REGENERATION
EXCHANGE

# Case Study Report
# Building Social Capital

## Prepared for the North East Social Capital Forum by Regeneration Exchange
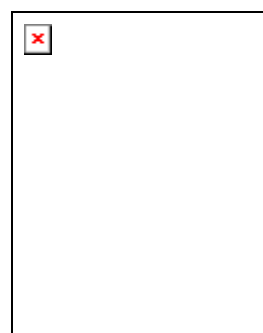
# Acknowledgements

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# Introduction

Social capital is generally acknowledged as a force for the good of all, at least when it is of the type that is inclusive and promotes social cohesion. There has been much discussion and research on understanding just what social capital is and on measuring it. What is still lacking is the 'nuts and bolts' of how it happens. This study aims to begin to identify the elements and process of how social capital has been built taking a case study approach. The case studies are built up using projects that typically exhibit a high level of a particular type of social capital.

The North East Social Capital Forum (NESCF) is a joint initiative between the Community Foundation and Regeneration Exchange, funded by One North East. It is the first regional initiative to attempt to capture social capital as a tool for economic and community development. It aims to raise awareness of social capital as a practical tool, and to identify good practice in the North East.
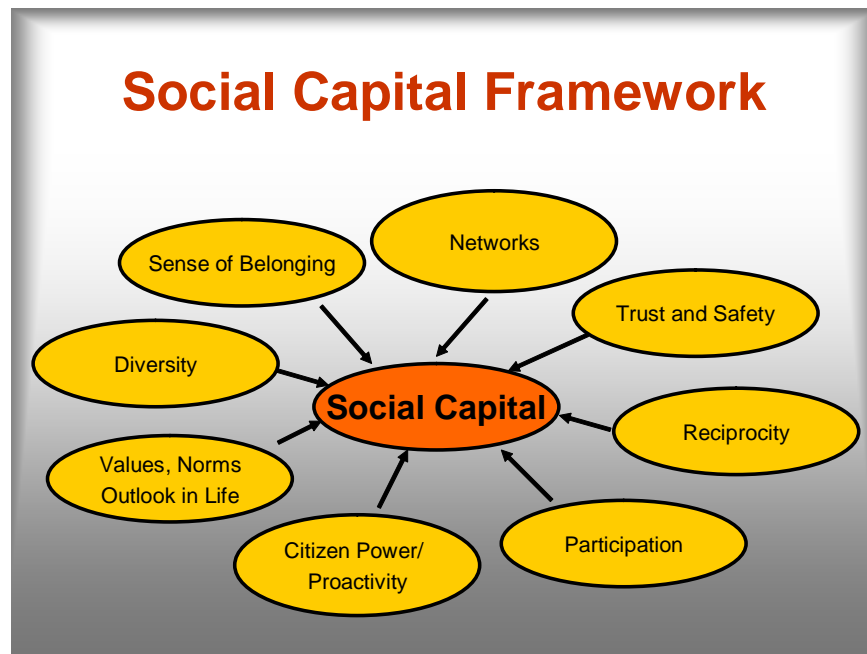
At the heart of the project is a multi-disciplinary Forum to work on this agenda. The Forum is currently studying how social capital can revive and build our communities throughout the region and involves a broad range of academics, policy makers and practitioners from different sectors.

So far the NESCF has arranged a series of forum meetings and seminars to discuss the various components of social capital.  The first output of the project an *Easy Social Capital Guide* has been produced and widely disseminated.

The NESCF also commissioned a small scale study to begin to identify in a practical sense how social capital happens. The aim of the study is to identify good practice in the North East with regards to social capital. The elements of different types of social capital; bridging, bonding, and linking, is identified through the use of case studies. The purpose behind this is to attempt to capture social capital as a tool for economic and social regeneration and raise awareness of social capital as a practical tool.

Case study material was sourced from projects and groups within the North East that exhibit characteristics of social capital.  The method for collecting the case study information was face to face semi-structured interviews with the key people involved in the projects or groups and desk based research.  The research team talked to users, members or employees of the case study examples. Elements of each type of different social capital presented by the projects are identified using an analytical framework.

## Social Capital and its Application



**Social Capital Framework**

- Sense of Belonging
- Networks
- Trust and Safety
- Diversity
- **Social Capital**
- Reciprocity
- Values, Norms Outlook in Life
- Citizen Power/ Proactivity
- Participation

(Boeck, Thilo. 2003)

Social Capital is a term that has been with us for a number of years and as Putnam says in *Bowling Alone* 'turns out to have been independently invented at least six times over the twentieth century, each time to call attention to the ways in which our lives are made more productive by social ties' (Putnam 2000 p19). For the purpose of this study we will use the term as it is described in *an easy guide to social capital* (North East Social Capital Forum 1st Edition) which states that

> 'Social capital is the social glue that helps people, organisations and communities to work together towards shared goals. It comes from everyday contact between people, as a result of their forming social connections and networks based on trust, shared values, and reciprocity (or 'give and take')' (North East Social Capital Forum, Easy Guide, p3)

While there has been a growing body of literature about the usefulness of social capital there has been little critical discussion and more importantly not a lot of investigation as to which came first i.e. is social capital a pre-cursor to a successful community or a product of a successful community. This aim of this study is not to debate the question but it is a consideration that should be kept in mind when using social capital as a tool for economic and community development, therefore a brief outline of the debate is included here.

Robert Putnam convinces us with his thorough investigation of data that there is a link between high levels of social capital and a successful society. The term successful society is taken to mean one where there is a good quality of life i.e.

lower crime rates, better schools, lower levels of teen pregnancy, and less child abuse, drug use and juvenile delinquency (Butler, P 2001). What remains uncertain is the direction of the link, or which comes first:

> 'At the local or regional level, there is mounting evidence that social capital among economic actors can produce aggregate economic growth. This is not to say that having more bowling leagues and PTAs will necessarily cause the town economy to prosper. But it is to say, that under certain conditions, co-operation among economic actors might be a better engine of growth than free-market competition' (Putnam 2000 p323).

So while there is said to be 'mounting evidence' (Putnam 2000 p323) it is telling that this statement is made with a high degree of caution. In an article discussing Putnam's work it is noted that

> 'there is a very strong argument here against those who wish to concentrate the bulk of resources on groups and individuals who present the strongest social problems … If we follow Robert Putnam's analysis through then we can see that, for example, crime can be reduced … through the strengthening of social capital. Significantly this entails working across communities – in particular sustaining the commitment and capacities already involved in community organization … and encouraging those on the cusp of being involved. The majority of the people we are talking about here cannot be classified as suffering from multiple disadvantage' (infed 09/08/2007 p 8)

This surely presents a caution against relying too much on developing social capital alone to counter the multiple ills of a society or community where the quality of life is low. This said it must be noted that a piece quoted in an article on social capital by Paul Bullen (www.mapl.com.au 11/09/2006 p 2) states:

> 'The historical record strongly suggests that the successful communities became rich because they were civic, not the other way round. The social capital embodied in the norms and networks of civic engagement seems to be a precondition for economic development as well as for effective government' (Civics matters PCD forum March 6, 1995 in Bullen Paul 2006)

In short it can be seen that there is a degree of debate about which comes first and it is with that in mind that we must exercise caution and not regard social capital as the only factor in successful societies. Indeed as noted in Evans, Joas, Sundback and Theobald 2005, 'like many other terms, social capital may be overexposed and, perhaps, too often regarded as a panacea for all social ills' (p14).This caution being noted however the usefulness of inclusive beneficial types of social capital cannot be denied and the following case studies present

how it may be possible to develop and/or build on existing social capital for the benefit of communities.

This study has split its analysis to focus on the different types of social capital i.e. bonding, bridging, and linking for convenience and ease of analysis but it must be remembered that Putnam states 'these are not either-or categories to which social networks can neatly be assigned – but more-or-less dimensions along which we can compare different forms of social capital' (Putnam 2000 p23).

The North East Social Capital Forum aims to increase the understanding of social capital in terms of its applicability in the role of economic and social regeneration, and to develop ways of measuring and monitoring social capital. Suggestions of how the measurement and monitoring of social capital may be carried out are made in the conclusion. The role of social capital in economic and social regeneration as expounded in each project forming the case studies are outlined at the end of each project description and briefly summarised in the conclusion.

