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Equity in Higher Education

Curtin University

SOCIAL JUSTICE EVALUATION OF SOCIAL COLLABORATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS
Thematic Review of Literature

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Introduction

An extensive literature search was undertaken on multiple databases relevant to 'social justice evaluation' and the process and outcomes associated with 'social collaborations and partnerships' aimed at promoting the equity needs of socio-economically disadvantaged groups.

A total of 50 articles were identified for review and the following is an outline of the key themes which have been captured from the articles to highlight understandings related to social justice evaluation, social collaboration (partnerships and coalitions) and where social inclusion and empowerment of disadvantaged populations is a key collective goal.

While there is a plethora of theoretical understandings on social collaborations and program evaluation, the consensus is that evaluation of collaboration/partnerships involved with equity goals for disadvantaged populations must involve social justice evaluation frameworks. The goals of collaborations - partnerships (including community coalitions and community engagement) - are numerous and include many social justice actions: advocacy, outreach, education, prevention, service delivery, capacity building, empowerment, community action, and systems-level change.

The social justice evaluation approach also embodies numerous concepts and methodologies and can include theories of empowerment, social capital, sense of identity, sense of community, capacity-building, as well as *photo-voice* and *action anthropology* methodology*.* These concepts can also be integrated into a broader ecological level evaluation framework developed to assess the effectiveness of social collaborations and partnerships involved with the promotion of equity for socio-economically disadvantaged populations and communities. These evaluation frameworks are also designed to capture other measures of processes and outcomes linked to partnership goals.

The format of this thematic presentation of the literature review begins with understandings and imperative driving social collaborations and partnerships that have evolved in the global and national socio-political space. This is followed by the key contributors who advocate social justice evaluation approaches where social collaborations are involved with promoting the equity needs of powerless groups and communities. Evaluation frameworks which target general partnership goals and social justice goals are reviewed to enable the development of a broader ecological level evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness of social collaborations and partnerships.

The goal of this review is that the key elements of the concepts, theories and methodologies underpinning a social justice approach to evaluation has been captured to develop an evaluation framework that is appropriate for analysing the contribution of social justice partnerships in higher education (HE).

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Section 1: Imperatives & Forms of Social Collaboration

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Imperatives & Forms of Social Collaboration

Social Justice Partnerships: Role of Education

Collaboration has been defined as an interactive process that enables people with diverse expertise to generate creative solutions to mutually defined problems (Van Garderen, Stormont & Goel, 2012). Friend and Cook (2003) identify several specific facets of successful collaboration, including: (a) parity, (b) mutual goals, (c) shared responsibility for decision making, (d) shared resources and accountability, and (e) valuing personal opinions and expertise. While collaboration is voluntary and can take many forms, for the purposes of this review the understandings related to social justice collaboration and evaluation (including concepts related to formation of partnerships) that aim to promote equity for socio-economically disadvantaged populations are examined.

Reporting on the Scottish community education system, social justice partnerships are linked to broader philosophical approaches generally characterised as 'universal', 'reformist' and 'radical' (Martin 1987, cited in Tett, Crowther & O'Hara, 2010, p. 38). Each approach has a different implicit model of society and community and, therefore, different premises and strategies underpin practice. Under the *universal* model, the assumptions are shared values and a working consensus with a basic harmony of interests, and so the community educator's role is to make universal non-selective provision for all ages and groups. Under the *reformist* model, it is assumed that there is a plurality of interests with inter-group competition for resources and, so, selective intervention is made by the community educator to assist disadvantaged people and socially excluded areas. Under the *radical* model, the assumption is that interests are in conflict because existing structures create inequality and powerlessness. In this model, the community educator's intervention is based on 'developing with local people political education and social action focused on concrete issues and concerns in the community' (Martin 1987, p. 25). Underpinning all three models is an interest in education's role in improving social conditions, although the type of provision and the focus for intervention will vary depending on the particular ideology of practice.

Much of the focus of community education has been within the reformist tradition, with the role of combating 'disadvantage' to the fore (Tett et al, 2010). For the numerically small practitioners who operate under the radical model, as agents of social change, the process of *learning and social action* are not separate. This tradition has always stood for purposeful educational intervention in the interests of social and political change: change towards more justice, equality and democracy through being responsive to community priorities and needs identified *with* people rather than *for* them.

At the same time, the philosophy underpinning community education is that education should grow out of the experiences of ordinary people and the social interests that are generated within communities. Policy makers identified a key priority for community educators to work in 'partnerships that include the voluntary sector, local adult guidance networks, other educational providers and fields such as health, community safety etc' (SOEID 1999, p. 1). Based on UK and Scottish Governments' policy documents, themes of collaboration and partnership are strongly tied to 'social justice' and focussed on socio-economically disadvantaged groups and communities (Riddell & Tett, 2001). For example, the report of the Scottish Taskforce on Poverty states:

> "*Achieving our ambitious targets can only happen through partnership with colleagues across the UK. We share a common commitment to delivering social justice. A belief that we are stronger together and weaker apart as people, as communities and as nations. . . . The targets in the Scottish Social Justice Report can only be delivered through focus, leadership and 'new directions' in the allocation and use of public, private and voluntary sector resources*" (Scottish Executive, 1999, p. 2).

Factors Driving Collaboration

Globally and nationally, the concept of partnership involving collaboration between institutions and organisations is currently commonly seen as providing solutions to meeting multiple, interrelated needs in areas of social policy including health, social welfare and education. For Hingham & Yoemans (2010) collaboration which involves a wide range of agencies, institutions and professionals raises many significant research questions concerning knowledge creation, professional identities, institutional autonomy and competition, forms of collaboration and partnership and the relative roles of local and central government in promoting the policy and outcomes for service users. A growing body of research evidence is being accumulated about the ways in which collaboration takes place across a wide variety of social policy arenas (Balloch & Taylor, 2001; Glendinning *et al.*, 2002; Robinson *et al.*, 2005; *et al.*, 2006). One theme within this literature is the way in which policy rhetoric emphasises the altruistic and consensual character of partnership. Individuals and institutions, it is assumed, will engage in collaboration and partnership because this will benefit clients, learners and practitioners. Lumby and Morrison (2006) refer to the importance of altruistic, superordinate values, such as putting the learner rather than the institution at the centre of provision. In contrast to this rhetorical commitment, they found institutional primacy and conflict were to the fore in the partnership. This did not mean that collaboration did not take place, but that institutions engaged principally on the basis of their self-interest. While Lumby and Morrison used intergroup conflict theory and gaming theory to explain this state of affairs, Seddon *et al.* (2004) also emphasised conflict within Australian education and training partnerships.

Collaboration: HE Institutions

Kezar noted in 2005 that there has been "virtually no research on how to enable HE institutions to conduct collaborative work" (cited in Duffield et al., 2013, p. 239). However, in 2013 Duffield reported that his statement still holds true for research related to collaboration among institutions of HE. While there much literature about partnerships within an HE institution as well as between HE and outside entities such as community agencies, there is very little about partnerships across institutions. In their review of partnerships in general and partnerships involving institutions of HE. Duffield et al. (2013) identified both internal and external factors motivating entities to collaborate. Internal factors such as leveraging resources and pooling talent, sharing common interests, and solving challenging issues act as incentives for engaging in a partnership (Amey et al. 2007; Eddy 2010; Scherer 2009).

The most important internal factor is the presence of common goals. Shared goals (Bringle & Hatcher 2002) are what drive the need for a partnership (Eddy 2010). Kezar (2005) described external pressures from several sources, including foundations that require collaboration for funding, accreditors and state agencies that call for collaboration around assessment, and employers that value collaboration in the workplace. Baumfield and Butterworth (2007) also stated that partnerships are popular with policy makers because they may increase the efficiency of an institution, allowing for shared resources and more efficient use of public monies. In the end, partners do not need common motivators: "The fact that partners have their own reasons (motivations) for participating is not inherently problematic so long as the partnership is mutually beneficial" (Amey et al. 2007, p. 7).

A partnership should produce increasing returns, providing more to the partners than they were previously receiving (Child and Faulkner 1998). A partnership may provide a competitive advantage to an institution because it can offer its constituents goods or services that were not possible without the partnership (Heffernan and Poole 2005). Benefits may also occur at the individual level if faculty members are rewarded by their institutions for collaborative work (Eddy 2010). The literature often refers to benefits and motivators associated with collaboration, but it is also important to consider the possible costs (Bringle & Hatcher 2002). For example, there is an immense time commitment required of stakeholders to initiate a partnership and to make it thrive (Baumfield and Butterworth 2007). While the partnership may be personally and professionally rewarding, the commitment may be too high if the work is not valued by the academic community. Therefore, the decision to partner should be thoughtful and strategic. Partners need to be a good fit, sharing common values, goals, and ways of doing business (Child and Faulkner 1998; Creamer 2003). Gajda (2004) recommended partnering only when it makes sense to do so.

Social Responsibility & Market Considerations

Globally and nationally the educational policy context is driving partnerships with business, and universities are being asked to join forces with a variety of other entities and sectors, including schools (Siegel, 2010), *communities* (Spangler, 2002; Williams, 2002), and government agencies (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 1997). Social partnerships are escalating in importance. The social responsibilities of universities and those of virtually every other organisational type are changing dramatically with the "thickening networks of interdependence" (Brown, Khagram, Moore, & Frumkin, 2000, p. 273) brought about by globalisation, changing demographics, and technological advances (Chisholm, 1998). Given the array of causes and issues (health care, poverty, pollution, global warming) confronting social institutions, there is mounting pressures for these social institutions to respond to large-scale societal problems (Margolis & Walsh, 2005; Parker & Selsky, 2004).

