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Social Capital* Building Toolkit
(Version 1.2)+
October, 2006

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***Introductory note*:**

Although this toolkit emanates from Harvard, much of what is suggested here falls in the "smart bets" category rather than the standard of certifiable truth that academic institutions typically adhere to. The comments and framework in this document are designed to help communities thinking about social capital and present them with hypotheses that they can pressure test through field experimentation. For that reason, we would appreciate any useful feedback concerning where your experience differs from our framework and ways in which this Toolkit could be more effective. You can e-mail us your thoughts to: saguaro@ksg.harvard.edu.

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* This toolkit is not mean to be a primer on Social Capital. For more information on what social is, see http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/saguaro/primer.htm and for some general tools on community organizing see the excellent Citizen's Handbook at [http://www.vcn.bc.ca/citizens-handbook/] or HUD's document on becoming a community organizer (HUD – becoming a community organizer at http://www.hud.gov/community/comorg1.cfm or). For general community skills see the Community Tool Box (http://ctb.ku.edu/). For a statement about the importance of social capital building see "The Importance of Social Infrastructure" by Cornelia Flora (http://www.ag.iastate.edu/centers/rdev/newsletter/june97/build-soc-capital.html). Xav Briggs of MIT has some excellent tools on the community problem-solving at: http://web.mit.edu/cpsproject/home.html.

+ Kathleen Lowney co-authored this document up to version 1.0 but bears no responsibility for changes thereafter.

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Introduction

For the past decade, social capital has resonated strongly with communities across America attempting to improve residents' quality of life and overall well-being. Social capital, defined as " the social networks and the norms of trustworthiness and reciprocity that arise from them," is a powerful predictor of many social goods, including people's health and happiness, levels of economic development, well-working schools, safe neighborhoods, and responsive government.[1]

Although the Social Capital Community Benchmark Study[2] has enabled us to better quantify and measure social capital, we are still exploring the most effective ways, settings and activities to build social capital and increase civic engagement.

Goals and how to use this Toolkit

A central challenge for those desiring more local social capital is how to build it. The goal of this Toolkit is to briefly describe the social capital concept and its dimensions, and then outline and illustrate some effective ways to build social capital among individuals and groups. We've included examples about supportive settings, venues and activities for building social capital, and when possible some "smart bets" or best guesses about its different purposes and outcomes. As with all community tools, this toolkit is a work in progress. It attempts to outline the building blocks of social capital so that communities can tailor these building blocks to the unique local issues and circumstances. [It's thus more of a grocery store than a recipe book.] One activity such as a neighborhood cultural festival may work in a community that wants to build social ties across ethnicity, whereas, a smaller, structured discussion group may be more relevant for a community trying to stimulate thoughtful and reflective dialogue about more sensitive topics such as race relations, immigration, or criminal justice.

This toolkit is a starting point, not an ending point. We've culled from our experience and research as well as from numerous community-building efforts to date. We encourage you to build upon this base. Please share your own successful ideas and strategies to improve this toolkit; email your thoughts to tom_sander@harvard.edu. Only

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[1] See Robert D. Putnam, <u>Bowling Alone The Collapse and Revival of American Community</u> (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000), Section IV.

[2] In an unprecedented partnership with some three-dozen U.S. community foundations, we conducted the 2000 Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey, the largest measurement of social capital ever. 30,000 respondents were polled across 41 communities, covering all parts of the country, and ranging from tiny towns to sprawling metropolises. This survey was developed in consultation with a Scientific Advisory Council comprised of some of the best social scientists in the country. For more information on the survey, survey instrument, and results, see: http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/saguaro/communitysurvey

through collaboration and pooled learning will we all maximize our collective understanding on how to build social capital.

This Toolkit on building social capital between individuals and groups at the local level[3]; however, we hope that these concepts can be applied to virtual, national or international relationships as well.

What is Social Capital and why is it important?

Social capital focuses on the social networks that exist between us (literally who knows whom) and the character of those networks, the strength of the ties, and the extent to which those networks foster trust and reciprocity.

The core concept of social capital is that social networks matter, both for those in the networks as well as sometimes for bystanders as well.

At the core of social capital is **trust**. What trust appears to measure is trustworthiness of community members, not gullibility. [And humans seem to be quite good at assessing others' trustworthiness. Experiments show a high correlation, for example, between respondents' predictions about whether others can be trusted and the percentage of "lost" wallets returned intact in staged experiments.[4]] Some communities exhibit *thick trust* where trust extends only to known friends and associates, while other communities exhibit *thin trust* where the trust extends as well to total strangers. Communities with more extensive social networks are more likely to have individuals behaving in a trustworthy manner, since the reputation of untrustworthy members travels fast in well-connected communities, and thus untrustworthy members pay a community-wide cost for the gains from any act of untrustworthiness on their part.

With these generalized norms of trust, people engage in **reciprocity,** doing for others not with any immediate expectation of repayment. This kind of thin trust is especially valuable, since it lubricates social interactions in the same way as cash is more efficient than barter (since you don't need to separately negotiate the terms of each interaction).

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[3] Other useful resources on group meetings can be found from Study Circles [www.studycircles.org], America Speaks (which uses innovative technology to get broad community participation from thousands of community residents, for example on the redesign of the footprint for the former World Trade Center in New York City), or community organizing groups like the Industrial Areas Foundation, PICO or ACORN. [A description of the America Speaks approach can be found here: http://www.boston.com/beyond_bigdig/opinion/artery_080302.htm or http://www.americaspeaks.org/services/town_meetings/tour.htm or http://www.arsba.org/GeneCorbin.html]

[4] Knack, Steven. "Trust, Associational Life, and Economic Performance", paper submitted to OECD, 2001. The correlation held true across the United States and 14 western European countries, even controlling for levels of income.

We don't really know a great deal about *how* trust is established but it appears there are three crucial elements:
1) Repeat exposure to others tends to lead to greater confidence that others can be trusted (assuming that parties respect conditions 2 and 3 below);
2) The parties are honest in their communications; and
3) The parties follow through on the commitments they make.
[As noted above, all of these conditions are more likely in communities with widespread social connections, or what sociologists call "dense social networks."]

In addition, it appears that one can self-consciously do things to promote trust. For example, the experience of the Texas Industrial Areas Foundation (TIAF) suggests that getting community members to purposefully tell each other their stories ("one on ones") is an especially helpful technique for building baseline trust between community members. Moreover, while not *directly* on point, in the early 1980s there was a competition to see which computer program best fostered cooperation over time without being taken advantage of.[5] The lessons from the winning strategy are that individuals should initially be open to collaboration, and quickly forgiving but not gullible.

