

Community Engagement: Towards Community as Governance

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Introduction

Community engagement is argued to provide government decision makers and policy developers with the ability to enhance services to the community through improved communication engendered by integrated interaction with the community. Aimed to provide an integrated and in-touch interface between citizens within the community and government, community engagement is a recent addition in a line of community-government initiatives. However, community engagement presents as a concept dualistic in nature and operationalised within ambiguity. Drawing on the extant literature and case studies, this paper unpacks the various definitions and practices surrounding interactions with community and government to provide a fundamental clarification of community engagement.

Community engagement exists at the front of the latest line of government-community initiatives. The possibilities contained within community engagement for the formulation and practice of new decision making and sustainability of results are as diverse in number as there are communities. In an ideal form, community engagement has the ability to develop an individual structure whilst working to dissolve the dualistic boundaries between government and the community (Considine 2005, 1-2). However, this cannot be achieved without a common or widely accepted understanding of the complexities of community engagement.

Similar to many community initiatives, community engagement when implemented has so far been slow to achieve its defined targets. From the literature reviewed, this paper contends there is a gap between community engagement policy and practice. The current incongruence between conceptual actions and understanding has led to the existence of dualities in the sphere of community engagement.

It is argued the dualistic nature of engagement was produced by the advancement of community development (?). Community engagement came in over the top of community development. Community development would often engage communities through a one-way process of community relations, causing the initial connection and contact between government and community. The main difference in community development was the common one-way flow of communication and power. Government remained in the position of control fostering engagement through funding and direction. It was from here that community capacity building was established. The concepts are linked to community development through a shared focus on government-community participation. Community capacity building enriched participation through enhancing existing and new community capacities.

As a step forward in consolidating and repackaging this array of interrelated concepts, Harrow (2001) provided a framework to reconceptualise community capacity building and in turn the relation to community engagement. Harrow's

(2001) work illustrates the many perspectives and arguments surrounding community capacity building.

Since Harrow's (2001) research there has been an expansion of policy and academic interest and attention around all things community – engagement, capacity and governance. A review of the literature and practice highlighted a lack of progress in translating the theoretical constructs into practical application within the policy and programmatic field. As a result, community engagement is currently understood as operating within OECD countries as a government to community flow process aimed at the individual within the community rather than towards the community as a whole.

The existence of diverse definitions, applications and procedures surrounding community engagement and connected concepts of community development and community capacity building has led to ambiguity regarding community engagement's actual meaning, which has implications for its potential as a government tool. Application deficiencies are in turn created where initiatives are decreased by contrasting understandings and uncoordinated applications. The ambiguity surrounding the concepts has hindered the application by limiting the ability to produce productive outcomes (Ryan et al. 2006).

This examination of the various constructs within the community engagement concept has been aimed at providing a fundamental clarification of the term community engagement and related community concepts through a) understanding critical components of community engagement b) establishing community engagement success factors and c) strengthening community engagement initiatives and policy.

As a continuation from the research outlined by Harrow (2001) and extended further to include community capacity building as a connected dimension of community engagement, this paper delivers a 'big picture' overview of the many facets operating within and around community engagement. Further determined are the ways in which community engagement and other forms of community-centric initiatives may be theorised and operationalised.

Challenging the current dominant paradigm of community engagement, this paper outlines and examines the sources of ambiguity surrounding community engagement. The current problems of community engagement reside within the definitional confusion and practical misunderstanding. It is contended that government-community initiatives that lack critical appraisal have led to the continuation of poor practice and the lack of a framework of generic good practices for initiative construction.

The aim of this paper is to present a clarification of the terms community and community engagement, encompassing enabler and barrier factors to the success of initiatives, for the purpose of maximising the potential of the concept. Research that was undertaken to fulfil this aim includes, firstly, reviewing the literature surrounding community engagement coupled with a discussion regarding different perspectives embodied within the literature. Secondly, the examination involved the establishing of community engagement success factors and strengthening community engagement initiatives. Specifically, research within the literature and case studies furthers the unpacking of community engagement and the interrelated concepts of community, community development and community capacity building. Concepts provided the basis for the reconceptualising of the engagement process as an active participation process.

