A COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY ASSETS APPROACH TO CLOSING THE HEALTH INEQUALITIES GAP

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Evidence of Need for the HH Initiative
Circulatory disease deaths (per 1000 population), 2001-2010

Deaths per 1,000 population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Males 40-64 years</th>
<th>Female 40-59 years</th>
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<td>Northern Ireland</td>
<td>West Belfast (AA1998)</td>
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Key:
- Northern Ireland
- West Belfast (AA1998)
The Healthy Hearts in the West initiative (2012 – 2013) developed a collaborative, community assets approach using a community development model to deliver:

- Community wide programmes, activities and events promoting and supporting heart health
- Community Pharmacy Programmes: Cardio-Vascular Screening and Weight Management
- Local provision of Cardiac Rehabilitation Programmes (Phases 3 & 4) in a community setting
Marmot in Action

The Marmot review (2010) highlighted the need for:

- Coproduction and collaboration across all sectors
- Challenges to existing structures
- Building mutual reliance and respect to address social determinants of health inequalities
The Marmot Review States...

“Effective local delivery requires effective participatory decision-making at local level. This can only happen by empowering individuals and local communities”
The Rationale for a Community Development Approach

Communities develop themselves but intervention can:
- Accelerate development addressing an identified need, in this case health inequality
- Set communities on a fruitful path
- Link community infrastructure to local and regional policies and initiatives; win:win outcomes
- Build partnerships with statutory and private sector organisations, such that they are receptive to engaging with community organisations on an equal footing.
Impact of Healthy Hearts
Intervention: Examples

- **Accelerate development:**
  Increased awareness about risk factors

- **Set communities on a fruitful path:**
  Springvale: from health days to whole organisation health and wellbeing strategy

- **Link community infrastructure to local and regional policies and initiatives:**
  Fit Kids Programme with Active Communities

- **Build community: statutory partnerships:**
  Cardiac Rehabilitation Phase 3 delivered from The Maureen Sheehan Centre
Community Development Values

- Social justice
- Self-determination
- Working and learning together
- Sustainable communities
- Participation
- Reflective practice
Putting Community Development Values into Practice: 1

- **Working and learning together**
  Collective action achieved through local Hub Planning Days, Hub Steering Group meetings, and a range of HH and community based heart health programmes and activities

- **Self-determination**
  Involving and enabling communities to make better choices for themselves: information, Pharmacy Programmes, health check opportunities, community groups promoting heart health messages
Putting Community Development Values into Practice: 2

- **Social justice**
  HH seeks to redress heart health inequalities through raising awareness and accessibility eg: Workplace Health Events and Falls Park Run

- **Promoting equality between the community and statutory sectors**
  HH partners worked together to influence, change and exert control over the social and political issues that affect people’s lives
Putting Community Development Values into Practice: 2

Seeking alternative ways of working through participation
The health inequality gap is widening between affluent and disadvantaged areas. HHW engaged with organisations to look at new ways to make heart health accessible to people

Sustainable communities
Building community capacity: heart health training and supporting heart health champions

Reflective practice
Robust qualitative and quantitative evaluation
High levels of social capital are correlated with positive health outcomes, well-being and resilience.

- Facilitating face-to-face community networks
- Encouraging civic participation and citizen power
- Consideration given to a more effective use of (limited) resources
- Making use of and enhancing the elements that exist and make up the community
A community asset approach values a community’s...

Capacity  
Skills  
Knowledge  
Connections and engagement  
Potential in a community  
Community knowledge

*It does not replace investment in improving services or tackling the structural causes of health inequality. The aim is to achieve a better balance between service delivery and community building*
Recognised existing skills and assets within the community, seeking to promote existing heart health programmes and events

- Identified opportunities to make optimum use of resources through working together
- Considered alternative approaches to facilitate more accessible services and health promotion interventions
- Provided additional input into existing programmes
- Built community capacity
Social Capital

- NICE Guidance on Community Engagement to improve health (PH9, 2009) emphasises how active communities can have a positive impact on health outcomes by improving services and influencing the governance of health services.

- Social capital is concerned with the value of social networks, bonding similar people, and bridging between diverse people, with norms of reciprocity. Fundamentally social capital is about how people interact with each other. HH coordinates such opportunities at strategic and operational levels’
Additional Partnership Activity
Collaborative, Community Assets Approach

- Belfast HSC Trust - engaging Community Dieticians to build capacity across community
- PHA and Belfast HSC Trust - further development of healthy workplace initiatives
- 4 Secondary schools - developing nutrition and cookery based programmes
- Multi-agency approach to programmes for young people at Springvale eg Fit4Work Programme
- Queens University Belfast (UKCRC Centre of Excellence for Public Health (NI)) research and evaluation support
- Cook It Programmes delivered in community groups
- Springvale Charitable Association developing tailor-made programmes for older people
Critical Factors

- Community development principles driving the Initiative, supporting individuals and groups
- Drivers, champions, and committed individuals
- Coordination of effort at strategic and operational levels across a range of partners
- Innovation and risk-taking within a governable and accountable framework
- A community assets approach: building on what is there, and improved use of resources
- Understanding local context and culture to promote and support accessible opportunities for behaviour change