Before we outline a variety of techniques and approaches, we wanted to introduce briefly the different forms and types of social capital.

Types of social capital

Social capital is not a monolithic entity, just as *physical* capital encompasses everything from a hydroelectric dam to an eggbeater: each useful for very different things. While social scientists are seeking a better understanding of the various dimensions[6] and types of social capital, we do know of some prime distinctions:
- **Public-regarding** ties that tackle a public issue (*e.g., a Parent Teacher Association*) v. **private regarding** (*e.g., a purely social club*). The latter may better stimulate more community members to be active since the former sometimes appeals only to "do-gooders", but it is also true that real community problems (like a crime spree, or a zoning issue) often mobilize people to action.
- **Formal** (*a dues-paying organization with committees and* bylaws) vs. **informal** (*a pickup basketball game)*. Many connections that begin more informally sometimes morph into more formal social relationships. Formal ties are more

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[5] See Robert Axelrod, The Evolution of Cooperation (New York: Basic Books, 1984). The computer contest had multiple rounds of a "prisoner's dilemma" type payoff where on each turn the only communication to the other player was whether you chose to leave $1 for the other player or not. Each player profited the most by getting $1 from the other player and leaving nothing, but this was usually not a sustainable pattern. Players that could establish consistent rounds of cooperation did better than players that got stuck in a rut where neither player was leaving anything for the other player. The winning Tit for Tat computer program chose to be cooperative on the initial round, and thereafter mirror back whatever its opponent did on the prior round (rewarding a prior round cooperation with cooperation on the next round and punishing a defection with a defection on the next round).
[6] For a fuller description of these dimensions see Robert Putnam, Democracies in Flux (Oxford University Press, 2002). See also the 11 dimensions of social capital that emerged from the Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey, available at: www.ksg.harvard.edu/saguaro/communitysurvey/results5.html.

likely to ensure that these ties persist over time. So while it is often easier to start informal social ties, participants in more informal relationships have to pay special care to make sure that these bonds deepen over time through additional activities, social interchanges, etc.

- **Bridging** (*social ties that cut across differences such as race, class or* ethnicity) vs. **bonding social capital** (*that links people together with others like them*). It is far easier to build bonding social capital than bridging social capital, captured in the maxim, "birds of a feather flock together." For this reason, it is especially valuable when communities can create more bridging social capital. One can't simply generalize that bridging is good and bonding is bad; they are good for different things. Our social support networks (to help us, for example, when we are sick) tend to be bonding social relationships, but bridging relationships are especially important to creating a sense of unity across race, class, or religion, to "importing clout" into communities that lack clout, and to breaking down stereotypes.[7]

- **Strong ties** (*someone with whom you might discuss a serious health problem or problems in your marriage)* vs. **weak ties** (*episodic, single stranded and more fleeting ties, like those you formed in a one-day park cleanup*). Some social scientists have speculated that as a society our mix of social relationships has moved more to weaker, more episodic and opportunistic relationships; if this is so, it certainly has implications for our ability to mobilize others towards collective goals.[8]

Different types of social capital are useful for different things. While too little is known about exactly what the comparative advantages are of different **dimensions** of social capital, we do know, as only one example, that stronger ties are more useful for social support while weaker ties are more useful for job searches.[9] We expect that the next 5-10 years will usher in far greater knowledge about which dimensions of social capital are especially useful for what outcomes.

Any community attempting to build more social capital needs to pay attention not only to *whether* they build more social connectedness but *what* types of ties these are. Are they

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[7] There are various resources/models out there for individuals or groups hoping to build bridging social capital. We recommend the *Concord Handbook: How to Build Social Capital Across Communities* (2003 by Barbara J. Nelson, Linda Kaboolian, and Kathryn A. Carver). Available at: http://concord.sppsr.ucla.edu/concord.pdf. Also useful models are: Mission Mississippi (www.missionmississippi.org) in a religious context and secular Mosaic Partnerships (http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/saguaro/pdfs/mosiac.pdf). In addition, there is a good discussion of the use of Study Circles to bridge diverse communities in *Where A Diverse Community Comes Together to Make Schools Better For All* (a case study of schools in Montgomery County, MD) at: (http://www.studycircles.org//en/Resource.101.aspx). Finally, Public Conversations which helps promote dialogues across differences has an excellent 2006 guide called *Fostering Dialogue Across Divides* at: http://www.publicconversations.org/JAMSguide.pdf. For updated references of organizations, see http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/saguaro/socialcapitalorgs.htm#bridging or http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/saguaro/measurement.htm#bridging.

[8] Robert Wuthnow, Loose Connections: Joining Together In America's Fragmented Communities (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).

[9] Mark Granoveter, "The Strength of Weak Ties" *American Journal of Sociology* 78 (1973): 1360-1380.

bridging social relationships? Are they primarily weaker bonds or stronger bonds?   In some communities, the goal of the community may be a social capital goal itself (e.g., to increase the amount of bridging social capital between Whites and African Americans in a community) or to decrease the social isolation of single mothers.

If the goal is not social capital *per se* but something that social capital can help achieve (like reducing teen unemployment), the local organizers need to make sure that the *type* of social capital they are setting out to build and building is related to their specific goals. Thus, a community that set out to build more bonding social capital among unemployed teens to reduce teen unemployment would be unwise: they should build more bridging social capital and presumably between unemployed teenagers and employed members of society (be they teens, or more likely community residents who are older), e.g., by connecting local businesses and high schools.

Character of the networks

We need to pay attention, not only to the levels of social ties but how they are distributed across communities and whether separate communities, ethnicities, faiths are social islands or all interwoven into a dense fabric.

We all inhabit multiple communities simultaneously: geographic communities (where we live) and communities of interest (alumni groups, families, people at our place of work, co-members in our voluntary associations, those with which we share hobbies or our faith, etc.) In some communities our social networks are very *bounded* so that we know the same individuals through multiple strands (as neighbors, as parents of children in the same school, as parishioners in the same church, etc.). These communities tend to look like illustration A and have few if any links between the differing communities. In other places the communities are all less bounded so there are numerous people who have social ties with others of different faith, educational level or ethnicity. See illustration B.

