The need for a complexity informed active citizenship education program

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While active citizenship education programs are assumed to have positive benefits for the active citizenship practice of participants (UNESCO, 2009, p. 4), there is actually little evidence that programs do (de Weerd, Gemmeke, Rigter & van Riji, 2005, p. vii). This paper discusses a research project that aimed to determine and increase the impact of an active citizenship education program that incorporates education for sustainability principles.

The inquiry's findings showed that while the program developed in graduates the active citizenship characteristics desired by Australian governments, graduates encountered significant systemic blocking factors related to power relations when they attempted to put what they had learned during the program into practice. The findings also highlighted the risk of the program producing a cohort of 'expert citizens'.

To address these findings and improve the interactions and working relationships between program graduates, paid community workers and other community members, a new program has been developed that is informed by complexity and adult education planning theory.

This new program recognises active citizenship as a 'wicked' problem, takes a systemic innovation approach, incorporates a participatory budgeting process, and supports participants to pass on their skills and knowledge to other community members.

Keywords: *active citizenship, wicked, systemic change, power*

Introduction

Active citizenship is a wicked problem (Day 1997, p. 421). Wicked problems are complex social policy problems that societies face which cannot be definitively described and that do not have definitive and objective solutions (Rittel & Webber, 1973, p. 155). Characteristics of wicked problems include: they are multi-causal, they have many interdependencies, attempts to address them often leads to unforeseen consequences due to their multi-causality and interdependencies, the problem and the problem's context evolve as attempts are made to address them, they require stakeholders to coordinate their approaches, and the various stakeholders have different understandings of what the problem is (Australian Public Service Commission, 2007).

Active citizenship education

One of two different understandings of active citizenship generally underpin an active citizenship education program: a communitarian notion of citizenship or a civic republicanism notion of citizenship (Annette, 2009, p. 152). The communitarian approach to citizenship education focusses on learning through volunteering and community service (Annette, 2009, p. 152). In contrast, the civic republican approach focusses on learning through civic engagement and non-formal [non-electoral (Jedwab, 2002)] political participation (Annette, 2009, p. 152).

While the three levels of government in Australia have expressed interest in citizens developing citizenship characteristics associated with a civic republican notion of citizenship, they each have a different understanding of what characteristics are important. At a local government level, the Local Government Association of South Australia

(n.d.) recognises that the success of local government community engagement processes 'rests on the need for a community well educated about civics and well informed on key issues affecting the community'. South Australian Local Government recognises the need for citizens to know what local government does and how they can be involved in the strategic planning and agenda setting for their local area (Local Government Association of South Australia, 2010).

At a state level, the former Premier of South Australia noted that while developing the civic leadership capabilities of citizens is a challenge (Weatherill, 2007), doing so is required if true partnership working between citizens and governments is to be achieved (Weatherill, 2009). A civic leadership capability considered particularly important by the former South Australian Premier was the capability of citizens to make a considered judgement rather than just providing their own opinions; citizens need to consider all the relevant information, understand differing points of view, and consider the needs of the community above their own self-interests (Weatherill, 2009).

The Australian Government's education for sustainability (EfS) strategy recognises that if Australia is to address unsustainability and promote sustainable development, education and learning needs to focus on developing 'informed and involved citizens who are able to engage with complex issues and understand the need to balance competing interests' (Department of Environment and Heritage, 2007, p. 4). To achieve this aim the Australian Government's EfS action plan focussed on developing the capability of citizens to: understand connections between environmental, economic, social and political systems; undertake collaborative visioning processes; think critically and reflect on personal experiences and world views; challenge established ways of interpreting and connecting with the world; effectively participate in decision making processes; and effectively work in partnerships (Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, 2009, p. 9).

The active citizenship capabilities desired by the Australian Government align with the key elements of EfS that are recognised in the literature: imagining a better future, systemic thinking, critical thinking and reflection, participation in decision-making, and working in partnerships (Tilbury, & Wortman 2004, p. 11). According to the literature, it is assumed that if programs contain these EfS elements:

1. graduates become active participants and decision-makers in change processes (Tilbury, & Wortman, 2004, p. 9), and

2. graduates are able to influence the organisations and the wider society that they interact with (Tilbury, 2007).

