Enhancing Social Capital in Children via School-Based Community Cultural Development Projects: A Pilot Study

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Abstract

This exploratory pilot study investigates the extent to which participating in a community cultural development (CCD) initiative builds social capital among children. An independent youth arts organisation implemented two cultural activities, developing a compact disc of original music and designing mosaic artworks for a library courtyard, in two schools located in a socio-economically disadvantaged area of South-East Queensland, Australia. After participation in the project, 39 primary school children aged 9 to 13 years completed a generic *Social Capital in Children Questionnaire* designed specifically for evaluating arts projects. Findings support the role of CCD within schools for enhancing social capital in young people, identifying a range of positive impacts regarding self-concept, reciprocity, feelings of obligation, extended networks and trust. The results suggest that program components, such as facilitating 'friendship' connections between children and designing activities that incorporate the sharing of materials, equipment and tools to facilitate reciprocity, should be an important focus for developing arts programs within a social capital framework.

Introduction

There is increasing recognition that community cultural development (CCD) initiatives, which emphasise interaction, collaboration and creativity via arts-based projects, facilitate individual and community wellbeing. In CCD programmes, community members work with artists to creatively express their life experiences and the culture of their community, with these collaborations on a wide range of artistic and creative endeavours frequently generating significant social and economic benefits (Queensland Department of Housing and Department of Education and the Arts, 2005). With international research suggesting that CCD programmes can promote social development, community identity and social connectedness, particularly within marginalized and disadvantaged communities, encouraging participation in community cultural/arts programs is viewed as one way to foster community integration and connectedness (Murray & Tilley, 2004; Williams, 1997). Thus, this article investigates the extent to which participating in a community cultural development (CCD) initiative might build social capital among children, documenting the impact developing a compact disc of original music and designing mosaic artworks for a library courtyard had on students residing in a socio-economically disadvantaged area of South-East Queensland, Australia.

The Role of Social Capital in Community Wellbeing

Community arts and cultural activities are increasingly viewed as a 'catalyst in building strong communities. The argument is that CCD initiatives provide a way to build social capital and capacity in communities, establishing and re-creating links, networks and partnerships among community members. Researchers and policy-makers believe that building social capital, most simply defined as community connectedness and "the connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them" (Putnam, 2000, p. 18), will facilitate both individual wellbeing and help revitalise communities (Kawachi, Kennedy & Glass, 1999; Putnam, 2000). Indeed, social capital is viewed as an essential element of a civil society, with Putnam (2000) arguing that "our schools and neighbourhoods don't work so well when community bonds slacken, our economy, our democracy, and even our health and happiness depend upon adequate stocks of social capital" (p. 27). Unfortunately, the reality is that changing global trends in community structures and family relationships are resulting in lower levels of social capital and connectedness, directly threatening the social, emotional, cognitive and physical well-being of children and young people:

> …families are on their own. Family privacy, economic prosperity, and mobility patterns all separate parents and children from traditional sources of support and feedback … Isolation is contagious, we become estranged from each other and all families lose the social support of close and caring loved ones (Garbarino & Abramowitz, 1992, p. 94).

For children and families residing in marginalized and socio-economically disadvantaged communities, often facing numerous barriers in terms of differential access to resources, power, and the process of social learning and reproduction of values, knowledge and norms of behaviour (Bourdieu, 1986), initiatives designed to build social capital and community connectedness may be particularly valuable. Indeed, Woolcock and Narayan (2000) argue that "communities endowed with diverse stocks of social networks and civic associations are in a stronger position to confront poverty and vulnerability and take advantage of new opportunities (p. 226). Yet, whilst research has shown that CCD initiatives are an effective and innovative way to engage traditionally hard-to-reach groups such as youth and socio-economically disadvantaged populations (Pope, 2006), very little is known about the development of social capital in children or the potential role of CCD initiatives in engaging and developing social capital in children from socio-economically disadvantaged communities. Thus, this research is designed as the first step in filling this knowledge gap.