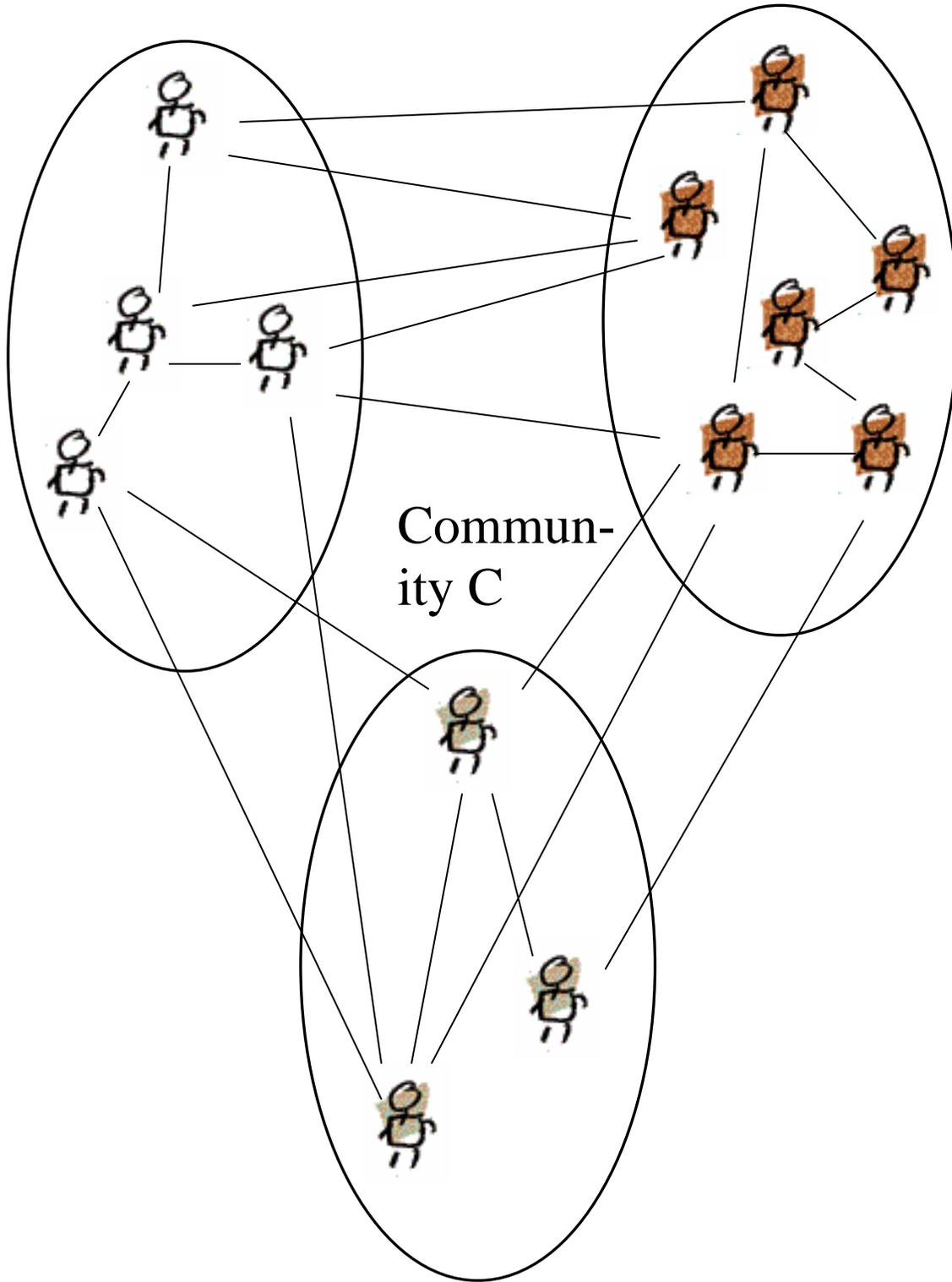Illustration A

Community A

Community B
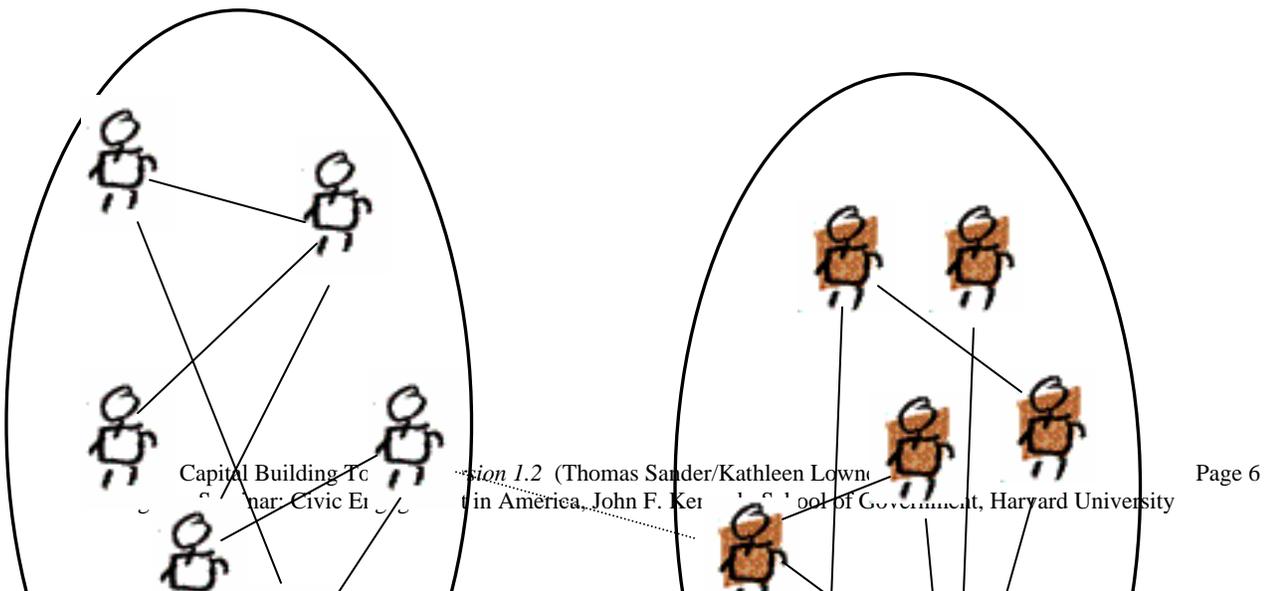
Interlocking Networks

Community A

Community B

Commun-
ity C

To the extent that one has community goals to expressly increase interlinkages between two communities (e.g., connecting the Anglos and the Hispanics in Miami), it is more important to look at the level of *interconnections* between these two communities than to look only at the levels of social capital within either the Anglo or the Hispanic community respectively, ignoring whether there have been any increases in social interconnectedness between these communities.

