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From passive welfare to community governance: Youth NGOs in Australia and Scotland

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ABSTRACT

This study examines two regional youth welfare agencies in different parts of the world that have independently from each other begun to redevelop their organisations within a community governance framework. This means that they are involved in an arena of public decision making about local resources that extends beyond local state services to embrace those activities that involve either the provision of public services as part of the community, or the representation of community interests to the broader policy community. The two agencies used in this study are Brophy Family and Youth Services in Warrnambool, Australia, that services southwest Victoria and Aberdeen Foyer in the regional city of Aberdeen, Scotland that services the rural hinterland. While these agencies are pursuing the same path towards a community governance approach they have adopted different strategies to achieve their aims. Using these two agencies as exemplars this paper outlines a conceptual model that helps to provide an understanding of an emerging community governance framework in the welfare sector.

1. Introduction

With the retreat of the state in the 1970s and 1980s occasioned by the emergence of neo-liberal approaches to governance, the welfare system was restructured which enabled some welfare NGOs to transform themselves into active participants in the competitive tendering process and enter into partnership with the state in the management of welfare services (Craig & Porter 2006). As the focus of the state turned to markets and competition rather than to the control of internal interests (such as welfare) by government departments and the bureaucracy, the welfare sector became fragmented and involved multiple stakeholders. Prior to the neo-liberal turn, community participation and involvement in governance processes relating to local welfare provision were almost non-existent, but with a minimization of the state role in direct service provision and a shift of significant responsibilities to the private sector and welfare NGOs, a new form of collective action emerged (Quiggin, 2005). This transition has been described as the Third Way where goals for incorporating the market and community into the governance processes feature 'inclusion' (Gray, 2000). In this process welfare NGOs were described as 'enabling' agents for citizens to gain access to support where local communities and welfare NGOs were drawn into partnership with each other and with governments (Bovaird, 2005).

According to Eddy (2006) tensions have resulted within and between organizations as complexities over the state apparatus and the plethora of policy-making sites emerged, and, as local citizens and welfare NGOs were re-constituted as stakeholders operating in a free market. The ability to adapt to new knowledge, a new role and identity were required by both welfare NGOs and community consultation mechanisms to avoid being excluded from success in the competitive tendering process (Loughlin, 2004). For Borzel (1998) while decentralization of the welfare system has been advantageous in opening up space for communities to engage in broader networks, there are also unforeseen tensions and challenges arising from ongoing change to governance and institutions. Through marketisation of contracting and the spread of decision-making and power across a network of participants, formal and informal rules and conventions have been re-framed (Eddy, 2006).

In this process the role and identity of welfare NGOs have changed. They are no longer mere 'recipients' of funding but are inextricably linked to the network of other participatory actors. To sustain services and develop new directions in a competitive market-based system, actors and organizations have moved beyond traditional roles and boundaries, and adapted to the complexities which have emerged through a hierarchy of networks fuelled by the rapid change in all aspects of life (Greene, 2007; Harvey, 2005). Changes have occurred within organizations because staff have also been included in the decision-making processes with space being made for their

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participation in internal and external networks, and as representatives of their organizations and local communities. To move forward and overcome the tensions, new ways needed to be negotiated through the creative integration of different understandings and knowledge, and, through such creativity new structures and systems replace old institutional forms and governance processes, thereby enhancing the capability of those involved to adapt to, and cope with, ongoing change (Thompson et al., 2007).