Little research has explicitly examined stocks of social capital in children. However, qualitative research in the United Kingdom by Morrow (1999, 2001) has highlighted how young people experience their local community and schools, illustrating that their "choice and freedom are constrained by everyday contexts, and a range of community, environmental, and socio-economic factors" (Morrow, 1999, p.761). More recently, Harpham (2003) proposed a theoretical model describing the potential relationship between social capital and child welfare outcomes, with mediating variables related to caregivers in the child's life and dispositional aspects of the child. Key aspects of social capital emphasised by Harpham (2003) include the extent of participation in networks; emotional and instrumental support gained; trust and reciprocity and shared norms which are in turn linked to child welfare outcomes such as physical health, mental health, cognitive skills, and life skills. Harpham (2003) hypothesised that enhancing social capital in the lives of children leads to positive long-term social, emotional, cognitive and physical benefits for children, and emphasised the growing importance of conducting exploratory research that examines this hypothesised link.

Social Capital and Community Cultural Development Initiatives
One way of fostering social capital in children may be through participation in community cultural/arts programs, whereby the process of community integration and connectedness occurs through the creative capacity of the people who participate (Kingma, 2002). Typically, CCD programs involve activities whereby children and young people collaborate with professional artists on a community-based arts project. Projects have at their disposal a range of art forms whereby, each "engages in its own way specific physical, cognitive, and affective processes – modes of thought in action" (Arts Education Partnership, 2004, p.6). Unlike traditional school-based approaches, community arts initiatives may naturally foster social capital by emphasising the value of collaboration, the respecting and valuing of diversity, extending networks, and prioritising the sharing of cognitive, emotional, social and physical

resources. In a recent review, Holloway and Krensky (2001) highlighted how and why arts education and projects impact the lives of children; the arts provide a unique opportunity for sustained personal and social change, as "art making is able to create a free space in which young people can envision different possibilities of themselves and their communities" (Krensky, 2001, p427). Critically, arts programs are particularly appropriate in socio-economically disadvantaged communities, contributing to the building of protective factors in children (Gasman & Anderson-Thompkins, 2003) and demonstrating considerable success in terms of "attracting, engaging, and retaining even the toughest kids" (Milner, 2000, p.11).

To date, although arts programs have demonstrated significant benefits in terms of the social, cognitive and emotional development of children, research has not explicitly investigated if or how participating in art programs might build social capital amongst children. Notably, however, research has demonstrated that children participating in arts programs typically report increased self-esteem, social skills, and academic achievement (Deasy, 2002; Getty Institute for the Arts, 1996; Mason & Chuang, 2001; Milner, 2000; Straub, 1994). Arts programs reinforce support networks, provide opportunities for community participation, extend community possibilities and improve the general well being of participants (Kingma, 2002; Milner, 2000). For example, recent research in Australia found that participating in drama and music arts programmes had a positive impact on students' self-esteem, engagement with learning, and ability to work cooperatively with others (Bryce et al., 2004). In particular, participation was beneficial for those who had difficulties with conventional learning and enjoyed being able to express themselves without reading or writing. Similarly, in qualitative research exploring the meaning and value of the arts in Australian children's lives, Barrett and Smigiel (2003) reported that the arts offered a way to escape from reality and communicate thoughts and feelings; for example, one participant commented "*when you are doing art it is like talking to someone who won't criticize and won't say nasty things back if you tell them*". On the other hand, the arts can be a meaning-making practice, promoting independent and critical thought; for example, Rolling (2008) documents how children instructed to sketch a political cartoon about social injustice in the world or community convey their opinions about issues as diverse as the inequity between developing and developed countries, wildlife conservation and the Iraq war. Thus, it seems that involvement in CCD initiatives and arts projects can provide young people with a safe place to explore and express ideas.

Recently, a three year evaluation of the Mosaic Youth Theatre of Detroit demonstrated that participation had a significant and ongoing positive impact on the social and emotional development of urban youth, particularly in the three key domains of skills, self, and society (Gutiérrez & Spencer, 2008). Qualitative and quantitative measures demonstrated that the Mosaic Model helped build both individual and social capital: as well as increases in grades and self-expectations, participants reported developing positive supportive social networks. Specifically, participants reported developing a sense of belonging to the Mosaic family

(73%) and trusting relationships with other young people (96%) and adults (89%). Crucially, qualitative research and anecdotal evidence suggests that the strong social ties and social capital developed is a significant asset to 'Mosaic Alumni', facilitating social support, career guidance and job opportunities.