How do you know if you've built more social capital
Is it not practical (unless you are talking about a tiny community of 10-20 people) to actually ask everyone:
        a) To detail all the people they know;
        b) Understand how they know these individuals; and
        c) Learn the character of every possible relationship.

For that reason you need to rely on proxies to gauge the level of social networks.

To gauge social networks, it is helpful to do several things:
1) Look at close proxies for social capital: for example, literally hundreds of surveys across countries, U.S. states, and communities have shown that "social trust" (trust of strangers)[10] is a strong predictor of levels of social capital for the reasons we alluded to earlier (the interconnection of trustworthy behavior and social networks).
2) Sample individuals in a community and assume that the individuals' responses are representative of your community. It is critical that the individuals are randomly selected and that one takes pains to make sure that they all participate in the survey equally.[11]
3) Ask about different dimensions of social capital.[12]   In the Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey (SCCBS) conducted in 2000, we asked some 100 questions of randomly selected individuals in 41 communities. We have used our experience in this survey to extract the dimensions of social capital and reduce this to its essence which we call the "Short Form" (see below).

Short-form: For those who want to ask fewer questions than the original SCCBS to gauge levels of social capital, we have constructed a short-form which includes the most stable social capital questions (i.e., ones that vary least day-to-day[13]) and those most central to the various dimensions of social capital. This "short form" social capital survey can be

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[10] The question "Which comes closer to your views, do you think most others can be trusted or you can't be too careful in dealing with strangers" has proven to be one of the most predictive questions about levels of social capital and generalized norms of reciprocity.
[11] Note, in telephone surveys there is often a high correlation between who is willing to answer phone surveys and whether those individuals are socially engaged and trusting. For this reason, it is imperative to reach not only the "easy to reach" but the hard to reach and reluctant as well, or else the results will be a sample only of the high social capital individuals in your community rather than your community overall.
[12] See http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/saguaro/communitysurvey/results5.html
[13] In social science lingo, we looked at the test-retest reliability of questions between the 2000 Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey, and the 2 panel post-September 11 waves that we conducted of this survey.

found on the Saguaro website under "Social Capital Measurement" (together with an explanation of how we derived these key questions).

Finally, you should understand that there is a huge variation in levels of social capital from community to community. You can get a sense of this from the 41 communities in SCCBS. For example, in a rural South Dakota county surveyed, three-quarters of Americans trusted strangers as compared to only 36% in Houston. Without conducting some before and after measurement of the levels of social capital, it is impossible to conduct a one-time survey of social capital and conclude whether your community is higher or lower in social capital than it was earlier.

Building social capital: pathways and building blocks

Although building social capital does not necessarily occur in a linear pattern, we have created a schematic that highlights a matrix of potential building blocks to build more social capital sorted by size of group and sorted from activities generally requiring less trust to those generally requiring more trust. This is not meant to provide a complete inventory of ways to build social capital, but to trigger individuals' and groups' thinking about potential approaches and some advantages and disadvantages of each. See illustration C.

Illustration C

Social Capital Building

LOW ◄┄┄┄┄┄┄┄┄┄┄ **TRUST LEVEL** ┄┄┄┄┄┄┄► **HIGH**

	Food/ Celeb- ration	Joint activity around com- mon hobby	Do a favor	Discuss. of commun- ity issue	Under- taking Joint Goal	Relation- ship building (1-on-1)
Large Group	Block party	Volun- tary assoc.	N/A	Town forum	Environ- mental clean- up project	Deeper introducti ons as part of a larger meeting
Small Group	Picnic with friends	Bowling league; book club	Revolvi ng credit assoc- iation	Neigh- borhood assoc- iation	Study Circles	Individ- uals in group pair up and share their extended stories
Indiv- idual	Invite another to a rest- aurant	Walking with a friend	Car- pooling; borrow- ing tool from neigh- bor	Street conversa tion	Mentor- ing/ Tutoring	Texas Indus- trial Areas Found- ation ("1-on- 1s")

Note: boxes are filled with one or two examples only of each type of approach.

Illustration D shows that, while there is no pre-defined sequence to building social capital, communities generally go from smaller groups to larger groups and from activities requiring less trust to those requiring more trust.

