisation grew to offer many arts-based programs at venues across the UK.	Primarily a community arts organisation dedicated to using the arts to support communities in the UK.	Provision of a hub for community artists and community workers through which programs and resources could be communicated and shared. A program of arts activities for adults and children in UK communities. Facilitation of and support for creative arts projects within communities.	Fusion Arts Centre has evolved and changed as government support decreased. Now operates as company limited by guarantee as well as a registered charity and fundraising has become a significant part of its operations. Operates in a much wider environment than community arts.	www.fusion-arts.org
Community arts networks (CANs)	1980s	Australia	Established in several Australian states during the 1980s (Western Australia, South Australia, and Queensland). Evolved from a network of people committed to community arts practice. Committed to empowering communities through community arts.	Focused on supporting communities through community arts. Achieved by linking communities with artists who would work collaboratively with community members on an community art project — such projects were usually murals, theatre productions, etc.	Government funded and provided many community arts programs for Australian communities. Significant outcomes for communities included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community involvement in the arts. • Community resources. • Community confidence (new skills). 	The CANs build on their early experiences in the 1980s and continued to evolve for the next two decades. Their commitment to social justice increased and they developed a philosophical platform of using the arts to address social inequalities. Many CANs began working with Aboriginal communities and disadvantaged communities in urban and regional areas.	www.canwa.com.au/about/the-organisation/history/

Source: Author's research.

Table 7 provides examples of arts-based projects in communities that were primarily focused on social concerns and the achievement of objectives aimed at promoting community dialogue, communications and social interaction. The majority of community arts projects, during the 1960s and 1970s and over subsequent decades, have been implicitly based on the premise that arts practice is concerned with cultural identity and the expression of cultural values within communities (MacDonald, 2000). Art in the community is also seen as providing an opportunity to communicate individualism, eccentricity, diversity and inspirational example (MacDonald, 2000). The arts are seen, at least by community artists themselves, as a powerful medium through which communities could add value to and create meaning in people's lives.

Community arts programs have always been strongly focused on the development or refinement of values and philosophies based on improving the ability of community members to take action to improve social well-being and respond to community change (Goldbard, 1993). Projects have often been built on visiting artists commissioned to work with communities to achieve specific social outcomes, usually related to community engagement and linked social objectives (MacDonald, 2000). In the sense of tangible outcomes, such projects have often resulted in murals, community sculptures and other public art installations. However, the link between the tangible art products and the less tangible outcomes of art has always been a key characteristic of community arts practice. For community artists and communities, the project is generally as much about the journey as the product, providing a strong focus on the development of grassroots involvement that is characteristic of the arts over this period.

Guiding Principles of the Community Arts Movement

Many studies claiming that the arts contribute positively to the development of social capital and community cohesiveness have been based on an examination of community arts programs. Generally these have been supported and operated by organisations desirous of using the arts as a tool for human and material development (Lowe, 2000). While there is huge diversity in the approaches and methods adopted by community arts projects and initiatives, it is possible to identify a common set of guiding principles underpinning the community arts movement. Firstly, almost universally they involve community

members in a creative activity leading to a public performance or exhibit (MacDonald, 2000). Secondly, community arts involve professional artists and community members working in a collaborative creative process resulting in collective artistic experience (Williams, 1995). Thirdly, these projects provide a way for communities to express themselves and enable artists, through financial and other supports, to engage in creative activity with communities (Goldbard, 1993). Lastly, community arts values the creative process as of equal importance to the artistic outcome (Macdonald, 2000).

These guidelines provide a platform for what has been described as the transformative potential of community arts (Williams, 1995). It is argued by Williams (1995) that community arts build social capital by boosting individual or group ability and motivation to be civically engaged. Others argue that it also builds organisational capacity to support effective community action (Guetzkow, 2002). This may be accomplished by creating a venue that draws people together who would otherwise not be engaged in constructive social activity and contributes to fostering trust between participants, augmenting their generalised trust of others (Lowe, 2000). Effective community action may also be achieved by providing an experience of collective efficacy and civic engagement, which spurs participants to further collective action (Hawkes, 2001). Community arts events may be a source of pride for residents (participants and non-participants alike), increasing their sense of connection to community (Williams, 1995). They may also provide experiences for participants to learn technical and interpersonal skills important to collective organising, increasing the scope of individuals' social networks and providing an experience for community organisations to enhance their capacities (Matarasso, 1996).

