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**EVALUATING PREVENTION:  
ELEMENTS FOR AN  
ALTERNATIVE APPROACH**

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## Introduction

Evaluating crime prevention is rapidly becoming a widespread practice. Various countries have endeavoured to carry out systematic and rigorous evaluations of prevention programs and measures, including a network of researchers who work on the *Campbell Collaborative*<sup>1</sup> to summarize international findings. These combined efforts are often grouped under the heading of "evidence-based policies"; and are based on empirical research.

However, the methodology is problematic: how does one measure the impact of programs whose main goal is the absence of criminal offences? The transformation of results from evaluation research into program and policy decisions is also at stake. At what point is the pool of knowledge sufficient to warrant the conversion of isolated programs into public policy strategies and, conversely, to abolish programs that are proven inefficient? In a previous paper<sup>2</sup> on the role of evaluation of national policies on prevention and security, the ICPC emphasized the disparity between findings from evaluation studies and the content of effective policies, the predominance of impact evaluations utilizing a limited number of variables, as well as the sporadic use of results from evaluation studies to develop public policies.

It is quite obvious, as Laycock<sup>3</sup> pointed out, that the expectations and needs of practitioners and policies often do not correspond with the approaches of researchers: practitioners' expectations for studies that are concise, speedy and written in everyday language do not correspond to researchers' time scales, their training and the context in which their studies are produced. Perhaps equally disheartening is the gap from knowledge to practice, even between scientists and stakeholders, and their inability to put this knowledge to good use. Another point, although more obscure, is a tendency among researchers to impose a certain scientific model, which in itself may be part of the problem.

Policies for the prevention of delinquency were initially built around city development projects since this is where acts of delinquency and insecurity are most common, and these policies could address the concerns of local residents. These policies were then fine-tuned to

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<sup>1</sup> The Campbell Collaborative is an informal regrouping of researchers which gives a progress report on the state of knowledge

<sup>2</sup> ICPC, "From Knowledge to Policy and Practice: What Role for Evaluation?", Montreal, 2002.

<sup>3</sup> Laycock (2001) ... contribution at the evaluation seminar

stress an integrated action involving various stakeholders, and aimed at changing risk factors. Backed by scientific research on delinquency trajectories and victimization risks, integrated intervention would act on risk factors as a whole. Furthermore, evaluations on the impact and efficiency of various types of preventive measures led to a gradual buildup of knowledge on successful practices. With the help of evaluation methodology, integrated practices, multi-sector interventions and actions on the overall risk factors of a given community have given way to selective interventions—a small number of short-term projects and actions focused on area security techniques, breaking away from actions focusing on at-risk individuals and communities. Greater emphasis is placed on situational intervention, or to a lesser extent, child development, but rarely, are the two combined and even less often are they integrated with social- and community-based interventions on neighbourhood and living conditions. Some authors have concluded that social prevention is non-existent because of a lack of empirical studies, and only situational or developmental measures can be considered as valid scientific bases for prevention.<sup>4</sup>

One might wonder to what extent this situation is a perverse result of prevalent evaluation methodologies. The methodology acquired from the experimental/clinical research model, with its random allocations, control groups, pre-post variables, quantitative analyses, etc., does not lend itself to integrated, multi-factor and multi-sector evaluations. In other words, broader community approaches to prevention do not yield to standard methods.

This concern led the ICPC to take a closer look at the phenomenon of “Comprehensive Community Initiatives (CCI)” especially as experienced in the USA. As will be seen, these initiatives are based on action principles similar to those of community-level integrated prevention. What makes them interesting is that over the years a developing evaluation practice has begun to emerge, which diverges from the traditional method, but holds some promise and is more in line with the underlying philosophy of community interventions. This developing approach is the focus of this report.

The first part gives an overview of CCI's. The second part looks at evaluation practice, debating the limitations of traditional evaluation approaches, and presenting case studies. The third part highlights examples that are relevant to an evaluation practice for crime prevention.

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<sup>4</sup> For example, Cusson (2002).

## **PART I - Neighbourhood Prevention Initiatives Undertaken by comprehensive Community Initiatives (CCI)**

CCIs are part of an American experience of community- or neighbourhood<sup>5</sup>- level interventions intended to improve living conditions for individuals, families and neighbourhoods by implementing integrated strategies within social, economic and physical<sup>6</sup> sectors. These strategies rely on participation from citizens and institutions, and also on a wide range of social services (education, health, housing, employment, etc.).

"Comprehensive community initiatives" is not an easily-defined term. The word "comprehensive" refers to the impressive array of methods that are used to deal with a given social problem. "Community" defines the political and administrative entity within governmental boundaries, but also the sense of belonging residents have, as well as the meeting of private interests brought together by geographical proximity<sup>7</sup>. In fact though, the word "community" is rarely defined in the literature we consulted; it is usually established with those in charge of a given initiative deciding on boundaries. For some, the emphasis on "local" refers to the switch from the social State to an administrative one, which lightens its traditional roles by passing some of them on to local communities.<sup>8</sup> To get a better grasp of comprehensive initiatives at the community level, we will take a short look at their background.

### **Background**

CCI is part of a community tradition in the USA that has existed at least since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and focuses on helping the underprivileged and their neighbourhoods<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> These two words are used interchangeably.

<sup>6</sup> In this context, "physical" encompasses buildings, materials and waste management.

<sup>7</sup> Rossi, Peter H., "Evaluating Community Development Programs: Problems and Prospects" in Ronald F. Ferguson and William T. Dickens, eds., *Urban Problems and Community Development*, Washington, D.C : The Brookings Institution , 1999, p. 531.

<sup>8</sup> For further consultation on this matter see Crawford...

<sup>9</sup> This historical background is based mainly on Robert Halpern's *Rebuilding the Inner City*, New York : Columbia University Press, 1995. See also O'Connor, Alice. "Evaluating Comprehensive Community Initiatives: A View From History" in Connell, James P., et al., eds., *New Approaches to Evaluating Community Initiatives*, Vol. 1,

Until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, poverty issues due to unemployment, wage inadequacies, poor working conditions and general living conditions (health, housing, etc.), were, for the most part, left to traditional support services: the neighbourhood itself, mutual aid associations and especially charitable organizations. The charities' action plan for poverty was founded on the notion, which stemmed from the preceding century, that since people were responsible for their own precarious state, aid was granted only to those who deserved it.

Reformers began to question the validity and efficiency of this philosophy. Fuelled by the desire to protect individuals, families and local communities from the disastrous effects of capitalism, to fight against social oppression, endeavours ran from prohibition to women's suffrage, from legal recourse for victims of industrial accidents to immigration restraints; in other words, reforms to ensure a certain social cohesion and family preservation. Hence a focus on conditions for housing and work for minors.

It didn't take long for the concept of neighbourhood improvement to become a main tool in the fight against poverty, along with implementation of settlement houses (a sort of community centre) which had already begun to emerge in underprivileged neighbourhoods. These settlements provided a variety of services to new immigrants and also to the neighbourhood such as babysitting, extracurricular programs, sewing, sports, summer camps, theatre, adult education, basic health care, employment assistance, emergency food supply, clothing, and housing. They were meant to be a support to home and family (this was evident in their structure), a type of model home with middle-class values;<sup>10</sup> and although they were constructive in mobilizing and organizing the residents of a community regarding specific issues, as well as instilling civic duties, they tended not to be politically active.<sup>11</sup>

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The Aspen Institute Roundtable on Comprehensive Community Initiatives, <http://www.aspenroundtable.org/vol1/oconnor.htm>. The HTML version which we viewed online was not paginated; therefore we cannot indicate page numbers for our previous references. This also applies to other chapters in Volume 1 and Volume 2.

<sup>10</sup> Halpern, op. cit., p.31

<sup>11</sup> Three elements came into factor: existing institutions such as the Church and political parties did not want this newcomer to trespass on their territory; moreover, the residents in question looked upon these community centres solely as service providers; and above all, directors wanted to remain neutral in order to take on the role of integrator and conciliator in a society plagued with conflict and division. Halpern, op. cit., p.31-36.

The movement did not appear to foster a sense of belonging, and may, according to one analyst, have even contributed to problems related to the exclusion of the black population and the integration of immigrants.<sup>12</sup>

The reform movement began to lose momentum as early as 1910, mostly because of its inability to stop the degradation of living conditions in poor neighbourhoods. The movement experienced difficulties during World War I, when intolerance and suspicion prevailed towards anything resembling Bolshevism - in fact towards any opposition to the established social order - and this came at great cost to those living in underprivileged neighbourhoods.

In the 1930s the “Chicago School” of sociology made its mark with its community work and projects. The Chicago Area Project was a social experiment on the prevention of neighbourhood juvenile delinquency. Its creators, Burgess and Shaw, emphasized the impact social environment has on crime and, more specifically, on the breakdown of institutional social control and neighbourhood facilities; on the difficulty faced by some immigrants to adapt to new customs and institutions in an industrial urban setting; and on the exclusion felt by some neighbourhoods from the larger community. The project was intended to get marginalized communities involved in identifying problems and finding respective solutions, but its promoters overlooked the importance of the involvement of others, such as City Hall so that better services would be provided, landlords so that buildings would be maintained, or banks so that the underprivileged would not be discriminated against.<sup>13</sup>

From 1940 to 1960 two closely linked strategies were pursued in the fight against poverty—urban renewal and public housing—with minimal ties to social welfare in order to avert the dependence of the poorest families. In fact, public housing was the only action that targeted the underprivileged, since the middle-class also benefited from the renewal and rebuilding of the main business districts. According to Halpern, these two strategies had a direct impact on each other: they secured downtown areas, along with their cultural and commercial institutions, from the wave of Black migrants from the southern U.S., and they reinforced regional segregation through zoning and the locations of schools, roads and housing projects.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> For more details see Halpern, op. cit., Chapter 1.

<sup>13</sup> In Russell Square particular attention was given to discouraging youths from joining street gangs, with "curbstone counseling" as recourse – a type of social work. See Halpern, op. cit., p.50-52. Back of the Yards Neighborhood Council is a similar project.

<sup>14</sup> Halpern, op. cit., p.66. In fact, during the '50s, there was a decrease rather than an increase in the number of housing projects, which implies that the neediest neighbourhoods suffered further deterioration.