Typical Pathway

LOW ◄········· **TRUST** ·········► HIGH

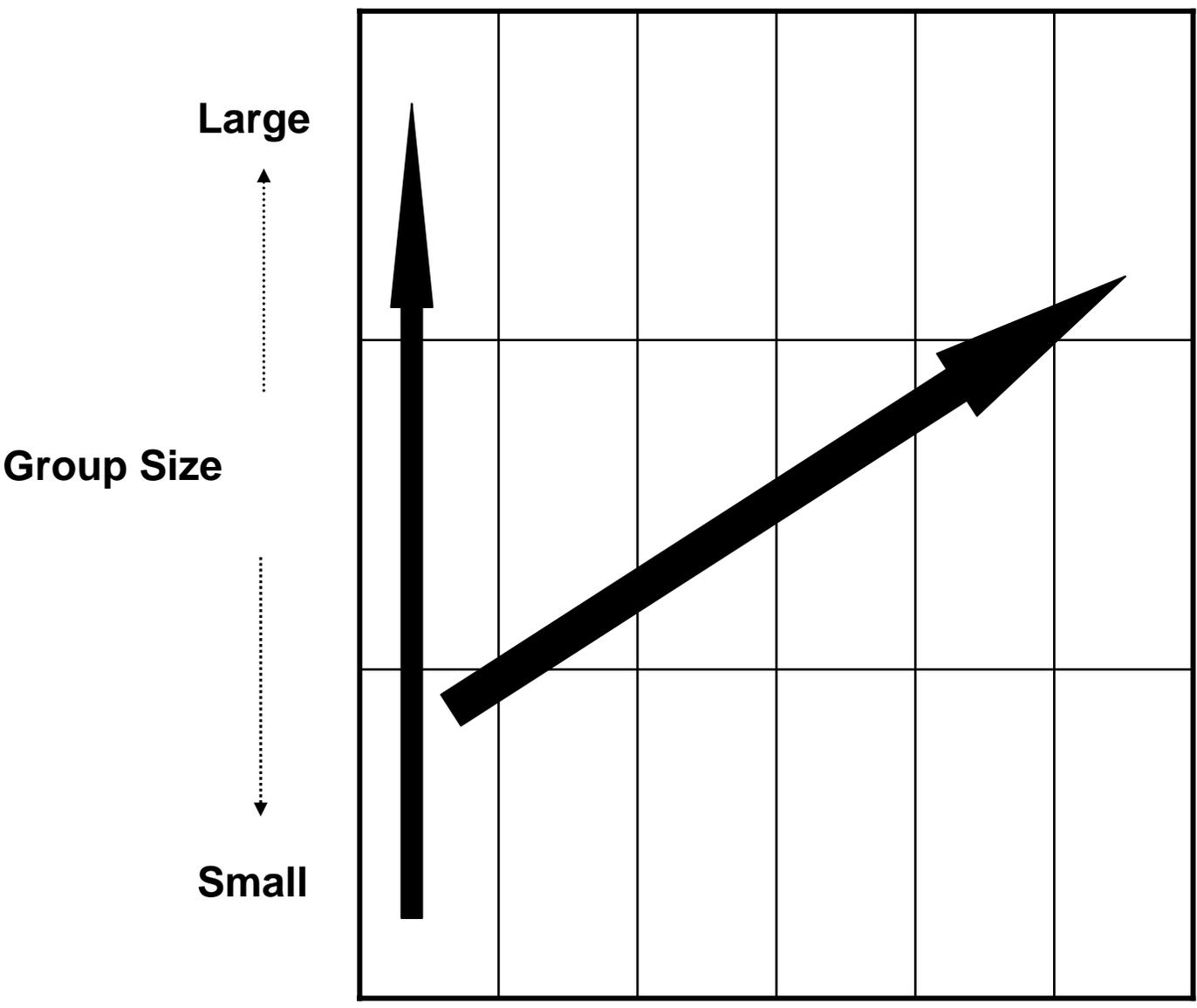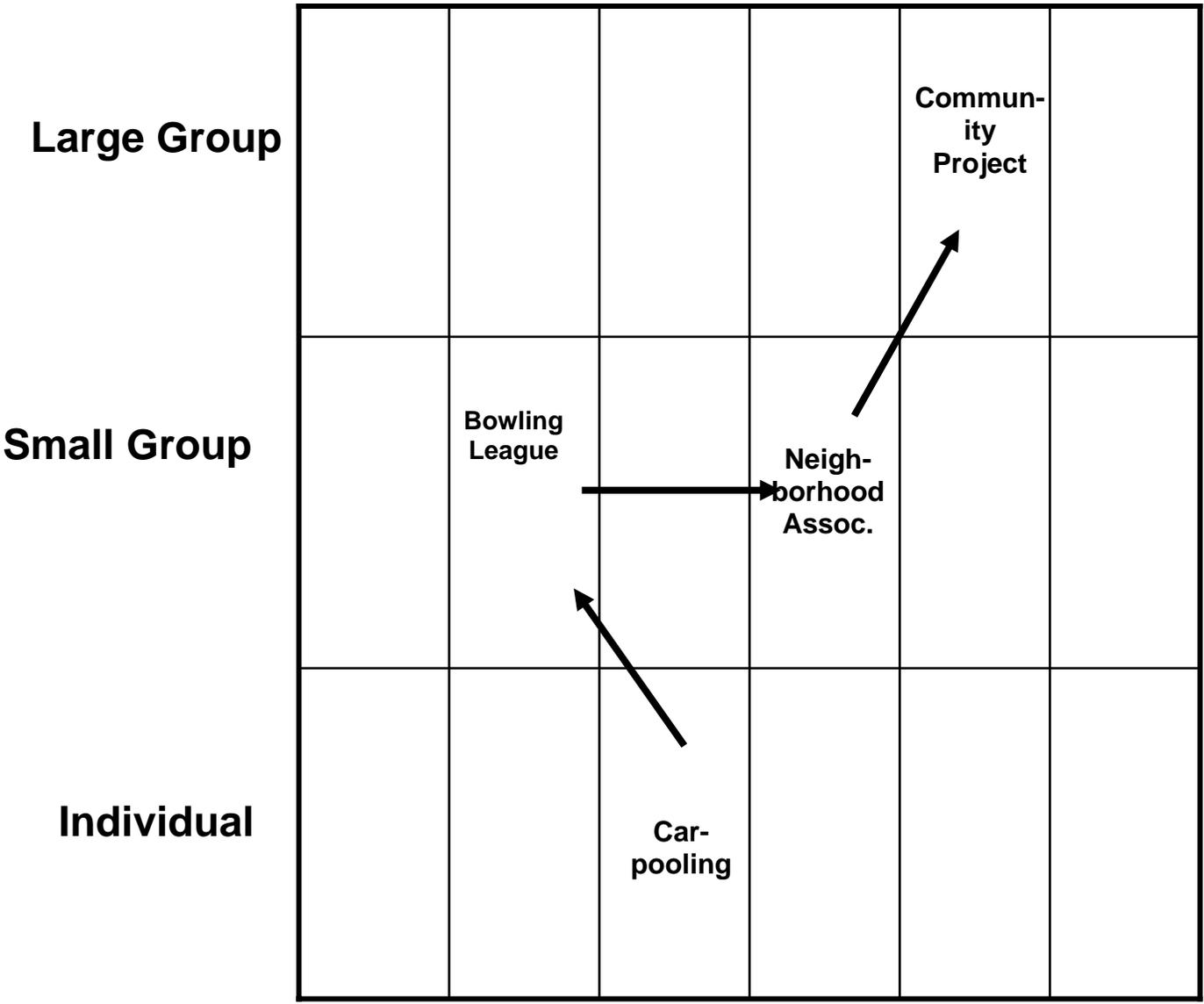| Food/ Celebration	Joint activity around common hobby	Do a favor	Discuss. of community issue	Undertaking Joint Goal	Relationship building (1-on-1)

Large

Group Size

Small

Illustration E shows an example of how a community might move from more informal social ties to group informal social activities to social capital focused on community issues. In this example, we're presuming that some relationships established in carpooling relationships and networks exposed the common interest of these commuters in bowling. This resulted in the carpoolers deciding to participate in a bowling league. Through the discussions at the back of the bowling alley, these bowlers realized that they had common concerns with neighborhood issues and decided to get together with others to form a neighborhood association. The neighborhood association's conversations led to the community deciding to take concerted action on a community issue: like fixing up a run-down playground that had become a haven for drug dealers. This is one example of how networks that may have arisen for purely social ties can in turn become the basis of public-regarding efforts to improve a community.

