

# Assessing the Village Model and the Village To Village Network in Advocating Aging in Place for Older Americans

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## **ABSTRACT**

Aging in Place allows seniors to remain in their choice of residence for as long as possible, using local services and conveniences to live safely and independently. The Village Model is a component of this movement, recognized as a community-based and peer-support network, which allows older Americans to age in their homes and remain active in their community. While it is generally accepted that the first Village emerged in 2001, tens of new Villages have been established over the last few years (presently over 50 are operating and 120 are in planning). When the movement gained significant momentum, the Village to Village Network (VtVN) was established in 2009 as a response to national inquiries. VtVN, which is fundamentally an online tool, connects Villages across the country and provides technical support for developing and maintaining Villages.

In this thesis, I present my research work on behalf of the ICA Group, a non-profit consultancy, as I evaluate how successfully VtVN has been able to meet the needs of its constituency (the Villages). I used three methods to make this assessment: 1. completing a literature review on policies related to older Americans and the Aging in Place movement; 2. conducting research on network structures, both through a literature review and case studies of other nationwide networks; and 3. employing a survey instrument to interview the leadership of existing Villages regarding their experience with their community and the Village to Village Network. Using these analyses, I provide recommendations to the Village to Village Network on how to improve the organization for its membership (the Villages) and for advocating the Aging in Place movement.

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## **CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION**

## Changes in the Elderly Population

The U.S. Census Bureau approximates that the U.S. population will rise from about 304 million, as estimated in 2008, to about 415 million by 2050 (an approximation that independent of any changes in mortality rates, which do not address advances in medicine or life expectancy) (Olshansky 2009). The Census Bureau also forecasts that the population of Americans that are over the age of 65 will rise from 38.7 million, observed in 2008, to about 105 million by 2050 (Olshansky 2009). These findings suggest that while today, older Americans comprise of approximately 13% of the total American population, by 2050, this percentage is expected to reach about 25%—meaning that one in every four Americans will be 65 or older. Finally, the Census Bureau found that in 2000, 26% of 65-year-olds could expect to live to age 90 and by 2050, this percentage is expected to exceed 40% (Cutler 2009). Thus, by 2050, we will have a noticeable fraction of the American population that will reach the age of 65 and can expect to live notably longer lives.

There were approximately 77 million people born between 1946 and 1964, commonly known as the Baby Boomer generation. The first from this generation turned 65 years old in January 2011 (Transgenerational Design Matters 2011). More significant than the sheer number of people in this generation, however, is that this generation is unlike

their parents'; older Americans can now expect to live an average of 18.6 years longer than their parents had because of advancements in medicine and healthier lifestyle choices (AoA 2010; Baker 1998). Today, older Americans exercise twice as much than the previous generation and do not readily require, or even request, medical assistance (Baker 1998).

The current life expectancy is 76.1 years for men and 81.1 for women (CIA 2012). By 2050, the Social Security Administration estimates that the expected average age for males and females will be 80.0 and 83.4 years old, respectively. Meanwhile, other studies by the Census Bureau estimate that in 2050, the expected average age will be 80.9 and 85.3 years, for males and females, respectively. This estimation does not consider the deceleration of death rates, which would elongate the lifespan to 83.2 for males and 89.2 for females by 2050 (Olshansky 2009). Finally, studies that incorporate slower death rates and the estimated longer age expectations, find even higher values of 85.9 and 93.3 years for males and females, respectively (Olshansky 2009).

Today, Americans over the age of 65 can live about 20 to 25% of their lives in “active retirement” (Transgenerational Design Matters 2011) and are now commonly being referred to as “older adults.” These “older

adults” want to remain in their neighborhoods and be an active part of their local communities for as long as possible. The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), a national nonprofit organization that promotes healthy living for older Americans, reports that 93% of older adults prefer to stay in their homes as they age (AARP 2010). Today, older Americans want to be surrounded by familiar physical and social environments and age in the place that allows them to maintain their known lifestyle and remain connected to what they know as home.

There is now a distinction between younger seniors, who range from 65 to 80, and older seniors who are between 80 and 100 years old. Census data finds that there were about 5.4 million Americans over the age of 85 in 2008; but by 2050, this number will increase more than six times to 35 million Americans (Olshansky 2009). Active retirement for seniors often refers to participating in volunteer activities for their community or exploring new hobbies. Younger seniors, in particular, do not want to spend their time playing bingo, but be entertained by musicals and plays, continue learning about health and fitness, and participate in community activities. Finally, because this new generation of seniors has remained physically active and capable, they will find it

easier to age in their own homes (Lerner 2010).

Nevertheless, while this generation of older Americans can expect to remain active, they will still require some kind of support as they age—bringing to surface a new range of services that will encourage a strong, healthy lifestyle that is also affordable and manageable. Older adults will go through a number of physical, cognitive, and emotional transitions as they age; thus for promoting healthy aging, a support system is vital. Unfortunately, as aging takes place at an unprecedented rate, the concept of aging remains static and stigmatized (Sanderson and Scherbov 2008). Seniors face shame from being labeled as helpless or a burden to their children, while others fear becoming isolated or re-starting their lives if they are forced to move to a new community.

The cost of starting over is expensive, both financially and emotionally. Too often, old age is associated with relocating to a nursing home or a senior community, however, monetary costs for institutional care have an average of \$50,000 a year (AARP 2007), where households that are headed by a person that is 65 years or older reported a median income of \$43,702 in 2009 (AoA 2010). Moreover, the emotional and social cost of moving are often immeasurable given the factors of leaving one’s friends, familiarity, and community network. The emphasis on

cost is shifting, more recently, from relocation being a viable financial option to considering whether it is the optimal choice for one's personal well-being and happiness.

Older Americans are not only living longer, but living healthier lives, which they want to share with their communities in their own homes. These "retirement communities" are different from retirement-destinations such as Florida because they have emerged in small clusters based on local and common needs with strong social ties to one another (Morrison 2009). As an American principle,

older Americans also value their independence and the ability to live on their own. Many of them do not want to move in with their children and grandchildren, but live independently as they age (Timmermann 2012). Thus, a much-needed conversation is needed about healthy aging and novel options for older Americans to feel both safe and content with their choice. Fortunately, there is a growing movement known as Aging in Place (AIP), which allows seniors to remain in their choice of residence, independently, for as long as possible (Age In Place 2012).

### **The Aging in Place Movement**

Aging in Place (AIP) refers to living and aging in the place where one has lived for years, typically not in an institutionalized care environment, using the local services and conveniences that allow one to remain at home safely and independently (Aging In Place 2012). There is a variety of situations that older Americans face as they age, such as living with their children or willingly moving to senior community. However, about 30% of non-institutionalized older Americans live alone, which equates to 11.3 million people (AoA 2010). The needs of the elderly have transformed over the last few decades from requiring a form of intensive medical care to wanting to remain in their own homes and communities as they age (Administration on Aging 2011). Today, one-third of the home-

owners over the age of 65 (7.4 million of the 22.6 million) in United States live in the same residence that they have for over 30 years (Morrison 2009).

Aging in Place is gaining momentum across the nation as the American population shifts in its constituency. Morrison finds that several factors contribute to the AIP phenomenon, such as the younger generations having the characteristic of being mobile and transient, while the older population remains in place or close to their neighborhoods (2009). Simultaneously, he also asserts that, historically, many suburbs were established after the World War II era due to the Housing Act of 1949 which endorsed new housing construction and significantly contributed to the creation of suburban communities, particu-



larly of the same generational cohort (Morrison 2009; HUD 2012). This trend created a sense of belonging and community for certain generations as a collective. And today, these are the families and households that are choosing to remain in the same community as they age in place. These cohorts provide strong social connections, which are very valuable for maintain a strong community.

Today, Aging in Place (AIP) is seen both a social movement and a novel healthcare practice. The baby boomer generation has only begun to enter the elderly age group and this is opening up a new market for research and possibilities. This upcoming senior generation will be more independent than previous generations and be less likely to give up homeownership when they retire. Moreover, due to the weak economy, households will find it more difficult to afford relocation to retirement facilities, making the Aging in Place movement more desirable (Pat-

(Patteson 2010). Aging in Place empowers seniors to have more control over their lifestyle choices. Additionally, AARP finds that emotional connections are a significant motivator for aging-in-place: a desire to remain in a community near friends and family that provides homeowners with a support system and a social network (Lerner 2010). This is vital as MetLife, a well-known insurance company in the geriatric field, finds that aging without a support system can lead to social isolation, inadequate access to health care, and vulnerability in both the emotional and physical sense (MetLife 2011). Nevertheless, one certainty is that as older adults age, they will require certain services to be provided that will appropriately allow them to remain engaged with their communities and conscious of healthy aging (Kittner 2006); fortunately, this concern can be addressed by the Village movement.

### **Introducing the Village Model**

Over the last decade, a new model under the umbrella of “Aging in Place” has emerged known as the “Village” model. Villages are membership-driven, grass-roots organizations, led by volunteers, paid staff, and a board, that coordinate access to affordable services (such as transportation and home repair) for older Americans (Village to Village Network 2012). Villages aid residents,

often over 65, age in their homes while providing services through community support.

The concept of a Village was first envisioned by a group of older community members during the 1990s in Beacon Hill, Massachusetts, who sought an interactive and wholesome experience as they aged. This group established the Beacon Hill Village in

2001. Since then, Villages have evolved and are now commonly recognized as community-based and peer-support networks, which allow the elderly to remain in their homes and remain active in their community.

The Village model relies on an informal network of community members to aid the aging population within a specific geographic community. Most Villages originate out of a grass-roots, consumer-driven, volunteer-first model (McDonough 2011). Community residents initiate the process of establishing a Village by identifying their local needs, which are often related to a desire to age in place, and create a self-governing organization that provides assistance for turning these desires into actionable provisions. Susan McWhinney-Morse, one of the founders of Beacon Hill Village, which is commonly recognized as the first Village, states that Villages are formed, governed, and served by

residents of a community to respond to the community's expressed needs (Beacon Hill Village 2009).

A Village is often organized by volunteer members of a local community, comprised of one to several neighborhoods in close proximity. Villages are non-profit organizations with a membership-base that contributes to a monthly or annual fee; they primarily function through volunteer support, but can have one or two paid staff. The Village often solicits those over 50 years of age to become members, but it is more common to find members that are over 65 years old. Villages offer services that are less medical-care based because the concept is aligned with an increasingly healthier aging population. Instead, Villages often provide supportive services, such as transportation aid and social get-togethers.

### **Application of Research**

I am working for the ICA Group, a non-profit consultancy (ICA Group 2011) as a researcher on the Village Model. The phenomenon of Villages emerged in 2001 with Beacon Hill Village, in Boston, Massachusetts. Presently over 50 Villages are operational around the country, and there are over 120 in the planning process. Many elderly communities noticed Beacon Hill Village and used them as their model for starting their own

organization. As the movement gained momentum, the need for a formal organization to connect these Villages and serve as a resource for Village development became apparent, and thus, the Village to Village Network (VtVN or VtV Network) was created in 2009.

The VtV Network was established as a partnership between Beacon Hill Village and NCB Capital Impact, which is a national non-

profit organization with the mission of promoting community development. NCB Capital Impact has several initiatives to encourage sustainability and better choices, ranging from healthy foods to affordable housing (NCB Capital Impact 2011). The Village to Village Network is now one of NCB Capital's initiatives. The Village to Village Network is fundamentally an online-tool for the Villages that provides webinars, document-sharing, and organizes an annual conference. Having invested in this movement over the last two years, the Village to Village Network is now interested in assessing its effectiveness and challenges for existing and emerging Villages.

