THE GLUE THAT BINDS:
DESIGNING AND EVALUATING PROJECTS TO INCREASE SOCIAL CAPITAL IN REFUGEE COMMUNITIES IN AUSTRALIA

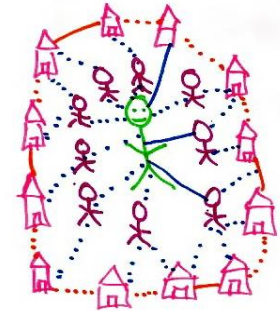# OUTCOMES OF THE SOCIAL CAPITAL RESEARCH PROJECT

AUTHORS: LINDA BARTOLOMEI, EMMA PITTAWAY, GERALDINE DONEY AND KRISTY WARD

Why we undertook the Project

- Increasing interest by funders and governments in supporting projects to build Social Capital
- STARTTS has had a long running interest in the development of social capital as an important means of recovering from trauma and facilitating successful settlement.
- Limited research exploring social capital among resettled refugees
- Limited research from the perspective of refugees
- Lack of relevant indicators
- Ethical challenges

Aims of the Project

˝ Understand what social capital means to refugee communities, and identify what aspects of social capital are important in settlement in Australia

˝ Develop a set of 'indicators' or measures of social capital, based on this understanding

˝ Develop a framework for assessing how successful community development activities are in helping to build social capital, using the social capital indicators

˝ Develop a training kit on this evaluation framework, and test the use of the method on one of STARTTS current community development activities.

Project Outputs
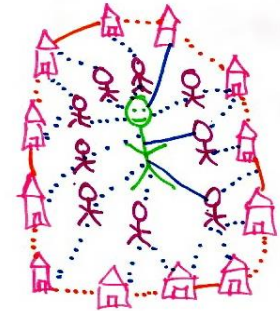
◈ The Project Report

◈ The Social Capital Project Design and Evaluation Guide

◈ The Social Capital Evaluation Tool

◈ The Training Package

◈ Peer reviewed journal articles

◈ Critical community based analysis of the importance of enabling factors to support social capital

◈ Key links between bonding and bridging capital

Defining Social Capital
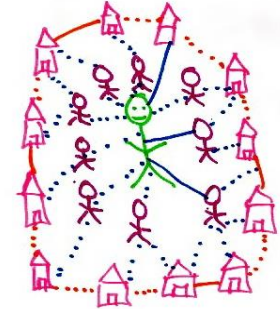
Social capital refers to social relationships, connections, networks and resources that exist within a community, as well as the 'norms' or formal and informal rules that govern social interaction, such as trust and cooperation

(Rostila 2010).

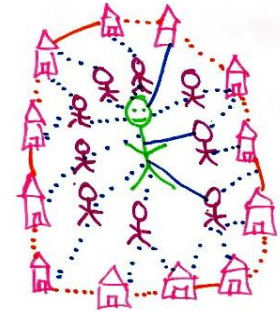# Three types of social capital are defined in the literature:
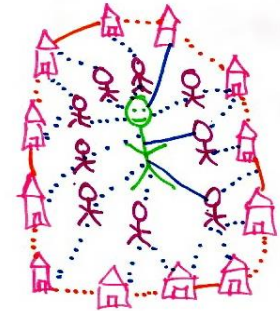
◈ Bonding capital

◈ Bridging capital

◈ Linking capital

(See - Granovetter 1973; Putnam 2000; Szretzer & Woolcock 2004).

What is Bonding capital?

◈ Close social connections to people close to you, like you or in your own social group

◈ They provide social support mechanisms that are essential for 'getting by' in life.
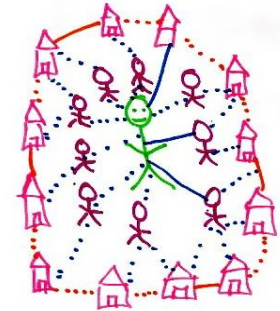
What is Bridging Capital?