This anti-poverty policy alienated residents who did not take part in the development of these projects or in the selection of construction sites for housing projects. Neither municipal planning groups nor the private sector (such as real estate developers) felt the need to establish a social structure, social controls or a local leadership, all of which are crucial elements to a community's cohesion and maintenance. The flood of new residents was therefore badly absorbed making the housing projects a refuge for the poorest and most dysfunctional families.<sup>15</sup>

Weakened social and economic ties during the early '60s between people living in underprivileged neighbourhoods and the rest of society caused a shift from integration to autonomy, separate development and collective control of public institutions. This philosophical change gave rise to a new neighbourhood initiative, from which the Gray Areas<sup>16</sup> and Mobilisation for Youth (MFY) programs stand out.<sup>17</sup>

Gray Areas was launched in 1961 by the Ford Foundation to provide education and training for underprivileged youths and children to make them more competitive on the job market—the focus was on youths because juvenile delinquency was regarded as a basic problem (as concluded by research and elected politicians); and to increase the capabilities and involvement of key institutions (school, employment, police force, penal system) by collaborating with a local body to develop an action plan along with the municipal government and local leaders (residents notably absent), and coordinate the whole campaign.<sup>18</sup>

The MFY was created in 1962 by the National Institute for Mental Health, the President's Council on Juvenile Delinquency, the Ford Foundation and other local foundations to tackle the many causes of delinquency with a variety of services aimed at changing living conditions in New York's Lower East Side. This single-site project was built on the foundation of Cloward and Ohlin's theories that delinquent behaviour resulted from lack of exposure to socially-accepted means to achieve socially-recognized goals, thus forcing youths to adopt street norms while unaware of societal norms.

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<sup>15</sup> Initial selection criteria were gradually abandoned, such as the requirement of employment.

<sup>16</sup> This name refers to the neighbourhoods located between the downtown and suburb areas.

<sup>17</sup> See Halpern, op. cit., p.89-105 and O'Conner, op. cit.

<sup>18</sup> Most of the Ford Foundation's financing went towards the running costs of this local body, which, in turn, sought out financial commitments from other organizations (public or private, national or local) to implement their formal strategy. In Boston, Oakland, New Haven, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. the federal government reinstated this program several years later as part of a national strategy against poverty.

Unlike Gray Areas, MFY sought out the participation of local residents—often from ethnic or cultural minorities—and, generally speaking, the development of a local leadership. Its head-on approach created tension between it and certain institutional stakeholders, such as schools or social aid offices, who were reluctant to give local residents a say and to have a new organization encroach on their area. Following in the footsteps of Gray Areas, the process brought together a group of stakeholders headed by a coordinating body, but could not withstand the disparity between means and goals, particularly between local input and problems arising from outside sources.

These initiatives convinced the federal government that the fight against poverty had to be led at the community level. In 1964, during the Johnson administration, Congress passed the Economic Opportunity Act, an "omnibus" bill, which led to the creation of the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) within the President's executive office, to manage and coordinate this new attack on poverty. Its goals were, among others,<sup>19</sup> to increase opportunities for underprivileged children and youths (and adults, to a lesser degree) and to show them how to best utilize the programs, as well as to tackle poverty through community action—a conceptual framework based on the strength of collective action at the community level and on the belief that the neediest do not possess the will nor the organizational skills to run such an endeavour. A new organization was created, the Community Action Agency (CAA), to manage community action strategies, but suffered a decline under local CAAs which were expected to mobilize resources for underprivileged neighbourhoods on behalf of residents and act as a platform to voice their concerns to public institutions.

Leveraging funds from social services, education and job training, CAA did not have the means to fulfil its ambitions either, arriving as it did at a period of strong social protest and racial tension. In fact, without private investments it had little impact on the lives of poor families or socio-economic conditions of underprivileged neighbourhoods in spite of new local services.

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<sup>19</sup> Our presentation deals strictly with community-level initiatives; therefore, we cannot address every aspect of this national strategy.

According to Halpern, its most valuable contribution was establishing the principle of right of access and ability, enabling the most destitute to make decisions regarding their own lives, and bringing people together to open up social dialogue that otherwise would not have taken place.<sup>20</sup>

Another aspect of the fight against poverty was the new national urban policy entrusted to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), created in 1965. Its initial program, Model Cities, proposed to solidify local government involvement and capacity for the rehabilitation of poor neighbourhoods, and was directed by local officials who oversaw the merging of resources and innovation.<sup>21</sup> Target cities were to create a local City Demonstration Agency (CDA)—a board within the Mayor's Office composed of elected officials, representatives of main institutions (schools, housing, health, social and employment services) and business and labour leaders—which would prepare detailed proposals.

Model Cities were instrumental in coordinating local action but also limited resident participation in planning and administration. Residents and representative community groups participated strictly as advisors, and CAAs were not involved at all; practically speaking, service strategies were resolved by the federal government. In 1969 the Nixon administration announced the end of the urban crisis and redirected its focus to law and order, sounding the end of the Model Cities program.

Nonetheless, the programs brought to light key elements from pilot projects for social programs,<sup>22</sup> benefiting subsequent CCIs: the difficult task of coordinating many groups; the tension between two sets of goals, namely the attempt to replicate and improve the program experiment, and effective local management—compatible goals but each subjected to tension resulting from the many stakeholders' differing priorities; the squandering of limited resources; and a legislative process that systematically leads to smaller resource grants than those originally forecast.

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<sup>20</sup> Halpern, p.115-116. Although a good deal of the CAA's work was supervising programs developed by the OEO, who did not put much of a priority on preparing community residents in decision-making and administrative tasks, one fifth of the programs were administered by the CAA.

<sup>21</sup> Against a backdrop of racial rioting, the Senate examined and, in 1966, modified the program proposal which provided for a substantial amount of money to be injected in a few urban projects. Consequently, the number of cities jumped to 75 (and two years later to 150) whereas financing was reduced from \$500 million to \$300 million.

<sup>22</sup> O'Connor, *op. cit.*

The strongest community-level approach to fighting poverty came from the efforts of residents and community groups (particularly Afro-Americans) in poor neighbourhoods, not from the federal administration or other government levels. In 1965 some neighbourhood leaders decided to take control of their economic development after concluding that it was not on governments' agendas; hence the creation of Community Development Corporations (CDC), a group of organizations belonging to and formed by the community. Between the years 1967 to 1969 the federal administration got involved in the CDC through its Special Impact Program (instituted through the Equal Opportunity Act), to promote business development in poor communities and sustain local infrastructure renewal. During the 1980s the federal government rescinded financing, and it was replaced by private interests, notably the Ford Foundation.

Around 1965 the first generation of CDCs tackled market dysfunctions by backing development and management for commercial projects, housing, industrial parks (physical infrastructure for companies) and manufacturing operations. They also addressed a range of local problems such as poor accessibility to health care, disorganized youth service organizations, street lighting, garbage removal and even police protection. Working on the principle that fewer projects with broader objectives would have a greater impact, CDC's worked out plans to integrate business and housing development in the ideal of a renewed community.<sup>23</sup> On one hand they proved viable institutions with strong community spirit and strict management, valuable tools allowing minority groups to control and manage invested capital like never before. On the other hand their efforts collided with the scope of the degradation of living conditions. Over time the organizations became smaller and more pragmatic, focusing on specialized areas and generating fewer jobs. Despite major funding from various foundations, financing suffered and CDCs redirected their attention towards housing renovation rather than construction as well as commercial and business real-estate development.

Present-day CCIs are part of a trend of community-based interventions directed at fighting urban poverty. On the whole, past experiences have been marred by a fixed notion that the poor are responsible for their impoverished conditions, by the discrepancy between limited resources and fixed objectives, by short-term commitments to long-term objectives, as well as by the absence of a truly integrated approach (multi-sector, multi-partner, multi-system).

After the federal government withdrew financial support, charitable organizations, the first supporters of community-based initiatives, resurfaced as private foundations. This did not mean, however, returning to the drawing board. To begin with, it was not a full withdrawal since many programs still financed a few CCI activities established by foundations. Secondly, and more importantly, unlike the settlements, CCIs did not offer only basic services.<sup>24</sup>

CCIs could therefore be considered the sum total of all these experiences from which they drew valuable working principles:<sup>25</sup>

- An analysis centred on environmental causes, and the complexity of and the link between social problems, demonstrating that individual and collective differences are results of external factors, and therefore can be modified.
- Recognition of geographic zones as a basis for social ties within neighbourhoods and as amenable units to launch social reforms and to serve as laboratories for social experiments.
- The use of institutions as a lever to generate individual and social change.
- The utmost importance of an extensive knowledge in planning, public education and training to encourage social progress.
- Isolation of the poor creates and perpetuates poverty and social inequalities.
- Placing the bulk of limited financing for the set-up and running of a centre that would solicit grants and distribute them among various social programs, and prepare and implement an action strategy for comprehensive redevelopment plans for poor neighbourhoods.
- Using a theoretical approach, such as that of the School of Chicago projects.

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<sup>23</sup> Halpern, *op. cit.*, p. 138

<sup>24</sup> More importantly, they do not perceive poverty as a contagious problem that requires segregating the "worthy" poor from the others.

## CCI Overview<sup>26</sup>

### Goals

Broadly speaking, CCIs have three goals: first, to enhance poorer areas and develop sustainable improvement opportunities for residents be they families or individuals; second, to improve the alliance between communities and outside services, such as health, social aid and employment; third, and herein lay their complexity and ingenuity, to encourage local changes supported by internal *and* external resources and knowledge. Therefore CCIs hope to generate a transformation on three levels:

- Individual and family: capacity building, activity development and implementation regarding health, employment, lodging—everything related to residents' quality of life.
- Local (neighbourhood): improve access to and the quality of local support systems and physical infrastructures, increase economic openings, consolidate existing local institutions or create new ones, provide a better community life by funding the neighbourhood so that it can manage conflicts and develop stable personal networks.
- Systemic: the two previous aspects will be long-lasting only if CCIs can carry out systemic changes. This can be done by increasing the quantity and quality of external services and activities—the school environment, the law, commerce or social services—or by providing greater access to municipal or regional economic openings for local residents.

With simultaneous action on three separate levels, CCIs are equipped with remarkably diverse activities or strategies, and consequently can adapt to different situations.

### CCIs' Principles

The aforementioned actions give rise to CCIs' two key principles—inclusiveness and capacity building. *Inclusiveness* refers to multi-sector activities: the range and improvement of social services, education and training, economic development, physical renewal and quality of life. The second is community *capacity building*: for individuals, through leadership development; for groups, through social network reinforcement; and for organizations, enabling them to provide better products and services while developing relations with outside stakeholders to maximize existing resources and actions.

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<sup>25</sup> O'Connor, op. cit.

<sup>26</sup> See *Voices of the Field* and *Voices of the Field II*.

Although not a principle as such, *time* is fundamental to the CCI approach. Their goals and principles are feasible only within a long-term plan. But this time factor also takes on a different form: CCI's do not appear spontaneously within a community through the impetus of the local government, or even community groups or foundations. Most CCIs are born in communities with previously-active stakeholders or neighbourhoods that have experience with an integrated fight against poverty, local development and citizen involvement. CCIs are often the result of a process that was started years before, providing them with a solid foundation to build on. The Cleveland Community Building Initiative (CCBI) is an excellent example of this firmly-rooted process.