The Village to Village Network has been established on the premise of connecting the Villages around the country. It provides information that ranges from intellectual capital, such as "nuts-and-bolts" documents to more practical needs, such as an online database provider. It is highly valuable for the Village to Village Network to be able to provide adequate and the appropriate information to its constituency. A part of the

research goal is to assess how successful the Network has been with sharing information and meeting the needs of its clientele. In addition to needs related to Village development, there is potential for the VtV Network to take an advocacy role on the national movement of "Aging in Place" and other related topics to older Americans.

The Network estimates that there are 50 Villages in execution, and over 120 in planning. With such a large constituency and increasing support for the Village movement, the Village to Village Network is at a pivotal time to strengthen its roots and extend its reach. The purpose of my research work is to understand the effectiveness of the Village to Village Network as a resource for Villages and to suggest recommendations for improvement. I evaluated the needs of Village Model practitioners to judge how well the Village to Village Network is able to provide assistance through its services and how effectively VtVN is able to construct a resourceful and supportive network.

### **Research Questions**

What can the Village to Village Network learn from the successes and challenges of existing Villages as it facilitates the advancement of the Village movement? How can the Village to Village Network strengthen its mission and organization?

## Methodology

To answer the research questions, I followed three courses of action. First, I completed a literature review on the history of policies related to older Americans and the Aging in Place movement; this aspect informs my understanding of the consumer group (older Americans), the resources older Americans have been allotted, and the general trends associated with these movements. Additionally, I attended the annual national conference organized by VtVN in October 2011 to better understand the Village movement around the nation,

Second, I conducted research on network structures, both through a literature review and case studies of other nationwide

networks; this aspect informs my assessment on how effectively the Village to Village Network is performing with respect to its constituency (the Villages) and how it can improve its services and delivery.

Third, I have employed a survey instrument to interview the executive directors or board members of existing Villages regarding their experience with launching their Village and the Village to Village Network as a resource. The interviews were administered by phone and focused on learning about the successes and challenges that Villages have faced and what recommendations the Village leaders may have for improving the Village to Village Network.

**CHAPTER 2 - ELDERLY HOUSING & CARE**  
**LITERATURE REVIEW**

## **Older Americans Act of 1965 & Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs)**

The Older Americans Act (OAA) passed in 1965 to maintain the dignity and welfare of older Americans (those over the age of 60) and initiated national awareness for supporting the elderly population. This act was a response to the lack of community and social services available for older Americans. The law created a vehicle for organizing, coordinating, and providing community-based services for the elderly. It created the Administration on Aging (AoA), which is overlooked by the U.S. Department of Health and Services, and funded a network of services, including care management, in-home support, senior center service, and nutrition programs (McDonough 2011).

The Act also established 56 State agencies and gave them the authority to grant research projects that served community planning and social services for the elderly. Additionally, the Act mandated the creation of 629 Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) around the country to serve as a resources of information the elderly, regarding a range of services, such as medical care and transportation needs (AoA 2012). AAAs serve as the most

direct and tangible resource for the elderly population as a mechanism that provides on-the-spot information and access to needed services. AAAs are governed by an advisory council with the goal of developing and coordinating community-based amenities for the elderly. AAAs may collaborate with one another if it is regionally feasible and are connected through a national network where they share information on governance, policy, planning and fundraising (National Association of Area Agencies on Aging 2011).

In theory, an AAA sounds very similar to a Village because AAAs are meant to serve as a resource for older Americans when seeking out support or aid. Nevertheless, Villages are distinct because they cater to individual relationships with their members and establish a peer-support network where members can rely on one another. On the other hand, AAA services tend to be more reflective of medical and health needs. Additionally, AAAs are have historically been severely underfunded, which makes them much less capable of helping their targeting population (McDonough 2011; Doty 2010).

## **Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs)**

Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs) emerged as an urban trend, first in New York City, in residential apartment buildings, where younger resi-

dents moved out leaving behind an aging, older residents population (NORCs 2012). The label, "NORC," was first coined in mid-1980's to describe a physical community set-

ting (apartment building or neighborhood) that, over time, came to be inhabited mostly by older adults (McDonough 2011; Hunt and Gunter-Hunt 1985). The novelty of NORCs is that these communities were not originally designed to serve an elderly population but naturally became populated with an older age group, as a result of Aging in Place (AIP).

The formal “NORC Aging in Place Initiative” is led by The Jewish Federations of North America, an international philanthropic organization, which has further developed the NORC paradigm to NORC-SSP, where SSP refers to Supportive Services Programs, since the early 2000s (NORCs 2012). Similar to Villages, NORC-SSPs heavily depend on providing services and volunteerism, in addition to relying on existing social and health organizations in the community, such as formal medical agencies (McDonough 2011; Bookman 2008; Ivery et al. 2010). The NORC-SSP is a coordinating body that employs case management and community partnerships to offer a range of supportive health

and social services to older adults residing in a specific area (McDonough 2011; Vladeck 2006).

The NORC and AIP movements both originated in the 1980s and are sometimes (though incorrectly) used interchangeably. Aging in Place, for a community, is a phenomenon that is facilitated by a particular generation of people settling in close proximity and over time, choosing to remain in the same place as they age (Morrison 2009). On a similar vein, therefore, through the persistent occupancy of older residents, NORCs also fall under the umbrella of Aging in Place. Overall, both NORCs and the AIP movement have the capacity to strengthen community through the presence of a strong social network, which refers to the community’s personal connections and word-of-mouth (Morrison 2009). This aspect is imperative for the success of Village formation and sustainment as Villages nurture a community’s existing network and give way to strengthening the peer-support.

### **Formal & Informal Elder Care**

Formal care refers to care that is provided by a trained health or social service professional, whereas informal care refers to the care provided by a family member (Bookman 2011). This difference denotes that formal care, which is paid, takes place in institutional and community settings, while

informal care, which is unpaid, takes place in private homes. A form of formal care that aligns with Aging in Place is through the provision of In Home Health Services (IHHS). In-home services are provided through locally approved agencies, which are in contract with the Department of Aging and Adult Services

(CDSS IHSS 2007). Costs are covered through insurance payments, such as from Medicare or private providers, such as Aetna (Michigan IHHCP 2012). IHHS have the mission of creating the best environment for the elderly, whether it involves a visit from a physician or another employee. The IHHS, however, are more catered toward supporting the elderly with less physical capabilities and require aid with completing “Activities of daily living” (ADLs), which including feeding, toileting, and grooming (National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP 2004).

While the Administration on Aging find that about 30% of non-institutionalized older Americans live alone (11.3 million people), it does not reinforce the “myth of the abandoned elderly” (AoA 2010; Bookman 2011) because informal care accounts for a great deal of unpaid work as families provide care to the nation’s most vulnerable population. Studies calculate an estimation of \$196 billion a year in 1997 to \$257 billion a year in 2004 for unpaid, informal work, based on a study by the United Hospital Fund (Bookman 2011). Such high estimates underscore the importance and large market for family care. Caregivers who are family members, thus, create a “shadow workforce” in the geriatric health care system. Bookman cites that according to the most recent AARP-NAC survey data, 23% of caregivers live with the elder for whom they are caring (co-residence is partic-

ularly common among low-income caregivers) and 51% live twenty minutes away (Caregiving 2012; Bookman 2011). Additionally, because American families tend to be mobile, where about 16% of families move each year, it is not uncommon for adult children to live in different cities, states, or even regions from their elderly parents—which makes it difficult to assure that their parents are well-taken-care of.

Past research focused on the challenges that working adults face taking care of both their children and elderly parents; this groups is known as the “sandwich generation,” a term coined by sociologist Dorothy Miller to bring attention to specific generational inequalities in the exchange of resources and support (Bookman 2011). The sandwich metaphor, however, does not necessarily convey all the encompassing factors, such as the dynamics of the interaction between generations related to finances, shared space, and emotional care. It is more common today to find adults spending more years caring for their parents than caring for their children (Bookman 2011). Moreover, because families are smaller in more recent generations, middle-aged adults tend to have a smaller sibling network to share the elder care responsibilities (Bookman 2011).

Elder care generally takes one of three forms: short-term, intermittent, and long-term (Bookman 2011). For examples, a



surgery may immobilize an elder temporarily, which requires fairly intense care for a short period of time, but could disrupt the caregiver's professional and/or personal schedule (if that caregiver is a family member). A majority of elder care recipients who have chronic health conditions require intermittent care, which means having regular trips to one or more specialists, medication management, and adjustments to household routines. In these cases, caregivers are needed frequently over a longer period. Finally, in other cases, elder care that is long-term can last for months or years and requires support on a daily basis. If the caregiver is a family member, this can significantly affect their ability to maintain a full-time job, provide care for other family members, and maintain personal and community involvement (Bookman 2011). Overall, the reality remains that elder care in the United States is a rising and demanding task, and it must be addressed sooner than later.

Economic resources available to caregiving families have a wide range. Upper-middle-class and affluent families often have enough saved funds to pay for elder care ser-

vices, while poor families may be eligible for subsidized services. Thus, the most difficult arrangement is for the working poor and families with moderate incomes, who encounter the "middle-class squeeze," (Bookman 2011). The financial dimension of elder care finds cross-generational transfers fairly common. A 2005 study found that 29% of baby boomers provided financial assistance to a parent in the previous year, while about 20% received financial support from a parent (Bookman 2011). Additionally, a study through surveying of elders over the age of 65 found that 50% of elders gave money to their adult children and about a one-third will help their adult children with child care, errands, housework, and home repairs. With respect to receiving, more than 40% reported receiving help with errands and rides to appointments; about a one-third reported receiving help with housework and home repairs; and about 20% received help with bill paying and direct financial support. Thus, it is notable that care, time, and money are being exchanged between the generations in both directions.

### **Understanding Villages and the Village to Village Network**

Villages are based on the notion that "it takes a village to raise a child," and thus, similarly, it also takes a village to support the elderly as they age (Gross 2007). The Village

initiative evolved out of community-based practices and empowerment approaches combining elements of locality development, civic engagement, and community capacity

building (McDonough 2011). Villages fundamentally rely on interdependence and community-building. Villages provide members with a network of resources, services, programs, and activities. Most of the services are organized to provide aid for daily needs, but also solicit social get-togethers promoting social, cultural, and educational programs. Villages provide referrals to service providers (e.g., plumbing), garner discounted prices, and suggest formal medical service systems. Thus, Villages improve the functional capacity of a community and promote Aging in Place (McDonough 2011).

The Village model relies on a network of community members to provide assistance to aging populations within a specific geographic community. Villages can develop through existing social service agencies that use formal services or be primarily driven by volunteers. Nevertheless, Villages are formed, governed, and served by the residents of a community who design the program of assistance to respond to the community's expressed needs (Beacon Hill Village 2009). Villages are constructed on cooperative principles and facilitate civic engagement. Villages vary in their implementation and services because they reflect the needs of each individual community. However, there are general "hallmark" characteristics, which include self-governance, grassroots membership-based organizations, coordination of events

and members, and consumer-driven. Villages are focal points for members, where members can simply call and obtain the desired information and guidance. Villages often provide referrals to numerous services, ranging from health care to house plumbing.