Key Problem Areas Characteristic of Community Arts

Successful community arts projects such as festivals, art exhibitions, community plays and other arts-based events have demonstrated how cultural activities can energise people to contribute to a range of positive social outcomes (MacDonald, 2000). These include improving the image of a region or town, reducing offensive or antisocial behaviour, promoting interest in the local environment, developing communal self-confidence, building private and public sector partnerships, enhancing organisational capacity, supporting local independence,

and exploring visions for the future (Williams, 1995). The concept of social capital and the premise that art plays a vital role in building cohesive and ultimately viable societies has thus been fundamental to the community arts movement (Williams, 2000). However, one of the problem areas for community arts has been its reluctance to grow its influence across other areas of community development and to move towards more integrated, whole-of-community approaches to growth and development.

While the strongest voices supporting community arts have been the community artists themselves, government agencies have also begun to see community arts as a valid tool for engaging communities in self-education and self-activation, perceiving it to be a highly visible, often effective and always colourful way to achieve community outcomes (Goldbard, 1993). However, by the mid-1980s, government priorities had changed and, as a consequence, funding for community arts quickly disappeared, resulting in failure for many projects. At this time, the rhetoric around the community arts also began to change through attempts to link the movement more strongly with community development. Arguments increasingly embraced the arts as a vibrant and dynamic way to build community capacity, increase social capital, activate social change, and develop human capital (Williams, 2000).

Thus when funding for the community arts began to subside, the philosophical and political principles on which the community arts movement had originally been based were incrementally seen as providing a platform for cultural development through encouraging cooperation, acknowledging and celebrating the strengths and unique qualities of communities. The movement was seen as a means for communities to be recognised and nurtured through a range of arts and cultural activities (MacDonald, 2000). At this time, the term 'community cultural development' (CCD) emerged to describe how communities could advance their artistic, social and cultural aspirations.

Key Features of Community Cultural Development (CCD)

As with the community arts movement, CCD is a community-based arts practice, which can embrace any art form. CCD is often described as the work of artists, arts workers and other community workers 'collaborating to express identity, concerns and aspirations through

the arts ... it is a process that simultaneously builds individual mastery and collective cultural capacity while contributing to positive social change' (Goldbard & Adams, 2006, p. 20). The Australia Council for the Arts (2006) funding guidelines argued that there are, in fact, many variations of community-based arts processes and, as such, there is no single correct model; however, the guidelines then proceed to define the process narrowly as primarily the collaboration between professional artists and community members to create art (Australia Council for the Arts, 2006). While Goldbard & Adams' (2006) definition encapsulates many of the key features of CCD, it is by no means a widely accepted one for, like CCB, the theory and practice of CCD is highly contested. Artists, arts workers, CCD practitioners, community workers and researchers/commentators argue about what constitutes CCD and the ways in which it differs from CCB and the community arts movement. Some suggest that its distinguishing feature is work that is motivated by social justice outcomes, while others argue that it includes any activity that assists human beings to engage in conscious reflection on their life experiences.

Goldbard & Adams (2006) argue that, while CCD is a well known theory and practice, it has attracted neither public attention nor the adequate resources to support its widespread adoption. They illustrate their argument by drawing on recent experience in the United States where an active CCD field has been well nigh invisible to those not directly involved. They argue that, because CCD employs the same forms as conventional arts disciplines, 'work in the field has mostly been treated as a marginal manifestation of mainstream arts activities' (Goldbard & Adams, 2006, p. 20).

Key Principles

The absence of an agreed definition in the CCD literature has not limited the breadth of work undertaken under its auspices and, over time, artists and arts workers have agreed to and adopted key principles to guide and explicate their work. The following seven key principles are derived for Goldbard & Adams (2006):

1. Active participation in cultural life is an essential goal
2. Diversity is a social asset, part of the cultural commonwealth, requiring protection and nourishment

3. All cultures are essentially equal and society should not promote any one as superior to the others
4. Culture is an effective crucible for social transformation, one that can be less polarising and create deeper connections than other social change areas/disciplines
5. Cultural expression is a means of emancipation rather than an end in itself; the process is as important as the product
6. Culture is a dynamic, protean whole and there is no value on creating artificial boundaries within it
7. Artists have roles as agents of transformation that are more socially valuable than mainstream art world roles — and certainly equal in legitimacy.