There is global interest in taking an EfS approach to active citizenship education. In 2002, to encourage the world to take action on education for sustainable development, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 2005–2014 as the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. The importance of EfS has resulted in a new pillar of learning being recognised: 'Learning to transform oneself and society', with active citizenship education being considered a key component of this pillar (UNESCO, 2009, p. 4).

Impact on active citizenship practice

Despite this interest in active citizenship education, there is little evidence that active citizenship education programs have an impact on active citizenship practice (de Weerd et al., 2005, p. vii). In fact, Brinkerhoff (2006a) considers there to be little evidence that training in general leads to valuable performance results:

> '... by many research estimates, only 15 out of 100 people that receive new training eventually use it in ways that produce valuable performance results.'

> (Brinkerhoff, 2006a, p. 303)

Insights from Brinkerhoff (2006b) also bring into question the ability of graduates from active citizenship education programs to influence the organisations and the communities they interact with as their ability to influence will depend on a complex range of system factors:

> 'There is always something else at work that interacts with the training, and enhances its effects or impedes them.'

> (Brinkerhoff, 2006b, p. 22)

> 'Best estimates are that 80 percent or more of the eventual impact of training is determined by performance system

> *factors, while the remaining 20 percent or so is driven by*
> *variations in the quality of the training intervention itself and*
> *the characteristics of the learner, such as inherent ability and*
> *motivational values.'*

<div align="right">(Brinkerhoff, 2006a, p. 304)</div>

Being a wicked problem, active citizenship (Day, 1997, p. 421) by definition is influenced by a multitude of intertwined and adapting causal factors (Australian Public Service Commission, 2007). It is therefore questionable, given this complexity, if active citizenship practice can effectively be addressed through a single education program.

Contribution of this paper

This paper contributes to the evidence on whether active citizenship education programs have an impact on the active citizenship practice of participants. It discusses a research project that aimed to determine and increase the impact of a community-based active citizenship education program that incorporates the key elements of EfS. Given that key elements of EfS were incorporated into the program it was expected that the two EfS assumptions would apply: graduates would become active participants and decision-makers in change processes (Tilbury, & Wortman 2004, p. 9) and would be able to influence the organisations and the wider society that they interact with (Tilbury, 2007).

The structure of this paper is as follows. After describing the program that is the focus of the inquiry, the research project that was undertaken is outlined. Next, the literature and theories that were applied to the inquiry's summarised data are reviewed. The paper then discusses the key research finding: that despite the program enabling participants to develop the active citizenship characteristics desired by the three levels of government in Australia, graduates were unable to implement much of what they had learned due to a range of system factors. To address this finding it is reasoned that the nature of both the interactions and the working relationships between graduates and paid community workers, and graduates and other community members needs to be improved. It is shown, by referring to the literature, that this could be achieved if the program incorporated a complex adaptive system (Lichtenstein, & Plowman 2009, p. 618) and participatory budgeting approach

(Schugurensky, 2009, p. 57). The paper concludes by describing a new program that has been developed to address the weaknesses of the original active citizenship education program.

The program

The Community Capacity Builders (CCB) Community Leadership Program is the program that was at the centre of this research study. CCB has been delivering this active citizenship program as the training component of the City of Onkaparinga's Leadership Onkaparinga Program since 2006. The City of Onkaparinga's leadership program is delivered to groups of approximately 20 residents in the Council area who have diverse education and employment backgrounds but are all actively engaged in the development of their community.

During the CCB program, each participant applies the program's 20 topics to any community issue or opportunity of their choice and progressively develops a collaborative project addressing their chosen community issue or opportunity. Prior to this study, summative program evaluations had shown that the CCB program achieves its three target learning outcomes: participants acquire the skills and knowledge required to develop collaborative community capacity building projects; bridge their projects to the strategic plans of governments and participate in community governance activities.