The new formulation of 'community engagement' or the 'engagement process' traces community as understood as 'place of interest', to being re-conceptualised as 'community as governance'. Understanding the community as one of 'community as governance' will be argued is a way forward to achieving productive community engagement. Community as governance enables the positional equality of community and government, and the further strengthening of responsibility, thereby harnessing a high level of engagement.

The reconceptualisation of community engagement to being understood and practiced within the spheres of community of governance and distilling enablers and barriers works to establish the actualisation of network governance as a workable and realistic concept and practice. Although network governance has been lately questioned as pertaining to an existence of pure fiction (Considine 2005, 3), community engagement has the ability to engender hope for the 'real' existence of network governance. This is achieved through the understanding of the actual capability and requirements of community engagement. The new understanding works to strengthen community engagement initiatives further and lead to the success of network governance approaches.

Methodology

In order to explore the differences between definitional understandings and practical application of community engagement, a combined research methodology was utilised. The hybrid methodology consisted of a combination of social theory research and qualitative empirical analysis. This approach provided the flexibility needed to research within the context of community engagement.

The hybrid methodology resides within a formation of social theory research and the framework of concept theorisation. Concept Theorise is the third level in Llewelyn's (2003) *Five Levels of Theorisation*. The levels were constructed to engender the possible existence of multiple theorisation levels.

Concept Theorise therefore provided the ability to enable practical understanding. Practical understanding is an important component of community engagement, as the capacity of community engagement is both a theoretical and a practical concept. Practical concepts, as opposed to idealistic concepts were congruent with the aim of the paper to locate a centre point between theory and practice. Additionally, Concept Theorise enabled the creation of new methods of understanding through the refinement of concept construction (Llewelyn 2003, 672-674).

Furthermore, the hybrid research method provided a sufficient framework to examine duality while also developing a better understanding of the contextual relationship surrounding the dualities of community engagement. The examination of dualities aided the conceptual analysis by providing clear links between polarities. The existing dualities within community engagement are policy / practice, policy / understanding, action / understanding and government / community.

Community Engagement Complexities

Community engagement has emerged as a key strategy for governments and community organisations to develop relevant and coherent policies and programs (Evans 2005, 117). The programs seek to bring together the range of stakeholders in deliberations, implementation and adoption of community initiatives. This emergence developed from the current dissatisfaction with existing processes. Community expectations have increased regarding the amount of community input to government decision making and processes. The disenchantment between policy makers and communities further lead government into seeking out new and improved models of engaging citizens in policy-making processes (Sankar 2005, 3; Cavaye 2004, 4).

As argued by Cavaye (2004):

“ the recent focus on community engagement represents part of an ongoing evolution in the role of the state, and the dominant approach taken to achieve the role of government in Australia and in western democracies generally” (Cavaye 2004, 5).

For Cavaye (2004), the driver of community engagement is linked to both community expectations and political and social patterns of western democracies. The linkage illustrates the complexity and non-categorisable nature of community engagement. Community engagement is therefore now conceived as the overarching concept in a series of both new and old conceptual formations.

The present ambiguity surrounding the meaning of community engagement resulted in the interchangeable use of the concepts that inturn lead to concept confusion and inappropriate use. Incorrect and inappropriate use of the terminology created inefficiencies within community engagement policies that resulted in negative

outcomes or failed community engagement potential, in turn leading to a further decrease and depletion of social capital and community strength.

The review of community engagement complexities presented a transparent outline of community engagement that fostered a unified understanding of connections and distinctions between community engagement and related concepts of community, community development and community capacity building. Inclusion of the term community was important for the consideration of the context surrounding the definitions. Without a comprehensive and clear understanding of the formulation and existence of community, then any attempt to understand community engagement may diminish because of the interconnectivity between community and community engagement.