Selsky and Parker *(2005)* define cross-sector social partnerships as "projects formed explicitly to address social issues and causes that actively engage the partners on an ongoing basis" *(p. 850)*. The cross-sectoral approach, (occasionally termed "inter-sectoral") means that organisations from business, government, education, and civil society are involved (Siegel, 2010). As Waddell *(2005)* has noted, "the core rationale for creating inter-sectoral initiatives is to achieve outcomes that integrate the distinct logics of the sectors" *(p. 96)*; that is, collaboration across sectors helps organisations achieve what no organisation or sector could achieve on its own. Most importantly, the focus is on a social problem, issue, or cause (Selsky & Parker, 2005) and typically formed with this express purpose in mind (Siegel, 2010). According to Austin et al. *(2004)*, it is important to understand the motivations for cross-sector social alliances because "they are the cornerstone on which alliances are built" *(p. 29)*.

In Siegel's (2008) analysis of US-based inter-organisational collaboration programs involved with the preparation of equity students for transition to universities and careers in business,

he reported two logics underpinning the initiatives, market and social justice. He found that the organisations' multiple individual and collective agendas produced varying interpretations of the program, which in turn determined how the program was structured, implemented, and sustained. The insight of most relevance is that when the HE partnership network recognised the relevance of this business initiative to their individual needs for a pipeline of minority students, did the partnership begin to make practical sense and receive participants' commitment and resources. The impact of this awareness lead to academic goals being supplemented with market considerations for a well-prepared and diverse applicant pool for university business programs and workforce for business and industry. Siegel (2008) concluded that since theory and empirical research offer little acknowledgment of the specific role of universities in these arrangements, an understanding of the initiating factors and motivations may help predict collaborations, activate them, or cast situations as potential collaborative opportunities, thus contributing to an acceleration of social problem solving.

Local Contextual Influences on Partnership

Haynes & Lynch (2013) highlight that educational partnerships have not been shaped only by national policy levers, but also by local contextual factors: the geography of an area, the history of relationships between schools and/or colleges, the character and capacity of local leadership, the culture of each member institution, individual agency and local needs in terms of skills and the labour market. Despite the different dimensions partnerships display in terms of inclusivity, focus, depth of engagement and scale (Hingham & Yeomans, 2010), much research on collaborations in education and in other contexts have sought to produce typologies of effective partnership working. Commonly identified features from studies in the UK and Australia include: trust between partners (Cardini, 2006; Billett et al., 2007; Dhillon, 2007), shared aims/goals that are clearly defined (Balloch & Taylor, 2001; Dhillon, 2005; Lumby & Morrison, 2006; Atkinson et al., 2007), effective leadership, transparent structures where roles are understood and each member valued, efficient channels of communication (Balloch & Taylor, 2001; Rudd et al., 2003; Lindsay et al., 2007; Spielhofer & Walker, 2008), clear agreements for the distributions of funds (Rudd et al., 2003) and high levels of enthusiasm and commitment from each partner (Hudson et al., 1999; Higham & Yeomans, 2006; Pring et al., 2009).

Haynes & Lynch (2013) emphasise, that working collaboratively poses challenges and risks for partners. They conclude that while their study lists features of effective partnerships, it is rather static and underplays the challenges faced in developing and sustaining collaborations. Higham and Yeomans (2010) also found that partnerships are dynamic organisms continuously evolving as partners leave and/or new partners join, personnel change, the policy context shifts and priorities change. In this respect, Wenger's (1998) argument that mutual relations among partners in a joint enterprise 'are often complex mixtures of power and dependence, pleasure and pain . . . success and failure . . . alliance and competition, ease and struggle, authority and collegiality, resistance and compliance. . .trust and suspicion' (p. 77) seems to offer a helpful account of the dynamics of partnership working.

Haynes & Lynch's (2013) study provides strong evidence that, effective, partnership working should be initiated at the local level, not at the national level, which Wolf (2011) also supports. Where collaboration is perceived by institutions/organisations and individuals as imposed, rather than emerging, bottom-up, as a positive, dynamic response to a communally identified need, only superficial cooperation may result. Partnerships established in this way appeared less likely to be sustainable in the medium to long term and more vulnerable to policy shifts and developments at the national level.

Australian Context: Social Partnerships

There has been a growth in interest in and a proliferation of social partnerships across Australia. Social partnerships can be found in all states and territories and are being actively developed in other parts of the world (Seddon & Billett, 2004). The common feature of social partnerships is their shared commitment to orchestrating collaborative actions and decision-making directed towards objectives held to be important by the members of the partnership. For instance, the Copenhagen Centre (1999) defines partnerships as:

> "*People and organisations from some combination of public, business and civil constituencies who engage in voluntary, mutually beneficial, innovative relationships to address common societal aims through combining their resources and competencies.*"

Supporters of these 'new social partnerships' claim that they overcome bureaucratic rigidities, address unfortunate consequences of market reform and provide solutions to social exclusion and the results of (individual, community and national) poor educational participation and outcomes (Levitas 1998; Putnam 2000). This paradigm shift is associated with more individualistic approaches to governance, work and learning (Rhodes 1996). New social partnerships display the following characteristics:

- *Interest groups and stakeholders:* the partnerships do not actively and directly engage the established interests of organised capital and labour but draw on a diverse coalition of interest groups and stakeholders who are focused and organised at a more localised and individualised level. These are self-governing agencies which associate through horizontal rather than hierarchical relationships (Walters 2003).
- *The role of government:* the government is said to function less as a centralised decision-making agency and more as a coordinating and facilitating agency which steers policy by creating contexts for, and helps to build individual and organisational capacities which sustain localised decision-making within networks (Kickert, Klijn & Koppenjan 1997), as occurred in the 'local learning and employment networks' in Victoria.
- *Management of decision processes:* decision-making in these social partnerships requires careful management because the shift away from corporate organisation (large government, organised capital and labour) to smaller-scale localised interest group participation creates differentiated political systems in which there is considerable cultural diversity and a variety of decision-making centres (Rhodes 1996). There is no single sovereign authority but a multiplicity of actors specific to particular policy arenas. This is a decision-making context which is described as 'governance' rather than 'government' (Jessop 1998).
- *Outcomes and accountability:* these new partnerships tend to be oriented to the achievement of specific goals and outcomes, and are judged on their 'fitness for purpose'. Where older partnerships emphasised the socialisation of individuals into ways of thinking and acting endorsed by the partners, new partnerships assume that individuals are relatively free from social constraint. Socialisation is, therefore, less important, and partnerships are judged more on the extent to which they support individuals to learn from their experience in ways which return tangible benefit (Offe 1996; Walters 2003).
- *Sites of working and learning:* partnerships bring individuals together such that the benefits of cooperation are demonstrated. They become more confident, capable and engaged. They create communities characterised by high 'social capital' (Putnam 1993), with strong social networks and trust which facilitate working together for mutual benefit (Woolcock 1998).

- *Capacity-building*: learning and development enhance 'the ability of individuals and organisations, or organisational units, to perform functions effectively, efficiently and sustainably' (United Nations Development Program 1997, p.5). Such capacity-building increases individuals' potential for action and participation in local governance. It enables men and women to effect positive changes in their lives, to become active decision-makers in their local contexts. They become 'actors' who can make a difference in everyday affairs rather than being passive subjects within social and institutional processes (Eade 1997; Walters 2003).
- *Self-regulating communities:* communities with high social capital are seen to be particularly responsive to policy initiatives. They provide contexts in which individuals can utilise their capacities through activities which realise their aspirations and dreams. The aim of community building and development is to remove constraints or 'unfreedoms' so that people can apply their capacities to life in practical 'capabilities' or 'functionings', enabling them to 'lead the lives they value' (Sen 1999; Putnam 2000).

In practice, social partnerships illustrate many of these characteristics but there is considerable diversity in their goals and character. Some are self-organising initiatives which develop as a consequence of community-based interests and activities. Others are organised and, to a greater or lesser extent, directed by interests external to communities (for example, government, industry). Some partnerships are quite narrowly issues-focused, concerned, for example, with supporting students in a particular school to access work experience (e.g. O'Donahue 2001). Others are more broadly oriented to community issues related to health, welfare or learning (e.g. Small Rural Communities Health Consortium 2002). Others take on major enterprise-building activities and work along similar lines to the old mutual associations of the nineteenth century (Benevolent Society 2003).

Community-University Partnerships: Australia HE

Since the Australian Government's focus on social inclusion, there are increasing levels of partnership between disadvantaged school communities and universities with the aim of raising aspiration and achievement. However, Armstrong and Cairnduff (2011) claim that the challenge for universities (particularly research-intensive universities with less experience with community outreach), is developing programmes that are respectful and in tune with the local community. The authors elaborate that sustainable partnerships with schools located in disadvantaged communities can only be established within a framework of mutual benefit and capacity building. As universities have as much to learn and gain through engagement in schools, as the schools do through their partnerships with universities. More importantly, acknowledging differences in strengths and challenges offers a basis for building attachment to schooling and creating opportunities through which the broader community may understand and conceptualise the value of and transformative nature of education.

The notion of community–university partnerships is not a new one and there is considerable scholarship on the characteristics of successful partnerships: co-operative goal setting and planning, shared power, resources and decision-making, group cohesion and partnership management (Barnes et al. 2009). Ostrander (2004) argued that university engagement is most productively undertaken when built upon a developmental framework. Essentially, that university–community partnerships are sensitive to local community and university needs and their changing circumstances. Barnes et al. (2009) assert that sustained university–community relationships are marked by four primary characteristics: (1) they are grounded in meaningful research partnerships, (2) they focus on community capacity building, (3) they involve long-term relationships with communities and (4) they create collaborative networks in the community and the university.

