

Shifting focus:

alternative pathways for communities and economies



A resource kit

produced by Latrobe City and Monash University



SHIFTING FOCUS:

**ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS FOR
COMMUNITIES AND ECONOMIES**

A RESOURCE KIT

An outcome of the Community Partnering project funded by:

- ◆ Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs
(Australian Research Council)
- ◆ Latrobe City
- ◆ Monash University

With support from:

- ◆ Australian Paper
- ◆ Loy Yang Power

**SHIFTING FOCUS:
ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS FOR
COMMUNITIES AND ECONOMIES**

A RESOURCE KIT

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University of Newcastle and University of Western Sydney

Latrobe City and Monash University
Traralgon and Melbourne, Victoria
2001



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Published by Latrobe City and Monash University
Traralgon and Melbourne, Victoria.

ISBN 0 9578620 0 8

Desktop Publishing: Jillian Dickinson
Cover Design: Liz Butler

The opinions expressed by the authors do not necessarily represent the views of Latrobe City or Monash University.



FOREWORD

The Community Partnering process detailed in this Resource Kit involves working hand-in-hand with people who have been marginalised, and assisting them to build community-based projects. The kit includes documented examples of how positives can be found in negative situations, in this case, the restructuring of the power industry. The ideas found in this document will assist communities to establish microeconomic communities in their local area using people as their major resource.

This Resource Kit has been produced through the cooperation between Monash University and the Latrobe City Council. Latrobe City Council is proud to be part of this working partnership and is pleased to see the results that this project has produced in the wider community. We hope that other communities will use this guide as a way of building a solid future based on the people in their region.

Councillor Tony Hanning
Mayor
Latrobe City

This Resource Kit is a wonderful example of a growing approach to regional development in which the community is recognised as what regional development is all about. The people, not the industries or the government or the social service agencies, are the assets of the region, and their energy and skills are what will make it grow. The kit gives practical, hands-on examples of how the people can come together, learn to see themselves as the main resource of the region, generate ideas, and turn their ideas into reality.

The people of Monash University are proud to be part of the community of Latrobe, and to have worked with other people here to develop this kit. We hope that it will be useful, not only to Latrobe and other communities in Gippsland, but to other communities also that are looking for ways to take control of their own future, and to see themselves as the key assets on which that future depends.

Brian Mackenzie
Pro Vice-Chancellor
Monash University Gippsland

March 2001



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This resource kit is one of the outcomes of the Community Partnering project, a joint initiative between Latrobe City and Monash University to support the development of community-based projects in the Latrobe Valley. The project received funding through an Australian Research Council Strategic Partnerships with Industry – Research and Training (SPIRT) grant. Latrobe City also contributed funding, as did Australian Paper and Loy Yang Power.

The members of the Rethinking Economy project team from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst (especially Rebecca Forest and Julie Graham) have been a constant source of encouragement. We would also like to acknowledge John Kretzmann and John McKnight from the Asset-Based Community Development Institute at Northwestern University, Illinois, whose work has indelibly shaped the Community Partnering project and this resource kit.

Like any community-based project, Community Partnering is the product of a collective endeavour that has brought together people with diverse backgrounds and life experiences.

Councillor Tony Hanning, The Mayor of the City of Latrobe, was involved in the initial discussions and has continued to be a champion of Community Partnering. We also acknowledge the support and feedback of all Latrobe City Councillors.

David Powell and Julie Hocking from Latrobe City, Arthur Veno from Monash University and Rob Sandall from Workfocus made vital contributions.

Jillian Dickinson (Latrobe City), Nel Halloran (Monash University) and Robert Jamieson (Monash University) provided excellent administrative support and guidance.

Through their questions, comments and feedback Stephen Lister, Alan Riley, Gina Symonds and Nicole Welsh played an invaluable role.

Without the passion and commitment of Yvonne Joyce and Leanne Vella, Community Partnering would not have been able to achieve what it has. They have worked unstintingly on the project.

Our biggest debt of gratitude goes to the people of the Latrobe Valley who have participated in Community Partnering. Many have been involved in ways outlined in this resource kit: talking with community researchers, attending community workshops, and becoming actively involved in community projects. There were also those who provided indispensable support through the “behind the scenes” work of photocopying, stuffing envelopes, making phone calls and so on. Finally there are those who made Community Partnering happen through their energy and commitment to building community initiatives. We particularly



acknowledge the role played by Les Argent, Margaret Bartlett, Matt Broeren, Harold and Joyce Doswell, Irene and Tadeusz Golab, Joseph Haider, Annette Johnson, Janice McAdam, Paul (Podgy) Mangion, Keith Peters, Steve Roberts, Chris and Diane Robertson, Ian Schroeter, John and Terri Trewin, and Diana Van Rhine.

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SECTION ONE
INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

How can local communities respond to pressing issues like restructuring, unemployment, the loss of social services, social isolation and dislocation?

What avenues are open for people who have been marginalised and disadvantaged by economic and social change to participate as active contributors and builders of their communities?

How might local councils, government agencies and institutions support the contribution of the marginalised?

What role can business play in community building?

Can community development projects provide a foundation for economic development?

If any of these questions sound familiar then this resource kit can help. It has been produced to support communities who are looking for practical ways to respond to the social and economic challenges of the twenty-first century.

The kit details steps and strategies that local communities can use to create initiatives that promote community well-being and potentially contribute to local economic sustainability. It is intended for anyone with an interest in community and economic development, and related fields like social planning and public policy.

The process has been developed through Community Partnering, a pilot project conducted in the Latrobe Valley by Latrobe City and Monash University. The Latrobe Valley has its own unique history shaped by the recent downsizing and privatisation of the Victorian power industry; but the issues facing the Valley are familiar to many rural and urban communities across Australia. These issues include unacceptably high levels of unemployment,

recognition of the failure of economic policies to produce benefits for all, disaffected young people, gambling, and drug and alcohol abuse.

The Community Partnering process detailed in this resource kit involves working hand-in-hand with people who have been marginalised to build community-based projects. The process can include any group marginalised and largely excluded from participating in mainstream economic and community activities: people of non-English speaking background, Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, older people and so on. Depending on the community, those who are the focus of a project will vary. In the case of the Latrobe Valley the emphasis was on people disadvantaged by the restructuring of the power industry, especially unemployed workers, young people, and sole parents.

There are five steps in the Community Partnering process:

- Step 1: Recruiting and training community researchers
- Step 2: Working with people as the primary resource
- Step 3: Identifying secondary resources
- Step 4: Generating ideas for community initiatives
- Step 5: Turning ideas into reality.

Each section of the resource kit deals with the five steps and outlines strategies and examples of materials that communities will find useful. The steps and strategies are a guide; they can be added to or modified so different communities can build their own pathways to community and economic development.

The steps and strategies have been shaped by a series of guiding ideas. These ideas entail shifting focus and looking at familiar concepts of disadvantage, community, economy and research in new ways. So before moving on to discuss the steps it is important to have a sense of the ideas and the shift in focus that is involved in a Community Partnering process. The next section provides an overview of the guiding ideas.



SECTION TWO
GUIDING IDEAS



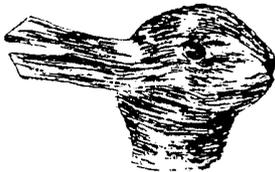
GUIDING IDEAS

Introduction

The four key ideas that guide the Community Partnering process are related to disadvantage, economy, community, and research. When we think about each of these issues we are usually standing in a well-worn spot from which we know that:

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| Disadvantage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>disadvantaged areas</u> are made up of needs and problems |
| Economy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>the economy</u> is made up of businesses and markets |
| Community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>communities</u> are made up of people who share things in common |
| Research | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>research</u> is something that academics and other experts do. |

In a Community Partnering project we move away from the familiar vantage point and reposition ourselves so we can explore disadvantage, economy, community, and research from new and unfamiliar angles. It is like doing the visual puzzle where we refocus our vision so the duck becomes the rabbit (or the rabbit becomes the duck).



Is it a rabbit or
duck?

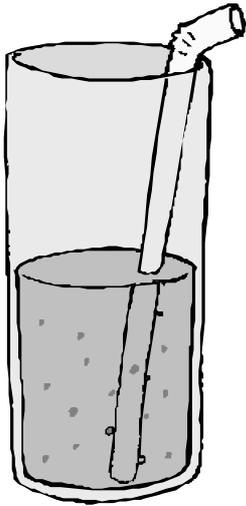
(Gombrich, 1972, page 4)

We believe it is important to make this shift because it opens up new ways of addressing some of the key issues facing communities today – whether they are urban or rural, small or large.

This section of the resource kit introduces and discusses the four guiding ideas. Look for the shaded statements that summarise how the ideas are used in Community Partnering. The section then concludes with case studies of four community initiatives that exemplify the guiding ideas.

Reference:

Gombrich, Ernst Hans, 1972, *Art and Illusion: The Psychology of Pictorial Presentation*, Phaidon, London.



Is the glass half full
or half empty?

A community
portrayed as half-
empty will come to
rely on outside help.

A community
portrayed as half
full will harness its
own resources.

Portrayals

When communities tackle social and economic challenges they invariably think in terms of needs, problems and deficiencies – like the lack of jobs, lack of opportunities for young people, lack of skills, lack of investment.

According to John Kretzmann and John McKnight from Northwestern University in Illinois this is like saying that the glass is half empty. It ignores the resources, skills and abilities that already exist in a community.

They argue that there are important differences between portraying a community as half empty or half full. A neighbourhood that is depicted in terms of emptiness, needs and problems will be on the receiving end of all sorts of services designed and delivered by outside experts. Residents will be positioned as passive, powerless and dependent on outside help and assistance.

A neighbourhood that is portrayed as resourceful and gifted will be more likely to draw upon the skills of local people to address issues and solve problems. Outside assistance and resources may still be required but the agenda will be set by the local community. People in these neighbourhoods are positioned as engaged citizens, capable of shaping their futures.

Kretzmann and McKnight argue that all people and all communities are gifted, resourceful and capable – even those most marginalised and disadvantaged by social and economic change. Their project is to turn the “needs map” into an “assets map” (Figures 1 & 2).

This does not mean that people and communities do not have issues or problems, but it opens up a different way to approach the challenges. It can mean seeing the same person or thing in a very different light: a young unemployed person becomes someone with experiences to contribute; an older person becomes

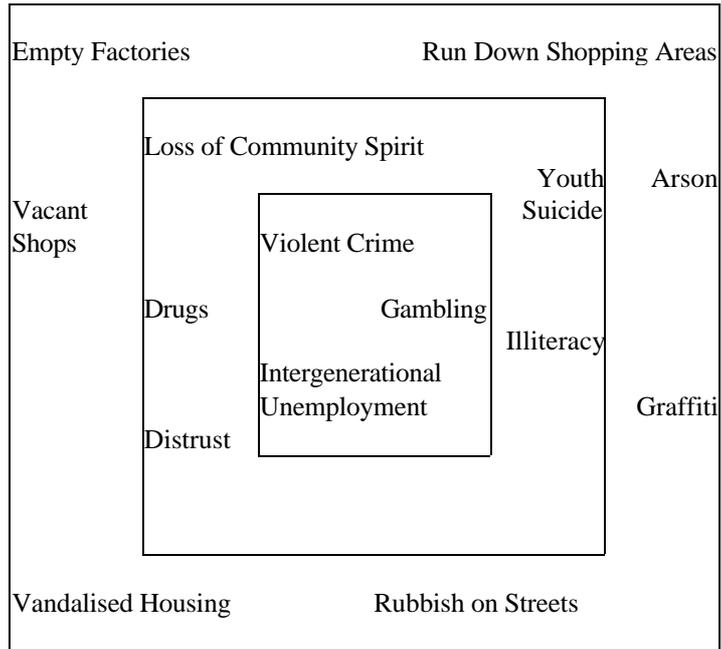


Figure 1: The "Needs Map"

Adapted from Kretzmann & McKnight (1993, 3)

The most important resource in a community is people, particularly those who are marginalised and usually defined in terms of needs and problems.

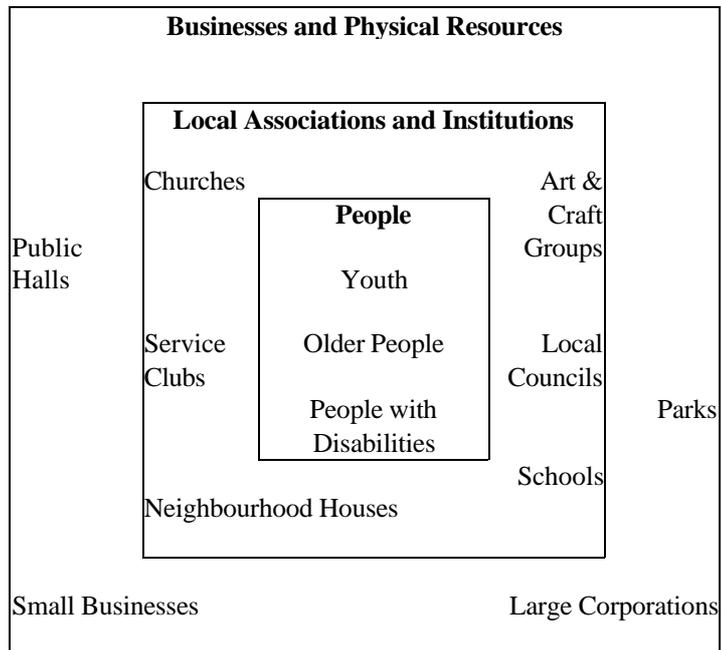


Figure 2: The "Assets Map"

Adapted from Kretzmann & McKnight (1993, 7)

someone with passions and ideas to offer; an unused building becomes a potential community resource.

The Community Partnering process is guided by the portrayal of all people and all communities as resourceful and gifted. It is oriented towards creating community initiatives based on the skills, interests and ideas of people who are marginalised and disadvantaged.

References and Further Reading

Through the Asset-Based Community Development Institute at Northwestern University John Kretzmann and John McKnight have produced an excellent set of resource materials.

Their key text is:

Kretzmann, John & McKnight, John, 1993, *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets*, The Asset-Based Community Development Institute, Institute for Policy Research, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois.

Chapter One is available online at:

<http://www.nwu.edu/IPR/publications/buildingblurb.html>

They also have an extremely useful training video:

Kretzmann, John & McKnight, John, 1996, *Mobilizing Community Assets*, The Video Training Program for Building Communities from the Inside Out, produced by Civic Network Television, distributed by ACTA Publications, 4848 N. Clark Street, Chicago, Illinois, 60640.

Information about their publications and resources (including how to order materials) can be found online at:

<http://www.nwu.edu/IPR/abcd.html>

Economy

Generally when we think of the economy we imagine the factories and businesses that employ people and produce goods and services for the market.

The economy includes unpaid work and non-market transactions

We can also take a much broader view of the economy and include the whole range of unpaid work that people do to produce goods and services that are either sold on the market or used in non-market transactions. In this case the economy involves activities such as housework; growing vegetables in the back yard; odd jobs done as favours for family and friends; art and craft activities; and voluntary work done for kindergartens, schools and community groups.

People who are not in paid employment make important economic contributions to their communities

Many people spend more hours each day doing unpaid and voluntary work than they do in paid employment. At a national level more time is spent in unpaid household and voluntary work than in paid employment (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1993). Indeed, the value of the goods and services produced in households by unpaid workers is almost equivalent to the goods and services produced for the market (Ironmonger 1996).

The second, broader view of the economy is important because it recognises that people who are not in paid employment still participate in economic activities that contribute to their communities. These economic actors include workers who have been retrenched from their jobs, young people who are unemployed, women who have children and are not in the paid workforce, retired workers and people with disabilities who do not have access to paid work.

Different views of economy lead to different economic development strategies

The two different ways of thinking about the economy impact economic development strategies. If the economy is understood as comprising only paid work and production for the market then promoting business growth will become the focus. Strategies to do this might include:

- incentives to attract large employers
- schemes to support small businesses

- plans to revitalise shopping areas to make them more attractive to retailers and shoppers
- infrastructure development (like roads and rail links) to assist industry and businesses
- training programs to ensure that the labour force is skilled and ready for employment.

These measures contribute to economic growth and development. But if we take the broader view of economy then other economic development interventions focusing on community, voluntary and household activities emerge as being important. Strategies to foster this type of alternative economic development include:

- supporting community-based and voluntary projects that have the potential to develop into more formal economic practices and activities
- supporting communities to take on economic activities that were once provided by formal businesses or the state
- resourcing households to alter their production and consumption activities.

Each of these strategies is discussed in more detail below.

Supporting community-based and voluntary projects that have the potential to develop into more formal economic practices and activities.

This strategy is based on a model of economic development in which formal market and paid economic activities “percolate up” from community and voluntary projects. It is a model that contrasts with the assumption that community well-being “trickles down” from economic growth and development (see Cameron & Gibson 2001).

CERES and the Bronx Community Paper Company (pages 20 to 23) are excellent examples of economic initiatives that have “percolated up” from community endeavours.

Supporting communities to take on economic activities once provided by formal businesses or the state.

With public and private enterprises withdrawing from service provision, local communities can be resourced to develop community-owned economic enterprises to provide services.

Formal economic practices can “percolate up” from community and voluntary activities

Communities can be supported to develop their own economic enterprises

Households can be resourced to become more efficient producers and consumers

Mirboo North Newspaper Cooperative Ltd, and Yoeval Multi-Purpose Health Centre are two outstanding community enterprises (pages 24 to 26).

Resourcing households to alter their production and consumption practices.

As one of the key sites of production, households can be supported to produce goods and services more efficiently and cost-effectively. Practices such as on-site recycling of household water, composting, use of solar power, and improved insulation and building techniques free up scarce resources for other purposes. These resources range from household incomes to community environmental assets, like water and clean air. This strategy promotes the development of new industries that are more environmentally sustainable (and that might be run as community-owned enterprises).

Sydney's Sustainable House is a dramatic demonstration of just how radically household production and consumption practices can be changed. The house is found in the polluted inner city suburb of Chippendale. From the street it looks like any other renovated terrace house but inside it is an exemplary model of self-sufficiency and energy efficiency.

For more information see:

<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/science/earth/handouts/chippendale.htm>

The Community Partnering process is guided by the broad definition of economy and it aims to generate community-based economic enterprises which address both community and economic goals.

References and Further Reading

Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1993, *How Australians Use Their Time*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra.

Cameron, Jenny & Gibson, Katherine, 2001, 'Regional communities reinvent economy', in Dibden, J; Fletcher, M.; and Cocklin C. (eds) *All Change!: Gippsland Perspectives on Regional Australia in Transition*, Monash Publications in Geography and Environmental Science, Melbourne (forthcoming).

Ironmonger, Duncan, 1996, 'Counting outputs, capital inputs and caring labor: estimating gross household product', in *Feminist Economics*, 2(3), 37-64.

The internet is an excellent source of information about alternative economic projects. Good starting points are:

The Centre for Community Enterprise
<http://www.cedworks.com/>

Community Economic Development Centre
<http://www.sfu.ca/cedc/gateway/sharing/>

Community Quarterly
<http://www.vicnet.net.au/~comquart/>

National Civic League (Alliance for National Renewal)
<http://www.ncl.org/anr.ced.html>

Rocky Mountain Institute
<http://www.rmi.org/index.html>

Sustainable Communities Network
<http://www.sustainable.org/casestudies/>

Links to other resources and projects can also be found at:
<http://rspas.anu.edu.au/ce/connections/index>

There are some excellent references about community-based economic development. The following are useful:

Gunn, Christopher & Gunn, Helen Dayton, 1991, *Reclaiming Capital: Democratic Initiatives and Community Development*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY.

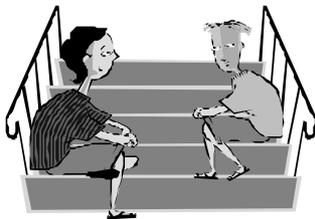
McLeod, Greg, 1997, *From Mondragon to America: Experiments in Community Economic Development*, University College of Cape Breton Press, Nova Scotia.

Perry, Stewart & Lewis, Mike, 1994, *Reinventing the Local Economy: What 10 Canadian Initiatives Teach Us About Building Creative, Inclusive and Sustainable Communities*, Centre for Community Enterprise, Vernon, B.C., Canada. (Order in downloadable format from:
<http://www.cedworks.com/>)

Communities can be made up of people who share a common identity or special interest

Communities of sameness offer a sense of belonging but differences may be silenced

It is possible to have communities of difference?



Conversations can build communities of difference

Community

Communities are usually thought of as being made up of people who share a common identity or special interest. Examples of communities based on common or shared characteristics would include the farming community of East Gippsland, the elderly Vietnamese community of Cabramatta, the quilters' community on the internet, or the community of recreational fishers concerned about commercial fishing practices.

These communities of sameness offer a sense of belonging and oneness. But what happens to people who are out of tune or out of step? Are people able to express differences or must they conform to a set of unwritten rules and expectations? Sometimes the value that is placed on sameness and belonging means that differences between people are silenced or hidden.

Can there be other types of communities? Is it possible to have communities based on a valuing of difference rather than sameness? How would such communities be created and sustained?

One way to approach communities of difference is to think of community as the call or appeal to become something new and different (Gibson 1999). Instead of common identities that are already present and known, community can be thought of as bringing into being new and as yet unknown identities. Conversations between people of very different backgrounds about their values or guiding principles would be one way of bringing new identities into being. These sorts of conversations do not always have to be serious and intense but might take place through fun events where people express joy and pleasure in each other's company. Festivals that celebrate cultural differences are an excellent way of opening up spaces for new ways of being to emerge.

