

# Fostering Community-led Change

*Guidelines for How Local Governments Can Better Collaborate with Communities to Set Priorities, Produce Social Capital, and Improve Outcomes*

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# Acknowledgements

We wish to thank the leaders of the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, the Louisville Office of Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods, and the District Council members of New York City for generously sharing their insights and for their tireless dedication to the people and communities that they serve.

We are grateful to Ryan Goss, Megan Humes, and their associates at the Centre for Public Impact for their guidance, collaboration, and openness throughout the development of this project.

We appreciate the time and insights of Professors Archon Fung, Julie Boatright Wilson, and Chris Avery. Our work was informed and improved by their thoughtful input on how to navigate this important, complex topic.

We are also grateful for the experts from Harvard University, the Participatory Budgeting Project, and the broader community who graciously shared their knowledge and experiences.

We sincerely thank the Roy and Lila Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation for providing us with funding to support our research.

Lastly, we are thankful for each other and our communities for supporting us throughout this work and reminding us of the value of social capital and connection, particularly in light of the distance and challenges resulting from the coronavirus.

# Executive Summary

## The Problem

In recent years, trust in the United States has declined both within communities and between communities and governments. Heightened ideological differences and reduced civic participation prevent communities from trusting each other and thus working together. Furthermore, growing partisanship and disparities in representation hinder governments' ability to collaborate, make progress on important initiatives, and equitably serve constituents. At the same time, there is widening economic inequality and persistent racial injustices. These factors combine to hinder collective thriving in the United States.

## The Opportunity

Social capital is fundamental to individual and collective well-being, equipping people with the trust and relationships required to collaborate and improve outcomes. As a tool, social capital has been applied to increase community cohesion, economic mobility, and democratic representation, among other priorities. In light of social capital's many benefits, there is an opportunity for governments and communities to learn how to leverage it together to equitably serve the public good.

*Social capital is the “links, shared values, and understandings in society that enable individuals and groups to trust each other and so work together.”*

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

**Thus, this report explores the central role that social capital plays in helping communities thrive in the United States. Moreover, it provides guidance on how local governments and communities can co-lead initiatives to build and sustain social capital while dismantling systemic inequities and centering communities and their priorities.**

## Case Studies

To address these questions, we developed case studies on initiatives in New York City, Louisville, and Boston to determine what factors facilitate and impede the development of social capital, both within communities and between communities and government. These cases span a range of government-community involvement, from more government-dominated to more community-dominated in nature. They also cover diverse policy topics, including civic engagement, violence prevention, and urban community development, demonstrating the breadth of areas in which social capital can have impact.

## Lessons

From our analysis of the case studies, we gleaned the following key insights for effectively building social capital:

1. Initiatives should build relationships within and between communities and governments. They should also be designed to bolster organizational legitimacy and community trust.
2. In addition, initiatives for developing social capital should contain three core components: community ownership, capacity-building for collective action, and a focus on equity.
3. There is no one right mechanism for building social capital; rather, initiatives should be designed to fit their unique context and evolve over time to reflect the changing needs of the community.
4. A prominent challenge to developing social capital is resources and sustainability. Because social capital is dynamic and complex, related initiatives should provide sufficient investment to support continuous adaptation and reinforcement.

## Recommendations

We applied the findings from the case studies, our literature review, and interviews with experts to develop recommendations. These recommendations include guiding principles and a toolkit to support government-community collaboratives in how to think about, design, and implement initiatives related to social capital. The guiding principles are as follows:

1. Governments and communities should co-own, co-create, and co-lead all aspects of the initiative and the resources and institutions that sustain it.
2. Collaboration relies on legitimacy and trust between governments and communities.

3. Initiatives to support social capital should involve not only governments and their constituents but also community-oriented organizations.
4. These initiatives should not rely on the government's pre-existing perceptions of community priorities, needs, and assets or of appropriate mechanisms for supporting social capital.
5. Governments and communities should adopt a growth mindset and a culture of experimentation in efforts to support social capital.
6. Building social capital takes time, resources, and commitment.
7. Social capital should not be considered in isolation.
8. Initiatives to build social capital should seek to develop community capacity for collective action.
9. All processes in the initiative should take an equity lens and moreover seek to undo existing inequities.

To help initiative teams fulfill these principles, this report also provides a toolkit of a versatile set of strategies. It includes specific best practices for diagnosing the core priority of the initiative, designing the initiative's processes and structures, and measuring impact. These tools can be applied by government-community collaboratives and external partners who might advise on the creation and implementation of initiatives to build social capital.

## Next Steps

The research and recommendations in this report are intended to inform the work of the Centre for Public Impact (CPI), a non-profit focused on reimagining government. Its work in North America focuses on three key, interrelated issues: city innovation, economic mobility, and government legitimacy. As such, the goal of this report is to help CPI identify best practices and opportunities to support cities in efforts to develop social capital. Given the many ways in which social capital contributes to collective well-being, we look forward to seeing how CPI and others leverage this report to partner with and benefit communities.

# Introduction

**The current social and political climate in the United States is marked by declines in trust and new and enduring divisions between communities. These conditions hinder thriving for many Americans and make it more difficult to solve key issues.<sup>1</sup>**

According to Pew Research Center, approximately 71 percent of surveyed Americans believe that interpersonal trust within the country has declined during the past 20 years.<sup>2</sup> Waning trust is associated with a variety of divisions in society. As participation in trust-building institutions like civic associations and faith organizations has declined, gaps between socioeconomic groups have widened.<sup>3</sup> Income inequality has increased in recent decades and reached a peak in 2018, contributing to stark gaps in economic mobility and lived experience.<sup>4</sup> Many forms of racial inequities and divides persist, including segregation in schools and neighborhoods, while xenophobia and hate crimes have resurged in recent years.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, increased partisanship and animosity toward members of different political parties have contributed to political divisions and strife.<sup>6</sup>

At the same time, divisions have grown between communities and governments, resulting in policymaking that does not serve public interests and impedes healthy democracy. Public trust in government has decreased since 2001 and remains at low levels; less than 30 percent of Americans have indicated trust in government in every major nationwide poll since July

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<sup>1</sup> Lee Rainie, Scott Keeter, and Andrew Perrin, "Americans' Trust in Government, Each Other, Leaders," Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, July 22, 2019, <https://www.people-press.org/2019/07/22/trust-and-distrust-in-america/>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001).

<sup>4</sup> Gina Heeb, "US income inequality jumps to highest level ever recorded," *Business Insider*, September 27, 2019, <https://markets.businessinsider.com/news/stocks/income-inequality-reached-highest-level-ever-recorded-in-2018-2019-9-1028559996>.

<sup>5</sup> "Racism, Xenophobia Increasing Globally, Experts Tell Third Committee, amid Calls for Laws to Combat Hate Speech, Concerns over Freedom of Expression," United Nations General Assembly, Third Committee, 71st Session, November 1, 2016, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2016/gashc4182.doc.htm>.

<sup>6</sup> Philip Bump, "The partisan divide keeps growing," *Washington Post*, October 11, 2019, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/10/11/partisan-divide-keeps-growing/>.

2007, the longest period of low trust in government recorded in over 50 years.<sup>7</sup> Only about half of respondents say that average citizens can “influence government if they make an effort.”<sup>8</sup> This perception underestimates actual trends; a study of public opinion and policy change from 1981 to 2002 found that average citizens and public interest groups have minimal independent influence on U.S. policy.<sup>9</sup>

Taken together, these conditions suggest that the strength of relationships and connections both within and between communities and government has eroded in the United States, with negative impacts for collective well-being. However, these bonds are critical to addressing the very issues outlined above and others essential to the public good. Building social capital in communities is linked to many positive outcomes, including higher-quality jobs, better health, and happier residents. In this context, efforts to build social capital—the measure of connections between individuals and organizations that facilitate collective betterment—are perhaps more salient than ever. In light of growing gaps within communities and between community priorities and policy decisions in the U.S., we are particularly interested in how governments and communities can collaborate to build social capital in a way that promotes equity, enables community leadership, and builds community capacity for collective action.

**Thus, this report explores the central role that social capital plays in helping communities thrive in the United States. Moreover, it provides guidance on how local governments and communities can co-lead initiatives to build and sustain social capital while dismantling systemic inequities and centering communities and their priorities.**

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<sup>7</sup> This finding refers to government inclusively, rather than government at a particular level (federal, state, local). See Samantha Smith, “6 key takeaways about how Americans view their government,” Pew Research Center, November 23, 2015, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/11/23/6-key-takeaways-about-how-americans-view-their-government/>; “Public Trust in Government: 1958–2019,” Pew Research Center, April 11, 2019, <https://www.people-press.org/2019/04/11/public-trust-in-government-1958-2019/>. Other polls suggest that while state and local governments are consistently viewed more favorably than federal government, public opinion of all government levels has remained lower than the most recent peak in 2001. See “The Public, The Political System, and American Democracy,” Pew Research Center, April 26, 2018, 18, <https://www.people-press.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2018/04/4-26-2018-Democracy-release-1.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> Pew Research Center, “The Public, The Political System, and American Democracy,” 74.

<sup>9</sup> Martin Gilens and Benjamin I. Page, “Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens,” *Perspectives on Politics* 12, no. 3 (September 2014): 564, [https://scholar.princeton.edu/sites/default/files/mgilens/files/gilens\\_and\\_page\\_2014\\_testing\\_theories\\_of\\_american\\_politics.doc.pdf](https://scholar.princeton.edu/sites/default/files/mgilens/files/gilens_and_page_2014_testing_theories_of_american_politics.doc.pdf).

## Client Description

Our research serves to inform the work of the Centre for Public Impact (CPI), a global non-profit organization launched by Boston Consulting Group. CPI collaborates with governments, community members, and other stakeholders to reimagine government so that it benefits everyone.<sup>10</sup> The Centre's work in North America focuses on three key, interrelated issues:<sup>11</sup>

1. **City Innovation:** Tackling complex problems by working with city leaders to research, test, and scale new strategies
2. **Economic Mobility:** Promoting well-being and addressing the cause of significant political and social unrest in the U.S.
3. **Legitimacy:** Restoring the relationship between governments and the people they serve

CPI advances these priorities through ongoing research and dialogue, development of tools and trainings to improve governance, and partnerships with changemakers. These activities serve to build a movement toward “a world where governments help societies to better respond to the complex challenges they face by prioritising human relationships and championing the need for our public institutions to listen, learn, and adapt.”<sup>12</sup>

## Core Questions

The following core questions guided our research:

- Why and how should governments consider social capital as a mechanism for strengthening communities?
- How should local governments approach and facilitate initiatives to build social capital in equal partnership with their constituents to help them thrive?
- What is the role of CPI in shaping a partner agency's initiatives around this topic?

In line with these central questions, we offer an analysis of the ways in which governments and communities can partner to develop, implement, and sustain initiatives that build social capital to help address important priorities. In addition to the core questions above, we considered questions related to 1) diversity, equity, and inclusion and 2) diagnosis, process, and measurement. See Appendix A for our research questions related to these considerations.

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<sup>10</sup> “About Us,” Centre for Public Impact (CPI), accessed April 1, 2020, <https://www.centreforpublicimpact.org/about-us/>.

<sup>11</sup> “CPI in North America,” CPI, accessed April 1, 2020, [www.centreforpublicimpact.org/north-america/](http://www.centreforpublicimpact.org/north-america/).

<sup>12</sup> CPI, “About Us.”

# Background

## Defining Social Capital

Social capital has been a popular topic of study since the early 1980s. However, the resulting research has addressed a wide range of phenomena based on different definitions of the term “social capital.”<sup>13</sup> Foundationally, we use formulations of the term from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). First, social capital represents the “links, shared values, and understandings in society that enable individuals and groups to trust each other and so work together.”<sup>14</sup> This definition describes how social capital, beyond being a characteristic of a community, serves as a resource. The OECD also describes social capital as “the resources—emotional, material, practical, financial, intellectual, or professional—that are available to each individual through their personal social networks.”<sup>15</sup> As a multifaceted resource, social capital thus provides the foundation upon which communities can leverage their bonds to achieve collective goals.

## Valuing Social Capital

### *Social Capital Matters for Individual and Collective Well-being*

Social capital produces public benefits across policy areas and levels of society. In 2011, the Tohoku region of Japan was devastated by an earthquake and a tsunami, resulting in roughly 18,500 deaths.<sup>16</sup> While many areas were affected, there was a significantly lower number of lives lost in certain communities. Researchers studied these differences and found that the communities with higher levels of social capital worked more effectively to prevent loss of life by supporting the evacuation of family members and neighbors, particularly those who were

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<sup>13</sup> Tristan Claridge, “Current Definitions of Social Capital: Academic Definitions in 2019,” Social Capital Research and Training, January 15, 2020, <https://www.socialcapitalresearch.com/current-definitions-of-social-capital/>.

<sup>14</sup> Brian Keeley, “What Is Social Capital?” in *Human Capital: How What You Know Shapes Your Life* (Paris, France: OECD, 2007), <https://www.oecd.org/insights/37966934.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> “Social Capital,” Glossary of Statistical Terms, OECD, last modified March 13, 2014, <https://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=3560>.

<sup>16</sup> Daniel P. Aldrich, “After a Disaster, Social Capital Matters More Than Bottled Water and Batteries,” *CityLab*, February 14, 2017, <http://www.citylab.com/cityfixer/2017/02/recovering-from-disasters-social-networks-matter-more-than-bottled-water-and-batteries/516726/>.

vulnerable.<sup>17</sup> The communities still had significantly lower mortality rates after the researchers controlled for other factors, such as seawall height and distance from the ocean.<sup>18</sup>

Social capital has effected many other positive outcomes. For example, in diverse contexts around the world, this resource forms the foundation of successful lending circles typically run by small groups of women.<sup>19</sup> In these circles, individuals contribute a set amount of money each month into a collective fund, from which different members of the group receive awards on a rotating basis.<sup>20</sup> The strength of social capital within these groups is foundational to this style of lending, allowing participants to accrue savings and become more financially stable.

Social capital can also influence the public's response to public health crises like pandemics. Research has found that people were more likely to engage in health-positive behaviors that prevent disease spread when they felt a stronger sense of neighborhood support and connection.<sup>21</sup> The level of social capital within a community also helped to build public awareness and improve information sharing about the disease.<sup>22</sup> While these behaviors are on an individual and community level, they have macro-level implications for collective health.

Along these lines, additional research suggests that social capital among a range of stakeholders can improve government planning and responsiveness in disease outbreaks.<sup>23</sup> In particular, coordinating the provision of medical services across municipalities worked to build social capital between diverse actors, including “public health and public safety [entities], interested parties in neighboring towns, local and state leaders, and volunteers across the state.”<sup>24</sup> The social capital resulting from this regional approach improved response coordination, standardization, resource sharing, and capacity during public health

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Depending on country of origin, other terms for lending circles include cundinas, tandas, pandeiros, hui, and susus.

<sup>20</sup> Shereen Marisol Meraji, “Lending Circles Help Latinas Pay Bills and Invest,” *NPR*, April 1, 2014, <https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2014/04/01/292580644/lending-circles-help-latinas-pay-bills-and-invest>.

<sup>21</sup> Ying-Chih Chuang, et al., “Social Capital and Health-Protective Behavior Intentions in an Influenza Pandemic,” *PLoS ONE* 10, no. 4 (April 2015), <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0122970>.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Howard K. Koh and Rebecca O. Cadigan, “Disaster Preparedness and Social Capital,” in *Social Capital and Health*, ed. Ichiro Kawachi, S. V. Subramanian, and Daniel Kim (New York, NY: Springer New York, 2008), 273–85, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-71311-3\\_13](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-71311-3_13).

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

emergencies.<sup>25</sup> In Massachusetts, this approach “facilitated the efficient ... coordination of seasonal flu vaccine distribution during the shortages of the 2004–2005 season.”<sup>26</sup> These cases demonstrate that social capital is beneficial to individuals, communities, and institutions.

In addition to improving public health responses, social capital can be applied as a mechanism to build the capacity of communities to engage in collective action, a necessary component of democratic systems. For example, research highlights how social capital helps to “maintain democracy by affecting both the quantity and quality of political participation by citizens.”<sup>27</sup> It also suggests that social capital formed the basis of collective action movements that have pushed back on authoritarian regimes and worked to establish more democratic governance.<sup>28</sup>

These examples showcase why social capital is such foundational to any healthy society. **Our social connections are an essential part of human thriving through times of both crisis and normalcy.** Social capital is a significant determinant of individual and collective well-being, with strong correlations to positive social outcomes in areas including economic stability, public health and safety, and civic participation. With such a range of benefits, it is clear why governments are interested in harnessing this important resource for the public good.

### *The Value of Social Capital is Context-Specific*

While social capital produces a myriad of benefits, how and why it is valued differs across individuals and communities. The organization Social Capital Research and Training articulates this point, arguing that “social capital is best valued by the people involved in the context in question, because different people in different contexts will place different values on different aspects of social capital. For example, a farmer might benefit most from feelings of reciprocity—sharing equipment, information, etc.—while a builder might benefit most from people helping them with introductions to good suppliers.”<sup>29</sup> As social capital is perceived and valued differently, efforts to build it should be specific to the context and communities involved.

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Quantity refers to the frequency of participation, and quality refers to the depth of political participation, including communications and information sharing around political concepts. See Pamela Paxton, “Social Capital and Democracy: An Interdependent Relationship,” *American Sociological Review* 67, no. 2 (2002): 258, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3088895>.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Tristan Claridge, “What is the value of social capital?,” Social Capital Research and Training, March 21, 2013, <https://www.socialcapitalresearch.com/value-social-capital/>.

## Harmful Approaches to Social Capital

While social capital should align with the values of the community, this resource can be employed to effect both positive and negative outcomes. At the group level, social bonds and norms of reciprocity can be used to strengthen the collective capacity of antisocial organizations.<sup>30</sup> Though social capital has the potential to enhance community, it can also serve to disenfranchise other groups when applied in a socially exclusive way.

**It is also important to recognize that government entities have often played a problematic role in shaping social capital in the United States.** Policies enacted on a range of topics have been inattentive to their impact on social capital. Furthermore, some policies have hindered the ability of communities to build and maintain social capital. While the following account is not exhaustive, it serves to demonstrate the powerful and lasting influence of government initiatives in shaping social capital in the U.S. context.<sup>31</sup>

Policies have been enacted to facilitate the separation and isolation of communities based on race, negatively impacting their capacity and opportunities for building social capital. For example, the practice of redlining, in which neighborhoods with higher proportions of Black residents were systematically denied mortgage capital, entrenched racial segregation by encouraging banks and white individuals seeking homeownership to avoid “high-risk” areas with “inharmonious racial groups.”<sup>32</sup> Though subsequent legislation sought to promote integration, redlining and other discriminatory policies dismantled social capital and had enduring consequences for relationships between communities across race and ethnicity.

More recently, policies around mass incarceration have thwarted familial and community bonds in communities of color, particularly in lower-income areas. An analysis published in 2018 found that on a given day, 21 percent of Black men born to the lowest-income families were incarcerated.<sup>33</sup> This separation has significant implications for social capital and the opportunity for communities to thrive. For example, the study found that lower rates of father

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<sup>30</sup> Putnam, *Bowling Alone*.

<sup>31</sup> While our analysis mainly focuses on race and class, we acknowledge that these challenges also affect individuals from other marginalized groups.

<sup>32</sup> “Rating of Location,” Part II, Section 9 in *Underwriting Manual: Underwriting and Valuation Procedure Under Title II of the National Housing Act With Revisions to February, 1938* (Washington, D.C.: Federal Housing Administration, 1938).

<sup>33</sup> Raj Chetty, Nathaniel Hendren, Maggie R. Jones, and Sonya R. Porter, *Race and Economic Opportunity in the United States: An Intergenerational Perspective* (Boston: Equality of Opportunity Project, March 2018), 7.

presence in neighborhoods were strongly associated with several negative outcomes for Black boys and men.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, policies through which communities of color are targeted for policing and experience more frequent and longer sentences limit the extent to which they can build bonds and reap the many, intergenerational benefits of those bonds.

In response to these policies and the inequalities they have reinforced, some government entities have launched initiatives to explicitly build social capital in lower-income communities and communities of color. However, many of these initiatives have adopted a deficit-based approach, with a focus on building unidirectional relationships in which predominantly white, higher-income individuals confer resources on lower-income people of color. In these models, the latter communities are falsely perceived as having no assets to contribute in return—a significant misconception, given that these assets help to sustain the communities in the face of economic, racial, and other forms of marginalization. Furthermore, these unidirectional approaches reinforce the power and value assigned to predominantly white, higher-income individuals and the forms of social capital they hold.

## Our Approach to Social Capital

Given this context, our proposal seeks to support local governments in adopting an asset-based, equitable approach to partnering with their constituents to build social capital.