Effective & Sustainable University-School Partnerships

In their report of Australian university-school partnerships, Kruger et al (2007) highlighted that partnerships are a social practice achieved through and characterised by trust, mutuality and reciprocity. These are described as follows: (a) **Trust:** the commitment and expertise that each of the main stakeholders brings to the partnership in the expectation that it will provide them with the benefits each seeks; (b) **Mutuality:** the extent to which the stakeholders recognise that working together does lead to the benefits each esteems; (c) **Reciprocity:** each stakeholder recognises and values what the others bring to the partnership. The condition for partnerships based on trust, mutuality and reciprocity is that the stakeholders can come together in ways which do not tightly define their expectations for and contributions to the partnership.

A clear conclusion of this research is that successful partnerships bring the stakeholders together around personalised and localised interests in learning, and school student learning, in particular. The findings of the research are that effective and sustainable partnerships are characterised by three effects and three related resources. Partnerships effects: An effective partnership has **a focus on learning** for all stakeholders. School students' learning is the principal focus of the effective partnership, enabling links to be made between school needs and priorities and pre-service teachers' skills and interests. An effective partnership leads all stakeholders to take on **altered relationship practices**. The practical core of the effective partnership is the professional relationships which the partnership initiates. The relationships are exemplified by the presence of and provision for conversations among pre-service teachers, mentor teachers and teacher educators. These conversations will have the learning of school students at their core and will stimulate pre-service teachers in building authentic learning relationships with school students.

An effective partnership constructs **new enabling structures** which span the boundaries of school and university. The partnership provides the space for stakeholders to initiate new learning relationships by valuing the contributions made by each partner and supports stakeholders in forming the committed relationships. Partnership Resources: An effective partnership encourages each stakeholder to contribute **personal and professional resources**, in the form of passion, commitment and professional understanding and expertise. Because clear institutional supports are absent in many partnerships, the stakeholders contribute their professional understandings in a **shared language**. This shared language will support communication across the division between school and university, most importantly about the learning of school students. **Institutional resources** are evident in partnerships which endure over time. The formal integration of partnership activity in university course and assessment requirements provides considerable incentives for engaged partnerships.

Institutional conditions which support partnerships: By definition, the university and the school are the ever-present institutions in university-school partnerships. What is disappointingly evident in the data, however, is the absence or at best the passivity of system involvement. Despite the assertions of parliamentary and system inquiries which have urged teacher education faculties to take up the possibility, school systems have not made many practical investments in partnership-based reform in teacher education. It is difficult to see how the conditions needed to create enduring spaces spanning university and school borders might be formed without the direct participation of resourceful school/education system authorities.

The institutional conditions available at **schools** for partnerships while easily defined appeared to have uncertain availability. When the conditions were present, partnerships could be established and sustained:

> ➢ The school principal is the partnership lynchpin. The principal's role is to ensure that the partners fulfil their agreed obligations. They also encourage teachers to take up partnership opportunities.
> ➢ Connection to an agreed school need is critically important in securing teachers' participation in partnerships. It seems that when the partnership activity is defined by the school and its teachers as
> ➢ much as by the university, the partnership possibility is considered, if not always adopted.
> ➢ Teachers' workload pressure is an ever-present condition of partnership participation.
> ➢ In schools, the allocation of defined responsibilities to at least one member of staff appears to be important in the maintenance of partnership activity.

Social Justice, Social Capital & Partnerships

In their examination of *school–family–community partnerships,* Bryan & Henry (2012), define them as collaborative initiatives and relationships among school personnel, family members, and community members and representatives of community-based organisations such as universities, businesses, religious organisations, libraries, and mental health and social service agencies. Partners collaborate in planning, coordinating, and implementing programs and activities at home, at school, and in the community that build strengths and resilience in children to enhance their academic, personal, social, and college-career outcomes (Bryan, 2005; Epstein, 1995; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). The benefits of school-based partnership programs is that it can create the environments, relationships, and experiences that reduce risks, build social capital, increase academic achievement and attendance, decrease behavioural issues, enhance school climate, foster resilience, and create developmental assets for children and adolescents (ASCA, 2010; Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2010).

The emphasis, however, is that successful partnerships are intentionally infused with the principles of democratic collaboration; student, family, and community empowerment; social justice; and strengths focus (Bryan, 2005, 2009; Bryan & Henry, 2008; Nelson, Prilleltensky, & MacGillivary, 2001). Democratic collaboration means that school, student, family, and community partners have shared decision-making, ownership, and responsibility for the partnership vision, goals, and outcomes. Together, partners define pressing student concerns, reach consensus on the need for partnership programs and events, expand the leadership of the partnership, engage the local and wider community, and focus on and implement the program(s). In schools, students' and families' voices are typically silenced, and programs and interventions are designed for rather than with students and families. In partnerships that embrace democratic collaboration, school personnel share power with students, families, and community members and view them as equal and valuable experts in the children's education and the partnership process (Bryan 2009).

Empowerment and social justice are intricately interrelated. Whereas empowerment focuses on increasing participation and voice for families in the partnership process and in their children's education, social justice focuses on increasing access to resources, information, skills, and knowledge for families (Nelson et al., 2001). Principle-based collaboration is a vital tool of social justice (Bryan, 2009) for collaboration with traditionally marginalised students and families. Partners also ensure that marginalised families participate in school and community decisions and policies (Bryan, Day-Vines, Griffin, & Moore-Thomas, 2012). Furthermore, in partnerships focused on social justice, partners intentionally tackle pressing social justice issues, such as closing achievement gaps, reducing disproportionate disciplinary referrals among affected student groups, providing in-school and out-of-school supports for students without them, and creating college access for underrepresented student groups. Relatedly, school counsellors must be aware that families have different amounts of social capital that can be enhanced or further depleted by the relationships that

counsellors build with families and their children (Bryan et al., 2011). Successful partnerships must also be attitude driven, vision driven, and data-driven (Bryan & Henry, 2012).

> **Section 2: Social Justice Evaluation Approaches**
>
> ➢ **Social Justice & Equity in education**
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SOCIAL JUSTICE EVALUATION APPROACHES

Social Justice & Equity in Education

In advocating social justice evaluation approaches, Ericson's (2004) writes that whether examining a curriculum, a large-scale educational program, or the institution of education itself, evaluators must be sensitive to concerns of social justice. He elaborated, that all educational practices are subject to the distributive dynamics of the educational system, which allots educational benefits in an unequal manner. Thus an evaluation that simply attempts to identify in a summative or formative manner actual or likely program consequences is necessarily incomplete. This is a strong reminder that evaluation practice cannot escape the necessity of raising and dealing with the normative and ethical concerns naturally embedded within educational practice. To pretend that such escape is possible equates to a posture that has little moral justification. Evaluators must acknowledge to their audience their position on issues of social justice, whether libertarian, meritocratic, egalitarian or otherwise.

Regardless of the social justice stance, evaluation should be conducted within the framework where these individuals or groups benefitting or not benefitting are identified. Evaluations should also be conducted with an attempt at identifying the mechanism of distribution. Even a lip-service endorsement of the principle of fair equality of opportunity as now exists within our society, argues that evaluators should seek to ensure that (potentially) morally arbitrary and irrelevant attributes of individuals (such as race, sex, ethnicity, and the like) are not the operative mechanisms in generating distributions of educational benefits. Although it is difficult to decide the ultimate issue of social justice, it is clearly possible for evaluators to adopt the distributive point of view. Though social justice requires much more than this, it morally commands no less.

Social Justice Orientation

Thomas and Madison (2010) highlight a growing body of literature linking social justice to evaluation practice. Barry MacDonald (1976) and Ernest House (1980, 1990) were among the first scholars to explicitly couple social justice interests and evaluation. In particular,

MacDonald advocated the use of democratic evaluation as a mechanism to depict the multiple realities of a program with "justice and truth." He argued for democratising evaluation knowledge and broadening the interests served beyond decision makers and experts to also encompass the interests of citizens, at large. House (1990) viewed social justice as one of the most important values that the field should aspire to fulfil with evaluation being an institution for democratising public decision making by making programs, policies, and decisions open to public scrutiny and deliberation. From this perspective, evaluation can contribute to enhancing fair and just distribution of benefits and responsibilities, or, to continuing inequality and distorting such distributions (cited in Thomas & Madison, 2010, p. 570).

Sirotnik (1990) provided a framework for examining evaluation and social justice in both philosophical and methodological terms. He called for making explicit the intimate connection between an ethical stance rooted in social justice and a methodological stance rooted in the sociopolitical context of evaluation. One of the many profound questions raised in this volume was regarding the place of social justice in the profession. Specifically, he asked "if evaluation of social programs is to serve the interests of society, then should not techniques and procedures derive from, rather than frame, the moral and ethical dimensions of the evaluative problem" (Sirotnik, 1990, p. 1). More recently, evaluators are increasingly anchoring their work in an intentional commitment to democratic social justice, equality, and emancipation (Greene, 2006). In doing so, as Greene points out, evaluators are rejecting the possibility of value neutrality in evaluation and, instead, fully embracing the intertwinement of values with evaluation practice.

Evaluators committed to social justice have pushed for using inclusive types of evaluation approaches such as transformative (Mertens, 2003), democratic deliberative (House & Howe, 2000), critical evaluation (Fay, 1987), and cultural/contextually responsive (Frierson, Hood, & Hughes, 2002; Hopson, 2000; Madison, 1992; Thomas & Stevens, 2004). Mertens' (2003, 2009) transformative paradigm, for example, argues that evaluators need to be cognizant of issues of social justice that are operating in society and affect the definition of social problems. As such, evaluators must be wary of deficit models that, essentially, blame individuals for social problems, rather than consider how institutional practices or societal responses to the certain individuals or cultural groups place them at increased risk for negative outcomes. Evaluators must work to facilitate an open discourse on social justice issues and how these issues affect the program being evaluated. The approach of House and Howe (2000) calls for deliberation in service of social justice and argues that evaluation must attend to the interest of all stakeholders, particularly the poor and powerless.