All of the key elements of EfS that are recognised in the literature (Tilbury, & Wortman 2004, p. 11) are incorporated into the program. During the program participants imagine a better future by exploring a range of community visioning models and techniques. They create a vision for the future for their issue or opportunity in collaboration with other community stakeholders and develop strategies and action plans to achieve preferred futures. Participants undertake systemic thinking by exploring communities as systems and by investigating the shift to integrated local area planning and networked governance. They explore the interrelationships between different perspectives for building community capacity and the need to balance human, social, economic and environmental impacts when making decisions and taking action. Critical thinking and reflection are encouraged by challenging participants' existing ways of interpreting the world as they explore global strategic directions and trends, overseas models and initiatives,

the tendency for people to preserve their own beliefs and to focus on positions rather than interests, and community issues and opportunities from seven community capacity building perspectives. These seven perspectives are a health, education, welfare reform, business, sustainability, collaborative planning and decision-making perspective. Participants' active engagement in decision making is incorporated into the program. They explore international participation frameworks; analyse methods and techniques for engaging with different types of stakeholders and explore the techniques and processes commonly used by governments for community engagement. The program has a strong focus on developing skills for working in partnership. It enables participants to cultivate collaborative leadership skills, design collaborative processes and develop a collaborative project.

The working in partnership EfS principle is a key component of the CCB program's design as the program has been created to be delivered in partnership with government. The government partner is encouraged to integrate the CCB program with initiatives they develop such as community visioning and planning forums, mentoring programs, community leadership networks, additional workshops using local guest speakers and site visits to local community initiatives and infrastructure.

The research project

To explore if the two EfS assumptions hold for the CCB program, a longitudinal research project was undertaken with the City of Onkaparinga to answer the questions:

- How does participation in the CCB program impact on the community leadership practice of participants and on their ability to influence the groups, organisations and communities that they interact with?

- What are the enabling and blocking factors participants encounter?

- How can the social impact of the CCB program be increased?

The inquiry's methodology included conducting biannual semi-structured interviews with nineteen program graduates for two and a half years. NVivo 8 software was used to transcribe the graduate interviews and undertake line-by-line open coding. As categories emerged during the coding, theoretical ideas from the literature were applied to the summarised data to determine the influence of the CCB

program on graduates and the organisations and communities that they interact with, and how to increase the program's social impact.

The nineteen graduates interviewed were participants in the first three CCB programs delivered with the City of Onkaparinga. During the three programs, the Council progressively integrated additional initiatives with the CCB program. The CCB program that provided the training component of the first Leadership Onkaparinga program was delivered between November 2006 and May 2007. This first Leadership Onkaparinga program just consisted of the CCB program, a visit to a Council public library, and two non-scheduled speakers organised by the Council. The second Leadership Onkaparinga program commenced in February 2008, finished in July 2008, and consisted of the CCB program, afternoon workshops and library visit organised by the Council, and a Council developed mentoring program. The third Leadership Onkaparinga program commenced in March 2009, finished in August 2009, and consisted of the CCB program, afternoon workshops, library visit and mentoring program organised by the Council, and site visits to infrastructure and community centres within the City of Onkaparinga.

Literature review

The theoretical ideas that were applied to the summarised data drew on insights from education, political science, public administration, democracy and complexity science literature. Three areas of interest emerged from the coded data that the literature was applied to: the perceived power imbalance between paid workers and active citizens; the risk of active citizenship education programs creating an elite group of expert citizens and the need to improve the nature of both the interactions and the working relationships between paid workers, active citizens and other community members.

Perceived power imbalance

The theory of street-level workers has informed the findings from the research project. Street-level workers are public sector and non-profit workers who interact directly with citizens in the course of their jobs and have considerable influence on citizens through their substantial discretion in how they implement public policy (Lipsky, 2010).

Wildemeersch (2007), and Wildemeersch and Vandenabeele (2007), have identified a power imbalance between street-level workers and citizens. While they initially considered the social learning that occurs when citizens engage in participatory planning processes with paid workers to be emancipating and empowering, after conducting research in a variety of contexts they came to believe such processes just replace traditional forms of coercion with new technologies of persuasion and normalisation (Wildemeersch, 2007, pp. 102–103; Wildemeersch, & Vandenabeele, 2007, p. 25). As Wildemeersch and Vandenabeele (2007, p. 25) state:

> *'Participation sometimes produces strong commitment of the actors involved, but also at other occasions, lots of refusal, resistance, and sometimes resignation when eventually, the procedures of collaboration turn out to be complex, bureaucratic, and expert-driven. We experienced in our youth policy planning research how the involvement of young people in the planning process sometimes ended up with a concentration of the power in the hands of the professional planning experts who understood best the rules of the game. Many youth-workers did not feel attracted by what they experienced as non-transparent and time-consuming procedures taking their energy away from the 'real participatory thing' namely engaging in youth-work activities with the youngsters.'*

In a similar vein, research by Levy (2018) into the interactions of public servants with members of the general public found that public servants resist public input and preferred to see decisions made by elites like themselves (Levy, 2018). The importance of addressing such perceived power imbalances between public sector workers and citizens was brought to the fore in 2004 when the findings from the British independent inquiry into how to increase and deepen political participation and involvement was released (Power Inquiry, 2006, p. 39).

