

Youth Participation in Local (Community) Level Development: A Development Strategy

By

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ABSTRACT

Youth Participation in Local (Community) Level Development: A Development Strategy

Youth participation as a development strategy in community development requires sustained engagement of youth. The synchronization of Barr and Hashagen (2000) ABCD approach to community development and youth development and participation perspectives. Among these perspectives are empowerment educational model (Freire 1970), the adolescent empowerment cycle (Chinman and Linney (1998), the youth development and empowerment (Kim 1998) and transactional partnering models (Cargo 2003) and Hart's ladder of participation. The synchronization has facilitated the creation of a youth-adult partnership model for improved partnerships between adults and youth in community development. This model from the onset demonstrates an engagement of youth and adults in a set of activities towards advancing the local development agenda. This model critiques Hart's Ladder of participation, a unilinear perspective on youth participation. The emergent outcome is a generic model of sustained youth at the local level. The success of the model relies on the incorporation of techniques practiced by the potential implementation organizations.

Keywords: Pro-Poor Development, Youth Development and Participation

BIOGRAPHIC SUMMARY

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Formal Education:

Currently pursuing a PhD in Development Studies with a focus on Social Policy with the *Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies*, UWI. The dissertation focuses on Youth in Participatory Development

Completed a Masters of Science (M.Sc) Degree in Sociology (Development Option), 2003 at The University of the West Indies, Mona.

B.Sc(Hon.) in Sociology (Major) with Economics, Political Science and Management studies courses. Some of the Management courses include Organizational Behaviour, Human Resources Management and Marketing.

Professional and Academic Conferences

- a. Caribbean Studies Association Conference 2009-June 1-5, Jamaica, Knutsford Court Hotel. The proposed presentation will be entitled *Limited Human Capital and its Challenges on Pro-Poor Development Strategies for Youth*
- b. Sir Arthur Lewis Memorial Conference 2008 on the Development Challenges in the 21st Century-September 25-27, UWI St. Augustine Campus. The presentation was entitled *Youth in Participatory Development*.
- c. Caribbean Child Research Conference 2008 on Promoting Child Rights Through Research- "*Building a Region Fit for Children*", Jamaica Pegasus Hotel- October 21-22. The presentation was entitled *Modeling Socio-demographic and Psycho-economic Factors that Influence Self-reported Health Status of Young Females, 12-17 years*.
- d. Presented findings from socio-economic survey conducted in 2007/8 by the Social Development Commission at Downtown Development Area Consultation, February 2008

Research Papers and Consultancy Experience

Data collections used in the studies below include surveys, focus group discussions and case studies

- (a) *Project Evaluation of the JAMALCO Breadnut Factory, 2007 (currently being carried out)*
- (b) *Motor Vehicle Accreditation for Residents and Commercial Enterprise around Sabina Park, 2007. Sponsored by the Local Organizing Committee of Cricket*
- (c) *Means Testing for Fee Payment, sponsored by and conducted for the HEART Trust/NTA, 2006*
- (d) *Community Profile Development: Denham Town, Lluidas Val, Fletchers Land and Yallahs, Sponsored by the HEART Trust/NTA, 2005*
- (e) *The Challenges of Productivity and Competitiveness of Women –Owned Enterprise in the Caribbean: A Jamaican Case Study, 2005*
- (f) *Problems and Coping Strategies employed by Mature Women Living on the Halls of Residence of the Mona Campus , 2003*
- (g) *Perceptions and Characteristics of Fast Food Consumption Patterns in Portmore: Dimensions of the McDonaldization Process, 2003.*
- (h) *Socio-Economic Survey of Parade Gardens, Seivewright Gardens, Monaltrie: Inner City Housing Project, Sponsored by the National Housing Trust, 2003 , 2004*

Current Place of Employment: International University of the Caribbean since July 2009

Job Title: Projects Manager

Implement and manage the Inter-American Development Bank and International University of the Caribbean sponsored Kingston Inner City Competitiveness Initiative (KICCI) Project otherwise called *Imagine Kingston* Project as well as other projects in the Office of Capacity Development.