In 1987, funding from the Cleveland and Rockefeller foundations to the Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences culminated in the creation of the Center on Urban Poverty and Social Change. Following the latter's 1990 report on poverty in Cleveland, the Mandel School set up the Cleveland Foundation, Commission on Poverty, which brought together about 30 representatives from the political, community and business sectors to develop a long-term plan to fight the city's relentless poverty. In 1992, it presented a seminal document which outlined the need to tackle this problem through an integrated and partnered approach, to focus on investments, education, health, and family and human resource development, in addition to securing the involvement of residents and local organizations, along with municipal groups in charge of renewal. This commission brought forth the Cleveland Community-Building Initiative Council (CCBIC) which carried out the work and prepared an action plan, testing it in four neighbourhoods, or "villages": East, Central, West and Mount Pleasant. In 1993, the CCBIC became the Cleveland Community-Building Initiative (CCBI) whose main work is continuing the Commission's proposals and, through it, proposals of locally-involved practitioners.

### CCI's Strategic Options<sup>27</sup>

Certain issues are of utmost importance to CCIs:

*Governance* is the development of channels for planning, decision-making and contextualizing accountability. CCI structures usually assemble interested parties such as residents, local business owners, local governments, community group representatives and members of public and private organizations. These structures can be either a pre-existing entity or a new channel, such as a coalition.

	<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
<b>Existing Entity</b>	Enables a significant improvement in living conditions for individuals and the community thanks to a professional staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protects its own interests.</li> <li>• Has a set manner of working, causing operative constraints.</li> </ul>

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<sup>27</sup> Evaluation is among CCIs' strategic options, but will be dealt with in the next part.

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	and better technical assistance.	
<b>New Entity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enables a varied representation of the community, therefore having a greater overall impact.</li> <li>• Possesses a more flexible structure, allowing for experimentation or exploration.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must create operative procedures and legitimize them.</li> <li>• Moves slowly because of many partners</li> <li>• Depends on financing to survive.</li> </ul>

The contrast between the two entities is not always clear-cut; and no matter which structure is chosen the CCI approach involves changes to existing work arrangements. The difficulty faced by a new structure to be accepted among existing organizations should not be over-emphasized since it always includes active stakeholders; in fact, there is a greater possibility of friction with those who have been left out, resulting in a power struggle with the new entity. The existing structure must meet the challenge of reshaping the relationship with other stakeholders, whether they are within or outside the community.

*Financing* is another major issue for CCIs. Despite the federal administration's withdrawal, public funding has continued indirectly through foundations and appeals to other national programs. However, with these grants alone CCIs cannot achieve their goals. In most cases, grants do not cover ongoing operating costs, but rather those associated with planning and administration, capacity building, securing funds for new activities, etc. Just as CCIs are not authorized to act as substitutes for existing activities and services, their funds cannot replace major financing from the public sector; quite the contrary—in addition to ensuring that present funding is increased and used as efficiently as possible, they help to procure outside funding. Ongoing financing is essential for setting up a long-term strategy and its goals, as well as allowing for a more concentrated focus on procedures, instead of time-limited funding which tends to produce "quick fixes."

The funder also plays a major role because contributions tend to spread influence and increase control within the initiative's conceptual framework and goal resolutions. Since CCIs aim to build a solid partnership between funders and stakeholders, involvement should not limit prerogatives as much as establish a trustworthy relationship between the two.

Regarding *technical assistance*, it is important to establish who will be in charge of what. As in other operational strategies, there are many possibilities: the funder or an outside consultant can be in control; assistance could be directed towards procedures (for example governance or strategic planning), or programs (particularly services, land use or financial expertise). However, CCIs work towards empowering local stakeholders, and therefore technical assistance should not take control but offer potential solutions to specific problems. Because local stakeholders, and by extension the whole community, appropriate these issues, they not only remain involved but also maintain control of the project and gain experience along the way. For this reason, CCI practitioners favour technical assistance that is just that—technical (such as establishing a building project)—as opposed to relying on process assistance (such as strategic planning). However, coaching has become one of the best types of technical assistance through counselling for initiative leaders, thus allowing them to make important decisions.

*Personnel* carry much more responsibility in a CCI than in other more traditional programs. In fact, the CCI approach requires regular revision of work definitions and management of various components. Moreover, staff must possess mediation and negotiation skills to effectively handle the divergent interests of participants and also the scope of their goals.

#### A Logic Model

The logic model will be discussed in the section dealing with evaluation; however, it must be pointed out that CCIs are a series of long-, intermediate and short-term activities and outcomes. The intended outcome is pre-set and a solid working foundation is laid; however, it also requires up-to-date pertinent scientific expertise. CCIs are also deeply rooted in the community and local-minded: through local stakeholders, they leverage their extensive knowledge of neighbourhood characteristics to develop a custom made strategy, targeting the community's true problems and capitalizing on its strengths. This dedication repeats itself throughout the history of most CCIs. Far from having sprung up overnight, they are the result of a string of local developments and endeavours.

### CCI Management: A Delicate Balance

Opposing interests and ideals from different partners can cause friction on two salient points. The first, setting attainable outcomes or goals, presents itself from the onset as well as deciding whether the initiative will focus on product or process. Some will favour concrete products—new housing units, new street lighting, etc.—to meet the community's immediate needs. On the other hand, some would rather build up the initiative's capacity to tackle present and future problems. While the former wish to immediately improve the local situation, the latter are more concerned with durability of improvements and the community's ability to reproduce them later.

Setting attainable outcomes involves many CCI operations.<sup>28</sup> *Governance* is debated from the beginning, since setting up a process will eventually ensure viable products. With this in mind, CCIs favour the involvement of residents and neighbourhood leaders in the governing body, which may not produce quick results but strengthen the initiative and guarantee its durability.

With regard to *personnel* and *technical assistance*, the question is whether to recruit technical staff to carry out the work unaided or a staff that would assemble stakeholders and support their collective endeavours. While outside recruiting may be the easier route, CCIs prefer to invest in the ability of personnel or local stakeholders to carry out the work in the future.

Finally, *programmatic activities* will differ depending on whether initiatives focus on products or process. Still, CCIs seem to have resolved this problem by addressing community reinforcement with integration of all programmatic levels (which means greater participation from residents and leadership development), and with community mobilization activities and outreach programs where different partners plan, then implement the program.

The second point concerns conflict between local stakeholders and outsiders, particularly funders. This internal/external tension revolves around control, authority, responsibility and accountability, and is quite natural: investors expect to have a say in the initiative, whereas initiative leaders wish to remain in control.

Rather than redistribute control, CCIs prefer to bring parties together by developing a new relation that builds on their strengths to create a collective work environment. Ultimately, there will definitely be a redistribution of power within this new relationship for the benefit of the initiative.

*Governance* presents two problems. First, despite a general consensus that local residents be on governing councils and, in a broader context, organizational and individual interests be integrated, the choice of representatives is sometimes difficult. CCI leaders attempt to include many of the community's components while funders attempt to limit the size of the governing board. The second problem is the shifting inside/outside border among governing board members who take on new responsibilities. Empowerment activities make some residents local leaders and, consequently, bestow a new status and new responsibilities upon them, thus possibly making other residents see them as strangers who no longer defend local interests, placing them alongside outside stakeholders.

*Technical assistance* raises the question of determining which stakeholder will have control and eventually decide to whom, when and how to pass control on. We previously mentioned that CCIs make every effort to avoid depending on outside technical assistance and prefer to bank on communities' capacities by developing individual abilities thereby keeping expertise in the community on a long-term basis. The corollary of this is that the CCI ends up with fewer short-term resources to resolve immediate problems, creating an opposing argument from stakeholders who wish to address these as quickly as possible.

### **Contemporary CCIs**

CCIs as we know them today began appearing in the late 1980s and the early 1990s. The first pilot projects were Community Building Partnership in Baltimore; The Atlanta Project; Neighborhood and Family Initiatives in Milwaukee, Detroit, Hartford and Memphis; and the Comprehensive Community Revitalization Project in New York. A second generation of CCIs soon followed: among them were Rebuilding Community Initiatives (in five cities) and Neighborhood Partners Initiative in New York.

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<sup>28</sup> Evaluation is one such operation, but will not be discussed here.

What follows is a presentation of a few of them.

### The Atlanta Project (TAP)

Launched by former President Carter in 1991, TAP helps underprivileged urban areas in the predominantly Black southern part of the city gain access to necessary resources for their problems. Its goals include systematic changes, collaboration, resident participation and empowerment, and corporate partnerships, with financing from private corporations and foundations. During its first five years, TAP targeted 20 neighbourhood groupings in and around Atlanta, with a total population of 500,000 and focused on six concerns: children, youth, economic development, health, housing and public security. Its 20 regional offices were set up in high schools. Phase II started in 1997 and concentrated on public- and private-sector relations to ease the transition from welfare to employment by setting up pre-kindergarten programs as well as health services in or near schools to increase the number of immunized children.

TAP's policy is defined by a consulting committee comprising representatives from local businesses, government officials and community leaders. Each neighbourhood grouping's strategic plan is developed by a resident management committee along with a local coordinator. By and large, TAP has set up a wide range of measures:

- America's Youth Passport, a booklet given to new parents to contain information about their child, such as fingerprints, a photograph, immunizations, as well as information on child nutrition, accident prevention and parenting;
- Participation of some areas in the Job Tax Credit, a federal program that encourages investment and job creation for residents;
- Immunization/Children's Health Initiative, through which 16,000 children were vaccinated and a database was developed;
- \$100 million invested in the 30 poorest areas along with \$150 million in tax benefits through EZ/EC (presented further on), a federal CCI;
- The implementation of TAPJOBS, in collaboration with employment placement agencies, business and university communities, giving qualified residents long-term job opportunities;

- FutureForce, a leadership-training program that helps high-risk teenagers overcome problems at home and school;
- Community Development Funds, set up through fundraising to help local non-profit organizations;
- TAP Into Peace, a person-to-person survey carried out by 4,000 volunteers asking residents their opinion on the fight against crime;
- Code Enforcement, a program which informs residents of their rights, shows them how to use existing procedures to report crimes, and stores them on computer software.

#### The Empowerment Zones/Enterprise Communities Program (EZ/EC)

Instituted in 1993 by the Clinton administration, (as an extension and refinement of an earlier program) under the aegis of HUD, its aim is to improve economic opportunities in rural and urban underprivileged communities by creating employment and business opportunities. The program's flexibility gives selected areas great latitude. In theory, its strategies and activities reflect four fundamental principles—economic opportunities, community-level partnerships, sustainable community development and a vision for strategic change—but in reality the first is often given preference over the last.