◈ Horizontal connections to people in the wider community

◈ Assists individuals and groups to access social and economic resources that aren't available in their own communities.
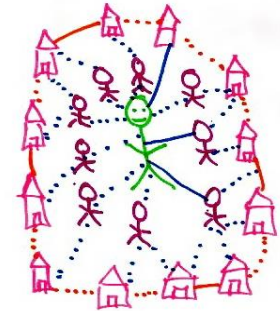
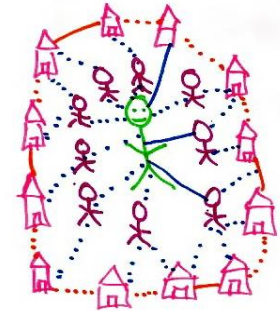# What is Linking Capital?

- Vertical connections to people in positions of authority or working in government or relevant social institutions.

- Gives individuals and groups access to opportunities for 'getting ahead'.

Impacts of the refugee experience on social capital

- Broken social networks and fragmented families
- Dissolution of social bonds due to persecution and trauma
- Deliberate destruction of communities and trust by regimes
- Loss of social structures
- Mistrust and suspicion of outsiders or authorities
- Multiple displacements and disruptions
- Individual and community resilience in the face of adversity
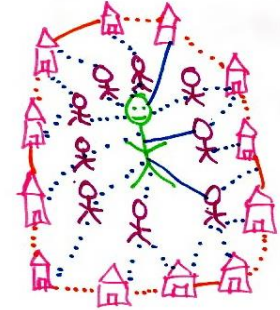
Project Methodology & Activities

Step 1: A working Definition of Social Capital

Step 2: Working with a Refugee Community Advisory Group – to explore meaning and impacts

Step 3: Refugee Community Consultations – to explore important networks, connections and relationships in the settlement process

Strengthening Social Capital - A Working Definition

'Supporting individuals and communities to strengthen positive social **relationships**, **connections**, and **networks** which increase their capacities to address problems in common and **enhance wellbeing** through increased access to **social resources**'.

How the refugee experience affects social capital

Before we arrive we have other issues, history, political differences, and fragmentation. The impacts of those experiences before we come here can have a great influence.
When people come here, due to what we went through, people don't trust each other. You don't feel like you want to connect because of bad past experience; fear maybe, perhaps the people you lived with betrayed you or something. So some people come and choose to stay in isolation. They choose not to interact, which isn't good. It is very difficult to put them together again.

'When you first arrive in Australia you will be someone feeling you've lost your status, your social status. In your country you are something, and here you are close to nothing. Self esteem will go down, you wouldn't have language to feel confident to communicate, many people lose their children. Anxiety, mood problems - you will struggle - for many people they will struggle a lot until they get the balance back' *(Consultation participant)*

"The outcome of building social capital: people can be on the same level together. How can we get back that spark and that confidence and motivation? We need to think about that. Try to connect the broken pieces."

"*Participation from the communities from the word go; good communication within the community; feeling safe; strong leadership; social, political and economic participation in Australian life; knowing how to meet needs; communities knowing who to contact in a problem; respect! And then participation in the design of services and programs.* **If social capital works - then you will have a happy community that can do things for itself, and advocate for itself, and that can be respected by everyone else**"
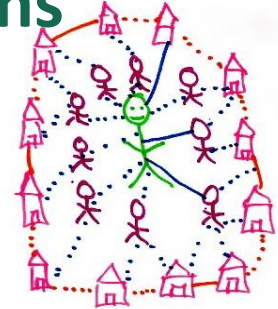
A Model of Social Capital in resettlement
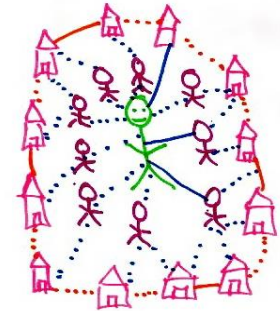
The four aspects of social capital:

- Social Connections and Networks
- Relational Norms
- Social Resources
- Social Capital Enablers

Some Social Networks and Connections Important to Refugee Communities

- Family connections

- Links to settlement service providers

- Links to teachers and schools

- Relationships with teachers/mentors

- Educational networks/opportunities

- Employment related networks/opportunities

- Connections to people with shared interests

- Connections to members of one's own immediate community

Relational Norms and Refugee Communities
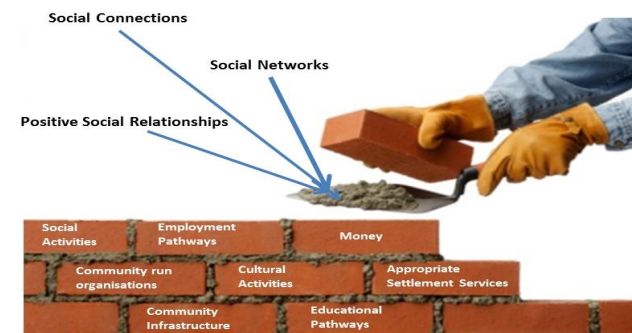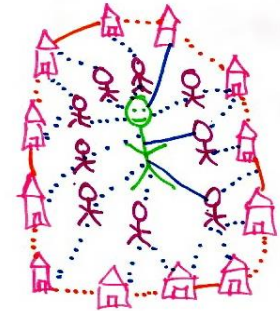

- Community goodwill, mutual support and cooperation

- Trust

- Community Harmony

- Organisational accountability and transparency

- Understanding and acceptance of diversity within the community

- Family Harmony

WE ARE ONE NOW!