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Job Title: Research Manager

Manage and implement research and profile development for the parishes of Kingston, St. Andrew and St. Thomas at the Social Development Commission. My scope of work was informed by several national policies such as the Public Sector Modernization Programme (PSMP), National Poverty Eradication Programme (NPEP) and Local Government Reform Policy, Youth Policy.

Research and Work Interest

Youth participation, development studies and community development

Youth Participation in Local (Community) Level Development: A Development Strategy

Overview

This paper emerged from within a broader framework of my doctoral dissertation entitled *Towards a Sustainable Approach to Youth in Participatory Development at the Local (Community) Level*. The purposes of this paper are twofold. The first is to illustrate frameworks for maximising youth participation at the community level as well as to highlight those skill competencies that are required for the effectiveness of youth serving organizations such as the National Youth Service. The second is to identify elements of a checklist for sustained youth participation at the local [community] level which have the potential to guide social interventions that targets youth

The paper begins by defining pro-poor development and its relationship with youth participation. This is followed by a discussion on youth development and participation with community development perspectives. The paper concludes by examining factors required for a logframe that conceptualises and identifies specific actions that enhances youth participation.

Pro-Poor Development

Sustainable human development is the ability of any society to meet the needs of its most vulnerable and incorporate their assets in a participatory

framework to meet current and future needs. Pro-poor growth requires a strategy that is biased in favour of the poor which is achieved by four key principles (a) defining development as strengthening human capabilities (b) policies that are specifically designed to enhance the quality of the lives of the poor (c) identification of the poor and (d) targeted poverty reduction interventions that work in conjunction with the “trickle down view”. Hence, pro-poor development is defined as a strategy developed and implemented based on the concept of human development, which mainly aims to expand the human capital and opportunities of poorer segments of the population through the implementation of the principle of social solidarity¹.

Jamaica’s most modern attempts in pro-poor policy interventions include the National Poverty Eradication Policy and Programme (NPEP) [Ministry Paper 13, 1995] established in the Office of the Prime Minister. Both policy and programme were geared towards creating the framework for promoting economic and social development in building the “enabling environment” that addresses *empowering communities to take responsibility for identifying the physical, social and economic needs to be met so as to eradicate poverty in their communities*. The other pro-poor intervention is the Poverty Alleviation through Health and Education (PATH) programme is administered by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS). The principal objective of PATH is to improve human capital development by increasing the access of children in poor families to education, thereby breaking the cycle of inter-generational poverty. It also seeks to improve the health status and productivity of the poor. This programme is part

¹ Human Poverty and Pro-Poor Policies in Armenia. Available at

of the Government's reform of the Social Safety Net Programme (SSN) and includes a merger of the three existing income support programmes - Food Stamp, Old Age and Incapacity Allowance, and Outdoor Poor Relief.

Pro-poor Development and Youth Participation

Youth participation² refers to the involvement of youth in responsible, challenging action that meets genuine needs, with opportunities for planning and/or decision-making affecting others in an activity whose impact or consequence is extended to others— i.e., outside or beyond the youth participants themselves. Rajani (1999) in Dunn (2002, 6) notes that *'it is only through participation that (adolescents) develop skills, build competencies, form aspirations, gain confidence and attain valuable resources.'* This confirms the view that youth participation therefore is a product and strategy of sustainable human development. It is a relevant pro-poor development strategy in so far as it is a means of helping youth develop a consciousness of issues that affect other youth. It encourages building networks and linkages with other stakeholders to help promote their assets and strengthening their capabilities. Globally³, 18 per cent of the population comprises persons between the ages of 15-24, that is an estimated 1.061 billion, the majority, 85 per cent live in the developing world; The Youth Development Report 2007 indicates that the developing world's 1.3

² The [National Commission on Resources for Youth](#)

³ Youth Development in Africa: Policies and Trends at the Global Level, Addis Ababa , 27 to 29 June 2006

billion young people are its next generation of economic and social actors. Missed opportunities to invest in and prepare this generation will be extremely costly to reverse, both for young people and for society. Given the importance of building human capital in youth, the Millennium Development Goals reflects seven of the eight goals that relates directly or indirectly to livelihood outcomes for youth. Table 1 below addresses this.