Before the British Power inquiry it was believed British citizens had become apathetic about political participation (Power Inquiry, 2006, p. 41). The inquiry uncovered citizen apathy in relation to political participation was a myth; British citizens had not disengaged from political participation, they had just disengaged from the processes and institutions of formal democracy (Power Inquiry, 2006, p. 41).

The inquiry discovered lack of influence to be the one prevailing disengagement factor, which showed up through all strands of their investigation (Power Inquiry, 2006, p. 73):

> *'... the very widespread sense that citizens feel their views and interests are not taken sufficiently into account by the processes of political decision-making. It cannot be stressed enough the depth and extent of this perception amongst the British public. Many, if not all, of the other accepted explanations presented here could also be understood as variations on this theme of weak citizen influence.'*

This citizen disengagement is even more prominent today than it was at the time of the Power Inquiry. In many western countries, trust in government and the appeal of democracy continues to decline (Donaldson, 2017). As at 2017, only 11% of Australians consider Australia's current system of government to be working (Donaldson, 2017) and only 60% of Australians consider democracy to be the preferable form of government (Roggenveen, 2017). For Australians aged 18–29 this situation is even worse with only 52% considering democracy to be the preferable form of government (Roggenveen, 2017).

Cervero and Wilson (1994) address such power imbalances in their theory of adult education planning. They recognise that when there is an asymmetrical power relationship, the planning of educational programs is most likely to serve the interests of those with power (Cervero & Wilson, 1994, p. 264). Cervero and Wilson (1994, p. 261) suggest that the most appropriate adult education planning approach to address this situation is to counteract it.

Risk of creating expert citizens

The findings from this research project have been informed by the political theory of expert citizenship and republican elitism. Bang (2005, p. 160) refers to the term 'expert citizenship' to describe new forms of informed citizen activism that take shape in multi-stakeholder governance networks and partnerships (2005, p. 160). Because Bang (2005, p. 160) considers these expert citizens to be a 'relocation of republican discourse into the exercise of political authority and leadership' he refers to this new expert citizenship as 'republican elitism'.

To be included in this republican elitism, citizens require a certain level of skills and capabilities, with those who will not, do not, or cannot gain these skills and capabilities running the risk of being excluded from participation in networks and partnerships (Bang, 2005, p. 160). Further contributing to this potential exclusion, expert citizens are considered to lack the political solidarity required to address the exclusion of their fellow citizens; they are more concerned with having an impact on policy development and implementation that assists their own projects than in assisting others in the community to engage in governance decision making (Bang, 2009, p. 131).

Bornstein and Davis (2010, p. 41) and the Australian Public Service Commission (2007) highlight the harm associated with creating expert citizens. Bornstein and Davis (2010, p. 41) stress the need for a significant percentage of people and not just a few appointed or elected elites to be engaged in leadership efforts to address problems if society is to be more adaptive and resilient. The Australian Public Service Commission (2007) takes a similar view emphasising that in order to address a specific complex wicked problem all people whose behaviour needs to change have to be engaged in the collective decision-making processes required for addressing the problem. Carson (2012) has specifically highlighted this risk in association with citizenship education programs, stating: 'I reckon the Deweyan and Jeffersonian call for an educated citizenry may lead, intentionally or inadvertently, to *elite* engagement.'