The West Gippsland Loggers and Conservationists Dialogue Group is building a community of difference based on a call for a new way of being. The group was started by a semi-retired logger and “greenie” who were neighbours. Through conversations the conservationist learned that the logger had a deep respect and love for the forest, and was concerned about levels of logging. The logger found out that the conservationist did not want to see all logging completely stopped.

Other loggers and conservationists were brought into the conversation, and a group began to meet on a regular basis to get to know each other better. A richer picture of the issues and values was built up. This allowed the group to deal with differences in ways other than fighting. They lobbied governments about sustainable forestry practices in native forests and started to discuss other contentious issues like water.

The group wanted to work against the antagonistic and oppositional model of most political debate so planned regular “Politics in the Pub” evenings where different points of view could be put forward and explored in a convivial atmosphere.

(Liz Clay, personal communication, 2000)

Communities of difference can also be based on giving and receiving gifts (Corlett 1991). The emphasis is not on gifts that can be calculated or predicted because of an already existing identity (such as the presumption that someone of Maltese background will be gifted with the ability to speak Maltese); rather the emphasis is on unexpected and spontaneous gifts. Giving is a wonderful way of building connections between people, learning respect for what others have to offer, and being always open to the surprise of people’s hidden and often untapped gifts and abilities. This type of gift giving changes the giver and the receiver, and creates the opportunities for new sorts of identities to emerge.

Mirboo North Newspaper Cooperative Ltd has been able to build a community of difference by valuing and nurturing the gifts of local people of all ages and backgrounds (see pages 24 to 25).

Communities can
be thought of as
constantly moving
between
difference and
sameness

Communities of difference can be created through the call to a new way of being or through the giving of gifts. Over time communities of difference can become communities of sameness. This is not necessarily a problem but communities need to be careful that the expectation of sameness is not enforced. Communities need to be open to and inviting of differences that unsettle their unspoken norms and rules.

In place of communities comprised of people who are already identical because of a shared identity or interest, we can envision community as a fluid process of moving between moments of sameness and difference, between being fixed and “in place” and becoming something new and “out of place”.

The Community Partnering process aims to generate communities of difference by bringing together people with diverse life experiences and backgrounds to work with each other on community initiatives.

References and Further Reading

Corlett, William, 1991, *Community Without Unity: A Politics of Derridian Extravagance*, Duke University Press, Durham, NC.

Gibson, Katherine, 1999, ‘Community economies: economic politics outside the binary frame’, <http://rspas.anu.edu.au/ce/knowledges/gibson.html>

For more on community as sameness see:

Kenny, Susan, 1994, *Developing Communities for the Future: Community Development in Australia*, Thomas Nelson, Melbourne, Australia.

For more on communities of difference see:

Miami Theory Collective (eds), 1991, *Community at Loose Ends*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.



In a traditional model of research academics and other experts study societies

In an action research process, people are involved in researching their own communities so as to produce change



Research

Most people are familiar with the traditional model of social research which involves academics and other professionally trained experts studying people. This research is concerned with describing and analysing the way societies work and the changes they go through. It is generally the model of research used when government bodies commission researchers to investigate a social problem or issue and develop recommendations about how government should respond.

Seen in the worst possible light the traditional model of research has been described as an exercise in “poking and prodding” communities, treating people like “lab-rats” and writing reports that sit on shelves gathering dust (while academics retreat to their “ivory towers”).

A very different model of research is known as action research. In action research local people participate in all aspects of the research process, with or without the help of academics and other professionally trained experts. This model of research is oriented towards producing change in the world, rather than simply analysing or describing social conditions (hence the idea of research as action).

Action research is extremely compatible with the asset-based community development approach of John Kretzmann and John McKnight (see pages 8 to 10). Both approaches are based on the idea that all people (and not just academics and those who are professionally trained) have knowledges to contribute to their communities (see also Sheil 1997). The research process then involves bringing people with different knowledges and forms of expertise to the table to collaboratively develop strategies and ways of moving forward and producing change in the world.

The action research process used in the Community Partnering project is characterised by:

- A collaboration between people with professional training (such as academics, social planners, community development workers) and others in the community (particularly those who have been marginalised and disadvantaged by economic and social changes)
- The use of conversation as a key research tool so that people listen and learn from each other's experiences and knowledges.
- An emphasis on research as a way of supporting and informing the creation of community initiatives and enterprises.
- A commitment to research producing tangible outcomes and actions.

References and Further Reading

Freire, Paulo, 1970, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, translated by Myra Bergman Ramos, Herder and Herder, New York.

Sheil, Helen, 1997, *Building Rural Futures Through Cooperation: Study Circles Kit*, Centre for Rural Communities Inc., Monash University, Gippsland Campus, Churchill, Victoria.

Case Study 1

CERES

Beginnings

CERES (Centre for Education and Research into Environmental Strategies) started in the late 1970s when a small group of volunteers were given access to a disused seven-hectare tip site on the banks of the Merri Creek in inner city Melbourne. The group started off by developing community gardens with a no-dig garden method.

Supporting the interests of diverse communities

Community Activities

CERES now provides a range of activities and facilities that appeal to diverse groups in the surrounding community. The original community gardens are largely used by migrants from southern Europe. People interested in urban sustainability participate in composting, recycling and permaculture. School children are involved with the animal farm and educational centre. Local residents care for the free-range chooks.

People are encouraged to build connections with each other and develop their own community initiatives. The community gardeners, for example, have established their own bocci court, while another group is building a sauna.

From a disused tip site to a \$1.6 million community economic initiative with a strong environmental commitment

Economic Activities

CERES is a non-profit incorporated association characterised by diverse economic practices. Commercial activities include a café, nursery (specialising in permaculture and bushfood) and educational programs. These activities generate around 60 per cent of the \$1.6 million annual budget. Other funds come from government grants and sponsorship.

There are also non-commercial activities. The residents who tend the chooks, for example, are “paid” in free-range eggs. Manure from the chickens is used on the community gardens where people grow their own food. People involved in the apiary make their own honey.

CERES currently employs fifteen people on a full-time basis and another 55 part-time.

Future Directions

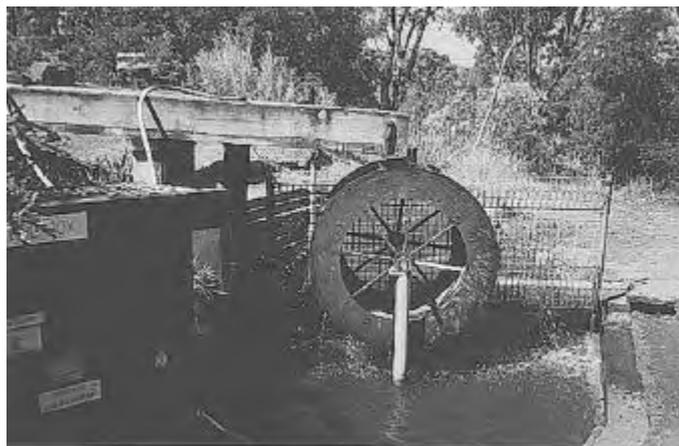
CERES is continuing to develop the site for sustainable community and economic activities. It has recently been selected as a demonstration project by Australia's Greenhouse Office.

Further Information

<http://www.ceres.vic.edu.au/>

8 Lee Street, Brunswick, Victoria, 3057, Australia

Phone: 61 3 9387 4472 or 61 3 9387 2609



Case Study 2

Banana Kelly Community Improvement Association

From
community
protests to the
largest
manufacturing
development in
New York City
since World
War II

Beginnings

Banana Kelly started in 1977 in New York City when a group of thirty local residents banded together to stop the demolition of their homes in Kelly Street, a crescent shaped street in the South Bronx. This action started them on their pathway to renovating, building and managing affordable housing.

Community Activities

Banana Kelly has built more than 2,500 apartments for low-income households in the South Bronx.

It has received approval and funding from the New York City Board of Education for a high school in which hands-on community-based activities will play a central role in the curriculum.

Banana Kelly specifically uses an asset-based approach to promote a shift away from the idea that people of the South Bronx are needy and deficient:

Banana Kelly employees and volunteers have learned many times that more is less. They have learned to start their local projects with what they have within the neighborhood, instead of looking beyond their own area for answers and resources. They do not accept the commonly-held view of “reality”; and have learned to trust that they can create their own reality.

(Kretzmann et al., 1997, page 51, emphasis in original)

Economic Activities

Banana Kelly now employs 120 full-time workers and has hundreds of volunteers. It manages real estate holdings of more than \$50 million. It runs a training program and a \$2 million loan fund to assist local residents in establishing small businesses.

Future Directions

After three years of negotiation Banana Kelly has gone into partnership with the Natural Resources Defense Council to form the Bronx Community Paper Company. The company is building a \$500 million paper recycling plant, the largest manufacturing development in New York City since World War II. The plant is being built to stringent environmental standards and will recycle half of New York City's waste paper—the urban forest. Over 1,500 local South Bronx residents will be employed in the plant.

References and Further Reading

Kretzmann, John; McKnight, John & Sheehan, Geralyn (with Mike Green & Deborah Puntteney), 1997, *A Guide to Capacity Inventories: Mobilizing the Skills of Local Residents*, The Asset-Based Community Development Institute, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois
(To order, see: <http://www.nwu.edu/IPR/abcd.html>).

<http://www.bronxpaper.org/>

[http://www.sustainable.doe.gov/success/
bronx_community_paper.htm](http://www.sustainable.doe.gov/success/bronx_community_paper.htm)

Case Study 3

Mirboo North Newspaper Cooperative Ltd

Beginnings

The Mirboo North Times was a local newspaper that was about to close after 103 years. A group of local people volunteered to work with the newspaper company to assist with production. In April 1997, after eighteen months, the company decided to shut down the newspaper. Having been hit hard by other economic changes in the area, the community rallied and formed a cooperative to run the newspaper. By July 1997 the cooperative was producing the newspaper.

Community Activities

Each week over 50 volunteers contribute to all aspects of newspaper production. Volunteers include local high school students, unemployed workers and retirees. Any and all contributions are valued.

Out of this approach people have developed new skills and new identities. One of the coop members tells of people's initial reactions to working on the newspaper and the new identities that have emerged through supporting people's gifts.

The people who said:

"I could do some proofreading" – went on to become editor.

"I've got some computer skills" – went on to become compositor, coordinator, director, video reviewer, member of several committees and became actively involved in other community groups in the town. He has also developed public speaking skills and leadership skills.

"I could do some keyboarding" – went on to become a writer and proofreader.

"I can't do anything really, but I'd like to help" – this lady compiles the community notes, helps around the office and works on three committees, bringing a wealth of local knowledge to each activity.

"I've got no skills" – this is the competent, hardworking, sales representative.

(Gero Gardner, quoted in Sheil 1997, 2.13)

The Mirboo
North
Newspaper
Cooperative Ltd
has built a
community of
difference by
valuing the gifts
of local people.

Economic Activities and Future Directions

In 1998 when the local bank branch closed down the community had the skills and confidence to take matters into their own hands. A banking cooperative was formed and has gone into partnership with Bendigo Bank to provide banking services in the town.

Reference and Further Information

Sheil, Helen, 1997, *Building Rural Futures Through Cooperation: Study Circles Kit*, Centre for Rural Communities Inc., Monash University, Gippsland Campus, Churchill, Victoria.

Mirboo North Newspaper Cooperative Ltd, 30 Ridgway, Mirboo North, Victoria, 3871, Phone: 61 3 5668 1201.



Case Study 4

Yoeval Multi-Purpose Health Centre



Beginnings

In 1988 the State government decided to close the local hospital in Yoeval, a small town in Central New South Wales. The people of Yoeval, with the assistance of their State member of parliament, formed a cooperative to take over ownership and control of the hospital. The government agreed to support the initiative in its early stages by making available funds that it would have contributed to the hospital had it remained in State hands.

Community Activities

Community-owned health facilities certainly require more local community involvement but Yoeval has proved this has many beneficial effects, not the least of which is the drawing of communities together and the re-establishment of local pride in achievement.

Member for Dubbo, Mr Gerry Peacocke, MP

Economic Activities and Future Directions

Through fundraising and contributions the Yoeval Multi-Purpose Health Centre has increased its facilities to include nursing home beds, hostel beds, hospital beds and ambulance and ancillary services. Local residents are shareholders in the cooperative and profits are used to further develop the centre and reduce the cost to members of using the facilities.

Further Information

<http://www.lisp.com.au/~ychc/index.html>

Yoeval Multi-Purpose Health Centre, Phone: 61 2 6846 4100

Other Case Studies

Community Recycling Network

<http://www.crn.org.uk/about/cases/main.html>

Cheticamp's Co-ops

<http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/Community/Support/CUSO/cheticoops.html>

FarmFolk CityFolk

<http://www.ffcf.bc.ca/>

Fig Tree Community Garden

<http://rspas.anu.edu.au/ce/stories/index.html>

Hoa' Aina O Makaha

<http://www.aloha.com/~hoa-aina/>

Materials for the Future

<http://materials4future.org/>

Mondragon Cooperatives

<http://www.mondragon.mcc.es/>

Octopod

<http://www.octopod.org.au>

Wai'anae Backyard Aquaculture Project

http://www.sustainable.org/casestudies/hawaii/HI_epa_aquaculture.html



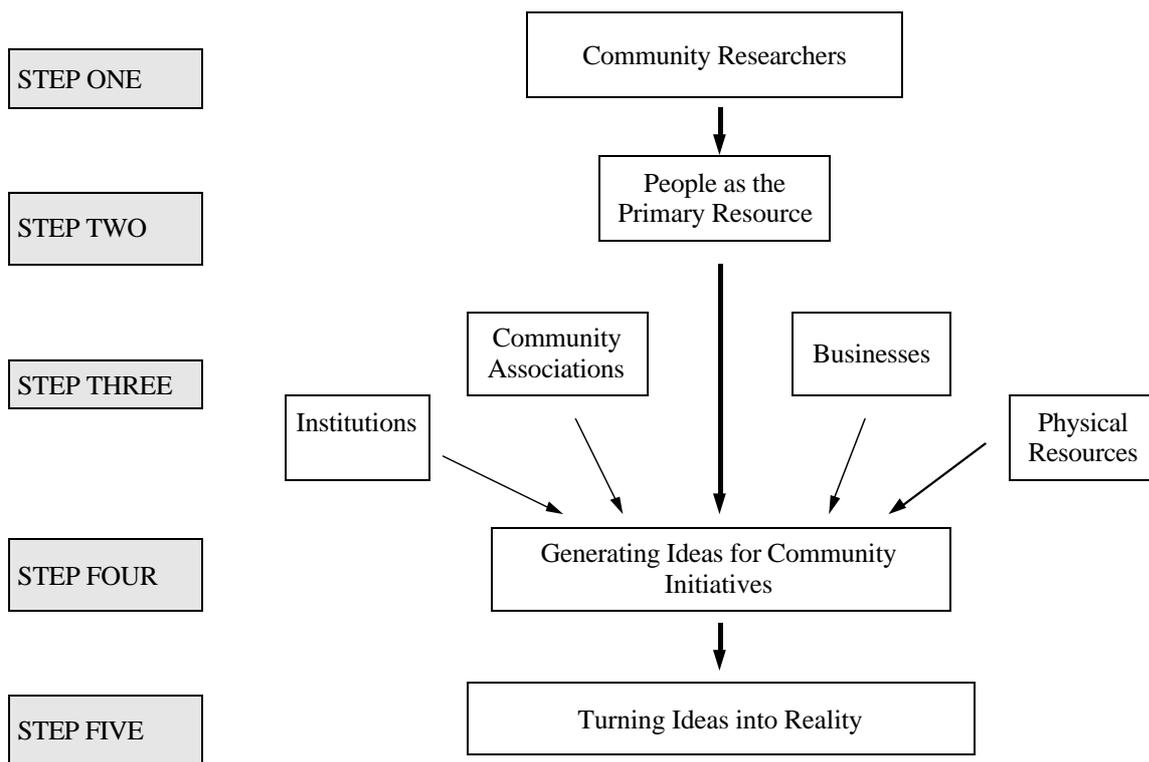
SECTION THREE
PROJECT OVERVIEW



PROJECT OVERVIEW

A Community Partnering project has five main steps:

- Step 1: Recruiting and training community researchers.
- Step 2: Working with people as the primary resource.
- Step 3: Identifying secondary resources.
- Step 4: Generating ideas for community initiatives.
- Step 5: Turning ideas into reality.



Step One: Recruiting and Training Community Researchers

Aim

To recruit and train community researchers with first-hand experiences of marginalisation and disadvantage.

Background

This step assumes that a Community Partnering project has been initiated by an existing agency (like a local council or community-based organisation) that has in place a project team made up of people with professional training such as community or economic development workers, or social planners. In this case the project team needs to be augmented by community researchers. However, a local group that conducts its own training using this resource kit can also initiate and run a Community Partnering project.

Key Tasks

1. Recruit community researchers.
2. Train community researchers.

Key Staff

The project team.

Time

1-2 months (approximately).

Outcomes

Community Researchers who are familiar with the ideas that guide the project and are able to work with people who are marginalised and disadvantaged.

The project team
includes community
researchers



Step Two: Working with People as the Primary Resource

Aim

To introduce the idea that marginalised, disadvantaged and isolated people are primary community resources with abilities, ideas and dreams that can be the basis for community initiatives.

Turning the “needs”
map into an “assets”
map

Background

Draws on the asset-based community development approach of John Kretzmann and John McKnight (see pages 8 to 10).

Key Tasks

1. Working with people to identify skills and abilities, interests and ideas, dreams and aspirations.
2. Working with people to begin formulating ideas for community initiatives.

Key Staff

Community researchers with support from the project team.

Time

6 months (approximately).

Outcomes

Groups who have developed some initial ideas for community initiatives based on their own skills, interests and dreams.



Step Three: Identifying Secondary Resources

Aim

To identify secondary resources and the potential contribution they could make to community initiatives.

Background

Draws on the asset-based community development approach of John Kretzmann and John McKnight (see pages 8 to 10).

Key Tasks

1. Identifying key community associations.
2. Identifying key institutions.
3. Identifying innovative ways that businesses contribute to community initiatives.
4. Identifying examples of physical resources that could potentially be used for community initiatives.

Key Staff

Community researchers in collaboration with the project team.

Time

6 months (approximately) (running parallel with Step 1).

Outcomes

Examples of community resources that could potentially be used for community initiatives.

Making an inventory
of all the assets of
a community



Step Four: Generating Ideas

Brainstorming
ideas for
community
initiatives

Aim

To generate ideas for community projects, with an emphasis on the ideas and interests of people who are marginalised.

Background

Builds on Steps Two and Three by coming up with new ways of harnessing community resources.

Key Tasks

Running community workshops, with an emphasis on involving people who are marginalised and disadvantaged.

Key Staff

Community researchers in conjunction with the project team.

Time

1 month (approximately).

Outcomes

An ideas bank.
Groups formed around common areas of interest.



Step Five: Turning Ideas into Reality

Aim

To support groups primarily comprised of marginalised people to develop new community initiatives.

Background

Builds on Step Four.

Key Tasks

1. Working with groups to refine their ideas.
2. Working with groups to develop their initiatives.

Key Staff

Community researchers in conjunction with the project team.

Time

12+ months.

Outcomes

New community initiatives that are managed and run primarily by groups of people who have been disadvantaged, marginalised or isolated.

Refining ideas
and developing
initiatives





SECTION FOUR

COMMUNITY RESEARCHERS



COMMUNITY RESEARCHERS

Introduction

Community researchers are a central element of the Community Partnering process. They are the key to building successful relationships with people who are marginalised, isolated or disadvantaged.

Community researchers will share the experiences and backgrounds of the people that are the focus of a project. Thus a retrenched worker is the ideal community researcher to initially work with other retrenched workers; an unemployed young person will quickly develop a rapport with other unemployed young people; single parents will be able to identify with a community researcher who is also a single parent.

The longer term objective is that people with diverse experiences and backgrounds come together to build community initiatives, but in the first instance community researchers play an indispensable role in making connections with those who are isolated and marginalised.

Community researchers will have a commitment to contributing to their communities and life skills that include:

- An ability to communicate with people
- An interest in working with different groups of people
- Good listening skills
- An ability to think creatively
- An ability to work as part of a team
- An interest in learning new skills.

Community researchers may not have the professional training or educational background of other members of the project team (like community or economic development workers, or social planners). But without community researchers the project team will face an uphill battle to gain the trust of people in the community.

A sample position description for a community researcher is provided in Appendix 1.

When planning for the involvement of community researchers it is important to know about gatekeepers. Gatekeepers may be activists or community workers who claim to speak on behalf of marginalised and disadvantaged groups. Gatekeepers have interests and allegiances that are already well defined. They have established networks and modes of operating. They will frequently have preconceived ideas about other people's abilities and capacities. Indeed sometimes they act on behalf of disadvantaged groups because they believe these groups need their help. Gatekeepers have public reputations that may rightly or wrongly prejudice perceptions of a project.

Community researchers, on the other hand, will not be actively or publicly aligned or associated with stakeholder groups or interest groups in a community. They will be able to build relationships without being hampered by the pre-conceived ideas or expectations of others.

Community researchers may need to work through gatekeepers, but they will not be gatekeepers.

This section of the resource kit discusses strategies for recruiting and training community researchers. The training is focused on the guiding ideas (discussed in Section Two on pages 5 to 27). Although the training is presented as a series of one-off activities, it is important for the project team to revisit the training and guiding ideas at different times throughout a Community Partnering process.

Recruiting Community Researchers

Objective

To recruit community researchers with first-hand experiences of marginalisation and disadvantage.