Despite significant interest in how cultural and arts programs might build resilience and social capital in youth and children, very little research has explicitly applied a social capital lens to assessing the efficacy of specific arts programs or interventions. Thus, this exploratory pilot study utilises a social capital framework to investigate the potential benefits of participating in CCD projects. Our aim was to better understand how and if participating in CCD initiatives lead by an independent youth arts organisation, developing a compact disc of original music and designing mosaic artworks for a library courtyard, impacts the development of social capital in school children residing in a socio-economically disadvantaged area of South-East Queensland, Australia. Our hope is that this exploratory research can help inform future evaluations of social capital in arts programs and, in doing so, highlight the value of a quantitative study of the arts.

Methodology

A collaborative joint research project was undertaken with an independent youth arts organisation to investigate the impact of community cultural development projects on young people from two schools in the South-East Queensland region. Students from these two schools were among 600 students from the region who participated in the arts projects funded through the Queensland Department of Housing's Community Renewal program, which targeted schools located in socio-economically disadvantaged areas. Programs were delivered by Catalyst Youth Arts Organisation Inc.

At one school, three musicians worked with Years 5, 6 and 7 to create a compact disc of original music based on the theme of the environment ('Music' School). Students worked with the musicians to write the lyrics and melody for the song and perform it playing various instruments and singing. Students then recorded the song in a recording studio. At the second school, a mosaic artist worked with a class of Year 5s to re-design their library courtyard and install mosaic artworks that they had created ('Courtyard' School). The students in this group worked with artists to create an outdoor clay/concrete mosaic to beautify the school's library courtyard. These students were also part of a documentary made about the mosaic project. A 'showcase' of projects was held at a local entertainment centre one weekend, incorporating students from the two schools in the present study, and five others located in the region.

Participants

A total of 39 primary school students (27 females, 12 males) from the Courtyard School (n=10) and the Music School (n=29) volunteered to complete the questionnaire. This represents approximately 24% of all students that participated in the programs at these schools. The mean age of the sample was 10.6 years (ranging from 9 to 13 years of age), with half of the sample in grades four/five (middle-grades) and half in grades six/seven (upper-grades). Approximately ten percent of the students preferred to speak a language other than English at home (predominantly Vietnamese). Given the relatively small number of respondents, the two arts programmes are combined in this analysis.

Instrument

A survey instrument, incorporating quantitative and open-ended components, was developed to explore social capital outcomes in the context of the programs conducted. The first section recorded the demographic details of the students such as school, age, grade, and gender. The second section included questions regarding the assessment of the project logistics, such as the adequacy of the project's length, participant satisfaction with the project and the artists, and ideas to improve future art projects. The third section comprised indicators of social capital including self esteem, trust, sharing of resources and skills, reciprocity (participant's willingness to help each other), extended networks, feelings of obligations towards others, safety, and the ability to work with people who are different from themselves.

The social capital items were patterned after questions developed by Onyx and Bullen (2000) in their study measuring social capital in five communities in New South Wales, with the language simplified and adapted to children in the age range of the final sample. The first version of the questionnaire was piloted with a group of 12 primary school students similar in age to the target group to examine any language comprehension difficulties that students may encounter. As Table 1 illustrates, consistent with Onyx and Bullen (2000), the final survey instrument covered the social capital domains of self-concept, reciprocity, extended networks, feelings of obligation, and feelings of trust and safety.

Procedures

Questionnaires were delivered to the two participating schools and teachers asked the students to complete the questionnaires (subject to prior consent), and to leave completed questionnaires with teaching staff. Not all students that participated in the arts projects were available to survey on the day questionnaires were distributed, resulting in a response rate of approximately 24%.

Table 1: *Social Capital Domains*

Variable	Operationalised by:
Self-concept	feeling better about oneself, the belief of having skills worthy of sharing with others, the belief of having the capacity to do things as well as others, and the belief of being able to make friends with others
Reciprocity	help given and received by participants, and the type of help such as the sharing of skills, knowledge, and/or equipment and tools.
Extended networks	ability to make new friends from their own class and from other classes, ability to meet teachers they had not met before, ability to make friends with the artists and to make friends from other schools, and involvement in activities external to school.
Feelings of obligation towards others	perceptions regarding their own component of the art project
Trust	feelings of trust towards other in the project and their ability to work with people who are different from themselves.
Feelings of safety	perceptions of safety in their school during their participation in the art project.