AARP states that "nine out of 10 older Americans want to stay in their homes for as long as possible, and the 'village' movement is capturing the imagination of the boomers that organized babysitting co-ops in the '60s and '70s," (AARP 2010; Lerner 2010). Villages are organizing services and are led by community members for their own benefit and healthy aging. There are now more than 50 Villages nationwide trying to make neighborhoods more comfortable and appropriate for healthy aging. Many seniors feel independent and desire to live in a mixed community, instead of only with other seniors (Gross 2007).

Beneficiaries of this initiative believe that a grass-root and relatively inexpensive strategy can go a long way for making a difference for seniors (Gross 2007). Additionally, with the independent mentality of the younger generation, some younger seniors also prefer to "pay a fee for the service," instead of feeling as if it is a hand-out (Gross 2007). Some feel that Villages provide a sense of community and camaraderie where everyone is discovering a new potential (Gross 2007).

Villages can be governed in several different ways, depending on the involvement of Board members and/or capacity of the paid staff. Membership costs range from double to triple digits, often depending on the services and activities provided (Lerner 2010). Villages can take from 18 months to three years in the planning, fundraising, and organization to be launched. They often require a substantial amount of fundraising and community recommendations to establish service referrals. Villages often screen, train, and vet volunteers to secure the privacy of their members (and vice-versa).

Many Villages also screen contractors and/or professional service providers before offering them as a referral and some Villages follow-up with the experience. Villages offer a social outlet for members by planning social events and connecting people with similar interests. Villages are often also connected to

related organization to optimize services, such as Area Agencies on Aging, Churches, and other non-profits (Lerner 2010). There are also models that encourage members to volunteer services to each another, known as a time-bank, which allows members to feel useful to one another (Steele 2010).

Organizing a village remains a difficult task, which can take up to three years in planning before services can be fully provided. There are major tasks, such as fundraising, understanding priorities, legal and insurance issues, and the challenge of building a network of volunteers to implement the organization. The process often starts with a neighborhood survey, followed by door-to-door visits to promote the idea, and conversations held at community associations. The personal touch is often a vital component, given the grass-roots nature of the organization and movement.

Common services offered by Villages shown to the right, image was produced through available information via websites of Ashby Village, Beacon Hill Village, San Francisco Village, and Capitol Hill Village.

<p><b>Components of the Organization:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Executive Director</li> <li>+ Assistant Manager</li> <li>+ Board</li> <li>+ Staff</li> <li>+ Volunteers</li> <li>+ Members</li> <li>+ Website</li> </ul>	<p><b>Events:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Social (Luchcons, Potlucks, etc.)</li> <li>+ Cultural (Museum, Concerts, etc.)</li> <li>+ Health (Exercise, Spirituality, etc.)</li> <li>+ Educational (Lectures, Financial Planning, etc.)</li> <li>+ Interest Groups (Book Club, Politics, etc.)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Referrals of Service Providers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Home Care (Gardener, Painter, etc.)</li> <li>+ Transportation (Taxi, Car Service, etc.)</li> <li>+ Professional Services (Attorney, Accountant, etc.)</li> <li>+ Health Services (Doctor, Care attendant, etc.)</li> <li>+ Physical Fitness (Classes, Trainer, etc.)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Village</b></p> <p><b>Volunteer-based Services:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Light Housework &amp; Repair</li> <li>+ Grocery Shopping</li> <li>+ Home Visits &amp; Phone Calls</li> <li>+ Technical &amp; Computer Support</li> <li>+ Petcare Assistance</li> <li>+ Food Preparation &amp; Delivery</li> <li>+ Physical Activities</li> <li>+ Transportation</li> </ul>

The “Village movement” is generally a trend for the middle class. Most Villages offer subsidized memberships to a percentage of lower-income household. These individuals tend to have a sufficient amount of assets that make them ineligible for Medicaid, yet they cannot afford to pay for a full-time home care, and often do not want to depend on their adult children. Thus, the Village model fills in the gaps which exist in medical and policy programs. Villages primarily serve older adults, who are not nursing-home eligible. The Village model encourages social interaction and provides basic help, suggesting that small changes and actions can significantly contribute to the elderly being happier, healthier, and more likely to postpone, perhaps forever, institutional health care.

Andrew Scharlach, a Berkeley gerontologist, believes that the Village movement is currently a boutique phenomenon, but sees potential for growth and expansion (Cape Cod Times 2011). Scharlach does not see membership dues as a barrier because the changing demographics will demand supportive and social services. It is worthwhile to consider that there may exist “naturally-occurring Villages” or support-networks that available for the elderly through local churches or ethnic associations. The Village, however, is unique because it is membership-driven. Villages are made operational by an executive director and volunteering staff, however the

Village is envision by its constituency and board members. The services a Village provides and the events it organizes are a result of what its members desire. Such an arrangement can also be organized by local church or ethnic organization, but it is unlikely that in that case, the primary focus is the care of the older members.

It is, thus, worthwhile to formalize the Village model and become a part of the VtV Network, if the mission is to serve older Americans. On a similar note, while most Villages are grass-roots initiatives, there are a few examples of Villages that have been created as part of a healthcare management system, where the peer-support and social need was recognized and addressed by the addition of a Village. For examples, Avenidas in California was a formal healthcare system, but it now includes a Village component for older Americans who are interested in a social support network.

Students from the University of Tennessee evaluated a Village in Knoxville, One Call Club, and made a significant discovery; they found the number of emergency room visits declined among people who joined the Village and members reported that their overall health has either remained steady or improved since joining (Cape Cod Times 2011; WJLA 2011). Thus, if the Village model succeeds on a larger scale, there could be sufficient incentive to allocate health-care re-

sources to this movement. Finally, the concept of a Village is not meant to solely benefit the elderly, but foster a stronger sense of community that will connect all generations from the youngest to seniors (Steele 2010).

Villages frequently vary in their governance structure, protocol with volunteers, and services available through the community. And while Villages are independent from each another, there is a great deal of information and experience the different Villages share with one another.

With the increasing popularity of this model, existing Villages have felt the pressure to serve not only their members, but incoming phone calls from prospective community members who want to learn more about the movement. Thus, an entity that can provide coordination and development support for the Villages and between them became necessary; and the Village to Village Network (VtV Network) was developed in 2009 as a response to the requests by existing Villages around the nation.

The VtV Network was created by a partnership between Beacon Hill Village (BHV), generally recognized as the first Vil-

lage, and NCB Capital Impact, a non-profit financial institution working on community development. NCB Capital Impact became involved with the Village movement when advising nonprofits in the state of California and aided about five Villages with their launching process. After that initial connection, NCB and BHV joined forces to support Villages nationwide.

The Village to Village Network is fundamentally an online tool that provides support and resources to existing Villages or to groups that are interested in starting a Village. The Network connects Villages around the nation through personal references and an online forum. There is a membership fee to become a part of this network, which gains one access to the online documents, webinars, and information. Presently, the Network estimates that there are over 50 Villages in execution, most of whom are members of VtVN. And the VtV Network is aware of over 120 more in planning process. Having been a part of the Village movement for the last two years, the Village to Village Network is in the process of assessing its effectiveness for its constituency.

**CHAPTER 3 - NETWORK STRUCTURES**  
**LITERATURE REVIEW & CASE STUDIES**

This research study primarily focuses on the efficacy and structure of the VtV Network with respect to how it can better serve its membership base (the Villages). The Village to Village Network connects Villages nationwide through an online tool. And as the Aging in Place movement gains prominence and Villages continue to emerge around the country, the VtV Network is in a position to assess, discover, and design the most effective way to share and disseminate information.

This chapter examines potential connections between VtVN as a network structure and literature on leadership, partner-

ship, and networks. The research behind organizational and network structures can be applied to both the VtV Network and the individual Villages. Additionally, the research on leadership and partnerships can also apply to both VtVN and the individual Villages, which are governed by different management arrangements and partner with local organizations to best serve their constituency. This chapter also provides case studies and offers examples of effective practices for the VtV Network to consider for emulation as it develops its organizational structure.

## **Leadership**

While the Village to Village Network is not a “manager” of the Villages, the performance of the Network is still dependent on its ability to protect its membership (the Villages) from threats and remain supportive at all times. Sutton advocates that successful bosses protect their employees and serve as a “human shield” in times of need and guidance (2010). Protecting employees involves avoiding lengthy and inefficient meetings and being motivational while not meddling with the employees’ work and professional development.

Sutton believes that management can recognize which processes or actions are superfluous, and suggests that a good leader would not allow her/his employee “sink time”

into inane or burdensome practices. Organizational theory suggests that management “buffers” its employees (or constituency) from external trepidations in order to permit completion of the organization’s work. The staff of VtVN participates in a variety of meetings to serve its constituency. However, the most direct application of meetings for VtVN with respect to its members is through webinars, which are online get-togethers for informing the Villages on certain practices and giving them an opportunity to ask questions. These occasions serve as an analogy to meeting time, and because webinars involve several parties, they should be utilized most efficiently and effectively.

Management is often organized in a hierarchical structure, where leaders also have to answer to a managing superior. However, there can be situations where the superior, who is not directly involved, acts in meddlesome ways with the organization's employees. In such a situation where a leader is placed as a connecting link between two ends, it is the responsibility of the leader to recognize the well-being of her/his employee and the organization (Sutton 2010). Good, and wise, leaders will balance the orders from the top, the considerations for the employees, and the mission of the organization.

Along the same vein, effective leaders will also trust her/his employees to follow their best judgment—and not find the need to overlook their every action. This situation is analogous to the organizational set-up of a Village. Villages have an executive director who is liable for the Village's operations; meanwhile volunteers represent the employees who aid the completion of daily tasks. The superior in this scenario are often the board members of a Village, who have a personal stake in the Village's success and reputation. In this situation, the executive director is responsible for balancing the requests of a Board with the capabilities of the volunteers, in addition to the needs of the members.

Monica Higgins states that most researchers conceptualize mentorship as a de-

velopmental assistance process, where a senior agent is paired with a protégé to create a single dyadic relationship (2001). Higgins defines developmental assistance as providing career support, referring to concepts such as sponsorship, and psychosocial support, such as counseling. The Village to Village Network plays the role of a mentor to its members (Villages) as it provides professional advice and support, while also providing counseling to members when necessary.

Nevertheless, Higgins adds that scholars now consider the limitations of this traditional model and suggest a new approach where mentees have multiple mentors. Higgins highlights that, today, individuals or organizations no longer having a single way of defining their personal or professional identity, but desire multiple advisors or mentorship-relationships to assist their growth. This aspect is applicable to the relationship between VtVN and Villages. VtVN is a primary resource for obtaining information on Village basics, such as how to organize a volunteer-base or solicit members. However, Villages are inclined to seek out additional forms of mentorship, such as from an organization like BlueAvocado, which informs non-profits on how to become more effective and financially sustainable (Blue Avocado 2012). Thus, the VtV Network must remain conscious of the various needs of its membership, which will vary by region and age of the Village.



## Partnerships

Fjeldstad and Sasson believe that organizations that create relationships across field boundaries participate in “explorative learning.” This action is very common for Villages as they often create partnerships with local service organizations and institutions. Wenpin Tsai writes that intra-organizational linkages allow organizations to achieve economies of scope, where partnering organizations decrease average costs when collaborating on two or more products. Additionally, Tsai states that intra-organizational links permit transfer of knowledge leading to a competitive advantage (2000).