For the purposes of this piece of work social regeneration is taken to mean any process or activity that generates or increases; a strong vibrant community with a sense of identity, belonging, reciprocity, trust, and an understanding of differences arising from social backgrounds. Economic regeneration is taken to mean any process or activity which generates or increases; employability, employment opportunities, entrepreneurial opportunities and drive, a strong local economy, and increased educational attainment.

## Bonding Social Capital

Bonding is the strongest type of social capital and refers to strong relationships or bonds between people, organisations and communities and common identity, purpose or tie that connects similar people. It relates to members of the same family, ethnic group, club, community organisation or club. It's how people capitalise on shared interests, values and lifestyles.

> 'Bonding capital is good for undergirding specific reciprocity and mobilizing solidarity … bonding social capital bolsters our narrower selves … [it] constitutes a kind of sociological superglue' (Putnam 2000 p22-23)

> 'Bonding social capital refers to the links between like minded people, or the reinforcement of homogeneity. It builds strong ties, but can also result in higher walls excluding those who do not qualify, American college fraternities being a prominent example of such bonding' (Schuller, Baron and Field, 2000)

The office for national statistics describes this as being made up of

> 'closer connections between people and is characterised by strong bonds e.g. among family members or among members of the same ethnic group; it is good for 'getting by' in life.'
> (http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=314)

While bonding social capital is essential for cohesive communities and helps define a shared identity it can also have a negative aspect, people feel 'safe' and it could prevent people from moving on; this will be discussed in more detail in case study 1.

**Case study 1:** *Who you are, in a marginalised group with mental health problems and or mental/learning disability.*

**Introduction**

This case study examines elements of bonding social capital in a marginalised group or more specifically people with mental health problems or a mental/learning disability.

The main bonding social capital 'element' of this case study is the 'mental health problem or learning disability' or the common identity which has brought the groups of people together. The case study will discuss the main elements of bonding social capital from the following project examples. Two projects are discussed in this case study, the Catering Service based at the Haswell and District Mencap Society and the Newcastle Clubhouse.  The research team interviewed project workers and members of the service.

**Case study projects**

The first project, the Haswell and District Mencap Society based at the Lisa Dixon Centre aims to provide social activities and moral support for families with children and adults who have a learning disability.  The Centre campaigns to ensure that people with learning disabilities rights are recognised and that they are respected as individuals.

Through weekly organised activities including arts and crafts, dance and drama, IT, netball, five-a-side, sewing, swimming, the purpose built centre increases the opportunity for people to come together in an informal 'social' environment.  The Centre is the only community building in the area, and is additionally used by the local community as a place where they can come together to participate and use the facilities.  The reception area is staffed by people with learning disabilities; visitors therefore see straight away the ethos of the centre in action.  It is about encouraging participation and involvement of all people in the local community.

A success of the centre is the Catering Service which developed from the on site kitchen run by volunteers with different types of learning disabilities.  This started as a social enterprise idea and has grown to provide outside catering for various organisations.  Volunteers are each given tasks to match their capabilities including preparing the baking, the plates and cutlery and delivering the food. When delivering the food, they see for themselves the impression they have made on the public and experience the compliments first hand. The project manager felt that:

> '*This gives them a great sense of importance and encourages them to take ownership of the catering service as they are proud of what they do.*'

A volunteer at work in the kitchen

Each volunteer keeps a weekly diary to record what they have done and the new things they have learnt.  The volunteers felt that working in the kitchen and being involved with the catering service offered more than just work experience, they said that:

> *'We don't just work together, we have learnt to cook, do housework.  Not only are we learning new skills, we also socialise together, and go to the netball club here and dancing on a Friday night.'*

Although the volunteers confidence has increased because of their involvement in the catering service, one negative aspect which can be associated with bonding social capital, is that whilst the volunteers may be capable of moving on to a job elsewhere, it was thought they may feel reluctant to do so because they feel safe working at the centre.

The second project the Newcastle Clubhouse, funded by the Mental Health Care Trust, is a community service for adults with mental health problems. Membership is voluntary and it aims to assist members to re-build their lives by offering an environment in which to regain confidence, self esteem, a sense of purpose and belonging. This is a user led service where the members actively participate in the decision making process.

The Clubhouse itself is a house or *'a hub of daily activities'* containing several units: a kitchen unit, a reception unit, a new information unit and even an allotment unit nearby. The everyday running of the Clubhouse is the shared responsibility of the staff and members. Adults with mental health problems can go to the Clubhouse and volunteer for example, to cook for that day, iron, help out with administration or any activity to contribute to the maintenance and upkeep of the building. It opens from 9am for breakfast, where members decide then on activities for each person for that day. The new information unit gives members access to information about services available including employment and education, mental health services and housing information and advice. The overall aim is to provide a daily structure for the members to work to.

Within the Clubhouse there are many groups set up including a gym group, a music group, a table tennis group, a 5-a-side football team, the allotment group and an art and drama group. Additionally, social activities are organised for special occasions and there are also organised therapy sessions, reflexology and head massage.


Clubhouse members ready to play football

The Clubhouse aims to engage people in all aspects including employment, and runs a Transitional Employment Programme (TEP) where people can go and work for an organisation, and be supported by a mentor from the Clubhouse. The aim is for the mentor to finally withdraw when it is appropriate. There have been nine of these and seven have been successful. One member of the Clubhouse commented that:

> *'One member has a proper job now and this gives hope and encouragement to everyone else.'*

An important aspect of the Clubhouse is its informal nature; a member felt that it is '*light and airy and welcoming*' and '*relaxed.*' It helps engage members to acquire a daily routine, without over pressurising them, and to re-build their confidence. One member commented that:

> '*I had no structure before and it took me a while to get involved, but it helped me to acquire a routine, but with no pressure. When I first came to the Clubhouse my life was over, socially and work wise but the Clubhouse helped me to get over this and realise this is not the case. The Clubhouse has not only changed my perception of mental health issues, but has opened up a whole new network of friends and acquaintances. I even met my wife there.*'

The Clubhouse is a user led service, and members fully participate in all aspects of decision making. A weekly meeting is held where all members attend and decisions are made collectively on planning for the Clubhouse and new staff appointments for example. Additionally the Clubhouse runs a sanction committee, which all members sit on. Members decide collectively about rules on acceptable behaviour and reinforce these rules themselves. This gives members responsibility but nothing they felt was outside of their capabilities.

One member commented that:

> '*The clubhouse benefits everyone who wants to take part and gives the right atmosphere to make people want to return.*'

**Elements of bonding social capital**

The main **element of bonding social capital** drawn from the case study projects outlined is the shared interest or common ground. This is the mental health problem or mental/learning disability that has brought the individuals together to engage in the project. Both projects have shared goals, the main one being to encourage engagement of individuals with learning disabilities/mental health problems**.** Both projects are described as being informal or relaxed, an important point mentioned by the members or users of both of the projects.

To summarise the elements include:
- Shared interest
- Informal networks
- Some shared goals
- Some shared activity/interest

**Building bonding social capital** *in a marginalised group with mental health problems and or mental/learning disability*.

From the case study projects the following aspects of **building bonding social capital** can be extracted:

- Firstly, provide a service or activity for people with mental health/learning disabilities to engage with and participate in.
- It is important to make people feel welcome and that they are not alone in their disability.
- Encourage ownership/responsibility of the activity, to give the members a sense of achievement.
- Provide an achievable learning opportunity or goal and support this.
- Provide a structure for individuals to work to.

These **social capital elements** have developed into the following **social capital outcomes** or benefits:

- Participation in the local community.
- Confidence building.
- Learning new skills.
- Engagement with other people.
- Involvement in activity groups.
- Socialising.
- Leading onto other opportunities such as employment or interaction at a different organisation.

Drawing on examples from both projects it can be summarised that bonding social capital involves; firstly taking a common ground to bring together and address common problems/issues and to develop a practical and positive solution/outcome, then involve all members of the group to develop the skills and to then feed these skills back into the project. Ideally these skills could then be transferred outside of the project, to a different organisation or even an employment.

**Role in social and economic regeneration**
As the main aim of the clubhouse is to provide social activities it is not surprising that there is a high level of contribution to increasing social regeneration. It is its own community with a strong sense of identity but does not exist in isolation from the wider community as it is open to all. The provision of a safe and supportive environment is crucial to this and evolving directly from it is the contribution to economic regeneration. The increased confidence and capacity of volunteers allows them to contribute to economic regeneration. The development of the catering service has provided employment opportunities, increased the employability of volunteers and contributed to the local economy. The success of the TEP directly contributes to economic regeneration '*One member has a proper job now and this gives hope and encouragement to everyone else'*.