Possible Example

LOW ◄┈┈┈┈┈┈┈┈┈┈┈ TRUST ┈┈┈┈┈┈┈┈┈┈► HIGH

	Food/ Celebrati	Joint activity around common hobby	Do a favor	Discuss. of commun-ity issue	Undertaki ng Joint Goal	Relationsh ip building (1-on-1)
Large Group					Commun-ity Project	
Small Group		Bowling League		Neigh-borhood Assoc.		
Individual			Car-pooling			

Starting point depends on trust levels: In any community, where you begin also depends on what levels of trust you have to begin with. For example, the Texas Industrial Areas Foundation is explicit that they often build upon pre-existing church networks (and even scout for such communities) in trying to build more social capital, focused on taking political action. They try to *recycle* these church-based networks into networks with more expressly political goals.[14]

Regardless of what approaches one uses and which cells in the matrix in Illustration C one is focusing one, to purposefully develop social capital, you need to appeal to people's *motivations* (see below), and most likely orchestrate opportunities to bring people together. Basic as it may seem, there are some practical techniques for getting people together that tend to be universally true:[15]

- *Ask people* to come and tell them about some of the benefits for them (free food, new knowledge/ contacts/skills, interesting topics, etc.); and
- *Learn about and a*ppeal *to individuals' self-interest*. What are residents' hobbies or interests? Are people interested in local issues, and if so which? Do personal, professional, power, or moral interests drive them to get involved?

Motivation
Few people form social relationships for the purpose of building social capital or forming social networks, with the possible exception of those hyper "networkers" of the 1980s. People usually form social ties, because:
a) They are offered a really fun activity (that builds social ties as a consequence); or
b) They crave social contact and believe that getting together will make them feel better. [It turns out that there is strong public health evidence that meetings and socializing lowers our stress levels, and makes us happier.[16]]; *or*
c) There is a pressing community problem (e.g., an environmental crisis, a crime wave, low-performing schools, or a zoning issue) that people rally around. In this case, people join if they 1) see a clear benefit or harm to themselves if the group succeeds or fails and 2) believe that *their personal involvement* will have an impact on the whole effort.

Relationships Relationships Relationships….

At the heart of social capital are the relationships between individuals. Building relationships can occur in many ways – some intentional and some serendipitous. The purpose of meeting may affect how and where people come together. The basic

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[14] John and Kretzmann and John McKnight have worked on approaches to build off of assets in communities (which could include lodes of social capital). More information is available in their1993 book Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets or at: http://www.northwestern.edu/ipr/abcd/abcdtopics.html.
[15] For further information on some of these techniques, see Kim Bobo, Jackie Kendall and Steve Max, Organizing for Social Change (Santa Ana: Seven Locks Press, 2001).
[16] For a review of some of this literature, see: Putnam, Bowling Alone, chapter 20. See also Lisa Berkman, Thomas Glass, Ian Brissette, and Teresa Seeman, "From Social Integration to health: Durkheim in the new millennium" *Social Science & Medicine* 51 (2000) 843-857.

foundation of any interaction is *conversation* with two (or more) people talking about their experiences, beliefs, values or concerns. Conversations may begin with something as commonplace as weather, sports or hobbies, but we should not be dismissive of such conversations as they breed familiarity, and establish common interests and personal inter-relationships. Without these initial conversations, it is much harder to delve deeper into the more meaningful social issues that communities must address, to discuss deeper personal issues, or feel comfortable taking concerted action. It is through these repeated conversations and interactions that the seeds of social capital grow. We will now explore some of the more practical ways to go from strangers to acquaintances, from "yours and mine" to the collective "ours", and from individual to collective action.

Venues and Activities/ Benefits and limitations

Before addressing specific venues or activities, there may be broader *structural conditions or practices* that can be taken to increase social capital. For example, one could reform workplace practices to make it far more common that workplaces gave time off to be with families, to attend community events or to volunteer (either at the workplace or outside the workplace). Local funders creating pools of social capital-focused funds can help spur community gathering places, social events or festivals (to name only a few examples) and may also make it more likely that various social capital-building groups and initiatives might arise. The government might change regulation or policy in a way that encourages more social capital. One could help create neighborhoods that have more opportunities and places for residents to connect: e.g., front porches, sidewalks, and public multi-use parks. These are all important potential strategies that we don't discuss further in this toolkit, but are legitimate strategies for community social capital builders.

All social relationships happen in groups, sometimes one-on-one, sometimes in small groups, and sometimes in larger groups. Below we describe these relationship-building opportunities and their respective advantages and disadvantages.

One on one
One on one contact is the most primary building block unit for friendships. This is often the easiest step as it spares the need for agendas, and facilitators, and finding common ground, all of which often necessary in larger group get-togethers. The drawback of one-on-one relationships is that it may be harder to leverage these *ad hoc* relationships into community change or large-scale action. That said, some groups, like the campaign of the Harvard University Clerical and Technical Workers Union (HUCTWU)[17] or the Industrial Areas Foundation, cement lots of intentional individual one-on-one relationships into large-scale action.

Also, it is often through one-on-one relationships that one might learn, for example, that a handful of your friends share an interest in environmental issues, or in discussing books,

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[17] For some information on this campaign, see John P. Hoerr, We Can't Eat Prestige: The Women Who Organized Harvard (Temple University Press, 1997).

or in choral singing, that makes it easier to bring these individuals together into a larger group.

Small groups of 3-12: Smaller groups are often easier than large-scale groups. Usually each of the individuals can get to know the others fairly well, which makes trust in others higher, and conversations often more open. These may be small enough to avoid the need for agendas and facilitators, although that depends on the pre-existing levels of trust in the group and the purpose of the meetings (e.g., a book club probably doesn't, but a group to discuss a local zoning issue might). One may need to ensure a certain level of stability of membership among the small group in order not to constantly break down the trust that one is establishing within the group.

Large group activities, if well run, are much more effective at achieving change and give the group greater clout. They also make clear to participants just how many others are interested in the core issue or activity. Large groups can uniquely surface multiple perspectives, and help to identify commonalities and set an action agenda. If the group is action-oriented and not purely social, you may need effective ground rules and facilitations to ensure that group activities are productive.[18]

In larger groups, you also need to *address obstacles to participation*: e.g., public transportation access, childcare, work schedules, language barriers, etc. These are critical issues at times, since if you've asked, planned, and scheduled yet people can't get there, or can't integrate into their family or work time, all your best intentions and efforts may be futile.[19] Smaller groups may encounter some of these obstacles as well, but it is often easier for small groups to schedule or manage around this (through the location of a meeting, through carpooling, etc.).

We now discuss each of the *columns* of the matrix in Illustration A, in order from those that generally require less trust to those that generally require more.