For welfare NGOs there were two significant areas of change: 1) the internal organizational features; 2) the linkages and associations between the networks of actors, communities and organizations involved in the governance process (Chang & Ying, 2007). In the first instance, relations between management, staff and clients and the built space needed to be negotiated because adaptations in organizational processes arose with changes to the role of welfare NGOs following the neo-liberal turn and again with the emergence of third way approaches to welfare sector reform. This included re-assignment of roles and tasks within organizations; changes to planning and delivery of services to clients; and sharing of new tasks relating to planning programs and establishing parameters for competitive tendering processes. As the state withdraws from direct provision of services in the welfare sector, welfare NGOs take on more responsibility for a wider range of services which creates greater complexity for the organization and staff; the need for more staff and staffing patterns; a more diverse workload for staff; the need for more training for these staff; changes in programs and objectives; and the need for larger and more complex built spaces within which to offer an extended array of programs and services. At the same time much of the funding available in the market model is time limited project funding and susceptible to policy change, and so continuity of programs is not necessarily related to their effectiveness (Savaya, Elsworth, & Rogers, 2009). The result is that the internal organizational features of welfare sector NGOs are in a continual process of change, which can lead to tensions for staff, management and clients if those involved are not able to transcend the 'old' organizational culture and negotiate a new and more flexible culture which can adapt to ongoing change and complexity (Elmer & Kilpatrick, 2008).

There are also a range of external features which impinge upon the role and identity of welfare sector NGOs and require ongoing negotiation between different parties including the growth of an innovative approach to governance. As part of the everyday discourse of public life governance can be seen in structural terms as the institutional arrangements for 'debating, considering, deciding, prioritising, resourcing, implementing and evaluating' policies and programs (Head, 2005: 44). In the public sector this type of governance was once only associated with processes used by individual governments about public resources. However in the wider agenda of the modernization of government the term governance has been extended to mean the dynamic process in which social and political actors play a significant role in deciding how to satisfy many of their own needs (Pierre & Peters, 2000). At local level the designation community governance has included collaborative processes where the arena of public decision making involves the provision of public services as part of the community, or the representation of community interests to external agencies (Edwards & Woods, 2004). This may include a number of forms including local government, citizen governance, local partnerships and incorporated governance (O'Toole, 2009). It is in this last sense that *locally* based welfare NGOs engage in partnerships for governance with their local communities.

Through a community governance framework welfare NGOs become stakeholders responsible for working in partnership with other community members to bring about particular types of benefit to both their clients and the wider local community. Governance in this respect is not only the vertical or corporate role of Boards or Advisory Committees but also governance in a horizontal mode where local community participation is encouraged (Bellafeuille & Hemingway 2005; O'Malley, 2004). Furthermore welfare NGOs that adopt a community governance framework also provide a policy conduit for the local community; firstly through their provision of information to policy makers; secondly through giving individuals with lower per capita incomes access to policy networks; thirdly, through their place as civic educators; and finally, as an alternate form of governance playing a role in developing and implementing policies and creating processes of communication and collaboration in the community (Cohen & Rogers, 1995). Governance is seen here as both a technique of engagement and a moral commitment to full citizenship which include empowerment, local responsiveness and social inclusion (Romeril, 2008).

2. Exploring local youth based NGOs

To understand the nature of the community governance in local based NGOs two regional youth welfare agencies in different parts of the world were chosen. They are Brophy Family and Youth Services (Brophy) in Warrnambool, Australia, that services southwest Victoria and Aberdeen Foyer (Foyer) in the regional city of Aberdeen, Scotland that services the rural hinterland. The sites were chosen on the basis of a literature search and prior knowledge of the operations of both agencies (Anderson, 2001; O'Toole, 2003). Both regional NGOs operate in economies dominated by metropolitan populations. Seventy-four percent of Victoria's population lives in the capital of Melbourne while around 70% of Scotland's population is located in the Central Lowlands belt including the cities of Edinburgh, Dundee, Glasgow, Perth and Stirling (Department of Planning and Community Development 2009; Scotland The Official Online Gateway 2009). Both agencies have independently begun to redevelop their organisations towards an emergent form of community governance in their approach to servicing local needs. While these agencies are pursuing a path that leads them to a community governance approach they have adopted different strategies.

Interviews were arranged with the two organisations; Brophy in November/December 2008 and Foyer in April 2009. The CEOs and three executive managers in each of the organisations were independently asked to outline their operations especially with regard to the roles of the agencies in the local communities. Notes from the separate interviews were compared within agencies to ensure that there was consistency of response across the executive team. From these notes a composite picture of the operations within the agencies was then developed. To validate these composite pictures a documentary review was made of all relevant documents in the agencies that were available. These documents included annual reports, policy statements, program reports and minutes of board meetings. Once the draft of the paper was written it was shown to both agencies to ensure that the information contained in the agency descriptions was factually true.