While partnerships are valuable, Tsai also warns that new linkages may not be easy to create because social relations are often “path dependent”—which means that future linkages are affected by past ones. Tsai explains that creating new partnerships requires time and commitment to acclimate the newcomers to a network; meanwhile it is often not fully clear how a new partnership may be beneficial. This assessment can be applied to both the VtV Network and individual Villages. Villages often create partnerships or linkages with local organizations, such as churches or service providers. Meanwhile, the VtV Network is considering creating national partnerships, such as with a transportation provider or an insurance company. These partnerships will allow Vil-

lages and the VtV Network to utilize existing resources (employing economies of scale and exchange knowledge), but will also require a commitment to maintaining communication and developing these relationships.

Tsai explains the complementary factors of social capital and strategic relatedness encourage the formation of new linkages. Social capital either facilitates or constrains a network or an organization’s willingness to create a new linkage; and strategic relatedness assesses how similar the new partner is to the existing one to highlight the opportunity for sharing strategic resources (Tsai 200).

Keith Provan asserts that many community-organized networks have become an important mechanism for building capacity, resolving problems, and delivering needed services (2005). Nevertheless, he warns (as many others have), networks are difficult to establish, and even more difficult to maintain given the multi-organizational partnership structure. Provan finds that deficiencies such as lack of financial support are common for community-organized networks, but it is often internal problems, such as mismatched interests within the network, that lead to the community network’s ability to survive and/or grow. Meanwhile, Tsai emphasizes the importance of trust between the network actors to promote informational, social, and economic exchange.

Establishing and maintaining trust and common vision among its constituency is very valuable to the VtV Network. Having helped over 50 Villages launch around the country, 120 new Villages are following suit and trusting the Network to also help them execute successfully. In order to maintain the same level of success and confidence, VtVN must persist in its communication with and support of the Villages in planning, which includes having a clear vision and aligned interests. This may require an increase of staff members to address the increase in numbers, but this need can also be met if the Network efficiently and effectively presents its resources and information for the Villages in planning.

Both Tsai and Provan recommend that members of the collaborative recognize the significance of their participation as a functioning and contributing component. Provan finds that constituents assess their diverse skillsets and knowledge-bases for addressing the community needs and also emphasizes recognizing the organization's social and political roles in the larger picture. Provan advocates that network analysis can provide leaders with significant information to help them build stronger networks; moreover, he stresses analyzing the relationship between the network and its constituents. Through self-assessment, leaders can assess the strengths and weaknesses of the network and shift priorities that may be critical to the organization's effectiveness.

### **Network Structures**

Paul Nutt suggests that strategic planning methods are not particularly useful for service producing non-profit organizations because their mission or goals are often vague (1984). Nutt states that strategic planning passes through two essential stages: formation, which involves goal development, and conception, which identifies opportunities to take action. The strategic planning process moves between the first and second stage until there is alignment between the objective and means to act. The planning process requires conversation, critical think-

ing, and refinement; ideas are exchanged between the stages throughout the process, adding and modifying the concepts until the organization can become actionable. This process between the first and second stage is where the VtV Network presently resides; this research study should motivate the strategic planning process for the VtV Network. Formulating and asserting its mission is vital for the VtV Network as the Aging in Place and Village movement gain momentum.

Robyn Keast et al. highlight that it is vital for participants and managers to under-

stand how a network functions and its purpose in order to be effectiveness in its mission. Moreover, they emphasize that the participants of the network should be clear in voicing their expectations and working to meet a collective goal (2004).

Keast et al. emphasize that there is a distinction between network structures and the concept of networking or networks. Networking refers to making connections through common ground, such as meetings or conferences, and the ultimate goal is to establish a link with other key players through individual efforts. Networks are created when the networking linkages or connections are formalized because of a mutual interest in further developing the relationship. It is pivotal to understand that networks may involve simultaneous action by different participants, but each action is independently operated by distinct organizations (Keast et al. 2004).

Network structures are organized when working independently is not sufficient to meet the needs of the constituents as a collective. Keast et al. suggest that a network structure comes together when the distinct organizations realize that they are one piece of the larger picture and desire to work together to accomplish the broader goal. The organized network structure, may thus, establish linkages, coordination, a task force, and require the participants to actively work together (Keast et al. 2004). For networks to

be effective, members must make a strong commitment to the overarching goals and may also contribute resources for a period of time (membership fees and/or skills). Keast et al. support that conflicts are often due to the misalignment between the individual members' goals and their commitment to the larger network. This aspect applies in the overarching mission of a network and the advocacy role the organization plays in serving its members.

Network structures are distinct from traditional organizations because there is no formalization of who is "in charge." This does not necessary mean there are no formal rules or a lead agency, but Keast et al. state that the traditional forms of organizational power do not apply to networks. Additionally, Keast et al. also describe that networks may suffer from political clout become some constituents may be more experienced than others, but this reality should be recognized. In this case, interpersonal relationships may be more important than formalized power structures. This assessment is very applicable to the present situation of VtVN. The Village to Village Network was established as a partnership between Beacon Hill Village (BHV) and NCB Capital Impact—this original structure creates a degree of political power for BHV and it is able to significantly influence how the Village movement is perceived worldwide

(as interested parties from Japan and South Korea are also soliciting information).

Keast et al. suggest that the non-traditional ways of leadership also affect the actions and perception of a facilitator, a role fulfilled NCB Capital Impact and the VtV Network in this scenario. Keast et al. assert that trust becomes a valuable and necessary component to working toward mutual growth (2004). While this may be difficult to ensure, Keast et al. recommend capitalizing on opportunities where instances of trust emerging in pockets. These instances can be found in the Village movement in urban areas, where several Villages emerge to serve the large elderly constituency, such as in Washington, D.C.

Finally, Keast et al. advocate that network structures are often established when participants recognize they need to cooperate and coordinate to achieve the larger goal (2004). This is in perfect accord for the VtV Network as a representative for the Village movement, thus, as Keast et al. would advocate, it is wholly possible for the VtV Network to assess and execute an effective network for its membership (a task being facilitated by this research study).

Similar to the suggestion by Keast et al. about encouraging opportunities of emerging “pockets,” the geographical presence of a network is highly valuable for the distribution of the Villages. Innes et al. assert that metropolitan areas in the United States are

growing in the form of “mega-regions,” depending on regional economies, infrastructures, and resources (2010). While this tendency is not apparent throughout the country, urban areas, such as Washington, D.C. and the San Francisco/Bay Area are evolving as leaders for the Village movement because they have a number of Villages present in their respective regions. It would be valuable for the VtV Network to consider creating regional hubs as a managing support-system for its constituency. Having offices around the country could lessen the burden on a central VtVN office and better serve the membership as needs vary across community type and region.

Fjeldstad and Sasson assert that creating organizational ties makes a group more competitive and reduces uncertainty. Networks create value by “impacting [one’s] access to knowledge” (Fjeldstad and Sasson 2010). In the long run, this contributes to efficient operations, growth, innovation, and performance. For the purpose of the Village to Village Network, this philosophy fits ideally with their mission. The network can serve as a means to provide information and strategy for both a Village’s staff and associated service providers. Soekijad would call the Village to Village Network a “network of practice” (NOP), where members are engaged in a shared practice, join voluntarily, and do not necessarily encounter one another face-to-

face. As a NOP is described, the Village to Village Network is not restricted by any formal rules, and places most of its efforts on the practice. Additionally, the main processes of a NOP is to interpret (connect the aligning

groups), integrate (encourage peer-learning), and to institutionalize (formalize the organizational practices)—all of which the Village to Village Network aims to fulfill.

### **Case Studies and Models for the Village to Village Network**

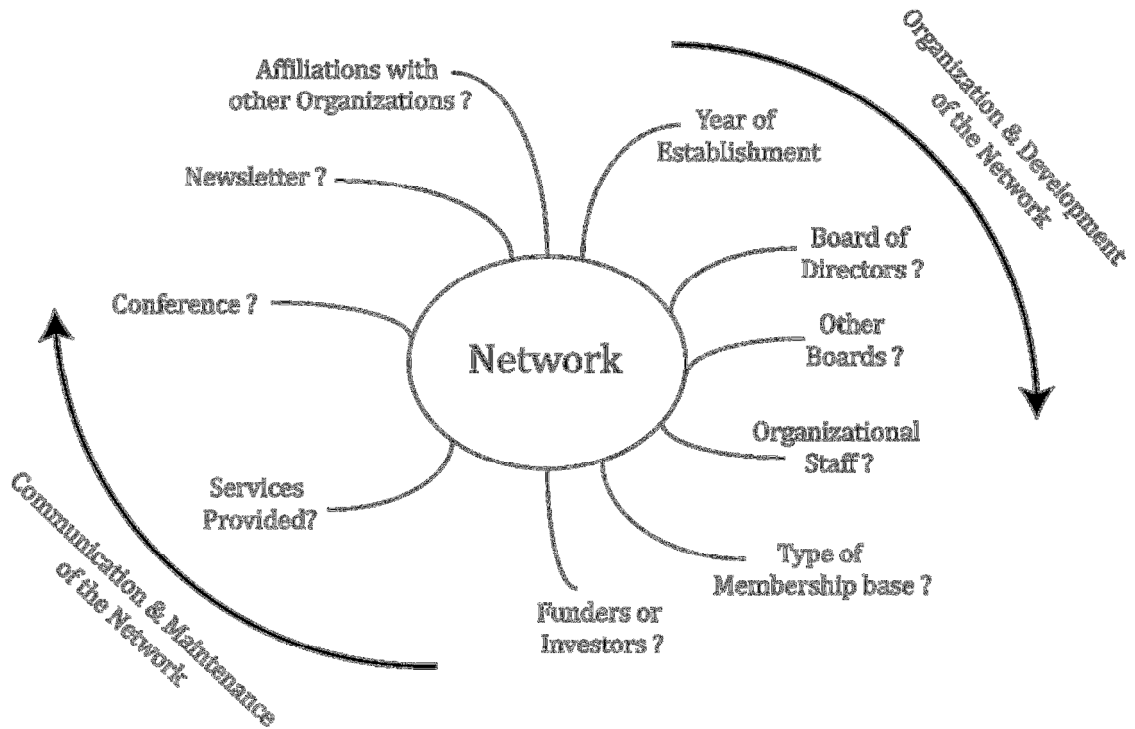
As a relatively new structure, the Village to Village Network can learn from other network organizations and model itself after successful efforts. To better understand and assess models of effective networks, four existing national networks were selected for modeling and organizational analysis. There was no formal selection process or criteria; organizations were considered based on a comparable framework with respect to the purpose for establishing a network (advocating a cause) and supporting a membership base through services (connecting like-minded organizations across the nations). The final four organizations were selected for modeling because of the comparable information available about them through their online websites.

For future studies, I recommend the leadership of the four chosen national networks be interviewed to gain a better understanding and first-hand perspective on how the networks' executed their operations, built their social and financial capacity, and advanced their missions over time.

The holistic assessment considered the history, mission, and organizational structure of each network. Additionally, the various services and accomplishments of the networks contextualize the needs of the distinct advocacy movements and constituency groups. The modeling analysis, first, considered each network's organization and development structure, which includes noting the presence of any boards, staff members, funders, and membership base (right-side of the model). Second, the network analysis looked at the reach and communication of network through its services, events, and affiliations (left-side of the model). Note below the template that was used to compare the different networks (read clockwise). The following framework does not consider the distinct, personalized actions and services provided by each network, which correspond to the specific causes; this generalization allows for big-picture organizational structure analysis. Thus, it is important to recognize that the following template is not a quick-fix, solve-all model. The model shown below helps visualize the components of a network structure,

which provides insight for recognizing key facets that appear consistently in different scenarios; however, the framework is flexible

and should be appropriate adjusted for the Village to Village Network.