## Case Study 2: *in a young peoples group.*

### Introduction

This case study examines elements of bonding social capital in a group which is specifically for young people.  One project or group was examined called the Regional Active Participation group (RAP). The research team interviewed five members of the RAP group.
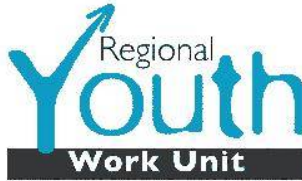
### Case study projects

The Regional Active Participation (RAP) group is a network for the North East of England and includes professionals from all sectors working across all age groups of children and young people. This includes all community, voluntary statutory, regional agencies and individuals required to consider the views of children and young people and involve them in decision-making.

The RAP group aims to effectively support children and young people's active participation by offering support: working across the region networking and sharing practice and working strategically: acting as a channel for children and young people's participation in the region, working in partnership with statutory, voluntary and regional agencies such as GONE.

The RAP group is partnered with the National Participation Workers Network for England (PWNE), a DfES funded project to support Participation Work, and other regional Participation Worker Networks around the country.  Funding is also from the Regional Youth Work Unit.

RAP currently meets for half a day every two months.  The regional network provides opportunities to:

- Attend conferences
- Take part in one-off themed meetings or events
- To influence local participation work
- Enter into dialogue with regional agencies such as Government Office and the Regional Assembly
- Make links with other local workers involved in participation work to share expertise and experiences

The Regional Active Participation (RAP) network aims to provide workers in the North East region with opportunities to come together to debate a particular issue where it affects the participation of children and young people. RAP hosts a number of discussion days.

RAP group members include:
- Young People's Participation Manager
- Participation and Development Worker
- Youth and Community Worker
- Personal Advisor
- Training Officer
- Chief Executive
- Regional Manager
- Social Care Assessment Officer
- Children's Partnership Worker

The network is open to anyone regardless of job title who is working to involve children and young people in decision making that affects their lives. Regardless of sector, age groupings or whether participation is your full time role or an aspect of your work. RAP has a blog situated on the 'my space' website providing a place for online discussions and information.

The research team talked to a number of members of the RAP group and the members highlighted a number of successes of the project. It is important that the RAP group has taken a joined up approach which avoids duplication. Furthermore it adopts an inclusive approach and is developing participation work with the full range across the 0-19 age range.

Members highlighted the success of a number of information events that have been organised, to share good practice and bring people together. These have included half day discussions about certain topics, the write up of these are then fed back to Government Office North East (GONE). The events have raised issues around developing good practice and the network.

Another success highlighted by a member is that the RAP group is developing strategic links in the region with other agencies i.e. Government Office North East (GONE) and being a conduit for participation and influencing their Participation Strategy.

Members stated the importance of attending the RAP group meetings and being able to exchange information between members. The RAP group has been successful in acting as a mechanism for information sharing and awareness raising of what is going on and how to access information, advice and support.

Another success of the RAP group is the good practice work being carried out in participation. A wealth of good practice in participation work is being developed

with children and young people in the region, with some examples of change occurring.  The RAP group members felt the group is encouraging and delivering change in the region, by moving thinking on to gathering views to then action and creating change.

Key to the success of the RAP group has been a few key individuals who have taken a major role and interest to develop the network and make it a success. This includes the co-ordination and the management role taken by the Regional Youth Work Unit.

It is important that RAP is independent of any one organisation and therefore independent of organisational demands and politics.

Other key factors to the success include the expressed need for such a group. The group is driven by its members, who are undertaking the work and understand what needs to change.

> *'The motivation of the members who work with young people, sometimes it can pick you up when you attend, as others are so enthusiastic.'*

RAP is reliant on members sparing the time to attend the meetings and be involved.

> '*Where there are active members the group is stronger'*

The RAP members felt that the group benefits its members by providing an opportunity to share information and practice and to find out about other projects, new projects and funding streams. There are a number of different organisations attending the RAP group meetings, some of these from time to time do presentations on projects that they are running.  This benefits other members attending the meeting as they can then signpost young people to these projects.

> '*RAP provides opportunities to develop practice, work with different groups of children and young people, and the opportunity to influence change at a regional and national level'*

The RAP members highlighted the importance of the group providing an opportunity for training, advice and support, informally and formally, through meeting and chatting with people and training days.  One member emphasised the importance of having so many different organisations working with young people, attend and be involved with RAP as members. It increases the member's network/contacts, and if someone has a problem on one topic, there may be another member who can offer advice on this.

> '*Knowing you're not alone, who else is out there, what they are doing, how to contact them"*

The RAP group not only benefits its members but the children and young people that the members work with. The RAP group contributes to members becoming better trained, supported and more informed, therefore providing a better service. The workers become more likely to influence change as the RAP group creates a mechanism to link with decision makers at a local and national level. Children and young people may then become more informed or even see these changes occur.

**The elements of bonding social capital:** *in a young peoples group*

The elements of bonding social capital include:
- Shared values/viewpoints
- Mostly shared goals
- Some shared activity and interests
- Informal networks
- Shared identity

While we have selected this project to demonstrate bonding social capital, we recognise that there are some elements of bridging social capital within this network, including:

- Different backgrounds
- Mixed formal/informal networks

**Building bonding social capital:** *in a young peoples group*

Sharing information that is of a common interest is encouraged by meeting regularly. By creating opportunities to take part in themed events shared activities can be developed. The group develops shared activity and interest across the common ground of influencing local participation work that is particularly aimed at young people. As the members of the group are all specifically working or have an interest in the area of children and young people's participation they have a shared identity based on this. The blog situated on my space website encourages informal exchanges of information and networking.

**Role in social and economic regeneration**
RAP engages and encourages young people in diverse ways and through this creates a vibrant group of young people and adults committed to furthering the needs of young people and in particular the development of a network, a crucial element of social regeneration. The engagement of young people in this group is also increasing their involvement in civic society as they are actively involved in the decision making process. The contribution of this project to economic regeneration is through the provision of access to training.

## Bridging Social Capital

Bridging social capital brings together people with different view points and interests around a common issue or activity. It is how people get ahead and how they can learn from people from a different background or group and through this understand different points of view more effectively. It relates to weaker relationships and networks across social groups.

'Bridging networks … [form] linkage to external assets and for information diffusion ... [and] moreover bridging social capital can generate broader identities and reciprocity … [providing] a sociological WD-40' (Putnam 2000 p 22- 23)

'Bridging social capital … refers to the building of connections between heterogeneous groups; these are likely to be more fragile, but more likely also to foster social inclusion' (Schuller, Baron and Field 2000)

The office for national statistics describes bridging social capital as being made up of

'more distant connections between people and is characterised by weaker, but more cross-cutting ties e.g. with business associates, acquaintances, friends from different ethnic groups, friends of friends, etc; it is good for 'getting ahead' in life.
(http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=314)

## Case study 3: *where you spend your leisure time, in a local association*

This case study focused on Independent Living for Older People (ILOP) which is a support organisation based in Middlesbrough, set up to:

Provide low level preventative support to enable older people to live active lives and gain confidence in their local communities.

It is funded for three years by Neighbourhood Renewal, and is a partnership between Middlesbrough Council and a consortium of voluntary agencies including Age Concern Teeside, Salvation Army Middlesbrough and WRVS.

Objectives of ILOP are to enable older people to:

- Live independently and make informed choices
- Live in an environment which is safe and free from abuse and neglect
- Be involved in a wider community
- Have the opportunity to access other professional organisations
- Enhance social inclusion

ILOP offer two services; the Handyperson scheme providing low level support such as DIY and gardening, and the volunteering service. The volunteering aspect of ILOP involves volunteers befriending the service users, popping around for a chat, assisted shopping, either by doing the shopping for them or helping the service users to go and do the shopping and transport, taking the service users to collect shopping, to appointments etc.

This case study will focus on the volunteering side of ILOP. For this case study research, the research team talked to project staff and a number of volunteers.

The project workers stated that there is a certain type of person who becomes a volunteer; *'it is usually someone who is genuinely interested in people.'* The amount of time that each volunteer can give to volunteering varies, and there is a diverse range of volunteers between the ages of 19 up to 76, both male and female. ILOP supports volunteers and provides training on food hygiene, first aid and many more topics that the volunteers request to be trained in.