**Our approach posits that initiatives to build social capital must contain three core components: community ownership, capacity-building for community collective action, and a focus on equity.** Community ownership refers to the need for such initiatives to be designed and led within the local context and for community members to have the opportunity and authority to shape the process. Capacity-building signifies that initiatives should not only enhance the strength of community relationships but also bolster the capacities of residents to lead change in their communities moving forward. Finally, a focus on equity upholds the importance of both acknowledging existing inequities that serve as barriers in this work and actively seeking to dismantle those inequities. We hope to use this approach to de-bias our recommendations, center community goals and capacities, and promote equity on the bases of race, class, and other factors.

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<sup>34</sup> In this case, negative outcomes include higher rates of incarceration and lower rates of economic mobility in adulthood.

# Overview of Methodology

We took a multi-pronged approach to assess the role of the government as a partner in building social capital in the communities it serves. Our methodology included the following steps:

- A literature review examining social capital, civic participation, asset-based and equitable approaches to community development, capacity-building for community collective action, and collaborative governance
- Meetings with experts in these fields
- The development of case studies on initiatives that have shaped social capital
- Interviews with governmental, non-profit, and community stakeholders in the prospective and selected case cities
- The development of guidelines and a toolkit of best practices for initiatives to build social capital

Further information on our process, including selection criteria for the cases and sample interview questions, can be found in Appendices B and C.

# Overview of Case Studies

Our case studies focus on initiatives in New York, NY; Louisville, KY; and Boston, MA, specifically in the Dudley neighborhood. As shown below, these three cases present diversity across several metrics relevant for social capital, including degree of community engagement and leadership, type of government-community partnership, and the particular policy areas that the initiatives sought to address in relation to social capital. While these cases do not necessarily reference social capital by name, they all draw on social capital as an integral part of their processes and solutions. We studied these cases to identify and better understand the factors that contribute to building social capital.

	New York City	Louisville	Boston
<b>INITIATIVE</b>	Municipal Participatory Budgeting	Office of Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods	Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative
<b>POLICY AREA</b>	Civic engagement	Violence prevention	Urban community development
<b>PARTNERSHIP</b>	Government-initiated and designed	Government-initiated, community co-created	Community-initiated and designed

**In presenting these cases, the goal is not to provide a “how-to” for replicating the initiatives they describe.** Each of these cases involves challenges and opportunities for improvement. Moreover, as discussed throughout this report, initiatives that seek to build social capital should be specific to the context and shaped by the communities therein. Therefore, while these cases informed our recommendations, they do not represent models to be copied and applied in other contexts. Rather, they should be considered as examples of different processes by which governments and communities became involved in initiatives that developed social capital.

The case descriptions below provide a brief overview of the following: the initiatives, their relevance for building social capital, and the key takeaways of their approaches. The full case studies can be found in Appendices D, E, and F.

## New York City: Participatory Budgeting

### *The Initiative*

Participatory budgeting is a process in which members of the public have a say in determining how to allocate public funds. It is a mechanism for governments and institutions to gain insight from the communities they serve on how constituencies would like officials to spend a portion of the entity's budget. Community members can get involved in the process to varying degrees: designing and proposing project ideas, being an official delegate engaged with government officials, and/or voting on the final selection of projects to fund. In this report, we specifically consider the design and implementation of participatory budgeting in City Council districts in New York City.

Participatory budgeting in the city began as a pilot program in four districts in 2011. It is currently a practice in a majority of the city's districts. Over the last eight cycles of participatory budgeting, the government has implemented a range of community-developed projects including streetscape improvements; additional park amenities; facility, technology, and waste-management upgrades; and new public spaces. Collectively, these improvements have positively contributed to arts culture and community resources, education, green infrastructure, housing, parks and recreation, public health and safety, transportation, and services for seniors and youth.

### *Relevance for Building Social Capital*

Participatory budgeting has the potential to “deepen democracy, build stronger communities, and make public budgets more equitable and effective.”<sup>35</sup> By providing a mechanism for communities to coalesce and articulate, develop, and advocate for their priorities, participatory budgeting strengthens relationships among community members who might otherwise only engage in political processes through more isolated and infrequent means, such as voting. Meanwhile, as a collaborative process in which governments provide support to communities in shaping and implementing their ideas, participatory budgeting can lead to more representative and community-informed governance and thus instill mutual trust between governments and their constituents.

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<sup>35</sup> “What is PB,” Participatory Budgeting Project, accessed March 7, 2020, <https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/what-is-pb/>.

### ***Key Takeaways***

Participatory budgeting increases the role and value afforded to community members in shaping policy platforms and service provisions in partnership with elected officials. As described above, this collaborative approach strengthens relationships within and between community members and governments. However, the mechanics of participatory budgeting lend themselves to several challenges. While the projects that arise from participatory budgeting are context-specific and co-created, the overall process is largely fixed and government-managed, creating a missed opportunity for bolstering community capacity. Any local adaptations to the parameters of participatory budgeting are set by the government, with the potential to be changed or eliminated with political turnover. Meanwhile, issues in building community buy-in and trust have been decisive in shaping the longevity of the initiative, with mixed results across districts. An additional challenge is that while historically marginalized populations such as individuals with criminal records have the opportunity to participate, participatory budgeting has not significantly mitigated existing inequities in access to and representation in political processes. These two challenges highlight the need for concerted investment in facilitating participatory budgeting to ensure robust and equitable community participation. In this context, many elected officials have struggled to allocate sufficient resources to the initiative.

## **Louisville: Office of Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods**

### ***The Initiative***

In 2012, a triple homicide sparked a new sense of urgency in addressing violence in Louisville. The City assembled a team, which later became known as the Violence Prevention Work Group, to examine the problem. This group comprised city officials, community leaders from West Louisville, local academics, and a range of other contributors. Following the recommendations of the group, the local government sought to prevent violence in Louisville by taking a multi-sector, public health approach. In particular, the City established the Office of Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods (OSHN) to conduct a number of programs and campaigns to address the root causes of violence. By creating a dedicated office, the government institutionalized violence prevention and signaled its commitment to the longevity of this work as a public health priority.

In 2015, the OSHN launched a campaign called One Love Louisville, which focuses “on allowing every resident to realize that they have a stake in the well-being of the city.”<sup>36</sup> The campaign is part of the City’s broader strategy to reduce violence by mobilizing residents from all neighborhoods to engage with their communities and create a safer city. Some of the programs include conflict resolution and mental health trainings, education and support for parents, and a range of mentorship opportunities. Though the City’s comprehensive approach to violence prevention has not yet shown a significant impact on current violence rates, the OSHN is measuring its impact over the long term. City initiatives toward violence prevention have demonstrated progress in addressing the contributors to violence through developing social capital. For example, community members have bought into the work of designing, leading, and participating in a variety of OSHN programs. This sense of ownership is critical for the kind of culture change needed to support violence prevention.

### *Relevance for Social Capital*

The approach taken by the OSHN centers the need for social capital in violence prevention. Starting with the approach and recommendations from the Violence Prevention Work Group, community building has been an essential element of violence prevention in Louisville. This approach is especially valuable in addressing violence prevention because of the breakdown of trust within the community caused by increased violence in past years. Community building and the resulting strengthening of social capital both serve to restore a sense of community in neighborhoods that have been divided by violence. They also build the capacity of the community to address the root causes of violence from a public health perspective, such as “low levels of community participation” and “socially disorganized neighborhoods.”<sup>37</sup> Along these lines, the OSHN designed the initiatives to include structured mechanisms for ensuring community integration as well as accountability and transparency. Community members held leadership positions during every phase of program design and iteration, and volunteers from the community lead the implementation and monitoring of the initiatives.

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<sup>36</sup> “One Love Louisville Action Plan,” Louisville-Jefferson County Metro Government, accessed March 20, 2020, <https://louisvilleky.gov/government/one-love-louisville-action-plan>.

<sup>37</sup> “Youth Violence,” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, accessed March 20, 2020, <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/index.html>.

### ***Key Takeaways***

The One Love Louisville campaign and the associated initiatives from the OSHN used a public health lens to develop a holistic strategy for violence prevention. This strategy integrates the perspectives of community members, representatives from many sectors of society, and expert facilitation to design and implement programs that engage affected communities to address the root causes of violence. Its historically informed, racial equity lens guides the way that stakeholders consider appropriate approaches to new initiatives in light of past injustices. In addition, One Love Louisville programs offer guidance and training to help communities expand their capacity for collective action. For example, the OSHN provides resources for establishing neighborhood associations throughout the city and training for community leaders to engage with their networks around violence prevention. By maintaining close collaboration with the community and allowing for iteration over time, OSHN initiatives are able to adapt to community needs and resources. However, because public health frameworks assume that the integrative cultural change needed for violence prevention requires a long-term investment, these initiatives suffer from internal government pressure for resources and external pressure to show an immediate impact on violence reduction.

## **Boston: Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative**

### ***The Initiative***

The mission of the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) is “to empower Dudley residents to organize, plan for, create, and control a vibrant, diverse, and high-quality neighborhood in collaboration with community partners.”<sup>38</sup> DSNI was established in the 1980s as a partnership between community members, local non-profits, Community Development Corporations, churches, and the Riley Foundation to protect against redevelopment and to combat the disinvestment, arson, and illegal dumping that were affecting the Dudley community. Its initial efforts included advocacy to prevent the dumping of toxic waste in the neighborhood and to carry out clean-up projects. These efforts contributed to the creation of social capital between neighbors by uniting them around a common cause. In 1988, the group created a community land trust, which proved vital to its ability to win eminent domain and acquire decision-making power over how vacant land would be treated in the community. Since then, it has served as a powerful organizing coalition that has led development without displacement, community leadership trainings, and other initiatives that build social capital and create opportunities for residents. Recent initiatives have included a cradle-to-career

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<sup>38</sup> “DSNI,” Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, accessed March 15, 2020, <https://www.dsni.org/>.

approach for education, youth homelessness prevention, a neighborhood investment initiative, safe transportation for children to school, and a City-led redevelopment project for a neighboring community.

### ***Relevance for Building Social Capital***

DSNI's approach provides several key lessons for how community-led initiatives can be used to build and reinforce social capital. Core components of its work are building relationships between neighbors and with community organizations in addition to organizing the community to partake in collective action. The organization has a number of practices to realize these goals, including facilitating community meetings, open houses, festivals, resident training events, and resident outreach. DSNI deeply values high community participation and creates the time and space required to allow the community to fully participate in decision making around its initiatives. The organization keeps its community meetings open to all residents and has norms in place that help to guarantee respectful dialogue and community building. The group also supports racial equity in its mission, initiatives, and process. As a whole, DSNI's relationship building, collaborative processes, and commitment to racial equity strongly contribute to the development of social capital within the community and the organization.

### ***Key Takeaways***

DSNI has been remarkably strong at building social capital, developing community leadership, promoting racial equity, and increasing civic capacity for Dudley residents. By co-creating a shared mission and goals, DSNI was able to develop strong community buy-in and ownership over the initiative. In addition, DSNI's commitment to addressing systemic inequities is embedded in organizational structures to promote racial equity in leadership and decision making. Furthermore, the organization's work highlights the benefits of investing in and educating residents to increase community capacity and leadership. While DSNI has been highly effective in many regards, it is vulnerable to a number of challenges. Since systemic change takes a long time to actualize, DSNI has to strive to keep funders, stakeholders, and the community engaged over time. Furthermore, as a non-profit, it has faced challenges with acquiring sufficient funding and resources.

# Lessons

**By analyzing the approaches taken in each of these cases, we discerned several overarching factors that shape the way initiatives produce social capital.** These factors represent important considerations for future efforts to build social capital.

The table on the following page outlines these factors and to what extent they represented areas of improvement for each of the initiatives. There are several important nuances to keep in mind when evaluating the table:

- **Our assessment does not measure the performance of the initiatives relative to one another.** In keeping with our framework for social capital, we consider each initiative's process in light of its unique context and goals. For example, because any given initiative will have its own scope and parameters, we do not compare its effectiveness in increasing equity to that of another initiative.
- **These rankings do not reflect fixed qualities of the initiatives.** Rather than in terms of success or failure, we present our findings as areas of growth because efforts to build social capital should be viewed as adaptive.
- **These categories encompass several interrelated considerations.** Each case reveals nuances beyond those captured in the table. A full analysis of the initiatives and their specific strengths and challenges is included in Appendices D, E, and F.

## Lessons

Factor/Consideration	New York City	Louisville	Dudley
Built relationships within/between communities and government	Area of strength	Area of strength	Area of strength
Centered community leadership and ownership	Area for growth	Area of strength	Area of strength
Increased equity for marginalized groups	Area for growth	Area of strength	Area of strength
Developed community capacity	Area for growth	Area of strength	Area of strength
Resourced, staffed, and funded the initiative to excel	Significant area for growth	Partial area of strength	Significant area for growth
Structured the initiative to ensure long-term sustainability	Partial area of strength	Area for growth	Area for growth
Developed legitimacy and community trust	Partial area of strength	Area of strength	Area of strength
Used a context-specific approach for the initiative	Area for growth	Area of strength	Area of strength

 Area of strength

 Area for growth

 Partial area of strength

 Significant area for growth

This assessment demonstrates that resources and sustainability represent salient concerns for initiatives related to social capital. This challenge may be due to the intangible, complex nature of social capital as an investment and the long-term requirements for systemic change. In addition, the case of participatory budgeting in particular demonstrates the critical distinction between fostering social capital and fostering it in such a way that centers community ownership, capacity-building for community collective action, and equity. This initiative would need to improve in relation to these factors to create social capital that leads to more inclusive and sustainable change. Lastly, this assessment reveals that each case demonstrated strengths in building relationships, both within communities and between communities and government. This finding demonstrates that diverse processes can produce promising results in different contexts. **Therefore, a key lesson from the cases and this assessment is that there is no one “right” mechanism for building social capital. Rather, government-community collaboratives seeking to build social capital should develop processes and strategies that fit their unique contexts.**

# Recommendations

Together with the literature review and meetings with experts, these findings informed our recommendations for initiatives related to building social capital. In the subsequent sections, we provide guidance to help teams develop initiatives that draw from the strengths of these cases while planning for common challenges.

Our recommendations include both a set of guiding principles and a toolkit for creating collaborative, sustainable initiatives centered on fostering social capital. The toolkit includes more tangible best practices to support teams in diagnosing the priorities they want to work on; designing and implementing inclusive processes; and measuring the initiatives' impacts. An abridged list of these principles and tools can be found in Appendix G.

## Guiding Principles

**While initiatives related to social capital should be specific to the context and can take a range of forms, they should all be grounded in the central goal of building and supporting relationships.** In addition to this central goal, the following guiding principles should inform and drive all phases of the process in developing, implementing, and sustaining such initiatives.

These principles are numbered for clarity; their order does not signify relative importance. Indeed, these principles are mutually reinforcing and also underpin several of the diagnosis, process, and measurement tools that we outline in subsequent sections.

### **1. Governments and communities should co-own, co-create, and co-lead all aspects of the initiative.**

Countless public policies and government initiatives have been inattentive to and undermined the capacity of communities to build and maintain strong bonds. In more well-intentioned cases, some initiatives have sought to achieve a positive impact but have been misaligned with community interests and thus ineffective, if not harmful. Therefore, as a central tenet of our recommendations, government-involved initiatives to develop social capital should ground their work in community priorities by sharing the ownership, design, and evolution of the initiative with community members.

When dealing with the nuances of relationships and trust within a community, there is no level of institutional mandate or enforcement that can compel social capital.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, a critique of initiatives related to social capital is that the institution in power can seem manipulative or disingenuous in creating structures intended to develop relationships.<sup>40</sup> This concern is valid; however, it does not mean that governments should avoid any involvement in related initiatives. Rather, governments should provide support to community-driven efforts to strengthen relationships. To achieve meaningful and sustainable social capital, community members must be able to share ownership of the work, tailoring the initiative to meet them where they are and to effect the particular changes that they want to see in their neighborhoods. Meanwhile, the government's role in this type of work should be primarily as a convenor, facilitator, and resource provider.

Government initiatives often do strive for community leadership when planning civic initiatives. However, a common barrier to this level of community engagement is a lack of meaningful follow-through from the government entity. That is, in many cases, governments lay the foundation for robust community engagement, such as allocating positions on decision-making bodies to community members. However, these efforts are rendered ineffective if community members do not have the capacity or willingness to participate.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, it is incumbent on governmental stakeholders to identify and address any barriers to participation, and then to facilitate the mechanisms for community leadership according to resident capacities and preferences. Overall, in initiatives to build social capital, communities and governments should co-own and co-lead the process, with governments proactively enabling and supporting community leadership.

## **2. Collaboration relies on legitimacy and trust between governments and communities.**

As indicated above, there are a number of barriers to effective and meaningful partnership between communities and governments. In particular, a lack of trust can be an obstacle not only in establishing the partnership but also in maintaining it through the development,

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<sup>39</sup> For example, see Laura K. Graham, "Bonding, Bridging, and Constricting," in *Beyond Social Capital: The Role of Leadership, Trust and Government Policy in Northern Ireland's Victim Support Groups* (London: Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 2016), 118; Alexandra Norrish, Nikola Biller-Andorno, Padhraig Ryan, and Thomas H. Lee, "Social Capital Is as Important as Financial Capital in Health Care," *Harvard Business Review*, November 20, 2013, <https://hbr.org/2013/11/social-capital-is-as-important-as-financial-capital-in-health-care>.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Relevant concerns could include a lack of access to reliable transportation to attend the meetings or mistrust in the process.

implementation, and evolution of the initiative. Therefore, governments should seek to build and uphold legitimacy and trust throughout the process to support social capital. This trust should be bidirectional: governments should both take actions to build the community's trust and trust the community to co-lead the work. While this approach might be uncomfortable for government leaders who have not previously worked in this manner or who are reluctant to share decision-making power, building trust is critical to community buy-in and genuine co-creation of initiatives to foster enduring social capital.

**3. Initiatives to support social capital should involve not only governments and their constituents but also community-oriented organizations.**

Approaches and efforts to support social capital are nuanced. Therefore, governments seeking to collaborate with their constituents to support social capital should engage and leverage the expertise of community-based organizations and groups. Calling in these partners helps to bridge the divide between constituents and governments and to expand the number and diversity of stakeholders invested in the initiative and its long-term success. In addition, these local organizations likely have insights into effective ways to connect with community members and the barriers to more inclusive participation and representation.

Community-oriented organizations beyond the local level can also provide guidance on best practices for community engagement. For example, such organizations can offer resources for initially mapping the assets of the community or measuring the effects of the initiative. Best practices should be tailored to the community's particular priorities and conditions, and the inclusion of community-oriented entities should not supplant partnership with community members. However, leveraging the expertise of these partners reduces the burden that a government might otherwise place on itself to develop its processes from scratch.

**4. These initiatives should not rely on the government's pre-existing perceptions of community priorities, needs, and assets or of appropriate mechanisms for supporting social capital.**

A government's reliance on its own assumptions undermines the three above principles. Assumptions can pervade and influence all phases of initiatives, even ones in which communities are given the authority to lead the process. For example, while a government might co-create the mission and goals of the initiative with the community, it might first make some assumptions in choosing that community as a prospective partner or in deciding how best to initially connect with that community. These and other assumptions

can have profound implications for the scope of the initiative, whom it does and does not benefit, and its implications for building relationships within and among communities. Therefore, it is critical to actively engage with community members and partners, center their perspectives, and facilitate critical dialogues in decision making to limit the potential influence of assumptions in shaping the process.

Along these lines, while we advocate for the inclusion of community-oriented organizations in this work, these entities can carry their own assumptions. For example, organizations that develop best practices might assume that a strategy that has worked in other communities will necessarily work in a particular context. Overall, initiatives that rely on this and other assumptions instead of engaging community members and shaping the initiative based on their insights are less likely to be successful.

### **5. Governments and communities should adopt a growth mindset and a culture of experimentation in efforts to support social capital.**

With ineffective or harmful results, many past government initiatives toward social capital suggest that governments might not necessarily have the capacities to successfully partner with their communities in these efforts. Furthermore, building and sustaining relationships is inherently complex and uncertain. Therefore, both missteps and the need for adjustment should be expected. However, these conditions should not preclude governments from action. Rather than focusing on avoiding mistakes at all costs, governments should embrace an iterative process to support positive change, in which trial and error is planned for and pursued in concert with the community.

This culture of experimentation can seem infeasible or even insensitive in contexts where there is animosity between governments and communities due to past harms. The recommendations provided in this report all serve to build the capacity and willingness of governments and communities to trust one another and genuinely partner. Upholding and applying this guidance will enable teams to try different approaches and make mistakes together without risking trust. If the work remains centered on community priorities, leadership, and equity, trials and errors will be viewed as coming from a place of legitimate effort and shared commitment and will result in a more responsive, effective, and sustained initiative in the long term.