The following national networks were modeled:

- The Housing Partnership Network (HPN)
- The National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV)
- The National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (NNIRR)
- The Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN)

## Housing Partnership Network (HPN)

The Housing Partnership Network (HPN) was established in 1990, as a business collaborative between leading nonprofit organizations working on housing and community development. HPN is missioned to build and finance affordable homes, revitalize communities, and provide economic opportunity of lower income and working families. HPN is member-driven and envisions a culture of shared values, trust, innovation, and collaboration.

The HPN Board of Directors is comprised of the senior leaders from HPN's membership organizations. The Network also has several other boards, which manage HPN's various initiatives (or enterprises); these boards are also comprised of leaders from HPN's membership organizations. The initiatives are led by enterprises that focus on

a variety of issues, include financing, insurance, and venture counseling. HPN has a number of funders and investors, ranging from private banks (such as Bank of America and Citigroup) to government agencies (such as Fannie Mae) to support foundations (such as the Home Depot Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation).

HPN has one national office in Boston, with satellite offices in Denver, the Twin Cities, and Washington, D.C. The Network is staffed by 26 people. HPN hold two national meetings and facilitates peer exchange, where members share their experiences and ideas.

HPN was selected as model for VtVN because of its peer-support nature and its member-driven base. There are significant differences between the two networks, such as that HPN is an invitation-based network, where they invite and integrate fully established organizations into the network. Secondly, with a staff of 26, four offices, and leaders from many of the member organizations participating in the Network's operations, direction, and development, HPN has a much more significant labor base.



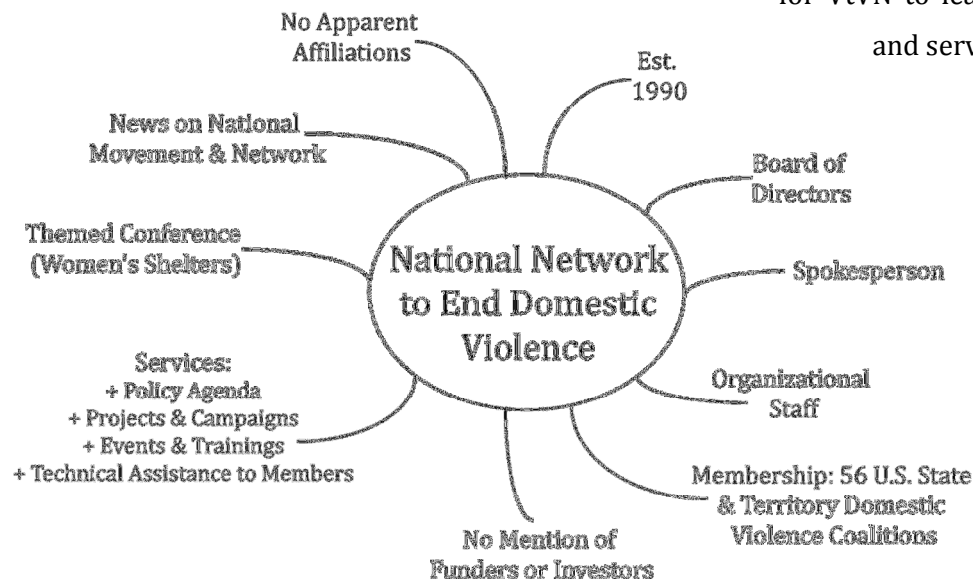
## National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV)

The National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) was formed in 1990 as a social change organization dedicated to ending violence against women. NNEDV is an advocacy organization composed of members that represent state domestic violence coalitions, allied organizations, and supporting individuals. NNEDV works closely with its member organizations to recognize the ongoing and emerging needs of domestic violence victims and addresses these needs by employing innovative advocacy tools and by ensuring that these concerns are heard by policymakers at the national level.

NNEDV has an organizational staff of 15 and a Board of Directors with 12 members from its membership base. NNEDV also produces annual reports for its constituency and public. NNEDV collaborates across fields and with corporate partnerships to offer a range

of programs and initiatives, such as by providing state coalitions with resources, training, and technical assistance, to address the complexity domestic violence. NNEDV holds national and regional meetings, where members share information and ideas with NNEDV staff and with each other. NNEDV's programs include supporting and building the capacity the 56 statewide and territorial coalitions, advancing the economic capability and financial literacy for victims, increasing media coverage of domestic violence cases, and educating survivors and their allies about their state-specific legal rights.

NNEDV is an advocacy based organization. VtVN was not founded to play a formal advocacy role, but to provide technical assistance to its members. Nevertheless, NNEDV is also managing the aspect of assistance for its 56 members, thus there is room for VtVN to learn from the structure and services of NNEDV.





## National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (NNIRR)

The National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights was founded in 1986 to defend and expand the rights of all immigrants and refugees, regardless of immigration status. NNIRR is composed of local coalitions, a variety of community groups, and social justice organizations; its constituency draws from diverse immigrant communities and actively builds alliances with social and economic justice partners. NNIRR serves as a forum to share information and analysis, to educate communities and the general public, and to develop and coordinate plans of action on important issues.

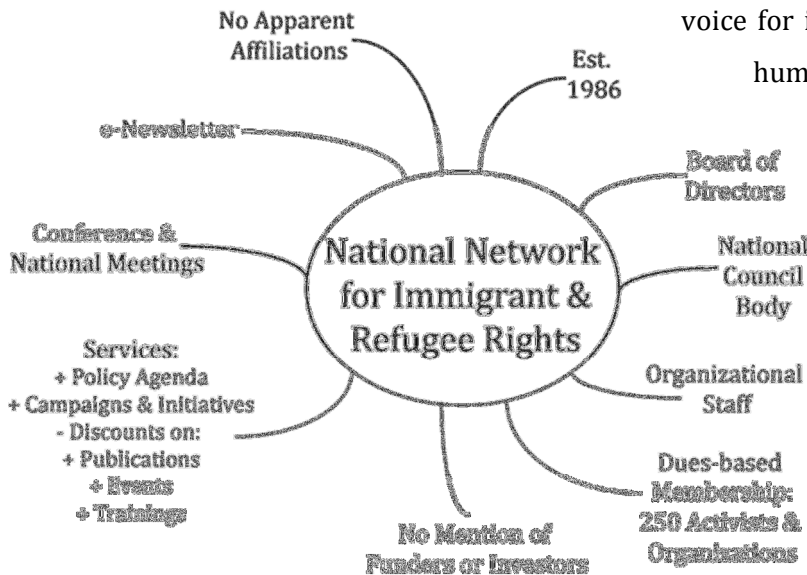
NNIRR has a staff of 3 and a Board with 14 members. NNIRR holds an annual strategy summit for members and allies to reflect, discuss, and strategize next actions and steps. NNIRR also has targeted initiatives, such as one for Women’s Voices and LGBT Outreach. Some of NNIRR’s program-

matic actions include advocating to the Obama Administration and Congress for just immigration reforms and organizing field hearings to discuss the harm caused by legal reforms.

Accomplishments include establishing the Human Rights Immigrant Community Action Network (HURRICANE), which has published three reports documenting human rights violations and abuses through essays and commentaries. NNIRR also created Building a Race and Immigrant Dialogue in the Global Economy (BRIDGE), which is an award-winning educational resource used at community workshops and trainings.

NNIRR is quite distinct from VtVN because of its mission and advocacy work. Nevertheless, NNIRR was selected because it has a voluntary, dues-based membership, it is fully operational by a small staff and it serves a targeted population. NNIRR provides a voice for immigrants and refugees, and their

human rights, while VtVN provides a voice for older Americans and their choice to age in place. Neither of these populations are at the forefront of political concerns, yet they still comprise of a significant portion of the American population and their voice needs to be heard.



## The Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN)

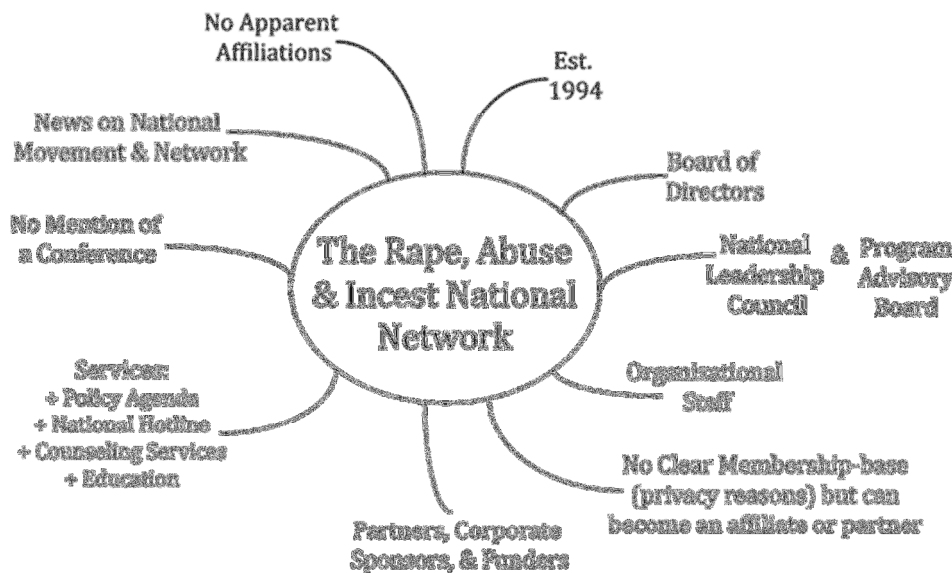
The Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network was founded in 1994 and created the National Sexual Assault Hotline (which now also has an online version). Additionally, RAINN operates the DoD Safe Helpline for the Department of Defense. RAINN partners with and provides technical assistance to over 1,100 local rape crisis centers. RAINN carries out programs to prevent sexual violence, supports victims, and ensures that perpetrators are brought to justice. RAINN is supported by volunteers, donors, corporations, and grants. RAINN is a resource for television, radio, and print news outlets; for local, state and national policymakers; and law enforcement and rape treatment professionals.

The RAINN organizational staff is composed of 5 people. Its Board of Directors has 6 members; RAINN also has a National Leadership Council which has 9 members and

a Program Advisory Board with 13 members. RAINN utilizes its relationships with the entertainment industry (entertainers, athletes, media networks, and corporate partners) to educate and inform the public about sexual assault prevention, recovery, and the prosecution process (through concerts, campus visits and in communities, accounting for more than 120 million Americans each year).

RAINN's policy department tracks, analyzes, and disseminates data on federal and state policies as a resource for pushing certain strategies. RAINN also leads national efforts to improve laws and policies, where RAINN leaders have testified to Congress.

RAINN has a variety of support groups, while VtVN does not have many partnerships or linkages; yet from RAINN's experience and work, this aspect is a significant contributor to its capacity to reach the public.



## **CHAPTER 4 - SURVEY INSTRUMENT**

## Survey Approach

The Village to Village Network was established to connect Villages around the nation. Thus, it has the ability to share information regarding the Village movement, the Aging in Place movement, as well as on smaller advancements that one Village may have made, such as how to maintain membership renewal numbers. In addition, the VtV Network has the potential to hold a certain amount of political power and leverage its membership base, such as with service providers and discounts. Thus, it is valuable to gauge and assess the interest in pursuing these possibilities for the membership base for the VtV Network.