Key Tasks

1. Recruit community researchers.

Tools and Tips

The recruiting process is a search for people who share the experiences and backgrounds of those who are the focus of a Community Partnering project. Potential community researchers may underestimate their skills and abilities. There are at least two strategies that can be used to find community researchers:

1. Placing a carefully worded job advertisement in the local paper. An example of a job ad is on page 42, along with the reflections of some community researchers on the ad.
2. Networking with agencies and groups that are likely to have contact with people from the target groups.

Time

1-2 months (approximately).

Outcome

A project team that includes community researchers.

Community researchers will have first hand experience of disadvantage

Sample Only

Job Advertisement for Community Researchers

COMMUNITY PARTNERING PROJECT

Have you been hard hit by economic change in the Latrobe Valley and found it difficult to get a job?

We are looking for three people who are familiar with this experience and who are willing to talk to others such as retrenched workers, unemployed youth, and single parents.

Applicants will need to have lots of enthusiasm, be motivated and interested in working with people from many different groups in our community.

The successful applicants will be employed by Monash University but will be based at the La Trobe Shire Council. A current Victorian driver's licence is required.

Each position is for 21 hours/week for a period of 35 weeks.

Community Researchers Reflect on the Job Ad

Yvonne: I was getting really frustrated because I couldn't get any work . . . and I said to a friend "Why can't someone just make use of what I know. I've experienced these different things and wouldn't it be great if someone just wanted to know about that stuff.." So then there was this ad in the paper that said "Have you experienced these sorts of areas – single parenting, retrenched workers and unemployed youth". And I'd pretty much done all of that. That was amazing.

Jenny: And you thought this is the job for me!

Yvonne: Well, actually I'd got to the stage where I'd almost given up applying for jobs because I wasn't getting anywhere. But I stuck it on the fridge and looked at it for a nearly week . . . because I didn't want another knock-back.

Steve: I read it out to the wife and she said "You'll never get a job like that, don't bother putting in for it." And I thought "I'm going to put in for it". So I did. Basically it was the challenge of it.

Jenny: So why didn't she think you'd get it?

Steve: It was so different to what I'd done 90 per cent of my working life – a blue collar worker to a white collar worker. But I'd got the experience the advertisement was asking for. I'd experienced despair, anger, all those feelings and frustrations.

Training Community Researchers: Community

Objective

To introduce community researchers to the idea of people's differences and similarities (see pages 15 to 17).

Key Activities

1. Conduct an introductory activity such as the one on page 44 that introduces all the members of the project team and highlights their differences.
2. Conduct an introductory activity such as the one on page 45 that highlights the similarities between people on the project team.

Tools and Tips

See 'Key Discussion Points' on pages 44 and 45.

Time

½ day (approximately).

Outcome

Community researchers with an appreciation of the similarities and differences between people.

Acknowledging
differences and
finding common
ground

Sample Only

People's Differences

Activity

1. All members of the project team put a different coloured sticker on their collars.
2. All write a response to the following questions on three separate sheets of paper:
 - Something interesting I did on the weekend.
 - Something interesting I've done at work.
 - Something I did as a child that relates to this project.
3. Stick the sheets around the wall.
4. Give each person a set of coloured stickers
5. Working individually each person puts on each response sheet the coloured sticker that corresponds to the person they think wrote it.
6. When everyone has finished going through the sheets, find out who wrote each response, and ask each person to expand on their responses.

Key Discussion Points

- We have all learned something new about each other.
- Our project is like this exercise because it is based on learning new things about people – their interests, experiences, skills and so on.
- We can never assume we know what somebody's abilities and interests are, because people will constantly surprise us.

Responses from one project team

Something interesting I did on the weekend

- This weekend I learnt how to change the oil and spark plugs in my car.
- Marched in the Moomba Parade playing a trumpet.
- Went on a fun walk and spent most of the five kilometres chasing a 75 year old grandmother!

Something interesting I've done in my work

- Worked on Thursday Island in the Torres Strait.
- Driven an overhead crane and removed a generator rotor weighing 100+ tonnes, worth approximately \$100 million.
- I once dropped a raw egg in my cash drawer and spent the next 20 minutes frantically trying to clean the goo off the money.

Something I did as a child that relates to this project

- I fell asleep in the pot cupboard and my mother was out with the police searching the streets for me. Perhaps this project is symbolic of me emerging from the pot cupboard!!!
- Worked in a school project building gardens, rockeries etc.. We all had a lot of fun and gained a lot of experience.
- I was a great goal attack in my primary school netball team—"Sneakers". This relates to working as part of a team as I will be doing in this project.

Sample Only

People's Similarities

Activity

Go around the group and ask each person to talk about why they are interested in working on the project.

Key Discussion Points

- Despite the sorts of differences that we have, like differences in age, hobbies, background, work experience and family situation, we all share a common interest in working with people and a concern for the well-being of our community.
- We all bring something unique and different to the project, but we also bring a common interest and concern for people.
- Sometimes in the project it will be important to draw upon different perspectives and experiences (of each other and the people we meet). At other times we will be building on common concerns.

Some of the responses from one project team

“I’d been working in this job for years and I was so miserable because of all the pressures. You used to be able to chat with people when they came in and really look after them, but now there were all these pressures to sell products. You had to fill out forms to say how many customers you had asked about retirement planning or whatever the product was for the month, and it was ridiculous because most people we saw were on pensions and benefits. And you could see the services were changing and the people who were worst affected were people on pensions and benefits. So I left. And I knew I just wanted to work with people. And I thought that this job was an opportunity to work with people and really do something worthwhile.”

“I thought this job would be a bit different. I’ve never done anything like this before in my life, I’ve always had blue collar jobs. And I think that if I can just help one person then I will have achieved something.”

“I can see so much potential in our community, but I look at the sorts of measures that are being introduced and I’m not confident that they will produce worthwhile outcomes in the long term. So rather than focussing on trying to attract big business and industry and investment from outside the region I think that much more emphasis could be placed on trying to work with the things that we already have, starting with people’s interests and skills, and starting with the ideas that people have got for things they want to be doing.”

Introducing
action
research

Training Community Researchers: Research

Objective

To introduce community researchers to action research (see pages 18 to 19).

Key Activities

1. Using a whiteboard brainstorm images, words and ideas associated with research. Good prompts to use are:
 - What is research?
 - Who does it?
 - What tools do researchers use?
 - Why is research done?
2. Highlight how this is a traditional model of research in which experts are the researchers, and other people are the researched.
3. Introduce the action research model.
4. Construct images of the two different models of research and discuss their differences

Tools and Tips

An example of the two models of research is provided on pages 47 to 48.

Key points to make during this training activity are:

- This project uses an action research model in which we all participate as experts with our own specialist knowledge and insights.
- We will also learn from each other and together build up a shared knowledge.
- But we will go one step further than just learning new things, we will be using our specialist knowledge and our shared knowledge as the basis for building new activities, actions and realities.

Time

½ day (approximately).

Outcome

Community researchers with an appreciation of an action model of research.

Sample Only

Example of one brainstorm about research

What is research?

[gathering information
finding out
answering questions
investigating existing systems
finding answers
“the truth is out there”

Who does it?

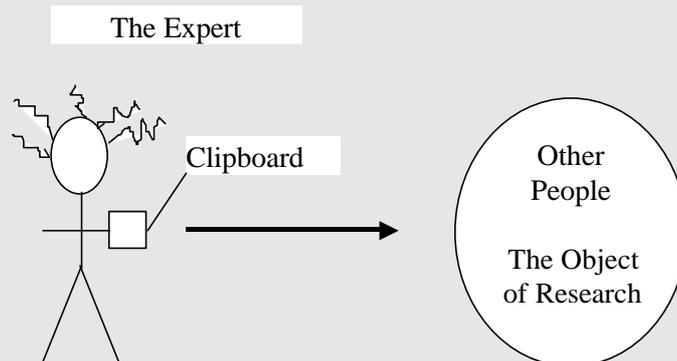
[mad scientists
nutty professors
dusty labs, cloistered away, ivory towers

What are the tools?

[other people
statistics
hypotheses
methodology
data
control groups

Why is it done?

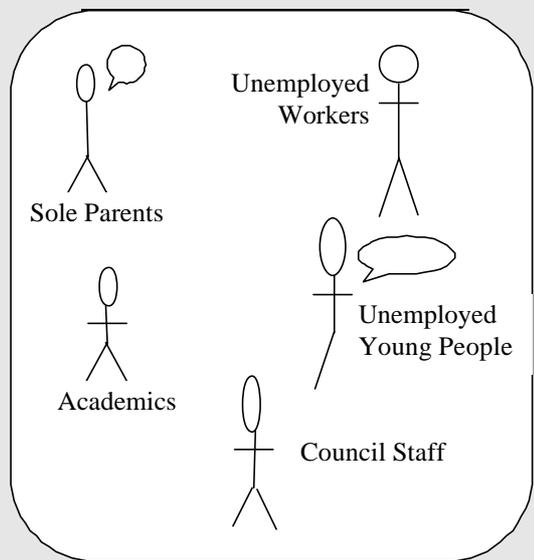
[government
policy-makers
other experts



Sample Only

Example of one diagram about action research

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| What is action research? | creating new realities producing actions process of interaction collaborations conversations between people changing the world |
| Who does it? | unemployed people sole parents academics council staff |
| What are the tools? | listening talking conversations |
| Why is it done? | to make things happen to change things |



Everyone involved is an "expert".
Everyone talks, listens and learns from each other.

Training Community Researchers: Portrayals

Objective

To introduce community researchers to needs-based and asset-based portrayals of the community (see pages 8 to 10).

What aspects of the community are thought about in terms of needs or problems?

What aspects are seen as resources or assets?

Key Activities

1. Working as a team, brainstorm the needs and problems in the community. Write all the needs and problems on a blackboard or whiteboard.
2. Brainstorm all the assets or positive things about the community. Write these on the blackboard or whiteboard.
3. Working as a team sort the needs and assets into categories (e.g. people, physical environment, groups, associations).
4. Use the categories to construct a needs map and assets map.
5. Discuss the differences between the two maps.
6. As a team discuss the work of John Kretzmann and John McKnight (see pages 8 to 10). Chapter One of *Building Communities From the Inside Out* can be downloaded from <http://www.nwu.edu/IPR/publications/buildingblurb.html>. Other materials can be purchased (see <http://www.nwu.edu/IPR/abcd.html>)

Tools and Tips

A needs-based and assets-based portrayal are on pages 50 and 51.

Key points to make during this training activity are:

- The needs and assets maps are two different ways of thinking about and portraying our community.
- This project is based on the assets map. It involves finding out more about the assets in our community and using these assets as the basis for new community projects.

Time

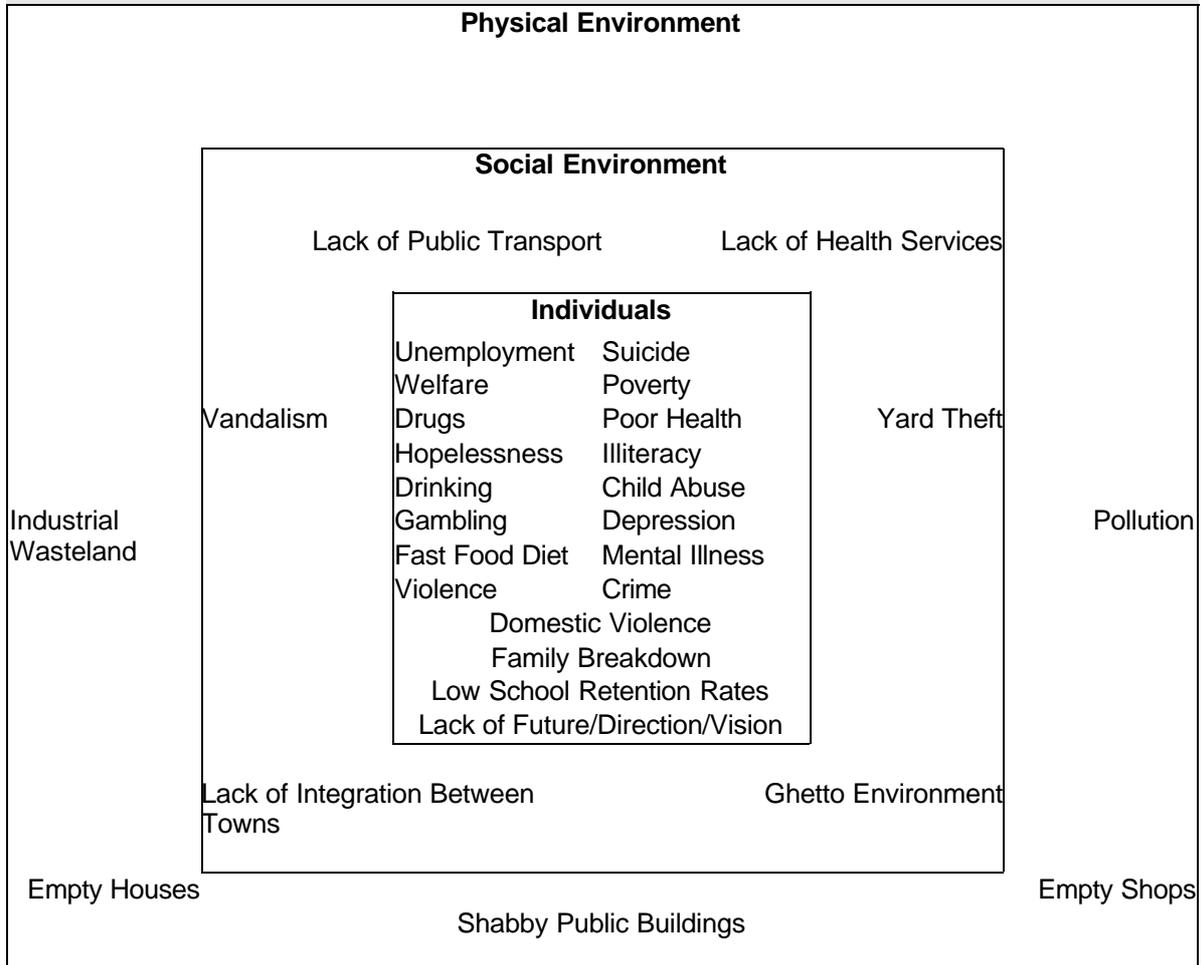
½ day (approximately).

Outcome

Community Researchers with an appreciation of the distinction between needs-based and assets-based portrayals.

Sample Only

Example of a needs based portrayal

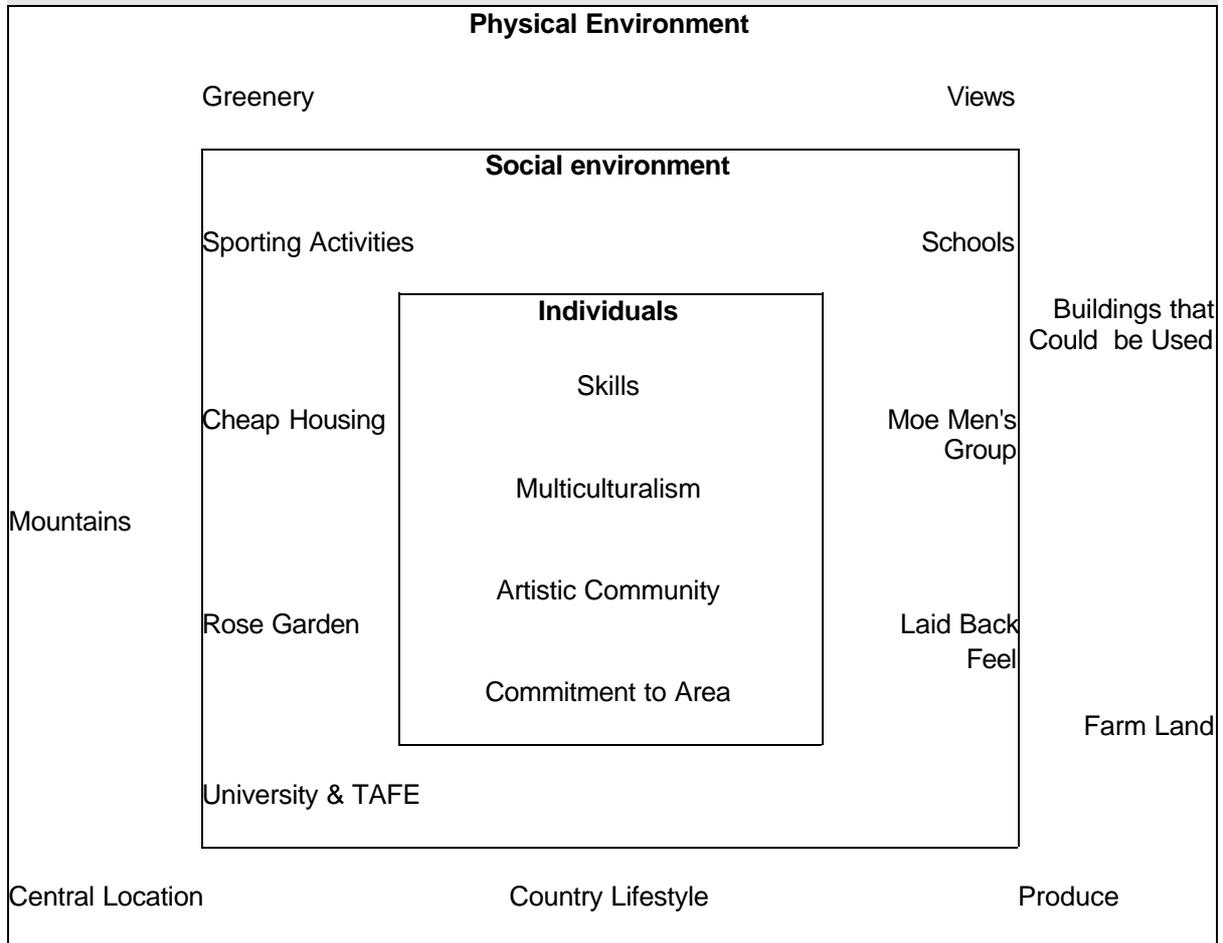


Key discussion points about this needs-based portrayal were:

- The needs and problems of individuals seem to far outnumber other needs and problems.

Sample Only

Example of an assets based portrayal



Key discussion points about this assets based portrayal were:

- The towns and physical environment are seen as the assets.
- Individuals are far more readily thought about in terms of needs and problems than assets or resources.

The project will find out more about the assets and resources of the community, starting with individuals.

Training Community Researchers: Economy

Objective

To introduce community researchers to an understanding of the economy as including unpaid work and non-market transactions (see pages 11 to 14).

Key Activities

1. Introduce and discuss the diagram of the visible and hidden economy (page 53).
2. Each person writes down a list of all the activities they do in a typical day, include all paid and unpaid activities.
3. Working as a team, sort the activities into those that belong in the visible part of the economy and those that belong in the hidden part of the economy.

Tools and Tips

Follow this activity up with visits to alternative economic enterprises in your local area, or have a look at some alternative economic projects on the internet (see pages 20 to 27)

Time

½ day (approximately).

Outcome

Community researchers with an appreciation of the range of economic activities and practices.

Introducing
the hidden
economy.

Forms of Economic Activity

| Type of Business | Type of Labour | Type of Market | |
|--|--|--|---------------------|
| Capitalist Enterprises (e.g. small, medium and large businesses) | Paid Labour | Market Transactions | The Visible Economy |
| Alternative Capitalist Enterprises (e.g. alternative businesses motivated by an environmental ethic) | Alternative Paid Labour (e.g. Work for the Dole, training schemes) | Alternative Market Transaction (e.g. thrift shops, Local Exchange and Trading Systems) | |
| Non-Capitalist Enterprises (e.g. self-employed people, not for profit organisations, cooperatives) | Unpaid Labour (e.g. housework, gardening, helping out friends or family) | Non-Market Transaction (e.g. exchanges with neighbours, friends or family) | |

Source: Cameron, Jenny & Gibson, Katherine, 2001, Regional communities reinvent economy, in Dibden, J; Fletcher, M.; and Cocklin C. (eds) *All Change!: Gippsland Perspectives on Regional Australia in Transition*, Monash Publications in Geography and Environmental Science, Melbourne (forthcoming).



SECTION FIVE

WORKING WITH PEOPLE AS THE PRIMARY RESOURCE



WORKING WITH PEOPLE AS THE PRIMARY RESOURCE

Introduction

Once community researchers have been trained the next step is to begin working with marginalised, disadvantaged and isolated people to identify their skills, interests and dreams. This step is the foundation for generating ideas for community initiatives and then supporting groups of people to turn the ideas into realities.

Marginalised people have skills, interests and dreams that are the basis for new community initiatives

Disadvantaged and marginalised people are usually portrayed as “needy” and “deficient”. Social services are orientated towards identifying and addressing their needs and problems. The strategies outlined in this section work in a very different way. They focus on the skills and abilities, interests and ideas, dreams and aspirations of marginalised people. The strategies position all people as contributors to their communities and capable builders of community initiatives.

Community researchers play a vital role in building relationships with people who are disadvantaged and isolated. With the support of community development workers, social planners, social service providers and so on, community researchers will be able to undertake each of the strategies:

- finding people to work with
- introducing the project
- defining marginalised people as the primary resource
- introducing ideas for community initiatives
- overcoming obstacles
- running mini-workshops.

Finding People to Work With

Objective

To find marginalised and disadvantaged people who might be interested in being involved in the project.

Key Tasks

1. Identify community-based organisations and social service agencies who are likely to have contact with the kinds of people that are the focus of your projects.
2. Approach the coordinators of the organisations and agencies to see if they are willing for community researchers to talk with groups.
3. Organise a time to meet with the groups.

