

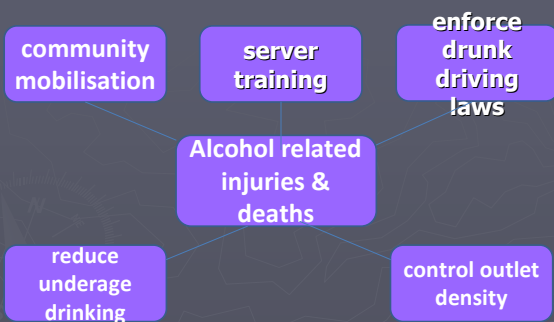
Community Engagement and Alcohol – A Multi-component approach

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Middlesex University

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What is a 'multi-component' approach?

- ▶ a programme of co-ordinated action, singular interventions run in combination with each other and / or sequenced together over time
- ▶ identification, mobilisation and co-ordination of appropriate 'stakeholders'
- ▶ whole communities form the target intervention group



Community prevention trials USA

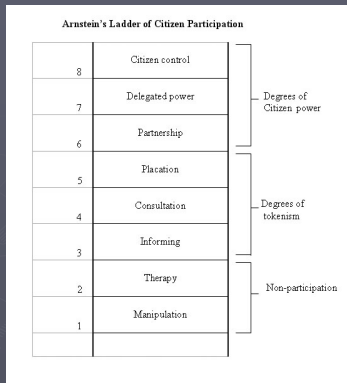
- ▶ Alcohol consumption: - 6% and 49%
- ▶ Driving over the limit: -51%
- ▶ Drink driving crashes: -6%
- ▶ Night time injury crashes: -10%
- ▶ Assault injuries: -43%

Surfers' Paradise AUS

- ▶ Positive effects for 14 /16 items in risk assessment policy checklist
- ▶ Improved responsible hospitality practices
- ▶ Decreased drunkenness/ violence/aggression
- ▶ 34% decrease in assaults
- ▶ Attracted 'better' clientele

Issues and problems

- ▶ short term change, evaluation, transferability, unexpected and unwanted effects
- ▶ research and 'top down' led
- ▶ focus on criminal justice/ prevention
- ▶ limited community 'engagement'



**Professional attitudes and behaviour
'Appropriateness' of community involvement (%)**

ACTIVITY	VERY	FAIRLY	NOT AT ALL
Consultation	77	23	0
Delivery	35	62	3
Evaluation	55	37	6
Fundraising	41	44	12
Management	16	61	18
Commissioning	22	52	21

Areas of work	VERY	FAIRLY	NOT AT ALL
Education / prevention	64	34	1
Diversionsary	64	33	3
Support	67	27	5
Campaigning	59	34	3
Aftercare, relapse	37	44	15
Law enforcement	18	38	37
Treatment delivery	14	43	37

Limits of community engagement

- responsibility and accountability,
- willingness and ability to be involved,
- perceptions of emerging community leaders,
- representativeness of activists

The 'Spark Plugs' in 'Suburban Town'

- ▶ Started by professionals- establish empowered networks
- ▶ Objective for professionals - learn the process of making links with the community
- ▶ Not-for-profit consultancy engaged
- ▶ Employed local 'spark plugs' – initiated projects
- ▶ Five projects funded

The five projects

1. **PVC:** target - encourage 25 young people to perform in a talent contest. £4000.
2. **Z Youth Club:** target - engage 25 young people in constructive activities. £3950.
3. **God Provides:** target - get 10 clients back to work. £4000.
4. **'Suburban Town' Youth:** target - encourage 20 young vulnerable people to clean up a pond area. £3400.
5. **The Birds:** target -get 20 young people to attend a Saturday club. £4000.

The Spark Plugs were

- ▶ local
- ▶ early adaptors and have power
- ▶ community activists
- ▶ people who show good humour and energy
- ▶ those who have the knack of bringing people together

Key ingredients for success

- ▶ willingness of funders to take a risk
- ▶ small number of key 'can do' people
- ▶ awareness that these were quite small sums of money
- ▶ accept - local people could be trusted
- ▶ existence of suitable people to be spark plugs
- ▶ an intermediary community worker with particular qualities and skills

Limitations and Challenges

- ▶ difficult to find spark plugs
- ▶ spark plugs were predominantly Black and Christian
- ▶ aims of the projects were mainly diversionary and educational
- ▶ most projects involved teams of volunteers
- ▶ costs of working with communities underestimated
- ▶ notably missing – user led projects

Some comments:

- ▶ 'graffiti is much more of an issue than drugs, as well as mugging and petty crime'.
- ▶ 'I always think you need to have basic youth projects that are very inclusive [rather than] just specialising on the drug and alcohol use'.
- ▶ 'I think this targeting stuff is complete nonsense'.

Tensions

- ▶ it was difficult for local people to act as leaders. 'As soon as someone in the community springs up as a leader there is so much antagonism to them... self appointed leaders have a really tough time. There is antagonism to them because they are seen as 'getting above themselves' [but] 'the local authority likes working with community leaders. It makes it much easier for them... they will work with the community leader, use them as our conduit for information [but] it is actually quite divisive'.

The Future

How sustainable these activities will prove to be is an unknown. Many of the professionals have moved on to other duties and locations while the spark plugs remain, seeking other funders and other support for their ideas and vocations.

Central government policies on participation, while not necessarily bringing citizen and user voices to the centres of decision making power, were producing a culture of change'

Newman et al. (2004) Public participation and collaborative governance *Jnl. of Soc. Policy* 33 (2) 203-223

Multi-component programmes require partnerships

The sum is greater than the parts