2.1. Brophy Family and Youth Services

Brophy Family & Youth Services, a NGO located in Warrnambool in the southwest region of Victoria has been using a 'local' approach for service delivery since 1974 and now covers the southwest of Victoria (Brophy Family & Youth Services, 2004a). Initially, Brophy operated one program providing 'hostel accommodation for homeless youth in southwest Victoria' but over the past decade has expanded its services to meet the needs of a vast array of young people who have been confronted by a diverse range of challenges and lifestyle issues which include, but are not confined to, homelessness (O'Toole, 2003). The majority of these programs are funded by Federal and State governments and cover two major service areas: early intervention programs (covering areas such as health, educational and vocational support, and community enterprise and development) and client

services (covering such areas as youth and adult homelessness and support services, and family and relationship services). The number of programs is quite extensive as, for example, Brophy's original service of providing shelter and support for homeless youth within the region, now exists under the banner of the Youth Homelessness Program, but is delivered through six different specialized programs. Brophy's expansion over recent years is noteworthy: services have been expanded to such an extent that there are 38 programs operating.

Until October of 2008 most of the programs and services provided by Brophy operated from the first floor level of a building in the main retail shopping area of Warrnambool and was 'unseen' in the local community. Access for clients (and prospective clients) was via a glass door and narrow staircase opening directly from the 'main' street. Inside, the area occupied by Brophy's workforce was cramped, with staff needing to share work spaces and equipment and at times, interview and counsel clients within earshot of others. As the number of programs and staff grew over the decade from 1998 to 2008, there was a need to use other premises in different areas of the city. In October 2008 Brophy began to operate from the newly constructed three story Community & Youth complex in Warrnambool. This building was designed by 'an environmentally-knowledgeable architect' in conjunction with Brophy management, staff and clients. Funding support included substantial amounts from state, federal and local governments. Significantly there was a major input of capital from local philanthropic trusts and donations from many local businesses and individuals.

2.2. Aberdeen Foyer

Aberdeen Foyer was established as a charitable organisation in 1995, appointing its first staff in 1996. In 1997 it opened a training and resource centre in the centre of Aberdeen, and a year later opened its first supported accommodation site, providing supported accommodation for young people who were homeless or at risk of homelessness. The starting point for the organisation was a focus on preventing and alleviating youth homelessness and unemployment which it undertook by developing supported accommodation services alongside access to a range of education, training, employment support and community health service activities for young people, and increasing to other disadvantaged individuals in the Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire areas of Scotland. The Foyer is now funded to a large extent through contractual arrangements with Government bodies at Local, National or UK levels. In addition the Foyer secures support from a number of charitable trusts as well as support from the business community particularly that based in Aberdeen by way of corporate social responsibility activities.

The range of programmes now available through the Foyer is considerable and helps address issues facing vulnerable young people aged 16–25 enabling them to take the step towards independent living, learning and work. By way of an example within the supported accommodation the Foyer adopts an action planning approach delivering a number of life skills and health promotion programmes that provides the participants with practical steps towards eventual self reliance. The wider work of the organisation beyond the supported accommodation includes programme for personal development, community rehabilitation for alcohol/drug problems, employment support services aimed at supporting former drug users, practical support for former tenants moving into their own homes, tenant centred learning programmes, community based learning opportunity providing free informal learning activities alongside sector specific specialised programmes for entry into key areas within the local economy where there are skill shortages.

The business model adopted by the Foyer from its outset also included the formation of a subsidiary trading company, which was established in 1997. Foyer Enterprise now operates a number of successful commercial businesses, most notably the Foyer Restaurant & Gallery, recognised as one of the top restaurants within Aberdeen, more recently (January 2008) it took on the licence to operate the Foyer Restaurant & Café at His Majesty's Theatre in Aberdeen. Foyer Enterprise also operates a graphic design business, Foyer Graphics, and last year acquired 50% share in Roadwise Driving Training providing a range of learner driving and corporate driving training services across the North East and beyond. In January 2008 Foyer Enterprise also established a small property maintenance business, Foyer Works, which operates on a social firms model i.e., provides work experience and employment opportunities for young people coming through the Foyer's wider employability programmes.