According to these authors, deliberation in service of social justice involves an evaluator not overlooking the power imbalances inherent in the evaluation process. Instead, the evaluator acts as a conscientious professional who adheres to a set of defensible, carefully considered principles for engaging inclusion, dialogue, and deliberation among relevant stakeholders. Critical evaluation, an approach informed by critical social science epistemology, advocates evaluations that perform social analyses that illuminate structural injustices and promote action to redress these inequities. Cultural competence in evaluation is grounded in work emphasising evaluators' explicit attention to issues of diversity, cultural responsiveness, and multicultural validity (Botcheva, Shih, & Huffman, 2009; Frierson et al., 2002; Kirkhart 1995; Madison, 1992; Thompson-Robinson, Hopson, & SenGupta, 2004). All of these issues have implications for the promotion of social justice and equity.

Rationale for Social Justice Orientation

Advocates of social justice-centred evaluation begin with the moral perspective that respect for the rights of others are important to conducting fair and valid evaluations and in engaging

in meaningful public discourse. This includes respect for the diverse world views, indigenous lived experiences, and the right to disagree and to learn from disagreement. As Greene (2005) points out, evaluation provides a mechanism to engage with our diversity, to learn how to live with, appreciate, and accept differences. Evaluation should provide reasoned knowledge to stimulate public discourse about the outcomes of social programming and the development of social policy.

Kushner (2009) summarised five outcomes as the argument for a social justice orientation in evaluation. These include (a) providing an open exchange of ideas across stakeholder groups, (b) making the evaluation process a space where power inequalities can be (procedurally) neutralised (i.e., equal treatment for all including mother, manager, and minister), (c) promoting independence and impartiality of the evaluator whose obligation is to address everyone's dilemma, (d) promoting free and open publication of evaluation reports, and (e) increasing recognition of collective responsibility for enhancing public information.

Evaluation Theory & Social Justice

Evaluation theory, although disparate and in most cases unproven, provides a wide range of theoretical perspectives concerning the construction of knowledge, use of knowledge, and valuing knowledge. Social justice evaluation encompasses strains of methods, use and valuing theories, or approaches that provide a more equitable distribution of power in judging and valuing. Existing evaluation theoretical constructs and paradigms that advance social justice-oriented evaluation include transformative evaluation (Mertens, 1999, 2009; Mertens & Hopson, 2006), deliberative democratic evaluation (Greene 2005; Greene, Millett, & Hopson, 2004; Henry, 2000; Hopson, 2009; House, 2000), contextually and culturally responsive evaluation, (Hopson, 2009; Hood, Hopson, & Frierson, 2005; Thomas & Stevens, 2004), and multicultural validity (Kirkhart, 1995, 2005).

Proponents of these approaches address fundamental deficits in current evaluation practice including the epistemological hegemony in social knowledge construction, conflicting interests in the use of knowledge, the marginalisation of some groups in society to the benefit of others, and lack of transparency in public policy use or lack of use (Mertens, 2009). In response to such deficits, these and other scholars advance normative theories, paradigms, approaches, or models to improve evaluation practice. The central theme in this body of work is advocacy for the engagement of diverse voices in the knowledge construction process, and in public discourse to affect social change in the public interest Mertens & Hopson, 2006). In addition to theoretical works, social justice-centered evaluation education can include empirical observations of the application of social justice principles in evaluation practice (Mertens, 2009).

There is a growing body of social justice-centered evaluations conducted in the United Kingdom, Australia, and the United States (Asada, 2005; Cooper & Christie, 2005; Mackenbach & Gunning-Schepers, 1997; Saunders, 2006) that can be critically examined. Two themes predominate in this work: (a) evaluation as a means to give voice to those who have suffered generations of inequities in the social and political power structures maintained by the status quo and (b) the role of evaluation, in a democratic society, to ensure that evaluation results find their way into the public domain to engage public discourse.

Kushner (2000) maintained that methodology should be thought of as a means of reconciling the twin demands of the evaluator's own values in respect for social justice and the characteristics of the field under study. Although he clearly did not propose that evaluation move into advocacy, per se, Kushner recognised that the evaluator's values play a role in shaping the inquiry. Evaluation methodology itself has sometimes led, in complex and subtle ways, to systematic injustices with the main source of error lying in our standard conception

of causation, which is inadequate and incorrect (House, 1990). House (1991) further argues, that in an attempt to remain objective, contrary to embracing constituent agendas, evaluators often fall prey to only hearing and valuing the program's or funder's agenda to the exclusion of competing or complimentary views. As a result, he recommends a more open process where evaluation methodologies are determined by program realities including stakeholder perspectives and goals, planned as well as consequential, or unanticipated outcomes.

Education Evaluation: Responsive & Social Justice

In their evaluation of parent empowerment in underperforming schools, Cooper & Christie (2005) highlighted two approaches to education evaluation: (a) responsive evaluation and (b) social justice evaluation. While responsive evaluation orients more directly to program activities and responds to diverse audience requirements for information and assessment of the success and failure of the program. This is in contrast to the social justice evaluation approach (Cronbach, 1963; Guba & Lincoln, 1989; King, 2002; Stufflebeam, 2000) where it promotes social justice and benefits those members of society who are in the greatest need of assistance (House, 1991). From this perspective, evaluation is a political activity, the process incorporates an open procedure for judging public programs and it should further democratic control as opposed to hidden control. This practice of public evaluation attends to the interests of everyone in society and not solely the privileged. In this context, evaluation establishes ''who gets what'' (House 1980, as cited in Alkin, 1992) and identifies race, gender, and ethnicity as areas that evaluators can explore in order to promote social justice or at the very least, recognise injustice.

House (1991) contends that evaluators cannot be value-neutral as they represent ''the interests and needs of those unjustly ignored'' (p. 245). According to the social justice evaluation perspective, every evaluation has a value slant from its inception that includes motivations, biases, values, attitudes, and political pressures (House, 1991, 2003; King, 2002; Stufflebeam, 2000). Although this value slant constitutes the context of valuation (House, 1972) methodological rigor and validity to verify findings, and pinpoint data based conclusions is paramount. In practice, this type of social justice evaluation engages program recipients, the under-represented group to be involved in the evaluation process at least as extensively as other program stakeholders (House, 2003). When less powerful stakeholders enjoy the same advantage of participation in the evaluation as other more powerful stakeholders, stakeholder bias is prevented. This includes methods that best capture the views of the multiple stakeholder groups with equity.

International Perspectives:

Community Coalitions: Action for Social Justice

In the US, the federal government has increasingly used community coalitions as a targeted strategy to address emerging community issues. A coalition is traditionally defined as "a group of individuals representing diverse organisations, factions or constituencies who agree to work together to achieve a common goal" (Feighery & Rogers, 1990). Community coalitions differ from other types of coalitions in that they include professional and grassroots members that are committed to working together to influence long-term health and welfare benefits in their community (Butterfoss, 2007). The activities of community coalitions include advocacy, outreach, education, prevention, service delivery, capacity building, empowerment, community action, and systems change. Additionally, given their ability to leverage existing resources in the community and convene diverse organisations, community coalitions connote a type of collaboration that is considered to be sustainable over time (Butterfoss, Goodman, & Wandersman, 1993).

The literature highlights three functions of community coalitions. First, community coalitions create collaborative capacity among diverse organisations, including health care providers, community groups, grassroots organisations, faith-based groups, universities, and government agencies. Second, community coalitions help their communities to develop the capacity to build social capital that can be applied to other health and social issues. Third, community coalitions are catalysts or agents of change at the local level, advocating stronger policies, influencing individual health or behavior, and delivering services, among other activities. The functions of community coalitions are also the building blocks of two important theories of community coalitions, the Community Coalition Action Theory (CCAT) and Empowerment Theory (HHS, 2010).

The CCAT and Empowerment Theory provide useful frameworks for understanding community coalitions and the factors that affect their ability to perform their core functions successfully. The theories highlight the outcomes of coalitions, ranging from community capacity to health and social outcomes. They also demonstrate that coalitions must react to the needs of the community and adapt their collaborative activities according to new community conditions. According to theory and research, six characteristics have been linked to the functioning and effectiveness of community coalitions and partnerships. These characteristics include: (a) leadership, (b) membership, (c) structure, (d) operations and processes, (e) strategic vision, and (f) contextual factors. These characteristics can affect the development of community coalitions and their ability to achieve their goals and create change. Many of the same factors that contribute to the effectiveness and functionality of community coalitions also facilitate their outcomes, impacts, and sustainability.

When evaluating the impacts of community coalitions, traditional program evaluation methods are considered ill-suited to capture the dynamic nature of social partnerships. Furthermore, the lack of well-established evaluation methodologies that address the unique characteristics of coalitions has led some researchers to focus on process evaluation, though policymakers and funders continue to seek direct evidence of community coalitions' positive impacts. There are, however, several conceptual models for evaluating community coalitions, based on both traditional and participatory evaluation methods, which offer potential for improving systematic evaluation of community coalitions.

Section 2. Concepts for Social Justice Evaluation Approaches

> **Community Coalition Action Theory (CCAT) & Empowerment Theory**
> **Communities of Practice: Empowering concepts & methodologies**
> **Social Partnerships: Framework for Evaluation**
> **Origins, Characteristics & Dimensions of Social Partnerships**
> **Group Dynamics Characteristics**
> **Community Based Partnerships: Evaluation Tools**

Concepts for Social Justice Evaluation

Community Coalition Action Theory (CCAT) & Empowerment Theory

Two prominent theories of community coalitions are the Community Coalition Action Theory and Empowerment Theory. These theory-based frameworks illustrate the different stages of community coalition formation and the dimensions and factors that can facilitate and impede a community coalition's ability to address its goals. The predominate theory of community coalitions is the Community Coalition Action Theory (CCAT) (Butterfoss & Kegler, 2002). The CCAT highlights several important factors that affect a community coalition's ability to conduct its core functions of creating collaborative capacity, building community capacity, and fostering change at the local level. The CCAT is viewed as an important framework for building and evaluating coalitions.