The creation of expert citizens can also be detrimental to democracy. According to Dahl (1998, p. 38), five criteria are required for all citizens (not just a few expert citizens), in order to achieve an ideal democracy: effective participation, equality in voting, enlightened understanding, control over the agenda, and inclusiveness. To achieve the criteria of effective participation all citizens must be given the same opportunity to express their views during policy development (Dahl, 1998, p. 37). Equality in voting requires all citizens to be given an equal and effective opportunity to vote on decisions about policies and for each vote to be counted equally (Dahl, 1998, p. 37). Enlightened understanding requires all citizens to be given the opportunity to learn about alternative policies and the likely consequences of each one (Dahl, 1998, p. 37). To achieve control over the agenda, all citizens must have the opportunity to choose which matters and how matters should be placed on the agenda (Dahl, 1998, p. 38). Inclusiveness requires all adult permanent residents be

given the full rights of citizenship implied in the first four criteria (Dahl, 1998, p. 38).

Need to improve interactions and working relationships

Complex adaptive systems (CAS) theory has informed the findings from the research project as it provides practical insights into how to improve the interactions and working relationships between street level workers, active citizens and other community members. CAS are systems, such as communities (Amadei, 2015, p. 4), that are composed of semi-autonomous agents that can self-organise/recombine through adaption into new capabilities (Lichtenstein, & Plowman, 2009). According to CAS theory, under certain conditions interactions between these interdependent agents produce system level order (Lichtenstein, & Plowman, 2009, p. 618) as the agents interact and learn from each other, change their behaviour, and adapt and evolve to increase their robustness (Gillis, 2005, p. 10).

In addition to improving relationships between diverse stakeholders, a CAS approach is required for addressing active citizenship more generally. This is due to CAS approaches being recommended for tackling wicked problems (Davies, Mulgan, Norman, Pulford, Patrick, & Simon, 2012, p. 8) because they confront the multi-causality, interdependencies and evolving nature of wicked problems (Australian Public Service Commission, 2007).

'Systemic innovation' is an approach that improves the interactions and working relationships between diverse community stakeholders, incorporates an understanding of complexity and complex adaptive systems, and is recommended as the most appropriate form of social innovation for addressing wicked problems (Davies et al., 2012). It recognises that single initiatives on their own are incapable of addressing wicked problems (Davies et al., 2012, p. 2). Systemic Innovation is defined as 'a set of interconnected innovations, where each is dependent on the other, with innovation both in the parts of the system and in the ways that they interact' (Davies et al., 2012, p. 4).

The need for EfS active citizenship education program to take a CAS approach has recently been recognised. The UNESCO Roadmap for implementing the post-2015 Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development has identified that creating the enabling

environment for EfS to bring about systemic change is a priority area and understanding complex systems is recognised in the Roadmap as a key EfS skill (UNESCO, 2015).

Another approach that has been recommended for improving working relationships and interactions is participatory budgeting. Participatory budgeting is defined as 'a process in which citizens directly and democratically decide how to allocate part of a budget' (Baiocchi & Lerner, 2007, p. 8). According to Schugurensky (2009, p. 57), participatory budgeting can significantly address power differentials.

Research findings

While the coded responses from the graduate interviews showed that the program developed in graduates all of the active citizenship characteristics desired by the three levels of government in Australia, the two EfS assumptions did not hold for the program. Graduates reported that they encountered significant blocking factors when they attempted to put what they had learned during the program into practice. These perceived blocking factors were due to system factors, including: asymmetrical power relationships; a lack of participation opportunities for graduates; and the attitudes, skills and knowledge of other community members.

Asymmetrical power relationships

It was identified during the interviews that while graduates valued the support they had received from City of Onkaparinga staff (thirteen graduates reported receiving support from City of Onkaparinga staff), they perceived street-level workers generally as a significant blocking factor. The coded responses highlighted that graduates considered their encounters with street-level workers as expert driven and resisted by the workers: four of the graduates responded that workers do not value graduates' skills and knowledge, four graduates mentioned poor facilitation by a worker, three graduates identified the need for workers to engage better with the community, two graduates commented on workers giving graduates tokenistic roles and two graduates reported workers having negative attitudes towards them.

The following quotes from the graduate interviews suggest that the graduates perceived street-level workers as blocking them by controlling decision making:

If you don't have the power you don't get a say. It's very worker influenced.

She's [paid worker] a bit of a bully in meetings and that, so she will disregard what a person will say or she will say I know you will agree this is the only way to go about fixing the problem.