The Village to Village Network provides information, through the online tool, about the operations, processes, nuts-and-bolts for existing and developing Villages. It also connects Village across the nation through an online forum and by recommending Villages through phone inquiries. There are about 50 Villages that are fully established and practicing across the nation, and

over 120 in the planning process. I interviewed 22 Villages from this pool. The purpose of the survey tool is to learn how effectively the Village to Village Network serves its constituency (the Villages).

The survey was administered over the phone and the interviews lasted between 45 and 90 minutes. The survey was a conversation with the executive director or a board member of each Village. The survey asked questions about how the Villages communicate with the VtV Network (or the original Village, Beacon Hill Village), what resources the Villages used from the VtV Network, how the Village was able to start-up, and what partnerships it has created with local organizations. The survey also asked if the Village had any requests or suggestions for improving the Village to Village Network. I assembled the responses as successes and challenges for VtVN and formulated lessons and recommendations for improving services and the organization.

## Survey Tool

### Telephone Interview Questions

#### Brief Background

1. What are your current roles and responsibilities?
2. How long have you been with your Village?
3. How would you characterize the Village movement and why it's important?

#### Village to Village Network

1. How would you describe the current level of communication between you and the Village to Village Network?
2. What are the different ways you currently communicate with the Village to Village Network? How could these be improved?
3. What do you value most about the Village to Village Network? Could you describe a time in 2011 that the Village to Village Network made a real difference in helping your organization?
4. What improvements would you like to see in Village to Village Network programs and services? Could you describe a time in 2011 that you wish that the Village to Village Network had been able to help your organization more?
5. What is your most immediate goal for increasing membership for the coming year? (Number or percentage) What role could the Village to Village Network play in helping you achieve this goal?

#### VtV Network Leadership & Governance

6. How familiar are you with each of the partners that manage the Village to Village Network and the roles that they play in the operations and governance of the Network?
7. In what ways, if any, have you been involved in the Village to Village Network? (advisory committee, national gathering planning committee, conference or webinar presenter, other)
8. What do you envision your Village's role should be, in playing a leadership role in the Village to Village Network, in shaping the strategic direction of the network, or in advancing the Village movement?

#### VtV Network Service Offerings

9. What current service offerings do you use most frequently or value the most? (e.g.: National Gathering; Technical Assistance; Online Discussion Forum; Webinars; Document Sharing; Model Surveys for Members; National Village Directory and Map; Member satisfaction survey, etc.)
10. What programs or activities would you like the Village to Village Network to add to its array of services?
11. Can you imagine a way that your Village could partner with the Village to Village Network to expand your service offerings, reduce costs, or increase revenues? (i.e. Co-Employment, subcontracting national or large contracts (transportation / meals on wheels), group purchasing)
12. What other recommendations do you have to improve the Village to Village Network?

#### Village Start Up

13. When your Village was in the planning stages, who or what was the biggest resource you found in terms of providing strategic guidance, testing ideas and plans, and providing concrete help and support?
14. What supports that you did not receive or could not find would have been most helpful?
15. What role do you think VtVN is best positioned to play in supporting groups that are thinking about starting Villages or are already in the process of creating a Village?

16. When your Village was first being planned, were there any other community based aging models that were considered? Do you think your village would be here today without the presence of the village model and Village to Village Network?

### **Partnerships with Organizations & Services**

17. Are there opportunities for your Village to collaborate with service providers in your community? What are they, what services do they offer, and what type of obstacles would you face in trying to establish such partnerships?
18. How have you approached creating partnerships with service providers? (e.g. Member recommendations, discount promotion, online soliciting, etc.)
19. What type of role does your Board play in the operations of the village or in establishing partnerships and how could the Village to Village Network support that activity?
20. Are there any organizations or associations in your community that provide services or opportunities that overlap with the Village? How would you characterize your relationship with them? (collaborative, competitive, etc.)

### **Other Groups / Associations**

21. Would you like the Village to Village Network to be more like other membership organizations (or any other organization you are a part of) in any way? If so, how?

### **Closing Questions**

22. What other service offerings has your village thought about adding to your menu of services?
23. What do you see as your biggest challenge in the coming year and in what ways could the Village to Village Network support you in overcoming them?
24. Would you mind if we contact you once again if we have any short follow-up questions?
25. There will be a report coming out of this work, would it be okay that we cited your Village as an interviewee?

### Interviewed Villages

	<b>Village Name</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Community Type</b>
1	Ashby Village	California	Urban
2	Avenidas	California	Suburban
3	Elderhelp of San Diego	California	Urban
4	Marin Village	California	Suburban
5	Westchester Playa Village	California	Suburban
6	Washington Park Cares	Colorado	Suburban
7	East Rock Village	Connecticut	Urban
8	Stayin Put in New Canaan	Connecticut	Rural
9	Capitol Hill	District of Columbia	Urban
10	Dupont Circle	District of Columbia	Urban
11	Palisades Village	District of Columbia	Urban
12	Lincoln Park Village	Illinois	Urban
13	Beacon Hill Village	Massachusetts	Urban
14	East Lansing Village	Michigan	Urban
15	Midtown Village	Nebraska	Suburban
16	Monadnock at Home	New Hampshire	Rural
17	Sacramento Mountain Village	New Mexico	Rural
18	Gramatan Village	New York	Suburban
19	Front Desk Florence	Oregon	Rural
20	Crozer-Keystone	Pennsylvania	Suburban
21	Capital City Village	Texas	Urban
22	Mt. Vernon at Home	Virginia	Suburban

## Survey Findings

### Presence of VtVN:

Villages appreciate that the Village to Village Network (VtVN) exists because there is a sense of validation from its presence and an acknowledgement of the power in numbers. It is an excellent resource to refer people to who are interested in starting a Village and also creates some prestige to be associated with a national organization (particularly in less urban areas where the Village model is not well-known). Villages also feel that the VtV Network, with its small staff, has done a great deal to get people to start connecting, communicating, and sharing ideas.

### VtVN Governance:

Villages that launched before or around the time of 2009, when the VtV Network was established, are aware of the organizational structure of the Network, with respect to the roles of Beacon Hill Village (BHV) and NCB Capital Impact. Most other Villages, however, that have launched over the last two to three years, know only the name of BHV and do not readily recognize NCB Capital Impact. Nevertheless, several participants also mentioned that it may not be absolutely necessary to fully understand the organizational structure of VtVN as long as the goal of helping Villages is achieved. One Village mentioned, however, of being interested in exploring the possibility of turning the Network

into an “association,” where different Villages can be represented, instead of a peer-to-peer support network solely led by BHV and NCB.

### National Role of VtVN:

Villages recognize that each Village is unique to its local community, however, many Villages request that the VtV Network formalize a definition for Villages and stated it clearly on the website so that the Village concept can be easily explained and recognized. The definition does not need to be stringent, but can state a few key points that sets Villages apart from other organizations that serve older Americans.

Villages also recommend that VtVN should focus on being up-to-date with the movements related to aging on the national level. This was a particular request by the leaders who have been involved with the aging movement for many years and feel that they have lost touch with the field because of the daily Village demands. Executive directors and staff members are often too busy with the everyday operations, which makes it difficult for them to remain in tune with the progress being made at the national policy level.

### VtVN Services:

The services predominately used through the VtV website are: the forum, doc-



ument sharing, webinars, and locator map. Suggestions for improvement of the forum include becoming more organized by topic, region (east or west coast), and type of village (urban or suburban), instead of being emailed to all of the members of VtVN. Likewise, the documents provided online should also be organized by topic or subject.

Recommendations for improving the webinar service were similar; the webinars should be explicitly defined as useful for Villages in specific planning or operations stages, or based on community type (urban or suburban). Some Villages also request that there be more participation on the webinars, instead of being a lecture-style presentation.

The available documents on the “document sharing” tab are primarily only useful to newer Villages. Yet, they are not a complete package for Villages in planning to launch; there is material lacking, such as appeal letters for funding, how to structure the organization, and formal bylaws. Newly established Villages also request that the Network also provide information on how to run a non-profit business, including research on board management and efficient operations. Additionally, Villages request that the provided documents be up-to-date and have a variety in their sampling (for different models). A few Villages also requested a glossary of aging and computer literacy, in addition to Village terminology.

The locator map is a highly valued tool, but it has inconsistencies and should, thus, be regularly checked for glitches. Some Villages also request that the map provide more information about the Villages, such as membership dues, number of members, and the year of launching.

Of those interviewed, about half the Villages have opted to use Club Express, the recommended database platform. However, all users mentioned that Club Express is a “mixed bag” of ups and downs, which requires refinement and a simpler user-interface. Villages that communicated with the VtV Network in their planning process were more likely to be using Club Express, while Villages established previous to VtVN, or those with an external patron or sponsor, are more likely to be using a different tool. Some Villages also expressed interest in a database to account for volunteers and events.

#### Developmental Stages of Villages:

It became apparent that there are, generally, three development stages for Villages, depending on their age: pre-launch and the recently launched, which can be up to one year since launching; newly established which is between one to three years of operations; and fully established, more than three years of operations.

Additionally, Villages vary in their organizational form and governance, which tends to be related to their region and local community; they often follow models of: urban, suburban, rural, hubs & spokes, or a healthcare management system.

#### Village Boards:

The conversations regarding the establishment of a Village appeared to be significantly affected by the strength and commitment of the Village's Board. Villages that mentioned having a dedicated founding Board with skilled members, who had "done their homework" with respect to what their local elderly community needed and wanted seemed to have a strong sense of purpose and mission. Villages with less active Boards appeared not be fully devoted to the cause and had spent less time in the visioning and planning process; often, in this case, the board members tended to have been a group of friends who were more committed to one another, than the larger community.

Villages request information and research work on board development and management to answer questions such as: how long should terms last? How should members transition in and out? What number of members is a good balance for a Board?

#### Referral Services & Partnerships:

Villages have varying experiences with creating partnerships in their local

community with service-providers and institutions. Most Villages do not consider service-providers as "partners," instead they see providers as referrals or suggestions because Villages do not want any be liable for service quality. Some Villages, however, which have enough human capital and time, follow-up with their members who use certain services to ask about their experience.

Villages tend to describe partnerships as well-defined linkages with formal institutions, such as hospitals, universities, and faith-based organizations (e.g.: Churches). Several Villages also mentioned partnerships with local YMCAs, Kiwanis Rotary Clubs, and occasionally, AAAs; however, these ties appeared to be the weakest links because of political and financial constraints (collaborations between comparable non-profit organizations with limited capacities).

Villages often did not find overlap with other organizations that serve older Americans in their communities. Several stated that this was because Villages target a distinct older American population, which have more social needs, as opposed to medical care.

All Villages showed interest in partnering with the VtV Network for group purchasing opportunities. Most Villages desire assistance with transportation and insurance coverage. There were a few Villages that believed local pricing and discounts were suffi-

cient and they did not need to be a part of a national contract. Villages also recommended that partnerships could also be organized based on regional locations, for example in the Washington, D.C. area.

#### Inter-Village Communications:

All Villages were welcoming and enthusiastic about sharing their experience and being a “leader” for the Village movement. However, Villages would also like to see a more visible form of exchanging ideas on one another’s events, management, and balancing operations with costs. Villages that have a more computer-savvy membership desire a more interactive form of exchanging information with their peers, such as sharing stories and accomplishments online in real-time to maintain momentum.