Literature research into the community engagement complexities of community, community development and community capacity building demonstrated the interrelated and interconnection loop existing between the concepts. Community, community development and community capacity building exist and form through interrelationships; the result is the formation of community engagement that in turn reconceptualises the initial starting point of the concepts. This constant changing flow is the flexibility of community engagement. Failure to recognise the alternations that community engagement makes onto the starting point weakens the community engagement initiative.

Community as a multiple construct

By definition, community is the linkages of individuals brought together by the sharing of a range of factors. Factors include place, interest and governance. The series of linkages have resulted in the emergence of community as a multiple construct.

Throughout the extensive body of literature surrounding the concept of community, the term 'community' is derived from a series of overlapping concerns based on collectives, groupings and subject categorisations. In this way, the implied characteristics of community are a community of interest, community of space or community of communication. It was important to understand the ability possessed by communities to change over time. Through the overlapping and multiple dimensional characteristics, communities do not tend to position themselves as a fixed entity. Knowledge and understanding of the constantly changing dispositions of communities is essential for any community engagement initiative program or planning (Dinham 2005, 303; Cavaye 2004; France 1999, 15-16; Nelson and Pettit 2004, 305).

The originating basis of any community engagement practices is community, both in textual order and conceptual significance. Definitional understanding of community as a concept is therefore imperative for the success of any community engagement

initiative. Failure to register what is the type of community and what binds the community seriously diminishes the success of any community engagement program. To register the community as either consisting as a community of place, community of interest or community as governance will aid the community engagement program. It is contended that striving for the third categorisation, community as governance will engender a higher level of community engagement and in turn foster network governance.

The delineation of community into three characteristic elements has been extended by Ryan et al. (2006). The research outlined community as the composition of three models; community as place, community of interest and community as governance or engagement, the latter being the new contribution to understanding the community collections. The notion of community is elaborated through the process of community formation as the collective linking of people through shared location, interest or governance. The framework is helpful to simplify and categorise different communities, as well as highlight the reasons for which the formation was instigated. From each different level, separate strengths and weaknesses may be distilled.

Community as geographic location through the provision of easily recognisable boundaries forms the first level of community. Although relatively uncomplicated to recognise and categorise, community as location may potentially harm the impact of community engagement initiatives through operational difficulties due to problems of spatiality. Spatiality problems comprise the limited number of locations due to geographical characterisation and limitations placed by time, through to geographical spaces subject to changes over time (Walsh 2001, 10).

Community of interest contributes easier community mobility and legitimacy to community engagement initiatives. Community of interest focuses attention on broad social themes such as disability, the environment and transcends spatial configurations of community. As such, this conceptualisation attaches importance to common bonds of interest rather than geographic location. As the second level of community, interest binding fosters a deeper connected community formation. The weakness of community of interest is the constriction it faces by not being able to surpass its auxiliary role and act as a central player. This is due to the vast variety of interests and leads to difficulties in forming larger communities which are stronger and have more impact. Bell and Newby (1971, 29) similarly describe community as the connection through social bonds.

Community as governance exists in a higher level of formation than the previous community as place or community of interest. While the former enlists the community through more one dimensional aspects, community as governance distils equal responsibility between the government and community. By dissolving the lines of power that have previously separated government and community, community as governance is able to create not just a sense but actual ownership to the community

over responsibility for community engagement programs in their own community. This process creates a higher level of participation, interaction and enthusiasm, which are all essential ingredients to any community engagement process.

Community as governance is the third and strongest community formation. Through maintaining positional equality of members with reference to both community and government, strength is increased through equal responsibility. Government responsibility is focussed upon all community members with equal rights for the community and may lead to full community interest by enhancing desire through community ownership and enhanced input. The weakness to community as governance is that there is no positional leader. This characteristic may hinder discussion through lack of structure and authority. Therefore, community as governance or engagement enables a wider scope than mere communication, providing an engaged role through citizen government equality and active participation. Greater community centrality is an important process in the intervention strategy and is generated through community as engagement.

Community as governance also forms the construct that separates community engagement from its precursors of community development and community capacity building. Community development maintained the authority of government and separateness of community and limiting input to strict lines of discussion. Whilst community capacity building, although focused on building up the required different capacity of a community, failed in the long run to create sustainable programs.