TABLE 1: Millennium Development Goals and there Relationship with Youth Livelihood Outcomes

Millennium Development Goals	Relationship With Youth Livelihood Outcomes
Goal1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct
Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target 8. Literacy rate of 15- to 24-year-olds
Goal 3: Promote gender equality and Target 9. Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary, and empower women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target 9. Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary, and • empower women tertiary education • Target 10. Ratio of literate women to men, ages 15–24
Goal 4: Reduce child mortality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indirect
Goal 5: Improve maternal health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indirect
Goal 6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target 18. HIV prevalence among pregnant women ages 15–24 years • Target 19. Percentage of population ages 15–24 years with comprehensive and correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS • Target 20. Ratio of school attendance of orphans to school attendance of non orphans ages 10–14 years
Goal 8: Develop a global partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target 45. Unemployment rate of young people ages 15–24, by sex

Source: Youth Development Report, 2007 Chapter 1: Youth, Poverty Reduction and Growth.

In Jamaica, the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ) has already formulated a draft of a National Vision 2030 for steering national development which the Prime Minister has endorsed. Table 2 outlines the elements at work for

sustained participation .In addition, there are scenarios that are likely to occur if the youth participation as a strategy of pro-poor development is not managed and sufficiently integrated in the national vision for first world development by the year 2030.

TABLE 2: National development goals, outcomes and youth exclusion scenarios

National goals	National outcomes	Results if youth participation at the community, institution and state level is not considered
<i>Jamaicans are empowered to achieve their fullest potential</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A healthy and stable population 2. World class education and training 3. Effective social protection 4. Authentic and innovative culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future generation that is apathetic to the possibilities of positive change in their life chances • Future generation that continues to look beyond the state borders for change agents(usually personalities) • Stymie the transformative power of local culture and heritage in development and behaviour change
<i>The Jamaican society is safe, cohesive and just</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Security and safety 2. Effective governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwillingness to participate in local development process on the ground • Distrust and apathy displayed to public institutions and public offices • Growth of negative institutions(gangs, city and rural vagrants)
<i>Jamaica's economy is prosperous</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A stable macro-economy 2. An enabling business environment 3. Strong economic infrastructure 4. Energy security and efficiency 5. A technology-driven society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unstable employment patterns • Inability to contribute to social net for their own survival (NHT,NIS, pension plans, health plans • Youth without relevant skills, training and

National goals	National outcomes	Results if youth participation at the community, institution and state level is not considered
	6. Internationally competitive industry structures	<p>education not able to compete effectively in the competitive global economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased poverty trends in youth
<i>Jamaica's development is in harmony with its natural environment</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sustainable use and management of environmental and natural resources 2. Hazard risk reduction and adaptation to climate change 3. Sustainable urban and rural development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Depleted environmental resources for youth Unsustainable livelihood practices

Source: Vision 2030 Jamaica: National Development Plan (Draft), 2009

Integration of the ABCD Model of Community Development and Youth Development Perspectives

The Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) developed a core of ideas that contributes to Achieving better Community Development (ABCD model) (See figure 1). The model developed by Barr and Hashagen (2000) has four dimensions that address community empowerment. At the base is a focus on community empowerment that targets personal empowerment and positive action that addresses poverty, health and other discriminations that challenges dominant power structure. The other based component is community organizing that address matters related to the effectiveness of these groups and how representative their views are of the wider community. Finally, there is participation and involvement through which change in community life is achieved. The second tier focuses on the quality of community life. The emphasis

here lies in the sharing of wealth, developing a caring community, safety and health, creativity and camaraderie among its citizenry. This result is the third tier that addresses the quality of life issues of a livable, sustainable and equitable community. The final outcome translates into a healthy community (Source: Ledwith 2005, 80). The ABCD model is described as a planned process of change based on inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes.