The CCAT builds on a number of existing models and frameworks related to partnerships for community development and capacity building. Together these frameworks have informed the CCAT's presentation of the stages of development and implementation, core components of effective coalitions, and the interaction of context and outcomes that impact a coalition's formation and success. The CCAT models the progression of community coalitions from formation to institutionalisation and includes a feedback mechanism that loops back to earlier steps in response to new issues and changes in community context (Figure 1). The theory takes into account the numerous factors which impact community coalitions, such as the community's social and political climate, history, and values.

Figure 1: Community Coalition Action Theory Model

Source: Recreated from Butterfoss, 2007
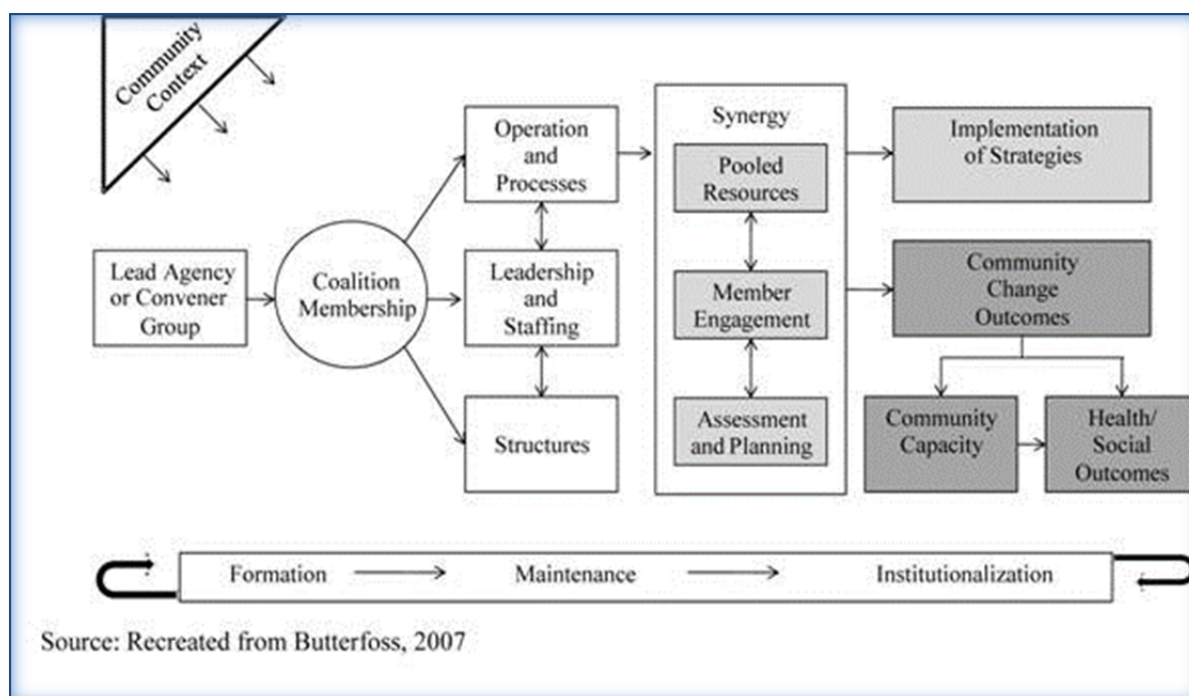
In brief, the CCAT introduces several important coalition characteristics (e.g., leadership, membership, structure) that affect a community coalition's ability to foster changes in the community. The theory highlights the idea that a coalition's strategies can create community capacity outcomes as well as health and social outcomes. Also integral, empowerment theory examines the process of gaining influence over the conditions that matter to people who share communities, experiences, and concerns (Fawcett et al., 1995). By definition, Empowerment Theory is central to the core functions of community coalitions: creating

collaborative capacity, building community capacity, and fostering change at the local level. Empowerment Theory suggests that community coalitions empower their member organisations to collaborate effectively and their communities to build the social capital necessary to address emerging issues. Additionally, this theory focuses on the different factors that facilitate or impede a community's collaborative capacity to bring about community change.

Communities of Practice: Empowering Processes

In his analysis of street work projects including youth riots in Copenhagen, Morck (2011) argues that rather than focussing on outcomes of empowerment, the goal should be about a process-driven communities of practice. As he elaborates, empowerment is not just about individuals getting jobs or formal education. It is also about making changes in concrete communities of practice and their practice ideologies, by recognising potentials from the margins and producing collective processes of expansive activity (Engestro¨m 1987) that in specific ways transcend marginalisation (Morck 2010b). From a theoretical perspective, Morck (2011) adds that empowerment processes happen when various parties from different societal positions work together and can collectively challenge and expand conditions in the direction of realising common interests. This work often also includes conflicts, struggles, disagreements, and clashes of interests (Holzkamp-Osterkamp 1991). It cannot be done without compromises (the game of give and take). However, it is important not to think primarily in terms of strategy and compromise.

Empowerment is about mutual exchange and expanding the understanding of conflicts. Steps to this end include recognising the various positions and perspectives of disparate groups, expanding the critical consciousness of all involved parties, and through these steps changing practice ideologies and actual actions in practice. Analysis of practice ideologies (Morck 2006) includes analysis of what are seen as legitimate versus illegitimate actions within involved communities. Practice ideologies are linked to communities of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998) and sometimes practice ideologies differ from actual actions of the members of a community. This becomes visible when analysing dilemmas and contradictions as part of the process of change. Empowerment processes encompass not only individual and social transformation but also can and often do go hand in hand with adaptation and socialisation. Recognising and facilitating these processes is a continuing challenge for actors involved in processes of empowerment (Morck, 2011).

Social Partnerships: Framework for Evaluation

Governments, civic organisations and aid agencies worldwide embrace social partnerships as a means to understand and address local and regional concerns and for building social capital. Partnerships are often enacted to address issues or as a means to secure effective educational provisions through meeting localised needs (Billett et al., 2008). These partnerships bring the prospect of engaging communities with government and non-government agencies in identifying and solving problems in ways consistent with localised needs and concerns (Field, 2000), making informed and consensus-based decisions, and cooperatively negotiating locally desirable outcomes (Seddon *et al.*, 2005). They are also seen as a way to assist collaborative decision-making and build local capacity (Jessop, 1998) that supports economic, social and civic development (Putman, 1993) attuned to local needs and circumstances (United Nations Development Program, 1997), and to militate against a reliance on central agencies. These capacity-building and developmental goals are well aligned with educational initiatives, particularly those that are required to engage effectively and collaboratively with those outside of educational institutions, such as managing school-to-work transitions (Billett, 2000) and access to university. So, economic, social and political imperatives and goals intermingle with and underpin government and

non-government agencies' interest in the effective enactment of social partnerships at a local level.

In their evaluation of ten Australian social partnerships, Billett et al (2008) highlighted that vital understandings can be gained about the development of social partnerships based on their origins and their auspicating or hosting. For example, some social partnerships evolve as a result of local concerns about issues such as local skill shortages, youth unemployment, lack of adequate social and physical infrastructure or promotion of local regions and communities (Billett, 2000). Since the genesis of these kinds of partnerships is often aligned with local issues, they are referred to as 'community partnerships' (Billett & Seddon, 2004). Another form of social partnership referred to as 'enacted partnerships' is where government and non-government agencies intentionally establish and enact them for specific policy purposes. In this instance, the hosts who enact them are often outside the communities in which they are enacted. A typology of three different kinds of social partnerships based on differences in initial formation including the goals and processes are depicted in Table 1.

Table 1: Origins and characteristics of partnerships

Types	Genesis	Goals	Processes
Community partnership	Concerns, problems, issues identified within the community	To secure resources to address issues, problems and concerns, often from agencies outside the community	Consolidating and making a case and then working with external agencies to secure adequate responses
Enacted partnership	From outside the partnership which is to be the target of the engagement, yet with goals or resources that the community is interested in engaging with	To secure outcomes aligned to external funding body	Responding to requirements and accountabilities of external partner/sponsor through engaging the community in activities associated with those goals
Negotiated partnership	Need to secure a provision of service or support that necessitates working with partners	To develop effective working relations outside of the organisation that comprises the social partnership	Working with and finding reciprocal goals with partners

Even when there is a common set of concerns, the process of working together is complex and challenging, often contested and requiring new ways of working and in changing circumstances. Therefore, to be effective, social partnerships require partners and participants to understand that social partnerships work in ways directed towards achieving shared goals or, more likely, a common focus of concern (Coffield, 2000). However, it is likely that even when there are shared goals, the means of securing those goals will be the subject of contested views and practices within social partnerships, which can jeopardise their formation and continuity and their important work (Cardini, 2006). Given this is complex and contested, but important, work, the goal is in understanding effective conduct of partnership work in order to develop and guide its practice, and evaluate its implementation.

Principles and practices of effective partnership work

An analysis of interview data from ten Australian social partnerships, revealed the dimensions of partnership work comprised: (a) cultural scoping work; (b) connection-building work; (c) capacity-building work; (d) collective work; and (e) trust-building work (Billett *et al.*, 2005). The analysis also included how the partnerships might come to manage the contested relationships and diverse imperatives that are played out in social partnership work. Five sets of principles were also identified as being effective in guiding both initial and ongoing partnership work. These are building and maintaining: (i) shared purposes and goals; (ii) relations with partners; (iii) capacities for partnership work; (iv) partnership governance and leadership; and (v) trust and trustworthiness. These principles are enacted around five dimensions of partnership work and manifest in a set of practices aligned to them. This work is best realised through the work processes within social partnerships, supported and informed by external sponsors and the adoption of particular variations and emphases within social partnerships over time.