3. From passive welfare to community governance

Over the past decade these two agencies have been developing new approach towards how they interact with local clients and their local community. The two agencies have utilised some different techniques in embedding themselves into the community through renovating both internal and external relationships. While Foyer has used a social enterprise approach to develop trading activities Brophy has focused on developing an infrastructure that will provide substantial accessibility to information, activities and services within a one stop shop framework. The unifying theme is one of community capability where the role and functions of the two organisations are focused on both utilizing the existing resources of the community as well as channelling external resources into the community. They may not use the term 'community governance' in their lexicon but an analysis of the way they operate indicates that they have moved beyond a passive welfare model to one of community governance. This process can be best pictured in Fig. 1.

The paper now moves to an analysis of the activities of the Brophy and Foyer within this community governance framework.

3.1. From service delivery only to adaptation

Brophy and Foyer perceive of themselves as places in their communities where capability building for both their clients and the local community is paramount. Brophy's approach has developed around a capability building philosophy that provides many young people with a zone of comfort where they can gain access to knowledge, security, life skills and citizenship links to their local community. Some examples of programs are worth mentioning. Young parents have opportunities to learn more about caring for babies and children while also gaining confidence in themselves and

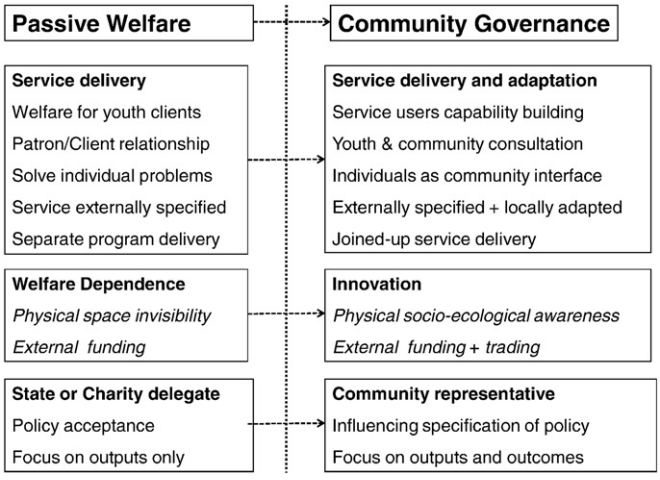

Fig. 1. Conceptual framework for distinguishing passive charity from community governance.

their abilities. Young people with health and wellbeing issues can access information and treatment through the auspices of visiting health professionals. Pathways to training and employment are opened up and young people learn how to engage with the wider community. Sexual Assault counselling is available in the privacy of specially designed counselling rooms. A coffee shop and lounge area provides venues for relaxing and socialising. An enterprising retail outlet on the street-front provides young people with the opportunity to express themselves through designing clothes and jewellery to be sold in the shop. And adorning the walls of the new complex are artworks displaying the talents — and often, the emotions — of the young people who have been, or are still, associated with the services provided by Brophy.

Foyer asserts that it's 'approach has recognised that homelessness and disadvantage is not just a matter of providing a home but necessitates addressing many of the underlying causes of homelessness and disadvantage, and critically, providing people with the means of gaining and sustaining employment' (Aberdeen Foyer, 2008). Its aim is to develop the capabilities of those disadvantaged youth through programs that lead them through a number of steps to independent living, learning and work. For example the supported accommodation program (outlined above) offers a range of programs that engages participants in a process that leads towards eventual self-reliance. This has included offering accommodation and support services for couples and young single mothers (Anderson, 2001).