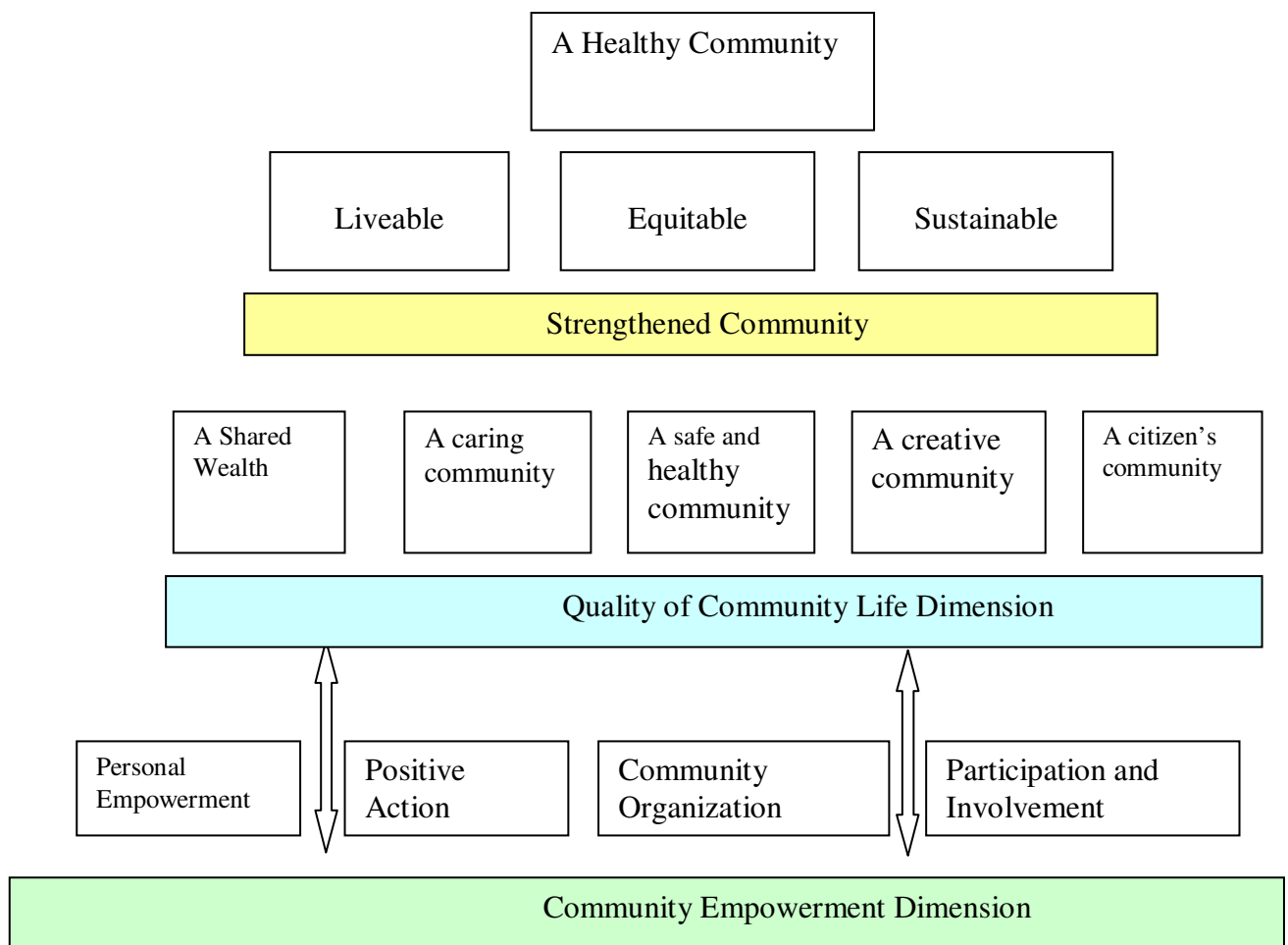


FIGURE 1 The ABCD model
(Source: Community Development: A Critical Approach, 2005, p81)

Figure 2 reflects the ABCD process model within which community development draws on ‘inputs’ such as human, financial and material resources that are identified inside and outside of the community. The ‘process’ component address matters related to the daily survival of the community work such as organizational capacity, advice and support, encouraging reflection and planning , assessing power relationships and helping to develop strategic thinking. This eventually leads to ‘outputs’ that are tangible, which have quantitative measurements of actions achieved. The ‘outcomes’ is the stage that effectively measures quality of community life against community development interventions. The outcomes to which Barr and Hashagen (2000) cited in Ledwith (2005,84) refer are sustainability, livability and equitability.