Tools and Tips

Community organisations and agencies to approach include:

- Neighbourhood houses
- Resource and community centres
- Adult education classes
- Literacy and numeracy classes
- Work for the Dole projects
- Support groups and lifeskills groups
- Health services

Ask the coordinators of organisations and agencies for their ideas about the best way to approach the groups they deal with.

Time

1-2 months (approximately)

Outcome

- Appointments to meet with groups and discuss the project.

Build connections with community organisations and agencies

Introducing the Project

Objective

To meet with people who have been marginalised and disadvantaged to introduce the project and discuss their potential involvement.

Key Tasks

1. Meet with groups.
2. Introduce the project.
3. Discuss their potential involvement.

Tools and Tips

An example of the material used by community researchers to introduce one Community Partnering project can be found on pages 60 to 61.

An excellent way to first get a group's attention is to use photo-essays that depict everyday life in your community from the perspective of disadvantaged groups (see pages 62 to 65).

At first, making presentations can be difficult. Have a look at the reflections from community researchers on what it was like for them and how they dealt with some of the barriers they encountered (page 66).

After community researchers have met with a few groups have a discussion with the support staff about the strategies that are working well and problems that are encountered.

Time

1-2 months (approximately)

Outcome

- Agreement from groups that they are interested in meeting again with the community researchers.

Initially some people may not be interested. Don't worry. Use the project team to discuss what to do

Sample Only

MATERIAL AND IDEAS TO DRAW ON WHEN INTRODUCING THE PROJECT

1. Perceptions of our Community

- Media reporting represents our community in a very negative light.
- Lots of people (especially those from outside) have very negative perceptions of our community.

2. The ½ Empty Glass

- This negative approach is to see our community as being like a half-empty glass.
- It is to focus on all the things that are wrong, all the problems, needs and deficiencies that people have (see also the photo-essays on pages 62 to 64).
- This suggests that you have to fill the glass up, that you need to get things from outside and pour them into the glass to make it full. These things might be businesses, or investment or experts.

3. The ½ Full Glass

- In this project, we see our community as being like a half-full glass.
- We acknowledge that there are problems, but there are also lots of very positive things and we want to focus on these.
- We believe that the most important resource in our community is the people who live here and their skills, talents and ideas.
- In this project, we are particularly interested in the skills and ideas of people who are often seen as having lots of problems, needs, and deficiencies—people like sole parents, unemployed young people and retrenched workers.

Q. What is the primary resource of our community?

or What makes the glass half full?

A. People - their skills, talents, gifts, ideas and interests.

Other elements of our community are also important.

- Q. What are the secondary resources of our community?
- or What are some of the other things in the half-full glass?
- A. Community groups and associations
Small, medium and large businesses
Institutions (like the local councils, schools)
Physical infrastructure (like unused buildings, vacant land)

4. The aims of the project

- In this project, we want to build on the resources in the half-full glass.
- We want to build on the skills, talents, gifts, ideas and interests of people in our community, and in particular the skills, talents, gifts, ideas and interests of those who are disadvantaged like unemployed young people, sole parents and retrenched workers.

5. How do we build on the resources in our community?

- By bringing people together to learn about their skills, talents, gifts, ideas and interests. We use a Portrait of Gifts as one way of doing this (see pages 68 to 69).
- By linking people who have common interests and shared goals.
- By drawing on existing community groups, institutions and businesses to support new projects .
- By supporting groups to turn their ideas into realities.

6. What are some examples of outcomes?

- Young people at risk of homelessness are being trained in woodworking skills by retired workers.
- Unemployed and retired workers establish a community garden on unused land and donate produce to local community groups.
- A group of single parents start a baby-sitting club that develops into a cooperative providing child care services and home-cooked meals to busy employed people.
- Retrenched workers run a community tool library that lends tools and provides advice on home and furniture repairs to people on low-incomes.

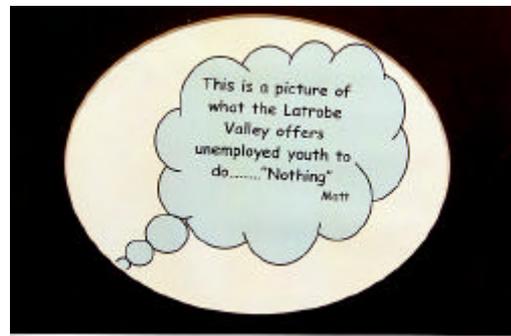
USING PHOTO-ESSAYS

Photo-essays are a terrific way to get people's attention and to depict what life is like for those who are marginalised, disadvantaged and isolated. They can include:

- Headlines from newspapers



- Statements from people



- Photos

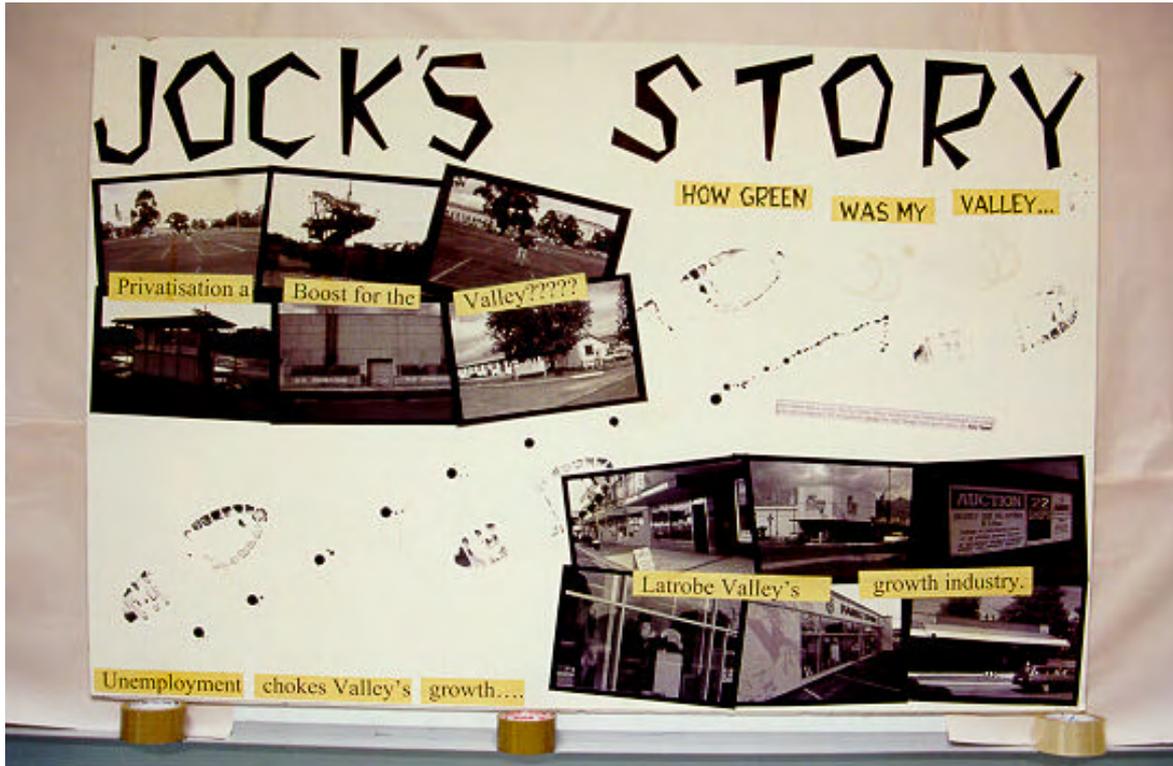


Making photo-essays is a fun way for community researchers to get to know each other and work cooperatively. Community researchers can also invite their friends and family to help make the photo-essays.

Make sure you ask for permission when you take people's photos. Let people know why you are taking their photo, and how and where it will be used.

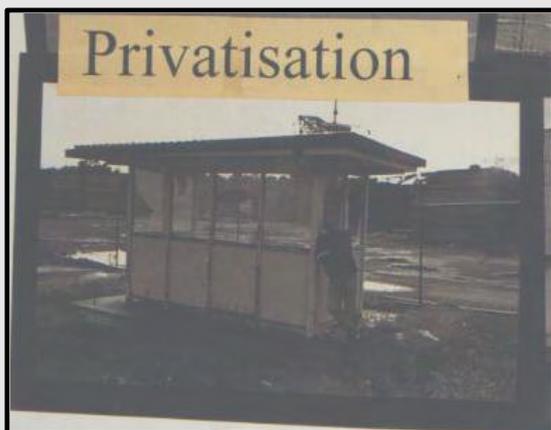
If you take close-ups of businesses or institutions you will also need to get permission.

Keep a record of all permissions.



“Jock’s Story” was put together by unemployed workers from the State Electricity Commission in the Latrobe Valley. It shows derelict industrial buildings, abandoned mining equipment, empty carparks and vandalised bus shelters.

From the point of view of Jock and his mates, downsizing and privatisation of the power industry has produced a boom in thrift shops, pawn brokers and vacant stores, while the workers have been thrown onto the “scrap heap”. The photo-essay taps into the feelings of abandonment, loss and nostalgia for the past felt by many across the Latrobe Valley.



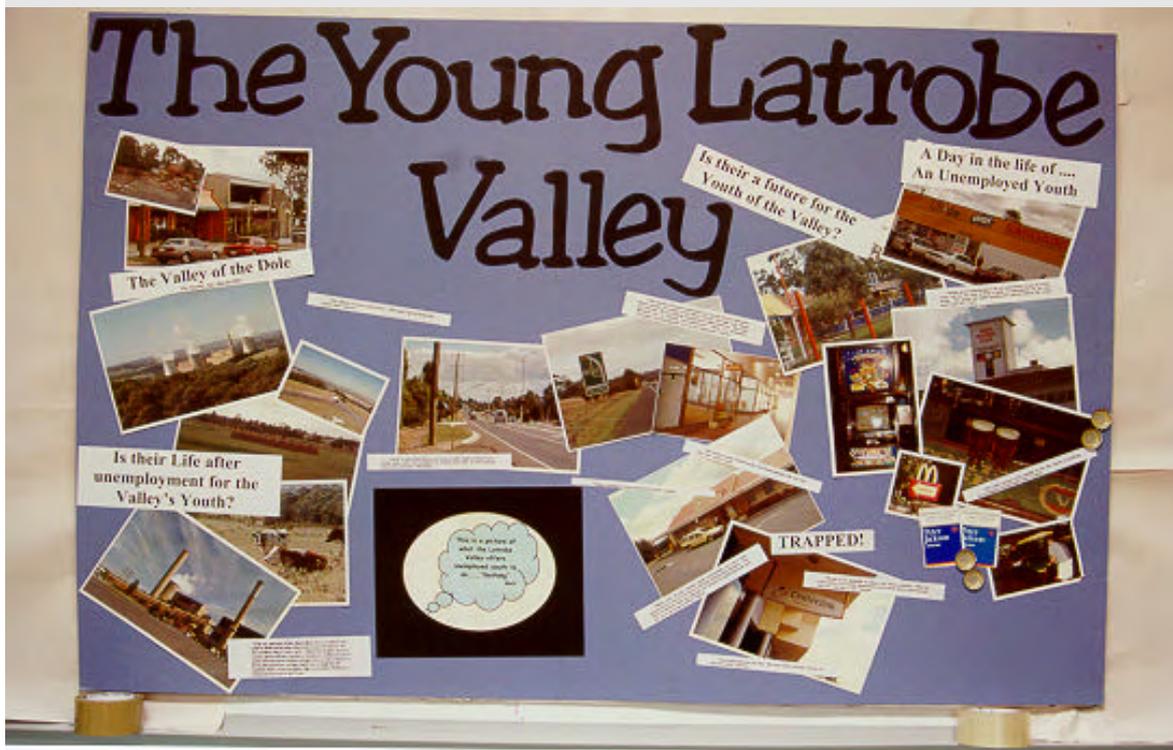
“Jock’s Story” immediately created a connection between the community researchers and the groups they were talking with.

It is an excellent illustration of a “needs map” giving the community researchers a starting point for talking about the difference between focusing on needs rather than assets.

“The Young Latrobe Valley” illustrates life in the Latrobe Valley from the perspective of young unemployed people. It highlights everyday events such as drinking, smoking, playing pool, going to the pub, visiting Centrelink and going to court.

Like “Jock’s Story” there is a powerful sense of abandonment, with the young people depicting their lives in terms of no jobs, no opportunities and no future.

This photo-essay is also an excellent example of a “needs map”.



COMMUNITY RESEARCHERS REFLECT . . .

. . . on making those first presentations to groups.

Yvonne: I have this vision of me being pushed out on a stage and Jenny's foot is sort of pushing me out there. And I'm saying "I can't do this". And then having to just do it . . . I felt I could pick it up ok; it was the articulating it to other people that I wasn't sure about, and what their response was going to be. I was worried if they thought I was an idiot, you know "What are you raving on about?". So I'd be a little bit hesitant about talking. And that was an issue standing up in a class and talking about something that I wasn't sure how it would go across and what if it was rejected and what if people sat there thinking "What is this woman on about?". That was hellish that that might occur.

Kathie: And there were some difficult moments in those early talks and presentations, thinking that people weren't interested or . . .

Yvonne: Yeah. Waiting for the response. Although once I got going it was ok. Even getting a negative response gives you something to work with .

. . . on the barriers they encountered.

Leanne: I think there are a lot of people that are angry. I can remember when Yvonne first took me out to some of the groups and we would get the politics thrown at us. I think a lot of the anger that people have is political, politically directed, especially "There's no work in the Valley. Everything goes to the City". And there were constantly these comments that everything goes to Traralgon. There was all that. So there is definitely anger there.

Kathie: And you actually felt it directed to you.

Leanne: Yeah, it was. It was towards us . . . and even towards their local council, their local government . . . and towards the university: "Here's someone who's got maybe the power or the intellect to do something but they're not doing anything about it. All you want to do is research us. We know these are what the problems are. We're sick and tired of people telling us we're like this". Things like that.

Kathie: So how have you overcome that issue?

Leanne: In the end, Yvonne would say "Don't present yourself that you come from Monash". She would present herself as a single parent, and I would present myself as an unemployed person, and automatically you would have that rapport with someone, because you're on the level that they're on. It would be until you'd say that the project is sponsored by Monash University and the Latrobe Shire, that's when you'd get the political stuff. But the political stuff tended to be male driven. The women really took to the project and the understanding of it really well, they could see that it was really tangible. Whereas the men tended to put up the obstacles.

Turning the
“needs” map into
an “assets” map
by using a
Portrait of Gifts

Defining People who are Marginalised as a Resource

Objective

To build up a knowledge of the marginalised and disadvantaged as skilful and capable, with ideas, dreams and aspirations that might be the basis for new community initiatives.

Key Tasks

1. Meet with people and groups to complete a Portrait of Gifts (see pages 68 to 69 and Appendix 2).
2. Collate the “results” of the Portrait of Gifts from the different groups (see pages 68 to 69 and Appendix 2).
3. Meet with people and groups and discuss the “findings”.

Tips

An excellent way of building relationships and giving people the opportunity to find out more about each other is for people to work together to complete a collective Portrait of Gifts.

The Portrait of Gifts does not have to be a comprehensive “survey” of a large number of people. Its primary use is as a tool to show people how skilled and capable they are. Its secondary use is to demonstrate to others the range of skills, interests and ideas in the community.

Once you have recorded the results give people or groups their Portrait of Gifts to keep.

Time

2-3 months (approximately)

Outcome

- A portrayal of people as the primary community asset and resource.



PORTRAIT OF GIFTS

What is a Portrait of Gifts?

- A Portrait of Gifts is a tool for valuing the everyday skills that people use at work, home and in other situations, such as volunteer and community groups. It can be completed by people working alone or it can be the basis for a conversation and discussion with a community researcher.
- The Portrait of Gifts might seem like a survey, but is it best thought of as a strategy for initiating contact with people and inviting them to participate in a Community Partnering project.
- The Asset-Based Community Development Institute at Northwestern University has produced a resource book with different examples of Portrait of Gifts (or Capacity Inventories). See:
Kretzmann, John, McKnight, John & Sheehan, GERALYN (with Mike Green & Deborah Puntenney) (1997) *A Guide to Capacity Inventories: Mobilizing the Community Skills of Local Residents*, The Asset-Based Community Development Institute, Institute for Policy Research, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois (Available from ACTA Publications, 4848 N. Clark Street, Chicago, Illinois, 60640, 773-271-1030, acta@one.org, see also <http://www.nwu.edu/IPR/abcd.html>).
- In the Latrobe Valley Community Partnering project, the community researchers followed the example of the Greyrock Commons Co-Housing Community (discussed on pages 83 and 91 in the resource book, above) and reported on the results of the Portrait of Gifts in terms of people's gifts—gifts of the head (what people know), gifts of the hand (what people can do), and gifts of the heart (things people care about) (see page 70).

What Issues Should be Considered?

- Will you be using the information in aggregate form or do you want to be able to identify individuals? Will people be asked for their names?
- Some communities use the Portrait of Gifts as the basis for establishing learning exchanges. Do you want to use Portraits for this purpose? (If so, you will need people to fill in individual forms and you will need to know their names).
- Can groups fill in one form together or do you want each individual to fill in their own?
- How will you be reporting the findings from your Portrait of Gifts?
- How many Portraits will be completed? Do you need to ask all residents in a neighbourhood to complete a Portrait of Gifts, or do you only need to approach the people you want to start building relationships with. In the Latrobe Valley Community

Partnering project, just over 50 Portraits were completed by people involved in Numeracy and Literary classes, Neighbourhood House courses, and Work for the Dole programs.

- How will you be reporting the findings from your Portrait of Gifts?

*It is very easy to ask many more questions than you actually need to.
Try to gather only information that you are fairly certain you will use.*

*Testing a draft Portrait of Gifts on a small number of people
is an excellent way of refining questions.*

*A complete portrait of gifts and brochure reporting on the
results is included in Appendix 2*

Sample Portrait of Gifts

The following two extracts are taken from a Portrait of Gifts.

| Education and School Activities | | Tick |
|---------------------------------|--|------|
| 1. | Organising activities for children or teenagers | |
| 2. | Reading or story telling to children; Listening to a child read aloud. | |
| 3. | Helping in a class room. | |
| 4. | Providing some kind of other support for the school, eg: fund raising, school canteen or tuck shop (please specify): | |
| 5. | Sharing computer skills with others. | |
| 6. | Sharing other skills with or tutoring an individual or group (please specify): | |

Do you have any skills you would like to learn?

Are there any skills you would like to share?

The following extract is from a brochure that reports on the results of the questions above. The complete portrait and brochure are included in Appendix 2.

Gifts of the Head

- nearly ¾ of the people who filled in a Portrait of Gifts listen to children reading aloud.
- nearly ½ have shared computer skills with someone else.
- some skills people would like to learn are:

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| furniture restoration | internet skills |
| sewing | tv and computer repair |
| first aid | organisational skills |
| creative writing | leadership skills |
- some skills people would like to share with others are:

| | |
|-------------|------------------------|
| woodworking | sewing and dressmaking |
| photography | arc welding |
| basketball | tai chi |



The Latrobe Valley - A Learning Community

Introducing Ideas for Community Initiatives

Objective

To introduce people to different types of community initiatives that could build on the skills, interests and ideas identified in the Portrait of Gifts.

Inspiration can be gained by looking at other community initiatives

Key Tasks

1. Gather examples of community initiatives, such as cooperatives, not-for-profit incorporated associations and volunteer projects.
2. Meet with people and groups to discuss the examples of community initiatives. This discussion could happen when you talk about the results of the Portrait of Gifts.

Tools and Tips

An extract from a brochure about different community initiatives is included on page 72. The full brochure is in Appendix 3.

The internet has lots of examples about community projects (see pages 14, 20 to 27).

Find out about initiatives in the local area so you can talk to groups about them and even take groups to visit them.

Make sure you include initiatives that are relevant to the skills, ideas and interests identified in the Portraits of Gifts.

Time

1-2 months (approximately)

Outcome

- People begin to think about and talk about community initiatives that could be developed by building on their abilities, interests and ideas.

The following extract comes from a brochure about different types of initiatives that local communities have developed in response to issues like unemployment, loss of social services and so on. The initiatives build on the skills, interests, and aspirations of local communities. The full brochure is included in Appendix 3.

Co-operative Responses . . .



Families are assisted by a local community group and businesses to build large backyard fishtanks. Sun-fish are bred for home consumption or market sale. A group of families form their own co-operative as a way of increasing market production and generating employment.

A local community has high levels of poverty and few employment opportunities.

The Mirboo North Newspaper Co-operative is formed. Over 50 people contribute each week to the publication of the paper. With the closure of the last bank branch a co-operative has formed to provide financial services in conjunction with Bendigo Bank.



A local newspaper in Gippsland is threatened with closure.

Overcoming Obstacles

Objective

To prepare strategies for overcoming the obstacles that people might put in the way of becoming involved in building community initiatives.

Key Tasks

1. Based on the discussions to date, talk about the obstacles that people might put forward. Don't forget to include the obstacles that are important to you.
2. Prepare strategies and techniques for overcoming obstacles.

Tools and Tips

There are at least three way of addressing obstacles:

1. Prepare specific responses or answers, such as those on page 74. When you are gathering examples of community initiatives see if there is any specific information about how groups have overcome obstacles.
2. Think of obstacles and problems as offering an opportunity for a conversation in which you can explore different points of view. Often people will think of obstacles when they are focusing on problems, needs and deficiencies. What assets and capabilities can you introduce into the conversation? An example of this strategy is on page 75.
3. Use the technique of strategic questioning to assist people in finding their own solutions to problems and obstacles. For more on strategic questioning see page 76.

Develop your strategies before you introduce people and groups to the examples of community initiatives, so you can tackle any obstacles straight away.