The project workers and volunteers stated that there are many benefits of the volunteering service that ILOP provides to service users. Most importantly the volunteers help service users to regain their confidence but also their independence. Having a volunteer there to support them, especially one that is not a family member, ensures they still make their own decisions, but have help if they need. They stated that families are now so fragmented, the older person often doesn't have anyone, and the volunteering service fills this gap.

The project workers highlighted a benefit of the volunteering service in that it helps the service user to become more active socially as well as providing support to undertake daily activities.

> '*One volunteer has brought two service users together, they have gained confidence because of this, and the three of them regularly go out together.*'

Often the service user is very isolated, and the volunteer helps them become more involved in their everyday life.

'*It opens up their life from isolation.*

The volunteer becomes a friend to the service user.

> '*I am more of a friend, if they don't want to see me one week, doesn't have to, if he needs shopping done at any time, they will let me know*'

The project workers highlighted a number of reasons that individuals become a volunteer for ILOP.
These include:

- To regain confidence to get back to work.
- As part of a university degree, students volunteer to gain experience in the care service.
- '*To make sure there's someone there for them when they need help*'
- People want to '*give something back*'
- To ensure that '*someone helps them out when they are older.*'

The volunteers themselves discussed a number of reasons that they volunteer. One volunteer had suffered bereavement and lost both parents:

> '*I lost both my parents and I spent a lot of time with them, when they had gone I felt I was missing out, and it left a huge gap, volunteering helped to fill in the gap.*'

This volunteer felt that volunteering benefited them as it was:

> '*For myself and the conversation*'

As well as to:

> '*Make sure someone is okay, and to give something back.*'

One volunteer works full time, and didn't think they would be able to volunteer because they couldn't spare enough time. The flexible nature of ILOP meant that they could volunteer for one or two days, with a service user that lives near to

them.  They can take the service user to get their food shopping when they are going.  This volunteer stated that *'it is nice to do some volunteering'*

The volunteer stated how becoming a volunteer benefits them:

> *'I feel good doing something meaningful without making too much effort. I'm making a difference to someone meaning they don't have to go in a home'*

The project workers highlighted the importance of the volunteering service

> *'We don't know what would have happened to some of the service users if we hadn't been here'*



**A volunteer with a user**

**The elements of bridging social capital:** *where you spend your leisure time in Local Associations*

The elements of bridging social capital within this case study include:
- Different background
- Mixed formal and informal networks
- Different values and viewpoints
- Some shared goals
- Some shared identity and history

**Building bridging social capital:** *where you spend your leisure time in local associations*

This case study demonstrates an example building bridging social capital through a reciprocal relationship, based on a mutual understanding.

Volunteers volunteer to help people but they are volunteering for personal reasons of their own as well. This is building bridging social capital, through 'give and take.' The relationship is based on mutual exchange meaning both the volunteer and the service user are getting something different out of the relationship.

This is supported by Putnam:

> 'Networks on community engagement foster sturdy norms of reciprocity: I'll do this for now, in the expectation that you (or perhaps someone else) will return the favour…

> …Sometimes, as in these cases, reciprocity is specific: I'll do this for you if you do that for me. Even more valuable, however is a norm of generalized reciprocity: I'll do this for you without expecting anything specific back from you, in the confident expectation that someone else will do something for me down the road.' (Putnam, 2000, p.20-21)

**Role in social and economic regeneration**

ILOP builds networks and relationships between volunteers and users, making connections that may otherwise not be established *'One volunteer has brought two service users together, they have gained confidence because of this, and the three of them regularly go out together'.* The biggest contribution towards social regeneration of ILOP is the building of reciprocity, where a volunteer will give time and support to a service user, not for direct gain themselves but to *'make sure someone is okay, and to give something back'* and to ensure that *'someone helps them out when they are older'.*

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Through the provision of handyperson scheme ILOP contributes directly to economic regeneration as it provides employment locally. Volunteers receive training on a number of topics which directly increases their employability; also they gain confidence and experience, further increasing this.

## Case study 4: *Where you work, in a private company*

## Introduction

This case study examines elements of bridging social capital where you work and specifically in a private company.

Putnam states:

> 'Since more of us are working outside the home today than a generation ago, perhaps we have simply transferred more of our friendships, more of our civic discussions, and more of our community ties from the front porch to the water cooler.' (Putnam, 2000, p.85)

The case study will discuss the main elements of bridging social capital in two companies, the John Lewis partnership, Newcastle and Eaga partnership, Newcastle.

## Case study projects

Two private companies are discussed in this case study, John Lewis and Eaga.

The founder of the John Lewis Partnership, John Spedan Lewis, had a vision to have a profitable business with employee co-ownership which focuses on the happiness of Partners. The Partnership acts on the principle that *'there should be more to a job than just work and pay.'*

John Lewis based the 'Partnership Spirit' on this vision, the four principles of this are:

- Ensuring the happiness of partners is at the centre of everything they do.
- Building a sustainable business through profit and growth.
- Serving customers to the very best of their ability
- Caring about communities and the environment.

The John Lewis Constitution states that:

> 'The Partnership aims to employ and retain as its members people of ability and integrity who are committed to working together and to supporting its Principles. Relationships are based on mutual respect and courtesy, with as much equality between its members as differences of responsibility permit. The Partnership aims to recognise their individual contribution and reward them fairly.'

All of John Lewis employees are Partners and as a Partner they are co-owners of the business who have a share in its success. An annual bonus, which is a proportion of the profits, is distributed equally to Partners as a percentage of the salary, however John Lewis believes that working in partnership is about more than sharing profits.

An important aspect of the John Lewis Partnership is Partner engagement, in all aspects of the Partnership; this is enforced through the formal networks of the Partnership, but also through the informal networks including leisure and benefits and organised social activities which will be discussed further on in the case study.

Employee or Partner co-ownership increases Partners engagement as it encourages Partners to work together. This harnesses self and collective responsibility and the knowledge that success depends upon providing the best quality products and services to customers, to ensure that they return. Employee co-ownership and the collective responsibility is an element of social capital, this is demonstrated through the shared goals or interests that Partners are collectively working towards, who are from different backgrounds and may have different values or viewpoints outside of work.

A Partner felt that a benefit of the 'Partnership Spirit' is that it has contributed to team building within the department.

> *'It helps to build team spirit and morale within the department'*

The John Lewis Partnership refers to four elements that contribute to the happiness of Partners: a work/life balance, competitive pay and benefits, fulfilling potential and fair treatment.

The John Lewis policies and leisure benefits are designed to help Partners *'balance work and home lives and therefore stay committed to long term careers with the Partnership.'* These include:

- Flexible working
- Career breaks
- A flexible retirement policy
- Subsidised dining facilities within the store
- Holiday and leisure facilities at four locations across UK, which Partners can use with their families or friends at a subsidised rate.
- Discount on most purchases after one years service which increases after three year's service
- Fifty per cent subsidy on visitor attractions including museums, theatre, opera and concert tickets.
- The opportunity to go on long leave (paid leave for up to six months) is available for Partners with twenty five years service.

A range of discount opportunities and benefits are offered to Partners and listed in a national 'Partner Choice' booklet. This includes discounts on childcare costs, AA memberships, opticians, health and leisure centres to name a few. This is the benefit of John Lewis, being such a large organisation; they are offered discounts by many other companies. A local 'Partners Choice' booklet is being developed, to include local offers specific to areas branches are situated in.

In each store a Partners Amenities Co-ordinator (or Leisure Benefit Co-ordinator from January 2008) is employed to be responsible for a yearly budget to manage and spend on organising social activities for Partners; this is an example of an informal network, another element of social capital. The Co-ordinator chooses how this budget is spent, with suggestions from volunteers and Partners in store, by organising various events and activities over the year. For each event the Co-ordinator chooses how much of the budget to subsidise this with. The Co-ordinator at John Lewis Newcastle emphasised the importance of choosing activities that interest most Partners and that this involves getting to know most Partners interests.

> *'Newcastle is a very strong branch for social activities, people like to get involved, someone from catering has different interests than someone from the management office, it is important that I organise activities that interest most people"*

Organised social activities vary and include European trips to Italy, theatre trips locally as well as to London, pamper days and themed nights within the Partners lounge situated in store, including Elvis nights, bingo nights, quizzes, beauty nights and Las Vegas nights. Furthermore one bigger special event is organised once or twice a year.