It is here that community engagement has the potential to create 'sustainable projects beyond first generations' (Considine 2005, 16). Formulating community engagement through the eyes of community as governance is argued to widen the scope and strengthen the success of community engagement.

Community as governance is a new construct and has yet to be instilled within the foundation of community as 'governance'. Coupled with the misunderstandings of the characteristics of community is the ambiguity surrounding the meaning of community engagement. The conflation of definitions surrounding the meaning of community engagement and the connection terminology of community development and community capacity building has also led to the failure of community engagement to reach its full potential.

Definitional conflation: Community development

Community development has been an established process throughout government community policy. Existing as a means of connection for community with different resources, community development has been since utilised as a mechanism for working alongside communities. The collective community and the development of personal and social growth orientation lie at the centre of community development.

In this relation community development exists as a key driver of community engagement.

Community development involves development through collective response. This process has the ability to raise collective and individual aspirations whilst challenging existing power structures. Opportunity to develop community is further facilitated through the processes of active citizenship, working partnerships and social inclusion (Gilchrist 2003, 16-23).

As a combination of theory and practice, community development is comprised of three fundamental principles: participation, empowerment and ownership. The principles sustain a level of control over community program initiatives through knowledge and participation. More precisely, the level of control is sustained over the planning, development, implementation and maintenance of community initiatives that in turn impact on collective and individual forces (Dinhams 2005, 302-303; Miller and Kilpatrick 2005).

By definition, community development is explored as a participation of initiatives designed to engage communities in future decision making processes (Butler 2002). Community development through collective response formation is able to generate personal growth whilst fostering social change. Factors involved in the formation of a productive community development framework of personal growth and social change include self help, participation, resource provision and awareness raising based on analysis and education (Butler 2002, 2).

Growth and social change themes are also found in the definition of community development developed by France (1999). Community development is the involvement process of continuous problem solving and opportunity adoption. The purpose of this process is to maximise wellbeing and assist the most disadvantaged labour markets both economic and social in constantly changing conditions (France 1999, 16-17).

Key themes to emerge from all the community development definitions involve community development as a personal and social growth orientation. Community development enables community citizens to initiate collective response in order to contribute to government policy about community. The themes suggest that community development aims for a collective community with the ability to raise, create and challenge new and already established public policy.

The development of community to achieve active involvement within the public realm links to community capacity building. Development of capacity develops community which engages community.

Definitional confliction: Community capacity building

Community capacity building as a concept has been in formation since the 1990's and centres on building resources of knowledge and skills. Research into the orientation of capacity building and community development concluded that the concept is a process rather than a goal, and is argued to be the process to build a stronger society (Loza 2004, 297). Community development is linked to community capacity building through a shared focus of building community capacity to a collective participatory force. The increased level of community control sustains community and government program planning, implementation and facilitates the programs maintenance (Williams 2004, 730; France 1999, 12).

Central to community capacity building is the process of ownership and responsibility to communities. Similar to community development, community capacity building involves giving ownership and responsibility to communities and aims to release individual limitations thereby fostering participation (Simpson, Wood and Daws 2003, 279-281; Butler 2002, 2). The role of government is central to successful community capacity building initiatives. Government roles outlined by France (1999) involved the realisation of government's own position as being an equal position with community. Ultimate success is dependant on the community playing an essential role within local community collectivity and within the achieving and maintaining of an economic goal and social equilibrium balance.

A large input into the theoretical understanding of community capacity building was undertaken by Harrow (2001). Harrow (2001) argued for the detailed examination of various perspectives to reveal the conception of community capacity building as the first step to achieving an effective community engagement initiative. Two main contentions emerge regarding the conception of community capacity building. The first concerns capacity building as either a strategic or goal orientated concept. For Harrow (2001), determination of the value of capacity building is the key to the concept's strength and effectiveness. Without prior orientation clarification the practical application of the concept is conducted within ambiguity, resulting in capacity building policies of equal vagueness and 'be regarded by people delivering as illusions' (Harrow 2001, 227). The second main argument posed by Harrow (2001, 226) regards the tension between deficit and empowerment models of capacity building, with preference for empowerment. The different focus on funding to a policy approach reflects strategic objectives. Therefore, to understand community empowerment, knowledge of what a community is, is needed first. This is similar with the work of Shirlow and Muntagh (2004, 59) and their connection between the social and successful community capacity building.