Since the program's inception there have been three designation rounds, and the main criterion was a community's high rate of poverty. In 1994, 105 impoverished communities throughout the country were designated as EZs or ECs and 40 more were added in 1999. At the end of 2000, the program was broadened through the Renewal Tax Relief Act which created Renewal Communities (RC). The federal government named 40 RCs, along with nine new EZs. The program was further enlarged in 2001.

Financing in 1999 for urban EZs reached a total of almost \$4 billion (\$1.5 in funding and \$2.5 in tax incentives), given in flexible block grants for social services and tax breaks for geographical business sectors. As a result, a host of activities, programs and various projects are developed within this national program.

### The Comprehensive Community Revitalization Program (CCRP)

Initiated in 1991 by the Surdna Foundation, the CCRP's pilot project was to strengthen the South Bronx Community Development Corporations (CDC) with development and strategic assessment of overall community renewal, capitalizing on their housing-project and property-management expertise. Six CDCs were chosen: the Banana Kelly Community Improvement Association, the Mid Bronx Desperados Community Housing Corporation, the Mid Bronx Senior Citizens Council (MBSCC), the Mount Hope Housing Corporation Inc., the Phipps Community Development Corporation (West Farms) and the Promesa Housing Development Fund Corporation.

During the '60s and '70s living conditions deteriorated greatly: widespread vandalism and a wave of arson were followed by an exodus of residents and community organizations, in addition to many job losses. The '80s marked a rebirth as many CDCs—backed by local governments and foundations—rebuilt their communities, starting with public housing. Over the following decade CDCs suffered a shortage of investments essential to the maintenance of a true community's services and infrastructure. A new range of services and amenities were created to provide a better quality of life for new citizens. The CCRP was created to help CDCs meet these needs.

Despite wanting to do more than build rental units and be aware of the needs of their community, CDCs did not possess local or outside contacts required to take action. They needed a global vision as well as their community's absolute involvement. The CCRP put together a community-based collaboration rather than build a new neighbourhood governance structure. Some of its key underlying theories are:

- Existing CDCs which have implemented large-scale housing programs are the most suitable organizations to preside over an integrated renewal for the community.
- The CCRP would provide help and technical assistance for CDCs to initiate and implement comprehensive renewal strategies.
- The CCRP would provide initial funding to help CDC projects secure additional public and private funding.
- The CCRP would help CDCs learn from each other throughout the initiative and work with one another to bring wider-reaching changes.

- Resident empowerment would be a main strategy in community renewal efforts to maintain results and eventually reduce dependency on the program.
- Rather than tackle interrelated problems separately, services would be more integrated.
- Planning and implementation would proceed simultaneously.

The CCRP focused on the following four areas, but CDCs did not divide their efforts equally among them:

- *Health care*: Provide better services in neglected areas and secure additional funding from outside sources.
- *Economic development*: Many projects were launched, such as a new shopping centre, a new loans program and catering businesses. The CCRP provided initial investments, technical assistance, and consultation for CDCs. The MBSCC capitalized on this, focusing on job creation and, consequently, bringing more revenue into the community. The recommended approach was to set up new ventures that would provide services for senior citizens, which would in turn solidify the need for the CDC's expertise on a long-term basis. Other ventures merged with family- and child-oriented programs. In most cases, funding and help from the CCRP allowed these projects to take off, but more importantly it gave leverage by securing funds from outside sources.
- *Employment*: Job creation and better employment access were dealt with separately because these four CDCs had an extremely high rate of unemployment. In 1996, together with the Federation Employment Service, they created the New Bronx Employment Service to meet residents' different needs regarding job assessment, job preparation workshops, job placement, childcare counselling programs and social service programs.
- *Quality of life*: The CCRP has helped CDCs improve their infrastructures, particularly by building six parks and creating green-space projects; fortified by their experience, CDCs also continued their housing development. The greatest achievement is having secured financing from outside sources at the rate of \$100 for every dollar invested by the CCRP, which translates into the involvement of many local stakeholders, such as the municipal government, and consequently, into larger CDC networks.

### Cleveland Rebuilding Community Initiatives (RCI)

Launched in 1994 by the Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF), the Cleveland RCI aims to ease transition in the overall improvement of living conditions for children and families in certain neighbourhoods. Its objectives are twofold: individual (child/family experiences and well-being) and systemic (improvements in organizations, institutions and public services).

This project focused on five neighbourhoods chosen by criteria such as the following: an economically underprivileged environment; interest from the municipal governments in the RCI; the probability of finding local, regional and national partners interested in a long-term commitment; an existing initiative comprising residents and important groups and institutions; and a local community group that would take charge. This last criterion was essential since this exercise aimed to rebuild neighbourhoods with the support of existing community-based renewal organizations (CBOs). In other words, RCI's strategic approach was to help these groups create or reinforce local collaboration while developing and implementing projects that complied with these five principles outlined by the AECF:

- Maximize the capacity and impact of neighbourhood resources and institutions.
- Develop efficient, neighbourhood-based, human service reforms for children, youths and families.
- Reform existing neighbourhood investments and increase private- and public-sector capital investments.
- Improve housing and social infrastructure.
- Foster community-based governance collaborations

The first wave of financing (\$160,000) allowed CBOs to prepare strategic plans for the initiative and to seek additional partners able to diagnose each community's needs and circumstances. The second (up to \$1.5 million) was allocated to sites with feasible strategic plans to help them sustain capacity and partnership development, implement and improve programmatic interventions, and design an additional three-year strategic plan of capacity development. In the third and final demonstration phase, subsidized organizations and their partners could plan and direct a demonstration project, thus spreading their work on community development.

## CCIs Working With Delinquency

### The Comprehensive Communities Program (CCP)<sup>29</sup>

In 1994 the CCP, attached to the Bureau of Justice Assistance (U.S. Department of Justice), was given the mandate to integrate law enforcement into social programs and to collaborate with public and private organizations and individuals to control crime and improve the quality of life in communities. These goals were guided by two major principles: communities must have a leading role in partnership development for the fight against crime and violence, and local and government officials must set up firmly- coordinated and multidisciplinary tactics to best support communities. Emphasis was immediately put on gang and youth violence and cities were chosen according to their rates of violent criminality: Baltimore was among those having the highest with a rate of 285 per 10,000; Columbia had 211; and Boston 176 (the national average was 72). Local police and communities played major roles, but conflict resolution, alternatives to incarceration and youth integration programs also contributed. CCP locations differ for various reasons:

- Targeted area: In most cases the entire community is targeted, sometimes limited to specific sectors, at other times including many counties.
- Governance structure: This can include the mayor's office, the police department, a public administrative organization, and a municipal director.
- Community policing efforts: Boston brought citizens together with public and private organizations after a lengthy period of abuse and corruption; Salt Lake City created Community-Oriented Officers, who were integrated into Community Action Teams, or CATs (consisting of a probation officer, a town prosecutor, a community mobilization specialist, a family and youth specialist, and a community relations and mobilization coordinator). Members met every week to discuss local problems, find solutions, coordinate resources and implement resolutions. Seattle joined forces with the local police and concentrated on problem solving.

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<sup>29</sup> See BJA. *Comprehensive Communities Program: Program Account*. Bureau of Justice Assistance Bulletin. 2001. For the Hartford CCP see Rich, T. et al. *Police Department: Information Systems Technology Enhancement Project*. Chapter 4. Cambridge: Abt Associates Inc.1999.

- Community mobilization efforts: Fort Worth incorporated citizens into patrol units; Boston included resident representatives in their strategic planning and created a "drug court"; Salt Lake City's Mobile Neighborhood Watch, administered by residents, provided police training in crime-fighting activities for volunteers.

### A Look at Hartford's CCP

In 1996 Hartford, Connecticut, joined the list of cities with a CCP. Its aim was to mobilize the community, engage the entire local police force (this had been done previously but on a smaller scale), and increase municipal management. The city created "problem-solving committees", consisting of residents elected at public hearings, in each of its 17 boroughs. These committees would discuss residents' concerns and, with the help of other municipal services and organizations, implement programs to deal with them.

The CCP trained its committee members in problem solving—problem designation and analysis, strategy development and implementation, and outcome assessment—and introduced them to computer "mapping". Once the software for mapping and data analysis were created, local officials developed a system that would allow community organizations limited access to police data. For reasons of confidentiality access to the time, location and type of service request, offence and arrest was blocked, as well as to the age, race and sex of the person arrested. Another CCP endeavour was the institution of the Hartford Community Court, created to handle public nuisances promptly.

### The Weed and Seed Strategy

This program was launched by the U.S. Department of Justice in 1991 to mobilize and coordinate a community's resources. The name refers to "weeding out" violent offenders, drug traffickers and other criminals from targeted areas through law enforcement activities; and "seeding" (for long-range outcomes) with area restoration and human service activities that would prevent and deter future crimes; and controlling violent crime, drug trafficking and drug-related crimes, while providing a safe living environment through community policing and focusing on problem-solving for crime prevention and deterrence.

This program had three main objectives: to develop a comprehensive and multi-partnership strategy; to coordinate and integrate existing and new private, local, state and federal initiatives on criminal-justice and human service activities; to mobilize residents for community policing; to help identify and remove violent offenders and drug traffickers from their neighbourhood; as well as to help other human service resources identify local needs and meet them. The roughly 200 operational sites work under the Executive Office for Weed and Seed, which delegates planning, implementation and evaluation tasks to local executive committees who must set these up. Presided over by the local district attorney, these committees comprise representatives of major local, state and federal agencies, as well as business leaders, tenant-association leaders and other community activists.

### Communities That Care (CTC)

In 1996 the team of Hawkins and Catalano developed an approach based on information from extensive research which, over the years, has identified predictive risk and protection factors in behavioural problems among young people—violence, teen pregnancy, drug addiction, school dropout and particularly delinquency. They have brought to light the compounding effect of exposure to multiple risk factors, as well as the efficiency of integrated strategies that tackle many problems simultaneously mostly, but not solely, by reinforcing protective factors. Scientific studies link both factors to four social areas: peers, family, school and community.

Although theory-based, the approach is also pragmatic, providing an information system that allows communities to create their own risk- and protective-factor database, and then choose the prevention measures best suited to their needs. Hawkins and Catalano's work with the states of Kansas, Maine, Oregon, South Carolina, Utah and Washington labelled 22 measures linked to 12 essential predictive risk factors of county-wide illegal drug-use rates among young people. They also developed a school survey that gauges risks, protection, delinquency and illegal drug use, from which they can diagnose risk and protection levels throughout the community and the state.

Communities can use these tools to develop a prevention strategy. CTC systems start the process by showing how these tools can help communities decide which policies, programs and crime-prevention projects are best suited for their strengths and problems. This system has been implemented in over 500 communities throughout the United States over the last decade. Its implementation is a five-step process:

**1.** Interested communities and their key participants are designated, and an evaluation is done on existing initiatives and local conditions, particularly those that might hinder the system's implementation.