The Co-ordinator emphasised the importance of the subsidised social activities to Partners because it provides Partners with the opportunity to do things they may not normally do, or in some circumstances be able to afford, have the confidence to organise or do on their own. The Co-ordinator stated that the social events encourage Partners to socialise with others across the store therefore encouraging cross departmental relationships to develop.

One Partner said that:

> *'It's good to work for a company that invests in social organisation within the company, for the benefit of every partner. Every few month's new activities, trips and holidays are advertised in our chronicle, which we as Partners actively use. It is nice to socialise and use these activities with friends and family outside work hours.'*

Social events are advertised and publicised in the free newsletter the Chronicle Newcastle, on a page specifically for the latest social events and activities. The aim of the Chronicle is to aid the team work of the branch in its business and social life. The Chronicle is specific to each John Lewis branch, similar to a local newspaper, and contains articles on latest news in store, topical issues from across the departments in store on products, letters from Partners and customers, welcome to new Partners, trading figures and trends.

Other support John Lewis offers includes a Retired Partners Committee. This Committee is responsible for co-ordinating and organising activities, events and trips for retired Partners, as well as providing support.

There is further support available from a Registrar who is responsible for dealing with all Partners' problems.

John Lewis encourages Partners' development and training and provides Partners with the opportunity to access training on many subjects within the store. The Curve is a training room within John Lewis, equipped with a range of training courses available for Partners to use and train on a number of subjects, for Partners to benefit their daily job or purely as personal choice. Furthermore if a Partner would like to do an educational course outside of work, or learn a new skill John Lewis subsidise fifty percent of the cost of this. This is enforced because John Lewis views anything which benefits the Partner in their job or in everyday life as is worthwhile and this brings something new to the business.

John Lewis ensures that all Partners have a say in how the business is run and actively promotes a democratic decision making process by encouraging Partner feedback on all aspects of the partnership. Working groups are occasionally set up, to discuss and make decisions on various topics, for example Partners hours and increasing sales, which Partners are involved with. Additionally a Partner Survey is distributed to all Partners in the store to consult them on all aspects of their working lives. Partners are anonymous and questions are asked on their job, department/section, their manager, branch and the bigger picture.

The second case study project example is Eaga. Eaga was formed in 1990 by John Clough. Eaga has a strong customer focus and commitment to fuel the poor and vulnerable communities.

In 2000 John Clough decided to create a Partnership and an employee owned model for Eaga, using the John Lewis model as an example, with 125 partners. In 2007, Eaga has 3400 Partners and is 51% employee owned.

Eaga Cares was developed with John Clough's sense of community spirit which he applies to his work, in mind. Eaga expects the 'spirit of ownership' from the Partners through energy and commitment, enthusiasm, positive attitudes, focus

on customers, challenge and support and a commitment to the values and communities.

The Eaga Cares vision is of:

> 'A sustainable business leading in the delivery of solutions for social, environmental and energy efficiency needs.  We care for our Partners, customers and communities with integrity, respect and enthusiasm.'

The Eaga Cares values include:

- We are a winning team
- We are customer focused
- We are dedicated to continuous improvement
- We have a sense of urgency
- We act responsibly and safely
- We are professionals
- We embrace change and will maintain a sense of fun

Eaga is an employee owned Partnership and Eaga believe that this gives Partners a drive to deliver a better service to the communities that they serve.

> '*In terms of caring the reason we put our partners first, is they are people who deliver to the customers who can be the most vulnerable in society. If we care about our Partners, our people, they will care about the customers'*

An important aspect of the Eaga Partnership is Partner engagement which is reinforced by the Partnership ethos and the Eaga values.  Furthermore as shareholders Eaga's employees interests are aligned with their external shareholders.

> *'We are absolutely committed to employee engagement and if you are committed to that you do the things the employees want you to do, and this carries into the community or your customers'*

Every new employee is inducted at Eaga in Newcastle into Eaga Cares and this includes all employees, regardless of what level that they are employed at.  At the induction new employees are asked to give a list of all of the contacts or networks that they have, to add to a central database at Eaga.  This builds on the networks and contacts that the organisation has and creates sustainable networks that others can join.

> *'We create an organisational environment in which our people feel valued and have fun and which is an employee of choice'*

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In order to ensure the Partnership is protected, Eaga believes in employing the right person above the ability to perform the task. There is a strong emphasis on employing someone with the right personality, or more specifically someone who *'cares.'*

> *'We try and hire people who really care. It's about how to protect the culture of an organisation and the values, get people who are energised, energetic and caring'*

Partners are given 'invitation to join Eaga' cards which they can hand out to people they meet in everyday life, who they feel would make a good Eaga partner. Eaga believe that if they are employing people who care, they would recognise other 'caring' people suitable to work at Eaga.

Employees are pro-actively encouraged to look for community projects and engage and support a wide range of projects that they are interested in. Eaga support these projects, either with money or time off for the partner to volunteer. It is important that this is driven by the employee and not a top down process, to encourage the employee to be fully supportive of the project they get involved with. Eagan supports a range of community projects and gives a substantial commitment, financial and other initiatives to these.

> *'The main driver for us is employee engagement, employees are our main shareholders, and they are free to make choices in terms of getting involved in the communities that they serve.'*

Eaga encourage the acknowledgement of good work and Partners are rewarded for excellent service through the Eaga Stars Scheme. Every month, each of the six divisions presents an award to an employee who has exceeded the Eaga Cares commitment with customers. At the end of the year, one of these is picked to be Eaga Star of the year. Another method of recognition of good work is the Values in Practice card (VIP), these are for partners who have done a good job and are nominated by other people they have worked with.

There is a bi-monthly internal magazine and within this new employees are welcomed to the company. This is sent to staff members homes, so family members are encouraged to read this and become interested in what is happening at Eaga and the work it is involved with.

Eaga are continuously encouraging employees to provide feedback and input at all levels of the hierarchy, through many channels including a Staff Council, Executive Board meetings and an opinions survey. The survey is anonymous and gives partners the opportunity to provide their views on all aspects of work including being a partner, their team and their team leader. If results of the survey show there are issues within teams, then one to ones with team leaders are organised, to discuss and explore ways to resolve these issues.

> *'We ask the questions we need answered to help us to make the business better'*

One Eaga Partner and team leader described the importance of working for Eaga Partnership:

> *'If you can't identify what it is about the organisation beyond the fact that you can benefit from its success (profits) partnership doesn't matter. Any organisation that wants to make partnership a success has to build that engagement, because if you don't have that, they can't clearly identify why they want to work for the organisation and for a number of our people that is because we have these social and environmental values, that we demonstrate day in and day out, that's important for local community'*

**The elements of bridging social capital*: where you work in a private company***

The elements of bridging social capital within the case study examples are based around the shared activity or more specifically being employed at the same organisation and striving towards the organisations goals and values. The employees are from different backgrounds. The elements include:

▪ Shared activity and/or interests/goals
▪ Similar social status
▪ Some shared identity and/or history
▪ Mixed formal and/or informal networks
▪ Different background
▪ Different values and/or view points

**Building bridging social capital:** *where you work in a private company*

One of the main elements to building bridging social capital in the two case study examples is employee engagement. Employee engagement is reinforced by the organisations goals or values that employees are working towards.

As employees are co-owners of the businesses, they co-operate to support one another for the mutual gain of the organisation, and are therefore more willing to help each other. Being co-owners thus increases the employee's sense of responsibility and encourages employees to work together thus building trust between them.

People co-operate with one another through the formation of formal and informal networks. Encouraging and supporting informal networking, through organised social activities, as John Lewis do, contributes to making work a more 'happy' place and reinforces employee engagement, and encourages friendships to develop. Putnam states

'Many people form rewarding friendships at work, feel a sense of community among co-workers, and enjoy norms of mutual help and reciprocity on the job' (Putnam, 2000, p.87)

'Many studies have shown that social connections with co-workers are a strong predictor – some would say the strongest predictor – of job satisfaction. People with friends at work are happier at work.' (Putnam 2000, p.90)

Eaga encourage employees to participate and support community projects that they are interested in.  This is an example of bridging social capital between the organisation and the local community because it is the transference of the rich social capital from the workplace into the wider community.  Employees carrying the invitation to join Eaga' cards and being encouraged to give these out is additionally opening up the possibilities of employing people from the wider community.