## **6. Building social capital takes time, resources, and commitment.**

In addition to the trial and error involved in efforts to develop social capital, there are several aspects to building relationships that require sustained resources. First, social capital is not a condition that can be immediately realized. Strengthening relationships often involves not only changing hearts and minds, but also identifying and addressing the barriers to such change. Therefore, laying the groundwork for social capital and building it takes patience, time, and resources, including resources that one might not originally expect to be necessary or relevant.

Furthermore, social capital is not a permanent condition that, once realized to a certain extent, becomes static. Social capital by any measure, at any level, needs to be reaffirmed over time by relevant stakeholders. Therefore, it is important to account for the resources required to not only build relationships, but also sustain them. Lastly, while building and sustaining social capital is resource-intensive in its own right, advancing social capital in efforts that center community leadership, build community capacity for collective action, and promote equity can require additional investment. However, building social capital in this way also expands the team of stakeholders who have the authority and capacity to support the work moving forward.

## **7. Social capital should not be considered in isolation.**

There are a few key ways in which social capital should be considered holistically. First, as described above, relationships will evolve over time. In addition, social capital takes different forms for different people. Therefore, it should not be considered in terms of any one specific measure or outcome of interest. Rather, the concept of social capital should be considered holistically, inclusive of the varied ways it manifests for different constituencies. Furthermore, these varied forms of social capital should be recognized and supported without a judgment on their value or efficacy for communities.

Lastly, as evidenced by our cases, relationships both shape and are shaped by many social forces. Therefore, strategies to advance social capital should not be viewed in isolation. It is important to continuously identify, assess, and respond to the other factors that influence the building and sustaining of relationships. Also, where government-community collaboratives seek to build social capital to serve a community priority, such as violence reduction in Louisville, that priority should likewise be viewed holistically, with many contributing factors beyond social capital.

After providing several principles to clarify how governments and communities should think about their partnerships, building relationships, and social capital, it is important to specify two other outcomes that governments should seek to effect in collaborative efforts toward social capital: community capacity for collective action and equity.

**8. Initiatives to build social capital should seek to develop community capacity for collective action.**

Initiatives on social capital should involve equipping constituents with the skills and knowledge they need to coalesce and take action on their priorities. Building capacity for collective action has positive implications in line with several other guiding principles; for example, governments will be less likely to rely on assumptions if their constituents have the tools to make their own priorities, needs, and assets clear. Moreover, capacity for collective action is what makes it possible for community members to leverage the social capital they have built to improve collective outcomes. With this capacity, communities have organized to mitigate the impacts of natural disasters, create loan programs to enhance economic opportunity, and change cultural norms to promote health.<sup>42</sup> By building the community's capacity for collective action, initiatives will create lasting change with positive spillover effects across many civic priorities.

**9. All processes in the initiative should take an equity lens and moreover seek to undo existing inequities.**

Lastly, there are many ways in which initiatives to support social capital can perpetuate or even exacerbate existing inequities. Meanwhile, social capital has the potential to improve a range of social outcomes. With so many potential benefits for communities, it is critical to foster social capital in such a way that does not reinforce the privilege of some and the marginalization of others. Rather, if these improved outcomes are to be realized with maximum impact, initiatives to build social capital should be responsive to the priorities and needs of the communities that would benefit from them most.

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<sup>42</sup> Aldrich, "After a Disaster, Social Capital Matters More"; Meraji, "Lending Circles Help Latinas Pay Bills and Invest"; Keiko Miyamoto, Miho Iwakuma, and Nakayama Takeo, "Social capital and health: implication for health promotion by lay citizens in Japan," *Global Health Promotion* 22, no. 4 (October 2014): 5–19, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25319376>.

## Toolkit

There are many ways to uphold the guiding principles in initiatives that build social capital. The subsequent sections outline some of the tools that can aid in this process. **These tools are not exhaustive or mandated**; they represent ideas for government-community stakeholders to consider. The ways in which stakeholders fulfill the guiding principles should be specific to the context and the mission, values, norms, and goals of the initiative.

While many of these tools are overlapping and not sequential, we have organized them into the following categories for clarity. First, *diagnosis tools* serve to aid teams in defining the focus of the initiative, identifying relevant stakeholders, and building the context needed to develop and implement the next steps. *Process tools* relate to practices and norms that can help to structure the initiative in alignment with the guiding principles. Lastly, *measurement tools* provide further guidance on how to approach the assessment of the initiative and its impacts over time. Resources related to these tools can be found in Appendix H.

It is critically important to partner with the community in exploring, adapting, and applying these and other tools. References to “you” in this toolkit signify any government-community collaboratives involved in initiatives to build social capital.

### *Diagnosis*

Taking time to define the priority of the initiative and understand the landscape is fundamentally important for designing solutions that will be appropriate, equitable, and sustainable. Building this foundation on the issues at stake, constituent populations, and range of stakeholders enables thorough analysis and thoughtful intervention. As underscored in the guiding principles, fostering this understanding is an iterative process, and shared knowledge will continue to evolve as the initiative develops and new partners join the initiative.

### Diagnosing the Priority and Context

1. **Define the issue or opportunity clearly, centering community priorities.** Take time to identify the issue or opportunity at hand, including its causes and effects. When refining the focus, pay attention to and challenge any assumptions that arise about how the issue can or should be solved. This approach allows you to maintain an open mind to a range of creative solutions without imposing unhelpful limitations.
2. **Consider and build partnerships with all relevant stakeholders.** Social capital touches all sectors of the community. Make sure to include the perspectives that are implicated in your work, including from community leaders and organizers, government offices,

law enforcement, social service agencies, health officials, local business owners, local academic institutions, faith leaders, and others based on the issues at stake.

- 3. Map community assets.** All stakeholders must understand the assets and resources present in the community. This understanding allows stakeholders to avoid perpetuating harmful biases about community resources. It also provides a richer understanding of the resources that can be leveraged to develop a robust and sustainable strategy for the specific context.
- 4. Develop historical context.** In addition to community assets, understanding the historical background of the community provides critical context for assessing current conditions and their root causes. Often, disenfranchised communities face isolation and low economic opportunity because of the legacy of discriminatory government practices. Recognizing the harm that government interventions have caused in the past can inform strategies moving forward and serve as an important reminder to take care in elevating equity in the work. Historical context also provides valuable insights for how to engage the community with sensitivity.

### IN PRACTICE: Louisville

The City of Louisville used expert literature on violence as a public health concern to guide the approach to the issue. Before beginning to design the initiative, the government organized the Violence Prevention Work Group to bring together community members and stakeholders from all sectors of the city to explore the history of the affected community and the context of violence. The team also took time to identify the community's assets, resources, and liabilities to develop a full understanding of the situation. This group drew on this multi-sector approach and the historical context of the area to create a holistic conception of the issue and opportunity at stake and the range of existing resources.

### *Process*

These tools relate to processes that aid in developing, implementing, and sustaining initiatives to build social capital. Depending on the initiative, some of these steps might occur in tandem with diagnosis. Along these lines, the following tools should be viewed as ongoing, concurrent strategies that should adapt to new learnings and changes in conditions over time. The order of these tools does not indicate relative importance. In addition, we reiterate that the goal is to provide a starting place for developing the structure, practices, and culture of the initiative.

## Setting the Mission and Goals

- 1. Co-create a clear shared mission, values, norms, and goals that inform your focus and process.** By co-creating a community vision, you can establish alignment within the initiative, build community and stakeholder buy-in for the work, and develop relationships. Norms should seek to promote identity and cohesion among stakeholders. In addition, be sure to center community leadership, capacity for collective action, and equity within the mission, values, norms and goals to help ensure that it stays a priority.
- 2. Set up structures to protect against mission drift.** These structures can help keep the team accountable to the vision, particularly as tempting opportunities outside the scope of your work arise. Possible strategies include creating an oversight committee that consists of government officials, community members, and other stakeholders to enforce accountability to the mission.
- 3. Establish periodic meetings to review and update goals.** These meetings allow you to consider and respond to the evolution of the initiative's purpose over time as you learn of new challenges and make progress on existing goals.

### IN PRACTICE: Dudley

DSNI relied on a highly collaborative process to co-create a shared mission, values, norms, and goals. This shared vision has proven vital to DSNI's success, keeping the community and equity centered in the work and ensuring that participants engage in accordance with the community norms. DSNI relies on the resident-led board to protect against mission drift by having board members participate in longer-term goal setting and provide feedback on programmatic decision making. DSNI also engages the community in updating the goals every two years to ensure continued responsiveness to community needs.

## Building Community

- 1. Establish a foundation of trust and respect so that stakeholders can authentically engage in the work.** Give special attention to creating a working environment that encourages, supports, and values all voices in being heard, particularly those that are often silenced in certain spaces and groups. The mission, values, and norms can support this type of work by giving stakeholders a shared language and reference point for communication and collaboration.

- 2. Provide institutional space for community members to problem-solve.** Designate and maintain institutional space that allows community stakeholders to critically engage with the priorities of their communities. In addition to physical accommodations and materials, building this space involves the aforementioned tool on trust and respect, alignment on the shared purpose, and cooperation.
- 3. Surface productive tension.** When handled properly, conflict can serve as a mechanism for increasing trust in the process and incorporating diverse voices. Strategies for leveraging productive tension could include providing trainings on how and when to give feedback, how to respectfully communicate dissenting views, and how to engage with thoughtful sharing and listening. In addition, party-neutral facilitators can help to synthesize and find commonalities across differing perspectives and productively manage conflict.
- 4. Take time to celebrate community.** While this tool is easy to overlook as superfluous, it is critical to experience the feelings and traditions that make community special. Intentionally creating opportunities to celebrate together and take joy and pride in the unique culture of the community is essential for sustaining the motivation to do difficult work. It also provides an opportunity for the initiative team and the greater community to come together to strengthen relationships, trust, and social capital.

### IN PRACTICE: Dudley

DSNI's community-building skills have contributed to their success in organizing and mobilizing residents to achieve change. DSNI is highly effective at building community within and between residents and the organization. For example, DSNI is very intentional with how staff interacts with residents and uses celebrations and traditions to strengthen relationships with and between community members. In addition, DSNI's norms and values have successfully worked over 30 years to create a holding space where community members feel comfortable sharing diverse opinions, working through conflict, and solving community issues. Community members deeply believe in the norms and values and use them to hold each other accountable in having respectful, equitable, and productive dialogues.

## Centering Equity in the Work

- 1. Pay attention to the details of equitable community engagement throughout the process.** At any stage, seemingly small factors like meeting location, time, and who sets and sets and sends the agenda have an impact on who has an opportunity to participate and lead the process. Centering equity throughout the development, implementation, and evolution of the initiative requires careful consideration of such factors and collaboration across stakeholders to ensure that processes that reinforce marginalization are identified and discontinued.
- 2. Engage in anti-bias training and challenge how the team may be unintentionally perpetuating inequities in the work.** A number of practices can support equitable thinking, including ongoing anti-bias training for all team members. Furthermore, teams should collaborate to challenge themselves on how they perceive and perform the work. This strategy can include reframing questions ordinarily asked in the process of evaluating and seeking to solve community issues. For example, instead of asking “How do we reduce crime in this neighborhood?,” team members should work together to ask “How might existing structures and policies reinforce crime in this neighborhood instead of counteracting it?”
- 3. Acknowledge different baselines and allocate resources to compensate for historical inequities and disinvestment.** In addition to diagnosis, the above strategies help to reveal how communities have experienced different levels of access and opportunity, both historically and today. Once you understand these disparities, it is critical to prioritize and distribute resources to reflect these inequities and provide greater investment toward historically marginalized constituencies.
- 4. Build a team that reflects the community. Give greater weight to input from the communities most affected by the work.** Community representation helps to center community voices and increase legitimacy and trust in the initiative. Even in teams with designated leadership positions for community members, pay attention to who is occupying leadership roles to ensure that the initiative is truly co-led and co-created. Within the team, greater weight should be given to input from individuals from the communities most affected by the work, as they will have the deepest insights on what their communities need. However, it is key not to place undue burden on specific individuals to represent the thoughts and ideas of an entire community, as this approach is harmful to these individuals and inherently reductive to a wide range of experiences. Employing these and other strategies for equitable representation will help to uphold community buy-in and trust.

### IN PRACTICE: New York City

Participatory budgeting in New York City has engaged a more diverse population of residents than other political processes, such as elections. However, equity represents a significant area of improvement, in part because this initiative does not adequately address the details of equitable engagement or involve a team that reflects the community. For example, while budget delegates receive guidance to consider equity in assessing project proposals, these delegates opt in to the role and primarily represent individuals with more time, resources, and experience in collective action. Meanwhile, communities who have historically been marginalized still have less capacity to lead the process. Participatory budgeting would better fulfill its goal to expand civic engagement and build relationships if it was more proactive in allocating resources to compensate for historical inequities in access, capacity building, and representation in political processes.

### Establishing an Organizational Structure

1. **Build community ownership into the governance structure.** Design the organizational structure of the initiative such that community members have designated positions of authority at all levels.
2. **Establish public decision-making mechanisms.** Organize accessible and inclusive public meetings to engage in a dialogue with community members who are not normally embedded in the initiative and enable them to shape the process. This tool helps to include new voices, aiding the legitimacy, responsiveness, and iteration of the initiative.
3. **Design the initiative to reduce vertical and horizontal silos.** Differences in hierarchy (vertical silos) can create negative working dynamics that make it difficult for people to take risks and develop creative solutions. Creating a flatter organizational structure can promote innovation and equity. Meanwhile, horizontal silos can impede information sharing and collaboration. Establishing structures to ensure coordination can reduce horizontal silos and barriers to progress.
4. **Create cross-sector partnerships.** In addition to involving community stakeholders and organizations, integrate multiple government agencies and offices into your work. This expanded organizational structure institutionalizes the inclusion of relevant stakeholders and provides clarity on how these partners should collaborate.

**IN PRACTICE: Louisville**

In its governance structure, the Office of Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods designates leadership positions for community members in working groups and committees. These positions ensure shared decision making and that community voices are continuously integrated into the implementation and monitoring of initiatives.

**Building Capacity**

- 1. Hire from the community.** Hiring from the community bolsters the capacity of the initiative to be responsive to community needs. If community members are given meaningful and impactful positions, it can also build their capacity to lead change and strengthen social capital between the community and the government. Lastly, this strategy can build legitimacy and trust in the initiative, particularly among the community members it intends to serve.
- 2. Leverage community organizations to expand scope and depth of influence.** Even with strategies for building legitimacy, governments do not have the capacity, resources, or public trust to do everything alone. Community partners can strengthen the initiative by offering expertise in topics ranging from community services to data analytics. They can also serve as a means for community members to partake in the work if they do not trust the government.
- 3. Partner with community members and organizations to continuously recruit new voices.** This strategy helps to build both volunteer and working capacity and sustainability in the initiative. By involving the community in outreach, teams can more effectively connect with constituencies that are farther removed from governmental processes and services, build momentum behind the initiative, and enhance existing social capital.
- 4. Use trainings to build individual, community, and organizational capacities.** Investing in people can improve their ability to do the work, thus increasing the overall effectiveness in the initiative. In addition to anti-bias training, topics to consider include community organizing, facilitation skills, using iterative processes, communications, and financial and resource management.

### IN PRACTICE: Dudley

DSNI has built organizational and resident capacity in two specific ways that have contributed to their effectiveness and sustainability. First, they have partnered with external stakeholders to receive support and training on topics in which they are less well versed. They have then taken this support and converted it into trainings for staff, board members, and residents to build future capacity for collective action. Second, DSNI prioritizes hiring its staff from the community and encourages residents to bring in other community members to participate in the organization's events and activities. These strategies help to ensure that DSNI is in tune with community needs and expands the number of community members being served.

### Ensuring Resources and Sustainability

- 1. Incorporate your initiative's activities into the budgets of relevant governmental agencies.** This strategy helps to ensure the continued prioritization and funding of the initiative by the government.
- 2. Diversify funding streams for the initiative.** In addition to governmental stakeholders, community organizations should incorporate the initiative into their budgets. This diversification is particularly important if the initiative involves philanthropic funding. In addition to improving collective resources, diversification of funding can help to protect against funder co-optation of the initiative, challenges with varying time schedules for funding, and political change.
- 3. Embed the initiative into normal operating procedures.** Integrating the initiative into the programming of various stakeholders helps to ensure commitment and create consequences for opting out. It also reduces potential disruptions to the initiative in cases of political turnover.
- 4. Be realistic, aware, and transparent about the resources, time, and energy required for this work.** Tackling complex issues, building social capital, and improving social outcomes is difficult; it can require significant resources and time. It also might take decades to see the true results. Therefore, governments and communities should have realistic expectations and transparent communication regarding initiatives related to social capital, including the resources required to do them well, their timelines for change, and how outcomes might manifest over time. In addition, including accountability measures can help ensure that initiatives persist despite resource challenges.

**IN PRACTICE: New York City**

Facilitating participatory budgeting inherently involves a significant time and resources; as a new initiative with its own processes, it involves high upfront costs in designing, launching, and building public awareness of the program. Moreover, facilitating participatory budgeting in a way that enables community leadership, builds capacity for collection action, and dismantles inequities requires further resources. For participatory budgeting to represent a mechanism for expanding social capital, not just reinforcing existing capital, governments must allocate further resources. For example, district officials have identified the need for additional measures including facilitation training for staff and community members and enhanced, targeted outreach to connect with historically marginalized populations. If governments consider and plan for these resource demands, they will be more equipped to develop and sustain effective, equitable, and community-driven participatory budgeting.

**Designing an Iterative Process**

1. **Use an iterative problem-solving process to create change.** The initiative should grow and evolve to respond to the community's changing priorities, needs, and assets. This process helps to maintain representation while integrating fresh ideas into the work.
2. **Create a culture of experimentation.** Research suggests that the greatest barrier to innovation is an organization's culture and how it treats trial and error.<sup>43</sup> Encourage people to try new ideas and ways of thinking when working to address the central challenge or opportunity of the initiative. Normalize making mistakes as part of the work.
3. **Recognize how the working environment and trust affect people's abilities to take risks.** People who do not feel safe in their working environment are significantly less likely to engage in the culture of experimentation. Seek to understand how race, gender, class, and other factors can affect team members' abilities to engage in trial and error and create conditions to enable and encourage their participation.
4. **Actively seek and respond to feedback from people within and outside of the initiative.** Feedback is essential to knowing what is working and when to change course. Moreover, responding to feedback effectively can bolster trust in and the legitimacy of the initiative. As such, it is critical to provide timely and thoughtful responses to feedback and to integrate feedback into future iterations of the work.

<sup>43</sup> Stefan H. Thomke, "Building A Culture of Experimentation," *Harvard Business Review* 98, no. 2 (March–April 2020): 40–48, <https://www.hbs.edu/faculty/Pages/item.aspx?num=57805>.

### IN PRACTICE: Louisville

The One Love Louisville initiative re-evaluates its overall strategy after predetermined periods of testing and uses these evaluations to change course as needed. This process includes publishing a report with the qualitative and quantitative findings so that stakeholders can provide feedback. In turn, this feedback informs how the strategy is altered or built upon moving forward. Individual programs also undergo regular evaluation by the implementation teams. These teams, led by community members, monitor the progress of each initiative and update goals and strategies based on community feedback.

### Ensuring Accountability and Transparency

- 1. Establish monthly meetings open to the public to report out on progress and share updates.** Regular meetings help to motivate groups to make progress on their work and hold them accountable. It also provides an opportunity for any distinct working groups on the team to collaborate on a shared problem and innovate on solutions. In addition, making these meetings open to the public increases transparency and keeps people who may not be able to attend the meetings engaged. This accessibility also increases the likelihood that the initiative will continue to benefit the community.
- 2. Develop other strategies to share progress updates with the public.** In addition to meetings, creating targeted ways to disseminate updates helps to ensure inclusion and accountability. These updates could be in the form of regularly published reports, live updates on public forums, or digital dashboards that visualize progress. Major updates should be provided bi-annually to give the team time to produce results. Along these lines, progress updates might need to include context around some of the more challenging metrics to account for the time it could take to actualize results.
- 3. Leverage residents to increase accountability in the work.** Beyond the above strategies, there are more robust ways to involve the community in upholding accountability. One option is to develop a citizen oversight committee that monitors and supports the initiative's progress and ensures equity in the work. Another option is to have a resident-based hiring committee that provides feedback on hiring for community-facing positions in the initiative.

**IN PRACTICE: Dudley**

DSNI's board is structured to include a resident majority. This practice increases accountability and transparency by giving residents oversight and decision-making power over the organization's goals and operations. One opportunity to build upon these practices is to implement a user-friendly dashboard that tracks how DSNI is making progress on its goals.