Time

1-2 days (approximately)

Outcome

- A "tool-box" of techniques and strategies for dealing with obstacles.

Obstacles are to be expected

Think through ways of helping people overcome their own and others' obstacles

Sample Only

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES THROUGH SPECIFIC RESPONSES

OBSTACLE 1: What's in it for me? What will I get out of it? Why should I bother to be involved?

This project provides opportunities for you:

- to contribute your skills and ideas to the community.
- to become involved with other people in projects that interest you.
- to learn new skills and share your skills with other people.

For example:

- unemployed workers with painting and building skills have helped the Moe Neighbourhood House with building and repair work.
- a young unemployed man has found that he shares an interest with an older retired woman, and that it might be possible for them to work on a project together.

OBSTACLE 2: Where's the money going to come from? Who's going to give support?

There are many different ways for ideas to be turned into real projects:

- often projects don't need money at all to get started, but just need people who are prepared to contribute their time.
- there are many different groups and organisations (like churches and businesses) who are interested in contributing in a variety of ways. For example, a local church has land, housing units and a large kitchen that it wants groups to use.
- sometimes it is best if projects start small and then when they are better established look at getting funding from outside sources.
- this project will help groups find innovative ways of getting the resources they need.

OBSTACLE 3: What do you want me to do? What to I have to do?

You can be involved by:

- coming along to a small event like a pizza making and meeting other people who might share similar interests.
- coming along to a workshop to find out about projects that other people have worked on, share your ideas with other people, and meet with people who have resources they want to contribute.

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES THROUGH CONVERSATIONS

The following conversation took place when a community researcher was talking with a group about the possibilities of people working together on community initiatives. The conversation starts with an unemployed worker putting forward obstacles:

One particular gentleman was quite obviously very frustrated and pessimistic. He was quite vocal and kept presenting me with stumbling blocks. “Look what they have done?” “What are they going to do about it?” “What’s the use?” “No-one is going to be bothered.” “People will want to be paid”.

I tried to address his issues without being confrontational. I tried to be sympathetic and understanding. We talked a bit about the problems in our community. I agreed with what he had to say It was evident that we had to almost exhaust that line of thinking before moving on.

At this point in the conversation the focus is on the problems in the community. So the community researcher uses the strategy of introducing the unemployed worker’s skills and interests into the conversation (which she knows about because the group worked on a Portrait of Gifts). This produces a very different tone and the unemployed worker can begin to see the possibilities rather than obstacles:

He is very good with his hands and knows a bit about cars. I asked, hypothetically, if there were a group of single parents interested in learning about car maintenance, and if I could arrange a venue and possible tools, would he be interested in sharing his skills and knowledge? “Yeah. I’d do that no worries” he said. I asked him would he expect to be paid for his time. “No. I wouldn’t do it for money” he replied. I asked “So do you think you’d get anything out of it yourself?” “Yeah. I suppose I’d get some satisfaction out of it cause I like to help people like yourself”. So I really tried to turn it around and have him answer or resolve his own questions and issues.

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES THROUGH STRATEGIC QUESTIONS

Strategic questioning is a technique that is extremely useful to overcome obstacles. It helps shift the focus onto possibilities and openings rather than blockages and barriers. It is a way of letting people find their own answers to the issues that are important to them.

Fran Peavey has written about strategic questioning. She points out that strategic questions avoid asking “Why”; and avoid questions that only have a “Yes” or “No” answer. Drawing on her work we can develop some strategic questions that could be used to respond to the earlier obstacles:

**OBSTACLE 1: What’s in it for me? / What will I get out of it? /
Why should I bother to be involved?**

- What would you like to get out of the project?
- What issues would you like to address through a community project?
- What keeps you from getting involved?
- How do you feel about getting involved?

**OBSTACLE 2: Where’s the money going to come from? /
Who’s going to give support?**

- What sort of support do you think community initiatives might need?
- How could we get some support?
- What can you do?
- What would it take to get you involved?
- Who else could we get involved?

OBSTACLE 3: What do you want me to do? / What do I have to do?

- What would you like to do?
- What can you offer?
- What would you be interested in doing?
- How would you like to be involved?

Fran Peavey also gives wonderful examples of strategic questions that might be helpful to use in a community project, for example:

- What would it take for you to change on this issue?
- How would you like it to be?

Peavey, Fran, 1997, ‘Strategic questioning: an approach to creating personal and social change: a web resource’, edited by Vivian Hutchinson, available online at: <http://www.jobsletter.org.nz/vivian/stratq97.htm>

Running Mini-Workshops

Objective

To bring people who are marginalised, disadvantaged and isolated together to meet with others and begin exploring ideas for community initiatives.

Key Tasks

1. Based on what you know about the people and groups you've been working with, identify some that might have overlapping interests.
2. Invite the people and groups to lunch or afternoon (or morning) tea where they will have to work together preparing the food (pizza-making or scone-baking are good interactive activities).
3. Plan a small workshop to follow the food preparation and eating. The workshop should give people a chance to talk about their ideas and to find out about other people's interests.
4. Run your food-based event and mini-workshop.

Tools and Tips

A sample program for a mini-workshop is provided in Appendix 4.

Time

1-2 months (approximately)

Outcome

- Some initial ideas about community initiatives that people might be interested in working on.

Getting people to prepare food together is an excellent way of breaking down barriers and building connections. Consider incorporating food-based activities with any other strategy discussed in this resource kit. See also page 100 for a discussion of the importance of informal events.

Bringing people together to explore ideas for community initiatives





SECTION SIX

IDENTIFYING SECONDARY RESOURCES



IDENTIFYING SECONDARY RESOURCES

Introduction

Building a knowledge of resources that can support community initiatives

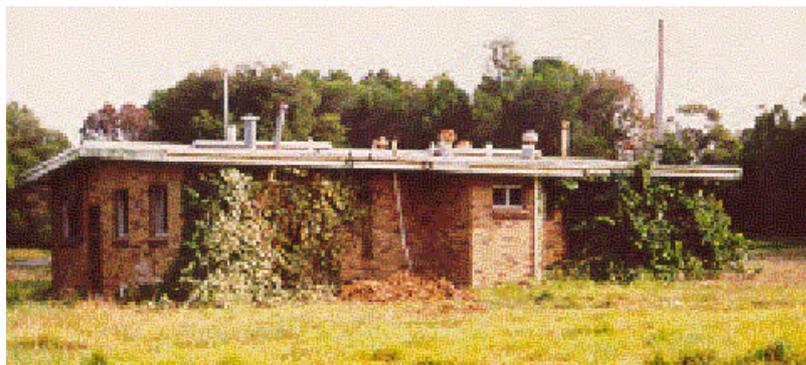
The third step in a Community Partnering project is to identify secondary community resources such as:

- Community associations
- Local institutions
- Businesses; and
- Physical resources.

This step augments the second, which has positioned people who are marginalised, disadvantaged and isolated as the primary resources of any community.

The aim of the third step is to build up a knowledge of the secondary resources that could contribute to and support the development of community initiatives.

The third step can be undertaken at the same time as the second, with community researchers and other members of the project team involved in the tasks.



Community Associations and Local Institutions

Objective

To identify and build relationships with a range of community associations and local institutions.

Key Tasks

1. Identify community associations that may be interested in supporting community initiatives, such as neighbourhood houses, residents' groups, sports clubs, hobby and art groups, and service clubs.
2. Identify local institutions that may be interested in contributing such as churches, schools, TAFE colleges and universities, government departments and agencies.
3. Contact the associations and institutions to let them know about the project and to explore potential connections.

Tools and Tips

The community researchers will be in contact with community associations and local institutions through their work with people who are marginalised. Build on these connections.

Many local Councils produce directories of community groups, hobby groups, sports clubs, schools and so on.

A good way to keep in touch with community associations and local institutions is to make sure they receive regular updates on the project.

Community groups are often looking for speakers; offer to talk about the project.

Time

6 months (approximately).

Outcome

Good working relationships with community associations and local institutions.

Identifying who can support community initiatives

Businesses

Objective

To identify ways in which businesses might be able to contribute to community initiatives.

Key Tasks

1. Identify a range of small, medium and large businesses, or business groups (like the Chamber of Commerce).
2. Make a time to talk with the managers or owners.
3. Interview managers or owners about the ways businesses currently contribute to the community, and potential avenues for contributing.
4. Collate some of the examples of business contributions.

Tools and Tips

This does not have to be a comprehensive survey of all businesses. The idea is to assemble some examples of business contributions and provide some ideas for resourcing community initiatives.

An example of the topics to cover in an interview with business managers or owners is included on page 84. The outcome of one interview is on page 85.

Time

2 months (approximately).

Outcome

Examples of ways businesses currently or could potentially contribute to community initiatives.

Businesses have potential to contribute to community initiatives

Sample Only

Topics to Cover with Businesses

1. **What are some examples of business practices that make a contribution to the community? These examples may be ones that people are involved in, or they may know of them from the local area or from elsewhere. Practices might include:**
 - Sponsorship of community events (like sporting clubs, art awards, fairs)
 - Donations of equipment, products and materials (e.g. donating products to non-profit groups)
 - Contributions of time and expertise (e.g. legal or financial companies who offer their expertise to non-profit groups; companies who allow staff time off for voluntary work)
 - Community services (e.g. pharmacies who pick up and deliver prescriptions free of charge to pensioners)
 - Education, training and employment initiatives (e.g. developing training programs for young people)
 - Purchasing policies (e.g. purchasing locally produced products and services)
 - Investment policies (e.g. providing low interest loans to local non-profit groups)

2. **How are decisions made about community contributions?**
 - Is there a strategic plan for ‘investing in the community’?
 - Are contributions made to groups that business people have personal ties with?
 - Are they looking to support groups that are likely to become self-sufficient?

3. **What are the benefits for businesses of making community contributions?**
 - Contribution to community well-being.
 - Enhancing company image and good will of communities.
 - Improved employee motivation and commitment.

4. **What are the obstacles to making community contributions?**
 - No coordinating group to manage and direct contributions.
 - Difficulty of deciding between the many different groups that make requests.

The following are useful references about business contributions:

America, Richard, 1995, *Philanthropy and Economic Development*, Greenwood Press, Connecticut.

Christie, Ian; Carley, Michael; and Fogarty, Michael, 1991, *Profitable Partnerships: A Report on Business Investment in the Community*, Policy Studies Institute, London.

Summary of Discussion with Local Restaurateur

1. The contribution of the restaurateur to the community:

- Sponsorship of the local eisteddfod, carols-by-candlelight and other performing arts events that have broad appeal.
- Sponsorship of community health initiatives.
- Contributions of food to the Salvation Army.
- Providing food scraps to a local worm farm that runs on ecological principles.
- Specifically employing and training young people who have a passion for cooking (in one case this involved financially helping a young person at risk of homelessness to find secure housing).
- Policy of purchasing and showcasing local and seasonal produce.
- Policy of displaying the work of local artists and artisans.

1a. Other contributions that the restaurateur would be interested in making:

- Opening up the restaurant kitchen and offering training to young single mothers in food preparation and budgeting.

2. How decisions are made about community contributions:

- The restaurateur has an interest in the performing arts, healthy living, and the welfare of young people, and specifically supports projects that will benefit these groups and causes.
- The restaurateur also supports community projects that are unlikely to be supported by other businesses.

3. The benefits of making these community contributions:

- Contributes to the overall quality of life in the community.
- Provides support for the groups and causes the restaurateur values.

4. What are the obstacles to making community contributions?

- Lack of an efficient way of making contact with groups.

Physical Resources

Objective

To identify unused or underused physical resources that could be used for community initiatives.

Key Tasks

1. Find some large and easy to read maps of the area.
2. Identify on the maps examples of unused or underused physical resources that could potentially be used for community initiatives. Resources might include industrial and commercial buildings, housing, halls and other public buildings, parks and bushland.

Unused physical resources can support community initiatives

Tools and Tips

This does not have to be a comprehensive survey of all physical resources in the community. The idea is to assemble examples of resources that could be used for community initiatives.

Walking around an area is an excellent way of finding out more about unused or underused resources. It also provides opportunities to talk with local residents about the project, and to find out what they know about physical resources in their neighbourhood.

Time

2 months (approximately).

Outcome

Examples of unused or underused physical resources that could be used for community initiatives (see page 87).



New Uses for Physical Resources in the Latrobe Valley

Unused or Underused Resource

New Use

| | | |
|---|--------|--|
| Former Turnaround for Steam Locomotives | —————> | The Roundhouse Arts Centre |
| Old Butter Factory | —————> | Artists Resource Collective |
| Showground Buildings | —————> | WorkFocus (employment and training initiative) |



| | | |
|-----------------------------|--------|--|
| Former Pre-School Buildings | —————> | Santa’s Workshop and Creative Reuse Centre |
| Vacant Shops | —————> | Display Space for Santa’s Workshop |
| Former Caravan Park | —————> | Community Garden |
| Old Industrial Premises | —————> | Community Workshed |



SECTION SEVEN

GENERATING IDEAS FOR COMMUNITY INITIATIVES



GENERATING IDEAS FOR COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

Introduction

The fourth step in a Community Partnering project is to generate ideas for community initiatives.

The strategy is to bring people who are marginalised, together for a community workshop. There are three main elements to the community workshop:

1. *Establishing common ground and providing background material.*

This involves presenting information gathered throughout the project about:

- people's skills, abilities, ideas and interests (i.e. people as the primary resource)
 - businesses, community associations, institutions and physical resources (i.e. the secondary resources)
 - examples of other community initiatives.
- This background material provides a stimulus for brainstorming ideas for community initiatives.

2. *Brainstorming ideas for community initiatives.*

This involves breaking into small groups of between six and eight people, with a facilitator, to brainstorm ideas.

3. *Discussing the next step.*

This involves breaking into groups who are interested in common ideas to discuss the next step. Potential outcomes of the discussion might be:

- a future workshop to find out more about other projects based on the idea
- the group meets again to keep working on the idea
- agreement that no-one in the group wants to pursue the idea any further for the moment.



Community Workshop

Objective

To bring marginalised people and others together to generate ideas for community initiatives.

Key Tasks

1. Organise venue, catering, program and facilitators.
2. Invite people that community researchers have worked with.
3. Advertise widely.
4. Hold the workshop.
5. Follow-up with press releases and project update.

Tools and Tips

People respond best to a face-to-face invitation. Community researchers should concentrate on inviting the people they have had contact with throughout the project.

Advertising strategies can include:

- distributing flyers to community groups
- displaying flyers in shops, Centrelink, health centres, churches etc.
- letterbox drop of flyers
- press releases and radio interviews
- word-of-mouth invitations.

An example of a flyer is on page 93, and a sample workshop program is on page 94.

A detailed program and instructions for workshop facilitators is included in Appendix 5; and a project update produced after a workshop and widely distributed is in Appendix 6.

Time

1-2 months (approximately).

Outcomes

An “ideas bank” (see pages 95 to 96).

An indication of the community initiatives that people are specifically interested in working on; and an indication of what the next step might be.

Space and time to generate ideas for community initiatives



Sample Only

COMMUNITY PARTNERING

“IDEAS” WORKSHOP

Share your ideas for community projects for the Latrobe Valley.

Wednesday, 6 October, 10am-3pm
Kernot Hall, Old Princes Highway, Morwell

Lunch provided.
Transport available, ring 5136 9270.

RSVP (for lunch numbers) 5136 9270.

For more information, contact Yvonne Joyce,
Stephen Lister, or Leanne Vella, 5136 9270.

Community Partnering is funded by La Trobe Shire Council, Monash University, and Dept of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (Australian Research Council), with support from Australian Paper and Loy Yang Power.

Sample Only

Welcome to the “IDEAS” WORKSHOP

WEDNESDAY, 6 OCTOBER, 1999, 10am - 3pm

| | |
|---------|------------------------------------|
| 10.00am | Introduction |
| 10.15am | The Assets of the Latrobe Valley |
| 10.45am | Examples of Community Projects |
| 11.00am | Introduction to Workshop One |
| | 11.15am MORNING TEA |
| 11.45am | Workshop One - Brainstorm of Ideas |
| | 12.30pm LUNCH |
| 1.30pm | Introduction to Workshop Two |
| 2.00pm | Workshop Two – The Next Step |
| 2.45pm | Summary |

For more information contact 5136 9270

Community Partnering is funded by La Trobe Shire Council, Monash University, and Dept of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (Australian Research Council), with support from Australian Paper and Loy Yang Power.



Sample Only

Community Ideas Bank

Ideas for community projects generated through one “Ideas Workshop”.

Making and Exchanging

- Fixing old bikes and making them roadworthy
- Tool recycling and lending library
- Making wooden furniture without power tools (bodging)
- Sharing boat building skills
- Making bush furniture
- Lawn mowing for elderly people
- Fixing broken furniture and furniture exchange
- Half-used paint bank and exchange
- Dress pattern exchange
- Fibre and fabric bank
- Sharing garden tools
- Book binding
- Learning exchange that utilizes ‘grey power’
- Handyman assistance for the aged
- Inventors resource centre
- Community wood workshop
- Inventory of skills that could be offered by people with time on their hands

Cultural Projects

- Internet café for youth in small towns
- Community film making workshop
- Photographic developing room
- Youth newspaper
- Matching social dancers with learners
- Music festivals
- Music workshops
- Communal cooking kitchen
- SEC recognition day
- Community bush dances
- Documenting family histories, personal stories
- Music jam sessions

Sheet music and or musical instrument exchange
Book reading
Matching people who play musical instruments with those who want to start to learn to play music
Street parties
Collector's directory
Art and beautification projects
Christmas street decorations
Murals and painting spaces
Designing trees
Family art celebrations between Christmas and New Year

Environmental Projects

Fixing gardens for elderly or others in need of assistance
Wetland management
Cleaning up waterways for children's play
Revegetation projects
Backyard seed banks for native plants
Water recycling off roofs
Backyard tank yabbie and fish farming
Recycling demolition materials
Public bushland care
Garden produce exchange
Community chook yard
Community gardens
Teaching young people bush appreciation
Collection point for sawdust and manure for community composting
Register of public open space that could be used for community projects
Recycling centre for clean industrial waste to be used by pre-schools, primary schools etc. for art activities

Ideas for Specific Workshops

How to set up a community garden
Cooperatives—how do they work?
How to set up a community toolshed
Sleep workshop
Communication and networking workshop
Management options for community projects



SECTION EIGHT

TURNING IDEAS INTO REALITY



TURNING IDEAS INTO REALITY

Introduction

The final step in a Community Partnering project is to help groups turn ideas for community initiatives into tangible outcomes.

Following the community workshops to generate ideas, people with common interests will initially need assistance to form as a group and refine their ideas. Further down the track the groups that form will require support with practical organisational and management matters (ranging from advice about insurance and legal issues, to assistance with funding grant applications, to facilitating strategic planning sessions).

The overall goal is to create initiatives that are primarily managed and run by people who have been marginalised and disadvantaged by social and economic changes. Remember that those who are marginalised are most often portrayed in terms of needs and problems, and that the emphasis is usually on servicing these needs (see pages 8 to 10). The initiatives that develop out of a Community Partnering process may be one of the few opportunities for marginalised people to work together and contribute to their communities.

There are no hard and fast rules about how ideas and groups should be supported. Each initiative will develop along its own pathway.

This section of the resource kit therefore provides a summary of different strategies for turning ideas into reality. It starts with strategies for facilitating the formation of groups and refining ideas. These include:

- “How To” Workshops

- Field Trips
- Working Groups
- Public Meetings
- Demonstration Projects

It then provides an overview of the different types of organisational and management support that groups may require once they have formed.

The section ends with case studies of five community initiatives developed through the Latrobe City and Monash University Community Partnering project and the strategies employed to support the development of each.



Perhaps more important than any of the strategies outlined in this section are the informal get-togethers and conversations that build connections and friendships.

Each of the more formal strategies outlined in this section needs to be punctuated by events such as:

- bbqs and picnics
- get-togethers at the local pub
- chats on the telephone
- celebrations of landmark events (like birthdays, Christmas or the handing over of a funding cheque)
- an evening at the bowling alley
- informal cups of coffee
- an afternoon of pizza-making or scone-baking
- a fishing trip to a local spot.

See also page 77 for a discussion of using food-based activities.

“How To” Workshops

Overview

“How To” workshops provide a forum for people to explore what is entailed in turning an idea into a reality.

Exploring what is involved in turning an idea into reality

When to use them

“How To” workshops are appropriate:

- when people have an idea but want to know more about what might be involved before proceeding
- when people have a general idea and need to turn their attention to more specific details
- when lots of different people have a similar area of interest and all the ideas need to be “on the table”.

Activities

“How to” workshops can include:

- speakers from comparable community projects who discuss the development of their projects
- films or videos about other projects
- workshop activities where people begin to focus on key issues and specific details.

A program for a “How To” workshops is on page 102.

Follow-Up

“How To” workshops can be followed up in several ways, including:

- field trips to find out more about other projects (see page 103)
- formation of a smaller working group to address issues and report back to the larger group (see page 105)
- a more formal public meeting to agree on a course of action (see page 106).



Sample Only

“HOW TO” WORKSHOP

FRIDAY, 8 OCTOBER, 1999

10am – 1.30pm

10.00am Introduction to Community Gardens

10.15am Presentation, Gil Freeman,
Founding Member, CERES

See pages 20 to 21

10.45am Introduction to Workshop

11.00am Workshop- “Let’s Talk Spuds & Daisies”

- * land
- * tools, equipment
- * fencing, shed
- * plots - individual/communal
- * composting, chemicals, water strategies
- * decision-making structure
- * what to grow, who to grow for, groups to include

11.45am Questions

Discussion - “Where to From Here”

12.30pm LUNCH

Community Partnering is funded by La Trobe Shire Council, Monash University, and Dept of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (Australian Research Council), with support from Australian Paper and Loy Yang Power.