**Role in social and economic regeneration**
As local employers there is an obvious contribution to economic regeneration, although this is not necessarily attributable to social capital. Eaga's process of handing out cards by employees to people who they feel would be suitable future employees is, however, utilising the social networks to potentially increase economic activity. The training offered by both companies directly increases employability. Perhaps the strongest contribution to economic regeneration is through the combination of increasing social capital at work through the various methods used by both companies in their attention to the social well-being of their employees and job satisfaction, thereby retaining a high proportion of their employees which has a direct positive effect on a stable economy. The ethos of both companies has a direct effect on social regeneration as they actively promote activities and attitudes which lead to a sense of belonging and build networks within the companies and in the wider community.

 **Linking Social Capital**

This is more complex and brings people with different levels of influence together. By linking people in a position of power and higher social status to people with less influence/power the issues from lower down the power/status scale can be supported in a more effective way.

Linking social capital is the newest addition to the typology of social capital. Proposed by Szretzer and Woolcock as a possible step forward in the conceptualization of social capital, arguing that there may be 'linking' forms of social capital in addition to previously recognized 'bonding' and 'bridging' forms of social capital. (http://ije.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/full/35/3/614)

The Office for National statistics describes this as being made up of

> 'connections with people in positions of power and is characterised by relations between those within a hierarchy where there are differing levels of power; it is good for accessing support from formal institutions. It is different from bonding and bridging in that it is concerned with relations between people who are not on an equal footing. An example would be a social services agency dealing with an individual e.g. job searching at the Benefits Agency.' (http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=314)

## Case study 5: *where you spend your leisure time – community representatives in formal committees*

### Introduction

This case study explores linking social capital in the context of where you spend your leisure time and focussing specifically on leisure time spent as a community representative in a formal committee. While the findings are applicable to many formal committees where the community is represented they will have a particular resonance for a Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).

### Case study projects

Representatives from 3 different Community Area Partnerships (CAPs) were interviewed. The CAPs are part of the Wansbeck Initiative, the LSP for the Wansbeck area of Northumberland. 6 CAPs drawn from each of the wards that make up Wansbeck district are represented on Wansbeck Initiative. Representing grass roots level involvement in the initiative, CAPs are membership organisations and membership is open to representatives of local community groups, local businesses, local service providers and councillors. LSPs are made up of representatives of local stakeholders sectors which include; private sector (local businesses), public sector (NHS, education, employment), Voluntary and Community Sector (not for profit, non statutory organisations). Together these represent the community and make decisions about where money is spent locally by developing a strategy to address local priorities.

The crucial element of the CAPs is the grass roots representation which is important for the decisions the LSP makes to be rooted in the locality. This is a dynamic relationship and while the partnership gains vital inroads to the community the representatives gain access to influence. The representatives also gain an increased personal capacity through the experience of being involved in high level decision making. Members of the CAP are involved at different levels; some are involved with themed groups feeding information back and forward between the LSP and the community, some sit on the board of the LSP, others attend the LSP board meeting. Each CAP has its own individual experience as outlined below.

*West Bedlington Community Area Partnership*
The overall aim of this group is to help improve west Bedlington and improve quality of life. The group meets every two weeks. There is a Chair, Vice Chair and treasurer with paid administrative support from the local authority. The Chair and Vice Chair both attend the LSP board meetings.

> '*This keeps us both up to speed with what is going on. The themed groups now have to report regularly to the Board, which did not always happen, so now there is a good flow of information. Access to information through*

*the CAP has improved and we now also have much better relations with the local authority. Involvement in previous initiatives means we have access to individual departments and officers and can pick up the phone to speak to someone. This did not happen before the partnership was set up*'

Other members of the CAP get involved with initiatives run by the council and in local decision making. There are many levels of involvement by representatives from the CAP through formal networks. By being part of these networks community representatives are able to make connections with people who have influence. The LSP and the CAP are dynamic seats of linking capital where those with traditionally less power are able to team up with the more powerful.

'*I keep going to the meetings because I want the best for West Bedlington. I want to know what is going on. It also means that I can pass information out to local people, and stem rumours that sometimes start. I can keep people right to an extent in so far as local developments and services. I think it is beneficial to have the partnership and beneficial for me to attend, I find out about things I wouldn't normally be involved in.*'

The relationships are not without difficulties and tensions. It is not unknown for the link to temporarily be broken as those in a position of power use this to favour of their own agendas.

'*Barriers that we face usually involve poor responses from certain sectors, which do not always respond to requests for information. We try and put pressure on to get them to let us know what we think we need to know. Or to involve us more in local consultations. But they do not always reply despite our best efforts. We try and overcome this by trying to attack from all angles. Lots of members get involved and contact the relevant people who are not responding to us. We write to them, invite them to our meetings – sometimes this eventually works.*'

The presence of one key activist to keep the link active is also a common theme.

'*I personally feel very strongly about staying involved. I need to keep in the loop. There are some key individuals who keep the partnership going, and are the driving force. They are essential to the success of the CAP. Without them I could see that the CAP would fizzle out.*'

The experience of being involved in this type of venture is empowering on a personal level and builds personal capacity as well as giving more power to the community.

'*I feel like I have developed skills by being involved in the CAP. I have more of an understanding of funding now, and a better understanding of*

> *local authority structures and procedures. I feel like we are listened to more.'*

As the CAPs are part of a wider partnership this further increases the learning and linking activities with benefits for all.

> '*I feel the CAP is influential. There has been a definite power shift since the start of the CAP. The CAP has become much stronger. We have also started working with other CAPs. For example we have recently worked with East Bedlington CAP looking at community facilities across the whole of Bedlington.*
>
> '*The CAP gives me an opportunity to meet more people, get new contacts and establish bonds with people. I would not have such an opportunity without the CAP.'*

The experience of East Bedlington Community Area Partnership is in many ways similar. There is a Chair and the local authority provides secretarial support. The group is the grass roots involvement of the LSP and meets bi-monthly. Usually the CAP Chair sits on the LSP board but cannot attend due to work commitments. Although all the CAPs are there to ensure grass roots involvement the individual aims differ slightly and East Bedlington states

> '*The aim of the CAP is to promote social groups to work together and to work with the council to inform them of what is priority to us, and important to local people. We also have a say in how the council spend their resources in our area.*'

Although this is probably not intentional the stated aim is paraphrasing what linking social capital does: 'be a link between people who have differing levels of power or social status, such as different social classes, or political links' (NESCF p10). The links and relationships are built over time as understandings grow between the different groups involved.

> '*At first it felt like the CAP was basically being used to rubber stamp decisions that the council had already made. Progress has been slow, but things have progressed and the emphasis has shifted to now taking the CAP's ideas and helping them develop them. The council still 'seeds in' pet projects, but they engage better and involve the CAP at an earlier stage so that we can have some input.*'

Having said this it is very much a dynamic relationship which can ebb and flow and must be constantly worked at, and the power differential can be brought into play to the advantage of the power holders.

'*The Partnership tackles a lot of social issues, but the council is not always supportive – sometimes they do things their own way rather than how we think it could be done. For example they use their own workers for projects which is much more expensive than local contractors, and it is our money that pays for the work.*'

A different manifestation of the use of a power differential is seen where representatives use their position to push forward their own agendas.

'*Members sit on the CAP representing their own community groups, and are supposed to represent the group's views. But I am not sure how well this works in practice as I think people still give individual views, and do not necessarily feed information back to their groups.*'

The communication does not work so well for East Bedlington CAP as the Chair is not able to attend LSP Board meetings. In such a network good communication is vital as it keeps the relationships alive and developing.

'*This causes problems in that CAP members either offer to go on my behalf, but don't, or no-one volunteers. This makes it difficult to keep track on what is going on at a higher level, and also difficult to take issues relevant to East Bedlington to the Board. We have problems interacting with the Themed Groups, as we do not have any representatives' sit on these groups. We also do not seem to interact much with other CAPs across the District, which I think would be helpful.*'

This CAP also notes the need for strong activist input

'*2-3 key individuals keep the CAP going. … There is a strong backbone to the group that drive things forward.*'

Involvement with the CAP increases the understanding of other peoples' points of view and also of the constraints in which organisations have to operate.