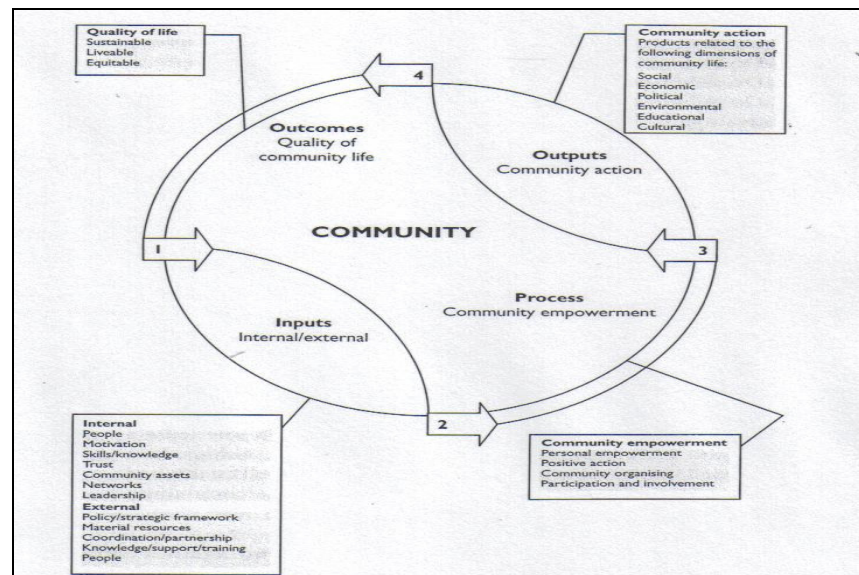


FIGURE 2: ABCD process model

(Source: Community Development: A Critical Approach, 2005, p83)

The main models presented as addressing youth development were the empowerment educational model (Freire 1970), the adolescent empowerment cycle (Chinman and Linney 1998), the youth development and empowerment (Kim 1998) and transactional partnering models (Cargo 2003) and Hart's Ladder of Participation (1997). These models set a framework for sustaining youth participation in local development in that they facilitate personal development in order to make meaningful contribution to community development. Aspects of the youth development models along with the ABCD model of community development have been integrated to create a new model called the youth-adult partnership model as seen in figure 3. This association between adults and youth emphasizes the value of the community in the positive socialization and mentoring process, where if applied has the possibility of generating positive outcomes for the community if these relations are maintained. In addition, whereas Hart's model views youth participation in definite stages, where youth are not participating into a situation where initiatives are completed led by youth, figure 3 identifies a situation from the onset youth and adults are engaged in a set of activities towards advancing the local development agenda. This perspective is useful on the basis that a model designed to support youth participation at the local level must address matters of facilitation, mentorship in order to derive an asset based perspective of youth, the fuel required to better sustain their participation.

