

Case Study 3: Community X

Part 1:

Community X refugees started arriving in Sydney in about the year 2000. They came from an environment where dictatorship promoted and supported community divisions across ethnic and religious lines. They settled mostly in Western Sydney. As numbers increased, a community organisation was formed by the few members of community x who came to Australia before the year 2000. In 2006, amidst the mainstream media sensationalised reporting demonizing community x and accusing them of not integrating into the Australian society, there was a need by the community to plan and respond to issues arising as the community settled in western Sydney. The newly elected committee of the association decided it should have a plan.

1. What steps do you think needed to be taken & how can this be done?
2. What assets do you think this community has at this stage?
3. What can you say about the community's social capital?

Part 2:

The committee of the community association approached STARTTS and other social services to assist. STARTTS, Anglicare; Baulkham Hills, Holroyd, Parramatta MRC; Fairfield MRC, and Friends of STARTTS offered to work together with the community to organise a strategic planning session for two consecutive days. These organisations provided the meeting place, catering and other resources to facilitate the two days. A year before this happened, the community managed to convince STARTTS to employ 3 community x staff members. Staff members came from different ethnic groups but were committed to bringing the community together.

Community x leaders, elders and representatives turn up in good numbers for the two consecutive days. The planning was a huge success.

1. What do you think was critical in mobilising resources for this strategic plan?
2. There was never such a gathering of members of community x across different ethnic groups. What do you think made this possible?
3. What assets do you see at this stage?

Part 3:

Community X is a diverse community. This was reflected in the attendance of the strategic planning session. The attendees represented different ethnic groups and sub-communities.

These different cultural groups have somewhat distinct cultures, language, and dance. These different cultural groups and sub-communities formed their own associations as the community grows and this fragmented the community into many small groups. However, all these small groups are still represented by Community X Association. Most of the groups were unaware of the other groups prior to the strategic planning. When they met, they realized there was much they could do together for the benefit of the whole community. This realization came after an asset mapping activity.

1. Map and discuss the Asset of Community X in Sydney?
2. How can these assets be connected?
3. What do these assets need to be able to work together?
4. Why is social capital important?
5. What role did the strategic planning play apart from coming up with a plan?