***Measurement***

Effective measurement is essential to the evaluation and refinement of initiatives that build social capital. In addition, measurement that reflects community conditions fosters legitimacy and trust in the initiative. Measurement includes both methods to assess outcomes and what metrics are used.

**Developing Methods to Assess Outcomes**

1. **Set a baseline for the initiative.** Before beginning to design and test initiatives, it is critical to determine a relevant baseline for your objectives so stakeholders know what benchmark to compare the initiative's outcomes to over time.
2. **Develop diverse, tailored opportunities for open and anonymous feedback.** Once this baseline is established, develop appropriate methods for assessing that baseline and collecting feedback moving forward. For example, conducting surveys can inform what the baseline looks like for an initiative and can be more easily replicated throughout the initiative to facilitate comparison. However, when aiming to capture the nuances of social capital, it is critical to adopt a range of practices for gathering input to align with community preferences and capacities. These mechanisms should meet all constituencies where they are to address barriers to equitable participation and ensure accurate findings.
3. **Collect feedback early and often.** As robust measurement is essential for supporting a culture of experimentation, regular and meaningful feedback can provide insight into the effects of various trials, areas of improvement, and promising paths forward.
4. **Adapt measurement methods over time.** Along these lines, measurement methods themselves should also be viewed as iterative, with adaptations based on the quality and extent of community feedback gathered through trials of various methods. Measurement methods should continue to evolve to ensure that affected constituencies can effectively shape the evolution of the initiative.

### IN PRACTICE: New York City

The outcomes of participatory budgeting in New York City reveal the importance and nuance of setting a baseline for measurement. Thus far, two of the primary measures used to assess its impact are the amount of discretionary funds made available for community projects and the proportion of the population in each district that participates. In assessing these measures, some stakeholders have felt that participatory budgeting produces minimal results, with no more than \$2 million allocated and six percent of residents voting in any district. However, compared to when participatory budgeting was not available, this funding and participation represent valuable improvements for many other stakeholders involved in the process. Therefore, it is important to establish a baseline for measurement so that stakeholders have a shared sense of the starting point and can co-create appropriate benchmarks.

### Developing Metrics for Social Capital

- 1. Develop metrics for assessing social capital that best align with the conditions and goals of the initiative.** Outcomes related to social capital can take many forms.<sup>44</sup> In our community-driven, context-specific approach, we do not prescribe a set of metrics for initiatives to foster social capital. Rather, metrics should be developed to align with the mission, values, and goals of the initiative co-created by the government and community.
- 2. Include metrics that reflect the holistic and complex nature of building social capital.** Building relationships, and the changing of hearts and minds often necessary to build those relationships, cannot be easily measured. Furthermore, building social capital might lead to changes in factors that seem outside the scope of the initiative. Therefore, metrics for initiatives that seek to build social capital should be inclusive so as to capture the range of effects that could arise from the initiative.
- 3. Adapt measurement metrics over time.** The inclusion of a variety of metrics will help to highlight how these measures should be refined over time to detect the outcomes of the initiative. Metrics should be adapted over time to reflect evolving conditions in social capital in the community and any changes in the goals or scope of the initiative in response to those conditions.

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<sup>44</sup> Studies of initiatives related to social capital reflect this variability, with metrics ranging from discrete factors like density of community groups to more intangible factors like strength of norms.

### IN PRACTICE: Louisville

The City of Louisville recognized that by taking a public health approach to violence prevention, the work would primarily center on addressing the root causes of violence rather than discrete instances of interpersonal violence. This kind of work requires significant time to manifest results. The factors that contribute to violence, like those that perpetuate poverty, are entrenched, systemic forces that cannot be immediately dismantled. While the OSHN ultimately seeks to reduce violence, measurements related to the incidence of violent crimes do not capture the work of their initiatives or the impacts they have in the short term. Indeed, it is expected that the more comprehensive effects of the initiative will not be measurable for at least a decade. The Office of Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods recognizes this context and is committed to this work despite the extended time horizon.

# CPI's Opportunity for Impact

Governments and communities seeking to build social capital and improve outcomes might find that they currently lack some of the capacities that enable this work. As an organization that works with cities across the globe, CPI has access to a broader set of ideas and expertise that can be leveraged to support partners in developing, implementing, and measuring their initiatives. The following section provides an overview of some of the ways that CPI can contribute to this work, with options ranging from lower to higher levels of engagement. As indicated in the list below, some options can be altered to become more or less demanding of CPI's capacity. While the following options are more specific, CPI can also build upon our work to connect with additional city governments and communities to learn how they are leveraging social capital to re-imagine government.

## Low Engagement

### *Diagnosis*

- Share resources on how to define problems without relying on biases or assumptions about solutions.
- Share resources on asset mapping to help government-community collaboratives reimagine the assets and resources in their contexts. This step could include compiling and sharing a list of organizations that provide high-quality training or written resources on facilitating conversations with the community on asset mapping.
- Share research on touchpoints between governments and communities to support mapping and involving all stakeholders. Examples of touchpoints include teachers, police officers, sanitation workers, public health inspectors, parking and transportation workers, public park officials, and others who directly interact with the community.

### *Process*

- Compile and share a list of organizations that provide high-quality anti-bias training.
- Write articles or develop webinars (medium-engagement alternative) that focus on incorporating equity into initiatives and providing a rationale that governments can use to communicate why more resources might be allocated to historically underserved communities.

- Write articles or develop webinars (medium-engagement alternative) that focus on strategies to de-silo organizations involved in cross-sector initiatives. The strategies should focus on how to flatten vertical silos and work across horizontal functions to support the development of social capital throughout the initiative.
- Write articles or develop webinars (medium-engagement alternative) on how to sustain community-led initiatives through political changes such as a shift in priorities or political turnover.
- Share resources on how to develop iterative processes that allow teams to assess their own areas of improvement, particularly in relation to community interactions. Possible resources include strategies for integrating feedback into future work.
- Share findings from this report and best practices from CPI's Fail Forward initiative to support government-community collaboratives in building a culture of experimentation.

### *Measurement*

- Compile and share a list of organizations that provide training or written resources on equitable mechanisms for community feedback.
- Write articles or develop webinars (medium-engagement alternative) to help teams think through appropriate methods and metrics for assessing the impacts of initiatives to build social capital.

## **Medium Engagement**

### *Diagnosis*

- Support asset and stakeholder mapping by providing technical support to identify nontraditional stakeholders in the context of specific initiatives.
- Provide a webinar or virtual technical assistance on how to productively facilitate conversations with community members and other local stakeholders to build historical context.

### *Process*

- Provide virtual training to governmental agencies on how to bring City Hall into the community and build connections with community members where relationships might not exist or are lacking.
- Provide virtual training to governments on how to design structures for their initiatives to integrate communities into the process. Possible structures include committees, feedback loops, and other collaborative measures.

- Offer virtual or in-person technical assistance (higher-engagement alternative) on how to develop community organizing, facilitation, and capacity-building skills for governments and their partners.

### *Measurement*

- Provide virtual training to cities that are already using asset-based frameworks to build social capital to improve how they measure their initiatives. Possible topics include how to set a baseline, how to collect community feedback, and how to set and adapt metrics to assess incremental and broader impact.

## **High Engagement**

### *Diagnosis*

- Provide intensive coaching on asset mapping, setting a baseline, or other diagnostic tools to support government-community collaboratives.
- Perform a robust historical analysis of the community and provide guidance on best practices for rectifying past injustices and appropriately engaging with stakeholders.

### *Process*

- Provide intensive coaching on how to develop an initiative such as the ones described in this report. Coaching could focus on one or more particular aspects of the work, such as how to co-create the mission, value, norms and goals or how to institutionalize practices that promote equity.
- Hold convenings for local governments engaged in this work that focus on the types of issues they are trying to solve and the core capacities they need to build, such as community feedback systems. Require these stakeholders to bring their community co-leaders to the convenings to promote capacity building beyond the municipal level.
- Build a cohort model for government-community collaboratives iterating on the same priorities to create a knowledge exchange of best practices and a peer support system to overcome challenges.
- Design dashboards, progress reports, or other concrete tools that can be used by government-community collaboratives to share progress on their initiatives with the broader public.

### ***Measurement***

- Provide intensive technical assistance on adapting measurement methods and metrics over time.

These ideas are designed to align with CPI's mission and core beliefs for ease of implementation. In addition, we have identified ideas outside the realm of the organization's current work that provide an opportunity for CPI to consider new ways to inform and support initiatives to build social capital.

### **Creative Alternatives for Positive Change**

- Develop initiatives to reimagine government by first partnering with communities and/or non-governmental community agencies rather than government entities. This approach ensures community buy-in, provides an opportunity for new ideas to surface, and builds long-term community capacity that can withstand political turnover.
- Hold convenings for community partners to network and collaborate on strategies for solving issues related to governance and social capital.
- Solicit community and governmental agencies to receive training and technical assistance required to do more transformative systems-change work.
- Help connect governments and communities with funders so they can have greater financial flexibility to test new concepts related to building social capital.
- Hold innovation hackathons for government-community collaboratives to brainstorm solutions for challenges facing their communities. These events represent an initial step in the process to ideate, rather than a complete solution in their own right.

## Conclusion

In a time when trust in communities and institutions has declined, social capital represents a critical resource for helping communities thrive. Social capital can be employed to achieve a range of positive outcomes including economic empowerment, public health improvements, and democratic advancement. While many government interventions have been inattentive or harmful to social capital, there is an opportunity for local governments to partner with their constituents to build social capital into strategies to address systemic problems in a way that upholds community ownership, capacity for collective action, and equity. This research uses the cases of municipal participatory budgeting in New York City, violence prevention in Louisville, and urban community development in Dudley to identify the core factors that shape the strengths and challenges of strategies related to social capital.

Drawing on these factors, we propose a set of guiding principles to inform government-community collaboratives in their approaches to building social capital. To help these collaboratives refine their approaches and fulfill the guiding principles, we also provide a set of tools for diagnosis, process, and measurement. Above all, we advocate that initiatives to improve social outcomes by building social capital must be done through an integrated, equal partnership between governments and communities, taking the community's priorities, needs, and assets into account. good.

*“When all communities in a city can be viewed and actively appreciated for the assets they bring to the whole, and real concern is shown for the liabilities, by residents, law enforcement, policy makers, and elected leaders, then and only then will community rebuilding have a fighting chance to survive the challenges.”*

Violence Prevention Working Group, Louisville

Though our recommendations provide a foundation for the development of future initiatives, this report is neither definitive nor exhaustive. In relation to the cases, the research presented here narrowly assesses their approaches to and implications for building social capital and therefore obscures some nuances of the initiatives. This issue in scope is compounded by the limitations of our research in terms of interviews; we were not able to gain the perspectives of diverse stakeholders, particularly affected community members, and therefore could not provide a more complete assessment. Our findings should be considered with these limitations in mind.

Additionally, though our recommendations are informed by expert guidance, existing literature, and our original case studies, these proposals provide an initial framework for building social capital. Government-community collaboratives should test and further iterate these ideas. In addition, there may be outlying contexts in which the kind of community collaboration outlined in this report is not yet feasible. These instances only serve to reinforce the importance of situating the initiative in its specific local conditions and designing strategies that meet communities where they are.

We hope that this research will provide a foundation for the Centre for Public Impact and its partners in developing initiatives that strengthen community bonds and leadership, enable community members to engage in collective action, and promote equity to help communities thrive. As social capital is fundamental to individual and collective well-being, governments should acknowledge this resource and work alongside their constituents to build relationships in order to achieve shared goals and flourish together.

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Additional Research Questions

The following includes our research questions as they relate to (1) diversity, equity, and inclusion and (2) diagnosis, process, and measurement.

### *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*

- How can policymakers develop initiatives that center community leadership and help communities to build on existing strengths?
- How do we encourage policymakers to expand their definition of community assets to include non-traditional assets?
- How do we ensure that governments implement policies that do not further entrench existing inequities?
- How can we support policymakers in challenging their own assumptions and biases, both conscious and unconscious?

### *Diagnosis, Process, and Measurement*

- How can governments identify opportunities to help communities build social capital?
- In situations in which initiatives to build social capital are appropriate, how should governments approach their development to ensure effectiveness?
- How can initiatives be designed with sustainability in mind?
- How can governments assess, monitor, and evaluate social capital, and which metrics should be used?
- What are the factors that shape the effectiveness of efforts to build social capital?
- What can CPI learn from the successes and failures of other communities who have tried to do this work?

## Appendix B: Detailed Methodology

In order to develop our case studies, we surveyed the field for programs in the United States that seemed like promising examples of social capital partnerships between local governments and communities. After identifying 10 possible cities for the case studies, we narrowed our selection by applying the following criteria:

- Is a key component of the initiative related to building social capital?
- Was the initiative a collaborative process?
- Does the initiative take an asset-based approach?
- Is the initiative racially diverse in its stakeholders?
- Do we have a pre-existing relationship or some type of connection with the target city?
- Are the cities geographically dissimilar from one another?

After finalizing our target cities, we performed a thorough analysis of existing publications and news articles about the cities and initiatives of interest. Once we deepened our understanding of each program, we contacted the relevant governmental and community leaders and interviewed them about the nature of the initiatives and the processes used to develop them. Lastly, we used snowball sampling to identify additional stakeholders to interview for the development of each case.

We then used a combination of the literature review, case studies, and information gained from meeting with experts in the field to develop our general recommendations and create a toolkit of best practices to support governments and communities interested in pursuing this type of work. A detailed description of these recommendations can be found in the Recommendations section.

## Appendix C: Interviews

### *Interview Questions*

This is a sample of the types of questions we asked to develop the cases. Given that our cases varied in focus and activities, we altered our questions to suit the respective initiatives. We also added questions during the interview, as applicable.

1. Can you tell us about the history of the program/intervention? Why was it created? What did it hope to accomplish?
2. Can you walk us through the process you took to develop the program/intervention?

#### **Identifying the area of focus**

- a. How did you identify or conclude that there was a need for intervention (underutilized assets, conditions that could be improved, etc.)?
- b. What information did you draw on to form the above conclusions? To what extent did this insight come from community members?
- c. What were your first steps following the identification of the area of focus? Examples include reviewing available data, calling a community meeting, etc.
- d. How did you gather the requisite information about the conditions you sought to change?
  - i. If they asked for community input: What methods did you use to gather information from the community? What kinds of data did you collect? Which members of the community did you gather information from? Were there any voices missing? How would you describe the community's responsiveness to your method(s)? In your opinion, what were the successes and areas for improvement in this process?

#### **Designing the intervention**

- e. Which sources did you use to gather ideas for possible interventions?
- f. To what extent did you solicit feedback on these ideas? From which populations/stakeholders?
  - i. If they asked for community input: Refer to the questions listed in 2.d.i.
- g. To what extent was the process of designing the intervention iterative? If you solicited feedback from stakeholders, did you provide additional opportunities for input before finalizing your approach?

#### **Implementing and sustaining your solution**

- h. Who were/are the entities responsible for carrying out and/or maintaining the intervention?

- i. If applicable, how do you continue to gain feedback and input from the community?
- j. What does success look like? What are your metrics for measuring success? What does sustainability look like? How do you foresee the intervention(s) evolving over time?

### ***List of Interviewees***

#### **Experts**

- Chris Avery
- David Deming
- Archon Fung
- Robert Haas
- Zoe Marks
- Quinton Mayne
- Richard Parker
- Robert Putnam
- Julie Wilson

#### **City Stakeholders**

##### **New York City**

- Loren Peabody
- Hollie Russon Gilman
- New York City Council Member Andrew Cohen
- New York City Council Member Barry Grodenchik

##### **Louisville**

- Rashaad Abdur-Rahman
- Maryam Ahmed

##### **Boston**

- John Barros
- Minnie McMahon
- Harry Smith
- Sustainable Development Committee (observation)

##### **Durham (potential case study)**

- Andre Pettigrew

## Appendix D: Case Study: Participatory Budgeting

**An analysis of how government boosted civic engagement and strengthened social capital within and between communities and government**

### *The Motivation*

Participatory budgeting represents an opportunity to effect a range of positive changes in governance, including increased transparency and accountability and the mitigation of corruption and clientelism. As described by elected officials who have pursued participatory budgeting in the U.S., this approach has the potential to increase civic engagement and diverse representation, not only in participatory budgeting itself but also in other political processes. Moreover, with an increased knowledge of how government works, communities may place more value and trust in democratic institutions, develop skills in problem-solving and analysis of social issues, and ultimately gain capacities in collective action and cohesion to apply in their communities. In New York City in particular, participatory budgeting has been pursued as an opportunity for community organizing and increasing public involvement. In some districts, the goal has also been to engage young people in order to build a pipeline of active community members. **While the potential outcomes of participatory budgeting are conducive to social capital, the process by which it is carried out can have dramatically different effects on the well-being and social capital of residents.**<sup>45</sup>

Participatory budgeting in NYC was inspired by the success of its use in Brazil, which represented an early and comprehensive implementation of participatory budgeting. In this context, participatory budgeting was developed in response to challenges in low political representation and public services for low-income communities. It served to redistribute power and ensure that funds were allocated to marginalized communities that otherwise lacked decision-making power in the political system. The use of participatory budgeting in Brazil has been considered a model for the development and implementation of the practice in terms of its role in equitable civic engagement, political representation, and public service provision.

Following its development in Brazil, participatory budgeting has been applied in many other countries, including the U.S. The use of participatory budgeting in New York City represents one of the most extensive applications of the practice domestically and has been studied

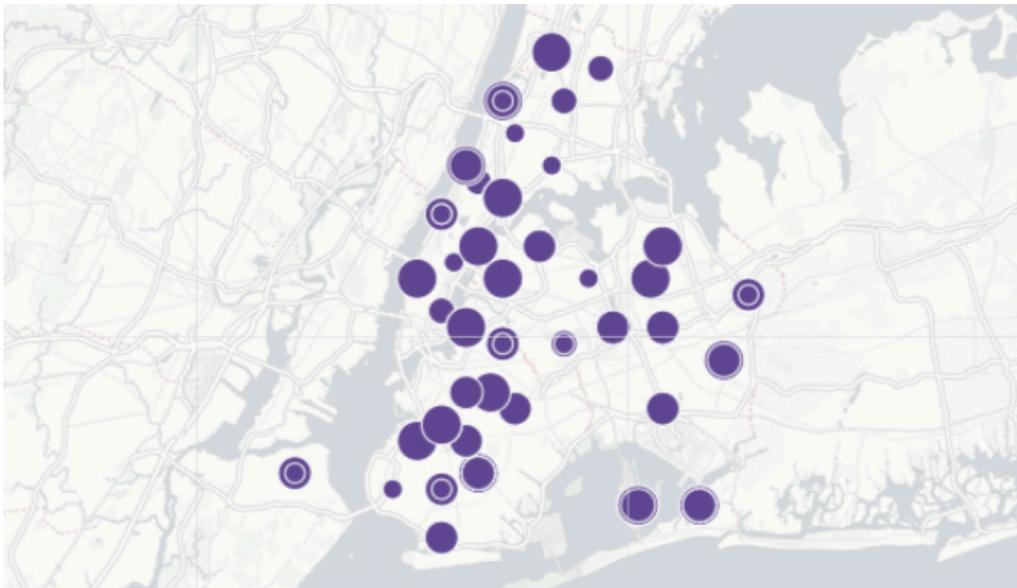
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<sup>45</sup> Allison Blythe Hurlbut, *Piloting Participatory Budgeting: An Examination of Social Capital, Well-Being, and Public Good Provision in New York City* (New York: Columbia University, 2012), <https://academiccommons.columbia.edu/doi/10.7916/D8D224RQ>.

specifically for its implications for social capital. While participatory budgeting is now facilitated at multiple levels in New York City, including in the public-school system, this case focuses on its application in City Council districts in particular.<sup>46</sup>

### *The Initiative*

From its use in four districts beginning in 2011, participatory budgeting has grown to include 33 districts and \$35 million in capital funding in New York City.<sup>47</sup> Every district follows the same schedule in terms of the phases of project development and selection; proposals that gain the most votes during “Vote Week” are adopted in the City’s budget for the fiscal year.<sup>48</sup> All projects must represent physical infrastructure improvements that “benefit the public, cost at least \$50,000 and have a lifespan of at least 5 years.”<sup>49</sup> Projects across districts have involved improvements to schools, libraries, public housing, streetscapes, and public spaces.



Map of current participatory budgeting processes in New York City municipal districts<sup>50</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, in November 2018, residents voted to establish a Civic Engagement Commission, which is tasked with developing and maintaining a citywide participatory budgeting program. See “About Civic Engagement Commission,” NYC Civic Engagement Commission, last modified December 18, 2019, <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/civicengagement/about/about.page>.