An important element here is the way that both Brophy and Foyer are able to 'join-up' their service delivery. While many of the programs that Brophy and Foyer contract from different funding agencies have specific targets, such programs may be narrowly focused and produce limited outcomes for the clients. Brophy and Foyer have been able to overcome the narrowness concern by combining a range of programs into a more integrated approach. For example the supported accommodation program at Foyer aims to assist youth through a range of steps where each different program ties in consequentially. Youth can enter at different stages depending upon their capabilities. Similarly at Brophy the Headspace program is a good example of service integration whereby four core streams of mental health, drug and alcohol, primary care services and vocational services are combined to deliver one articulated intake system.

For both Brophy and Foyer instigating a strategy of change focuses not only on who gets involved but also the way in which participants get involved. Foyer includes its most immediate community of youth in the decision-making processes of the Foyer through their direct involvement in decision making from the Board through to various advisory committees (Anderson, 2001). Brophy involves young people in various advisory bodies some of which helped to develop the philosophy, structure and plan of the newly built complex. Such direct involvement in the deliberative processes of the agencies is fundamental to developing participative citizenship amongst youth (Cockburn, 2007). Both organisations also have direct involvement of other community members on their governing boards as well as advisory committees. In its planning for the new building Brophy employed a range of community committees to ensure that community had ownership of the design and philosophy of the building together with the youth.

Both agencies have shifted from a system of governance that is purely working *for* the local community in terms of the delivery of specified services to working *with* the local community where both young people and the community are included into planning the directions of the service delivery. The clients are not just customers of service delivery but also collaborators through their participation in the decision-making process. In this way both Foyer and Brophy have moved from the traditional welfare model of the patron/client relationship to one of engagement which flows from consultation and participation (Brophy Family & Youth Services, 2004b). In its equal opportunity policy Foyer explicitly states that it 'is committed to the involvement of clients in all areas of work and formal representation is provided by the Young People's Forum and through other Client open meetings held twice a year' (Aberdeen Foyer, 2009).

3.2. From welfare dependence to innovation

For Brophy the need to overcome the fragmentation of staff and service delivery, combined with a desire to provide young people with access to an ever-increasing range of community-based services and opportunities for connection with the local community evolved into a six year project to design, fund and build a new premises. The 'mission statement' set out in the Business Plan for this project highlights the main aim as being:

> … to provide a comprehensive continuum of care and support to young people in Warrnambool and surrounding districts through the provision of a community & youth complex (Brophy Family & Youth Services, 2004a)

The decision to involve the community was not purely for financial reasons but extended to the greater long term goal of greater community engagement and ownership of Brophy. Having a 'place' that could be seen in the community and in which all youth could gain access was central to the development of a model of governance that was community based, community owned and locally responsive (Flint, 2009).

The building itself provides young people with new knowledge because one of the aims is to establish an 'environmentally friendly' structure, which will serve as a model for raising awareness of environmental issues and introducing young people to innovative methods for addressing these same issues. Such an attitude derived in part from consultations with the community (especially the youth). Brophy did not just want to develop and build a new 'complex', it also wanted to create a 'built place' that could inspire clients, and the local community, to adjust behaviours and develop new ways of doing 'things'.

The way Brophy has been able to design and construct a new community premise and expand services in recent years is particularly interesting when considering how dominant political ideologies have impacted on welfare services during this same period. Brophy's involvement has mainly been in the delivery of programs designed and funded by the state, but with structural reform of the welfare sector the organisation has become more innovative in its planning for the future. Accordingly, privatisation and competitive tendering did not constrain Brophy, rather it seemed to provide an avenue for management, staff and clients to build a broader approach and vision into which new funding opportunities were moulded, thereby enhancing the development and delivery of services to young people and families in southwest Victoria. Services can now be provided to those in need; privacy of clients can be ensured; staff have room to function effectively; and most importantly disconnected youth can be united with the local community in a way that builds capacity in the locality.