We make a decision about something … and we set the date and parents start sourcing resources so we can do it cheap. People are getting donations and then staff have a meeting and say no that's not going to work we'll have to do it ten weeks from then. That's really not valuing the decisions that are made at a meeting and not valuing the amount of work that parents put into something.

The quotes below reveal that graduates consider one reason street-level workers block them is because they do not value their skills and knowledge:

Blasting people's ideas; just because I don't have a badge with a title on it doesn't mean I don't have things to say and that they are not very valuable.

A lot of paid workers just see volunteers as providing a service … They provide not only their time, but they provide their thoughts and their ideas and just so much more.

They wouldn't have listened to me because I'm not an employee.

These findings support Wildemeersch and Vandenabeele (2007, p. 25) and Levy's (2018) findings: that professional workers who know the rules of the game have significantly more power, workers resist public input and workers prefer to see decisions made by professionals like themselves. Given the importance of addressing power imbalances identified during the Power Inquiry (2006, p. 39), the increasing distrust in government (Roggenveen, 2017), and the decline in democracy's appeal (Donaldson, 2017; Roggenveen, 2017), it is important that this power imbalance is addressed.

Lack of participation opportunities

It was identified during the interviews that graduates were eager to work with professional workers and were disappointed that they could not

find opportunities to do so. Seven of the graduates responded that there were no opportunities to participate in government decision making, four graduates mentioned that the Council could make better use of participants after the program, three graduates identified that there were no opportunities to participate at a participation level that they believed worthwhile, and one graduate commented that they considered opportunities to participate in meaningful government decision making were only for the elite.

The quotes below illustrate the lack of participation opportunities that graduates perceived:

> *I haven't been aware of any opportunities to participate in any community forum stuff.*

> *One of the biggest disappointments ... I certainly got the impression that as successful participants in the program we would be looked at by Council as potential facilitators ... that didn't happen.*

> *We often talk about this. There's almost like a deflated feeling because we get inspired so much by what's going on overseas [network governance] and the opportunities aren't here.*

> *I don't think I'm in the loop. I feel like if I was to present myself they would say "who are you". If the opportunities were there, I'd be there, because it really interests me.*

The graduates expressed desire to participate with workers in community forums and network governance opportunities aligns to the 'expert citizen' form of active citizenship described by Bang (2005, p. 160). The knowledge and skills that the graduates acquired from undertaking the CCB program has provided them with the skills and capabilities expert citizens require in order to effectively participate in governance activities that focus on achieving political outcomes (Bang, 2005, p. 160).

Attitudes, skills and knowledge of other community members

Graduates reported during the interviews that they were blocked when they attempted to share what they had learned during the program with

other community members. Eight of the graduates responded that they encountered people who do not like change and do not appreciate new ideas when they attempted to pass on what they had learned, and five graduates encountered members in their own community group or organisation that blocked them when they attempted to implement what they had learned.

The following graduate quotes suggest that graduates perceive this difficulty to be linked to the attitudes, skills and knowledge of community members:

> *Many of them are people that are really, really set in their ways, and to try and change these people's attitudes is a very, very slow educational process.*

> *It's important that we can communicate with the rest of the community, our volunteers, and can relate something towards them. At the moment if I was to bombard them with the program itself I think I would lose them ... I use to do lots of training when I was working and when you come out of it your full of beans and then you find your running against a brick wall because you have got the program but to bring other people along it's not that easy.*

> *If they don't understand it, it's "yeah but", and it's like there's no point talking to you because you have no idea what I'm talking about. So it is frustrating.*

While graduates have not portrayed the expert citizenship characteristic of a lack of political solidarity with other citizens because they are more concerned with advancing their own projects (Bang, 2009, p. 131), they have suggested that it is difficult to work with community members that have not undertaken the CCB program. Given that a significant percentage of community members need to be engaged in order to address wicked problems (Bornstein, & Davis, 2010, p. 41; Australian Public Service Commission, 2007) and that elite engagement undermines democracy (Dahl, 1998), it is important that the risk of the CCB program only producing a cohort of expert citizens is addressed.

Increasing the program's impact

Informed by these findings, the social impact of the CCB program could be increased if the asymmetrical power relationship between the CCB

program participants and the street-level workers were addressed. The adult education planning approach of counteracting asymmetrical power relationships (Cervero, & Wilson, 1994, p. 261) could be assisted by including content into the program that shifts the power dynamics.