<sup>47</sup> “What is PBNYC?,” Participatory Budgeting, New York City Council, accessed March 7, 2020, <https://council.nyc.gov/pb/>.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> “Case Studies,” Participatory Budgeting Project, accessed January 10, 2020, <https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/case-studies/>.

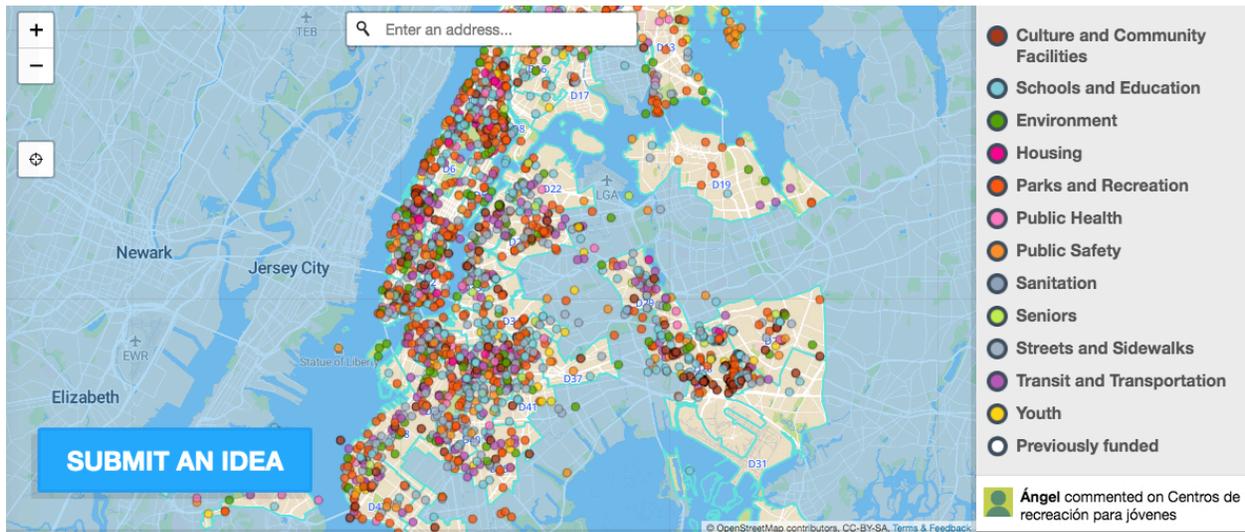
However, there is variation in the specific processes through which community members engage in setting and voting on priorities. First, elected officials have adopted a range of approaches to connect with their constituents to involve them in participatory budgeting. District staff members have attended and held community meetings, posted information in stores and public libraries, distributed paper and online newsletters, and utilized social media to make the public aware of the new process and to encourage community members to identify and elevate issues of importance to them.

Volunteers and individuals involved in participatory budgeting in New York City have comprised civic associations, schools, and friends of libraries. Community members have the opportunity to develop and submit project ideas, which are then vetted by relevant City offices for desirability, viability, and affordability. The City government provides this analysis and supports the process at no cost to community members. Additional volunteers, “budget delegates,” further develop the ideas into proposals. Once the proposals are finalized, community members may vote online, at government buildings, and libraries. Some officials have also sent home information on participatory budgeting and ballots for voting with school children. Following the vote, the governmental or institutional partner funds and implements the selected projects.

Collectively, these varied forms of involvement provide an opportunity for different members of the community to build social capital. **While voting and other traditional forms of political engagement are often individual or small-group efforts, participatory budgeting represents a mechanism for engagement that allows residents to take on leadership roles, collaborate to develop and build support for projects, and engage with others on community priorities.** As just one example, community members regularly submit, explore, and contribute to ideas on the New York City Council Participatory Budgeting website, as shown on the following page.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> “About,” New York City Council Participatory Budgeting, accessed January 21, 2020, <http://ideas.pbnyc.org/place/607081/response/617590>.



Online platform for community members to submit, explore, and connect on project ideas<sup>52</sup>

### ***The Impact***

While studies of participatory budgeting in Brazil found discernable impacts including increased spending in low-income neighborhoods and in social services, research on participatory budgeting in the U.S. has mainly focused on to what extent the process was well run rather than specific outcomes. There are a few aspects of implementation in the U.S., including in New York City, that have hindered the measurement of impact thus far. For one, implementation has been relatively small in scale, not only in terms of participants but also the amount of funds that the public may allocate. Compared to participatory budgeting in Brazil, in which at least twenty percent of the capital budget was under the purview of the public, a relatively small amount of public funds has been opened to participatory budgeting in New York City. Most Council districts' have discretionary funds between \$1 million to \$2 million that have been applied to participatory budgeting, a small amount for the city both in terms of the proportion of the budget and given the high cost of implementing capital projects. Furthermore, the processes have been implemented as pilots first and eventually scaled up, such that participatory budgeting has only been in its most expanded form for a few years. Lastly, because districts have started participatory budgeting at different times, and some have ceased to facilitate the process, it is difficult to control for these changes when assessing impacts.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

Despite these challenges in measurement, participatory budgeting has resulted in new and expanded forms of civic engagement in New York City. Approximately one to five percent of constituents in most districts participating in the process in 2017. This turnout represents a few to several thousand participants in each district. Despite this low level of involvement, there is evidence to suggest that participatory budgeting in New York City may have also boosted voter turnout in elections overall.

### *Strengths*

#### *Inclusivity of Additional Constituencies*

While the parameters for participatory budgeting vary by context, its implementation in New York City featured the inclusion of populations that are often explicitly or implicitly excluded from participating in elections and other forms of political engagement. In particular, participatory budgeting in the city allows for youth and individuals who were previously incarcerated to engage in the process. This inclusion allows for participatory budgeting to be a mechanism for building relationships among a wider cross-section of the community than many forms of political and even civic engagement, as youth and individuals with criminal records may be barred from serving on public bodies and volunteering in certain contexts.

#### *Increased Role and Appreciation of Community Insights*

District representatives in New York City noted that one of the most valuable outcomes of participatory budgeting has been the ideas generated by their constituents regarding capital projects. **In keeping with our own asset-based approach to government initiatives, elected officials have found and appreciated that constituents have a deeper knowledge of their communities and the strengths, needs, and goals therein.** In this context, participatory budgeting has represented another opportunity for communities to share and apply that knowledge in the development of what officials have described as creative, thoughtful, and targeted project proposals. Elected officials have noted that these on-the-ground insights have been particularly useful in large districts, where it is less feasible for government agencies to keep abreast of conditions everywhere. Therefore, the ability to gather additional forms of feedback across a constituency has been helpful in aligning government efforts with community priorities, thus expanding representation.

### Strengthened Relationships for Governments and Communities

These benefits support social capital in a few key, interrelated ways. First, the government's appreciation for the insights provided by community members helps to build trust between constituents and their government. Meanwhile, from the community's perspective, having its insights be heard, elevated, and valued and seeing the tangible, meaningful results of its advocacy also contributes to increased trust and motivation to engage in political processes. This mutual trust is expanded due to the fact that a more inclusive and diverse subset of the population is engaged in the process. With this trust and engagement, governments are more likely to continue to facilitate participatory budgeting, which allows community members to come together, explore and articulate their priorities, and engage with the broader public on these priorities. From this collaborative process, community relationships are strengthened and well-informed project ideas emerge; these insights benefit governments anew. **Therefore, participatory budgeting can represent a self-reinforcing mechanism for the building of relationships, both between governments and their constituents and within communities.**

### Challenges

#### Community Buy-in and Involvement

While the Successes section demonstrates the value of community input in supporting participatory budgeting and building social capital, it also highlights that **this process is highly dependent on the buy-in and engagement necessary to generate input in the first place.** Therefore, challenges in fostering meaningful community involvement have been decisive in the effectiveness of participatory budgeting in New York City, with several districts that have since ended the practice noting community involvement as one of the main barriers. While describing that their colleagues in other districts have created an engaged group of constituents, government officials in the districts that have ceased to use participatory budgeting also discerned that the process would ideally be community-driven, but struggled to build an active constituency. Indeed, district staff members described challenges in garnering involvement at every stage in the process, from having constituents take ownership of project ideas to encouraging voter turnout, regardless of community interest in the proposed improvements. Some offices also struggled with managing the logistical aspects of participatory budgeting with a lack of community engagement in organizing and facilitating this more involved process. In these contexts, the capacity for participatory budgeting to represent a mechanism for building social capital was limited.

### Resource Demands

Along those lines, some district officials have described the extended, slow, and labor-intensive process inherent in participatory budgeting as a hindrance to its sustained implementation. Participatory budgeting involves high upfront costs, as government offices must institute a new process, set its parameters, and conduct outreach to ensure the public is aware of the program. Supporting participatory budgeting following this initial phase is also resource-intensive, as the development and vetting of project ideas require facilitation by at least one government agency. One official described the process as similar to running an election campaign in terms of time and labor. Still others noted that resources allocated to participatory budgeting necessarily restricted the already limited number of staff hours and dollars that district members had at their disposal, and that facilitating participatory budgeting should ideally represent a full-time, dedicated staff position.

For some districts, the extent of resources necessary to support participatory budgeting felt particularly large given the relatively low budget made available to community members for input. In other words, the return on the government's effort in launching and facilitating participatory budgeting was not worthwhile in light of the limited impact that \$1 million in capital funds could bring to bear in their district. Staff members noted that this amount of money does not effect significant change in a context like New York City, and this limitation hindered commitment (and thus the potential for building relationships) among both governmental and community stakeholders.

In addition, officials felt that other initiatives to increase civic engagement, such as voter registration drives in high schools, could be more easily targeted and allocated than participatory budgeting for the same or lower resource expenditure. Similarly, others felt that for the level of effort required by participatory budgeting, their staff members were more effective and efficient in connecting with, soliciting feedback from, and serving their constituents through other avenues. For example, one district member has employed the same methods of communication used to promote participatory budgeting and others to convey the simple message to their constituents of “tell me [your goals, concerns, and priorities]”. For this member, such an approach represented a faster and more responsive and feasible process. In espousing other, less involved methods, elected officials noted how these methods are more aligned with the low level of effort that some community members are willing to commit to civic engagement: “people want to make their suggestion and move on; they don't want to make their suggestion in the most complex process of participatory budgeting.”

This sentiment that participatory budgeting represented a less viable and efficient approach for gaining insights from their communities was particularly true for those district members who felt that their policy platforms were already aligned with the priorities of their constituents. For these officials, the intensive, complicated process of participatory budgeting only served to reinforce that they were already representing their constituents well, and did not reveal new areas of concern or opportunity that should be pursued. After facing the resource demands of participatory budgeting, some officials concluded that they knew their districts well enough to deliver results and that in being elected by their communities, they were ultimately capable of and responsible for making decisions regarding capital allocations.

Concerns regarding resource demands are decisive in shaping the extent to which participatory budgeting represents a platform for building social capital. **Experts point to significant investment in participatory budgeting as critical to its success.** For example, contexts in which the participatory budgeting process has been institutionalized and adequately supported with funds and staff have experienced a greater share and diversity of participation among constituents. It is important to note that the resources provided in these cases exceeded those required for merely launching and facilitating the basic processes inherent to participatory budgeting. Rather, in these cases, district officials further allocated resources to identify barriers to participation and to adapt their processes in light of those barriers, whether developing new forms of outreach to connect with youth or scheduling additional meeting times in the evenings to enable participation from a wider subset of their constituency. While all of these actions required greater resources, they also led to more successful manifestations of participatory budgeting in expanding engagement. These findings suggest that the challenge of resource demands is a relevant consideration that must be addressed if participatory budgeting is to fulfill its potential for building relationships.

### Legitimacy and Trust in the Process

Notwithstanding the cases in which the results of participatory budgeting reflected elected officials' existing policy platforms, some elected officials have also felt that the legitimacy of the process as a form of representative democracy has been undermined. In particular, there have been concerns regarding who is eligible to participate in the various stages of the process. For example, elected officials in New York City have noted that based on rules set by the City Council, constituents from any district are eligible to vote in the participatory budgeting process for districts other than their own; there is no proof of residency involved in voting. One district staff member noted that this lack of control in ensuring that participants are members of the community "broke the back" of participatory budgeting. Furthermore, while the more inclusive nature of participatory budgeting is beneficial to building relationships,

some elected officials have expressed concern that youth below the age of 13 are eligible to vote and the manipulability of young voters. Regardless of one's opinion on youth engagement in political processes, these concerns undermine the legitimacy and trust that are afforded to participatory budgeting, and thus its effectiveness as a means of building relationships.

### Divisiveness and Competition

While a relatively rare concern, some elected officials have noted that participatory budgeting has the potential to be viewed and pursued as a competition between different community stakeholders and their interests. Particularly given the relatively limited amount of available funds for allocation, officials have noted that there are often “losers” in the process of participatory budgeting. Governmental stakeholders have suggested that this condition may demonstrate that participatory budgeting is not necessarily an appropriate mechanism for building social capital, as it can create divisions between those whose priorities are given consideration and whose projects are ultimately selected, and those whose priorities and/or projects are not.

### Inequities in Participation and Representation

**Indeed, perhaps the most important challenge that can arise in participatory budgeting is that it can replicate and reinforce existing inequities in political participation and representation among constituencies in a community.** While the inclusive parameters of participatory budgeting in New York City allow for a greater cross-section of the population to participate, elected officials have recognized that those individuals and groups already active in civic and political processes, such as older adults and parent teacher associations (PTAs) in more affluent schools, were better equipped to leverage their existing networks, organize, advocate for their priorities, and vote in greater numbers in the participatory budgeting process. Because community members often self-select in submitting ideas for projects and serving as delegates, these disparities in participation can profoundly shape the process. Indeed, one elected official ceased to pursue participatory budgeting in their district in part because it was “too easy to game the system.”

In some cases, these disparities in participation were due to factors beyond the officials' control, such as low density within a district or long work hours and commutes, particularly among lower-income working constituents. In other cases, governmental stakeholders pointed to apathy toward and a lack of trust in government as drivers of low involvement among some of their constituents, underlining the condition that engagement and trust are mutually reinforcing and critical to participatory budgeting. Despite recognizing these challenges and their implications for inclusive engagement in participatory budgeting, elected officials noted

that the “same group of people that are involved in most things” have been involved in the budgeting process and that it is not possible to compel others to participate.

**For many officials, this inequity in participation nullified the very goals of participatory budgeting: building relationships and trust within and among community groups and neighborhoods, expanding political representation and power, and developing more innovative and community-informed policies.** Some district officials intentionally limited the extent to which already active constituencies could reap the benefits of participatory budgeting, so as not to penalize those who were not involved and to “keep it fair.” However, in relation to social capital more broadly, studies of the use of participatory budgeting in New York City have found that while participatory budgeting can increase social capital, “in general the participants already had a higher level of social capital entering the process,” “inequality in social capital is evident when considering the public goods the residents are requesting,” and “participatory budgeting risks maintaining or worsening inequality by empowering the powerful and not the disadvantaged.”<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> For example, see Hurlbut, “Piloting Participatory Budgeting.”

## Appendix E: Case Study: Office of Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods

**An analysis of how a government-community collaborative built social capital to address the root causes of violence**

### *The Motivation*

In early 2012, Mayor Greg Fischer began to explore the issue of violent crime in Louisville. In May of that year, a triple homicide in West Louisville escalated the urgency of this work.<sup>54</sup> Though the city had experienced high levels of violent crime until that time, this incident caused a particular shock to the community because of the brazen nature of the third homicide. While police were on the scene following a double homicide in the Russell neighborhood, a woman was shot and killed a few houses away. The feeling that not even heavy police presence could deter gun violence in the area sent a new degree of fear through the community. This event inspired the creation of the Office of Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods and the One Love Louisville program, which have begun to address violence in Louisville. These initiatives approach violence prevention from a public health perspective, focusing on the root causes of violence rather than the interpersonal outcome alone.

Violence, and the conditions that contribute to it, have been studied from a public health perspective since 1980.<sup>55</sup> According to the Social-Ecological Model used by the CDC, violence can be the consequence of factors at the societal, community, relationship, and individual levels.<sup>56</sup> At the community level, the CDC defines the risk factors as the following:<sup>57</sup>

- Diminished economic opportunities
- High concentrations of poor residents
- High level of transiency
- High level of family disruption
- Low levels of community participation
- Socially disorganized neighborhoods

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<sup>54</sup> Associated Press, "6 shot, 3 dead, in west Louisville neighborhood," *CBS News*, May 17, 2012, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/6-shot-3-dead-in-west-louisville-neighborhood/>.

<sup>55</sup> "Violence Prevention at CDC," Violence Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, last modified January 28, 2020, <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/publichealthissue/index.html>.

<sup>56</sup> "The Social-Ecological Model: A Framework for Prevention," Violence Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, last modified January 28, 2020, <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/publichealthissue/social-ecologicalmodel.html>.

<sup>57</sup> "Youth Violence," Violence Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, last modified March 2, 2020, <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/index.html>.

According to violence prevention staff in Louisville, the years when there have been reductions in homicides have corresponded with years when politics at the national and local level have supported the expansion of resources for those in need. There is a sense that people are able to come together when they have hope that there is a future that looks better than the present. This finding is consistent with the idea that government policies on a high level affect the levels of trust and hope Americans have for their own outcomes and those of their communities.

In Louisville, the history of racist urban renewal policies created conditions in which these factors became reality. Louisville's history is marked by a number of historical policy decisions that have led to the conditions of violence today. Louisville, Kentucky, like many cities across the United States, came to its present condition through a long history of racist and segregationist urban planning policies. Redlining systematically disenfranchised Black residents from accumulating wealth through homeownership. In addition to redlining, zoning and urban renewal policies also perpetuated and often deepened existing inequities and systematically disenfranchised the primarily Black residents of West Louisville neighborhoods.

Federal government policies also hindered bonds between individuals who share identities and cultural values, particularly in lower-income communities and communities of color across the country. As one example, in the mid-20th century, the federal government initiated the vast expansion of the interstate highway system, funding the construction of arterials, overpasses, and other large thoroughfares to connect urban areas. Such exchanges were disproportionately and intentionally built through communities of color; in 1938, the Federal Housing Administration asserted that "a high speed traffic artery may... [provide] protection from adverse influences and inharmonious racial groups."<sup>58</sup> These projects resulted in the destruction of homes, as shown on the following page, and in many cases the bifurcation of previously cohesive neighborhoods. In reducing non-vehicular mobility and taking away density and community heritage, these infrastructure projects hindered social capital in communities of color.

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<sup>58</sup> "Rating of Location," *Underwriting Manual*.

One such project was built between the downtown and West Louisville neighborhoods during the 1950s, creating a distinct racial division on either side of the elevated expressway.<sup>59</sup> These segregationist and oppressive policies fueled conditions that led to inter-generational poverty and other systemic negative outcomes in the affected neighborhoods. All of these factors were part of the legacy of past government interventions that systematically oppressed Black residents in West Louisville. This legacy contributed to the issue of violence in these communities that the City sought to address. Thus, in 2012, the mayor mobilized resources to begin efforts to reduce violence in the city.



In the 1950s, homes in West Louisville were destroyed to make room for the new I-65 highway.<sup>60</sup>

### *The Initiative*

One Love Louisville is an initiative through Louisville's Office of Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods that aims to mobilize community members to make a collective impact on the problem of violence in West Louisville.

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<sup>59</sup> Joshua Poe, "Timeline," Redlining Louisville: Racial Capitalism and Real Estate, last modified 2015, <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=a73ce5ba85ce4c3f80d365ab1ff89010>.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

## Diagnosing the Problem and Opportunity

The Mayor's Office was interested in building the City's capacity for injury and violence prevention prior to the tragedy that occurred in May 2012, but this event gave the work a sense of urgency. City officials used an assessment tool developed by the National Association of City and County Health Officials to map community concerns, assets, and opportunities for improvement. They used this tool because they determined that a public-health framing of the issue of violence would best serve the community and allow for a holistic approach to solutions. The City convened a work group to further diagnose the situation and develop initial recommendations. In June 2012, the Violence Prevention Work Group (VPWG) was established. **The VPWG was committed to creating an equity-minded and holistic initiative that would address violence at its root causes rather than focusing on simply the violence itself.**

The VPWG was established with five committees that focused on different relevant aspects of society in order to develop a holistic set of recommendations: Community Building, Education, Employment and Economic Development, Health and Social Wellness, and Juvenile and Criminal Justice. The group developed an inclusive process with the aim of inviting marginalized voices from the community into the conversations about solutions to the problem of violence in their neighborhoods. The VPWG framed their process as such:

"Our stipulations were few but critically important: first, our deliberations would be open to all; and, second, our recommendations for change would be based solely on facts and data. Furthermore, we would use a twin approach that would allow for both recommendations that are system-wide and as such would impact the entire jurisdiction; as well as recommendations that target a specific group (racial/ethnic, age, gender, or geography) determined to be most impacted by the issues at hand."<sup>61</sup>

**The VPWG team knew that its work was merely the first step in what would need to be a long-term, iterative process to address the complex problem of violence.** As such, the primary recommendation of the VPWG was that the mayor ensure the sustained investment in the work by institutionalizing the team and making a full-time hire within the administration. The team released a 122-page report after several months of research and development that included these 41 additional recommendations to address violence in Louisville.