Results

Analysis

Completed survey data from the 39 primary school students was analysed using SPSS statistical software for quantitative data, with thematic analysis was carried out on open-ended items. As the study is exploratory in nature and intended as a pilot study, a number of limitations constrain the analyses. Firstly, the sample size is small (N=39). Secondly, there are significantly more students in the sample from the Music School than the Courtyard School (74.4% vs. 25.6%; $\chi2(1, 39) = 9.26$, p<.05). Thirdly, there are significantly more female students than male students (69.2% vs. 30.8%; $\chi2(1,39)=5.78$, p<.05). Finally, this was a cross-sectional study, with no opportunity to track changes via a pre and post evaluation. In light of these limitations, therefore, the results presented below must be viewed as preliminary and interpreted with caution. Results have been presented according to the two sections in the survey: project logistics and social capital indicators, with the focus of analyses on the social capital items in the survey and how these items can be refined in future evaluations. For the analysis, a series of nonparametric chi-square analyses (appropriate for the small sample size) were conducted to determine whether the observed frequencies differ from the frequencies that we would expect by chance.

Project Logistics

The second section of the survey instrument assessed project logics, including the project's length, satisfaction with the project content and artists/facilitators and ideas for future improvement. The majority of students found both the length of the entire project (86.8%, n=38) and the length of each session (64.9%, n=37) to be "just right, we got everything done". Almost all of the sample enjoyed working with the artists (97.4%), with participants response to an open-ended question about "why?" indicating that they enjoyed working with the artists because they used the children's ideas, were non-judgemental and the fun nature of activities. For example, students commented that: "Most of the time it was you getting your ideas used", "They were understanding when you had a problem", and "Because it was fun making the song and hearing it played". In response to a question about "What parts of the Art Project did you enjoy the most and Why?" children identified elements of the project such as doing things that they hadn't done before, doing things that were fun and exciting and having input into the process as major parts of the project that they enjoyed. The following typify responses given: "Making the mosaics. Because we could design it ourselves", "Singing because it was fun", and "The recording because it was new and exciting".

In terms of aspects of the project that the participants did not enjoy, almost half of the sample did not identify any parts of the project that they did not enjoy. Those that did find elements of the project not enjoyable identified boredom, slow parts of the project and difficulties over making decisions as major reasons for their dissatisfaction. Comments such as: "Staying back after school. I found I got bored", "Writing the songs because it took a long time", and "Fighting with friends because of ideas that we didn't agree on" demonstrate elements of the project not enjoyed by some students. Indeed, when asked about their ideas on how to make the art project better, students identified involving more grades (children of differing ages), doing different activities such as dancing, and extending the length of projects to include different options.

Social Capital Indicators

Table 2 presents the frequencies of responses in percentage terms for the total sample, with missing responses excluded from analyses. Results are presented based on the social capital domains of self-concept, reciprocity, extended networks, feelings of obligation and feelings of trust and safety. There were no significant differences in response patterns by gender or grade for any social capital domains, although there were significant differences by school/program in the Reciprocity and Extended Networks domains.

Table 2: *Survey Responses by Social Capital Domain*

	N	Yes (%)	No (%)	χ2
SELF-CONCEPT:				
Has participating in the art project changed any of the following things?				
I feel better about myself	37	**67.6**	32.4	4.57*
I have skills to share with others	38	**73.7**	26.3	8.53*
I can do things as well as others	37	**67.6**	32.4	4.57*
I can make friends easier	37	51.4	48.6	0.03
RECIPROCITY:				
Did you help others?	37	**89.2**	10.8	22.73*
How did you help others?				
Sharing my skills	34	**73.5**	26.5	7.53*
Sharing what I know	35	**94.3**	5.7	27.46*
Sharing paintbrushes, instruments etc.	35	54.3	45.7	0.26
Did other kids help you?	35	80.0	20.0	12.60*
How did other kids help you?				
Sharing their skills	31	**90.3**	9.7	20.16*
Sharing what they know	31	**96.8**	3.2	27.13*
Sharing paintbrushes, instruments etc.	31	51.6	48.4	0.03
EXTENDED NETWORKS:				
Thinking about the people you have met:				
Have you made new friends in your class?	39	46.2	53.8	.23
Have you made friends with students in other classes?	39	64.1	35.9	3.10
Have you met teachers you didn't know before	39	**66.7**	33.3	4.33*
Did you make friends with the artists?	39	**92.3**	7.7	27.92*
Have you made new friends from other schools?	39	30.8	**69.2**	5.77*
Do you participate in Arts activities outside of your school?	39	30.8	**69.2**	5.77*
FEELINGS OF OBLIGATION:				
Did you feel you had to finish your part of the Art Project?	38	**84.2**	15.8	17.79*
TRUST & SAFETY:				
Did you trust other kids participating in the project?	38	94.7	5.3	30.42*
Did you enjoy working with other kids who are different from you?	38	100.0	-	-
Did you feel safe?	38	**97.4**	2.6	34.10*

p<0.05 (items in bold are significantly different)