**2.** The CTC team meets with local stakeholders, seeking involvement from community leaders and members of local organizations who are concerned with juvenile delinquency and youth development. These people will define a vision for the future of the community, designating an organization that will carry it out. The multi-sector council comprises a governing board that oversees activity planning and implementation and a board of community representatives from various local groups.

**3.** The council conducts a security diagnosis which involves creating a profile of the community's strengths and problems by creating a database of risk and protective factors, criminal behaviour and other behavioural problems; pinpointing each neighbourhood's major risk factors and/or the neighbourhoods most at risk, through data analysis; making an inventory of existing community resources for tackling risk factors or strengthening protective factors.

For example, in Fort Collins, Colorado, 18 risk factors (linked to the afore-mentioned juvenile behavioural problems) were given priority based on various measures to gauge the community's level of risk. Some of these factors are on the following page.

Comprehensive Community Initiatives' Evaluation Practice:  
Can It Work for Prevention?

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	<b>Examples of Risk Factors</b>	<b>Examples of Indicators to Measure Risk Factors</b>
<b>Community</b>	Availability of illegal drugs, alcohol and tobacco	Percentage of 8th and 12th grade students who think it's easy or very easy to obtain these products
	Residential mobility	Number of house sales
	Weak community ties and community disorganization	Voter turnout ----- Percentage of rented or owned housing units (occupied)
	Poverty	Percentage of students enrolled in the free/ low-cost breakfast program ----- Population rate using food stamps
<b>Family</b>	Family history of delinquency	Rate of adults in illegal drug- or alcohol-dependency treatment program ----- Level of education of 25 year olds
	Family-conflict management	Rate of confirmed cases of child abuse and neglect ----- Number of children placed in foster homes (by type)
	Positive parental attitude and involvement regarding problem behaviour	Rate of violent crimes and thefts ----- Rate of pregnant women in alcohol, drug or tobacco treatment programs
<b>School</b>	Early and persistent anti-social behaviour	Number of primary students presently or previously in special-ed programs because of emotional instability ----- Rate of suspended primary-level students
	Failed school-year from end of primary level	Percentage of students in the lower national quartile for linguistic, reading and math skills
	Lack of school involvement	Rate of daily student attendance ----- Percentage of high-school graduates
<b>Individuals and Peers</b>	Early delinquency	Age of 12th-graders for first marijuana consumption and first incident of alcohol abuse ----- Intentions of 8th-graders regarding future drug use
	Alienation and rebellion	Suicide rate among youths ----- Percentage of youths who attempted or considered suicide

Our intent is not to analyze the initiative's risk factors and indicators; besides, this is only a partial representation of their findings. We do want to point out that this was a joint endeavour based on research and backed by practitioners' opinions.

For example, while the community's rate of adult participation in alcohol and illegal drug treatments has diminished, leaders have pointed out that this is due to a decrease in the number of available spaces in Colorado programs and not because of an improvement in people's health. Based on these findings, the committee singled out three risk factors: family conflicts, family problem-solving, early behavioural problems. An inventory of available resources showed a need for bilingual services, prevention strategies and programs for children and young people, coordination among existing resources and services, volunteer tutors, and involvement in recreational activities for youths of all ages.

4. The community board is also in charge of developing a locally-integrated youth-development plan that determines the intended outcomes from the reduction in risk factors and from the reinforcement of protective factors; determining the indicators that would later be used for an evaluation; deciding on the activities to bring forth these outcomes from proven approaches; and finally, an evaluation plan for data collection and analysis to gauge activity progress compared to the intended outcomes.

5. The fifth and final step involves implementing the evaluation plan. The governing board of local leaders has the crucial role of securing funding.

Comment:

Delinquency-related initiatives described as CCIs have very little to do with *real* CCIs, with the exception of the CTC system which gives communities working tools and stringent methods to tackle problems comprehensively. Furthermore, this approach requires a theoretical basis for its activities which, in turn, must be the result of an internal consensus.

The two other approaches—the CCP and the Weed and Seed strategy—drift away from the CCI concept. The notion of a comprehensive approach is eluded and capacity building is performed to a minimum. The *weeding* and *seeding* elements do not form an integrated process but, instead, are independent units. The police control the weeding without being part of a coalition. The strength of a comprehensive approach lies within the synergy between various activities, not in their mere appendage. Therefore, it is not a question of investing in social-service related activities as much as in law enforcement but of developing a truly comprehensive approach.

The circumstances repeat themselves with the CCP, except that *seeding* is replaced with *community policing*, and *community mobilization* activities often reflect a security aspect (residents among police patrols in Fort Worth, neighbourhood supervision with Salt Lake City's Mobile Neighbourhood Watch). The CCP never addresses causes for delinquency; its goal is to increase local capacities for detecting and reacting to delinquent behaviour.

## **PART II - Evaluating CCIs**

Given CCIs' characteristics, assessing them is an intricate exercise and many would be quick to dismiss the possibility of a scientific evaluation. However, over the years an evaluation practice has emerged and, although it does not meet the main model's principles, it is just as arduous.

### **Limitations of the Traditional Evaluation**<sup>30</sup>

Let us clarify that the evaluation of an intervention's *efficacy* aims to establish its impact, whereas an evaluation of its *effectiveness* aims to establish how closely the implementation followed the original plan, and an evaluation of its *efficiency* seeks out the economic benefits. To establish the impact of an intervention, measured impacts must be from the intervention in question and not from other factors. According to traditional scientific criteria of positivist research, intervening variables must be monitored as closely as possible, that is to say, alternate hypotheses must be eliminated: hence the famous debate on the decrease of delinquency registered by the New York police department, which could be attributed to the zero tolerance policy adopted under Chief Bratton, or could be due to other factors, such as a decrease in the demographic weight of young people, relocation to other cities, changing patterns in drug trafficking, or even to other community groups who started intervening in gang violence at the same time.

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<sup>30</sup> This technical section deals with different traditional evaluation methods. It is largely based on the chapter by Hollister and Hill (1999) "Problems in the Evaluation of Community-Wide Initiatives" in *New Approaches to Evaluating Community Initiatives*, Vol. 1. <http://www.aspenroundtable.org/vol1/hollister.htm>

To eliminate alternate hypotheses, the usual procedure is to form a control group, do pre-post intervention appraisals and, ideally, divide subjects randomly into two groups, one experimental (receives intervention) and one control (does not receive intervention). When working on a comprehensive intervention at the community level, dealing with multiple factors simultaneously (housing, employment, health, job training, social fabric, parenting skills, early intervention for children and high-risk youths, etc.) and implementing various actions led by different partners (city, education, social and health services, the police and the law, etc.), the usual evaluation procedure is not suitable for many reasons.

The first basic problem is the unit of analysis. The traditional unit of analysis for quantitative program evaluations has been the individual. This is sometimes the case with CCIs, but more often the unit will be the family or institutions, or even the community as a whole. In fact, the mere premise of a community-level evaluation, of a problem area for example, suggests that impacts should be researched within each of the three previously-mentioned types of evaluation, each one in relation to the others; a family is not an isolated or fixed unit but part of a whole, in constant contact with its environment, surroundings, community and institutions.

Another problem is outcome measures. Since the focus is not only on a range of different objectives but also complex objectives (for example, better integration and use of existing community services, and the multi-institution creation of a shared vision on problems and the action's underlying theory for change), a CCI's outcome measures will be just as complex and numerous. Also, an integrated community-level intervention on prevention, which aims to reduce delinquency and victimization, cannot measure its success rate solely on police statistics.

Another set of problems is comparison groups. With community-level comprehensive initiatives it is not possible—nor is it ethical—to randomly choose residents who will and will not be included in the intervention. When dealing with *institutions*, the methodological weakness here lies in the size of the sample group, which is too small to guarantee that random assignment would cancel out the effects of non-measured groups.

An example would be relocation with a job-training program, in which some workers from the sample group were hired while other workers in the same field were laid off, therefore showing no increase in employment—the result being that program participants were offered these jobs *instead of* other non-participant workers who would have been chosen had it not been for the program's existence. Therefore, an evaluation based on random distribution of control and treatment groups that are too small in relation to the overall market, could not detect this phenomenon; because the number of study participants is so minimal, it is unlikely that a trained and hired individual from the treatment group would seek employment at the same place as someone from the control group.

Because CCIs are constantly evolving, an on-going evaluation is necessary but cannot be done by the traditional method.

The Employment Opportunity Pilot Project's (EOPP) evaluation is a case in point regarding major problems with community comparison-group formations. This large-scale job-access program, launched at the end of the '70s, targeted frequently-unemployed adults and poor families with children. This evaluation used constructed comparison sites but lost all scientific merit when unforeseen changes occurred in the communities: out of the ten sites, one was hit by a hurricane, another was struck by flooding and yet another suffered from the closure of an automotive plant, a major setback for the local economy.

It is dangerous, to say the least, to compare communities whose underlying characteristics differ—two problematic communities are not necessarily comparable just because of similar unemployment, drop-out and delinquency rates. A small-scale sample presents the same problem as with institutions: the unavoidable weakness stems from the small number of participating communities, unless the evaluating team is very large, resources enormous and time not a factor—conditions extremely unlikely to come together.

There are other problems too. To begin with, there is the *unreliable criterion of proximity*. Control communities are usually matched up according to various characteristics which are believed or "known" (if previously proven) to have an impact on the variables being studied. This could be based on geographic proximity, with the belief that the differences in socio-economic structures and the expansion of external forces would be minimized, but this is

not a safe assumption. Sometimes social, political and economic forces foster development of specialized functions in different sectors of one area, and these differences have varying effects on progress within communities. Since these effects cannot be accurately identified, it is therefore impossible to determine whether these changes—or the absence of change—are due to the intervention or other circumstances. The proximity criterion is questionable because of the treatment community's effect, positive or negative, on the control community, which is noted in the ripple effect caused by services or by individuals' relocation.

This was the scenario in a South Carolina county with the evaluation of an educational school- and community-program aimed at reducing the number of unwanted teen pregnancies. Evaluators wanted to compare changes noted in the eastern part of the county, which was part of the program, to the western part, but realized that the media campaign (the program's main element) was carried out through the county's only newspaper and radio station, which means that people living in the western part were also affected. Moreover, some of the venues chosen to spread the program's message, such as the church and the workplace, were frequented by members of the control group, even if they resided in the treatment community.

The next problem is the *criteria used to match communities*. This is usually done on the basis of similarities in demographic data from national censuses, which are only done every ten years, and rarely give (depending on the county) municipal-level information, such as street blocks. The long intervals make these tools ineffective because communities are constantly evolving. Even if they could give an immediate picture of the communities, a statistical model that could weigh the numerous matching characteristics does not yet exist.