The two points of disagreement toward the purpose of community capacity building are interconnected through the discussion on the meaning of community capacity building. Found throughout the various perspectives discussed in Harrow's (2001) research, the perspectives provide a theory based framework to community

engagement. However there still exists a disconnect between the theoretical aspect and practice of this policy agenda.

Community capacity building as an active process is further discussed by Kirk and Shuttle (2004) as a two-fold on-going process of helping and learning. The first process involved learning as a transforming perspective strengthening society by providing opportunity for individuals to perceive differently, resulting in the engagement of reality with new eyes. New perception consequentially opens up individual senses to new and different ideas, which is a starting point for capacity building. This provided partnership and interdependence between different people perusing the same goal. Goal clarification established prior to implementation avoids the risk of undermining the process through dependency (Kirk and Shuttle 2004, 238).

Different aspects within community capacity building included resources of individual knowledge / skills, including inputs of physical resources and supplies. Programs ensure citizens are active through helping community individuals to free up time, inturn enabling more time involvement. The success of the community capacity building process is vital to the success of the community engagement initiative, and ultimately provides community and government with the skills to develop and engage.

Definitional confliction: Community engagement

Dissatisfaction with existing processes has led to greater community expectations of input to government decision making and processes (Cavaye 2004, 4). Community engagement engenders the participation of individuals and communities in discourse or engaged dialogue regarding relevant polices or service decisions. The process involves information gathering, consultation and participation simultaneously working together to form a consensus of community needs and agency's mandate. As the ideal productive community engagement process, the community now considers community engagement, in its ideal formation, as a basic service by community citizens. A service aimed at finding new ways to establish local constituency, building support and gaining credibility (Evans 2005, 117-119).

Community engagement has been defined as the participation of communities in the relevant decision making that is based within community interest and enhancement of community wellbeing. Engaging community citizens within the decision making process of public policy provided policy makers with a potential expert source of knowledge. The engagement model identified previously untapped community resources to stimulate community and individuals into collective action (Ryan et al. 2006, 2). Community as a potential source of untapped knowledge was argued as a key resource by Adams and Hess (2001, 3-4), stating that the re-emergence of community as a powerful ideal is based on the shift to community as a quality source of community policy ideas and programs.

This approach is continued by Sanker (2005) who argued community engagement provided the ability to tap into a wealth of knowledge and experience. New sources of information improve decisions and strengthen policy legitimacy by total public private inclusion and cooperation (Sanker 2005, 1).

Effective community engagement requires the following key elements to ensure successful collaborative engagement. Authority is needed to legitimatise issues and on the ground practice. Follow-up evaluation is crucial to maintain government community mutual respect and confidence. Formal and pre-set structures, procedures and relationships are required in the mediation of community engagement. Finally, closely coordinated and clear practical engagement demonstrations are needed to foster future engagement (Cavaye 2004, 4).

Community engagement has come to the fore as a key public policy agenda. As noted throughout the review of the literature several conflicting and differentiating definitions and conceptions exist regarding community engagement and the surrounding terminology. The effectiveness of community engagement is hindered by the conflicting definitions. The following section practically examines the community engagement complexities within published case study examples. Testing the literature against the practice will enable clarification of community engagement in practice.

Case studies

This section demonstrates various community engagement, community development and community capacity building programs and traces efficient and deficient recurring themes that occur within. The community engagement cases were sourced from scholarly journals and were chosen for their diversity of contexts. This approach is to ensure the generic nature of the recurring themes. It is contended that it is important to construct a generic set of enablers and barriers for community engagement that can be applied to any situation.