Field Trips

Overview

Field trips are an excellent way of refining and getting ideas. They also offer an opportunity for people to find out more about each other and to build connections with each other (see page 104 for some reflections on this aspect of field trips).

When to use them

Field trips workshops can be used:

- when people want to know more about what is involved in turning an idea into a reality
- when people want to address specific issues and find out how to get around those things that seem to be obstacles.

Visiting developed projects and making connections with each other

Activities

Visits to comparable projects and talks with key people involved.

Follow-Up

Field trips can be followed up with strategies such as:

- formation of a small working group to address the issues and then report back to the larger group (see page 105)
- a more formal public meeting to agree on a course of action (see page 106).



Reflections on a Bus Trip

The following are some reflections from two members of a group who went on a bus trip to CERES after a “How To” workshop (see page 93). This field trip proved to be pivotal, not only because it was a process of making an idea real but because it gave people the time and space to talk with each other and build connections and friendships.

Joan: It floored me, CERES, with their chickens and their bees and their recycled water and the excitement and the fun of the group. I really enjoyed the bus tour . . . You found yourself thinking. But what really got me was the crowd - it’s a mixed group of people . . . [and] they’re trying so hard to do something and we’re talking about for the whole community. You’re talking about elderly citizens, street kids, your drug addicts, correctional services, work-for-the-dole.

Jake: And then the bus trip and when we got back it was like, wow, these definitely are the people on the bus trip that are going to be part of the community garden . . . It was different though, we were all just definitely unique, I thought that. And everyone got on friendly. And I’m certain that for a while after that trip everyone kept meeting and most of them are all still around. I know when I came back after the bus trip I was saying to Jo, “I sat with this lady and she was telling me all these things that are happening in her life.” . . . And when we got there you could just tell that it was something more than just a bus trip for people. It was to start thinking and get ideas. And the whole thing was an opportunity for us to get to know each other a bit and you can hear what others are interested in.



Working Groups

Overview

Working groups involve a small group of people meeting to address issues and decide on a course of action or a series of recommendations.

When to use them

Working groups are a way of “nutting out” the issues.

Activities

Meeting together to discuss a series of issues. Usually working groups meet on a regular basis for a defined period of time.

Follow-Up

Working groups need to report back their findings to a larger group of interested people. This could be to a public meeting (page 106) or a formation meeting (page 109).

Regular small group meetings to plan and organise action



Public Meetings

Overview

Public meetings are an excellent strategy for reaching a decision about an idea or deciding on a course of action.

Larger, more formal public meetings to publicise plans and enlist support

When to use them

Public meetings are appropriate for a variety of purposes. They can be used:

- as an initial way of calling together people who might be interested in an idea
- as the forum for reporting back on the recommendations of a working group (see page 105).

Activities

Public meetings are usually conducted in a formal manner with a set agenda and a chairperson. Some people, such as local politicians, may be specifically invited while others may learn about the meeting through advertising and media coverage.

Follow-Up

Usually a public meeting will reach agreement on a course of action and the next steps in developing a project.

An excellent resource with hints for planning effective public meetings is:

McFarlene, Geoff; Carpenter, Julie; and Youl, Rob (editors and compilers)(no date) *Group Skills and Community Action*, available on-line at: <http://www.netc.net.au/enviro/grpskills/>



Demonstration Projects

Overview

Demonstration projects are a way of trying out an idea on a small scale.

Trying out an idea on a small scale

When to use them

Demonstration projects can be used:

- when there is a small group of people who are extremely keen to start working on an idea
- to gauge how much support there would be for an idea
- to get one part of a project started quickly while more planning goes into the other parts.

Activities

Usually a demonstration project will run for a defined period of time, and it should be evaluated. Both Santa's Workshop and Latrobe Cyber Circus started as demonstration projects (see pages 119 to 121 and 127 to 129).

Follow-Up

If the evaluation is favourable, a demonstration project may lead to a larger project. The evaluation may point to areas where the idea needs to be modified.



Organisational and Management Support

Overview

Once the ball is rolling and community initiatives start taking shape there is a range of matters that will need to be dealt with. The Community Partnering project team may be able to work through the issues with groups, or it may be necessary to call in expert advice.

The community's secondary resources can play a vital role at this point in the Community Partnering process (see pages 79 – 87). Existing businesses, institutions, community groups and associations all have experience dealing with organisational and management matters and may be able to lend support.

The following provides an overview of the sorts of issues that groups will encounter, and a list of useful references and resources.

Group Processes

Establishing good group processes is key to the success of community initiatives. Groups that communicate well with each other and are able to work together will be able to address issues and overcome obstacles far more easily than groups that are not working well.

There is a multitude of resources on group processes. Local libraries and the internet are probably the best places to start. We have found the following to be extremely useful:

Kennedy, Gael, 1995, *Managing Community Organisations: 4 Working Together*, Ettinger House, Sydney. For more information contact Ettinger House, (02) 9754 1811.

McFarlene, Geoff; Carpenter, Julie; and Youl, Rob (editors and compilers)(no date) *Group Skills and Community Action*, available on-line at: <http://www.netc.net.au/enviro/grpskills/>

NSW Community Builders Website, Working with People,
http://www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/getting_organised/people/

Sheil, Helen, 1997, *Building Rural Futures Through Cooperation: Study Circles Kit*, Centre for Rural Communities Inc., Monash University, Gippsland Campus, Churchill, Victoria.

Good group processes are key to the success of a community project

Forming as an incorporated association has important benefits

Formation Meetings

These are the meetings at which a group forms as an incorporated association and adopts a constitution. This may also be the time when a Committee of Management is elected.

There are good reasons why a group running a community initiative should form as an incorporated association:

- many funding bodies, especially government departments, will only provide funds to an incorporated association
- when compared with unincorporated associations, incorporation provides members with more protection against legal action
- incorporated associations can own property, lease land or premises, borrow money, sign contracts and so on.

Each state has its own Act of Parliament governing incorporated associations, and most produce an easy to use guide to forming an incorporated association and sample constitutions (or rules). For information about incorporated associations, contact:

Australian Capital Territory
Registrar-General's Office
Phone: (02) 6207 0461
<http://www.rgo.act.gov.au/home.htm>

New South Wales
Department of Fair Trading
Phone: (02) 9895 0111 or 133 220

Queensland
Office of Fair Trading
Phone: (07) 3246 1500
<http://www.consumer.qld.gov.au/forms/association>

South Australia
Office of Consumer and Business Affairs
Phone: (08) 8204 1900 or 8204 9799

Tasmania
Department of Justice and Industrial Relations
Phone: (03) 6233 3450 or 6233 4104

Victoria
Office of Fair Trading and Business Affairs
Phone: (03) 9627 6200 or for long distance callers 1 800 240 251

Western Australia
Ministry of Fair Trading
Phone: 1300 30 40 14

The Council of Social Services in each state will also be able to provide information about incorporation.

ACTCOSS
Phone: (02) 6248 7566

NCOSS
Phone: (02) 9211 2599

NTCOSS
Phone: (08) 8941 2006

QCOSS
Phone: (07) 3832 1266

SACOSS
Phone: (08) 8226 4111

TASCOSS
Phone: (03) 6231 0755 or 6231 0542

VCOSS
Phone: (03) 9654 5649

WACOSS
Phone: (08) 9220 0601 or 9220 0616

Committees of Management

The affairs of an incorporated association are managed by a Committee of Management, usually made up of a President (or Chairperson), Vice-President (or Deputy Chairperson), Treasurer, Secretary (or Administrator) and Ordinary Members.

The Council of Social Services in each state will have resources about the roles and responsibilities of Committees of Management (contact details above).

Latrobe City has produced *A Guide for Committees* which outlines the roles and responsibilities of Committees of Management. The Guide includes examples and pro-formas of commonly used forms. For more information contact:

Community Planning and Development Unit
Latrobe City
PO Box 345
Traralgon, VIC, 3145
Phone: (03) 5173 1400

A Committee of Management needs to know its roles and responsibilities



Policies and procedures about everyday activities will ensure that a community initiative runs smoothly

Policies and Procedures

Establishing clear policies and procedures about the day-to-day activities and operations of community projects is important. Policies and procedures may cover issues such as use of equipment, supervision of children and hours of operation. A well thought out set of policies and procedures minimises the chance of misunderstandings and conflict.

Policies and procedures related to health and safety are also important to ensure that the group is fulfilling its duty of care.

An extremely useful overview to developing policies and procedures is included in:

Kennedy, Gael, 1995, *Managing Community Organisations: 4 Working Together*, Ettinger House, Sydney. For more information, contact Ettinger House (02) 9754 1811

Insurance

Public liability insurance is essential for community groups

Groups need to make sure that they have insurance coverage, particularly public liability.

AON Risk Services Australia Limited specialises in insurance coverage for community groups.

AON Speciality Group
 PO Box 4189
 Sydney, NSW, 2001
 Phone: (02) 9253 7542
 Fax: (02) 9253 7299

Volunteering Australia can also provide advice, particularly with regard to insurance for volunteer workers. There are state branches of Volunteering Australia:

Volunteering ACT
 Phone: (02) 6251 4161

Volunteering New South Wales
 Phone: (02) 9231 4000

Volunteering NT
 Phone: (08) 8981 3405

Volunteering Queensland
 Phone: (07) 3229 9700

Volunteering South Australia
 Phone: (08) 8221 7177



Volunteering NT
Phone: (08) 8981 3405

Volunteering Queensland
Phone: (07) 3229 9700

Volunteering South Australia
Phone: (08) 8221 7177

Volunteering Tasmania
Phone: (03) 6231 5550

Volunteering Victoria
Phone: (03) 9650 5541

Volunteering Western Australia
Phone: (08) 9420 7288

The following publication provides a useful overview of the different insurance covers community groups may need:

Kennedy, Gael, 1995, *Managing Community Organisations: 2 Keeping It Legal*, Ettinger House, Sydney. For more information, contact Ettinger House (02) 9754 1811.

Legal Issues

These may range from securing planning permission from the local authority to signing leases on land or buildings.

The Council of Social Services will be able to provide more information for each state (contact details on page 110). A good overview is provided by:

Kennedy, Gael, 1995, *Managing Community Organisations: 2 Keeping It Legal*, Ettinger House, Sydney. For more information, contact Ettinger House (02) 9754 1811.

Finances

Groups may need assistance with a range of financial matters, including:

- opening bank accounts
- establishing good account-keeping procedures
- registering for an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- registering as a GST compliant organisation

The Council of Social Services in each state will have material on the management of financial matters (see page 108). Another useful reference is:

A range of legal issues will impact community initiatives

Financial matters need to be well-managed



Kennedy, Gael, 1995, *Managing Community Organisations: 5 Money*, Ettinger House, Sydney. For more information, contact Ettinger House (02) 9754 1811.

Latrobe City's *A Guide for Committees* also includes examples and pro-formas related to financial reporting. Contact:
 Community Planning and Development Unit
 Latrobe City
 PO Box 345
 Traralgon, VIC, 3145
 Phone: (03) 5173 1400

Information on ABNs and the GST for incorporated associations can be found at the Australian Tax Office internet site:
<http://www.taxreform.ato.gov.au/>

See also http://www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/getting_organised/managing/

Fund-Raising

Fund-raising activities may need the approval of state and local authorities

Most community initiatives will need to raise funds for their activities. This can include activities such as running sausage-sizzles, raffles and cent auctions. States have legislation governing fund-raising for charitable or non-profit purposes, and groups may need to apply for permission. Be sure to find out what the requirements are in your state. The Council of Social Services in your state will be able to help (see page 110 for contact details).

Community groups need to also be aware that local authorities have codes that govern activities like food preparation and handling. Even the humble sausage sizzle on a Saturday morning may need permission from the local authority. Check with your local council.



Government Departments and philanthropic trusts provide funds for community groups

Grant Applications

Applying for funding grants from government bodies or philanthropic trusts is an excellent way to fund projects.

The best way to find out about government funds is to keep an eye on major newspapers (for State and Federal grants), and local newspapers (for local council grants).

Local, State and Federal parliamentarians are a good source of information about government funding.

Philanthropy Australia has a website on funds offered through philanthropic trusts. Each year they publish a directory of funds available:

Philanthropy Australia

Phone: (03) 9620 0200

Directory of Australian Philanthropy

<http://www.philanthropy.org.au/bshop/bshop.htm>

The NSW Community Builders Website also has information on funding,

<http://www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/finding-funds/>

Communication Strategies

Groups may need support developing communication strategies.

This can include activities such as writing press releases or developing a newsletter to keep members and interested people up to date with activities and events. An example of a newsletter is in Appendix 6.

For tips on producing user-friendly publications, see,

http://www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/getting_organised/message/

Strategic Planning and Coordination

Finally groups may need support to coordinate their activities, and develop strategy plans.

An extremely useful overview to planning and coordination activities is included in:

McFarlene, Geoff; Carpenter, Julie; and Youl, Rob (editors and compilers)(no date) *Group Skills and Community Action*, available on-line at: <http://www.netc.net.au/enviro/grpskills/>

Kennedy, Gael, 1995, *Managing Community Organisations: 4 Working Together*, Ettinger House, Sydney. For more information, contact Ettinger House (02) 9754 1811.

Community initiatives will need support to develop communication strategies and undertake strategic planning activities



Case Study 1

Latrobe Valley Community Environmental Gardens Inc.

An abandoned caravan park becomes the site for a community garden

Overview

Latrobe Valley Community Environmental Gardens Inc. (LV CEG) is located on a 3 hectare site near the main shopping area of Morwell. The site was once a caravan park but for the past ten years has been an unused physical resource. The long term vision is for a community garden that includes:

- individual garden plots
- larger shared garden plots for groups of people
- raised garden beds for people who have difficulty bending over
- composting projects
- recycling projects (including water recycling)
- free-range chickens
- mud-brick and straw-bale building projects
- picnic and bbq area.



Sources of Inspiration/Group Motivation

LV CEG has been inspired by a number of community gardens in Melbourne including CERES (see pages 20-21), “Veg-Out” (St Kilda Community Garden), Nunawading Community Garden and Kevin Heinze Community Garden Centre.

LV CEG has been particularly inspired by the way these projects cater for a broad cross-section of people by offering a range of community, gardening and environmental activities. The group is determined and motivated to create a similar resource for people of the Latrobe Valley.

Aims and Objectives

To be a place for people of the Latrobe Valley to come together and participate in garden-based activities with a community and environmental emphasis.

Community Objectives

- To build community spirit and foster connections across differences like age, ethnicity and ability through shared involvement in garden-based activities
- To build community spirit and foster connections across differences like age, ethnicity and ability through shared involvement in garden-based activities
- To provide an environment for people to work cooperatively.
- To support and contribute to other community-based initiatives like food banks

Educational Objectives

- To foster an environment in which people can contribute their skills, learn from each other, and develop new skills and fresh ideas

Environmental Objectives

- To support environmentally-responsive gardening practices including composting and water recycling

Forming as a Group and Refining Ideas

The possibility of a community garden was initially raised at a hot dog luncheon at Morwell Neighbourhood and Learning House, and at a pizza-making lunch for three TAFE Numeracy and Literacy classes. The idea of a community garden and other related projects like a community chook yard and community produce exchange were also talked about at the community workshops (see pages 92-96).

To build on the level of interest in community gardens a number of the strategies discussed on pages 101 to 106 were then used to form a group and refine the ideas:

1. A “How-To” workshop was held in early October 1999. Gil Freeman, one of the founding members of CERES (see pages 20-21), was the guest speaker.
2. Those who attended were so inspired by Gil’s talk that two bus trips to CERES were quickly organised (see page 103). (The group has also visited three other community gardens).
3. A smaller working group formed to address some of the issues, including finding a site and forming as an incorporated association.
4. A public meeting was then held in March 2000 at which LV CEG formed as an incorporated association and elected a Committee of Management.

The “How-To” workshop was attended by a range of people including those from TAFE Numeracy and Literacy classes and Morwell and Moe Neighbourhood and Learning Houses, people of

From ideas and
inspiration to a
working reality

non-English speaking background, unemployed people, people with disabilities and young unemployed people. The Committee of Management is made up of people from these groups. Indeed several young unemployed people who came along to the “How-To” workshop simply for the free lunch have become some of the most active members of LV CEG and are members of the Committee of Management.

Organisational and Management Support

From October 1999 to November 2000, the group has been supported by the Latrobe City and Monash University Community Partnering project to complete a range of organisational and management tasks including:

- holding workshops on group skills and roles and responsibilities of Committees of Management
- securing the approval of the Latrobe City to use a disused caravan park site in Morwell for the gardens
- obtaining planning permission from the Latrobe City
- forming an incorporated association
- obtaining public liability and volunteers’ accident insurance
- holding sausage sizzle fund-raisers
- submitting successful funding grant applications to the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services (Family and Community Networks Initiatives) and Latrobe City’s Gambling Impact Fund
- developing a regular newsletter for members
- holding strategic planning afternoons.

Difficulties and Solutions

The first difficulty facing LV CEG has been the size of the project. The issues that needed to be addressed before any work on the site could commence appeared to be never-ending. For example, the group decided to hold sausage sizzles to raise money for public liability insurance. In order to carry out this seemingly simple activity they needed a fund-raising permit from the Victorian Office of Fair Trading and Business Affairs and a food permit from Latrobe City. They also needed to open a special fund-raising bank account, and develop sound book-keeping and banking procedures.

One solution to this difficulty has been to work through each task and related issues as they arise. It would have been easy for the group to become frustrated with the amount of time it took before any work could commence on the site. Instead the group has tried to see each of the preparatory tasks as a necessary step along the way. And regular review of the steps that had been successfully completed was a way of reminding the group of the progress that was being



Drawing on secondary resources in the community

achieved. The group has also tried to ensure that people do not lose interest and drop out by including plenty of social get-togethers and informal events to balance the work activities.

The second difficulty facing the group has been the lack of resources to begin developing the garden site. The solution has been to draw upon the secondary resources within the community. For example, the site was covered with old shrubs that needed to be removed in order to clear a space for garden beds. A local community organisation had some Work for the Dole participants who were trained in the use of chain-saws and were prepared to fell the shrubs. Pieces that were large enough were taken away as fire-wood. A group of people serving Community Service Orders stacked the remainder of the shrubs, and the local Fire Brigade burned the stacks as a training exercise for new volunteers.

A local hire business has also donated the use of a rotary hoe for preparing the ground, and the local waste management company is donating old railway sleepers and bricks that can be used for garden bed edging.

Next Steps

The group's priority is to establish garden beds so that individuals and groups can begin gardening.

Building relationships to ensure sustainability of the community garden

A second priority is to manage two funding grants. LV CEG has received a grant from the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services through the Family and Community Networks Initiative. This grant is to be spent on developing a master plan for the site, developing health and safety policies and procedures, training in group processes, and fencing for the site (a requirement of the planning permit). The group has also received a grant from the Latrobe City Trust for reestablishing water supply to the site.

The third priority is to continue building relationships with community organisations and institutions to ensure the sustainability of the project.



For more information contact:

Janice McAdam, Administrator, (03) 5134 4934

Case Study 2 Santa's Workshop

An unused pre-school building becomes Santa's Workshop

Overview

Santa's Workshop is a community facility where people can make large Christmas decorations for the outside of their homes and for community display. The project draws on primary and secondary resources of the Latrobe Valley:

- Local residents including unemployed workers volunteer their time to supervise and help people make the Christmas decorations
- A local community organisation provides two Work for the Dole participants who assist people and also make decorations for community display
- Local businesses donate materials such as timber off-cuts, mistints of paint, drop-sheets and so on
- Latrobe City provides public liability insurance
- Latrobe City provides an unused pre-school building for the workshop.



Sources of Inspiration/Group Motivation

Like many communities, people across the Latrobe Valley decorate the outside of their houses for Christmas. The initial inspiration was to encourage more people to participate in this activity.

The group that has since formed to run the workshop is motivated by the friendships that develop, and the learning and sharing of skills that takes place.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of Santa’s Workshop is to provide a community resource where people with limited resources can come together to make large outdoor Christmas decorations.

Forming as a Group and Refining Ideas

Making Christmas street decorations was an idea raised at the community workshops (see page 92 to 96). Once the availability of a key person with an interest in sharing his skills was confirmed, a demonstration project was organised for November and December 1999. Given the success of the demonstration Santa’s Workshop a small group emerged who were prepared to take a primary responsibility for running the workshop in subsequent years.

Organisational and Management Support

During the demonstration stage there was a high level of support from the Latrobe City and Monash University Community Partnering Project. The project team contacted businesses, coordinated the supply of materials and equipment, and provided a community researcher to supervise. The team also obtained planning permission and arranged for Latrobe City to provide public liability insurance.

Since then the small group that has taken responsibility for running the workshop has received a small level of support with tasks such as making initial contact with businesses, clarifying policies and procedures for use of the workshop, and assisting with an official launch.

From demonstration project to ongoing community enterprise



Difficulties and Solutions

Santa's Workshop has encountered only minor difficulties that have been easily solved by putting in place clear policies and procedures. For example during the demonstration project there was no charge and materials with high usage such as paint brushes had to be constantly replaced. Participants are now asked to contribute a gold coin each time they use the workshop to cover the cost of paint brushes, cleaning materials and tea and coffee.



Next Steps

During 2000 the group started to make decorations for businesses and community organisations. These were "paid" for in sheets of timber. The group has received orders for 2001 that they will begin making in February. Closer to Christmas the workshop will reopen for general community use. The hours of operation will be extended to include one evening a week so people who are in paid employment can participate. The group is also considering workshops to make Easter decorations.