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[18] To facilitate a productive group conversation, especially among larger groups (but sometimes even with small groups), many organizations choose to lay out ground rules at the beginning to provide a framework for open dialogue to occur. The National Coalition on Dialogue and Deliberation provides a list of different groups' ground rules (http://thataway.org/ncdd/resources/rules.htm). For our purposes, we've created a ground rules summary using principles common to most organizations. You may choose to introduce these (or some variation) when initiating a conversation among small or larger groups:
- Introduce yourself before speaking
- Everyone gets a chance to speak, and only one person speaks at a time, no interrupting
- Share personal experience and stories and from the heart (not as a representative of a group, organization or affiliation)
- Respect confidentiality or anonymity requests
- Listen to understand
- Ask questions instead of automatically assuming or judging
- Stay focused on the topic and what matters
- Link and connect ideas of the group, find common ground when possible
- Agree to disagree respectfully, challenge the idea not the person
- If it's a structured activity with a facilitator, help to keep the group on track; avoid "shaggy dog" stories (long drawn out personal stories that don't connect directly to the discussion)

[19] Bobo et al., Organizing for Social Change.

1) **Celebration/Food**

Strengths: It is often easier to get people together when the activity seems fun rather than what we would call a "broccoli" activity (something people feel they should do but that doesn't seem appealing). An activity like a celebration or sharing food requires a much lower threshold for getting people together (both on the part of the inviter and the invitee); participants are committing only to spend a meal together or be together for the celebration and are not committing to any kind of follow-up.

Weaknesses: The weakness is the flip side of the strength. One can imagine celebrations or meals where there is little real sharing and thus the friendships are not really developed or strengthened. The fact that participants are not committing to a friendship or follow-up activities means that there may be lots of cases where relationships do not form or persist.

Motivation of Participants: Having fun, developing new friendships or strengthening existing friendships.

One-on-one example: inviting someone to join you at a restaurant.
Small group example: a dinner party, or supper clubs.
Large group example: a block party, or a neighborhood picnic.

Tools/principles/comments:
By appealing to people's desire for fun, these approaches may be a way of drawing out individuals other than the "usual civic suspects". You might also think about *creating innovative ways* to bring people together in the community, the workplace, the schools, through arts and culture, through houses of worship or places of reflection, or through government.

2) **Joint activity around common interest or hobby**

Strengths: The joint activity could be one-time or ongoing (compare an invitation to a friend to play music together once versus deciding to form or join a band). Given that all participants share this interest, there may be easy ways of leveraging this common interest into friendships. Since all the participants presumably enjoy the activity undertaken, it may be easier to get participants to commit to doing this regularly.

Weaknesses: If the activity is one-time, see some of the weaknesses and cautions described above in the "food" example. If the shared interest is "spectating" (watching a movie, attending a concert), there may be little time built in for developing stronger social relationships, unless this is intentionally planned. If one's ultimate goal is improving the community, you have to look for opportunities down the road to *recycle* these relationships into a community initiative or goal.

Motivation of Participants: Having fun, developing new friendships or strengthening existing friendships.

One-on-one example: walking with a friend.
Small group examples: book club, or a bowling league.

Large group examples: Professional or civic association meetings, a garden show, a fundraising sports event like a bike-a-thon, or a pulpit or chorus swap.

Tools/principles/comments:
See the comments above under "Celebration/Food", regarding the fact that by appealing to fun, this may be a way of drawing out new civic actors, and bringing people together in different ways.

3) **Doing a favor for another**

Strengths: One of the Saguaro Seminar participants (Paul Resnick, now a professor at the University of Michigan School of Information) remarked that it is often a more effective strategy to ask another for a favor (a neighbor, a colleague, etc.) than to wait to be asked; by creating some implicit low-level obligation to return the favor, this can help establish some level of trust (presuming one returns the favor when asked). In communities or networks of friends, one may also be able to set up informal cooperatives that help reinforce social relationships and trust: for example, by recognizing that not everyone can afford or store garden tools, or a snow blower, etc. (and setting up an arrangement to share these), or by setting up a babysitting cooperative[20], or establishing an email tree to coordinate taking recyclables to the recycling center.
Weaknesses: Individuals may be reluctant to create any obligation of another to them or fear being turned down.
Motivation of Participants: Building social capital; making a deposit at a favor "bank".

One-on-one example: borrowing a tool from a neighbor or carpooling.
Small group example: Revolving credit association or a babysitting cooperative.
Large group example: N/A (not aware of large group examples of this, although some cooperatives like grocery cooperatives could be large-scale).

Tools/principles/comments:
In such cases, if you want others to reciprocate these favors it may be important to *demonstrate* the value and importance of social capital by showing what positive consequences will occur as social capital rises.

4) **Discussion of community issues**

Strengths: For some communities it may be too hard to jump directly to undertaking a joint goal (category 5 below). It may be preferable to build buy-in by convening others for a conversation about a specific issue (e.g., local environmental problems, teen gangs, poor neighborhood trash pickup) before moving to possible collective action.
Weaknesses: If such conversations are divisive and reveal more division than common ground, these discussions could potentially lead to less trust rather than more. In some

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[20] A babysitting cooperative provides members of the cooperative with a list of other parents they can ask for babysitting and in return parents need to provide the same number of hours of babysitting to others in the network.

communities it may be hard to have a frank conversation about community issues without some core level of trust between individuals.
Motivation of Participants: Improving the community.

One-on-one example: street conversation.
Small group example: neighborhood association.
Large group example: town forum.

Tools/principles/Comments:
Three principles may be helpful in such undertakings.

First, provide an *activity with explicit or implicit action-oriented goals*.

Second, recognize that your community of participants will constantly shift and be sure to proactively help to integrate newcomers. Thus, in one's group activities, make sure that new participants who join mid-stream or even during the middle of meetings or events are introduced, oriented, and involved. Be conscious of and eliminate "code speak" (such as, acronyms and allusions that newcomers may not be familiar with). Create an inclusive environment so that people feel welcome and stay involved.[21]

Third, *educate*. Folks may have concerns or desire to get involved but may not be familiar with the issue as a whole. Help them to learn: what it is; whom it affects; what you can do to draw attention to the issue, involve more people, and improve it; and what you'll need to do this (resources, funding, skills and experiences of members).[22]

5) Undertaking joint goal

Strengths: Having or determining a purposeful group project may be a good catalyst for convening others or engaging them. Moreover, the common commitment of participants to this goal may help to increase levels of trust (assuming that sub-factions in this group don't surface).
Weaknesses: may be a lot easier to start with building trust through "one on ones" (see category 6 "intentional relationship building" below). If sub-factions occur in the undertaking of this joint goal, it may increase trust *within* these sub-factions, but may undermine *group-wide* trust.
Motivation of Participants: Improving the community.