Although a new occurrence, the practice of community engagement initiatives within public policy decision making has had many forms. Various incarnations of community engagement have been attempted over an array of contexts, locations and governments.

Case study examples were focused on various implementations of community engagement located within scholarly case studies. The examined case studies varied in their content, situation, location and implementation application. Differentiating factors to emerge provided examples of the definitional processes whilst highlighting similarities within the opposing practices in the attempt to use processes to achieve community participation. The case studies were analysed to arrive at a theoretical and practical application of community engagement.

The diversity of the cases allowed the coverage of a wide scope of initiative implementation across the various concepts of community engagement. Grouped under the headings of community engagement, community development and community capacity building the cases produced a series of recurring themes. The examination of these themes was followed by a case-specific outline. The concept themes were further categorised into enablers and barriers highlighting areas of deficiencies and positive practices of efficiencies.

Based on the lack of program reviews instigated by government of government initiatives, case studies were reviewed to provide post-implementation information. The information distilled from the case studies further provided the basis to derive a set of criteria for productive community engagement initiatives.

Overview of Case Studies

Community engagement themes were sourced from two case studies. The first *The Internet, Organisational Change and Community Engagement: The Case of Birmingham City Council* (Goodwin, 2005) focused on the extent that internet integration technology facilitates greater community engagement. The second, *Effective Community Engagement for Sustainability: Wombat Community Forest Management Case Study* (Nelson and Pettit, 2004) involved government sponsored community based forest management.

The themes from community development derived from the case studies *Community development in the UK - Possibilities and Paradoxes* (Gilchrist, 2003) and *Community Capacity Building: Starting with People Not Projects* (Simpson Wood and Daws, 2003). The first case involved studies focused on UK strategies, the development of targeted evaluation criteria and neighbourhood renewal strategy. The second case involved a rural Australian telecommunication initiative to establish a remote town internet café.

The final themes from community capacity building stemmed from the articles *Capacity-building, Representation and Intracommunity Conflict* (Shirlow and Murtagh 2004) and *Community Capacity Building: A Critical Evaluation of the Third Sector Approach* (Williams 2004). Shirlow and Murtagh (2004) focused on the success of capacity building partnerships based on the ability to strengthen through change. Williams (2004) involves community capacity building to empower the residents and community workers of Hilltown to increase social policy input. The focus on community capacity building to strengthen social capital and support engagement and development activities provided the linking factor between the two case studies.

Case study Analysis

The tables of positive and negative recurring themes provided categorisation of themes under the headings community engagement, community development and

community capacity building. The categorisation designs illustrate the differences in themes occurring whilst providing arrangement for initiative analysis. Various case studies focused on the problems and efficiencies of community engagement, community development and community capacity building initiatives. The case studies were sourced from programs occurring within an array of Westminster governments to provide an overall view of current practices within this domain. All case studies were chosen on the basis of their diversity with respect to differentiating and similar initiatives and situations. Structuring the factors under the community engagement, community development and community capacity building categories provided easy reference to relationships between factor, initiative and category.

Table 1: Factors contributing to the success of community initiatives

Community Engagement (Goodwin 2005; Nelson and Pettit 2004)	Community Development (Gilchrist 2003, Simpson 2003)	Community Capacity Building (Shirlow and Muntagh 2004; Williams 2004)
Decision making powers devolved	Empowerment through network formation	Quantitative focus – stimulate participation
Strategic directive reorganisation	Opportunity and occasion creation	Needs and interests surveys undertaken prior to initiatives
	Strategic framework formation	Establish high communicative dimension
	Sharper definition – core values and commitments	Create greater trust and mutual respect = strengthen partnership
	Ownership of initiative development, problems and solutions	Establish mechanisms / streams to translate identification into participation rates – a qualitative focus
		Internally driven project -- aim to build external links
		Develop clear, justifiable and publicly understood criteria
		Assimilationist approach

Factors contributing to the success of community initiatives illustrated the different positive contributing factors to community initiatives. Recurring themes to emerge include trust and respect creation, clear criteria development, opportunity creation and high communication. Alternatively, the following table examines the categories for the existence of negative reoccurring themes.