An analysis of these seven principles provides an insight into the strong ideological platforms on which the theory and practice of CCD is based. All are powerful ideological statements expressed in highly emotive language to stake a claim for what is perceived to be a key role of the arts in social and cultural development. However, it could be argued that words and phrases such as ‘cultural commonwealth’, ‘crucible for social transformation’, and ‘means of emancipation’ suggest a special, privileged role of the arts in providing higher order social and cultural outcomes, especially at the expense of community economic outcomes such as new businesses and employment.

Perhaps most contentious of the principles derived from Goldbard & Adams (2006) is the observation that artists have key roles as change agents who must engage socially and culturally with community issues. Without exception, ‘they must recognise an obligation to deploy their gifts in the service of greater social aims as well as individual awareness and transformation’ (Goldbard & Adams, 2006, p. 58). While this may constitute a noble role for artists, Goldbard & Adams (2006) illustrate the principle by arguing that the mainstream version of this issue is the ongoing controversy over Hollywood activists whose qualifications to speak out on public issues are often questioned. Goldbard & Adams (2006) use this analogy to raise implicit questions about the nature of artists and their often unquestioned access to celebrity and status. To what extent does their comparison of Hollywood activists with community arts workers suggest that artists might reasonably expect to exercise an intrinsic right to express social, cultural and political views? Such a suggestion implies an inherent superior or leadership

role for community artists simply as artists. Such a privileged or special role for artists is a key implied theme in much of the CCD literature. This implication needs to be explored further in order to determine the appropriate position and role of the artist in community development. Further work is also required to identify and evaluate the potential artistic contribution to community development in the context of other community occupations and talents. While the role of the artist in community development may be significant, it may deserve neither special status nor privilege.

Related to issues of the role of the artist are principles relating to emancipation through cultural expression, culture as a crucible for social transformation, and active participation and authentic citizenship through cultural life. While these are admirable principles and the associated social and cultural outcomes should remain important goals for all communities, there is an inherent problem in the almost exclusive, perhaps single-minded, focus of CCD on the social and cultural. The seeming failure to consider the potential of the arts and culture in the economic development of communities may limit CCD from working with communities in an appropriately holistic and integrated way.

Key Problem Areas

There is evidence in the literature of the significant differences that CCD has made to people's lives, the development of community identity and the strengthening of community cohesiveness (Hawkes, 2001; Hawkes 2003; Ruane, 2007; Sonn, Drew & Kasat, 2002). However, as intimated previously, they are almost exclusively related to social and cultural outcomes and CCD's role in the promotion and acceptance of diversity and inclusiveness. It has also been recognised that the people who work in CCD sometimes pioneer arts and cultural activities through governments, organisations and institutions sceptical of the relevance of artistic processes to community outcomes and unsympathetic to the potential of the arts in civic life (Mills, 2006). Nevertheless, alongside these acknowledged important outcomes, CCD has been challenged by the increasing exposure of its limitations in terms of addressing the escalating complexity of community life.

Firstly, the language and philosophy of CCD is neither understood nor appreciated within the communities it purports to support (Goldbard & Adams, 2006). The resulting confusion in communities about CCD's purpose and function may well represent a serious limitation to its potential for meaningful partnerships between artists and other community member organisations. The purpose of CCD seems to be misunderstood even within the arts and cultural industry and remains marginalised within the sector as too few artists, arts policymakers and arts funding bodies comprehensively understand the term (Dunn, 2006). Consequently, CCD artists and arts workers all too often operate at the periphery of mainstream arts sectors and find a career in CCD difficult to sustain. Throsby & Hollister (2003) report that, over the 10-year period from 1993 to 2003, the total average income of a CCD artist declined in real terms by \$5,000 while the income of other artists increased by \$7,000. Throsby & Hollister (2003) estimate that there are 2,500 artists working in CCD in Australia, representing less than 6 per cent of all artists. This figure had decreased during the 10-year period of the study from just over 3,000, indicating a significant decline in the number of practising CCD artists.

A further problem identified in the literature has been the apparent inability of CCD to embrace a sufficiently comprehensive range of community projects and activities because of narrowly defined parameters for supporting CCD activities. While the community arts movement has included a range of visual, theatrical, musical, textual and other art forms, CCD has adopted a narrower approach that focuses only on the role of the arts in formulating and enhancing the future social and cultural aspirations of communities (Sonn et al., 2002). Typically, community arts harnesses active community involvement in the art-making process to produce images, symbols and other resources for community appreciation and use. CCD, however, utilises a more complex approach involving cultural planning and mapping, usually with local governments, to identify strengths and resources in communities that can be used to enhance community functioning (Sonn et al., 2002). Benefits are considered in terms of empowerment, community identity, community cohesiveness and sense of community rather than the artistic merit of products and outcomes.