Finally, group comparison construction for individuals, institutions or communities bring the researcher face to face with ethical issues which, although not insurmountable must be addressed, particularly when the analysis units are communities in which case it involves more people. For example, the decision to bring social services into a neighbourhood and to leave another without can have heavy consequences for affected residents and must be considered seriously.

With delinquency, program evaluations implemented within the CCP and Weed and Seed exemplify the impossibility to assess integrated initiatives (although these two programs do not meet that criterion) with the traditional evaluation methodology. The process-and-outcome evaluation of Pittsburgh's Weed and Seed project addresses impact only half-way through a fifty-odd page report, with only two pages on crime reduction, the national program's fundamental objective. Most of the impact evaluation examines public opinion surveys. Residents' sense of security is an important gauge in the assessment of preventive programs—and even more so to gauge the progress of a CCI—but it does not give any indication of the actual<sup>31</sup> decrease in crime; a fact that the evaluation team was well aware of:

"Of course, any observed changes in crime rates in the target area during this time period might reflect factors other than Weed and Seed. For instance, changes in crime reporting may cause the reported crime rates to rise or fall independently of any shift in the true crime incidence. Changes in the regional or national economic context may also affect local crime trends, favourably or unfavourably. Additionally, an observed reduction in crime for the target area may occur through displacement of crime to adjacent or nearby areas, whose crime rates would correspondingly rise."<sup>32</sup>

Any socio-economic intervention in the target area could have an impact on risk- or crime- prevention factors. This warning is reiterated by the authors of a preliminary report on the CCP: "The crime rates in the six cities either decreased or stabilized during the CCP process. But due to complex variables of the many factors that contribute to the level of crime, it is difficult to say how CCP or any other specific program played a part in this trend."<sup>33</sup>

Finally, a look at problems linked to modeling. Community-level *statistical modeling* is the development of a model that would predict the probability of certain events in the community if the initiative had not been implemented. The predictions are used as counterfactual variables, which are then compared to values taken after the intervention.

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<sup>31</sup> We are aware that actual crime is the sum of apparent crime (that which is registered by the police) and unknown crime (known as the "Dark Figure"). The actual crime to which we refer in this text is in fact the apparent crime. However use of this term could be confusing for the reader.

<sup>32</sup> Bynum, Timothy, et al. (1999) *National Evaluation of Weed and Seed: Pittsburgh Case Study*. Research Report, National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice, p.26.

<sup>33</sup> Kelling, George L., et al. (1998) *The Bureau of Justice Assistance Comprehensive Communities Program: A Preliminary Report*. Research in Brief, National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice, p.9. Yet, in the bulletin *Comprehensive Communities Program: Program Account* published in 2001, the BJA does not mention this essential warning and presents the results from an evaluation study done by the BOTEC Analysis Corporation, with decreases of up to 50% in the rate of violent crimes. Unfortunately, the bulletin's article does not provide any bibliographical reference for the study, and we were unable to locate it.

*Time-series modeling* extrapolates past values of a series of variables to predict a value for the outcome during and after an intervention, and it is eventually compared to the post-intervention value. For example, we can use data from the number of all-terrain driver deaths over  $x$  years to reach a statistical estimate of the number of deaths that would have occurred without the new legislation requiring a driver's licence, and compare the estimated result to the actual number of deaths for that same time frame after legislation was passed.

These two modeling methods are not reliable because they presume that a community's many variables evolve in a linear fashion; but other than the intervention itself, they do not control other variables which may have had an influence on the outcomes.

As for *multivariate modeling*, this has not been used yet with communities but has already proven inconclusive in evaluating programs. A case in point is the welfare reform assessment in New Jersey (the national AFDC program), where modeling predictions of caseload changes were later dismissed because subsequent changes in the low-wage labour market drowned the program's effects. These unforeseen changes had not been included in the modeling.

To summarize, traditional evaluation methodologies have many limitations in relation to the arduous assessment of comprehensive initiatives, but it would be wrong to claim that CCIs cannot be assessed because of their incompatibility with the criteria of "scientific" evaluation. Instead, because of the limitations of scientific evaluation, we must adopt a new evaluation approach. The following section looks at CCIs and researchers who have strived to create a new approach.

### **CCIs' Evaluation Practice**

Community-level evaluations started in the '50s when job training was the main focus, with the intent to replicate previous actions, and new evaluation standards were introduced to measure programs' success rates.

This late start partly explains the weaknesses in evaluation practices of previous programs, such as Gray Areas, which resorted to self-evaluations established by each program and periodic visits from staff members and outside consultants. On the one hand these self-evaluations could not be validated without a uniform process and standard procedures. On the other hand, external sources did not evaluate programs individually, nor would it have been anticipated or possible to retrieve collected data for such an evaluation.

*Neighbourhood pilot projects against juvenile delinquency* also considered evaluation a learning tool, but their assessment focused on the empirical validity of an underlying theory. Because of time constraints, their evaluation practice was not fully developed.

The weakness of these community-level national action programs was a missing evaluation methodology, because they had been hastily instituted. CCIs did, however, understand that evaluation is a social learning process that introduces new research methods that deal with urban problems through social change. In addition, their evaluation practice has produced a vast compilation of data concerning changes at the community level.

From the mid-'60s, evaluation research and community-level initiatives diverged. There was tremendous growth for the former and a gradual but rapid abandonment of the latter by authorities. This separate evolution is attributable to the influence of the following historical forces and processes: professionalization, which accounts for greater expertise in knowledge creation, and in the creation and implementation of social welfare programs; the expansion of the welfare state and with it a greater demand for knowledge; and changes in the social, economic and political contexts from which these comprehensive initiatives were developed.

The turning point came in 1965 when the Johnson administration launched the Planning, Programming and Budgeting System (PPBS) which bridged the gap between public policies and experimental research centered on "measurable" program outcomes. His new application for assessment from federal departments and organizations brought evaluation into a research field of its own.

However, it also brought political pressures that hastened and aggravated adaptation difficulties for CCIs. Take the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) as an example: with PPBS requirements on the one hand, and long-term planning applications as well as the program's policy innovation applications on the other, accounting problems took on a new dimension in 1967, when Congress voted on the amendment requiring that all OEO programs undergo a critical assessment. This evaluation used control groups, covered cost-benefit analyses, and used data from participants' opinions of program strengths and weaknesses. Ironically, in spite of priority given to fighting poverty, a complete assessment of CAP and its related programs was never done.

The evaluation practice for community-level initiatives developed after the arrival of the PPBS evolved against the flow of a constraining evaluation method. It is difficult to say whether the demands of this method were the cause of the weakness in the Model Cities evaluation practice. From the program's very inception, evaluation, with its limited financial resources, was given a secondary role and generated strong tensions within the program. Government administration,<sup>34</sup> which was funding the program, wanted a clear definition of the overall program objectives on replicability and subsequent improvement; but mostly the administration wanted to know to what extent local pilot sites had met national policy objectives, and ensure that local initiatives would be carried out so as to test the causal relationship between the intervention strategy and the outcomes. Local program directors felt that this vision did not conform to the program's local goals and that it would be best to measure objectives against the efficiency of the local administration.

Lastly, the CDC's experience brought to light other points regarding the evaluation practice: the conflicting opinions of numerous sponsors; the complexity of indicating the effects of poverty; the consequences of political time constraints, and the lack of comparative contexts from which to learn.

Some crucial factors that interfered with research and evaluation were limited investments from government officials and other financial sources—whether due to inadequate lobbying or the absence of a central administration which left stakeholders unable to report program contributions—as well as the gap between the evaluation practice at that time and the evaluation needed to assess CDC initiatives. Another, to a lesser degree, was a careless attitude towards scientific social concepts that were not consistent with local reality.

### A Practice Based on a Theory of Change

Studies during the '90s on CCIs' evaluation practices have led to a theory of change, which, according to researchers and practitioners, is a promising new route.<sup>35</sup> More than a method, it is an evaluation approach much more comprehensive than previous methods, which are sometimes integrated in its process.

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<sup>34</sup> It contradicted itself since HUD was opposed to MCA, who, while under its jurisdiction, was in charge of administering the Model Cities program.

The theory of change incorporates the evaluation into the initiative itself, and it uses the former to plan and adapt the latter.<sup>36</sup> According to Connell and Kubisch, it is "a systematic and cumulative study of the links between activities, outcomes, and contexts of the initiative."<sup>37</sup> Rather than attempt to illustrate *a posteriori* the existence of a causal link between implemented activities and noted outcomes, it focuses on links between the initial, intermediate and final outcomes. This way, it identifies the outcomes that will be monitored, even before the first activities have taken effect, and assesses the proposed activities' potential of reaching these outcomes, as well as the contextual factors that might come into play.

The three criteria<sup>38</sup> in the theory of change are the following: is it plausible, that is are the activities appropriate in relation to the intended outcomes; is it do-able, are the strategies compatible with available resources; and is it testable, can progress be measured. The theory rests on the presupposition of the validity of a theory that explains the causal link between an intervention and its outcome. This requires substantial insight into research because the theory is based on knowledge of social sciences and the experiences of practitioners. The theory also has a solid grip on local reality: implemented activities rely on the community's resources as it addresses problems.

Philliber<sup>39</sup> recommends laying out the general theory of change on paper in chart form to visualize the proposed causal sequence: processes on the left, short-term outcomes in the centre, and long-term outcomes on the right. First the long-term outcomes are listed, then the intermediate ones, and then the short-term ones, which are sometimes a preliminary process to the other two objectives. For example the creation of a community governing board can be a short-term outcome though if such an entity already exists when the CCI is implemented, then it is a process. In other words, the theory of change starts by designating the CCI's intended outcomes before working on strategies that will be used to reach them.

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<sup>35</sup> This was concluded in the documents from the Aspen Institute's Roundtable.

<sup>36</sup> Some CCI evaluations begin once their activities have already ended. In such a case, the theory of change is not fully exploited and can be qualified as "weak."

<sup>37</sup> Connell, James P. and Kubisch, Anne C. "Applying a Theory of Change Approach to the Evaluation of CCI" in *New Approaches to Evaluating Community Initiatives*, Vol. 2.

<sup>38</sup> Connell and Kubisch, op. cit.

<sup>39</sup> Philliber, Susan. (1998) "The Virtue of Specificity in Theory of Change Evaluation: Practitioner Reflections" in *New Approaches to Evaluating Community Initiatives*. Vol. 2 *Theory, Measurement, and Analysis*. The Aspen Institute Roundtable on Comprehensive Community Initiatives. New York.

Defining a theory of change is central to a CCI evaluation practice and involves input from all participants. Although impact and process evaluations often require everyone's participation, this rarely happens, and CCI partner involvement is not a simple matter.<sup>40</sup> The evaluator coordinates this collective effort in which stakeholders each present their own theory of change, come up with a final theory and decide which indicators will be used to assess the activities' effectiveness.