One-on-one example: Mentoring or tutoring.
Small group example: Study Circles[23] or cleaning up an abandoned lot.
Large group examples: Texas Industrial Areas Foundation[24] political actions or a political rally. TIAF political actions utilize the strong social relationships developed

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[21] Bobo et al., <u>Organizing for Social Change.</u>
[22] Bobo et al., <u>Organizing for Social Change.</u>
[23] See www.studycircles.org
[24] See Mark R. Warren, <u>Dry Bones Rattling: Community Building to Revitalize American Democracy</u> (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001). Alliance Schools Concept Paper. Interfaith Education

through "one on ones" (see below) and subsequent "house meetings"[25] to confront elected officials, demanding certain political changes that the individual members of TIAF previously have agreed upon.

Tools/principles/comments:
See principles on educating others and providing activity with action-oriented goal under number 4 above ("Discussion of community issues").

6) **Intentional relationship building** ("One on ones")

 "One on ones" as practiced by the Industrial Areas Foundation are about developing relationships around shared interests. One on ones are sometimes initiated or conducted by community organizers or leaders (in churches or in homes). By taking time to really understand people's stories (the roads they have traveled, formative experiences, what defines who they are and what they believe in, etc.), individuals sharing these deeper stories develop trusting relationships.

Strengths: when done well can lead to significantly more trust between participants.
Weaknesses: hard to get others to share their story, unless "one-on-ones" are widely understood as a cultural norm. Thus, there may need to be a larger organization like TIAF that sets this norm, or there may need to be a period in advance of the "one on ones" where this terminology and the benefits of one-on-ones are shared throughout the community.
Motivation of Participants: either social capital, relationship-building, for its own sake or as strategy to change community.

Individual to individual example: Racial reconciliation dinners where a group pairs up interested blacks and whites to get together (one black and one white) and the meal is subsidized by local restaurants that want to increase bridging social capital. [If these dinners are merely dinners, they would be in category 1 ("celebrations and food"), but accompanied by explicit and planned guidance, training or inquiry, diners can use these dinners to better understand each others' stories, and receive benefits more like one-on-ones.]
Small group example: A group as a whole, or as a technique to get individuals to know one another has individuals pair up and tell extended stories to one another as part of a meeting.
Large group example: Deeper introductions as part of meeting; but harder to do this as group gets larger and larger and trust among entire group is not as strong.

Tools/principles/comments:

Fund. Fall 1998. or http://www.tresser.com/ernesto.htm. Paul Osterman, "Organizing the U.S. Labor Market: National Problems, Community Strategies" Prepared for the conference on Reconfiguring Work and Welfare In the New Economy: A Transatlantic Dialogue, Madison, Wisconsin, May, 2000.
[25] Where these one-on-one conversations are woven into a larger and longer narrative of potential shared interests and where the innate leaders of the organization can be selected.

If the primary purpose of these one-on-ones is not community change but is social capital building *per se*, as with number 3 above ("Doing a favor for another") you may have to *demonstrate* the value and importance of social capital.
For more detail on potentially some best practices on this approach, read more about the Texas Industrial Areas Foundation.[26]

This toolkit presents a brief overview of applied social capital concepts, terms and examples. This document also provides some replicable tools for understanding and measuring social capital. We hope this Toolkit has been helpful in getting you thinking about ways to build more social capital in your community. But with all this said, you are likely to learn the most by undertaking efforts in your community (ideally together with others who want to build stronger interconnections) and periodically reflecting on what's working or not working, and why. We wish you the best of luck and hope to learn from your wisdom and experience. Again, please share your experiences, insights, comments and ideas so that the body of knowledge regarding social capital building continues to grow.

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[26] See Warren, <u>Dry Bones Rattling</u> for a better discussion of this approach.

Glossary of Terms

Bonding Social Capital: social ties that link people together with others who are primarily like them. For example, a group that meets of 50-year old African American men. [In reality some groups are bonding in some ways and bridging in others: for example, the Knights of Columbus is bonding with respect to religion, but bridging across social class.]

Bridging Social Capital: social ties that link people together with others across a cleavage that typically divides society (like race, or class, or religion).

Formal Social Ties: social ties that exist within the context of a formal organization (with elements like bylaws, regular meetings, minutes, etc.).

Informal Social Ties: social ties that exist outside the context of formal organizations (like neighbors talking over a back fence, ties through a pick-up basketball game, etc.).

Instrumental social capital building: social ties built with some purpose in mind (like improving schools, decreasing community crime, etc.).

Multi-stranded: social ties based on knowing an individual through multiple channels (for example, a voluntary association, living in the same neighborhoods, participating in a sports league with them, etc.)

Private regarding (also called **inward-looking**) social capital:

Public regarding (also called **outward-looking**) social capital:

Reciprocity (generalized): when there is generalized trust within a geographic community or a community of interest, individuals often start displaying reciprocity, doing something for another not with any immediate expectation of return, but trusting that the favors will be passed on to others in the community, and either directly or indirectly benefit the person doing this initial favor.

Single-stranded: as distinct from multi-stranded ties, social ties based on knowing an individual through only one channels (for example, through work only or only through going to same house of worship).

Social capital: social networks and the norms of trust and reciprocity that flourish through these networks.

Social networks: who knows whom in a community, and the character of those ties.

Strong Ties: close personal friends; typically the people one goes to in times of great crisis (if one has lost a job, or has marital problems, or has a severe health problem) and needs personal support.

Thick trust: is trust embedded in personal relationships that are strong, frequent, and nested in wider networks. This honesty is based on personal experience (see p.136 of Putnam's, Bowling Alone)

Thin trust: (or **social trust** or **generalized trust**) extends trust beyond an individual's actual network, into a more implicit sense of common networks and assumptions of eventual reciprocity. Thin trust is based more on community norms than personal experience, therefore if the community connections deteriorate; *it too decreases in effectiveness and value*.   (see p.136 of Putnam's, Bowling Alone)

Trust: the extent to which individuals believe that others mean what they say and will follow through on their commitments.

Trustworthiness: whether others are deserving of trust.

Weak Ties: more like nodding acquaintances – people who one might be able to go to for smaller favors (like asking if they knew of a job, or whether they could lend you a $5) but who you do not know that well.