Self-Concept

As Table 2 illustrates, students' perceptions of their self concept significantly altered as a result of their involvement in the art projects. As a result of their involvement, *over two thirds said that that feel better about themselves, had skills they could share with others and could do things as well as others.* However, it is important to note that there was no significant difference for the item measuring how easy it is to make friends. Notably, when asked in an open-ended question if they "have noticed any other changes in your life because of the Art Project?", approximately half identified feelings of increased self-confidence as a change in their lives as a result of their involvement and others commented on a motivation to engage in more arts-base activities. The following comments typify responses given: "I'm excited about doing more arts and I'm confident in my singing" and "I think it took some shyness out of me, so I feel good now".

Reciprocity

The *majority of students helped and received help from others* in the art project, specifically skills and knowledge. However, students were less likely to share materials, with only half reporting sharing paintbrushes, pencils or musical instruments. Notably, all Courtyard School participants reported sharing art project materials with others, whilst only a third (36%) of the Music School participants reported sharing materials with others ($\chi2$ (1,35)=9.35, p<.05).

Extended Networks

Approximately two-thirds of students reported that they had met teachers they didn't know before and *made friends with the artists*. However, most students felt that they had not made new friends from other schools, with no significant difference in items measuring whether they had made new friends in their own or other classes. There was a significant difference in terms of making new friends in class depending on the arts activity, however; significantly more students at the Courtyard School felt that they had made new friends in their class than the Music School (80.0% vs. 34.5%; $\chi2$ (1,39)=4.50, p<.05). Overall, a significant majority of students also reported that they do not participate in arts activities outside of school.

Feelings of Obligation, Trust and Safety

Participants reported *strong feelings of obligation, trust and safety*, with most feeling they had to complete their part of the project (84%), trusting the other children participating in the project (95%), enjoying working with children different from themselves (100%) and feeling safe (97%). Qualitative data support the finding that students enjoyed the diversity of participants, with responses to the open-ended question "What did you learn about your friends, class, school and family…?" strongly indicating an appreciation of diversity, the talents of others and trust, as major learnings by the students. The following typify responses given: "That people will show their talents if they have the opportunity", "That they all have extremely great talent", and "That we can all trust each other".

Discussion

The findings of this pilot study highlight the role that school-based community cultural development projects may play in facilitating social capital in children and young people, specifically feelings of reciprocity, obligation, trust and safety. Students clearly enjoyed the collaborative and creative process that is an integral component of arts projects, reporting that they helped and received help from others, felt obligated to complete their part of the project, trusted and enjoyed working with the other children and felt safe. Of course, the findings must be interpreted in the context of the limitations of this exploratory research, specifically the small sample size, the cross-sectional research design, the reliance on single-item self-report indicators and the development of our own non-validated measure of social capital. Nevertheless, the findings of this pilot study provide some guidance for researchers wishing to quantifiably measure "social capital" in arts programs. Thus, we will discuss – in turn - the key findings and implications, project limitations, and suggestions for future researchers, including the development of a revised and generic "Social Capital in Children Questionnaire – Arts Projects."

Pilot Project Key Findings and Implications

First, this exploratory research has suggested that school-based community cultural development projects offer one way to build social capital in children (Harpham, 2003). Critically, when reflecting on the experience of participating in the art projects, students reported that it had positively altered both their self-concept and their interactions with others. There were significant differences in each of the five social capital domains measured: self-concept, reciprocity, extended networks, feelings of obligation, feelings of trust and safety. For example, in the *Self-concept* domain, participation in the arts project clearly facilitated student's believing in themselves, their own skills and contributions. Notably, it did not appear to facilitate the belief in the ability to make new friends; as this could be due to the nature of the projects and the time available to facilitate friendship processes, future research should track whether specific arts projects impact on self-concept and friendship differently. A belief in the ability to make friends is an area of self-concept that requires greater attention in program design, in order to facilitate children engaging with each other, in addition to teaching and project staff.