A study of the various coexisting or concurring theories within one initiative, developed by stakeholders, is needed to eventually come up with a common theory. If divergent viewpoints on the initiative's elements were not initially a problem, they become one once disagreements affect the CCI's vision. If not addressed, these divergences become expectations and a conception that are incompatible with the action *and* evaluation. To impose a theory too quickly could interfere with the CCI's collaboration and stifle its dynamics. Conversely, to leave it without definition and a final consensus could tempt many to impose their own vision and therefore disrupt the project.

Working out a common theory is a difficult challenge but nonetheless presents the opportunity to benefit from the variety of visions and reinforces the CCI by clarifying intended outcomes, proposed activities and local contexts, involving all stakeholders from the beginning. As a result, the final theory, a framework that requires regular adjusting, will be a joint effort.

Working around intended outcomes eases the tasks of defining measure indicators and tools, as well as collecting data. Having said this, defining the indicators can be a challenge. It is, however, an essential process to gauge the capacities of intended activities. For instance, if all parties agree on improving police intervention in a particular neighbourhood, then there must also be consensus on the indicators; otherwise, dissension will likely result since for some the best indicator would be a local public survey whereas others might prefer to study the number of arrests, or even the solved-crime rates. Performance (or productivity) levels are essential to the indicators' effectiveness, and to determine the activities' success rate compared to the objectives. The complexity of the matter lies in the type of indicator—quantitative or qualitative. For example, if the indicator is a drop in the rate of second offences among young offenders, based on police statistics, then there must be a fixed level at which the activity

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<sup>40</sup> This is not surprising in as much as their own approach is participatory.

would be rated a success. In spite of possible disagreements among CCI stakeholders, their respective positions are reflected in numbers (at this point, the indicator has been approved by all parties) thus easing negotiations. But when the measure is based on a process—such as achieving the best collaboration among stakeholders in the fight against juvenile crime—it is a much more difficult task without reference points.

### The Primary Role of the Evaluator

Defining a general theory is a relatively long process that draws on the evaluators' many skills: a good knowledge of the field of intervention, since stakeholders' theories may be incomplete or unrealistic; diplomacy and team spirit to bring about consensus among parties with diverging views and interests; a mastery of the quantitative and qualitative tools to overcome frequent methodology problems; a good relationship with all stakeholders and work on each of their theories.

Present from the CCI's planning phase onwards, the evaluator works individually with each participant to clarify or define their theory of change and also collectively to rally them towards a single vision. The evaluator is also a stakeholder, though with added responsibilities—this sometimes causes friction with other parties—and one who keeps a close eye on the various personal interests. If, however, evaluators lack objectivity it is of little consequence to CCIs since the evaluator works with all other partners towards a unified view of the initiative. It could even be said that the evaluator should be directly concerned with the initiative, but more importantly, the evaluator must remain neutral to avoid siding with any other partner on the CCI's fundamental issues—defining outcomes indicators, and related strategies.

### Range of Methodological Tools

CCIs' evaluation practice has benefited from previous community initiatives, and has many methods and methodologies at its disposal:<sup>41</sup>

- *Ethnography* helps to create a thorough description of the communities, which in turn sheds light on their inner workings. This could involve studying experiences, behaviours and perceptions within smaller populations (including individuals and families) or studying

where they turn to tackle bigger issues (such as unemployment). Methods include field observation, mapping of ecological and institutional elements, as well as formal and informal relations analysis. Ethnography pertains to CCI evaluations in many respects: its exploratory approach is not influenced by *a priori* notions on community processes or outcomes defined outside the community; it directs communities towards change, and focuses on developing existing forces within the community.

- *Census and survey data* provide evaluators with the necessary information to study trends and patterns in different populations and define past changes in individuals and communities. The data also provide program directors with useful information that helps choose programs and define intervention strategies and include indicators of socio-economic status, household composition and the use of services.
- *Computerized tracking systems*, such as CTC, follow the trail of a wide range of information which can be consulted for programmed activities.

The theory of change does not require evaluators to use ethnography or a computerized tracking system in spite of their usefulness for certain initiatives, but census and survey data are crucial to CCIs. Since evaluators often work within street blocks, units "omitted" from national figures, evaluators must generate their own data on a micro-scale to outline a plan for complex initiatives, to be aware of residents' opinions of current programs, to present individual experiences from different population sub-groups, to provide information to develop more centralized interventions, as well as to measure the accessibility and use of community services.

### Limitations of the Theory of Change

By specifying which activities will produce which outcomes, the theory of change determines an impact's causal attribution. However, the causalities it establishes are relatively inconsistent with long-term outcomes because they are the last link in a chain of short-term and intermediate activities and outcomes, and because long-term outcomes are affected by unforeseen changes during the course of the initiative, such as additional funding.

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<sup>41</sup> Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP) website: <http://www.gse.harvard.edu/~hfrp/>

Because of this inconsistency in long-term outcomes, stakeholders' collective theory must undergo constant revision as the initiative progresses.

Furthermore, it is impossible to establish causalities categorically, even if activities unfold as predicted, producing the intended outcomes. Philliber's<sup>42</sup> crucial warning points out that the theory of change does not replace an evaluation using control groups with random assignments. As with traditional evaluations, external factors not integrated into the theory could affect the chain of events: non-measured variables can influence the outcomes.

### **Example of a CCI Evaluation**

#### Development of the Cleveland CCI's<sup>43</sup> Theory of Change

In the first stage, once the main groups of stakeholders had been designated (personnel from the CCI, governing board and community council) evaluators familiarized themselves with their theory of change through interviews, literature reviews and meetings. One of the main changes the initiative was striving for was that all participants contribute to the evaluation's development and application, hence their involvement in the development of the theory of change alongside the evaluators.

Next, the three theories of change were compared and reconciled despite being incomplete. In the third stage, closely linked to the second, the theories were used to design the evaluation through various steps:

- *Drawing up a new theory of change*, an outline for the CCI: this involves defining long-term goals and their link with short-term and intermediate goals, and analysing the causal links among activities and short-term outcomes. Evaluators wanted an initial outline—though it would undoubtedly change extensively—that would provide direction, a framework in which the CCI would evolve yet be contained and, most importantly, would mark the end of the short-term outcomes and strategy. These elements were the foundation of the evaluation.

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<sup>42</sup> Philliber, op. cit.

<sup>43</sup> Milligan, S., et al. (1999) "Implementing a Theory of Change Evaluation in the Cleveland Community-Building Initiative" in *New Approaches to Evaluating Community Initiatives*, Vol. 2. See also Milligan, S. et al. (2000) *The 1997-98 Cleveland Community Building Initiative Baseline Report on Collaborative Relationships*. Center on Urban Poverty and Social Change, Briefing Report #9904.

- *Establishing benchmarks* for short-term outcomes to observe the strategy's progress and ensure the initiative stays on track, *by specifying (if possible) a threshold of accomplishment*. For instance, regarding participation from the different community groups in the local council (who had the mandate of defining the strategy and activities in their sector)—one of the desired short-term outcomes—benchmarks were used to define categories of individuals to be represented and thresholds of acceptability. The evaluation team then gathered the initiative's staff to discuss progress markers, with the belief that these measures should be agreed on rather than imposed.
- *Gather baselines for long-term outcomes*. While evaluators had to bear in mind that the long-term component of the theory of change (and its ties with short-term and intermediate ones) would change after the six neighbourhoods' own strategies and activities were implemented, they nonetheless were able to work on the following long-term outcome categories that are common to all three theories of change: economic opportunity; neighbourhood identity and pride; security; strong institutions and services; and family, child and youth development. Afterwards, indicators based on available data were defined for each category.
- *Determine measures and data sources* to carry out the aforementioned tasks. This was done by setting up data collection mechanisms: documenting activities in a database; interviews with key respondents to set benchmarks; social and economic indicators compiled in a database of initial and ongoing measures for most long-term outcomes; and resident surveys.

### **PART III - Implications for Crime Prevention**

As with CCIs, integrated strategies for prevention and security at the community level prefer to be comprehensive and local—comprehensive by targeting delinquency and victimization risk factors, and local because public officials maintaining a close watch on a community and its dynamic forces is the best way to produce strong preventive actions. Another common factor with CCIs is the trend for integrated strategies for prevention and security to be based on scientific research: information on certain risk factors taken from longitudinal studies enables better focus on the actions.

Another similarity lies in integrated strategies for prevention and security that assemble local partners to create a shared vision, a diagnosis of its needs and issues, and an action plan. CCI experience has proven that tackling a problem with many parallel actions must also be part of a common logic in which the actions interrelate. Unlike CCIs, they have yet to develop a comparable evaluation practice.

We feel that our depiction of the CCI evaluation opens doorways for an evaluation of integrated strategies for prevention at the community level.

### A Knowledge- and Theory-based Approach

Through the theory of change concept, we have seen that CCIs' evaluation practice focuses on theoretical premises of implemented actions and not solely on pragmatic premises. This approach strengthens the ties between research findings (evidence) and the intervention's orientation. The evaluation's first task is to review and validate the hypotheses on which rest the initiative's activities. The evaluator must approach this from two aspects: the more scientific aspect of validation through pertinent literature review and, equally important, working with stakeholders on their implicit "theories" of targeted events in progress.

The first aspect, illustrated in the following example taken from Connell and Aber's work from an actual case, highlights the importance of scientific knowledge in the hypothesis that community characteristics with the greatest impact can be used to guide youths towards economic independence, civic responsibility and stronger family and social relationships. To achieve this, the strategy works with social mediators who, with their knowledge, experience and world awareness, can provide a positive influence on young people during their developmental years. Note that this model is intended for socio-economically underprivileged communities.

To illustrate, the premise is that all youths are directly or indirectly affected by the following four points:

- Demographic and physical characteristics related to economic, social, racial and educational information, as well as the community's security and quality of life, etc. Numerous studies have shown that underprivileged communities share many of these characteristics.

- The economic opportunity structure refers to industrial infrastructure, job locality and overall job availability. Studies have proven that these elements influence the employment situation of residents in underprivileged neighbourhoods.
- Institutional capacities in these areas are often deficient though the needs are blatant.
- Social exchange and symbolic processes relate to such factors as the heavy concentration of poor families, ethnic diversity and population relocation—all of which are known to have an impact on certain processes within the community, namely close friendships among adults, linking and maintaining common values for youth development, and youth surveillance and supervision by adults.

The focus on families, peers and other significant adults, such as social mediators, is also based on research. The family has been identified as the entity which contributes most to youth development; caregivers must persist in their role as educators when social conditions deteriorate; and adult social networks with common values regarding youths can compensate for certain inabilities in caregiving. Peers also play an important role, particularly during adolescence. This is reflected in peer culture in underprivileged urban neighbourhoods. When presented with an opportunity for positive action and an organized social structure, peers can provide support and convey positive social values.