Table 2: Negative reoccurring themes

Community Engagement (Goodwin 2005)	Community Development (Gilchrist 2003; Simpson 2003)	Community Capacity Building (Shirlow and Muntagh 2004; Williams 2004)
Rigid organisational / bureaucratic decision process	Under resourced – active citizens	Poor or no knowledge – awareness complications
Practices – meet internal resistance	Disempowerment – resulting from alienation	Lack of awareness facilities or community based programs
Unclear feedback process	Self styled community leaders	Disengagement – involvement felt unappreciated
Criticises past decisions	Neglect training and support focus	Resistance to programs/ courses – perceived course expense
Both government and community not clear on definitions	Failure to fund programs	Issue of confidence and low self esteem among respondents
No contact between researcher and community – produces knowledge gap	Address potential social impacts prior to implementation	
Both respond with suspicion – no trust	Short term objectives	
Opportunity offered to community is not clear	Over-estimated community time, energy and money	
Conventional model – too formal / restricted		

Key negative themes to emerge centred on the problems of under-resourced programs, a lack of feedback, practice confusion, practice resistance and short term objectives.

Case studies discussion

The categorisation table of initiative efficiencies and deficiencies traces themes occurring with community engagement programs. Themes outlined breakdown into three main areas; what is important for community and government to consider and, for program design and infrastructure to achieve successful community engagement. The breakdown provided greater insight into the reason behind and factors related to efficiencies and deficits of the community engagement initiatives. This is coupled with categorising themes under the different conceptualisations of community; place, interest and governance. The analysis commences with the conceptualisation of community engagement initiative efficiencies.

Table 3: Categorisation of initiative efficiencies

	Program design / infrastructure	Capacity of community	Capacity of government
Community as place	Strategic framework Devolved decision making Greater trust / mutual respect Strategic directive reorganisation Develop clear, justifiable criteria	Opportunity creation Establish high communicative dimension Stimulate participation	Assimilationist approach aimed to include diverse groups Aim to build external links Stimulate participation Opportunity creation Establish high communicative dimension
Community as Interest	<i>Community as place plus</i> Needs and interests survey undertaken prior to initiative	<i>Community as place plus</i> Needs and interests surveyed prior to initiative	<i>Community as place plus</i> Needs and interests surveyed prior to initiative
Community as governance	<i>Community as place plus</i> Partnership strengthening Empowerment through network formation Ownership of initiative development	<i>Community as place plus</i> Sharper definition of core values and commitments Empowerment through network formation Ownership initiative development	<i>Community as place plus</i> Empowerment through network formation Ownership initiative development Sharper definition of core values and commitments

It was found that community as place provides a platform of themes common to all community conceptualisations. The other levels of community illustrate themes that are specific to those levels. It is the extra factors that are needed to achieve community as interest or community as governance, the higher levels of community.

The main issues to arise from categorisation of initiative efficiencies included a high communication focus, partnership strengthening, surveyed needs and interests prior to initiatives and the importance of providing ownership of initiative development. Results indicated that capacity building efforts are the same for both government and community. However, it was also determined that community of interest and community as governance diverge in intent for program design, and capacity efforts for community and government. Community as governance focuses on the formation and strengthening of relationships while community of interest looks to understand the requirements and positioning of the different groups.

By the same token, the following table provides a categorisation of initiative deficiencies.

Table 4: Categorisation of initiative deficits

	Program design / infrastructure	Capacity of community	Capacity of government
Community as place	Neglect training and support focus Failure to fund program Criticises past decision	Lack of awareness of facilities or programs Short term objective planning Practices meet internal resistance Suspicion and no trust	Unaware of facilities / programs Rigid organisational bureaucratic decision making Practices meet internal resistance Suspicion and no trust
Community as interest	<i>Community as place plus</i> Address potential social impacts prior to implementation	<i>Community as place plus</i> Poor or no knowledge – results in complications Community program resistance	<i>Community as place plus</i> Short term objective planning set by government
Community as governance	<i>Community as place plus</i> Unclear feedback process Conventional model– too formal and restrictive	<i>Community as place plus</i> Under resourced – equals inactive citizens Disempowerment resulting from alienation Low confidence and self esteem Community not clear definitions and opportunities	<i>Community as place plus</i> Under resourced – equals inactive citizens Overestimated community time, energy and money Government not clear definitions and opportunities

