

Review of: "Working on the Root System of Social Connections in a Community"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Community as a process, a verb rather than a noun, *'rooted in the belief that this will make a difference'* sums up the essence of the article and lays out what is much needed to replace today's fragmented, silo-based, non-relational "projects" currently being imposed on people.

The authors have used a compelling story-telling style to lay out how small changes at the neighbourhood level, driven by people in the community, have implications for policy at the national and even global level. The vice-versa, of making activities in the community fit a policy, is irrelevant, they point out, as most times the metric used to compute success ignores the root cause, dealing only with the symptom, and often ends up aggravating it.

The case study is based in the Netherlands, but the lesson is applicable in all parts of the world: It is important to veer away from the increasing institutionalization of community functions and instead strengthen neighbourhood associational life.

The analogy of the tree and the bee strengthens the narrative, even when punctuated with a more formal treatment imposed by the ABCD framework. The conviction of the authors is clearly informed by practice, which is further referenced by links to related work such as the "Sense of Community Index" and other resident-led approaches and techniques.

A much-needed article today to question the status quo and revive the work of Jane Jacobs and John Mc Knight, both mentioned in the article, as well as that of other stalwarts who promoted the same approach, like Fals Borda, John Turner, Nabeel Hamdi, and Jim Lotz, among several others.

The article vindicated my own approach to community development, for which I am grateful to both Cormac Russell and Joop Hofman.