Cultural planning and mapping is a process aimed at interpreting what makes up a local identity, and assessing what cultural resources can be developed to improve community well-being and quality of life

(Grogan, Mercer & Engwicht, 1995). However, there exists no clear systemic framework to determine how cultural planning and mapping links to and influences individuals and communities. This has seriously limited the effectiveness of CCD in influencing broader community development, especially in terms of economic development and environmental planning (Sonn et al., 2002). In order that CCD artists and arts workers might address both perceived and real problems, there is a need to engage more broadly with communities and support the integration of the arts in all aspects of community development so that CCD artists and arts workers might address perceived and real problems, there is a concomitant need to broaden approaches to include the full range of community activities that may benefit from the involvement and support of the arts. Broader and more active engagement not just with government but also with community organisations and private sector agencies is essential to promote the potential of the arts across a range of community services that lead to the achievement of economic, social and cultural outcomes.

Creative Communities: A New Umbrella

Prior to 2006, CCD had been the official label used in Australia to describe those arts programs and activities that (i) emphasised collaboration between artists and other community members, and (ii) linked artistic work to community development practices and community empowerment (Goldbard & Adams, 2006). Until that time, the Australia Council for the Arts had been a strong advocate for CCD and was committed to supporting the concept through funding and policy development. However, in 2006, the Australian Council commissioned a review of CCD and, as a result, adopted a new term, 'creative communities', to describe arts-based funding for communities. The findings of this review recommended that the Australia Council adopt 'a Creative Communities Strategy that integrates policy, planning and delivery through strong leadership and effective partnerships to facilitate the growth of culturally vibrant communities' (Dunn, 2006, p. 2).

One of the key premises on which the recommendation was developed was the finding that the 'ownership of, and identification with, arts in communities is broader than the community development sector' (Dunn, 2006, p. 1). However, rather than quantify the scope of ownership, explore the breath of community activity or outline

a strategic approach to guide future practice, the review chose instead to articulate components of a vision for the achievement of stronger, more self-directed and culturally vibrant communities in Australia. Such a vision, argued the review, would be grounded in the common goals of economic viability, social equity, environmental sustainability and cultural vitality (Dunn, 2006). The review thus resonated with a broader contemporary move, both ideological and practical, to recognise the potential commonalities of economic, social, environmental and cultural goals (Phillips, 2004).

While the Dunn (2006) review stops short of defining what is meant by the term 'creative communities', it does provide four strong statements to support its vision of artists and communities working collaboratively on the achievement of community goals:

1. Arts and cultural practices are valued as an integral part of everyday life
2. Communities are valued as creators and active participants (not just consumers)
3. Cultural diversity is valued as a foundation of innovation, creativity and artistic excellence
4. Creativity and innovation are valued as means of engaging communities, building capacities, responding to issues and generating change.

Others have attempted a definitional framework by observing that the term describes the 'broad spectrum of arts and cultural development activity in and across communities in Australia' (Mills, 2006, p. 12). While such attempts deliver some precision, they do little to explain either the scope or nature of activities that might be undertaken under the label or identify the philosophical or ideological premises upon which the term is based.

The adoption of the term 'creative communities' by the Australia Council may be seen as a deliberate policy approach to ensure the arts are better placed to support communities in facing contemporary challenges. Indeed, a speech made by the Chief Executive Officer of the Australia Council at the time of the adoption of this term would substantiate this view:

Art agencies do see a role for themselves in the rejuvenation process — with good reason. The impact of the arts can be far-reaching ... the arts are more concerned about how people in communities connect — or, in some cases — why they fail to connect. We aim to do something about that, by promoting social cohesion and reconciliation; as a window onto deep-seated problems and how communities can start to resolve them; in boosting economies; and especially, and critically, in helping sustain local and regional identity (Bott, 2006, p. 2).