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<sup>61</sup> Violence Prevention Work Group, *Strategies to Prevent Violence in Louisville Metro: Short and Long-term Recommendations* (Louisville, KY: 2012), 4, [https://louisvilleky.gov/sites/default/files/safe\\_neighborhoods/strategies\\_to\\_prevent\\_violence\\_in\\_louisville\\_metro-short-long-term\\_rec\\_0.pdf](https://louisvilleky.gov/sites/default/files/safe_neighborhoods/strategies_to_prevent_violence_in_louisville_metro-short-long-term_rec_0.pdf).

Moreover, the Community Building Committee of the VPWG focused on exploring the disintegration of a sense of community as a result of ongoing violence in the affected communities. As one of the CDC's risk factors for violence, this issue in itself is both an outcome of violence as well as a source for the perpetuation of violence in the community. This committee determined that there were two paths to community building that were important to pursue in tandem to reduce violence: investment in physical infrastructure and development of social capital. In this case, the committee referred to the latter as the "sustainability of the intangible assets of each neighborhood, emphasizing the building of human capital by transforming attitudes, leadership building, and the reinforcing of values."<sup>62</sup> This definition utilized an asset-based approach that is critical to preserving the strengths and unique culture of the communities. As described by the committee in the report, "The planning teams are often city administrators, bankers, developers and realtors who do not always live, work, or worship in the affected community. Therefore, many of the community's social assets are underutilized, and the family development and resident leadership needs in the community go unnoticed and uncultivated."<sup>63</sup>

*"When all communities in a city can be viewed and actively appreciated for the assets they bring to the whole, and real concern is shown for the liabilities, by residents, law enforcement, policy makers and elected leaders, then and only then, will community rebuilding have a fighting chance to survive the challenges."*

Violence Prevention Working Group<sup>64</sup>

**Foundational to the committee's recommendations was the notion that violence is an outcome of the complex intersection of many visible and invisible factors.** As such, community building is a way to strengthen the foundation for collective response to crisis and development, which is an important addition to addressing each factor individually. Fostering community builds a flexible and adaptive capacity that is capable of responding to a variety of factors that contribute to violence. By developing the community's capacity for collective action, the

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 7.

community would be able to utilize shared norms and understandings to enforce changes in the community that affect the root causes of violence. The Community Building Committee determined that there were four categories of issues that were fundamental to building a sense of community in a community-led, assets-based way: (1) developing membership, (2) feeling influential, (3) experiencing reward, and (4) cultivating a shared emotional connection.

Within each of these four categories, the VPWG used original and academic research to analyze the landscape and existing barriers and proposed up to nine initiative recommendations. A summary of the recommendations for each category are as follows:

### Membership

West Louisville has been the site of widespread predatory lending and business practices. In addition, the legacy of redlining and racist urban development robbed the area of the ability to accumulate wealth through property development. The committee recommended that the local government increase enforcement of anti-predatory lending practices. This would allow both residents and investors to invest in the community by (1) injecting economic resources and bolstering local business and (2) encouraging stable residency, both of which contribute to the capacity for residents to build relationships within their communities.

### Influence

The ability to see and experience the tangible results of the community's efforts to advocate for change develops the feeling of influence among community members. This feeling signals to community members that it is worth investing in advocacy efforts because such efforts are not futile. The recommendations to increase feelings of influence focused on assisting neighborhoods and communities to organize in ways that allow them to have sustained impact and maintain influence. This assistance also included a financial commitment from the government to provide these newly formed neighborhood associations with meeting space. Structures that allow community members to come together to influence the outcomes of their communities provide an environment in which community building through productive relationships can thrive.

### Fulfillment

The VPWG recognized that it is important for community members to have the opportunity to feel the reward and satisfaction of being part of the community. “Places to live, work, play, and enjoy their membership in the community produce rewarding and fulfilling experiences.”<sup>65</sup> The report described high-quality, affordable housing; nonprofit organizations that provide a safety net in the community; faith-based initiatives; and quality local businesses as a few examples of existing fulfillment in West Louisville. The recommendations proposed building upon these existing successes as well as offering additional incentives for investment in desirable businesses, implementing fair housing and anti-displacement practices, and building a coalition of small churches to broaden their programming in order to strengthen community fulfillment and bonds.

### Shared Emotional Connection

The final category focused on the idea that shared identity and culture would allow West Louisville residents to take pride in themselves and their communities and to regain a sense of self-determination and connection. In this category, the committee recommended that the program on African and African-American history provided by Saturday Academy, a program hosted by the University of Louisville that taught high school students and adults about African and African-American history and heritage, be expanded. This was intended to build a sense of shared values and connection to a profound legacy. It also recommended that the community work to build an ongoing relationship with the media in order to change perceptions of the neighborhood within the broader metro area.

Within the year following the release of the Violence Prevention Work Group’s report, the Office of Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods was established to provide institutional backing for the ongoing investment of the Mayor’s Office into violence prevention. This office then began the process implementing initiatives for violence prevention. This process has since led to the first two phases of implementation.

### Phase I: Focus on Establishing Governance

In October 2013, the City officially began Phase I of the work and released a report detailing its strategies for this phase of the City’s violence prevention initiative, called *Louisville’s Blueprint for Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods Phase One: Moving Louisville to Action*. Phase I restated the asset-based approach that had been established by the VPWG, stating that Louisville’s

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 25.

commitment to violence prevention would “utilize [the City’s] existing assets, which include: strong neighborhoods, an engaged faith-based and non-profit community, an innovative school system and a compassionate government.”<sup>66</sup> The Phase I strategy applied the VPWG recommendations to the work of addressing the root causes of violence in three arenas: school, home, and neighborhood. While the VPWG assessed both long- and short-term goals, this phase focused primarily on the short-term goals and the initiatives that align with those goals.<sup>67</sup> Phase I also established a new governance structure that would facilitate the work going forward. The teams and work groups detailed in the chart below integrate community leaders with government staff and subject-matter experts at every level. This structure institutionalizes accountability between community and government stakeholders.

In addition to the governance structure, another important structural element of Phase I is the mechanism for iteration. The implementation team’s function is to both manage the ongoing projects of the overall initiative and lead “ongoing re-calibration of the plan.”<sup>68</sup> This structure systematizes a culture of experimentation and attunement to the impacted community, which is critical in designing community-led initiatives and maintaining community buy-in.



Governance structure for violence prevention work established in Phase I<sup>69</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Safe Neighborhoods, *Louisville’s Blueprint for Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods Phase One: Moving Louisville to Action*, (Louisville, KY: 2013), 4, [https://louisvilleky.gov/sites/default/files/safe\\_neighborhoods/site\\_images/blueprint\\_phase\\_i-moving\\_to\\_action.pdf](https://louisvilleky.gov/sites/default/files/safe_neighborhoods/site_images/blueprint_phase_i-moving_to_action.pdf).

<sup>67</sup> In terms of community building, the goals are primarily longer term, so the pillars of community building that had been described by the VPWG report were largely absent from the Phase I report.

<sup>68</sup> Safe Neighborhoods, *Louisville’s Blueprint for Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods Phase One: Moving Louisville to Action*, 9.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

### Phase II: One Love Louisville

In January 2015, the Office of Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods (OSHN) produced an updated report on the progress on and new programs for violence prevention in the city. Since the launch of Phase I of the work, the City established 10 working groups (the work of the race relations work group was reassigned to a different government department with the Center for Health Equity), mostly aligned with the governance structure outlined in Figure 1. The work groups included the following: (1) faith-based engagement, (2) juvenile and criminal justice, (3) economic development, (4) program development, (5) civic and community engagement, (6) suicide prevention, (7) substance abuse prevention, (8) police initiatives, (9) parental engagement, and (10) public relations and marketing. These work groups met monthly to develop goals and strategies to guide the next phase of the work.

With this report, the OSHN launched Phase II of its violence prevention program, which they dubbed *One Love Louisville*. **The function of One Love Louisville is to deepen the sense of shared ownership for Louisville’s community safety.** “The focus is on allowing every resident to realize that they have a stake in the well-being of our city.”<sup>70</sup> The OSHN launched One Love Louisville as a means for strengthening the community’s capacity for collective impact. One Love Louisville is a campaign accompanied by a series of programs that aim to lift up the assets that exist in the community in order to create community ownership and social capital in a genuine and sustainable way. The campaign spreads the message about the OSHN violence prevention work with the aim of increasing community participation under the heading “Be the one to make a difference.” It is accompanied by the hashtag #BeThe1 which is used to amplify the message on social media. The action plan for One Love Louisville describes its approach with an emphasis on building relationships:

“One Love Louisville is the strategy to unite neighbors to neighbors, provide opportunity for youth, and create healthy objectives to help negate violence in the city. Everyone has something to offer a person in need, a neighborhood or community. There is no one particular way for someone to #BeThe1 to have an impact on the life of a young person.”<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> “One Love Louisville Action Plan,” LouisvilleKY.gov, accessed on February 10, 2020, <https://louisvilleky.gov/government/one-love-louisville-action-plan>.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

One Love Louisville’s action plan comprises 13 goals and 42 initiatives to combat the root causes of violence. Within the community-building segment of the strategy, the goals and associated initiatives are the following:<sup>72</sup>

**1. See high levels of civic participation reflected evenly throughout Louisville Metro.**

Through this initiative, the OSHN would run surveys to measure a baseline of community civic participation and receive feedback on the same. The survey would also “measure feelings of empowerment, social connectedness, service, political involvement and connection to information.” This initiative would be a mechanism by which the OSHN would discover the opportunities for improvement in the civic participation landscape of the city.

**2. Map the leadership landscape in Louisville in order to identify community connectors, pinpoint gaps in services and create better marketing of existing leadership development opportunities.**

This goal was supported by three initiatives: create a network of community leaders, provide resources for establishing neighborhood associations, encourage community leaders to participate in municipal governance. These initiatives would establish a network of accountability and integration with community members through existing, trusted community leaders. By establishing these connections, the OSHN would be able to share information and build social capital between the government and the communities as well as provide resources for building social capital in community institutions like neighborhood associations.

**3. Increase community engagement and awareness of Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods efforts throughout Louisville Metro.**

This goal is also supported by three initiatives: share tip sheets on ways to get involved with One Love Louisville’s work with a variety of segments of the community, create and implement a communications plan for the work and increase awareness of One Love Louisville’s work throughout the city, develop creative strategies for mobilizing new segments of the population. These initiatives indicate the ways that One Love Louisville sought to increase community buy-in and participation as well as its commitment to an iterative and creative process.

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<sup>72</sup> Each of the goal titles listed here are directly quoting from the OSHN report: Office for Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods, *Louisville’s Blueprint for Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods Phase II: One Love Louisville*, (Louisville, KY: 2015), 34–37, [https://louisvilleky.gov/sites/default/files/safe\\_neighborhoods/one\\_love\\_louisville.pdf](https://louisvilleky.gov/sites/default/files/safe_neighborhoods/one_love_louisville.pdf).

#### 4. Create a faith-based violence reduction system in Louisville Metro.

Within this goal, there were three primary initiatives: map the faith-based institutions within the city and develop a thorough database of their existing programs and resources for violence reduction, design and share a training program for leaders in faith-based communities to provide information on identifying, understanding, and addressing risk factors for violence in their congregations, form a team of faith leaders who can serve as visible resources for addressing risk factors for violence within violence “hot spots.” These initiatives utilize the VPWG’s multi-sector approach by engaging another segment of trusted community leaders. This goal also sought to build the capacity of these leaders to effect change in their communities by providing them with the training and resources to engage effectively in violence prevention work within their communities.

These initiatives taken together form the basis for Phase II of Louisville’s work toward reducing the impact of violence in the city. The strategies draw upon and seek to build up the tenets of community ownership, community capacity building for collective impact, and an equitable approach to the work.

#### *The Impact*

As described above, One Love Louisville and the Office of Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods’ violence-prevention programs are comprehensive strategies that include both short- and long-term goals. It is intuitive to focus on the short-term goals rather than the long-term because the former are easier to track and measure. However, in the case of immense and complex problems like violence, measuring impact is neither clearly defined nor necessarily linear.

In Louisville, there has been an increase in violent crime overall in the years since the Louisville Mayor’s office began to address this issue.<sup>73</sup> The crime rates have fluctuated, at times dipping below the 2012 baseline, but recent years have shown higher rates of violent crime than the baseline. This is a difficult observation for all Louisville stakeholders to accept. One might imagine that some would use this trend to deem the OSHN plan a failure. However, it is critical to take a more nuanced approach to evaluation in order to capture the impact of One Love Louisville on other community outcomes. For instance, community members have proven to be engaged in this work and encourage their friends, family members, and neighbors to become involved, increasing the reach of One Love Louisville programs.

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<sup>73</sup> Louisville Metro Police Department, *UCR Report: January–February 2020* (Louisville, KY: 2020) <https://www.louisville-police.org/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/85>.

OSHN staff take seriously the understanding that public health issues are time- and resource-intensive to solve. The team does not expect to see an immediate measurable impact on violence reduction, and in fact, it is operating with the expectation that this kind of work can take decades before it shows tangible results. The OSHN is committed to continuing to invest time, effort, and resources into programming that will reduce violence in the long term, even if progress toward that goal is not linear in the meantime.

In order to balance the long and short timelines, OSHN uses different metrics for each individual initiative that are tailored to that project. The implementation team and advisory council evaluate the projects according to these metrics, using the lens of the Office's guiding principles and frameworks in order to test and iterate on existing processes without setting unreasonable expectations.

The initial VPWG report and the later One Love Louisville initiative highlight the importance of building capacity within the affected community to address the factors that contribute to violence and to strengthen the community's resilience to trauma. Measuring social capital in this context is difficult and often becomes reductive when quantified. One Love Louisville states the need for annual quality-of-life surveys to measure changes in community sentiment over time.<sup>74</sup> This is one way of gathering qualitative assessments of some measure of social capital over time.

### **Strengths**

#### **Integrating Community into the Governance Structure**

Throughout the City of Louisville's approach to violence prevention, the leadership has been intentional about integrating community members and diverse stakeholders in every level of governance. This practice was institutionalized in the governance structure laid out in Phase I. In addition to community involvement in all levels of the governance structure, community members co-chair the implementation team, which is responsible for managing the evaluation of ongoing projects and the re-calibration of projects as needed. This system institutionalizes the collaboration between community members and government stakeholders, providing structures for community members to co-own the initiative. This sense of ownership translates into the community buy-in and energy around the collective action within the community.

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<sup>74</sup> Safe Neighborhoods, *Louisville's Blueprint for Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods Phase One: Moving Louisville to Action*, 5.

### Government Provides a Foundation for Community Self-Actualization

The relationship between government and community members is also a notable strength of this program. The role of government in this program is to provide the resources that have been denied to West Louisville by historical injustice, to create the infrastructure for sustained work and investment, and to protect the vulnerable community from predatory practices. In this case, government authority provides stability and resources as a foundation upon which the community is able to create its own vision for success by leveraging the strengths, assets, and culture that it values.

### Social Capital Drives Implementation and Sustainability through Trust

Continued buy-in from the affected community allows for co-ownership of the process. Without trust in the team that is implementing these programs, the initiatives would surely fail because they are designed to rely on community input and ownership. In Louisville, the OSHN team has taken care to maintain trust between the community and its initiatives. For example, it has taken extra consideration in hiring in order to ensure that the staff of the team reflects the communities that it serves. Staff members describe how one individual sees someone he knows every time he is in the community. Having individuals that are trusted in the community in positions of authority on the government side provides a bond of trust that allows this work to continue.

In instances when community members have a pre-existing distrust in government, OSHN has partnered with local community groups and organizations to implement different aspects of the overall strategy. These community groups are familiar institutions that provide a trusted intermediary between community members and government programming. Additionally, OSHN staff rely on involved community members to bring their neighbors, friends, and networks into the work of violence prevention. This approach is possible because those community members have shared ownership of the work and feel responsible for the outcomes. They are excited about the possibilities and feel that their work matters to the future of the community. The OSHN also partners with trusted community organizations to bridge the gap between government entities and community members who have negative associations or low trust in governments. In addition, public monthly meetings for each working group present opportunities for community members to hear updates on the work and ask questions or provide feedback. These are examples of the OSHN's efforts to reduce barriers to participation and create inclusive systems for iterating on strategies. These structures also serve to increase trust between the community and the work and foster connections to traditionally underrepresented members of the community.

### Using a Historically Informed Approach to Build Racial Equity

Violent crime is emotionally distressing for everyone affected. In turn, emotionally driven responses can release discriminatory biases that deepen the inequities that fuel such crime in the first place. In this context, One Love Louisville takes an asset-based approach and actively maintains an awareness of the historical disinvestment and racist policies that created the circumstances that contribute to violence. These steps allow the program to avoid perpetuating dangerous biases and structures of inequity.

This philosophy also emphasizes the often uncomfortable truth for many white policymakers that government interventions, such as redlining, have a dark history of deepening racial divides and perpetuating the wealth gap between Black and White Americans. One Love Louisville openly acknowledges such realities in its philosophy, structure, and design. With this acknowledgement, the program justifies the distribution of additional resources toward the neighborhoods most economically affected by racist policies and creates a space in which community members can speak truth to power. It also avoids endorsing harmful attitudes that blame people for their circumstances. By openly recognizing historical injustices, this approach fosters trust between community members and the government and invites community members to engage with the work authentically, strengthening community partnership among a broader portion of the population.

### Adopting a Multi-functional Approach

By taking a public health lens, this program recognizes the intersection of various social factors that contribute to the conditions for violence. This lens allows for a holistic approach that engages multiple different sectors and policy areas. By bringing stakeholders from these different areas into the conversation, the development process more closely resembles the factors that intersect to create the conditions of people's lives. Also, by expanding the scope of the work, this strategy brings a greater variety of stakeholders into the work, creating relationships in larger networks and expanding the capacity for structural change.

### Providing Sustained Investment and Institutional Support

Because transformational change in violence reduction and social capital requires a significant investment of time and resources, the institutionalization of the work into the governance structure and budget protects processes from political disruption. In this case, the initiative was institutionalized in the form of the Office of Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods. This is a success in terms of long-term investment, but the future of this Office is contingent on continued support from the mayoral administration and community partners.

### Challenges

#### Precarious Nature of Relying on Political Will

As stated above, the institutional nature of the program is such that the Office of Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods is dependent on the continued allocation of resources from the mayoral administration. The mayor has not changed since the inception of the program, so political will has not yet been a problem. However, it might become a concern if the program outlasts the current mayoral administration. In the present state, OSHN must negotiate with the political opposition to gain resources for West Louisville rather than other parts of the city.

#### Public Impatience for Results

There is also the possibility that, due to long timelines, the public will become restless and search for other, less equitable mechanisms for addressing the complex problem of violence. For example, in 2019, U.S. Attorney Russell Coleman wrote in the *Courier-Journal* that “we will use every tool afforded us under the law to send you to federal prison for a significant period of time; this includes the teenagers who, often facilitated by social media, use guns to settle conflict,” after an increase in gun-related homicides.<sup>75</sup> This sentiment reflects that the long time horizon of One Love Louisville may pose a challenge for the initiative, in that both public and political support may decline in the absence of short-term results.

#### Communication Burden for Maintaining Stakeholder Buy-In

With a broad range of stakeholders from government offices, community organizations, and community residents, communicating progress and updates to maintain transparency and buy-in is a significant burden. This extends beyond the stakeholders who participate in the work to the foundations and elected officials who provide funding for the continuation of OSHN programs. Budget allocations for City projects are determined in conjunction with all other City priorities, so maintaining continued support from City officials provides a measure of security in ongoing budget negotiations. Maintaining this level of communication and buy-in is a burden on resources for the OSHN, but it may be an important investment in the Office’s long-term effectiveness in building social capital through its work.