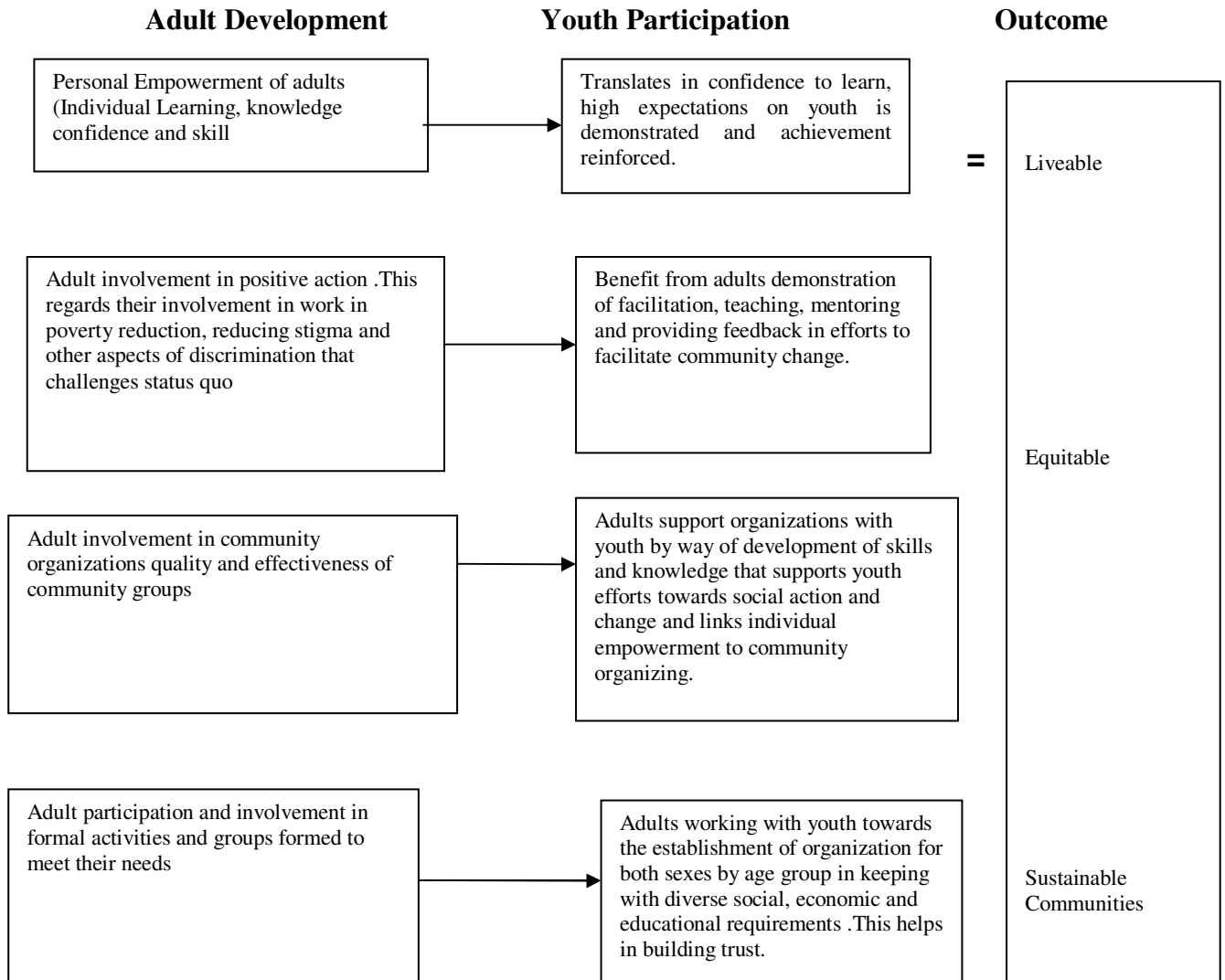


Figure 3: Youth-Adult Partnership Model(2010)®⁴

The youth –adult partnership model is important to the focus of this paper.

In that youth participation as a development strategy for local development, must be guided by state legislation and a combination of legislative and voluntary from

⁴ This model was created by Grace-Ann Cornwall, PhD candidate at the University of the West Indies and author of the dissertation *Towards A Sustainable Approach to Youth in Participatory Development at the Local Level*

agencies and the community. Figure 4 presents a generic model that addresses such interaction and the outcomes.