Since, government and non-government agencies seek to use social partnership for policy or programme purposes, Billett et al (2008) advocate that the aim should be to engage in partnership work, rather than to attempt to direct and control the participants. The authors also emphasise that evaluating social partnerships could be best achieved through appraising the quality and sustainability of partnership work, through the principles and practices articulated above and being patient about tangible outcomes that will take time. Also, in their initial evaluations, they might focus on the processes being used by partnerships to develop and sustain their working. However, often there is a level of political expedience—the political heartbeat—that will not tolerate such patience.

Community Based Partnerships: Evaluation Tools

While evaluation of the partnership process itself (e.g. the extent to which partnerships adhere to key principles of collaborative inquiry and action) is advocated (Lasker et al., 2001; Sofaer, 2000), less attention has been given in the field to how to conduct such evaluations. Schulz, Israel & Lantz (2003) highlight that community-based participatory partnerships have explicit objectives related to partnership formation, dynamics, relationships among group members, and collective action that are considered integral to the effectiveness of the group in attaining its outcomes (Israel et al., 2010). Comprehensive evaluation of community-based participatory partnerships, therefore, includes attention to how a partnership functioned as a group to work toward those outcome objectives (e.g. whether and how multiple perspectives were engaged in the analysis and development of solutions) as well as the contributions of those working relationships to the ultimate outcomes or objectives (Israel et al., 1998). In other words, evaluation of process objectives (e.g. characteristics of the implementation process) and impact objectives (e.g. intermediary goals considered essential to the attainment of the outcome) (Rossi, Freeman, & Lipsey, 1999) are essential if we are to understand the contributions of the partnership itself to the attainment of the outcome objectives of the group. In this article, the focus centres on the development and use of a tool for evaluation of the partnership process (process evaluation), and assessment of the extent to which the group effort adhered to principles or characteristics associated with effective groups (Johnson & Johnson, 2003), and the impact of those processes on group members' perceptions of the group (impact evaluation).

Evaluation Framework: Characteristics of Effective Group

Elaborating on the application of this partnership evaluation framework, Shulz et al. (2003) highlight that assessment of the ability of a partnership to reach its outcome objectives is seen as shaped by *intermediate measures* of partnership effectiveness, which are influenced

by the partnership's programs and interventions. These are, in turn, shaped by the *group dynamics characteristics* of the partnership (called functional characteristics), as well as characteristics of the *environment*. The group dynamics characteristics are also shaped by the *structural characteristics* of the partnership, including the members, and the *environmental characteristics* (see Figure 2).

Group Dynamics Characteristics: specifically, items corresponding to each central characteristic (e.g. leadership, participation, communication) were drawn from existing questionnaires (Alexander, 1995; Johnson & Johnson, 2003; Seashore, Lawler, Mirvis, & Cammann, 1983) or were developed to operationalise these characteristics of effective groups. These items are intended to enable partnerships to evaluate themselves in light of characteristics of effective groups (Israel et al., 2010; Schulz, Israel & Lanz, 2003; Mertens, 1999; Schulz et al., 1998). Figure 2 below depicts the conceptual framework for assessing group dynamics as an aspect of effectiveness of community-based participatory research partnerships (Adapted from Sofaer, 2000, cited in Schulz et al., 2012).

Figure 2: Assessing Group Dynamics of Partnerships
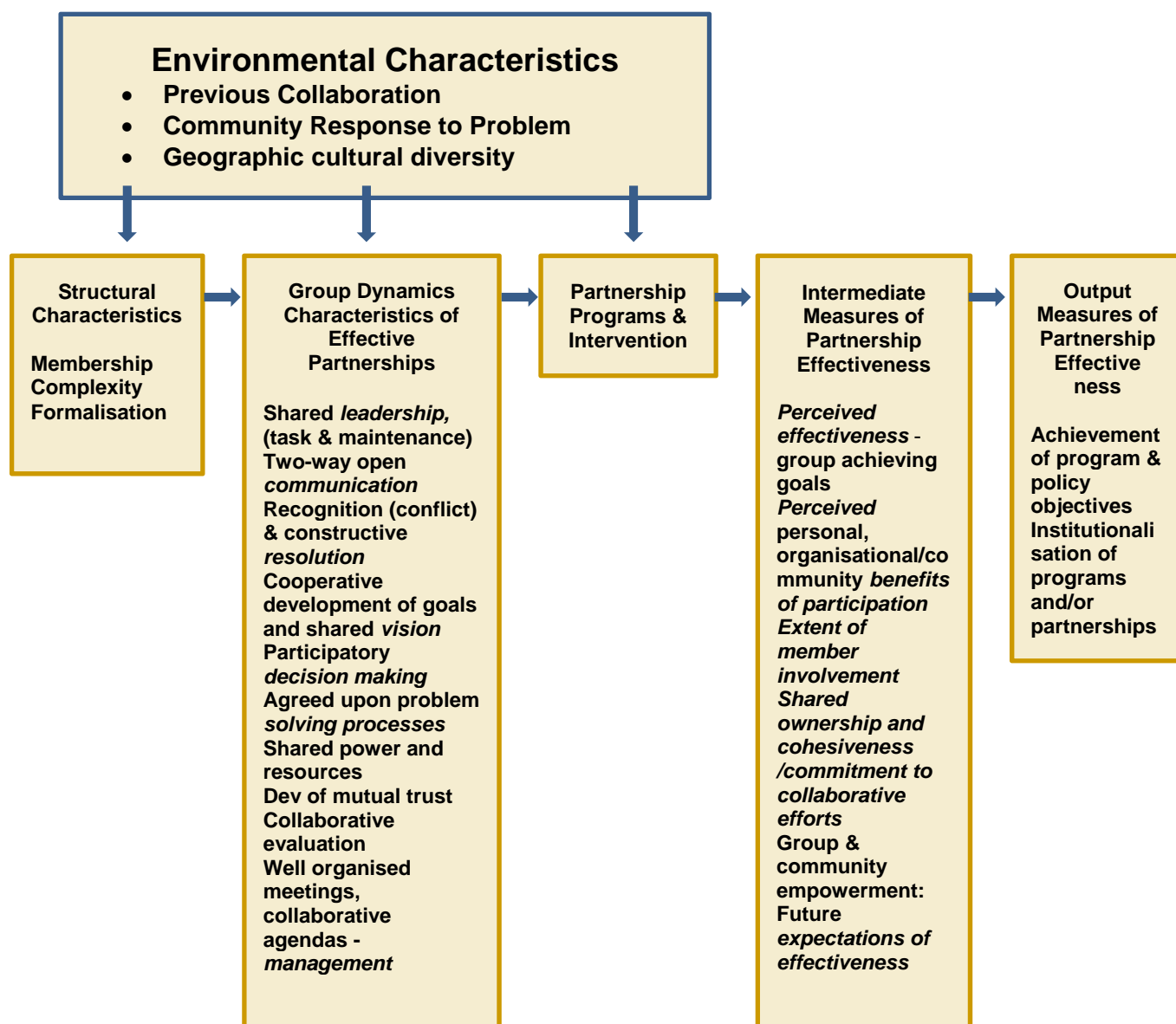
Collaborative or participatory evaluation is a form of participatory research that involves 'systematic inquiry by collaborative, self-critical communities' to assess their process and progress toward intermediate and outcome objectives (King, 1998, 59; Nunneley, Orton, & King, 1997).

> **Section 2.2: Concepts & Methodologies: Social Justice Approaches to Evaluation:**
>
> ➢ **Empowerment: Self Determination & Program Improvement**
> ➢ **Empowering Ethnographic Methodologies**
> ➢ **Photo-voice Methodologies**
> ➢ **Identity Formation: Engagement in Communities of Practice**
> ➢ **Identity, Community & Social Inclusion: Community Development, Empowerment & Social Capital**

Empowerment & Ethnographic Evaluation Methodologies

In attempting to help 18 American Indian tribes and two African American communities, bridge the digital divide, researchers applied empowerment (Fetterman and Wandersman 2004) and ethnographic evaluation (Fetterman and Pitman 1986) to plan, implement, assess, and improve and refine their efforts (Fetterman, 2005). These approaches differ from other forms of evaluation and strategic planning because the communities of evaluation practice remain in control of the process. For example, empowerment evaluation entails the use of evaluation concepts and techniques to foster self-determination and program improvement (Fetterman and Wandersman 2004). The process by which stakeholders can empower themselves to engage in system changes is: *based on the assumption that the more closely stakeholders are engaged in interpreting, discussing, and reflecting on evaluation findings in a collaborative and collegial setting, the more likely they are to take ownership of the results and to use evaluation to guide decision making and reform* (Fetterman, Deitz & Gesundheit, 2010, p. 814).

Its roots are in action anthropology (Tax, 1958) and community psychology (Rappaport, 1977). Empowerment evaluation builds on the action anthropology tradition by engaging both the ethnographic and empowerment evaluator and community member in projects that are directly relevant to community concerns. Empowerment evaluation differs from traditional evaluation in many ways: (1) the community is in control rather than the funder or external evaluator; (2) the evaluator serves as coach or critical friend, rather than as a disinterested third party or external expert; (3) the evaluation is designed to help people improve their programs and their lives, rather than as a "neutral experiment or test" or an exclusive focus on compliance; (4) it fosters self-reliance and self-determination rather than dependency; and (5) the ethnographic/empowerment evaluator typically maintains a relationship, albeit modified, long after the project has ended.