The annual conference is a valuable component of VtVN because it allows Villages to network, share ideas, and learn about how the movement is advancing on a national level. Nevertheless, many Villages cannot afford to attend the conference and find it difficult to justify its costs for a non-profit. Thus, several Villages suggest that regional conferences or symposiums be organized, from which material can be made available online. There was also a suggestion for telephone conferences with all the villages for an hour or 90 minutes.

#### Membership:

All Villages face the concern of people saying “I’m not ready yet,” which refers to community members who show interest in the Village, but do not want to commit to becoming a member because of different reasons, including feeling stigmatized as an elderly person who “needs help,” not wanting to pay the membership fee, or not fully understanding the value of the Village as a support-system. Villages want the VtV Network to create a voice for Villages on a national scale and market to the over-50 population as well as their adult children.

A few Villages offer different tiers of memberships, such as having senior and junior status, which provide different levels or accesses to services. A couple of Villages recommended that this could apply to VtVN, where it could also provide two pricing tiers: one for members and another for non-members. Senior status members would have access to documents and personal technical assistance, while junior member may only receive discounts and participation in webinars.

#### Potential:

Villages perceive a tremendous potential in the VtV Network to make connections with like-minded and peer organizations. Villages recognize that there is a balancing trick for VtV between Villages that are fully

launched and those that are in the planning process, but several suggest that the VtV Network encourage Villages to connect and engage regionally, such as in the San Francisco Bay Area or Washington, D.C. Finally, there is a unspoken sense that, traditionally, too much attention and power has been an-

chored in Villages with a large membership base or with the most years of operations (which is a small number of Villages); however, there is a new tier of recently established Villages emerging that have ideas to share and want to have a voice in shaping the movement.

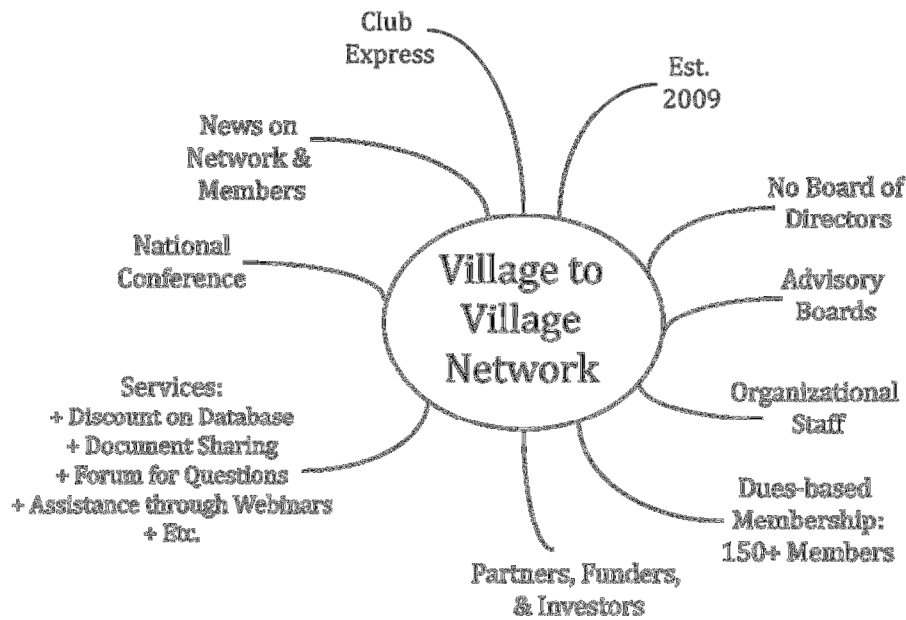
**CHAPTER 5 - RECOMMENDATIONS FOR  
THE VILLAGE TO VILLAGE NETWORK**

## Moving Forward

The Village to Village (VtV) Network has accomplished a wide variety of goals and tasks over the last two years. Nevertheless, the Village movement is gaining a significant amount of momentum and popularity nationwide. Villages have varying needs for their communities and membership base, and

the Village to Village Network needs to be appropriately equipped on how to respond to these dynamic needs. From the literature review, case studies of networks, survey responses, and assessment, it is evident that the VtV Network has a great deal of potential for growth and advancement.

The organizational structure analysis performed in Chapter 3 for VtVN shows:



## Leadership & National Presence

The Village to Village Network was established as a national response as an entity to help develop and manage Villages across the country. For this reason, VtV has an expectation of leadership and guidance in the eyes of its constituency. While it is generally accepted that each Village is distinct and unique, it is imperative for VtVN to develop a formal and clear, yet encompassing, definition

for a Village. This definition should be placed noticeably on the VtVN website, since the website is the primary point of contact to create a common understanding of Villages and develop a language for the Village movement.

It is difficult to phrase the purpose and services of VtVN with respect to its mission statement. In comparison, this is unlike the other Networks assessed in Chapter 3.

Thus, it is vital for VtVN to not only formalize a definition for the Village model, but for the Village movement, its connection to older Americans, and its place in the Aging in Place movement.

I recommend that VtVN also launch a national campaign to bring awareness of this movement to the masses, which can be facilitated by partnering or similar organizations relating to Aging in Place. VtVN should also reach out to foundations and funders for sponsorship, particularly those interested in aging; VtVN can leverage its existing sponsors, such as the MetLife Foundation, to endorse its presence and significance.

The findings of the University of Tennessee students were substantial, discovering positive effects and ramifications by being a part of a Village in Knoxville (WJLA 2011). This finding can raise momentum and potentially solicit funding. It would be valuable for the VtV Network to hire more staff, whether it is part-time or full-time. I would also recommend soliciting interns (paid or volunteers) from nearby colleges or universities to work on specific projects, as opposed to general help, and employ them for a set course of time, whether seasonal or year-round.

Additionally, VtVN should distinguish the aspect of providing technical assistance to its members from an advocacy role for the Village and Aging in Place (AIP) movements, as is evident with the National Network to

End Domestic Violence (NNEDV). VtVN lacks a formulated policy agenda for the Village movement. VtVN supports Aging in Place and it is the face of the Village movement, yet there is no active campaign for voicing the significance of Villages to the general public. The AIP and Village movements are national trends.

Thus, it is vital for the VtV Network to establish a national presence for itself, as well as its constituency, and provide the general public with a mechanism to recognize the Village model. A national advocacy movement would inform older Americans of the benefits of joining a Village, explain the reasons for membership costs, and make widely-available success stories as personal anecdotes from members. An informational and branding movement would help increase membership rates for individual Villages because it would gain credibility and enter the mainstream as a topic of discussion. Additionally, it can also help push forward the Village movement agenda and solicit elderly communities that may be interested in joining VtV Network and Village movement; I attended the annual VtV conference in October 2011, where a number of attendants were not affiliated with the Network but were interested in the Village concept, thus I believe this is practical base to consider marketing to. Finally, a national marketing movement would also reinforce the strength and growth of the

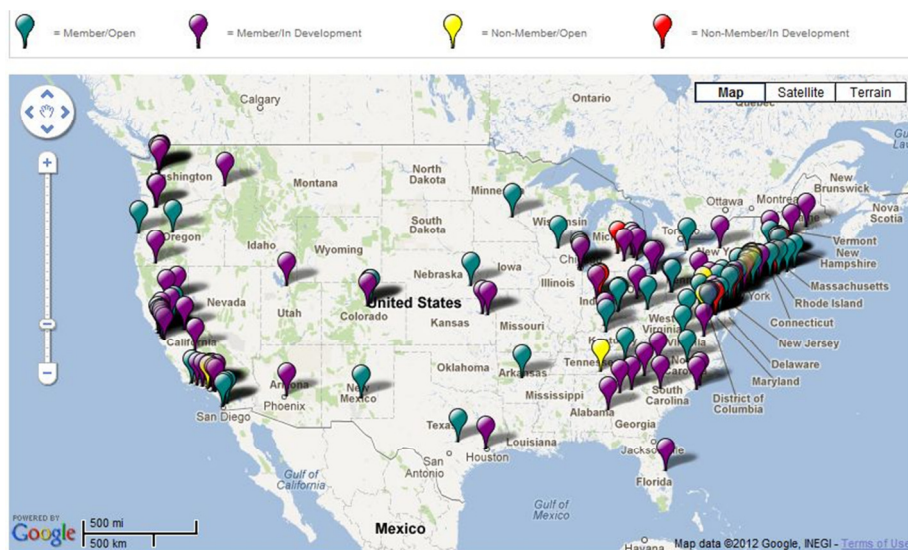
Village movement, which would help solicit sponsors and foundations for financial or operational support.

Another lesson to learn from NNEDV is to compile annual reports for its members and the public. If VtVN could track the milestones of the Village movement, of its contribution with supporting new Villages, and expected changes across the country, these reports can be used solicit funding and keep track of the organization. NNIRR, similar to VtVN, have a very small staff but has managed to establish a publishing resource. As advocates, VtVN should be creating a buzz in the field of Aging in Place and creating publications for its members and other non-member who may be interested in this movement is a powerful way to gain momentum. VtVN also needs to command a presence in the online world because information is increasingly becoming shared and spread through this medium.

Technically, the Network's website should draw more traffic and interest. First, VtVN needs to improve user-experience of its website by utilizing a simpler and more attractive interface, to make the website easier to navigate and more organized. The experience of visiting the

websites of the case studies (HPN, NNEDV, etc.) was significantly better than that with VtVN. The websites of the case studies were more logically organized, provided easy access to basic information, and had warm, yet professional, aesthetic appeal.

The Village Map is a valuable asset, which should be leveraged for soliciting more members and sponsorships. The Map, which is available to general public, is an easy and effective way to show the pervasiveness the Village movement. The image below can be found on the VtVN website: it has the ability to immediately show the significant following of the Village movement around the country (see below).



As an proponent and advocate for older Americans and AIP, the VtV Network has a role for educating its members on policy developments and progress related to aging, medical advancements, and even geriatrics. As a national representative for the Village



movement, VtVN has a responsibility to be well-versed on the various policy movements related to aging and older Americans. This role would also include sharing this knowledge with its members; thus, VtVN should provide informational updates to Villages that include research findings from prominent think-tanks and policy trends on the national level.

Additionally, VtVN should consider performing some research on the Village movement. This research study is one component of self-assessment, however, I recommend the Network extend the scope of their self-assessment and analyze the efficiency, effectiveness, and ramifications of the Village movement as perceived by the older American members. For example, similar to

the study by the students at the University of Tennessee (WJPLA 2011), VtVN should assess the social or economic payoff of being a Village member versus not being a member, which could take form of a community survey. This is imperative and would be valuable information given the high costs of formal and informal care of older Americans, particularly as this age group numerically expands. These studies could be conducted through university partnerships or paid consultants. Nevertheless, a strong, goal-oriented research foundation and national presence would increase the membership base for the Village to Village Network, as well as for the individual Villages, by providing the general public with a clear and tangible understanding of the Village movement.

### **Partnerships & Services**

As a relatively new organization, VtVN has potential for growth by connecting itself to like-minded and related organizations. An interviewed Village specially mentioned that it felt VtVN has not tapped into all of its resources; this pertains to partnering with peer organizations and exploring opportunities in the non-profit and aging realm.