Foyer has not concentrated on 'built space' in its development but has rather focused on what has been termed 'social enterprise' which can be defined as an agency that 'incorporates commercial forms of income generation into non-profit organizations as a means to accomplish mission (social value) and achieve financial sustainability (economic value)' (Alter, 2007: 57). Foyer combines income from trading enterprises with public subsidies linked to their social mission and private donations and/or volunteering. However, while they understand that achieving the mission of creating a social enterprise is mainly encapsulated in commercial financial models or income generation they also understand that social enterprise is more than just an adaptation of commercial models for use by NGOs. They see the introduction of social enterprise into new environments not

merely as a process of adopting (or adapting) existing organisational frameworks but rather focusing on the *purpose* first and then developing the organisational form after. Since they have long term vision for servicing youth in their local community they are able to mould funding opportunities to meet the vision/mission. For Foyer social enterprise comes with the realisation that 'the application of market orientation to social purpose ventures is a more complex construct than simply a path to generating financial as well as social returns' (Nicholls & Cho, 2006:102).

The aims of Foyer Enterprise businesses remain those set at the time of its formation i.e., to generate income to support the wider work of the Foyer, to provide an interface with the wider community and offer training and employment opportunities for young people. The Foyer has also established a range of productive partnerships, some of which have been developed into more formalised partnership agreements e.g., with Aberdeen College or through the formation of joint venture initiatives such as those established with a sister charity operating in Aberdeen, Instant Neighbour, and is working to expand and develop this joint working approach with other like minded social enterprise organisations.

The Roadwise Driver training is an example of focusing on social purpose in the design of a trading enterprise. It includes a Drive Road Safety Driving Package, supported by Grampian Police and Aberdeen College, combining 20 h of driving tuition with input on safe driving techniques, driving citizenship, and basic car maintenance. The benefits of the Foyer Drive Package have been recognised by the Scottish Government's Working for Families (WFF) projects in Aberdeen City & Aberdeenshire. By partnering with WFF to improve the skills of its clients the aim is to significantly enhance their employability by completing Road Safety Driving Packages.

The use of social enterprises also demonstrates the business and financial capabilities of Aberdeen Foyer in the market place. Through a demonstration of its ability to run successful business ventures Foyer is able to present itself as an agency in tune with the demands of the local economy. This is more than a marketing tool in that the application of social enterprise principles in the local community also allows Foyer to extend its network into the broader community through an enhanced contact with the business sector. In so doing the Foyer is playing a particular role in community governance through its decisions to allocate and use the resources it musters from external and trading sources for building the capability not only of its individual clients but also its local community.

3.3. From state or charity delegate to community representative

Both Brophy and Foyer are involved in *policy advocacy* which means making the effort to help powerless groups improve their lot (Jansson, 1999). Their advocacy is driven by their vision of a preferred state of affairs within their local communities and is encapsulated in the mission statements of their agencies. Both Brophy and Foyer are directly linked into a number of networks at the local, regional and national level. Membership of local boards outside of their agencies and participation in local partnerships gives both the CEOs and other agency members the opportunity to network into the local community. There are obvious advantages for their own organisations in this process in that it gives them important intelligence on local needs as well as access to important local resources. The understanding gained of the local rural and regional context is especially valuable in economies dominated by metropolitan populations centres, such as Victoria and Scotland. For example Brophy is involved in a range of local groups such the local Primary Care Partnership, the Community Southwest Alliance of Not for Profits and at a program level, the Child First Initiative and the Integrated Services against Drugs Victoria. Foyer is also involved in a large range of local groups such as Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Homelessness Strategy Groups, Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Youth Justice Strategy Groups and Aberdeen City Young People's Multi Agency Resource Forum.

Since policy networks 'prescribe the issues which are discussed and how they are dealt with' and play 'an agenda-setting role' it is important for local communities that their preferences are represented inside the specific policy network (Marsh and Smith, 2000: 6–7). The two agencies are represented in a wide range advisory committees and policy networks at the regional and national levels. For example Brophy has representation on the Southwest Regional Youth Advisory Committee and is a member of the Victoria Ministerial Youth Advisory Board that provides direct advice to the Minister of Youth Affairs on policy and issues. It also has representation on the State-wide School Focus Youth Service Program, providing advice to the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. On a Federal level, Brophy has representation on the National Connections Initiative that offers advice and feedback on the disengagement of young people from educational institutions. Foyer has access to a large number of networks and boards at regional level such as the NHS Grampian Health & Homelessness Working Group, NHS Grampian Public Health Forum and Grampian Princes Trust Board. At broader levels Foyer is represented on the Scottish Homelessness Employability Network, Scottish Food Health & Homelessness Reference Group and the Foyer Federation Benchmarking Group.