The empowerment evaluation approach has three steps: (1) mission; (2) taking stock; and (3) planning for the future. The evaluator/ethnographer serves as a coach or critical friend, helping each community establish its mission or vision. This represents the values of the community as a collaborative. The coach also helps the community take stock or assess

where they are in their efforts. This also involves an honest and engaged dialogue about the reasons for their successes and failures. After dialoguing about the status of the community's activities, they create a plan for the future, with specific goals, strategies, and evidence. This process is cyclical in that traditional evaluation and ethnographic methods such as interviews and surveys are used to test whether their strategies are working and to allow the community to make midcourse corrections as needed based on this evaluative feedback. The community conducts another formal assessment of their activities and compares their assessment with their previous ratings of key activities. Hence, the initial taking-stock exercise represents the community's baseline for future comparison. The plans for the future represent the intervention, and the second taking-stock exercise is a second data point enabling the community to measure growth or change over time by comparing the baseline ratings with the second data point ratings.

Photo-voice Methodology: Promoting Social Justice

Developed by Wang and Burris (1994, 1997), photo-voice was first used with the theoretical underpinnings of Freire's critical consciousness and feminism (Freire 1973; Weiler 1988). Wang proposed photo-voice as a method for those marginalised to document their experiences and comment on the social and political forces that influenced those experiences. While the process empowers individuals by providing a platform for group and community discussions, these critical dialogues about community improvement could be used to influence policy and promote systemic change (Wang, 2005). Researchers who use a social justice framework emphasise moral obligation and citizens' rights (Boutain 2011) and a focused agenda of direct change to minimise subordination and vulnerability to social injustice (Kirkham & Anderson, 2002). A social justice framework, therefore, can benefit researchers where photo-voice is incorporated in the design, given the original goals of photo-voice. In Sanon, Evans-Agnew and Boutain's (2014) review of photo-voice research, their evaluation incorporates Boutain's (2011) social justice insights to delineate three impacts: (1) social justice awareness impacts; social justice ameliorative impacts and social justice transformative impacts related to photo-voice use.

While *social justice awareness* impacts is said to inspire cognitive, emotional or intellectual insights on the part of individuals or groups. *Social justice amelioration* impacts involve actions to mitigate the immediate factors leading to the unjust conditions. Lastly, transformative action impacts aim to address the issue at its roots. The goal of transformative impact is to promote change in systems of oppression in ways of being, ways of interacting and ways of governing. Additionally, photo-voice findings which show unequal, unjust or uneven applications of regulations, in addition, might prompt a more extensive policy review. Sanon, Evans-Agnew and Boutain's (2014) review of social justice impacts of 30 participant photography studies (photo-voice methodologies), they found that while it raised awareness amongst the participants, community members and targeted stakeholders; eleven studies resulted in some form of immediate action to ameliorate the issue at hand and only three studies prompted changes at the policy level. In view of these findings, future researchers are encouraged to assess and plan for the social justice impact desired.

Identity & Negotiation: Engagement in Communities of Practice

Wenger (1998) argues that identities are formed in a "tension between investment in various forms of belonging and the ability to negotiate the meanings that matter in those contexts" (p. 189, cited Edwards & Tsui, 2009). Hence, identity formation is a dual process of identification and negotiability. Identification provides experiences and materials for building identities through an investment of self in relations of association and differentiation. Negotiability determines the degree to which selves have control over the meanings in which they are invested Wenger delineates the kinds of structural relations that shape the processes of identification and negotiability. Identification, he claims, congeals into forms of

membership, and negotiability into forms of ownership of meaning – that is, the degree to which community members can make use of, affect, control, modify or in general assert as theirs the meanings that they negotiate.

To clarify further the process of identity formation in communities of practice, Wenger delineates three modes of belonging – engagement, imagination and alignment. Engagement could be seen as the core mode of belonging, and the predominant source of identity in that within communities of practice members are continuously involved in the process of negotiation of meaning. Imagination is a process of creating images of the world and seeing connections through time and space by extrapolating from personal experience. It is the means by which new developments are conceived, and alternative futures envisioned. Alignment is a mode of belonging that ensures local activities are made congruent with broader structures and enterprises. This does not necessarily imply a one-way process of compliance with external authority. It could be "a mutual process of coordinating perspectives, interpretations and actions so that they realise higher goals" (Wenger, 2009, p. 79).

Membership and Mutual Engagement

Membership in a community is not *just* a matter of geographical proximity being given a title or declaring allegiance or belonging to an organisation. Nor is it *just* a matter of establishing interpersonal relations, although it is an indispensable part. In order for newcomers to become a full member of a community, they need to be mutually engaged in practice with other members so that they can gain access and contribute to the point enterprise and the repertoire in use. Using teacher training as the example of engagement in communities of practice, Edwards & Tsui (2008) emphasised "… *this means not only just being able to contribute to teaching but also to participate in the negotiation of meanings that matter in the community, including being able to contribute to the discourse, the ways of doing things, the routines, the concepts and the actions that community has developed and that have become part of its practice.*" For this reason, opportunities to engage with other teachers at a social level as well as at a professional level in their placement schools are crucial to becoming a teacher.

Identity, Community & Social Inclusion

Thomas (1995, cited in Skinner, Zakus & Cowell, 2008, p. 255) provides a useful definition of community development for the context of social inclusion:

> "*Community development is the strengthening of the social resources and processes in a community by developing those contacts, relationships, networks, agreements and activities outside the household that residents themselves identify will make their locality a better place in which to live and work* (p. 2)".

Social inclusion requires the accomplishment of social participation and social integration in communities whereby participants might achieve power over their lives in the present and into the future (Room, 1995, cited in Coalter, Allison, & Taylor, 2000). The definitions of both community development and social inclusion place emphasis on people, social processes and ways to enhance the capacities of communities, which in turn can lead to the development of social capital (Field, 2003; Productivity Commission, 2003).

Importance of Linking Social Capital

Extending the work of Putnam, Woolcock (2001) identified the concept of linking social capital that is concerned with vertical connections between the different levels of social

strata. These vertical connections can include individuals from entirely outside the community and provide "further opportunities for access to wider networks and the potential to leverage a broader range of resources" (Coalter, 2007, p. 547). Linking capital is therefore important because it can play a role in the exchange of power, wealth and status among social groups (Portes & Landolt, 2000; Putnam, 2000) from different hierarchical locations in society. Under neoliberalism, linking social capital has specific policy implications for the social inclusion agenda.

Encapsulating the contested terrain that surrounds defining social capital, Meikle-Yaw (2006) suggested that: social capital is broadly conceptualised as a quantity and/or quality of resource that an actor (individual or group or community) can access, or a resource that is located in social networks. The former emphasises the utility of social resources and the latter emphasises the utility of network characteristics. Implicit in definitions of social capital is its ability to generate positive outcomes through shared trust, norms and values; benefits secured by membership in social networks; and the desirability of collective understanding and action. (p. 55).

As a concept, social capital is central to a social inclusion agenda as it is seen as a way of building empowerment, well-being and community development toward an improved civil society. Moreover, as Spies-Butcher (2006) notes in support of Portes, stated that (1998), "social capital theory is little more than the long standing acknowledgement that civic involvement and social networks can have positive implications for individuals and society as a whole" (p. 6).

Section 3: Other Program Evaluation Approaches:

➢ **Australian University-School Collaborations: Program Depth & Breadth (equity orientations)**
➢ **Collective Commitment**

OTHER EVALUATION APPROACHES

Evaluation: Australian University-School Collaborations

While there is a paucity of research and evaluation in Australia that specifically focuses on the relationship between early school intervention and student participation in HE (Gale et al., 2010a). The authors, however, have conceived a repertoire of strategic interventions, which in combination enhance availability, access, achievement and aspirations, particularly for low SES background students. Strategic interventions that foster higher participation typically include programs with many of the following nine characteristics listed below. The reviewers, however, noted that these work best in combination within programs rather than as stand-alone activities (Gale et al., 2010b):

- collaboration across education sectors;
- establishing and sustaining early and long-term interventions to maximise program effects;
- 'people rich' programs that develop ongoing relationships and conversations;
- programs that target cohorts of students rather than individuals or the student population *en masse*;
- the use of relevant information and communication technologies;
- familiarisation activities and site visits;

- recognition of the contributions different groups can bring to university;
- quality academic curriculum that seeks to enhance student engagement and achievement;
- provision of financial support and incentives; and
- research-driven interventions.

The reviewers emphasise that a combination of key program characteristics, supported by a coherent university-wide equity orientation towards policy and outreach, holds the strongest promise for designing and implementing effective early interventions. Furthermore, the success of the case study programs appears to depend on the presence of several of these characteristics (at least half of the set). However, it is not appropriate to prioritise the characteristics according to their relative importance. Rather, the most important feature of successful interventions is the *combination* of many characteristics in response to the particular requirements of different student and institutional contexts.

Equity Orientation: While the characteristics are general principles that can be implemented from diverse policy orientations, a common feature linked to program success is an *equity orientation* that underpins the different combinations. This orientation is informed by three specific equity perspectives: *researching 'local knowledge' and negotiating local interventions*; *unsettling deficit views*; and *building capacity in communities, schools and universities*. The authors indicate that the focus for design and evaluation of interventions is the conjunction of this underlying equity orientation along with the combination of multiple characteristics. Although no simple formula for successful outreach activities is purported, the indications are that strong early intervention strategies need a suite of multifaceted responses to the particular needs of different groups. Also vital is that strategies are developed and implemented in partnership with a range of stakeholders, supported by secure funding sources and informed by a sophisticated equity orientation. Also beneficial is that interventions commence in the early phases of schooling (ideally the primary years) and progressively supporting students as they make the transition through the middle years into senior secondary school. A coherent approach to developing and implementing interventions with these qualities, both within universities and across the Australian HE sector, is required to sustain more systemic increases in the participation of disadvantaged students in HE (Gale, 2010c).