'*Members still get frustrated about how things happen so slowly, as they do not really understand why things have to take so long. But members now have a better understanding of limitations – for example funding, local authority procedures, and time constraints. I have personally a better understanding of other people's views since joining the Partnership. In fact, through this social engagement, members have got to know each other quire well. People are gradually becoming more understanding, and relaxed in their views of others.*'

West Ashington Community Area Partnership also meets bi-monthly, has a chair who sits on the LSP board, and receives administrative support from the council.

Their experience echoes that of the other two in respect of strong activist input being necessary.

> 'One or two key individuals have kept the partnership going for the first few years. More recently more individuals have got more involved, so the work is shared amongst about 5 key people who are eager to get things done.'

This also relates to their encounter of the necessity of the political will, or power differential being exercised according to particular agendas in some cases. For example in selective support for a detached youth project.

> 'A working group has been set up, and is made up of a youth worker, Wansbeck CVS, YMCA, a residents association and one councillor. These members all attend the working group on a voluntary basis and are keen to progress some sort of project that will improve youth provision in the area. The council is not supportive of detached youth work, and is not working with us on this bid.' 'We only link in with one of the themed groups, so it is difficult to say whether I feel we are on a level playing field. I don't really feel like we have equal power, but that might be due to the CAP not being assertive enough.'

The group has some difficulty in coping with the formal structures within the CAP and the LSP:

> 'All members are voluntary, although a paid worker attends from the council to take minutes and act as a link between the council and the CAP. We would like more support than this. ''I am lucky in that I have a flexible job, and can attend Board meetings. However, I cannot attend pre-board meetings, which are quite important. The pre-board meetings bring together all of the CAP Chairs and the themed group convenors. It prepares people for the Board meeting and gives us a chance to talk about things we want to raise. Up until recently I did not have a vice chair. But now things are a little easier as the vice chair can stand in for me when I am unable to attend events or meetings. We also have one CAP member who sits on the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership Themed Group. They attend meetings and then let the CAP know what the main issues are that they are dealing with. '

A good exchange of information is vital for all partners to feel involved and to make the most of the linking social capital.

> 'Although I can imagine that some CAP representatives might be a little intimidated with the high level of discussion - a lot of terminology and acronyms are used. Overall the flow of information to and from the Board is free flowing.'

**The elements of linking social capital**: *where you spend your leisure time, community representatives in formal committees*

The elements are complex and bring people with different levels of influence together. By linking with people in a position of power and higher social status to people with less influence/power the issues from lower down the power/status scale are said to be supported in a more effective way. The elements include:

- Different background and social status
- Different viewpoints/values
- More formal networks
- Limited shared goals
- Limited shared history

The membership of the CAPs and the LSP are drawn from different levels of society in a form of governance that is aimed at increasing participation, engagement, and addressing local needs. They draw together people from different backgrounds and with different remits, such as those representing statutory bodies and those representing their community. The viewpoints and values of those involved are often different, due to some being present in an official capacity and restricted by the practices of their particular agencies and also as some of the partners are new to governance structures. The networks are formal as are the structures in which they operate. While the local governance agenda is wide and covers many aspects of civic life the goals shared are limited to; policy delivery, spending decisions, and target setting for the local area. While many of those involved in the CAPs and the LSP have lived in the locality for much of their lives the shared history of the partnership is limited both by time and by sphere of involvement.

**Building Linking Social Capital:** *where you spend your leisure time, community representatives in formal committees*

One of the crucial elements highlighted by those interviewed is the need for good communications between all parts of the partnership. This is both necessary for the partnerships to function properly '*The themed groups now have to report regularly … there is a good flow of information'*, and for linking capital to be built *'we have access to individual departments and officers … This did not happen before the partnership was set up'*. The link to people with power does not always present an easy route to having an issue taken up by them and poor communication can be used to be selective about which issues are taken up *'barriers that we face usually involve poor responses from certain sectors … they do not always reply despite our best efforts'*. Linking social capital is open to abuse by the powerful where user or community engagement is required as a statutory obligation, as in the LSPs *'at first it felt like the CAP was basically being used to rubber stamp decisions that the council had already made. … The*

*council still 'seeds in' pet projects'.* The power differential is possible to overcome *'there has been a definite power shift since the start of the CAP'* but this needs to be worked at *'lots of members get involved and contact the relevant people who are not responding to us'.*

**Role in social and economic regeneration**
Involvement in the CAPs and the LSP is community based and therefore most obviously contributes to social regeneration. Through their activities they encourage participation within the community adding to a strong vibrant community and members state that they want to do the best for their community. The training that members receive increases their capacity, as does the experience of being involved in governance issues, which increases their employability thereby contributing to economic regeneration. These particular projects also increase civic engagement.

## Case study 6: *Where you live, in deprived communities*

**Introduction**

This case study will explore elements of linking social capital in deprived communities and discuss the main elements of linking social capital from two projects based in deprived communities: Greggs breakfast Club and the I Respect – We Respect campaign.

**Case study projects**

The first case study project example to be discussed is the Greggs Breakfast Club programme. This was started in 1999 with the aim of providing a free and nutritious breakfast for primary school children in deprived areas.  Greggs Breakfast Clubs are free of charge to the school and to all pupils. This is delivered through a partnership between the local Greggs Division which funds and supplies the food and the primary school itself.

The Breakfast Club example used in this case study is based at Fell Dyke School in Wrekenton, which was the 100<sup>th</sup> to be set up.   Fell Dyke school is open from 7am until 10pm every day.  82% of the children who attend the school are from a highly disadvantaged area, the school is a place of calm for them.

As well as talking to Greggs to gather background information about the breakfast Club, the research team visited the breakfast club, and talked to the volunteers that run the breakfast club and the children attending the breakfast club.

A vital element in the success of the clubs, are the volunteer groups from the school community who serve the food and generally run them Greggs states that:

> *'This enables the primary school pupils to enjoy a fun and healthy start to the day and allows local people to get involved in vital school activity.'*

The breakfast club runs every day from 8:30 - 9:00. Every morning, a wide range of food and drinks are available to all children and is free. This includes no sugar cereals, porridge in the winter, fresh orange and apple juice instead of cordial to encourage healthy eating; low fat spread and semi skimmed milk are used.  Two days a week - more often in winter - the children have a hot breakfast.  When the children have finished their breakfast they remain at school and play board games and read newspapers and comics until school begins.

At the case study school, it is the parents of children at the school, who volunteer to run the breakfast club.  The parents pick up the bread etc from the local Greggs bakery, and help out with preparing the breakfast and then tidying up afterwards they find it benefits them socially, they said:

*'It gets me out of the house and gives the opportunity to sit and chat to the other parents after the breakfast club.'*

One parent started to go to the breakfast club because her son was having problems mixing with other children so she brought him along to the breakfast club to make new friends and then continued to volunteer running the club. Parent volunteers are also involved in the school as Parent Governors. The head teacher emphasised that the Breakfast Club has raised the parent volunteers self esteem as they now feel a part of their local community.

The Breakfast Club was well attended by local children. The children said:

*'It's good to come here because Mam and Dad can't give me breakfast at home, so I can have something to eat before school'*

*'Get to eat fruit and healthy food'*

*'Means we can meet and talk to our friends because you can't talk during school time and play games if we want'*

There are many successes of the Breakfast Club. Greggs highlight that the breakfast clubs have contributed to improved attendance and classroom performance and to strengthen the relationship between the schools and their local community. Ofsted see this as a great project, to ensure children are having breakfast (in deprived communities) which improves confidence, attendance, and educational attainment.

The head teacher at Fell Dyke School emphasised the importance of the school for the local area in bringing people together and that the Breakfast Club additionally contributes to reducing bad behaviour and increasing attendance.

*'Free breakfast ensures that the children are given a good time in a safe environment. It means that the children are ready for school and settled and ready for concentrating. They help to improve manners and respect of children. The children aren't asking is it lunchtime at 11am'*

The head teacher stated that attendance levels have increased by 3%, results have increased as children are able to concentrate more and are more attentative and learn basic skills. This may not be only as a result of the Breakfast Clubs, but the Breakfast Club is a definite contributor to these successes.

The second case study project example is the 'I Respect – We Respect' campaign in Stanley. The Campaign is a grassroots version of the Respect Action Plan and aims to build up respect and social responsibility in the area. It is based around seven core principles:

'We all have a responsibility to respect everyone, regardless of their faith, age, colour, culture, sexuality or ability, this means:

1. Everyone has a right for their opinions and ideas to be heard
2. Everyone has a right to be treated courteously
3. Everyone has a right to be treated equally
4. Everyone has a right for their property to be treated with respect
5. Everyone has a responsibility to look after their neighbourhood
6. Everyone has a responsibility to look out for their family, friends and neighbours
7. We should all treat others in the same way as we would expect to be treated ourselves'

The principles of the campaign are transferable and far reaching, and clearly stated, they were developed with the idea that no one could argue with them.