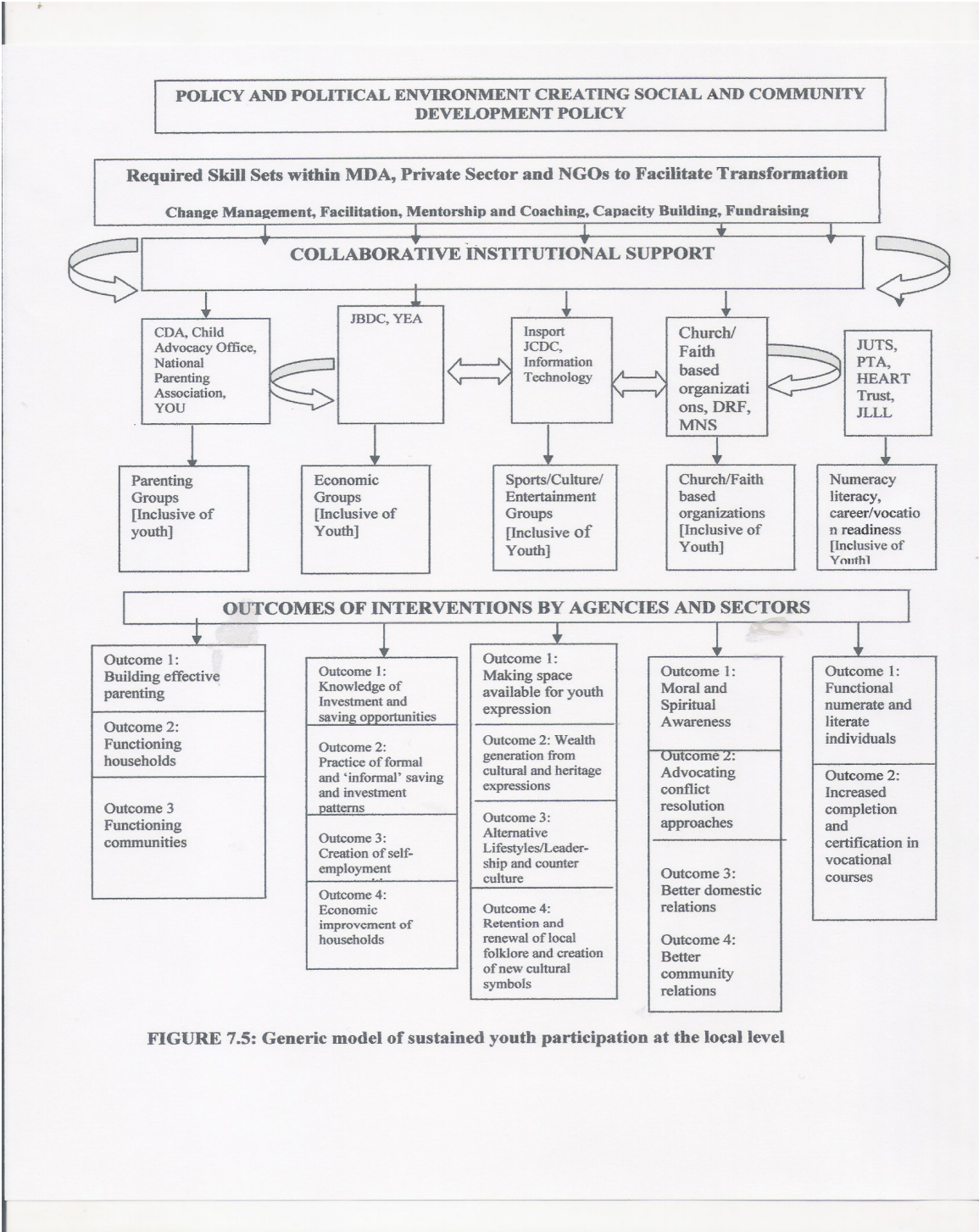


FIGURE 7.5: Generic model of sustained youth participation at the local level

FIGURE 4: Generic model of sustained youth participation at the local level

The value of the model presented in figure 4 demonstrates immediate recognition of a guiding social and community development policy and supportive skill sets in the Ministries, Department and Agencies as well as NGOs to support the implementation of the policy. The effectiveness of the policy is that there is an awakening of the institutional partnerships which are required to avoid duplication and optimization of limited resources. Furthermore a comprehensive social and community development policy has the potential to formalise the micro and macro development strategy for the country. The strengths of this model are its emergence from grassroots Jamaican communities and which has the potential to be replicated in other geographic locations that share similar historical, cultural and socio-economic definitions. Furthermore, it identifies important elements required for sustained youth participation at the local level (see figure 5). Its value to youth participation in local level development is further heightened when it is infused with the principles of the World Bank's logical frameworks designed to identify the distinct elements of transforming project ideas into action. That is, for a project to attain success in youth participation there are several factors that must be considered on the part of the funding and implementing agency (ies).