As for the developmental processes, there are three different learning categories: productivity, where success in school and professional performance are key indicators; communication, to avoid relationship conflicts; and daily life, through the integration of a society's rules (social and societal) and through "code switching" (going from one institutional environment to another, such as school to college, and adapting to a minority status in new cultural environments).

The second aspect involves drawing out stakeholders' implicit theories. Different stakeholders will have different approaches to an intervention on a security problem in a community. Take street prostitution as an example, where police officers could intervene because of its legal nature and also because they would have a common vision of prostitution as female exploitation or as a social disruption possibly leading to other public nuisances, such as drug trafficking. There could also be the involvement of social workers who aim to minimize female exploitation, including that of the legal system. To gather these stakeholders around a table without discussing their underlying concepts of an action plan would be heading

towards conflicting actions, thereby rendering the impact evaluation difficult since intended outcomes would be opposed.

CCIs' evaluation practice involves a debate among stakeholders on proposed activities and must show how actions will reach expected outcomes, thereby justifying their presence within the comprehensive strategy. Through data from scientific research and external evaluation studies, the evaluator assists in clarifying the links between actions and intended outcomes.

CCIs' evaluation process is more likely to be explicit and systematic when using data from traditional evaluation studies—on process or impact—when developing the components for an action strategy, and when the stakeholders collectively define the expected outcomes. This alternative evaluation practice cannot replace the traditional evaluation, but aims to revive the discontinued field of community-level integrated approaches.

### An Integrated Evaluation

In its Crime Prevention Digest II, the ICPC presented an analysis of keys to a successful preventive action, one in which evaluation and feedback represented simultaneously the end of the intervention's process—which began with the security diagnosis followed by action plan development and implementation—and its renewal, owing to the integration of acquired knowledge. CCIs' theory of change goes even further since it requires that the evaluation coincide with the three other elements and sustain them, allowing for continuous feedback from the developmental stages of the action plan to security diagnosis and implementation. This allows for a flexible initiative that can be adapted as needed.

The traditional evaluation is used at pivotal stages: during the initiative—in which case it is a process evaluation—to ensure that the initiative is implemented according to plan, as well as to single out certain early outcomes and make any necessary adjustments to initial objectives; and at the completion of the initiative to determine its impacts and/or profitability. This concept is rather static compared to CCIs' concept in which evaluation is a learning process with partners reviewing the initiative's key elements and particularly how well the elements fit into the strategy.

While a solid security diagnosis is important, it is essential that the planned actions correspond to it and that they form a logical chain of events. This form of integration, upstream from the initiative, maintains itself at each step, and with stakeholders' perspectives in mind, helps to cement the partnership.

Moreover, since these integrated preventive actions are short, intermediate and long term—especially when combined with situational, developmental and social measures—CCIs' evaluation practice outlines and measures the natural changes in targeted communities, as well as the evolution of actions and their respective institutions.

### Variety of Indicators and Data Sources

Although a decrease in delinquency is important, it is far from being the only essential success indicator. To judge the "success" of an integrated preventive action by its capacity to reduce the number of registered offences is to condemn it either to being eminently simplistic in its selection of interventions, or to being a failure. The rates of reported offences are in fact subject to many other variables—such as police practices—that are barely influenced by an integrated preventive action. Other indicators are just as representative, if not more so, of an integrated preventive action's success: a change in the perception of the "problem" of delinquency, the use of public areas, the perception of the quality of life in the neighbourhood, attitudes towards law enforcement and the justice system, collaboration among stakeholders and community sectors, are all equally pertinent indicators. In short, an integrated prevention evaluation that would not factor in these other indicators may be omitting the essentials.

Since the proposed steps go beyond the criminal field, police and legal data alone would not suffice. Although these data are useful, even necessary, other information can give a better perspective of local reality and contribute to resolving its problems: data from health care, educational and social service systems, municipal tax registries, the liquor licence board, school files, birth registries, electoral lists, NGOs' field work, public transport systems, censuses, etc. Quantitative as well as qualitative data from systematic field observations, interviews with key people, and local-media content analyses are other equally important sources.

### Variety of Methodology Tools

Experimental activities involving control groups are not conducive to this evaluation process. This, however, does not mean that scientific research should be abandoned. Instead, the evaluation will have recourse to a variety of methodology tools—questionnaires, in-depth interviews, systematic observations, etc.—and catalogued data (information from different sources on different indicators often gets thrown into one heap) as well as validation from stakeholders themselves (institutional and civil partners), all of which replace the more static inspection of traditional methods.

### Differently Conceived Outcomes

CCIs' comprehensive approach uses a particular concept of outcomes, which is essential to the evaluation. This evaluation practice does not validate or reject an initiative as a whole; instead it identifies achieved outcomes and strategy deficiencies or, more specifically, what went wrong in the linkage of short-, intermediate and long-term outcomes.

The real benefit of CCIs' evaluation practice is the emphasis on linkage between different outcome levels and their status at each of these levels, as opposed to dealing only with final outcomes. The time-honoured division between outcomes and processes no longer holds up since the latter are also considered as potential results; this is often the case since processes are crucial to CCIs' approach. In other words, the creation of a decision-making mechanism is, in itself, an outcome that is worth defining. The same can be said for the implementation of a partnership approach, which is usually considered to be a strategy, not an outcome.

The evaluation's success rests upon defining a common vision among stakeholders on intended outcomes. But this task, little more than an extension of CCIs' approach, is not easily accomplished since each participant's interests and vision must be taken into consideration. Not surprisingly, different opinions sometimes cause tension.

Each participant has a personal definition of success and "real change". A funder's view of success is a definite decrease of the targeted problem.

For local stakeholders, the evaluation must take into consideration changes that are not easily measured, often of a qualitative nature, such as capacity and training reinforcement, or residents' involvement in their environment. Crime prevention seeks to find approaches and strategies based on progressive rates of crime, arrests and second offences, and applying them elsewhere; and stakeholders' main goals are to create a joint process empowering stakeholders and residents to improve relations between institutions, as well as between institutions and residents, and to contribute to a better living environment where a decrease in crime is but one of many indicators.

## **Concluding Remarks**

To criticize prevention, particularly community prevention, for not producing measured, or even measurable, outcomes is like condemning employment or gender inequality policies for being inefficient because unemployment and inequality still exist. The problem is not with the tool but the methods used to gauge its effectiveness and efficiency. It would be foolish to favour traditional evaluation methods and shelve prevention, or accuse projects of being only a series of situational short-term measures, as they are sometimes regarded.

Community prevention is the desire and the ability to logically integrate short-, intermediate and long-term measures such as housing-protection and public-area measures; child and youth development measures; parental support and local dynamic-forces measures; and ways for institutional stakeholders to work together.

Integrated prevention encompasses all these elements simultaneously. It is complex and does not use instant-result indicators, such as the decrease in crime rates, which lose coherence when removed from the specific context. This prevention invites other approaches to an arduous evaluation. We believe that evaluation approaches developed by CCIs are conducive to this type of prevention. We hope that this report has conveyed this, and we hope to continue our study, refining methodology tools through empirical tests.

## CCI RESOURCES

### 1. Internet Sites

Among the more interesting internet sites, the Aspen Institute Roundtable is a true wealth of information, and it contains numerous references to other sites. To fully appreciate its value in the field of CCIs, here is a brief look at its background.

The CCI Roundtable was created in 1992 by the National Academy of Sciences and two years later it became part of the Aspen Institute. This roundtable is a forum where stakeholders—funders, directors, technical assistance providers, evaluators and public officials—can discuss and compare existing initiatives from across the country and work together on common problems. It is financed by the federal government and many private foundations, and has produced important projects and publications, such as:

- *Voices from the Field: Learning from Comprehensive Community Initiatives.*

Produced in 1995 and based on group discussions, it describes CCIs and focuses on their goals, principles, organizational strategies as well as tension among partners.

- *New Approaches to Evaluating Comprehensive Community Initiatives: Concepts, Methods, and Contexts.* (1995)

- *New Approaches to Evaluating Comprehensive Community Initiatives: Volume 2: Theory, Measurement, and Analysis.* (1998)

In 1994 the Roundtable created an evaluation steering committee to find solutions to limitations of traditional evaluation methods that assess a CCI's efficiency, and to learn from existing projects. The committee's findings are published in these two documents. Volume 1 deals with CCI evaluation and points out the difficulty of assessing an initiative because of its design for which the traditional evaluation is inefficient. Volume 2 deals with the theory of change approach recently developed for CCI assessment.

- Internet-based Resources for CCIs

The first, *Community Building Resource Exchange*, provides access to a host of internet sites, reference material, CCI records, etc.

<http://www.commbuild.org>

The second is the Roundtable's site where the previously-mentioned publications can be downloaded free of charge, with the recent addition of *Voices from the Field II*. This site is also a clearinghouse designed to help researchers and practitioners.

<http://www.aspenroundtable.org/>

- *Training for Racial Equity and Inclusion: A Guide to Selected Programs*

In 1998 the Roundtable started a project—Examining Comprehensive Community Revitalization through a Race/Ethnicity Lens—to deal with racism and community renewal. Four years later, this guide was published.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation works towards family and community development. It launched many CCI-type integrated initiatives and focuses on evaluation. The internet site is a must-see for those who wish to subscribe free of charge to their quarterly bulletin—Casey Connects—and download evaluation studies.

<http://www.aecf.org/>

Cleveland's Center on Urban Poverty and Social Change addresses the concentration impact on poor communities throughout their development. This research centre's site has a wide range of publication suggestions.

<http://povertycenter.cwru.edu/>

Abt Associates Inc., a prominent consulting firm, does research, strategic planning, and evaluations, and offers technical assistance to governments and foundations. Its site offers a selection of documents, many of which are evaluation studies.

<http://www.abtassoc.com/>

The site for the Comprehensive Community Revitalization Program (CCRP) is one of the few CCI sites worth seeing. It offers descriptions of its various programs and many of its publications can be downloaded, such as its quarterly bulletin—*The Reporter*.

<http://www.ccrpinc.org/>

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development administers the Renewal Communities, Urban Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities (RC/EZ/EC) initiatives and provides funding for many activities and projects. The internet site is not user-friendly but is, however, very informative.

<http://www.hud.gov/>

The Harvard Family Research Project of the Harvard Graduate School of Education assists decision-makers, foundations and practitioners in creating strategies for social and student achievement as well as child, family and community development, by collecting and analysing research outcomes and information. The site offers many publications, most free of charge, from four categories: early childhood care and education; family, school and community; evaluation and accountability; professional development. A subscription to their quarterly bulletin—*The Evaluation Exchange*—is free.

<http://www.gse.harvard.edu/~hfrp/>

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