The social impact of the CCB program could also be increased by addressing the risk of the program producing expert citizens. This could be assisted if program graduates were supported to pass on what they learn during the CCB program to other community members.

To address the asymmetrical power relations and the risk of producing expert citizens, the interactions and the working relationships between graduates and street-level workers, and graduates and other community members needs to be improved. According to CAS theory this could be achieved if favourable conditions are established (Lichtenstein, & Plowman, 2009, p. 618) that enable stakeholders to learn from each other, adjust their behaviour, and increase their robustness by adapting and evolving (Gillis, 2005, p. 10). Incorporating systemic innovation and participatory budgeting approaches into the program would contribute towards these favourable conditions (Davies, et al., 2012; Schugurensky, 2009, p. 57).

The new program

In response to the inquiry's findings, CCB has developed a new five-unit, project-based active citizenship education program that is embedded in a participatory budgeting process. The participatory budgeting process provides program participants, street-level workers and community members with the opportunity to directly and democratically decide how to allocate a pool of funds towards active citizenship learning experiences that are developed by participants during the program (Baiocchi, & Lerner, 2007, p. 8).

Unit 1 of the new program is titled 'Active Citizenship'. During this unit participants explore: the communitarian and civic republicanism citizenship approaches (Annette, 2009, p. 152), why active citizenship is considered a wicked problem (Day, 1997, p. 421), the concept of street-level workers (Lipsky, 2010) and the decline in support for democracy (Roggenveen, 2017).

Unit 2 'Understanding Solution Ecosystems' focusses on taking a systemic innovation approach to strengthen active citizenship in communities. It

includes the key EfS skill of understanding complex systems (UNESCO, 2015) and the systemic innovation tasks of researching and mapping the ecosystem of initiatives and innovations in a community that are contributing towards active citizenship (Davies, et al., 2012).

Unit 3 is titled 'Social Movements'. During Unit 3, social movements are explored as a form of counterpower that involves social actors challenging 'the power embedded in the institutions of society for the purpose of claiming representation for their own values and interests' (Castells, 2015, p. 5). A range of social movement types is explored, including: reform, revolutionary, redemptive, alternative and resistance movements (Little, McGivern, & Kerins, 2016, p. 923).

'Community Organizing' is the focus of Unit 4. During this unit participants compare power from the conflict and the consensus community organising approaches (Ohmer, & DeMasi, 2008). They also develop a power map. Power maps show the key actors that are involved with an issue, defines the power they have in relation to decisions and resources, and analyse relationships between the actors (Noy, 2008, p. 4).

Unit 5, 'Community Education' addresses the identified need for program participants to share what they learn during the program with other community members. During Unit 5, participants take a learning experience design approach to develop an active citizenship learning experience that incorporates some of the active citizenship capabilities that they have covered in previous units. Learning experience design is defined as 'the process of creating learning experiences that enable the learner to achieve the desired learning outcome in a human centered and goal-oriented way' (Floor, 2018).

Conclusion

The research project described in this paper, has investigated if two EfS assumptions apply to an active citizenship education program. It was found that the EfS assumptions did not hold for the CCB program: graduates were not actively participating and making decisions in change processes (Tilbury, & Wortman, 2004, p. 9) and were not able to influence systems change (Tilbury, 2007).

More broadly, this paper has contributed to the evidence on whether active citizenship education programs benefit active citizenship practice.

The inquiry found that while graduates did develop the active citizenship capabilities desired by Australian governments, systemic blocking factors prevented the graduates from being able to put these capabilities into practice.

Given that active citizenship is a wicked problem (Day, 1997, p. 421), influenced by a multitude of intertwined and adapting causal factors (Australian Public Service Commission, 2007), it is probably naive to expect that an individual program can embed active citizenship practice in a community without tackling the complexity (Davies, et al., 2012, p.8). To address these findings a new active citizenship program has been developed that does recognise the complexity of active citizenship.

This new program aims to increase the social impact of the original program by: including content that shifts the identified power dynamics, creating an ecosystem of active citizenship initiatives that are developed and delivered to other community members by participants; and improving the interactions and working relationships between paid workers and active citizens. To determine if this new program has a greater social impact than the original program further research is required.

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