Evaluation Characteristics: Program depth and breadth

While 10 characteristics have been identified that are typical of effective programs, it is not appropriate to organise these characteristics into a hierarchy of relative importance. However, it is possible to identify four program strategies related to particular character subsets as set out in Figure 1 below. For example, a program that combined financial support (assembling resources), enhanced academic curriculum (engaging learners), collaboration (working together) and familiarisation/site experiences (building confidence) would be stronger than a program that combined financial support (assembling resources), people-rich (assembling resources), communication and information (building confidence) and familiarisation/site experiences (building confidence). The first example has four characteristics drawn from across each of the four strategies while the second combines four characteristics drawn from just two strategies. Program composition, then, is assessed in terms of a balance between the total number of program characteristics (depth) and the number of program strategies from which they are drawn (breadth).

Table 2: Program Strategies

Assembling resources	Engaging learners	Working together	Building confidence
People-rich	Recognition of difference	Collaboration	Communication and information
Financial support and/or incentives	Enhanced academic curriculum	Cohort-based	Familiarisation/site experience
Early, long-term, sustained	Research-driven		

While the routine and rigorous evaluation of outreach programs conducted by Australian universities is an area that could be improved, the overall effectiveness of a program - understood in terms of its likelihood of increasing the number of disadvantaged students going on to higher education than would have otherwise been the case - will depend on the combination of depth (number of characteristics), breadth (number of strategies), and equity orientation (number of equity perspectives). While effective outreach programs have been conducted by Australian universities, Bradley et al. (2008) call for a more sophisticated approach to outreach that is designed to increase participation for disadvantaged groups, especially low SES, rural and remote, and Indigenous students. The authors acknowledge that success of various initiatives undertaken by the public universities has been varied, particularly in relation to low socio-economic status, rural and Indigenous students. While a more sophisticated approach is needed, effecting change in educational institutions and communities is also complex and relational.

Collective Commitment: Motivation to Work Collaboratively

Building on theoretical notions of activity theory and communities of practice, Rose and Norwich (2014) extend on these frameworks to provide greater clarity about collaborative motivation. Theoretical developments in the fields of team reasoning and collective preferences (Gilbert, 2001; Sugden, 2005), joint commitment (Gilbert, 2005), and collective efficacy and process–outcome beliefs (Bandura, 1997), is integrated into an ecological framework to explain interaction between group and individuals involved in collaborative working.

As the authors highlight, collective preferences are useful for analysis of multi-agency and inter-professional collaboration because they can elaborate on the key role of shared goals in informing ways that individuals work together to solve problems. Considered in this way, collective preferences involve: (1) the processes of generating shared goals, (2) shared perceptions of collective responsibility, and (3) a willingness to act as part of a group. However, Gilbert (2005) has extended her discussion of collective preferences to describe the idea of joint commitment, which describes how group members can all be committed to a joint course of action, and be answerable to everyone else who is committed. In joint commitment there is an intention to coordinate action in order to achieve a joint goal, with some expectation that the goal cannot be achieved by individuals alone. This leads to an obligation to perform the planned actions, to achieve the goal.

> **Section 3.1: Quantitative/Mix Method Approaches**
>
> ➢ **Partnership Self-Assessment Tool (PSAT)**
> ➢ **United Nations Partnership Assessment Tool (PAT)**

Partnership Assessment Tools

To examine measurement tools useful for the evaluation of social collaborations, Cramm, Strating and Nieboer's (2011) Partnership Self-Assessment Tool (PSAT) is reviewed. As the authors highlight, partnership collaboration requires relationships, procedures, and structures that are quite different from the ways many people and organisations have worked in the past. Research indicates the following about partnerships: it can be frustrating; building effective partnerships is time consuming, resource intensive, and often very difficult (Kreuter, Lezin & Young, 2000; Wandersman, Goodman & Butterfoss, 1997). A number of special challenges are involved in the management of inter-professional collaborative relationships (Mitchell & Shoerten, 2000]. One of the main critical tasks of partnership management is to enhance the capacity of partnerships to achieve high levels of synergy. Synergy is the degree to which the partnership combines the complementary strengths, perspectives, values and resources of all partners in the search for better solutions (Gray, 1989, p. 5) and is generally regarded as the product of a partnership (Lasker & Weiss, 2003). The synergy that a partnership can achieve is more than simply an exchange of resources among its partners (Cramm et al., 2011).

Theoretically, when partners effectively merge their perspectives, knowledge, and skills to create synergy, they create something new and valuable: a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. Lasker, Weiss & Miller (2001) developed a framework that supports the people responsible for managing partnerships in realising high levels of synergy. The Partnership Self-Assessment Tool (PSAT) was developed based on this framework by public health specialists for practical use by groups working to promote health and well-being in their communities (Weiss, Anderson & Lasker, 2002). It measures partnership synergy and other related dimensions of the partnership process (D'Amour et al., 2005). The establishment of construct validity during development of the PSAT items was rigorous (Weiss et al., 2002; 9]; it included data from qualitative interviews with partnership members, an extensive review of relevant literature and measures, as well as input from a panel of experts. A recent study conducted by Butt and colleagues (Butt Markle-Reid & Browne, 2008) showed that the PSAT is a valid partnership process measurement tool.

PSAT Measures: Partnership Synergy

The PSAT used to measure *partnership synergy* contains nine items (e.g. by working together, how well are these partners able to identify new and creative ways to solve problems?) and four dimensions of partnership functioning: *leadership* (11 items, e.g. fostering respect, trust, inclusiveness, and openness in the partnership), *efficiency* (three items, e.g. how well your partnership uses the partners' financial resources), *administration and management* (nine items, e.g. evaluating the progress and impact of the partnership), and *resources* (six items, e.g. data and information: statistical data, information about community perceptions, values, resources, and politics). Responses to all items are structured by a five-point Likert scale.

Table 3: PSAT Measure: Partnership Functioning

Four dimensions partnership functioning	Questionnaire Items
Leadership	1. Taking responsibility for the partnership 2. Inspiring or motivating people involved in the partnership 3. Empowering people involved in the partnership 4. Communicating the vision of the partnership 5. Working to develop a common language within the partnership 6. Fostering respect, trust, inclusiveness, and openness in the partnership

	7. Creating an environment where differences of opinion can be voiced 8. Resolving conflict among partners 9. Combining the perspectives, resources, and skills of partners 10. Helping the partnership be creative and look at things differently **11. Recruiting diverse people and organisations into the partnership**
Efficiency	**12. How well your partnership uses the partners' financial resources.** **13. How well your partnership uses the partners' in-kind resources** **14. How well your partnership uses the partners' time.**
Administration and Management	**15. Coordinating communication among partners** 16. Coordinating communication with people and organisations outside the partnership **17. Organising partnership activities, including meetings and projects** 18. Applying for and managing grants and funds 19. Preparing materials that inform partners and help them make timely decisions 20. Performing secretarial duties 21. Providing orientation to new partners as they join the partnership **22. Evaluating the progress and impact of the partnership** **23. Minimising the barriers to participation in the partnership's meetings and activities**
Non-financial resources	**24. Skills and expertise** **25. Data and information** **26. Connections to target populations** 27. Connections to political decision-makers, government agencies, other organisations/groups 28. Legitimacy and credibility **29. Influence and ability to bring people together for meetings and activities**

Note: items in bold are included in the short version.

The authors concluded that the PSAT is a valid and reliable instrument to measure partnership synergy and its dimensions. The advantages achieved by partnerships with high levels of synergy are likely to enhance partnership effectiveness in prevention and health promotion that have been identified by other investigators (Jones & Barry, 2011). The PSAT scores assess partnership's strengths and weaknesses in areas that are known to be related to synergy: (1) effectiveness of the partnership's leadership; (2) efficiency of the partnership; (3) effectiveness of the partnership's administration and management; and (4) sufficiency of the partnership's resources. This information can help partnerships identify in which areas they are doing well and in which areas the partnership needs to improve the collaborative process (Weiss, Anderson & Laster, 2002; Lasker, Weiss & Miller, 2001).

UN Partnership Assessment Tool (PAT)

The UN Development Office and the Office for Partnerships in collaboration with other specialists have developed the PAT to evaluate voluntary collaborative alliances between the private sector, the UN and other stakeholders. The recognition is that there is no guarantee that a partnership will be a success. Hence, UN organisations and their business partners recognise the potential to improve the impact and consistency of their collaboration. The United Nations have showcased numerous examples of successful partnerships; however, the learning enabled from these examples is in retrospect. There has been less focus on looking at the best practices that can be followed during the development and implementation of the partnership.

Although measures are in place to ensure that partnerships "do no harm", establishing the extent of the "good" resulting from these partnerships remains a challenge. Currently there seem to be no tools available to assess such sustainable performance and the

developmental impact of partnerships. The objective for creating the Partnership Assessing Tool (PAT) was to develop a simple and operational tool that can measure the level of various elements of sustainability of partnerships for development. Essentially, the tool has been designed to assess the likelihood for partnership to produce significant impact. The tool is accessible from a CD-ROM which can be ordered from the partner agencies. The PAT was designed to better identify and define in concrete ways the components that define the sustainability of partnership projects. By demonstrating the sustainability performance of partnership projects, the tool gives an indication of their potential developmental value, and thereby helps to guide decision-making and project planning (https://www.unglobalcompact.org/issues/partnerships/pat.html).

Summary

This thematic exploration revealed that there is a plethora of theoretical understandings on social collaborations/partnerships, including program evaluation. The consensus view, however, is that evaluation of social collaboration and partnerships involved with equity goals for disadvantaged populations must incorporate a social justice evaluation framework. This review has revealed that that the goals of collaborations, partnerships (including community coalitions and community engagement) are numerous and include many social justice actions: advocacy, outreach, education, prevention, service delivery, capacity building, empowerment, community action, and systems level change. Equally challenging is that the social justice evaluation approach embodies numerous theories, concepts and methodologies that can be integrated into a broader social, ecological level evaluation framework. The aspiration for those working in the field, however, involves designing evaluation frameworks that can effectively assess the goals and outcomes of social collaborations and partnerships involved with promoting equity for socio-economically disadvantaged populations and communities.

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