For more information contact:
Keith Peters, (03) 5134 5249



Case Study 3 Creative Reuse Centre

Overview

The Creative Reuse Centre is a place where off-cuts, seconds and other “waste” materials from businesses and manufacturers are made available to the community for use in creative and inventive activities. The Centre is housed in the same premises as Santa’s Workshop (see Case Study 2).

Sources of Inspiration and Group Motivation

The Centre was inspired by the idea of the “match” between individuals and groups who require extremely low-cost materials, and businesses and industries that have “waste” materials.

Waste materials as resources for creative projects

The group has been motivated by feedback from both users and suppliers. Many businesses and industries have accumulated materials they can no longer use but are, in their words, “too good to throw out”. Kindergartens, pre-schools and artists have been delighted with the store of materials that the Centre is collecting.

Aims and Objectives

The aim is to be a community, educational and environmental resource centre where businesses and manufacturers can send off-cuts, seconds and other “waste” materials to be used in creative and inventive activities.

Objectives

1. Contribute to existing educational and learning activities by collecting materials appropriate for reuse by individuals and groups (including pre-schools, primary schools, guide and scout groups, hobby clubs).
2. Offer new learning opportunities by running workshops that reuse materials in creative and inventive ways (e.g. Santa’s Workshop, Invention Workshops).
3. Promote the development of community networks by involving people who have been most affected by recent economic changes in the activities and operation of the Centre.
4. Contribute to the diversion of industrial and business waste from landfill.

Forming as a Group and Refining Ideas

Ideas for an inventor’s resource centre, and a fabric and fibre bank were first raised at the community workshops in October 1999 (see pages 92 to 96). At the time no group emerged with a commitment to turning the ideas into a project; however with Santa’s Workshop

Dreams, ideas and practicalities come together

developing as a project that used mistints of paint and off-cuts of timber it was clear that there was potential for a reuse centre. The Santa's Workshop group that had formed through the demonstration project expressed an interest in being involved in a broader reuse project.

The group was then joined by the Latrobe City's Child Care Unit Leader who had a long held dream of developing a reuse centre in the Latrobe Valley.

Organisational and Management Support

The group has been supported through the Latrobe City and Monash University Community Partnering project in a number of ways:

- developing a proposal to put to Council
- developing a strategy for approaching businesses
- assisting volunteers to contact businesses
- coordinating volunteers to collect materials



Difficulties and Solutions

To date the group's priority has been to establish a supply of materials in preparation for opening the Centre to users. The main difficulty now facing the group is that the amount of work required to get the Centre up and running exceeds the time that the volunteers have available.

The group feels that the Centre needs a paid coordinator working at least one day each week to promote the centre and establish a steady flow of suppliers and users.

Next Steps

The group's priority is to secure funding for a part-time coordinator.

For more information contact:
Fairlie Sharp: (03) 5136 9276

Case Study 4

Latrobe Community Workshed @ Newborough Inc.

An old industrial building becomes a community workshed

Overview

Latrobe Community Workshed @ Newborough is a place where individuals and groups can work on hobby, and art and craft based activities. It is located in an old industrial building that has been made available by a local retired businessman as a community resource.

Sources of Inspiration/Group Motivation

The group is inspired by the idea of a community workshed where retired and unemployed workers and others can come together to informally work on their own or collaborative projects.

Initially the Men in Sheds project in Bendigo and the Tongola Shed in Central Victoria, both catering to older retired men, provided models for the project. The level of interest from a wide cross-section of the community has motivated the group to develop a facility that caters to younger and older people, women and men, and those with a range of abilities and interests.

Aims and Objectives

To be a place for people to participate in a range of social, hobby, and art and craft based activities.

Objectives

- a. Build community spirit and foster connections across differences like age, ethnicity and ability through shared involvement.
- b. Provide an environment for people to work cooperatively and creatively.
- c. Foster an environment in which people can contribute their hobbies and skills, learn from each other, and develop new hobbies, skills and ideas.
- d. Support a healthy and safe workplace with environmentally responsible practices.

Forming as a Group and Refining Ideas

The possibility of a community workshed space was raised at the community workshops held in October 1999 (see pages 92 to 96). Through a series of contacts a Community Partnering community researcher met up with a retired businessman who had a disused Industrial building he was willing to make available as a community

Generating interest in using an available physical resource



Managing eagerness and high expectations is a challenge for new community groups

resource. The availability of the physical resource meant that the idea for community workshed could become a reality, and a series of the strategies discussed on pages 105 to 106 were then used to form a group and refine the ideas:

1. A public meeting was held to gauge the level of community interest in the idea. Almost 50 people attended the meeting. Around half were retired and unemployed people who had an interest in using the workshed for their own activities. Many had sheds in their backyards but were missing the social contact that paid employment provided. The remaining half were people from community based organisation who were interested in running more formal programs through the workshed. This group included those who worked with unemployed youth, people with disabilities and people recovering from work-based injuries. There was an extremely high level of support for the idea.
2. A working group of eight people formed at the public meeting to begin refining the idea further and addressing key issues, such as obtaining planning permission, and investigating ways of equipping the workshed.
3. A second public meeting was then held to authorise the incorporation of Latrobe Community Workshed @ Newborough as an incorporated association, and to elect a Committee of Management. The committee is made up of employed, unemployed and retired people with a range of abilities, skills and interests.

Organisational and Management Support

The Latrobe City and Monash University Community Partnering project team provided assistance with a range of tasks, including:

- obtaining planning permission from the City of Latrobe
- securing a lease agreement for the building
- obtaining insurance coverage
- approaching businesses for contributions of materials and tools
- writing funding grant applications

Difficulties and Solutions

The main difficulty confronting Latrobe Community Workshed @ Newborough is to manage the high expectations that people have of the project. The first public meeting drew such interest that people are now eager for the workshed to begin operating. Before operations can commence the group must finalise the lease agreement and obtain tools and equipment for people to use.

The group is managing this issue by keeping people up-to-date with progress through a newsletter, and involving people in as many activities as possible, such as working bees to prepare the building, and the assembly of hamper boxes for a small local business.

Next Steps

The priority is to obtain tools and equipment. The group is approaching local businesses and also submitting funding grant applications. The committee is also looking at ways of raising funds themselves. For example, a local school has approached the group about building a playground and involving students with learning disabilities. The local waste management company has offered broken furniture that the group could repair and sell.

For more information contact:

Ian Schroeter, Chairperson: (03) 5126 1945

Margaret Bartlett, Administrator: (03) 5127 5860



Case Study 5 Latrobe Cyber Circus

Overview

Latrobe Cyber Circus is an initiative to support the development of a circus and performance enterprise for marginalised young people. The project combines traditional circus skills with a more contemporary “techno-electronica” style of performance and entertainment.

Supporting and extending a newly established youth initiative

The project builds on primary and secondary resources in the Latrobe Valley

- It is being led by Triple O Productions Inc., a local collective of young people aged between 18 and 25 years who have been running fringe performances for over twelve months.
- Two youth-focused community organisation play a supporting role providing assistance with organisational and management matters.

Sources of Inspiration/Group Motivation

The project has been inspired by the commitment and passion of the members of Triple O to develop circus and performance skills, and share their skills with other young people, particularly those who are marginalised and isolated. The two community agencies, GET JPET (Gippsland Employment and Skills Training—Jobs Placement, Employment and Training) and Luke’s Place, are motivated to support young people to own and manage youth-focused projects.

Aims and Objectives

- Open doorways for marginalised, disadvantaged and isolated young people to develop circus and performance skills.
- Introduce young people to circus-based performances and to inspire involvement in the youth arts movement more generally.
- Offer an avenue for young people to explore and celebrate their identities and build their futures.



A demonstration project makes links with a youth initiative

Forming as a Group and Refining Ideas

Latrobe Cyber Circus emerged through a circus workshop demonstration project coordinated by the Latrobe City and Monash University Community Partnering project and involving GEST—JPET and Luke’s Place. A group of young people from Triple O Productions Inc. participated in the one day event (along with other unemployed young people).

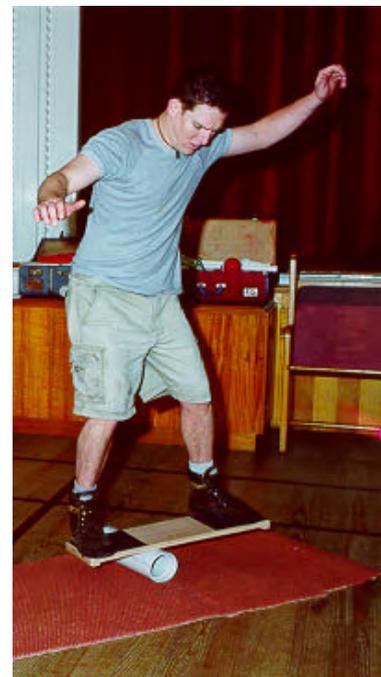
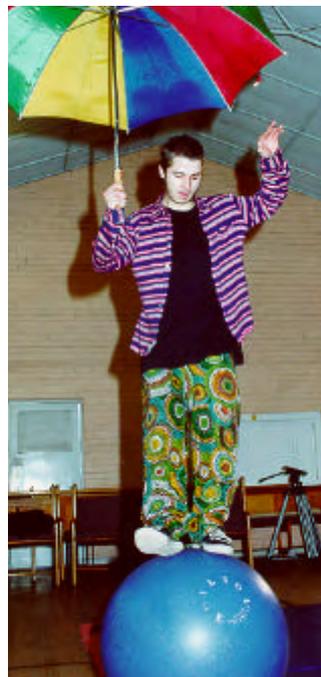
The participants in the circus workshop all expressed an interest in further training, and the members of Triple O Productions Inc. were prepared to play a key role. Indeed, out of the demonstration project several Triple O members began making weekly trips to Melbourne to train with Circus Oz.

Representatives from Triple O Productions, Community Partnering, GEST—JPET and Luke’s Place formed a working group to develop a funding proposal for additional training and performances.

Organisational and Management

The Latrobe City and Monash University Community Partnering project team played a key role:

- coordinating the demonstration project
- facilitating discussion between Triple O Productions Inc., GEST– JPET and Luke’s Place; and
- writing funding proposals.



Photos courtesy Latrobe Valley Express

Difficulties and Solutions

Latrobe Cyber Circus faces the difficulty of three groups with different approaches working together. Community Partnering has been able to facilitate the initial discussions and development of a funding grant proposal. This role has now been picked up by a steering group consisting of representatives from each of the groups involved and from external agencies such as Latrobe City Council.

Next Steps

Latrobe Cyber Circus has received funding through VicHealth for a one week circus camp. The outcome of the camp will be the creation of performances for local primary schools, secondary schools and dance parties.

For more information, contact:

Leanne Vella, Youth Development Worker, Latrobe City
(03) 5136 9231





APPENDIX 1

Sample Position Description: Community Researchers



COMMUNITY RESEARCHER—POSITION DESCRIPTION

BRIEF PROJECT OVERVIEW

Community Partnering is an initiative to foster community and economic development initiatives based on skills, resources and assets that already exist in the Latrobe Valley. The main emphasis is on the strengths and capabilities of groups who have been hard hit by economic change (like unemployed youth, retrenched workers and sole parents).

Three people will be employed over 35 weeks, working 21 hours a week with groups like retrenched workers, unemployed youth and sole parents identifying skills and talents, and generating ideas for community based initiatives.

POSITION GOAL

This position involves working as a member of a project team, contributing to a process of community and economic development by initially identifying the skills, talents and resources that already exist in the people, organisations and towns of La Trobe Shire.

KEY TASKS (Training will be provided for each of these tasks)

As part of the Community Partnering Project team the position involves:

1. Working with targeted groups across the La Trobe Shire to identify skills, talents, resources and ideas for community based initiatives.
2. Identifying other resources in the La Trobe Shire, such as community, business and government organisations, that could contribute to the development of community based initiatives.
3. Assembling the information from Tasks 1 and 2 (above) and presenting it at a series of community workshops.
4. Assisting the development of community based initiatives.

SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE (Key Selection Criteria)

1. Familiarity with and commitment to people who have been hard hit by economic change in the La Trobe Shire (such as unemployed workers and young people, and sole parents).
2. Ability to work with people from different groups and different communities.
3. Highly motivated, displaying a high degree of enthusiasm and initiative.
4. Capacity to work effectively in a team environment.
5. Strong interpersonal skills.
6. Basic computer skills.
7. Commitment to learning new skills.



APPENDIX 2

Sample Portrait of Gifts and Brochure Reporting Results

The Portrait of Gifts is adapted from:

Kretzmann, John; McKnight, John; and Sheehan, GERALYN (with Mike Green & Deborah Puntteney), 1997, *A Guide to Capacity Inventories: Mobilizing the Community Skills of Local Residents*, Asset-Based Community Development Institute, Institute for Policy Research, Northwestern University, Illinois.



Community Partnering

PORTRAIT OF GIFTS

Every individual has gifts. Gifts of the head, hand and heart. You may have a talent for figuring out how things work (head) or a knack for fixing things (hand) or even a keen interest in the environment (heart). The Community Partnering project is about identifying people's gifts, changing the perceptions people have of "the Valley", and creating opportunities for and supporting new community based projects and initiatives.

The information you give us may be presented at community workshops to demonstrate the range of skills that people in the Latrobe Valley have. No personal identifying information about you will be used at these public events. The workshops are for building connections with other people in the community and developing ideas for tangible projects and initiatives. You might even like to come along and share your ideas, and become involved in some of the proposed projects!

Your help in filling out this capacity inventory will be invaluable to the success of the project.

I am happy for the information I provide to be presented at community workshops (I understand that no personal identifying information will be presented).

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Community Networker: _____

*I have gained these skills through my experience at work, home or other environment
(eg, volunteer work, community group).*

Please tick appropriate box/boxes

| Child Care and Parenting Skills | |
|--|---|
| 1. | Caring for Children |
| a. | Children under 1 year |
| b. | Children 1 year to 6 years |
| c. | Children 7 years to 13 years |
| 2. | Caring for children with special needs |
| 3. | Caring for a child (not your own) overnight |
| 4. | Caring for sick children |
| 5. | Having a special relationship with a child not in your family |
| 6. | Other (please specify): |

| Work | Home | Other |
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| Transportation | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. | Driving a car |
| 2. | Driving a bus |
| 3. | Driving a commercial truck |
| 4. | Driving a tractor |
| 5. | Backing a trailer/caravan |
| 6. | Furniture removal |
| 7. | Other (please specify): |

| Work | Home | Other |
|------|------|-------|
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| Mechanical and Electrical Skills | |
|---|---|
| 1. | Repairing small appliances (eg TV, toaster) |
| 2. | Repairing major appliances (eg washing machine, refrigerator) |
| 3. | Repairing lawnmowers/small engines |
| 4. | Repairing motor vehicles |
| 5. | Other mechanical skills (please specify): |
| 6. | Electrical skills (please specify): |

| Work | Home | Other |
|------|------|-------|
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Please tick appropriate box/boxes

| Safety and Security | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 1. | State Emergency Services or Fire Fighting/CFA |
| 2. | First Aid Skills |
| 3. | Other (please specify): |

| Work | Home | Other |
|------|------|-------|
| | | |
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| Health Care and Welfare | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 1. | Running errands, shopping or driving for someone who needs transportation |
| 2. | Listening to or giving support to someone who needs to talk about their problems |
| 3. | Helping a person or family with medical problems |
| 4. | Providing respite or live in care for more than 24 hours |
| 5. | Helping a person or family with juvenile delinquency, probation, prison or legal problems |
| 6. | Visiting or calling the "home bound" or lonely |
| 7. | Giving food, clothing, money or household items to a family in need |
| 8. | Caring for the elderly |
| 9. | Caring for people with mental illnesses |
| 10. | Caring for the sick |
| 11. | Caring for people with physical or intellectual disabilities |
| 12. | Other (please specify): |

| Work | Home | Other |
|------|------|-------|
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| Horticultural/Agricultural | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. | Lawnmowing |
| 2. | Gardening |
| 3. | Farm skills |
| 4. | Other (please specify): |

| Work | Home | Other |
|------|------|-------|
| | | |
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| | | |

Please tick appropriate box/boxes

| Literacy and Language | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1. | Creative writing |
| 2. | Other forms of writing (please specify): |
| 3. | Familiarity with a language other than English (please specify): |
| 4. | Ability to speak another language |
| 5. | Ability to understand another language |
| 6. | Ability to read another language |
| 7. | Ability to write in another language |
| 8. | Ability to act as an interpreter |
| 9. | Other (please specify): |

| Work | Home | Other |
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| Pet Care/Animal Husbandry | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. | Grooming |
| 2. | Training |
| 3. | Exercising |
| 4. | Breeding |
| 5. | Milking |
| 6. | Shearing |
| 7. | Drenching |
| 8. | Other (please specify): |

| Work | Home | Other |
|------|------|-------|
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| Other | |
|--------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. | Hairdressing |
| 2. | Certified swimming instructor |
| 3. | Sewing/dressmaking/tailoring |
| 4. | Graphic design |
| 5. | Other (please specify): |

| Work | Home | Other |
|------|------|-------|
| | | |
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| | | |

Do you have any other hobbies or skills that have not been mentioned?

Do you have any skills that you would like to share?

Are there any skills you would like to learn?

Is there anything that you feel passionate about, eg, the environment, motor cars, cultural heritage, animal welfare?

Have you ever operated a small business or thought about starting one? Please give details.

Have you ever participated in or thought about alternative forms of business (eg, co-operatives, bartering groups, community credit schemes)? Please give details.

Have you ever been a volunteer in a community-based organisation? (eg, Neighbourhood Watch, sports groups, charitable organisations, church groups, scouts)? Please give details.

Have you ever contributed to your community or your neighbourhood in an informal way (eg, building a community playground, Clean Up Australia Day)? Please give details.

Are there any community projects you'd like to become involved in?

Do you have any ideas for community-based projects for the Latrobe Valley? Please give details.

Your ideas are invaluable. Please provide any comments.

Thank you for helping us by completing your Portrait of Gifts. We would like to keep you up-to-date with the project, particularly by inviting you to a community workshop where you can share your ideas with other people.

Please complete this section if you would like us to keep in contact with you. (This information will only be used for the Community Partnering project).

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____





**Everyone in the Latrobe Valley has
skills, talents and ideas.**

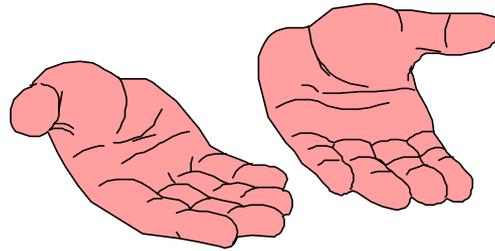
Over 50 people have filled out a Portrait of Gifts to tell us about their skills, talents and ideas. These include people from TAFE Numeracy and Literacy classes, Moe Lifeskills Group, SCOPE and Moe Men's Group.

The information is being used to:

- *Bring together diverse groups of people; and*
- *Build community-based initiatives.*

*For more information contact
Yvonne, Stephen or Leanne on 5136 9270*

GIFTS OF THE HAND



- Almost ½ the people who filled in a Portrait of Gifts have mechanical or electrical skills like fixing household appliances.
- ¾ have computer skills.
- Over ¾ have construction and maintenance skills, ranging from housepainting to furniture-making to concreting.
- Over ¾ have lawnmowing or gardening skills.
- Over ½ have art and craft skills, like drawing, painting, ceramics, pottery and leatherwork.
- People's hobbies and interests include:

| | |
|------------------------------|------------|
| dancing | basketball |
| lead lighting | darts |
| tai chi | fishing |
| restoring old film equipment | |

The Latrobe Valley—A Skillful Community

GIFTS OF THE HEART

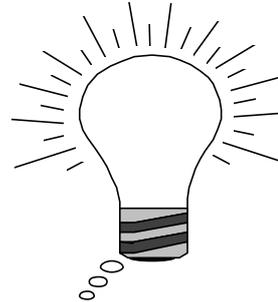


- Over ½ the people who filled in a Portrait of Gifts give food, money or household items to families in need.
- Over ½ run errands, shop or drive for people who need transportation.
- Nearly ½ help with children’s sports teams.
- Over ¼ help out in school classrooms.
- Nearly ¾ listen or give support to people who need help.
- Nearly ½ have first aid skills.
- Some of the things that people care deeply about are:

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------------|
| the environment | family histories |
| care of the elderly | recycling |
| opportunities for the young | |

The Latrobe Valley—A Caring Community

GIFTS OF THE HEAD



- Nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of the people who filled in a Portrait of Gifts listen to children reading aloud.
- $\frac{1}{2}$ have shared a skill with someone else.
- Over $\frac{1}{4}$ have creative writing skills.
- Nearly $\frac{1}{2}$ have shared computer skills with someone else.
- Some skills people would like to learn are:

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| furniture restoration | internet skills |
| sewing | tv and computer repairs |
| first aid | organisational skills |
| creative writing | leadership skills |
- Some skills people would like to share with others are:

| | |
|-------------|------------------------|
| woodwork | sewing and dressmaking |
| photography | |

The Latrobe Valley—A Learning Community



APPENDIX 3

Sample Brochure of Community Projects



WHAT ARE COMMUNITY-BASED PROJECTS?



When communities draw on their own resources they can respond to issues in exciting new ways.

Community Partnering supports innovative community responses:

- *voluntary initiatives
- *co-operative enterprises
- *financing alternatives
- *not-for-profit initiatives
- *self-employment & small business



Community Partnering is funded by La Trobe Shire Council, Department of Education, Training & Youth Affairs (Australian Research Council) and Monash University, with support from Australian Paper and Loy Yang Power.