At the same time the adoption of a community governance approach by *locally* based NGOs shifts their focus from one of reporting *outputs* to one of evaluating the *outcomes* of their activity with special emphasis upon their place in the local community. Outputs here refer to the activities of the agencies at the point of their service delivery whereas outcomes are the impact of these activities. Outcomes are the things that have actually been achieved as a result of the activities of the agency whether they are intended or not (Lane & Ersson, 2000). Knowing the outcomes of particular activities allows for greater understanding of local needs and can supply the evidence for the agencies to act as local advocates in the policy making.

In this process Brophy and Foyer are no longer just merely compliant service deliverers for other funding agencies they also deliver advice into policy networks that is based upon the evidence supplied from the outcomes of local experience, including the regional context. What this entails is a shift from the supply side of governance where they measure their *outputs* according to their contractual relations with their funding agencies to the demand side of governance where they help to strengthen the voice and the capacity of the community through a concentration on the *outcomes* of their activities. They move beyond a narrow welfare function to become the agents through which local community capability is expanded.

At this stage there is little or no data available for outcomes reporting but both Brophy and Foyer are investigating ways of monitoring the movement of their clients on an ongoing basis including those who have 'completed' their service delivery as well as those who may drop out of the system on the way through. Significant issues for monitoring and evaluation are the problems associated with adopting a linear framework for assessment and action planning. Such an approach can lead to unrealistic expectations and neglect 'the structural barriers young people faced in the labour market and housing system, as well as the diversity and complexity of individual young people's lives and the choices they made' (Anderson, 2001: 9–10). Brophy and Foyer are aware of these issues and are searching for the most cost-efficient means of adopting an evaluation mechanism that is not only ongoing but also assists them in identifying those who may need further assistance.

There is a downside to a stronger commitment to an outcomes approach. As others have found in the policy debate government and bureaucrats are quick to blame those who deliver the service rather than the policy or the program that informs the service (Chambers, 2002). If in pursuing an outcomes policy Brophy or Foyer find that there are shortcomings in the programs that they deliver they will

attempt to change or adapt the direction of the program. Policy makers who see the same data will most likely not sheet the blame for any failures back to the policy initiative itself but to the deliverers of the program. Accordingly both Brophy and Foyer are leaving themselves open to negative reports from their funders and thus endangering their own existence.

Nevertheless Brophy and Foyer deem monitoring and evaluation of outcomes as the way forward for understanding the success (or failure) of programs and for subsequent adaption and renovation of existing services to meet local demands. A significant problem however is to find the necessary resources within their limited budgets. Both Brophy and Foyer have found that government funded programs are strong on output compliance but they are rarely accompanied by useful monitoring and evaluation of outcomes. Even when specialised programs are targeted for evaluation they take little account of the way that local agencies have integrated the particular program into a broader service delivery framework. What Brophy and Foyer seek to achieve is a means of reporting their outcomes to their local communities.

4. Future challenges

There are still challenges to be confronted by regionally based NGOs such as Brophy and Foyer. They have been able to seize the opportunity offered by an emergent community governance framework to create new spaces and new programs, but they still both remain reliant upon, and accountable to their external funders. Such reliance and accountability arises because the largest percentage of revenue for servicing their programs comes from government. In turn, this provides government with the capacity to impose strict monitoring strategies on those organisations receiving their share from the government coffers. Government surveillance strategies therefore impose on the service providers in three ways. Firstly, providing detailed information on service delivery at short notice, staff are detracted from their primary goal of providing a service to those who often need immediate counselling and care. Secondly, because there is no single method or database for reporting to different government departments and different tiers of government, staff from NGOs are enmeshed in an administrative web providing particular levels of government with particular information, but, due to the different methods of reporting and the complexity involved when providing reports to a range of government departments, those doing the reporting — and their organisations — are often excluded from accessing the data. Thirdly most government funding does not cover 'administrative duties' and further, the time limited program and project nature of government funding not only complicates reporting but restricts NGOs' ability to take a strategic long term approach to fulfilling their mission.