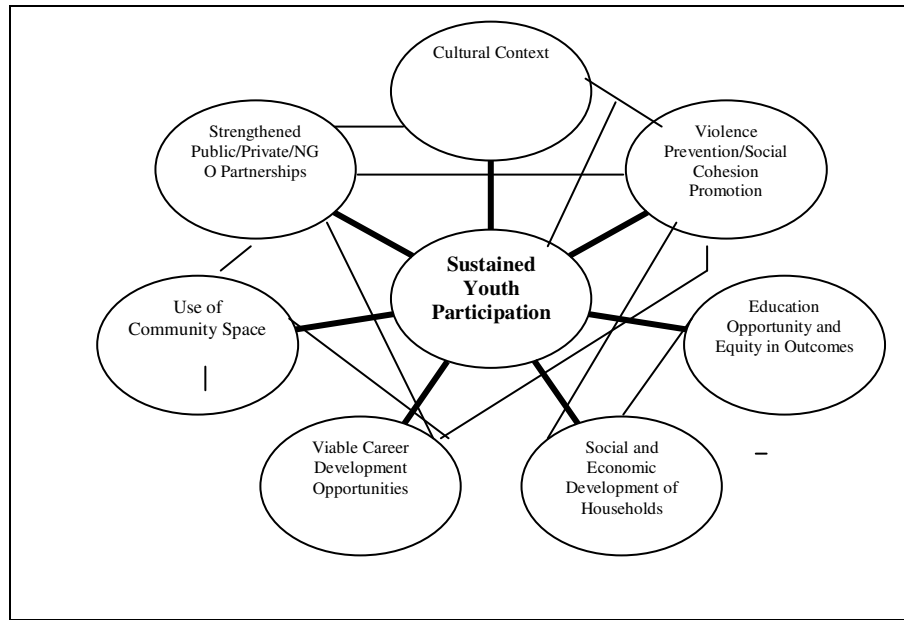


FIGURE 5: Checklist elements for sustained youth participation at the local level

The checklist items identified in figure 5 are interdependently associated. The first element in the model focuses on an assessment or understanding of the cultural context of the community being considered for engagement. This refers to an understanding of the norms (usually unwritten) which provide a better guide in understanding the both the social and psychological framework of residents. Also related to the communities' cultural context is its asset base which not only includes the financial resources as well as talents and skills of individuals, the capacity of organizations where they exist and the nature of the political connections and available infrastructure facilities.

The second element addresses violence reduction strategies, primarily advancing and strengthening of coalitions to address intra- community violence and youth violence. The third element addresses social cohesion promotion or strengthening positive social capital among residents. These include

parent/guardian interaction with the school, the Church/religious organizations and other organizations that may involve youth. In addition, there is need for the creation and unity of vision and clear identification of the role of various stakeholders (households, families, children, youth, adults, seniors, on site organizations, interventionist among others) in achieving the vision.

The fourth element addresses the availability of education opportunities and importantly equity in outcomes. Accessibility and attainment of quality education continues to serve as a catalyst of attaining further opportunities for upward social mobility and better social relations. Youth participation and by extension youth development is a function of the socio-economic development of the household from which they emerge. Households that are able better able to support the personal development of its members have the propensity to improve the social capacity of its members and be better able to organize and strengthen current contributions. This is the fifth feature of sustained youth participation.

The sixth element addresses viable career development opportunities and the possibilities of income generation and poverty reduction among youth. Failure to address this element has negative implications on sustainable development for the individual and the community of residents. The seventh element addresses the use of community space. Interaction and socialization is an important part of identity formation and learning group dynamic. It is an important avenue of interpreting and reinforcing changing cultural patterns. This has an important implication in a context where the majority of participants in this research were below twenty years. The eighth element in the checklist of

sustained youth participation is strengthened and better coordinated community/public/private/NGO partnerships that engage youth at the local level.

Conclusion

Youth participation is both a strategy and product towards national sustainable development. Its objective is to expand the human capabilities of those involved through building assets and social networks. Jamaica's vision 2030 must include youth participation as a development; failure to implement such has increased implications on increased vulnerability and social exclusion. The youth-adult partnership model facilitates a structured approach for interaction through the recognition of legislative support and institutional mobilization of the community, specifically those groups that target the youth cohort.

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