For more information contact 5136 9270

Voluntary initiatives.....



The local community, with support from small and large businesses and the La Trobe Shire Council, builds a community playground.

A local park in Morwell has few facilities.



Retrenched and retired workers establish a tool library where people on low incomes can borrow tools and obtain advice about household repairs. Tools are donated by local businesses and people also donate broken tools that can be used for parts.

Retrenched and retired workers have skills they want to contribute to their community.

Groups of single mothers meet once a week to cook meals. The meals are eaten fresh, or frozen for use later. The mothers contribute money each week and local businesses give discounts.



Single mothers struggle with the demands of cooking for their children every night.

Through Technical Aid for the Disabled people with varying levels of skill volunteer to build customised devices. Disabled people are charged only for the materials. Groups like Rotary and Lions help with donations.



People with disabilities need customised devices to help them with everyday life.

Co-operative enterprises....



The community responds by forming the Yoeval Community Hospital Co-operative Ltd. They raise money for expanded health and aged care services. The Co-operative has over 250 shareholders.

A public hospital in a small town in Central New South Wales is closed.



Families are assisted by a local community group and businesses to build large backyard fishtanks. Sun-fish are bred for home consumption or market sale. A group of families form their own co-operative as a way of increasing market production and generating employment.

A local community has high levels of poverty and few employment opportunities.

The Mirboo North Newspaper Co-operative is formed. Over 50 people contribute each week to the publication of the paper. With the closure of the last bank branch a co-operative has formed to provide financial services in conjunction with Bendigo Bank.



A local newspaper in Gippsland is threatened with closure.

Financing alternatives...

A group of farmers collectively manage a sheep flock on behalf of the local health service. The yearly wool cheque is used to help support the health service.



Funding for local health services in a small town in Western Victoria is cut.



Over 110 young people each contribute a minimum of \$12 and form their own credit union. A group of young unemployed people who are members of the credit union borrow money to start their own baseball cap and t-shirt printing business. Local businesses help with supplies and equipment.

Young people find that financial institutions are not responsive to their needs.



In New Zealand, the Dunedin YWCA sets up the Angel Fund to lend small amounts of money to women on pensions and benefits. Money is donated to the fund or lent by individuals and businesses.

Women on pensions and benefits cannot borrow money from financial institutions.

Not-for-profit initiatives...

Work Focus Inc. runs a range of initiatives, eg, retired workers train young people at risk of homelessness in woodworking skills; people on a 'work-for-the-dole' program rebuild a pearling lugger; and local artisans are helped to become self-employed. Support comes from large corporations and all levels of government.



High levels of unemployment follow the restructuring of the power industry in the Latrobe Valley.

Fig Tree Community Garden is established on vacant Council land. People with disabilities, older people, children and others grow vegetables and flowers. People on Community Service Orders assist. In order to become self-financing herbs will be grown commercially.



In Mooroopna via Shepparton people with disabilities want to be more active in their community.

Self-employment & small business developments....



A high school student organises dance parties and books local bands. The young person is now a music promoter and band manager in Dandenong, employing 9 young people full-time and another 100 part-time and casually.

There are few dance venues in Dandenong for young people interested in alternative music.



A local saw miller in Yarram comes up with an idea for a new milling technology that makes it cost effective to grow and harvest native timbers. The timber is used in award-winning buildings, and the technology is being exported overseas.

Local environment groups are concerned about the spread of pine plantations and the cutting down of old growth forests.



APPENDIX 4

Sample Program for a Mini-Workshop



The following program was used when three Numeracy and Literacy classes from across the Latrobe Valley came together for a pizza lunch. The three classes had never met each other. Over activities like cutting up tomatoes, grating cheese, slicing ham and peeling mushrooms people from the different classes started to interact. When it was time to put the toppings on there was a lot of laughter. Who wanted to share a pizza with pineapple? Were there any takers for anchovy? People started to make connections based on their food preferences. Other differences (like being from a different Numeracy and Literacy class, being of a different cultural background, or being a different age or gender fell away.

Once the pizzas had been eaten a community researcher (Yvonne) and an academic researcher (Jenny) led the group through the following workshop:

WORKSHOP

NUMERACY AND LITERACY CLASS

- 1. Thank everyone for coming and joining in the pizza lunch. (Yvonne)**
- 2. Provide an update on Community Partnering. (Yvonne)**

People as the Primary Resource

- Give some feedback of Portrait of Gifts and draw attention to:
 - ◊ Gifts of the Hands (Latrobe Valley—a skilful community)
 - ◊ Gifts of the Heart (Latrobe Valley—a caring community)
 - ◊ Gifts of the Head (Latrobe Valley—a learning community)
- The portrait of gifts is a way of showing how people are the primary resource or asset of the Latrobe Valley.

See
Appendix 2

Physical Resources

- Provide examples of the physical resources that are available for community initiatives (e.g., the flats, house, land, kitchen and hall at St Lukes; the welding equipment, photography equipment and developing room at Work Focus).

Business Resources

- Talk about some of the ways that businesses contribute to community projects (e.g. the restaurant that donates “waste” scraps to a worm farm, the hardware store that provides bbq facilities to groups for fund-raising).

Summary of the Community Partnering project:

- The project aims to bring people, physical and business resources together to develop community-based projects.
- Funded for 2 years to assist groups develop community-based projects.

3. Examples of community-based projects from other places. (Jenny)

Fig Tree Community Garden

- Located in Mooroopna outside of Shepparton
- Started as an activity for people with physical disabilities, but quickly grew to involve many groups in Mooroopna (older people, Scout and Guide groups, kindergarten children, and other local residents).
- Currently 85 people between the ages of 2 and 80 use the garden each week (town has population of 6,500 people).
- Garden activities include herbs, vegetables, flowers, composting of food scraps, recycling of plastics (for seedlings), water conservation (uses roof runoff for water).
- What were the steps to get the garden started?
 - ◊ Early 1997, Council provided access to the land; people on Community Service Orders cleared the block; and someone from the Neighbourhood House started working on the project 3 hours/week
 - ◊ April 1997, first gardening group started
 - ◊ August 1998, officially opened
 - ◊ 1998, won a State Award in the National Bank Community Awards, and awarded Special Commendation in the Keep Australia Beautiful Awards.

4. Other ideas for community-based projects. (Yvonne, with support from Jenny)

- Whiteboard/brainstorm other ideas that people have (looking for possibilities, not for problems and obstacles)
- If necessary, prompt with the ideas that the classes have already talked about:
 - ◊ Tool library
 - ◊ Home maintenance project
 - ◊ Car maintenance project

5. What to do with these ideas. (Yvonne, with support from Jenny)

- Let the group know about the larger workshop that they are invited to. The workshop will bring together people from other groups like Lifeskills, the Men's Group in Moe, people who do classes at the Neighbourhood Houses, and people from SCOPE classes.

- There are three ways forward for the ideas from today's small workshop:
 - ◊ Present our ideas to the larger workshop
 - ◊ If there are projects people are really interested in, we can get more information together, or even invite someone involved in a project (like Fig Tree Community Garden) to talk at the larger workshop
 - ◊ Maybe some people would like to be identified with an idea now, and would like to get together to talk about the idea more before the bigger workshop.

The Numeracy and Literacy classes decided they wanted to find out more about community gardens at another workshop; and a small group was interested in meeting again to talk more about a car maintenance workshop. People from the other groups that the Community Researchers were working with were also interested in community gardens so a workshop called 'How to create a community garden' was organised (see pages 101-102). This led to the establishment of a community garden and several people who were involved in the initial discussions on the pizza-making day are now members of the Committee of Management of the garden (see pages 115 to 118).

With the support of a Community Researcher the group interested in a car maintenance workshop held several meetings and then met with people who taught car maintenance at TAFE and other adult education classes. There was a lot of interest in the idea, particularly from young people. However, the group could not find a suitable building and could not find a way of addressing the safety requirements without a large injection of funding. The idea has been put to a number of service providers to see if they can come up with strategies for developing the workshop.



APPENDIX 5

Sample Workshop Program and Facilitators' Instructions



“Ideas” Workshop: Presenters’ Program

10.00 Introduction (15 mins)

Thank everyone for coming and introduce the project team.

Aim of the day:

- To generate ideas for community projects; and
- To come up with some ways to start turning the ideas into realities.

10.15 The Resources of the Latrobe Valley (2 mins)

Introduce the asset-based focus of the project.

People as the Primary Resource (10 mins)

Feedback of the Portrait of Gifts

- Gifts of the Hands — Latrobe Valley as a skilful community
- Gifts of the Heart — Latrobe Valley as a caring community
- Gifts of the Head — Latrobe Valley as a learning community

Physical Resources (8 mins)

Examples of commercial, industrial, open space, public buildings and other physical resources that could potentially be used for community projects.

Business Resources (5 mins)

Contributions by businesses, for example:

- Hazelwood Power’s contribution to the community playground in Morwell
- A restaurant that donates “waste” food to a worm farm
- A pharmacy that provides a pick up and delivery service for pensioners.

Institutional Resources (2 Mins)

Examples of institutional contributions, for example:

- La Trobe Shire Council’s Community Grants Scheme
- State and Federal Government Grant Schemes
- Philanthropic trusts
- Non-monetary forms of support by institutions, like leases on land and buildings.

Summary of Project (3 mins)

- Community Partnering aims to bring people and other resources together for community-based projects

10.45 The Resources of the Latrobe Valley (15 mins)

Fig Tree Community Garden

(see <http://www.rspas.anu.edu.au/ce/stories>)

CERES (see <http://www.ceres.vic.au>)

Octopod (see <http://www.octopod.org.au>)

Community Recycling (see <http://www.crn.org.uk/about.cases.main.html>)

11.00 Introduce Workshop One—Brainstorm of Ideas (15 mins)

Aim of workshop

Rules of brainstorming

Divide into groups and allocate facilitators

11.15 MORNING TEA**11.45 Workshop One—Brainstorm of Ideas** (45 mins)**12.30 LUNCH**

(Facilitators arrange ideas from Workshop One into common themes, ready for Workshop Two)

1.30 Introduce Workshop Two—The Next Step (30 mins)

Overview of the themes and ideas from Workshop One.

Outline potential next steps, for example:

- A workshop at which more information will be presented about other projects based on this idea
- Group meets again to keep working on the idea (decide on a time and venue)
- Decide that no-one in the group wants to pursue the idea further at the moment.

Divide into groups based on people's areas of interest. Allocate facilitators.

2.00 Workshop Session Two (45 mins)

(Facilitators make sure people leave their names and addresses so they receive update sheets)

2.45 Summary (15 mins)

Brief summary from each group reporting on their next step.



APPENDIX 6

Project Newsletters



October '99

Number 1

COMMUNITY PARTNERING UPDATE

Community Garden Get-Together

**Wednesday 20 October 1999,
2.30 - 4.00pm**

**Room 10, Ground Floor,
Latrobe Regional Art Gallery
Building, 138 Commercial
Road, Morwell.**

**Come along to help start
planning the Community
Garden.**



**If you would like to be involved, but can't
make this meeting, contact Yvonne,
Stephen, Leanne or Alan on 5136 9270.**

**Transport available, ring Yvonne,
Stephen, Leanne or Alan, 5136 9270.**

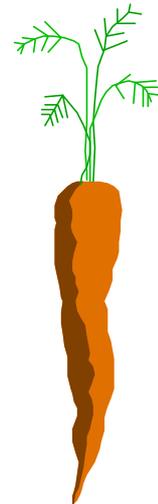
“How To” Workshops

“How To” Workshops were held at Morwell Bowling Club, Friday 8 October, to talk about community gardens and tool sheds.

COMMUNITY GARDENS

A range of community garden ideas were talked about, including:

- Having communal plots to grow food for groups like the Food Bank
- Growing organic vegetables for commercial sale
- Including chooks in the garden
- Recycling water and composting
- Having a hydroponic system
- Using old shipping containers as secure garden sheds.



A highlight of the morning was the talk by Gil Freeman from CERES (Centre for Education & Research in Environmental Strategies) in Brunswick, Melbourne. Gil talked about how CERES was started 20 years ago on an old tip site by 3 volunteers who were concerned about the high levels of unemployment in inner-city Melbourne. CERES is now a non-profit incorporated association with a budget of \$1.6 million. 15 people are employed full-time and another 50 part-time.

CERES includes community gardens, chooks, a worm farm, bees, an animal farm, alternative energy farm, commercial cafe and commercial plant nursery.



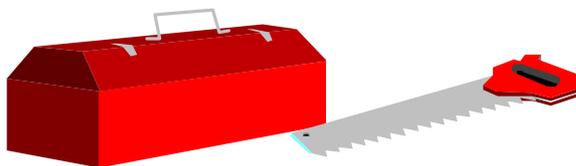
The Community Partnering Project will be visiting CERES. If you would like to come along, call Stephen Lister on 5136 9270.

COMMUNITY TOOL SHEDS

In the afternoon, Joe America from Mornington Peninsula Co-operative talked about the “The Help Service”, which offers household and gardening services for older residents.

Workshop groups then explored ideas for community tool sheds in the La Trobe Shire, including:

- a tool lending library
- a register of skills that people would like to share
- incorporating the tool shed as part of a community garden (come along to the meeting on 20 October to talk more about this idea).



If you would like to be involved in a Community Tool Shed, contact Yvonne Joyce on 5136 9270.

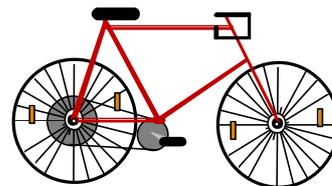
Community Ideas Bank

An “Ideas Workshop” was held at Kernot Hall on Wednesday 6 October to brainstorm the sorts of community-based projects people of the La Trobe Shire are interested in. Ideas are:

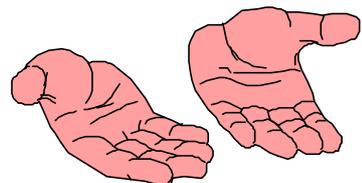
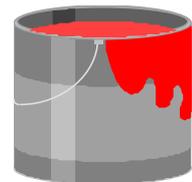
(**Bold type** indicates that there is someone ready to begin working on this idea)

MAKING AND EXCHANGING

- Fixing old bikes and making them roadworthy



- Tool recycling and lending library
- **Making wooden furniture without power tools (bodging)**
- **Making bush furniture**
- Lawn mowing for elderly people
- Half-used paint exchange
- Sharing boat building skills
- Fixing broken furniture
- Furniture exchange
- Dress pattern exchange
- Fibre and fabric bank
- Sharing garden tools
- Book binding
- Learning exchange that utilises ‘grey power’



- Handyman assistance for the aged
- Inventors' resource centre
- **Community wood workshop**
- **Community telephone service**

- Internet café for youth in small towns
- Youth newspaper
- Community film making workshop



CULTURAL PROJECTS

- Photographic developing room
- Matching social dancers with learners
- **Music festivals and workshops**
- Communal cooking kitchen
- SEC recognition day
- Community bush dances
- Documenting family histories and personal stories
- **Music jam sessions**
- Book reading
- Sheet music/musical instrument exchange
- Collectors' directory
- Street parties
- Matching people who play musical instruments with those who want to start to learn to play music
- Art and beautification projects:

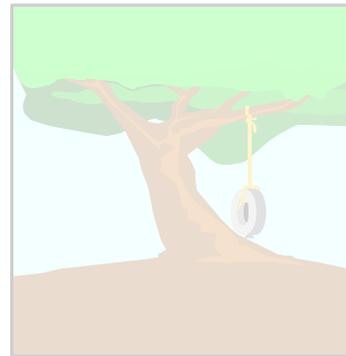


- ◇ Christmas street decorations
- ◇ Murals
- ◇ Painting Spaces
- ◇ Designing Trees

- Family art celebrations between Xmas and New Year

ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS

- Fixing gardens for elderly or others in need of assistance
- Wetland management
- Cleaning up waterways for children's play



- Revegetation projects
- Recycling demolition materials
- Public bushland care

- Garden produce exchange
- **Community chook yard**
- **Community gardens**
- Collection point for sawdust and manure for community composting
- Water recycling off roofs
- Backyard tank yabbie and fish farming
- Backyard seed banks for native plants
- Register of public open space that could be used for community projects



- Teaching young people bush appreciation
- Recycling station for clean industrial waste to be used by pre-schools, primary schools for art works

OTHER IDEAS WERE FOR:

- Sleep workshop
- Management options for community projects
- Communication and networking projects
- **Street lighting**
- **People's place**
- **Community awareness about mental health issues**

For more information about any of these ideas or the Community Partnering Project contact Yvonne Joyce, Stephen Lister, Leanne Vella or Alan Riley on 5136 9270.

The Community Partnering Project aims to support community based initiatives across the La Trobe Shire. The project is funded for two years (1999 & 2000) by La Trobe Shire, Monash University, Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (Australian Research Council), with support from Australian Paper and Loy Yang Power.

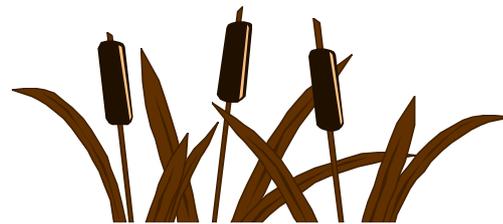


Project Profile

Easy Care Gardening Inc. (ECG Inc.) is a Sydney-based not-for-profit organisation creating low maintenance gardens for people who are frail, aged, or have a disability. ECG Inc. helps people to live in their homes for as long as they can manage.

The group started in 1988 in the northern suburbs of Sydney, an area with an aging population and where the homes and gardens tend to be large. Beginning with 3 volunteers and 25 clients, ECG Inc. now has more than 310 clients who need gardening assistance and 140 who need lawn-mowing. There are 4 full-time staff and more than 150 volunteers, many of whom are older people.

Along with general mowing and gardening



services. ECG Inc. will convert gardens to the easy-care principle. Using mulch and appropriate plants easy-care gardens are low maintenance and require only minimal upkeep.

Clients are charged a small fee that is negotiable. Financial support comes from Home and Community Care (funded by the state and Commonwealth governments). Donations of funds, equipment, assistance and support are also provided by local councils, community clubs, individuals and schools. 200 people have joined as Friends of Easy Care Gardening and have a say in the running of the group.

Source: <http://www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/ext/casestudy/69.htm>

June 2000

Number 6

COMMUNITY PARTNERING PROJECT

UPDATE

Circus Workshop

with trainers from **Circus Oz**
and **Moscow Circus**



**Training in acrobatics,
stiltwalking, unicycle, devil
sticks, diabolo & more . . . !**

*This workshop is for young
unemployed people.*

Wednesday 21 June, 10am – 4.30pm
**Luke's Place, Princes Highway,
Morwell**

BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL
Ring Leanne 5136 9270 (Mon - Weds),
JPET 5135 3006 or
Luke's Place 5127 6699



Sponsored by:

- ◆ Community Partnering Project
- ◆ GEST JPET
- ◆ Luke's Place

Funded by:

- ◆ School Focussed Youth Service

Community Garden

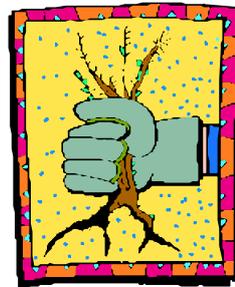
**Working Bee to start
tidying up the site.**

**Old Morwell Caravan Park,
Maryvale Crescent,
Morwell**
**Wednesday June 21,
10am – 4pm.**



Lunch Provided by Latrobe Valley
Community Environmental Gardens
Inc. & Morwell Neighbourhood House
and Learning Centre Inc..

Bring gloves & working boots



If it's raining come for lunch 11am – 2pm
Ground Floor, Latrobe Regional Art Gallery
Building, 138 Commercial Rd, Morwell.

NEWS FLASH

On the morning of the working bee, Morwell Neighbourhood House and Learning Centre Inc. is running a bus trip to Dasma's Material Recovery Centre and Op Shops in Morwell. The bus trip will join the community garden 'working bee' for lunch at 12.30. For more information call Gaylene 5134 5488 (Mon - Weds).

Bus Trip

Kevin Heinze Garden Centre

Kevin Heinze Garden Centre has raised garden beds and other facilities for people with special gardening requirements.

Wednesday 28 June, 9.30am-5pm
(Bring lunch or money for lunch)

Space is limited so ring Leanne or Jenny (5136 Mon, Weds) to book 9270 - Tues,



Sausage Sizzle Fundraisers

Friday 9 June & Friday 16 June
10am – 6pm

Bunnings Warehouse, Mid-Valley

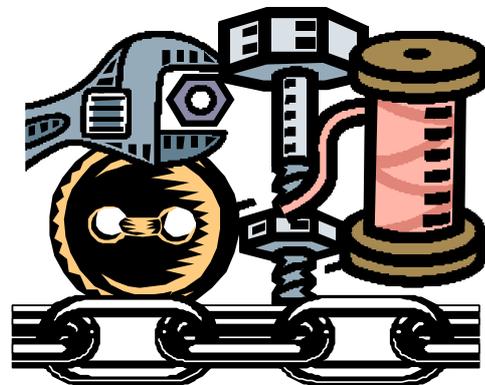
Fundraising for Public Liability and Volunteers Accident Insurance for the community garden.



Community Partnering Project is funded by:

Creative Reuse Centre

Work is now underway to get the creative reuse centre started. The centre will collect off-cuts, rejects, seconds and other “waste” materials from business and industry. The materials will be available for schools, pre-schools, kindergartens, community groups, families and individuals to use in creative and inventive



activities.

The centre will also run workshops like Santa’s Workshop, and Invention and Tinkering Workshops.

Santa’s Workshop



Returning
Aug. – Dec.
2000

Australian Paper

Loy Yang Power