Nevertheless the capacity of these local youth agencies has been expanded to include a degree of autonomy in their decision-making, where the new institutional arrangements allow locally based agencies the resources, the control and the freedom to achieve specified outcomes in their local areas. This may mean entrepreneurial activity such as Foyer Enterprise or the construction of a new community space by Brophy. Attracting new income streams through trading or community investment in local facilities not only provides some autonomy in decision-making about resource allocation it also provides Brophy and Foyer the freedom to transcend the uncertainty of policy change and respond to local needs. This may mean connecting similar programs funded from different sources into more 'joined up' approaches for client outcomes such as the learning, education and training approach adopted by Foyer. The next step is to complete the development of a community governance framework through the establishment of an ongoing process for monitoring and evaluation of 'outcomes' that the agencies can report to their local communities thereby improving their local accountability. This requires further research and development of an outcomes evaluation framework that accounts for endogenous factors related to outputs as well as exogenous ones.

A significant challenge for both Brophy and Foyer is to ensure that focusing on a community governance approach does not bring with it problems in funding from the more centralised agencies in government and elsewhere that focus on the broader issues of equity and social justice. While a community governance approach brings the agencies closer to local constituencies and ensures local sustainability in terms of local legitimacy there is still the problems alluded to above concerning shifting blame from the policy centre to the service delivery periphery. There is also the possibility that community governance brings with it exclusivity in the competitive funding arrangements of their major donors. Balancing these concerns with their commitment to local accountability gives Brophy and Foyer a complex path to follow.

5. Conclusion

It is clear that Brophy and Foyer have adapted to many of the challenges mounted by neo-liberal and Third Way politics because they have not only survived privatisation and intense competition, but have expanded their services through their innovative local approach to service delivery. Understanding the 'local' community and utilising that knowledge to adapt to changing circumstances has obviously been beneficial to these locally based NGOs. What they have done is to shift the focus of locally based NGOs from a welfare model that means 'looking after' the individual in society to an emergent form of community governance where building individual capability improves overall outcomes for the community.

Under the previous charity framework the 'local' was often overlooked when centralized government departments or major charities made determinations concerning local/community needs. What Brophy and Foyer have adopted is a community-based framework using local knowledge networks about who will receive what type of services. Accordingly they have become central players in the local welfare governance processes and thus, even if the state maintains some level of surveillance (from a distance), their role and identity have changed. They are no longer mere 'recipients' of funding but, it would seem, are inextricably linked to the network of other participatory actors.

Although this paper examines only two NGOs working with youth there are some lessons for other organisations that follow from the observed internal leadership and external focus of the NGOs. Firstly balancing new directions with traditional visions works more effectively through direct engagement with the local community. Building the goal of community governance into the overall strategic plans for the place based NGOs means that the interests of the community are represented through this process thus developing a more inclusive role for young people. Secondly, NGOs are more likely to be more sustainable and resilient when they represent 'community' knowledge and culture when working within the network of other actors involved in the welfare sector. Thirdly, within the organisation of local place based NGOs managers and members of governing bodies need processes that monitor the vision for both the client group and its local community. In this respect they need to regularly review the 'outcomes' of their activities to ensure that the programs they deliver are serving the interests of their clients in the local community. Finally and most importantly, including youth into the decision making processes within the organisation ensures that the operation of locally based NGOs adapts to the changing needs of local communities.

This way of conceptualising NGOs as part of a broader community governance framework is important not only for the local agencies and communities but also for future policy analysis. While some critiques may dismiss this community governance approach as a mere outcome of the neoliberal dominance of state policy there is reason to

believe that these types of agencies can and do become mediating structures for negotiating and sharing the knowledge necessary for creating a more participative citizenship. The most important lesson from this research is therefore to look beyond the guidelines and constraints imposed by external funding bodies and consider the local community as a resource, especially identifying and making use of local knowledge networks.

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