Similarly, the table of initiative deficiencies highlights the factors that hinder the productive potential of community engagement. In particular, knowledge for government and the community of important deficiency themes occurring within examined cases. The four main issues arising from the cases included the disconnect between community and government awareness to the program design, under-resourced initiatives, short term objective planning and internal / external community government program resistance by both community and government. Similarly to efficiencies outlined in table 3, the considerations regarding community as place form a common platform of concerns. Differences are again discerned between community of interest and community as governance. Divergence was identified across knowledge and planning horizons in the community of interest approach and, the lack of clarity and resourcing was identified in community as governance. The issues of empowerment, and lack of fit between community expectations and government obligation dominated the community of governance approach.

The following table presents a general framework, an overall core set of efficiency and deficiency factors. It is important for government and the community to recognise these factors as key considerations for community engagement initiatives.

Importantly, this framework can be utilised over any conceptualisation of community; place, interest or governance.

Table 5: Outcomes of Analysis: Framework for CE Practices

Efficiency Factors (Enablers)		Deficiency factors (Barriers)
High communication focus	→	Community and government awareness disconnect to the program design
Partnership strengthening	→	Short term objective planning
Surveyed needs and interests prior to initiatives	→	Under resourced initiatives
Provide ownership of initiative development	→	Program resistance by both community and government

Key factors were derived from the both tables of the categorisation of initiative efficient and deficient behaviours to illustrate the relationship and dependence existing between behaviours. The interdependence of operating factors table provides a behavioural outline recommended for community engagement initiatives as general principles. The table findings indicate the importance of prior knowledge of productive procedures and of the main mistakes that strengthen or weaken community engagement initiatives.

The newest contributions to the development of community engagement are the enablers and barriers operating factors, which are essential prior knowledge for any community engagement program. This includes all government and community actors within the community engagement programs. Without the spread of transparent knowledge in a two-way motion, the community engagement program is severely weakened. By sharing knowledge, the government and community are able to become closer while reaching towards the deepest formation of community, i.e. community as governance. At this stage, the community, through sharing the responsibility with the government, is empowered to a greater role throughout the initiative. This increased input is the key to achieving sustainable community engagement programs and real network governance.

Conclusion

Community engagement as a concept, practice and government or community initiative encompasses an array of variables that have both positive and negative influence. This paper sought to produce a fundamental clarification of community engagement through a reworking of the concept in relation to its surrounding terminology of community, community development and community capacity building. Case study analysis of published cases provided an analysis of initiatives in

practice to reinforce community engagement as an ambiguous concept both in theory and practice.

This problematic was evident within the findings from the categorisation tables of initiative efficiencies and deficiencies. The tables illustrated the key issues that community engagement initiatives formed around.

Interestingly, the corresponding issues from each table were linked through an independent relationship. This relationship provided the basis of the table of enablers and barriers to community engagement. Findings included the relationship between communication and awareness. A minimal communication focus may result in a minimal awareness level by both the community and government. Additional relationships included the interdependence between partnership strengthening and short term objectives, the importance that prior research has to providing resources and between participation rates and initiative resistance.

The examination results from the combination of literature definitions and case study critiques of community engagement derived from overarching principles of efficiencies and deficiencies. In producing clear enabler and barrier principles of good community engagement planning and implementation, this paper does not intend to infer that all community engagement programs are the same, or that the situations, factors and reasons for needing community engagement are the same. Rather, this paper distilled some principles of good community engagement planning and implementation as a means to enrich and extend the capacity of community engagement to its highest functioning and in turn add to the wellbeing of the community. Community is an important factor in sustaining society and community engagement is a means to connect aspects of the community and government, to work together to produce a surplus of social capital.

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