Within the *Reciprocity* and *Feelings of Obligation* domains, participation in the arts project fostered positive and collaborative interactions with others; the majority of students reported sharing their skills and knowledge with others, felt that others had also shared their skills and knowledge in return and felt obligated to finish their part of the Art Project. Such findings highlight how students benefited from the collaborative process that is often an integral aspect of many CCD projects. These findings highlight the importance of explicitly including elements of reciprocity and establishing opportunities for the sharing of skills, knowledge and materials, so that participation in arts programs results in both the appreciation of their won

skills and the skills of others. In addition, the *Feelings of Trust and Safety* domain illustrated
the high levels of trust and feelings of safety experienced, as well as the enjoyment gained
from working with children different from themselves. Importantly, it is clear that an
environment of trust was created, where children were able to openly participate and to share
and receive skills, knowledge and materials. The *Extended Networks* domain of social capital
highlighted that children strongly connected with the artists; the friendships gained with the
artists suggest a move away from traditional instructor-student relationships to one where
power is located more equally between student and 'teacher'. Indeed, open-ended responses
from the students indicates that the artists using the children's ideas, the artists being non-
judgemental and the fun nature of activities were major reasons for the children's enjoyment
in working with the artist. Future projects need to pay attention to the processes that facilitate
children engaging with each other, in addition to teaching and project staff. Interestingly, it is
important to note that the nature of the arts activity and the subsequent collaborative process
may also impact on the development of extended networks; compared to the Music School
significantly more students at the Courtyard School reported sharing project materials and felt
that they had made new friends in their class. As this could be due to the differing nature of
activities, it is essential that further qualitative and quantitative research explicitly explores the
impact of participating in different cultural development activities on social capital in
children.

Pilot Project Implications and Limitations
It is important to note that these findings are exploratory at best, with this pilot study designed
to examine possible quantitative research designs in the arts and for the further refinement of an
instrument to measure social capital in children. Before we focus on the survey, it is important
to emphasise that the small sample size and cross-sectional design are key limitations of this
exploratory study. In addition, although responses were anonymous and collated, the survey
was administered by teachers in a school setting. Finally, future researchers should endeavour to
utilise a longitudinal quantitative and qualitative research design to capture change, measuring
self-concept and social capital both before and after participation in an arts program (Saldaña,
2005). Whilst this was unfortunately impossible logistically in the current project, our research
provides some valuable insight into how social capital might be measured in the context of
participation in arts projects.

As there was no suitable pre-existing validated measure available, we developed a working
definition and brief measurement of key social capital domains specifically for this research.
As with any pilot study, this tool needs refinement and further testing; whilst we believe the
tool adequately captures five key domains of social capital, we would recommend that other
researchers interested in collecting statistical evidence from their program participants
consider refining some of the items and the measurement approach. First, to make completion
of the survey quicker and easier for the children, we utilised a categorical "yes/no" response

option; on reflection a five point Likert scale anchored at 1 (strongly agree) and 5 (strongly agree) would have better captured differences. Second, to keep the questionnaire completion time short, we limited the total number of questions and the number of questions within each domain was not equal; for example there were several questions on reciprocity, but only one item measured the *Feelings of Obligation* domain of social capital.

To assist future researchers interested in collecting statistical evidence from their program participants, Table 3 below outlines our recommendations for a refined and generic "*Social Capital in Children Questionnaire – Arts Projects*" for use in a post-hoc project evaluation setting. Within the *Self-concept* domain, we would recommend calling children's attention to their participation in the arts project and combining the "sharing skills and knowledge items" in the *Reciprocity* domain. In the *Extended Networks* domain, we recommend focusing solely on friendship formation with students and artists; thus, we would delete the item about "meeting teachers you didn't know before", and combining the "contact with other classes/other schools" items. As Tale 3 illustrates, we suggest adding two additional items that capture the team work dimension to the *Feelings of Obligation* domain, and keeping the *Feelings of Trust and Safety* domain essentially the same. Of course, researchers should adjust, remove and insert specific items as needed to best measure the impact of their programme – however, this generic survey provides an initial framework to guide the formation of survey items. In addition, we would also recommend conducting qualitative research in conjunction with this survey, to more fully capture the impact of participation on social capital. If that is not possible, open-ended questions about each domain in the survey are strongly recommended.