The results from the survey noted that most Villages try to collaborate with local community organizations, such as with Rotary Clubs, YMCAs, and AAAs, to maximize their effectiveness and to reach the greatest popu-

lation. Morrison found that a community's personal connections and use of word-of-mouth is a valuable asset for spreading knowledge (Morrison 2009). Thus, it is viable for VtVN to pursue such partnerships on a national scale for its constituency. A partnership at this scale could also have spill-over effects, such as if VtVN were to partner with YMCAs, volunteering opportunities could also encourage intergenerational interaction and relationships, which would combat the stigma of aging.

Additionally, VtVN should consider looking outside the nonprofit realm to build partnerships. The The Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN) uses a support network of media, entertainment, and corporate sponsorship to reach as large of an audience as possible. Similarly, VtVN should investigate what fields are most related to older Americans and link them to the Village movement to increase awareness.

The Network should also consider linking itself to related topics and discussions, such as aging-in-place and older Americans, in the various mediums they are discussed, which includes websites, forums, and searches. This action would require VtVN to create partnerships or linkages with related organizations. These partnerships may not be formal, for example, it is possible that an organization allows VtVN to post a link on their site if VtVN returns the favor. Nevertheless, it may be beneficial for VtVN to create formal ties because it can utilize these partnerships as a mechanism to reach a broader audience. Additionally, depending on who the partnership is with, VtVN may find it advantageous to share knowledge and/or resources. For example, VtVN may agree to sponsor the link for AARP (which is also a membership-based organization) and vice-versa; meanwhile, VtVN may formalize a partnership with "Aging In Place," where the two organizations

share information on their constituency and operations.

While the VtV Network provides document sharing among Villages, the Network does not provide information on organizational practices, such as board management and non-profit development. There is significant demand from existing Villages for such material; and given that the membership of the VtVN network will soon triple, it would be valuable for the Network to invest in providing these services sooner than later. Nevertheless, it is valid that the VtV Network does not have the capacity or expertise in these fields to provide this information. In this situation, it would be wise for VtVN to create partnerships with organizations that can provide these services and consultations. One example of such an organization is BlueAvocado, which VtVN approached for its last annual conference. Thus, on a similar note, VtVN could partner with management consultancies that could provide recommendations on effective operation strategies, transitioning board members, and making non-profits financially sustainable.

It is unlikely that the Network could afford to provide such services on an individual level, thus, I recommend that VtVN leverage their webinar concept in this scenario and encourage Village to participate in these catered presentations. Over time, VtVN also has an opportunity to provide "how-to"

guides, in either manual form or videos (YouTube) for its members.

An evident and formalized endorsement that VtVN has made is with Club Express, which is a database platform tool. Members who use this tool describe Club Express as a mixed bag of pros and cons—this is not an affirmative perspective for VtVN to hear because it is a reflection on their recommendation. I suggest VtVN work directly with Club Express to address the various complaints and glitches before more Villages sign up for Club Express and have negative or difficult experiences. Additionally, the VtV

Network should recognize that if partnering with Club Express is not beneficial and does not provide the Villages with useful and satisfactory services, then it is up to the VtV Network to take a leadership role and find another resource for its members or encourage them to find a tool on their own.

Finally, since VtVN is resource for Villages to help in their development and advancement, the Network should create a suggestions' box or feedback system on its website to allow Villages to put in requests for documents and/or other needs.

### **Organizational Structure**

When comparing the case study models in Chapter 3 to that of the VtV Network, one immediately notable difference is that VtVN does not have a Board of Directors. One could argue that the organizational staff of VtVN serves as the Board, but that would only account for Beacon Hill Village and NCB Capital Impact as participating members of the "Board," which is underrepresentation of the Village spectrum. There are currently two people who work full-time for the VtV Network: Judy Willet and Rita Kostiuk. Such a small staff does not permit VtVN to extend beyond phone inquiries, arranging webinars, and writing proposals for grants. Candance Baldwin and Susan Poor, of NCB Capital Impact, also contribute to VtVN discussions, as

well as several board members from Beacon Hill Village; however, it is not clear that they are responsible for any actions or operations. VtVN cannot afford hiring more staff because of its non-profit status and financial reliance on sponsors. The combination of these factors minimizes the capacity of VtVN and underscores its potential as a national leader.

The VtV Network should consider restructuring its management. At the present moment, Villages are knowledgeable about Beacon Hill Village and those who answer their questions at the Network (Judy Willet, Rita Kisok, and Candance Baldwin of NCB Capital Impact). However, to be ready to scale up as the Village movement gains momentum, it is necessary for VtV to be strategic

in their leadership roles and how the roles are understood by its members. Over the last two years, over 50 Villages have emerged and there are now over 120 in the planning process (VtV 2012). For the Network to remain a strong and trusted leader, particularly for the incoming members, VtVN must clearly state the people and partners involved in its leadership and organization of the Network.

Currently, very few Villages recognize the different partners involved in the Network. Nevertheless, I believe that VtVN has an opportunity at this stage in the Village movement, given the foundation this research study has set via the phone interviews that has informed Village leaders that VtVN is considering to making improvements and changes to its perception, services, and experience. Clarifying its leadership roles and partnerships would create transparency in communication between the Network and its members (old and new) and thus, encourage a strong, trust-worthy relationship.

As a network, VtVN is able to connect people and Villages across the nations, who would not necessarily have the opportunity to develop relationships at meetings or conferences. However, unless members are actively participating in some leadership role, they are essentially spectators or recipients of the information. The Network should consider modeling itself after a professional organization and/or association, where it could

brand its services and material. Through a professional stance, the Network can maintain a professional (or codified) link between its members, make a professional commitment to the advancement of the movement, and even educate its members on how they can participate in a larger conversation. All Villages were welcoming and enthusiastic about sharing their experience and being a “leader” for the Village movement. This is particularly important for VtV given the wide variety of models that Villages can take on.

The VtV Network primarily relies on its online tool as guide and resource for its members; however, VtVN does not programmatically have distinct streams of initiatives or projects that fulfill its membership’s needs. This aspect is most apparent in comparison to the Housing Partnership Network (HPN). VtVN should consider separating the different streams of support involved for running a Village, such as the financing aspect, the operational aspect, the leadership, and the contribution by volunteers. There is potential for the VtV Network to reach out to the Village leaders and capitalize on their diverse skill-sets and specialties to create and lead committees that focus on different aspects, such as service providers, financial sustainability, regional development, etc.

The VtV Network also should consider the strategy of having multiple membership options to increase its membership base. I

would recommend that the Network consider stratifying its services and tools to create different levels of Village membership. For example, senior members could receive access to all the current benefits and potentially also have added services, such as quarterly check-ins; meanwhile, junior members may only have access to the discussion forums, documents, and interactive map, but not be partnered up with a peer mentor; while finally, non-members would have to pay for the documents and services.

The Village to Village Network is sponsored by Beacon Hill Village and NCB Capital Impact, which means that the Network is both subsidized and run by employees of these two outside organizations. In an effort to include more voices for the Village movement and suggest a direction for VtV, the Network organized “advisory boards” soliciting executive members of various Villages to participate in themed discussion such as rural Villages and national partnerships. Unfortunately, responses from the survey found that this additional facet, while exciting, was cumbersome for executives given their plates for daily operations.

Additionally, many of the older Villages believe that they are giving more to the VtV

Network than receiving. All of the Villages mention that they are happy to help and speak with Villages that are in their planning stages, but this takes a lot of time and can become burdensome because many Villages often end up answer questions that can be found on the VtV website. VtVN should consider creating steering committees that have written and tangible goals, particularly with respect to advocating the Village and Aging in Place movement. This aspect can be managed by the older Villages.

The Network should also consider connecting similar communities based on physical regions, such as New England or the Mid-West, or even more general ones, such as the East and West Coast. In this relatively new movement, there are certain “go-to” villages that are repeatedly highlighted and also strained to share their work. However, if Villages could be connecting by similar governance structures and/or proximity to a city, the different groups can voice their experiences in a smaller group, support one another, and encourage collective efforts. A regional aspect would also lessen the emphasis and number of inquiries placed on a single VtVN office.

## **CHAPTER 6 - IMPLICATIONS FOR AGING IN PLACE**

## Overview Summary of Study

Fundamental characteristics of the Village Model include community engagement, participatory design, and collaboration. Villages are founded on the premise of engaging the local senior community. The services and amenities that a Village ends up providing are determined by the participation of the members, who vocalize, discuss, and request for certain needs. Finally, the operations and execution of the services is achieved through collaboration between Villages and local organization in the community. As the concept of the Village scales up to the reach the Village to Village Network, the Network should continue to exhibit these qualities while appropriately adjusting them to meet the needs of member organizations.

As an advocate of the Aging in Place movement and a leader for the Village move-

ment, VtVN needs to create a national presence for its constituency and become recognizable to the increasing population of older Americans. Advocacy is imperative to serve a voice for following of what is soon to be 150 fully operating members. As a grass-roots movement, VtVN needs to fully utilize its assets, which include a membership of new and old Villages, of urban and rural Villages, and wide-ranging Village leadership that can provide a variety of skills. As a young network, the VtV Network has been overworked and spread thin with its small staff and increasing constituency. However, through this research study, VtVN has an opportunity to redefine and rebrand itself as a more structured and holistic organization.

## The Future of the Village Movement

The Village to Village Network needs to be well-prepared for the launch of over 120 Village in the next year or two. This significant addition will change the dynamic of the VtV Network, but also provide a very large base of members that can help VtVN recognize the issues that are important to older Americans and the Village movement. Fjeldstad and Sasson assert organizations must learn about their customers and environments as part of the organization's suc-

cess strategy. The organization, moreover, should examine the context and network that its members are participants of in order to create value for their clients. By being aware of the factors that are important to one's clientele, organizations can capitalize on this knowledge and better serve their customers (Fjeldstad and Sasson 2010). Thus, VtVN should be ready to take on a great deal of information from its constituency to define itself and the movement.

As VtVN moves forward, it should recognize that there is potential for a variety of facets to explore within the Village movement. The contribution of the computer and internet access is a significant factor in facilitating the spread of the Village movement. Generationally, there are seniors who require assistance with the computer and accessing the variety of tools available through the internet. However, there is the potential for the incoming generation of seniors to not have as many difficulties with the electronics; this

may contribute to the future computerization of services. VtVN should consider looking further into this transformation.

Additionally, through this preliminary research study, several trends emerged with respect to the different types of Villages (whether urban or rural, young or old, etc.). Thus, as the movement progresses, there will be enough data for VtVN to better understand these different models to better serve its growing constituency.

### **Contribution to Aging in Place**

The Village movement is a significant contributor of the Aging in Place movement. Bookman found that there are six key groups that are engaged in elder care: health care providers, nongovernmental community-based service providers, employers, government, families, and elders, themselves (Bookman 2011). Unfortunately, these various efforts are often fragmented and uncoordinated. Each of the six groups need to find a source of support and funding, and may find themselves in competition with one another. The Village movement tries to bring together as many of these components as possible. The Village is an affordable and local way that allows older Americans to age in place, and though the first Village emerged in 2001, over

50 Villages were launched over the last two years as the movement gains popularity and demand—thus, the impact of Villages is self-evident for Aging in Place.

For a strong and consistent prevalence of the Village movement, particularly over the next 20 years (as the Baby Boomer generation ages) and then beyond as older Americans pursue longer, healthier lives, the Village to Village Network is in a pivotal position to define and lead this movement and encourage safe and healthy aging in place. Thus, the VtV Network should strategically employ this research study and the next few years to delineate and structure itself with respect to its mission and its services.



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