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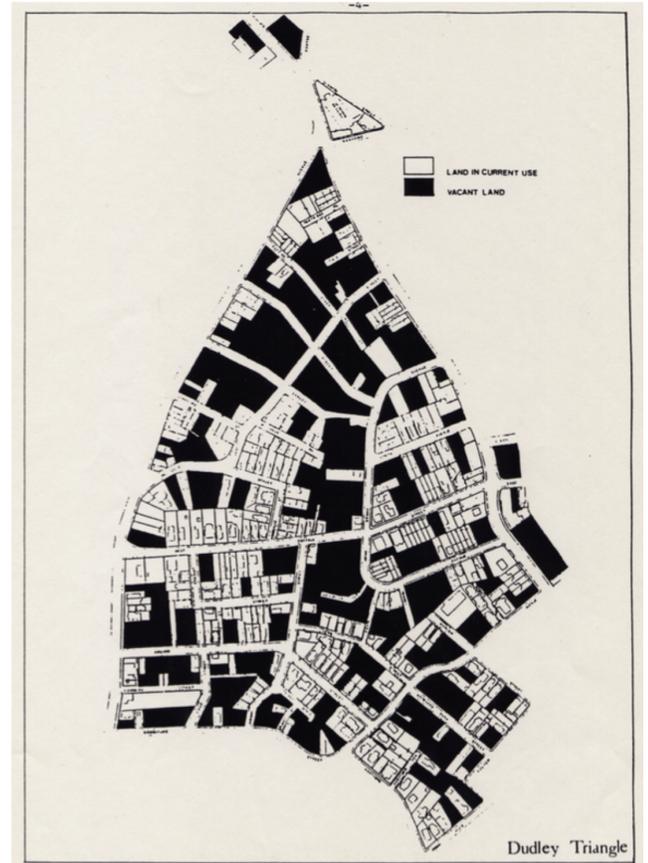
<sup>75</sup> Russell Coleman, “U.S. attorney: Louisville, as a city, has a violent-crime problem,” *Courier Journal*, July 8, 2019, <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/opinion/contributors/2019/07/08/louisville-violent-crime-murders-and-drive-bys-issue-whole-city/1674137001/>.

## Appendix F: Case Study: Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative

**An analysis of how community organizing on urban development built social capital to achieve collective impact**

### *The Motivation*

The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) originated as a partnership between community members, local non-profits, Community Development Corporations, faith organizations, and the Riley Foundation to protect against resident displacement and combat the disinvestment, arson, and illegal dumping that was harming the community.<sup>76</sup> For decades leading up to the formation of DSNI in the 1980s, the residents of the Dudley area had been subject to redlining, discriminatory lending practices, white flight, and disinvestment by the City of Boston.<sup>77</sup> As a result, the neighborhood had hundreds of vacant lots that were used to dump trash, toxic waste, and abandoned cars. The visual on the right illustrates the prevalence of vacant land (indicated in black) in the original DSNI focus area during the 1980s.<sup>78</sup> The community also had the highest number of waste transfer stations in the city, three of which were unlicensed, resulting in poor handling of refuse, strong unpleasant odors, rodent infestation, and illness for many community residents.<sup>79</sup> The community was frequently plagued by acts of arson, which were used to (1) push low-income residents out of the community so that their homes



<sup>76</sup> The Riley Foundation focuses its giving in Massachusetts. Philanthropic giving areas during this time included "social services, community development, youth programs, education, the arts and the urban environment."; Peter Medoff and Holly Sklar, *Streets of Hope: The Fall and Rise of an Urban Neighborhood* (Boston: South End Press, 1994), 40.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>78</sup> "Maps," Land Trust Resources, Dudley Neighbors Incorporated, accessed on February 20, 2020, <https://www.dudleyneighbors.org/maps.html>.

<sup>79</sup> Medoff and Sklar, *Streets of Hope*, 81.

could be redeveloped into condominiums, and (2) give developers and absentee landlords an opportunity to collect insurance from the fire, allowing them to save on rehabilitation or profit from abandoning the property.<sup>80</sup> These factors took a toll on the community's quality of life, motivating any remaining residents with access to financial resources to leave the neighborhood. This departure left behind residents who did not have an alternative option for where they lived, either due to finances or racist housing practices.

The Dudley community was also subject to significant disinvestment by the private sector and the City of Boston as a result of institutional racism against the predominantly Black, Cape Verdean, and Latinx residents. Due to discriminatory lending practices and redlining, banks refused to invest in the community.<sup>81</sup> At the municipal level, residents were frequently denied basic services and were ignored when they demanded support. When residents approached the City requesting a street closure because of the proliferation of illegal dumping there, the City refused.<sup>82</sup> City reports from the Boston Redevelopment Authority blamed Dudley residents for the physical deterioration of their community, while failing to account for the decades of City disinvestment, denial of basic services, and negligence with illegal transfer stations.<sup>83</sup> Meanwhile, the threat of redevelopment and resulting resident displacement seemed imminent. It was under these conditions that Dudley residents united to acquire the resources needed to gain control over their neighborhood and “build a sustainable, mutually beneficial, multicultural community.”<sup>84</sup>

### *The Initiative: 1985–1988 and Today*<sup>85</sup>

From the outset, residents of Dudley have demanded a central role in shaping the mission and structures of DSNI. DSNI was first created by representatives of human service agencies in the community and trustees from the Riley Foundation as an attempt to redevelop the community. In designing their redevelopment plan they created a geographic focus area, which included a core focus neighborhood (illustrated on the map above) and a secondary service area that extended into the surrounding community. Investments and redevelopment would be prioritized within the core area and would extend into the secondary area as relevant. When the original founders presented DSNI to 200 members of the community, it was immediately

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>85</sup> This case study only considers the work and impacts of DSNI between 1985 and 1988 and today. The organization has led meaningful work beyond the scope of this case study.

rejected on the basis that the community had not been involved in its development and had not been given positions within its governing structure.<sup>86</sup> As a result of the community's outcry, DSNI was restructured to become a bottom-up, community-led initiative; the geographic focus area defined by the original founders remained the same. The new governing board included requirements to ensure a resident majority on the board and equal representation among board members for each of the dominant ethnic populations within the community: African American, Cape Verdean, Latinx, and White.<sup>87</sup> DSNI also instituted two-year elections for the board to ensure a democratic process for the leadership that could respond to the community's needs over time.<sup>88</sup>

In line with the organization's commitment to ensuring that its work represented the community's interests, DSNI engaged in a door-knocking campaign to determine what priorities it would work on first. For the campaign, DSNI staffers interviewed community residents on which issues were most important to them and then analyzed the responses to hone in on a central issue.<sup>89</sup> This process not only served to inform DSNI on what its focus should be, but also helped to build awareness within the community of DSNI and demonstrated to residents that DSNI was genuinely interested in engaging with their needs. This attentiveness to community feedback and needs has been critical to DSNI's ability to authentically work on behalf of the community and their overarching success as an organization.

Some of DSNI's original activities included organizing residents to combat the illegal dumping and unlicensed transfer stations that were harming their community. The "Don't Dump on Us" campaign is described in further detail in the "Impact" section. This campaign led to the closure of unlicensed transfer stations, the removal of waste and abandoned vehicles, and a shift in community perception.<sup>90</sup> Another one of DSNI's original activities was partnering with an external consulting firm, DAC International, to: develop a community-informed revitalization plan; improve DSNI's facilitation skills; increase data and information on the community; and educate residents on how to view their community in new ways by specifically focusing community assets.<sup>91</sup> The major result of this work was a revitalization plan that was centered around the idea of an urban village. The design of the urban village was informed by resident

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 101–105.

descriptions of what they wanted to see in their community and how they wanted it to feel. A core component of the plan was development without displacement. This concept was central to the work because in many areas that were being redeveloped, lower-income residents were being priced out of the community. This produced inequities and undermined social capital. **As such, the resulting urban village plan focused on DSNI's core service area and "promis[ed] not just quality affordable housing, but quality of life. Dudley would have a vibrant cultural, commercial and residential community...the village concept 'should foster human growth where people have choice and opportunity.'"**<sup>92</sup> This plan was adopted by the City of Boston as the redevelopment plan for Dudley. A year later, DSNI would go on to open a land trust, then become the first community to win eminent domain, a success which is described more thoroughly in the Impact Section.

DSNI's organizing and activities following the adoption of the urban village plan in 1987 have led to many successes. Its process of collaborating with the community to identify needs and activities has remained an iterative approach that is responsive to how the community has evolved over time. DSNI today continues to serve as a mechanism to organize residents, amplify their voices, and ensure a thriving community. **DSNI's mission is: "to empower Dudley residents to organize, plan for, create, and control a vibrant, diverse, and high-quality neighborhood in collaboration with community partners."**<sup>93</sup> DSNI's work is a model for taking an asset-based approach to community development. It views residents as assets that are central to the mission, decision-making, and priority setting. Further, residents are supported and trained to realize community goals and expand impact. DSNI's current focus areas include the following:<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>93</sup> "DSNI," Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, accessed March 10, 2020, <https://www.dsni.org/>.

<sup>94</sup> "Program Focus Areas," Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, accessed March 10, 2020, <https://www.dsni.org/program-focus-areas>.

## DEVELOPMENT WITHOUT DISPLACEMENT

Intentional community development focused on planning and regulating the neighborhood's physical development. Includes partnering with residents and other agencies to implement strategies protecting against displacement

## YOUTH VOICE

Leadership development and community building for high school students

## NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Resident organizing and community building designed to revitalize the neighborhood, increase economic opportunities, and preserve the neighborhood's cultural heritages

## RESIDENT EMPOWERMENT

Development of the civic capacity, leadership, and mobilization skills of residents

The work of these core focus areas frequently overlap within DSNI's projects and initiatives and continues to evolve over time. Based on resident input, initiatives in the past 10 years have addressed topics including a cradle to career approach for education, preventing youth homelessness, a neighborhood investment initiative, and safe transportation for children to school. Recent projects for DSNI have included a development without displacement initiative occurring in Upham's Corner, a nearby neighborhood that is being redeveloped as an arts and innovation district. In this initiative DSNI has led the resident engagement work to design an RFP for developers that reflects the community's vision for the neighborhood. DSNI also used the land trust to purchase one of the buildings within this area for redevelopment at the behest of the city. Further information on this initiative is available in the Impact section. DSNI is also working on a Neighborhood Development project related to the 2020 census. This initiative seeks to increase resident participation in the 2020 census, by providing information on what the census is, why it is important and relevant for the community, and how to complete it.<sup>95</sup> It also offers support with census completion for individuals who do not have computer access.

<sup>95</sup> "Census 2020," DSNI Blog, Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, accessed March 10, 2020, <https://www.dsni.org/dsni-blog/2020/3/3/2020-census>.

DSNI also provides training to the residents that builds their capacity to create future change. DSNI offers leadership development to adults and youth within the community, some of whom later leverage these skills to take on leadership positions within the City of Boston and other partner agencies. Residents have been educated about topics such as homeownership, predatory loans, and protecting against foreclosure. They are also provided training in zoning, sustainable development, and other local housing laws to ensure that they are informed as they evaluate developers' proposals. In terms of youth development, DSNI provides leadership training and learning experiences to youth ages 14-18. Four seats on DSNI's board of directors are reserved for youth, providing another opportunity for youth to develop their skills and enabling them to take ownership within their community. Investment in community members has played a major role in improving quality of life for residents, while helping to ensure DSNI's sustainability over the past three decades.

As evidenced by the work described above, DSNI's focus spans a variety of areas ranging from urban development, to education, to leadership development. With these diverse activities, there is a question of how DSNI protects against mission drift. Fortunately, DSNI has a number of structures in place to ensure the organization stays faithful to its mission. In addition to the resident-dominated governing board, DSNI has subcommittees that have historically focused on topics ranging from youth development to housing and economic development. The Sustainable Development Committee is the only active subcommittee currently. This committee is responsible for reviewing development proposals, organizing residents to review and give feedback on these proposals, working with residents to update development standards and advocating for the community.<sup>96</sup> DSNI also deeply values building relationships and pride in one's community. It hosts an annual multi-cultural festival, open houses, and monthly community meetings. These events serve to bring people together, build social capital and keep the community actively involved.

### ***The Impact: 1985–1988 and Today***

DSNI has had a significant impact on the quality of life of its residents, and the ways in which the City and private entities interact with the community. Most importantly, its work has resulted in structural and policy shifts that protect the community against displacement, build social capital, and ensure the community's long-term sustainability. DSNI's first community campaign, *Don't Dump on Us*, resulted in a major community clean-up of vacant lots, brought

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<sup>96</sup> Dudley Neighbors Incorporated, *Community Investment Plan 2019-2021*, (Boston: 2019), [https://www.macdc.org/sites/default/files/user30753/DNI\\_COMMUNITY\\_INVESTMENT\\_PLAN\\_2019-21.pdf](https://www.macdc.org/sites/default/files/user30753/DNI_COMMUNITY_INVESTMENT_PLAN_2019-21.pdf).

residents together, and sent a message to City officials and the broader Boston community that the residents of Dudley had a right to quality services and fair treatment.<sup>97</sup> The initial advocacy efforts also led to the removal of abandoned cars and the closure of illegal waste transfer stations. Through these initial successes, DSNI began to establish its credibility and reputation with Dudley residents, the City, and the broader community. The City started to realize that it could no longer neglect the Dudley community, and that collaborating with Dudley could have political benefits. **Most importantly, DSNI's early successes helped to build hope and social capital as residents realized that their collective power could be used to ensure their rights and create the type of community that they wanted to live in.**

One of the most notable successes of DSNI was “becom[ing] the first community group in the nation to win the right of eminent domain.”<sup>98</sup> In order to be eligible to have eminent domain, DSNI formed a community land trust, named Dudley Neighbors Incorporated (DNI).<sup>99</sup> Winning eminent domain afforded DNI power over the land in Dudley, allowing them to engage in development projects including “the acquisition, assembly, and clearance of land, buildings, or structures.”<sup>100</sup> Through eminent domain, DNI has been able to convert more than 30 acres of vacant land into community assets, including homes, parks, and urban agricultural spaces.<sup>101</sup> A map of DNI's properties within the core area and the remaining vacant land is included on the following page. Winning eminent domain also enabled DNI to engage in equitable urban revitalization that prevents residents from being displaced as the community revitalizes. Further, it gave DSNI and DNI a source of leverage with other stakeholders because of their control over the land.

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<sup>97</sup> Medoff and Sklar, *Streets of Hope*, 67-87.

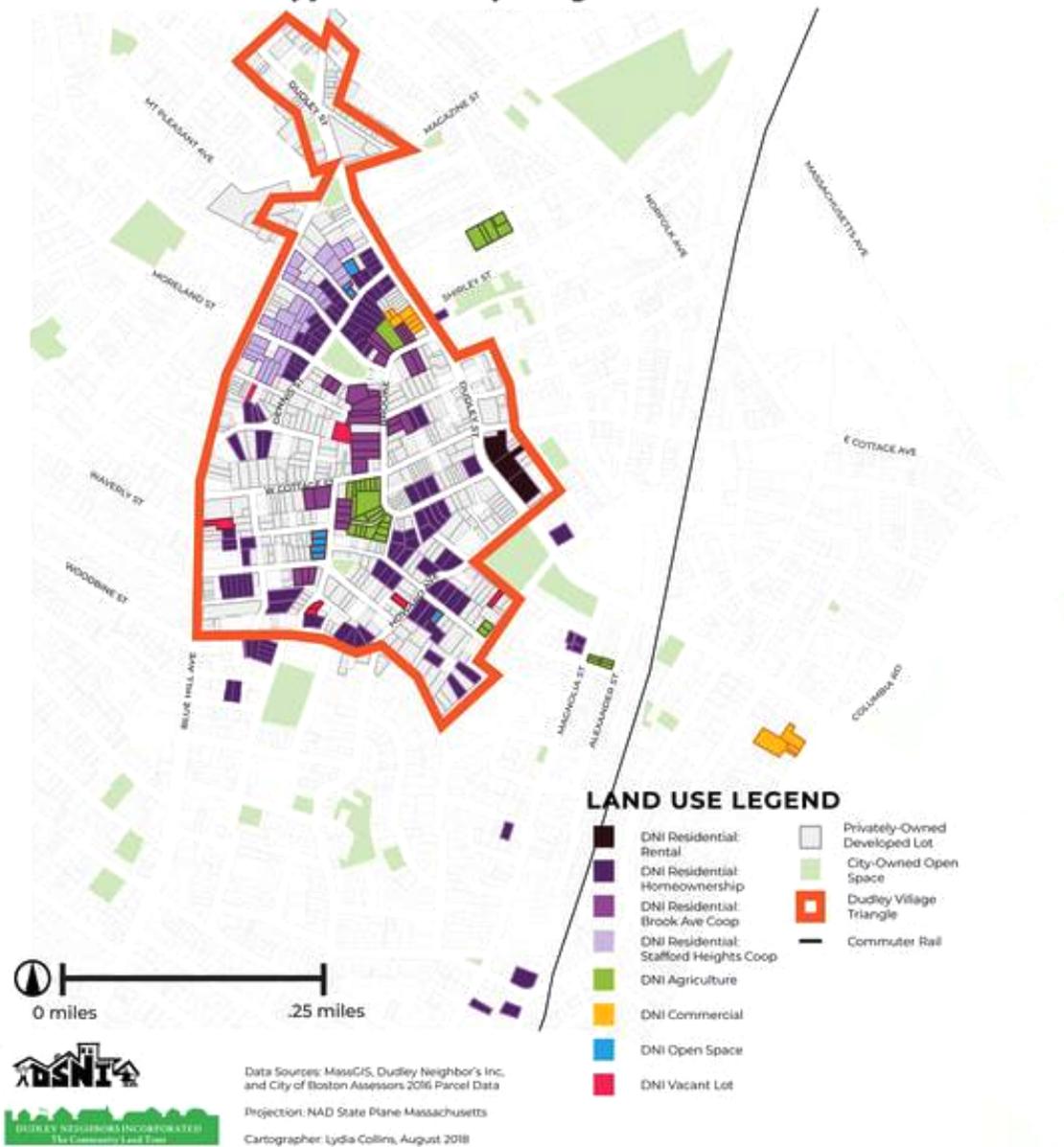
<sup>98</sup> Medoff and Sklar, *Streets of Hope*, 119.

<sup>99</sup> “Home,” Dudley Neighbors Incorporated, accessed on February 20, 2020, <https://www.dudleyneighbors.org/>.

<sup>100</sup> Medoff and Sklar, *Streets of Hope*, 119.

<sup>101</sup> “Background,” Dudley Neighbors Incorporated, accessed on February 20, 2020, <https://www.dudleyneighbors.org/background.html>.

### Land Use Type of Dudley Neighbor's Inc Parcels



Map of land uses and ownership in the Dudley Neighborhood

For ease of reader comprehension for the rest of this case, DSNI will also be used to refer to efforts by DNI, as their efforts and work are often intertwined. Through the land trust, DSNI has been able to collaborate with the community to create a set of development standards to ensure that properties within DSNI's core and secondary geographic focus areas are developed in compliance with what the community wants to see in its neighborhood. These standards are stricter than those of the City of Boston. Examples of these standards include

requirements around housing affordability, employment of local minority workers for construction, subcontracting with minority and/or women-owned businesses, outdoor space, bedroom size, and consistency in architectural style with the rest of the neighborhood.<sup>102</sup> The City strongly encourages developers to review their projects with the Sustainable Development Committee and get a letter of support when there are variances from the community's standards. Ideally, developers present their ideas to the community before presenting to the local zoning board; as discussed in the Challenges section, the process does not always happen in this order. The zoning board is not required to follow the Sustainable Development Committee's recommendations, however it is often in their interests to do so in order to maintain the collaborative partnership they have with DSNI more broadly.

While the land trust has granted DSNI significant leverage with the City and developers, it is important to highlight that the land trust is merely a tool, not a solution. It does not replace the need for a real community vision, plan, goals, and standards. The staff members of DSNI recognize this critical distinction:

*"Without organizing and people we'd just be another landowner, but without the land we would have much less power."*

Minnie McMahon, Project and Operations Manager, Dudley Neighbor Inc.

In recent years, DSNI has been able to expand its impact through a new collaboration with the City of Boston focused on the creation of the Upham's Corner Arts and Innovation District.<sup>103</sup> This project forms a core part of the organization's Development without Displacement strategy. Its specific role within the partnership includes using the land trust to purchase one of the parcels within the project area, leading the community engagement process, and translating resident requests into an RFP for developers. While the project is not yet completed, the City's request to partner with DSNI is an indication of mutual respect and highlights DSNI's ability to foster further institutional change for the benefit of local residents.

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<sup>102</sup> "DSNI Development Standards," Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, accessed in person, Dudley, MA, February 27, 2019.

<sup>103</sup> "Creating an Arts & Innovation District in Upham's Corner," DSNI Blog, Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, last updated May 7, 2019, <https://www.dsni.org/dsni-blog/2019/5/7/creating-an-arts-and-innovation-district-in-uphams-corner>.