Table 3: *Generic Social Capital in Children Questionnaire – Arts Projects*

Self Concept	Strongly disagree ▼	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree ▼
Because I participated in the arts project, I feel better about myself	1	2	3	4	5
Because I participated in the arts project, I have more skills to share with others	1	2	3	4	5
Because I participated in the arts project, I realised I can do things as well as others	1	2	3	4	5
Because I participated in the arts project, I can make friends easier	1	2	3	4	5

Reciprocity	Strongly disagree ▼	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree ▼
When I participated in the arts project, *I* helped other children	1	2	3	4	5
When I participated in the arts project, *I* helped other children by sharing my skills and what I know	1	2	3	4	5
When I participated in the arts project, *I* helped other children by sharing instruments, paintbrushes etc	1	2	3	4	5
When I participated in the arts project, *the other children* helped me	1	2	3	4	5
When I participated in the arts project, *the other children* shared their skills and knowledge with me	1	2	3	4	5
When I participated in the arts project, *the other children* shared their instruments, paintbrushes etc with me	1	2	3	4	5

Extended Networks	Strongly disagree ▼	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree ▼
When I participated in the arts project, I made new friends in my class	1	2	3	4	5
When I participated in the arts project, I made new friends in other classes and/or from other schools	1	2	3	4	5
When I participated in the arts project, I make friends with the artists	1	2	3	4	5
Before this arts project, I had participated in arts activities outside of school	1	2	3	4	5

Feelings of Obligation	Strongly disagree ▼	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree ▼
When I participated in the arts project, I felt I had to finish my part of the Art Project	1	2	3	4	5
When I participated in the arts project, I felt we were working together well to create something unique	1	2	3	4	5
When I participated in the arts project, I felt part of a team	1	2	3	4	5

Feelings of Trust & Safety	Strongly disagree ▼	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree ▼
When I participated in the arts project, I trusted the other kids participating in the project	1	2	3	4	5
When I participated in the arts project, I enjoyed working with other kids who were different from me	1	2	3	4	5
When I participated in the arts project, I felt safe	1	2	3	4	5

Conclusion

As the majority of students do not engage in arts activities outside of school, these preliminary findings suggest that community-based arts initiatives within schools may serve as a vehicle for the enhancement of social capital, particularly in the context of socio-economically disadvantaged communities where this research was conducted. A wealth of literature has illustrated that the social networks within a community have a significant impact on wellbeing and opportunities (Bourdieu, 1986; Morrow, 1999; 2001; Putnam, 2000; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000); thus, strategies and initiatives designed to foster social capital, establishing the foundations for individual achievement and community connectedness by encouraging and facilitating interpersonal relationships, engagement, trust, and collaborative ways of working, are essential. Unfortunately, there is currently very limited data on social capital indicators for children or the potential role of CCD initiatives in engaging and developing social capital in children or young people (for an exception, see Gutiérrez & Spencer, 2008). Thus, this research provides some initial insight into how to use a social capital lens to evaluate the benefits for children of participating in arts projects.

Overall, the present study suggests participating in arts projects may promote the engagement of students, the building of self-concept, feelings of reciprocity, extending of networks and feelings of trust and safety. Learning new skills, or participating in activities that the students have not done before and perceive as 'fun', such as the development of a musical compact disc or the art of mosaics, contributes to student engagement and enjoyment. The projects in the present study demonstrate a desired dynamic between facilitators and students, collaborative in nature, creating a safe environment whereby children's input is valued and incorporated into the program process. This research suggests that community cultural development programs may offer one way to build social capital in children, reinforcing the building blocks of social capital by extending support and friendship networks (Deasy, 2002; Mason & Chuang, 2001), providing opportunities for active, safe, collaborative participation (Milner, 2000), and improving self-concept and social skills (Kingma, 2002). Redefining the

value of community arts projects in terms of social capital may lead to recognition of the longer term, and wider community benefits of participation in such activities for children, particularly those residing in socio-economically disadvantaged areas with lower social capital. As the enhancement of social capital in children in such areas may contribute to the strengthening of community bonds and connectedness, future research should further explore the value of community arts projects from a social capital lens.

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