It is noteworthy, however, that the rhetoric of the Australia Council is yet to be matched by a significant change of direction or improved outcomes for communities. While the new rhetoric connects with the concept that ‘creative capital — new ideas and innovations, new designs, new ways of working and playing — is the fuel for the twenty-first century economic engine’ (Bulick et al., 2003, p. 34), there is much still to be achieved if creative communities is to be more than just a different, albeit catchy, new term to describe the same old practices related to the community arts and CCD.

CCB, Community Arts, CCD and Creative Communities Compared

Thus far, the major community development and capacity building programs have been examined. Drawing on key issues facing rural and remote communities identified in Chapter 2 and cross-referenced to the stated aims of contemporary community development programs, it is possible to generate key desired features and potential outcomes of various approaches to community development and capacity building as presented in Table 8. The resultant checklist is aligned, as appropriate, with CCB, the community arts movement, CCD, and creative communities. A star rating system has been used, with five stars indicating that there is substantial evidence in the literature to demonstrate a theoretical platform for addressing the key area of concern and evidence in the practice literature of outcomes being achieved. At the other end of the spectrum, a one-star rating indicates that there is little or no evidence in the literature to demonstrate a commitment to the key area of concern, either theoretical or practical.

Table 8. CCB, Community Arts, CCD and Creative Communities Compared.

Key outcome areas	Desired features and impacts of community development and capacity building programs	CCB	Community arts	CCD	Creative communities
Community involvement	High levels of active community involvement across all community sectors.	*****	*	*	*
	A strong focus on the creation of strong, sustainable, and cohesive communities.	*	*	*	*
	The community and its members are at the centre of the decision-making processes.	*****	*	*	*
	Focus on the development of community skills, knowledge and expertise.	*****	*****	***	*
Community empowerment	Strong expectation on sustainability of development process.	*****	*	*	*
	Empowers communities to gain a sense of ownership and control over the processes that influence their day-to-day lives.	*****	*	***	*
	Activities are inclusive of all community stakeholders/interest groups.	*****	*	*	*
	Recognises that whole-of-community development is a high-risk strategy that takes time and requires investment and resources.	*****	*	*	*
Integrated, whole-of-community solutions	Provides planned, integrated and holistic solutions reflecting local needs and circumstances.	*****	*	*	*
	Focused on all community stakeholders.	*****	*	*	*
Broad linkages	Operates in a broad policy context.	***	*	*	*
	Links with local, state and federal government initiatives and directions.	*****	*	***	***

Key outcome areas	Desired features and impacts of community development and capacity building programs	CCB	Community arts	CCD	Creative communities
Partnerships	Values and supports the development and maintenance of partnerships (both within the community and between the community and external agencies). Partnerships are seen as key outcomes that contribute to the sustainability of initiatives and longer-term community benefits.	****	***	***	***
Social capital	Acts as a catalyst to engender stronger social ties, trust and responsibility, while enhancing the social fabric of the community. Improves community cohesiveness. Strengthens community identity.	**** **** ****	* **** ****	* **** ****	* **** ****
Economic empowerment	Places strong emphasis on community economic development. Provides a catalyst for business development.	**** ****	* *	* *	* *
Community needs	Places a strong emphasis on the community itself identifying its needs, defining outcomes and initiating actions rather than being mobilised to act by external agencies.	****	*	*	*

Source: Author's research.

Table 8 demonstrates that, against the desired parameters, CCB is clearly the most effective method of supporting communities to develop strong and sustainable approaches to contemporary challenges. CCB uses a platform of community empowerment to stimulate development and growth across economic and social domains. It operates across a range of community services and connects with diverse industry sectors. Interestingly, there has been very little connection between CCB and the arts and cultural industries, suggesting that there is considerable potential for further exploration of these linkages. Table 8 also indicates the significant shortfall between the three arts-based concepts and practices and the achievement of desired features and impacts for communities. In many instances such shortfalls are a matter of degree; for example, community involvement in arts-based initiatives and programs is generally quite high but usually limited to specific groups within communities already engaged with or committed to the arts. In other instances the arts programs are exposed as narrow and insular, especially in areas focusing on integrated, whole-of-community outcomes.

Regarding the achievements of social outcomes, Table 8 indicates that CCB, community arts, CCD and creative communities all achieve high levels of connection. While this is commendable, it contrasts dramatically with the key outcome area of economic development where CCB is the only approach to place a strong emphasis on economic outcomes. In summary, there would appear to be significant opportunities for examining the potential for integrating CCB principles and practices with arts-based approaches.

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