### *Strengths*

#### Creating a Shared Mission, Values, and Common Goals

DSNI's approach is rooted in having a clear mission, goals, and shared set of values that were decided by the community during a set of strategic planning meetings. Subsequent community meetings have been used to reinforce, iterate, and update the community values and goals as needed. Part of the benefit of establishing such clear values and goals is the ability to articulate them to the City and other community partners. This can help to reinforce these partners' understanding of DSNI's priorities and what DSNI is willing and unwilling to accept on behalf of the community. While staying true to the mission and values can be difficult for some organizations, the community and DSNI's board serve to keep DSNI accountable and protect against mission drift.

#### Building Social Capital and a Sense of Community

DSNI has a number of strategies in place that foster community and build social capital. As discussed in the previous section, the community works together to set the mission, goals, and values. By collaborating as a community on these core issues, relationships between residents are deepened and they are able to create a shared community story. Further this helps to build a common sense of identity between residents. DSNI also provides information to new board and committee members on the community's history of organizing. This helps to establish a sense of where the community has come from, how they have succeeded, and provides hope to accomplish their future goals.

DSNI also hosts celebratory events in order to bring residents together and build pride in one's culture and community. DSNI offers an annual multicultural festival showcasing music and food from the different cultures in the community. It also holds an annual open house to introduce new residents to their work and other community members. As DSNI and residents pursue the hard work of seeking to change systems of oppression, creating these opportunities for joy and celebration is essential to their continued perseverance and success.

The staffing of DSNI also plays a major role in developing community trust. Staff members frequently serve as an informal resource for the community on diverse needs. Residents visit DSNI for support with understanding their bills, filling out forms, and printing/copying materials they might need. While this work is not the direct focus of DSNI, these types of supports help to both build relationships and reinforce the community's trust in DSNI.

DSNI also builds social capital between the community and the government, local organizations, and developers. DSNI reserves 13 of the 35 seats on its board for community partners, keeping diverse community agencies invested in its work and more readily available to residents. It has also partnered with local neighborhood associations in its service area to strengthen the associations' work, via mobilization of people and resources. For example, during the initial years, DSNI supported the Woodville Area Neighborhood Association with collecting signatures to get the government to place a stop sign at a busy intersection. In more recent years DSNI's land trust has partnered on a city-wide collaborative to extend best practices from the land trust approach to other Boston neighborhoods to protect against displacement. Over time, residents who have held roles within DSNI have taken on positions with other agencies and the City of Boston. These connections help to instill stronger partnerships between DSNI and other entities.

### Educating to Build Civic Capacity, Leadership, and Mobilization Skills

One of the cornerstones of DSNI's work is developing the civic capacity and leadership of its residents. For board and committee members, DSNI provides training on "DSNI's mission, history, group processes, meeting design and facilitation, and collective leadership."<sup>104</sup> As mentioned in the Impact section, DSNI provides resource events for residents on topics including homeownership, foreclosure, predatory loans, and zoning. DSNI also has a robust youth development program that provides leadership training and learning opportunities. These activities work together to empower residents with a deeper understanding of their community, institutional structures, and strategies to collectively mobilize for change. It also helps to connect residents with each other to build social capital and strengthen relationships. Lastly, it produces a pipeline of talent for DSNI, providing employment and civic leadership opportunities for residents now and in the future.

### Building Equity into the Organizational Structure and Functions

DSNI serves as "a vehicle for residents to exercise neighborhood control and access to resources."<sup>105</sup> At the center of DSNI's work is the idea of development without displacement. The focus on displacement prevention supports community members in being able to stay in their neighborhoods, and allows them to maintain decision-making capacity in their community. This work helps to ensure more equitable community development and also prevents relationships from being destroyed by displacement.

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<sup>104</sup> "Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative," [community-wealth.org](https://community-wealth.org/content/dudley-street-neighborhood-initiative), accessed on March 14, 2020, <https://community-wealth.org/content/dudley-street-neighborhood-initiative>.

<sup>105</sup> Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, "Program Focus Areas."

DSNI maintains a flat organizational structure that relies on community feedback and consensus to inform its work. Its board is required to maintain a Dudley resident majority, with an equal number of board seats reserved for residents from each major ethnic group (4 per group). By keeping a resident majority, the organization ensures that its focus stays local and relevant to the community. These requirements around ethnic representation on the board protects against one racial or ethnic group having too much control within DSNI's governance. Elections every two years allows for new residents to take on leadership positions within DSNI, which encourages leadership to be more evenly distributed across the community. This helps to build social capital by instilling legitimacy and trust into the organization, while allowing new relationships to develop as people step into leadership positions.

DSNI also strives to hire its staff from the community; this practice helps to ensure that the staff is representative of the community and maintains diversity. At the monthly Sustainable Development Committee meetings, DSNI provides services that make participation easier for residents, including translation, childcare, and food. These services promote equity by ensuring community members are not denied participation as a result of their language or family obligations. It also provides a meal for all community members. The practice of sharing food helps to build social capital while supporting residents that might be struggling with food security. DSNI intentionally holds meetings in the evening when people are less likely to be working and maintains robust documentation to ensure that individuals who are not present remain informed on what happens. All community members are invited to attend the developer meetings to learn, ask questions of developers, give feedback on proposals, and play a role in shaping how their community looks, feels, and changes over time. Voting is also used during these meetings to make decisions about whether or not to support developers, which furthers participation in decision-making.

### Using Collaborative Processes to Increase Voice

DSNI has a number of strong collaborative processes built into their organizational structure that ensures that resident voices are at the center of the work, and that conflict is used to learn and further the mission. As mentioned in the previous section, DSNI uses voting and requires community input on initiatives before making decisions in order to ensure a democratic process is upheld. It also relies on collaboration and iterative conversations to establish and update the community's development standards,

During the Sustainable Development Meetings, the community reviews developers' proposals and is able to ask questions about the development. The developers must leave the room after they present, so the community can discuss the project and vote on whether or not to support

the proposal. During the discussion, measures are taken to ensure equity in residents getting an opportunity to speak, via the community norm of recognizing when to step forward or back. After the discussion the community and DSNI co-draft a letter with its findings/determinations that gets shared with the zoning board. During these meetings, DSNI uses a facilitator and a set of community agreed-upon ground rules, which include norms around respect, how to share disagreement, how to respond when someone says something offensive, and the idea of agreeing to disagree. These practices enable conflict to be respectfully surfaced and help community members to build relationships with people who might not share their views.

### Partnering with External Entities to Build Capacity and Gain Tools

Since its initiation, DSNI has partnered with external agencies in order to supplement its work and gain expertise in areas where its members have less experience. The organization has relied on consultants to provide support with activities such as creating a comprehensive development plan, asset mapping, legal support, and developing RFPs. These partnerships are done in collaboration with the community, which votes to select the agencies that DSNI contracts with for consulting and other services. By working with consultants and external agencies, DSNI has been able to increase its internal capacity and gain additional tools to develop community leadership.

### Using a Place-Based Approach

DSNI's use of a place-based approach to create change serves as both an asset and a challenge. The challenges to this approach are discussed in the Challenges section. In terms of assets, using a place-based approach allows DSNI to build a stronger sense of community among residents, because the issues DSNI works on directly affect community members. This approach helps to ensure continuous resident engagement in the initiative. The place-based approach also helps DSNI to stay true to its mission and protects against overextending the organization in its work because of the geographic limitations of its service area.

One of the core goals within DSNI's work is to create a thriving urban village. To realize this goal, DSNI created its own sustainable development standards and included in those standards designs that facilitate community well-being and interactions. Therefore, in ensuring that new properties follow these standards, DSNI helps to maintain and build a sense of place in the community over time. By having these standards, DSNI and the community are able to shape the physical space of the neighborhood in a way that complies with and moreover reinforces the community's preferences and collective identity.

### Building a Strong Relationship between DSNI and the City

A major challenge associated with community-led work is developing an effective relationship with City leadership that does not compromise the community's values. DSNI has used a number of strategies to collaborate with and influence City officials. DSNI established a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the City stating that public development projects within the organization's geographic service area must be reviewed by DSNI in order for the project proposal to be granted a zoning variance. This MOU helps to uphold the community's voice and vision in development and is a safeguard to ensure the City's collaboration over time, even with changes in leadership.

The establishment of the land trust and the right to eminent domain has also furthered DSNI's working relationship with the City. From the City's perspective, having the land trust partner on projects makes it easier to ensure there is community backing for their work. It also helps the City to increase their tax base; by having DSNI's land trust purchase and redevelop vacant lots, the City gains revenue from the new homes and businesses that are built in those spaces.

DSNI has worked hard to establish its reputation and credibility with the community and other partners, including the City. Its effectiveness in building a strong relationship with the City is evidenced by the fact that the City approached DSNI to lead the community engagement aspect of the Upham's Corner Arts and Innovation District, as discussed in the Impact section.

### *Challenges*

While DSNI has been largely successful, it has also faced a number of challenges and had to learn from past mistakes. Communities and government agencies interested in replicating DSNI's work should consider how to overcome these obstacles when designing their work.

### Keeping Funders and Residents Engaged during Long-Term Change

One of the greatest challenges with DSNI's approach is that the type of systemic changes it seeks to produce, such as equitable housing and anti-racist community development, can take decades to manifest. DSNI is doing the long difficult work of upending entrenched inequitable systems and policies, while leading a deep shift in how people perceive and treat the Dudley community. The fact that results might take a while to actualize can impact the interest and motivation of residents, as well as funders. Failure to see results in the near term can cause residents to become disinterested or lose hope in the initiative. Another related challenge is financial sustainability. Funders want to see results within their grant and funding cycles, but this might not be feasible. This condition can make it difficult to attract and maintain funders.

### Building a Strong Relationship between DSNI and the City

While DSNI has a strong working relationship with the City of Boston, this relationship is not without its tensions. Each time there is a change in City leadership or in staffing in a department that partners with DSNI, there is a risk that the new individuals and their priorities might not be aligned with DSNI's work or processes. This challenge makes it imperative that DSNI is able to communicate its history to incoming City leadership and staff members, so that the organization can reeducate them on the partnership. The MOU is one of the protective features that helps to ensure the City continues to work with DSNI in the agreed-upon way. However, the agreement does not fully protect DSNI from the whims of political change and turnover.

It is important to reiterate that while the City has an agreement that public developments requiring variances must be reviewed by DSNI, the City does not have to follow its recommendations. While the City has incentives to comply with DSNI's recommendations, this lack of decision-making authority afforded to DSNI can pose a challenge to ensuring the community is developed in the way residents want to see. Another challenge is that the City does not notify DSNI when zoning meetings are happening; as such, the community has to actively monitor these activities without City support.

### Using a Place-based Approach

As highlighted in the Successes section, the use of a place-based approach comes with both benefits and challenges. One of the greatest difficulties with the place-based approach is the ways in which the land tangential to DSNI's service area gets developed. Because this land and its development fall outside of DSNI's geographic scope, the organization has less of an influence on what types of buildings and industries are built. This issue poses a risk to the well-being of residents, for example if developers decide to build a factory or waste facility that releases toxic fumes into the area. It could also affect residents' ability to get employed if a major employer is priced out of the neighboring area.

Another challenge with DSNI's approach is that it has resulted in the Dudley community receiving special treatment relative to other communities with similar demographics. While this is beneficial for DSNI, it also means that similar communities do not have the same level of protections against systemic injustices and resident displacement.

### Navigating Development Loopholes

DSNI's MOU with the City and development standards help to ensure that new buildings are designed in accordance with the community's wants and needs. At the same time, there are loopholes and issues with the process that allow developers to get away with non-compliance. One example that was observed at the February 2020 SDC meeting was a developer that was constructing units in the community in small quantities over a period of time. Had the developer built the units all at once, he would have triggered Boston's inclusionary development policy requirements. Building the units incrementally meant that the developer was not mandated to include a certain number of affordable housing units in his properties because he consistently fell below the minimum threshold.

While the example above is more of an extreme case, a number of developers choose to ignore DSNI's process, which can also lead to conflict. In this scenario, developers pursue the construction of their buildings and subsequently go to the zoning board to seek approval for a variance. The zoning board refers the developers to DSNI, but this is often after the building has been constructed. The community then has to decide whether or not to write a letter of support for what has already been built. As a result, the community doesn't have recourse to challenge projects that are pursued in a way that does not comply with DSNI's development standards. This pattern contributes to greater mistrust of developers and their intentions in the community and can reduce social capital with these particular stakeholders. Further, it limits DSNI's capacity to ensure that the community develops in such a way that upholds the shared vision and goals of the organization and residents.

### Ensuring Sufficient Funding, Staffing, and Resources

As a non-profit, DSNI is reliant on funding for its activities. This makes DSNI vulnerable to the preferences and interests of funders, which can threaten an organization's focus on their mission. Staffing capacity and availability also poses a challenge for DSNI. Given that DSNI is working on systemic changes, there is an abundance of issues for staff to work on. DSNI faces a challenge of ensuring staff are not being overextended. It has also experienced staffing shortages.

## Appendix G: Summary of Guiding Principles and Tools

GUIDING PRINCIPLES
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Governments and communities should co-own, co-create, and co-lead all aspects of the initiative and the resources and institutions that sustain it.</li> <li>2. Collaboration relies on legitimacy and trust between governments and communities.</li> <li>3. Initiatives to support social capital should involve not only governments and their constituents but also community-oriented organizations.</li> <li>4. These initiatives <u>should not</u> rely on the government’s pre-existing perceptions of community priorities, needs, and assets or of appropriate mechanisms for supporting social capital.</li> <li>5. Governments and communities should adopt a growth mindset and a culture of experimentation in efforts to support social capital.</li> <li>6. Building social capital takes time, resources, and commitment.</li> <li>7. Social capital should not be considered in isolation.</li> <li>8. Initiatives to build social capital should seek to develop community capacity for collective action.</li> <li>9. All processes in the initiative should take an equity lens and moreover seek to undo existing inequities.</li> </ol>
DIAGNOSIS TOOLS
<p><b>Diagnosing the Priority and Context</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Define the issue or opportunity clearly, centering community priorities.</li> <li>2. Consider and build partnerships with all relevant stakeholders.</li> <li>3. Map community assets.</li> <li>4. Develop historical context.</li> </ol>
PROCESS TOOLS
<p><b>Setting the Mission and Goals</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Co-create a clear shared mission, values, norms, and goals that inform your focus and process.</li> <li>2. Set up structures to protect against mission drift.</li> <li>3. Establish periodic meetings to review and update goals.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Building Community</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish a foundation of trust and respect so that stakeholders can authentically engage in the work.</li> <li>2. Provide institutional space for community members to problem-solve.</li> <li>3. Surface productive tension.</li> <li>4. Take time to celebrate community.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Centering Equity in the Work</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pay attention to the details of equitable community engagement throughout the process.</li> <li>2. Engage in anti-bias training and challenge how the team may be unintentionally perpetuating inequities in the work.</li> </ol>

3. Acknowledge different baselines and allocate resources to compensate for historical inequities and disinvestment.
4. Build a team that reflects the community. Give greater weight to input from the communities most affected by the work.

**Establishing an Organizational Structure**

1. Build community ownership into the governance structure.
2. Establish public decision-making mechanisms.
3. Design the initiative to reduce vertical and horizontal silos.
4. Create cross-sector partnerships.

**Building Capacity**

1. Hire from the community.
2. Leverage community partnerships to expand scope and depth of influence.
3. Partner with community members and organizations to continuously recruit new voices.
4. Use trainings to build individual, community, and organizational capacities.

**Ensuring Resources and Sustainability**

1. Incorporate your initiative’s activities into the budgets of relevant governmental agencies.
2. Diversify funding streams for the initiative.
3. Embed the initiative into normal operating procedures.
4. Be realistic, aware, and transparent about the resources, time, and energy required for this work.

**Designing an Iterative Process**

1. Use an iterative problem-solving process to create change.
2. Create a culture of experimentation.
3. Recognize how the working environment and trust affect people’s abilities to take risks.
4. Actively seek and respond to feedback from people within and outside of the initiative.

**Ensuring Accountability and Transparency**

1. Establish monthly meetings open to the public to report out on progress and share updates.
2. Develop other strategies to share progress updates with the public.
3. Leverage residents to increase accountability in the work.

**MEASUREMENT TOOLS**

**Developing Methods to Assess Outcomes**

1. Set a baseline for the initiative.
2. Develop diverse, tailored opportunities for open and anonymous feedback.
3. Collect feedback early and often.
4. Adapt measurement methods over time.

**Developing Metrics for Social Capital**

1. Develop metrics for assessing social capital that best align with the conditions and goals of the initiative.
2. Include metrics that reflect the holistic and complex nature of building social capital.
3. Adapt measurement metrics over time.

## Appendix H: Resources

Resources provide examples of existing frameworks and tools from various sources. This list is in no way exhaustive; there are many more iterations of these tools available from a wide range of sources. Use these resources as a guide insofar as they are helpful, but many frameworks should be tailored to the circumstances and context of the community being served.

You may find that some of the resources may not be helpful for your initiative or may contain components that are less aligned with our asset-based approach. Feel free to ignore the components that do not work for your initiative and disregard those that are not asset-based. We included those resources despite their limitations because of the benefits they may offer more broadly.

### *Frameworks*

**Spectrum of Community Engagement:** This article from the Stanford Social Innovation Review applies the spectrum from the International Association for Public Participation to highlight the different levels of community involvement and ownership in government decision-making. [https://ssir.org/articles/entry/community\\_engagement\\_matters\\_now\\_more\\_than\\_ever](https://ssir.org/articles/entry/community_engagement_matters_now_more_than_ever)

**Collective Impact:** This article from the Stanford Social Innovation Review provides examples of organizations doing collective impact work, and highlights the five conditions required for building collective success. [https://ssir.org/articles/entry/collective\\_impact](https://ssir.org/articles/entry/collective_impact)

**Involve:** This UK-based nonprofit works to center public participation in government decision-making. They provide a framework for community cohesion and participation which “provide[s] practical guidance for anyone seeking to work with their local communities towards creating greater community cohesion.” <https://www.involve.org.uk/resources/knowledge-base/resources/community-cohesion-and-participation-practical-framework>

**Collaborative Governance Research:** This research by Chris Ansel and Alison Gash (2011) provides a model for collaborative governance rooted in research on collaborative governance case studies. <https://sites.duke.edu/niou/files/2011/05/Ansell-and-Gash-Collaborative-Governance-in-Theory-and-Practice.pdf>

### *Diagnostic Resources*

**The Community Toolbox:** This service from the Center for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas provides training and resources for community organizations and public servants to engage in community development. Chapter 3 of the Community Assessment toolkit provides recommendations for community assessment and asset-mapping.

<https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/assessing-community-needs-and-resources>

**National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO):** This organization provides frameworks and tools for assessing issues related to public health. Topics include injury and violence prevention, healthy community design, environmental justice, and performance management for public health programs. We suggest the Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) toolkit for tools on every stage of planning and development of public health strategies.

<https://www.naccho.org/programs/public-health-infrastructure/performance-improvement/community-health-assessment/mapp>

**Forward Cities:** This organization provides tools on asset-mapping, community surveys and developing a strategic plan that may be useful to review when developing an equitable social capital initiative. We suggest reviewing their asset mapping work in particular.

<https://forwardcities.org/toolkits/#step-3>

### *Process Resources*

**PolicyLink:** This organization advocates for equity-centered growth strategies and policies in the United States. They provide a variety of resources for centering equity in your work. The Equitable Development Toolkit section presents strategies for centering equity in a range of community development scenarios.

<https://www.policylink.org/resources-tools/tools>

**Institute for Healthcare Improvement:** This organization applies best practices from improvement science, also known as continuous improvement, to create better health outcomes. They provide a number of resources on how to go about adopting and implementing improvement science principles that can help organizations working to develop better iterative processes.

<http://www.ihl.org/resources/Pages/HowtoImprove/default.aspx>

**California Institute for Local Government:** This organization's work on collaboration and partners provides information on how to build inter-agency and cross sector partnerships. <https://www.ca-ilg.org/collaboration-partnerships>

### *Measurement Resources*

**Social Capital Research:** This organization provides research, training and consulting on social capital and organizational culture. They have a general repository of information on social capital that may be useful to review. They also include an overview of measurement tools that have been used to assess social capital at the individual, group, community and national levels.

<https://www.socialcapitalresearch.com/measure-social-capital/>

**The World Bank:** The World Bank has a social capital measurement tool that has been used more frequently in developing contexts. Nevertheless, research on and aspects of the tool may be useful to review. Be aware that some of the survey questions may fail to use an asset-based approach.

<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/515261468740392133/Measuring-social-capital-an-integrated-questionnaire>

**The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development:** The OECD put together a databank of survey questions that have been used to measure social capital and a working paper that highlights ways to measure and assess social capital. Be aware that some of the survey questions may fail to use an asset-based approach.

<https://www.oecd.org/sdd/social-capital-project-and-question-databank.htm>

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