This Campaign is a more proactive approach to dealing with anti-social behaviour and is aimed at teaching and reminding young people of the importance of respect.

To raise awareness of the Campaign, branded 'respect' items were developed, a key success of the Campaign including; window stickers, wristbands, ribbons, pencils, rubbers, rulers, t-shirts, football tops, water bottles, keying torches etc. People can adopt this branding to show their support for the campaign, it was important that the community took ownership of the Campaign and championed it.



A window sticker and the seven principles were sent to all households and all shops and offices in the area.  Shops were given posters for the Campaign to

display in their window and badges to wear.  Badges and ribbons were sent to all public, private and voluntary and community sector workers. Activities have been organised through the Campaign including clean ups, Respect TV, sporting events including a Midnight Football League, played every Friday. The Newsletter has helped to publicise the Campaign.

Other services introduced to the Campaign included Durham Constabulary, GONE, Derwentside Council, local shops and businesses, Jobcentre plus, Durham County Council and Neighbourhood Renewal Unit.

A launch event day was held, where senior level Police, Fire Service, Government Office and Durham County Council representatives gave talks. School children were involved, and developed displays, poems, pictures, posters and raps on the subject of respect. A short film based on local people's interpretations of respect was shown. Local people attending were encouraged to sign up to the seven principles.

All eight schools in the Green Corridor were involved very early on in the Campaign. The seven principles and respect were built into the School Curriculum and work, wristbands, thumb rings and stickers were given to all school children and young people in the Green Corridor. It was important to have the young people on board so that they are publicising the Campaign to their family.

Key individuals who have contributed to the success of the project are the Board members who have championed the campaign and a number of residents, staff and the service providers who have supported the Campaign. Another key contribution to the success of the project has been the:

> *'Buy in' belief in the campaign, it strikes a cord'*

The project worker highlighted that the Campaign has benefited the community in many ways. It has

> '*Increased community responsibility and contributed to a greater feeling of togetherness and increased respect and neighbourliness.'*

> *'The community know that the Campaign is working to improve and combat issues such as Anti Social behaviour and fear of crime, important issues to them. It has been important to target the young people so the principles are carried through generations to improve and restore family values.'*

The people involved have had the opportunity to publicise the Campaign. The project worker states that it has increased interaction amongst a number of residents and officers at both local and central government level.

Additionally, residents have been had the opportunity to go to Conferences as part of the Campaign, the project worker stated:

> '*This has increased their responsibility and confidence levels.'*

As a result of the campaign, an action Plan has been developed and the campaign has been adopted by other Neighbourhood Management Partnerships.

A questionnaire was sent to local residents, to find out peoples views and opinions on Respect and what it means to them. It also provided baseline figures to be used to help determine if attitudes have changed by the end of the campaign.

**Elements of Linking social capital**: *in deprived communities*

The elements of linking social capital from this case study include:
- Different background and social status
- More formal networks

While we have selected this project to demonstrate linking social capital, we recognise that there are many elements of bridging social capital within these project examples including:

- Similar social status
- Different values/viewpoints
- Some shared goals
- Some shared identity and history

**Building Linking social capital:** *in deprived communities*

By providing support to run the Breakfast Club in the School, Greggs are building linking social capital between them and the school and the local community. They have a limited shared goal of providing breakfast and social opportunities for families in a deprived area and a limited shared history based around this activity. The different viewpoints and values of the volunteers, the school and the volunteers from the local community will be exchanged in a casual way around the activities and this will increase understanding of each other. By accessing Gregg's products and economic subsidies (in kind) from them people in a position of power (Greggs) are supporting those lower down the power/status scale (volunteers).

The 'I respect, you Respect' Campaign has built linking social capital between residents, shops and officers at local and central government level. Those people involved in the campaign have limited shared goals (although in this case they are rather wide ranging) and a limited shared history as many of the different social groupings will not previously have had any contact with one another. Bringing the many different groupings together around this shared goal links people from different backgrounds and social status where they will exchange and learn from each others different viewpoints and values.

**Role in social and economic regeneration**

Gregg's breakfast club contributes to economic regeneration in that it helps raise the educational attainment of the children as they are more engaged with the school and better able to concentrate on lessons after a good breakfast. The local community becomes more engaged with the school and with each other increasing a feeling of belonging thereby adding to social regeneration.

The respect campaign contributes widely to social regeneration through the shared identity of 'buying in' to the campaign with the various methods of displaying support. The reduction in fear of crime also contributes to a feeling of community well being, *'Increased community responsibility and contributed to a greater feeling of togetherness and increased respect and neighbourliness'*

## Conclusion

The projects examined in each of the projects have displayed different elements of social capital. From the examination of these examples of good practice it can be seen that replicating the processes by which social capital is developed may be possible. This said however it is not uncommon for the success of projects to often pivot around one or two influential or dedicated individuals. It is highly likely that these individuals are a big part of the 'secret ingredient' that makes the difference between a successful group and one that merely functions.

In the projects used to demonstrate bonding social capital the emphasis is on shared activity and common goal. The common goal in the projects studied can be described as emotive and areas of human concern that will tap into the passions of people involved in them. Mental health issues and young people are both areas that will rouse the passions of people who are interested or involved personally with either of these areas. Providing activities which positively improve the position of people with mental health problems and young people will invariably tap into the positive energies of those involved with anyone from those groups. It is the activity and the improvement of the lot of people in those groups that provides the vehicle and the driving force for the bonding social capital to develop, building on the shared experience outside the activity. In a wider context anything that taps into the human condition will be fertile grounds for building bonding social capital. As will a collective reaction to an outside threat, for example the suggestions of building an incinerator nearby or on a larger scale a war.

By definition bridging social capital is one that brings together people with different view points and interest around a common issue or activity. The two case studies looked at rather different aspects of this, one focussing on where you spend your leisure time and the other on where you work. The main element of this type of social capital is having one strong shared common bond (volunteering or employment in a company) and then building diverse connections from that. All the situations where the bridging social capital was examined had the common thread of a collective recognition of the human condition and shared responsibility for societal well being. In both the workplace and the volunteering setting a sense of giving to the wider community around an activity is pivotal to the building of bridging social capital.

Linking social capital is complex and brings together people with different levels of influence. It is here that a driving individual is often most necessary, at least in the early days as the differences may fragment a group, especially if the issue is not one that easily identified with. For instance in all of the CAPs it was noted that a key individual maintained the link with the wider partnership (the local strategic partnership) The relations in this sort of social capital are delicate and

the difference in power between the two groups can be used to further the powerful groups interest. To maintain this sort of social capital to benefit all the social groupings involved it is important to maintain transparent and effective communications between all levels. A common goal is also necessary.

Key to building and maintaining all types of social capital examined in these case studies is a shared activity. Without activity groups will become talking shops and then stagnate. The common thread in all of the projects studied is working towards improving the human condition. What the study has not been able to examine is if this then spills out into the everyday life of either the individuals or wider society. As well as one or two strong and dedicated individuals, another large part of the 'secret ingredient' to build social capital is meaningful activity around an issue or part of the human condition that can only be improved collectively.

From the case studies it can be seen that social capital can be increased through groups and organisations. The activities of the groups, by their very nature, often contribute to economic regeneration through providing training and opportunities to increase personal capacity thereby increasing members' employability. Social regeneration is aided through the development of networks, although sometimes these may be exclusive, restricted and not benefit the wider community. Within a group there is generally a shared identity albeit often only one aspect of an individuals identity.

Currently social capital is measured through membership of groups, among other indicators. While this is a good starting point it may be more insightful to develop measurements around what sort of activities the groups offer and relate them back to the elements discussed in the case studies. From the more detailed examination of activities provided by the groups we may begin to measure on a typology of social capital where the different types of social capital are measured. With a more detailed breakdown of types of social capital produced by groups they can then be related to the likely contribution to social and economic regeneration. With a deeper understanding and quantification of social capital information a meaningful baseline can be produced and by regularly revisiting and updating the production of social capital by groups can be monitored.

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