Social Resources and Refugee Communities

- Money

- Community infrastructure

- Community-run organisations and services

- Appropriate settlement services

- Emotional support

- Employment pathways

- Educational pathways

- Cultural activities

- Social, recreational and sport activities

Social Connections

Social Networks

Positive Social Relationships

Social Activities

Employment Pathways

Money

Community run organisations

Cultural Activities

Appropriate Settlement Services

Community Infrastructure

Educational Pathways

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Social Capital: 'The Glue' between the bricks
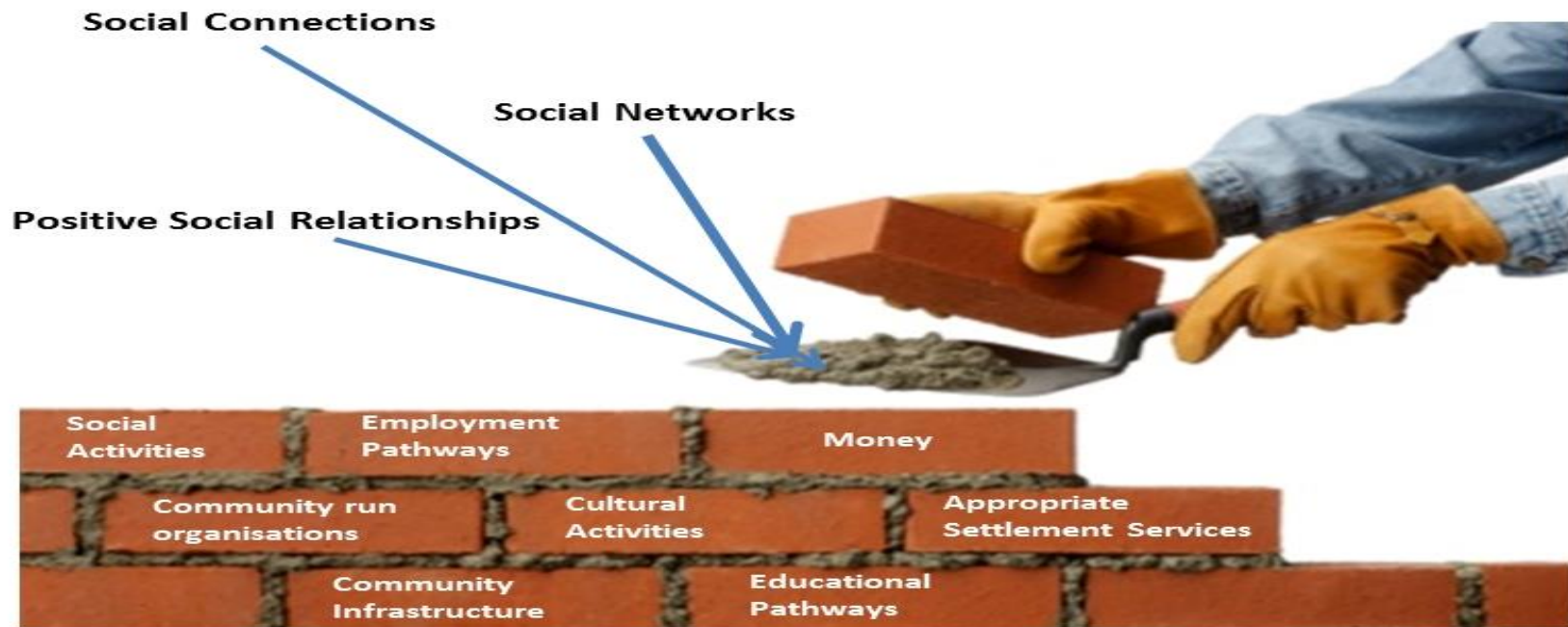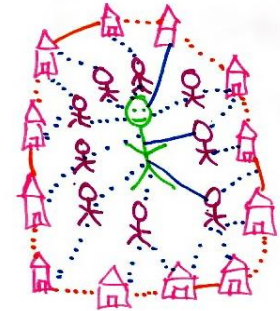
Social Capital Enablers: Refugee Communities
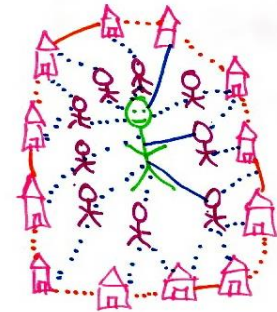
Social capital enablers are the individual, community and socio-political factors that enable refugee individuals and communities to access, utilise and strengthen social capital. They also enable them to extend their social connections and networks and build new links in settlement.

6.

Participating in design of service program.
respect
Participating in directing social policy
- know how to meet needs
good communication.
- social, political economic participation
Feeling Safe
strong leadership

Social Capital Enablers: Refugee Communities

Individual capacities

- Socio-economic status
- Educational attainment
- Understanding of mainstream culture
- Sense of freedom and equality
- Sense of safety and stability
- Sense of independence and autonomy
- Self-confidence and self-esteem
- Sense of belonging
- Sense of hope/aspiration
- Cultural self-esteem

Social Capital Enablers
Refugee Communities

Community capacities

- Cultural capital
- Cultural fluency
- Efficacy and responsibility in community leadership
- Sense of place

Socio-political factors

- Respect for and acceptance of diverse cultures
- Provision of appropriate and responsive settlement services
- Recognition of the skills, qualifications and experience of people from refugee backgrounds
- Opportunities for family reunion

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Bridging and Linking capital - the challenges

◈ The lack of strong bonding capital can prevent marginalised communities from accessing bridging and linking capital

◈ Racism and discrimination in the wider community can negatively impact on marginalised communities' ability to access bridging and linking capital

Bonding Capital and Refugee Communities
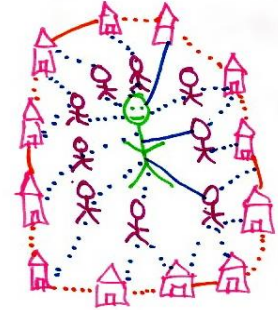
If a community has internal strength it helps to:

˝ build bridges for individuals and groups to the wider community

˝ facilitate access to community resources and power structures

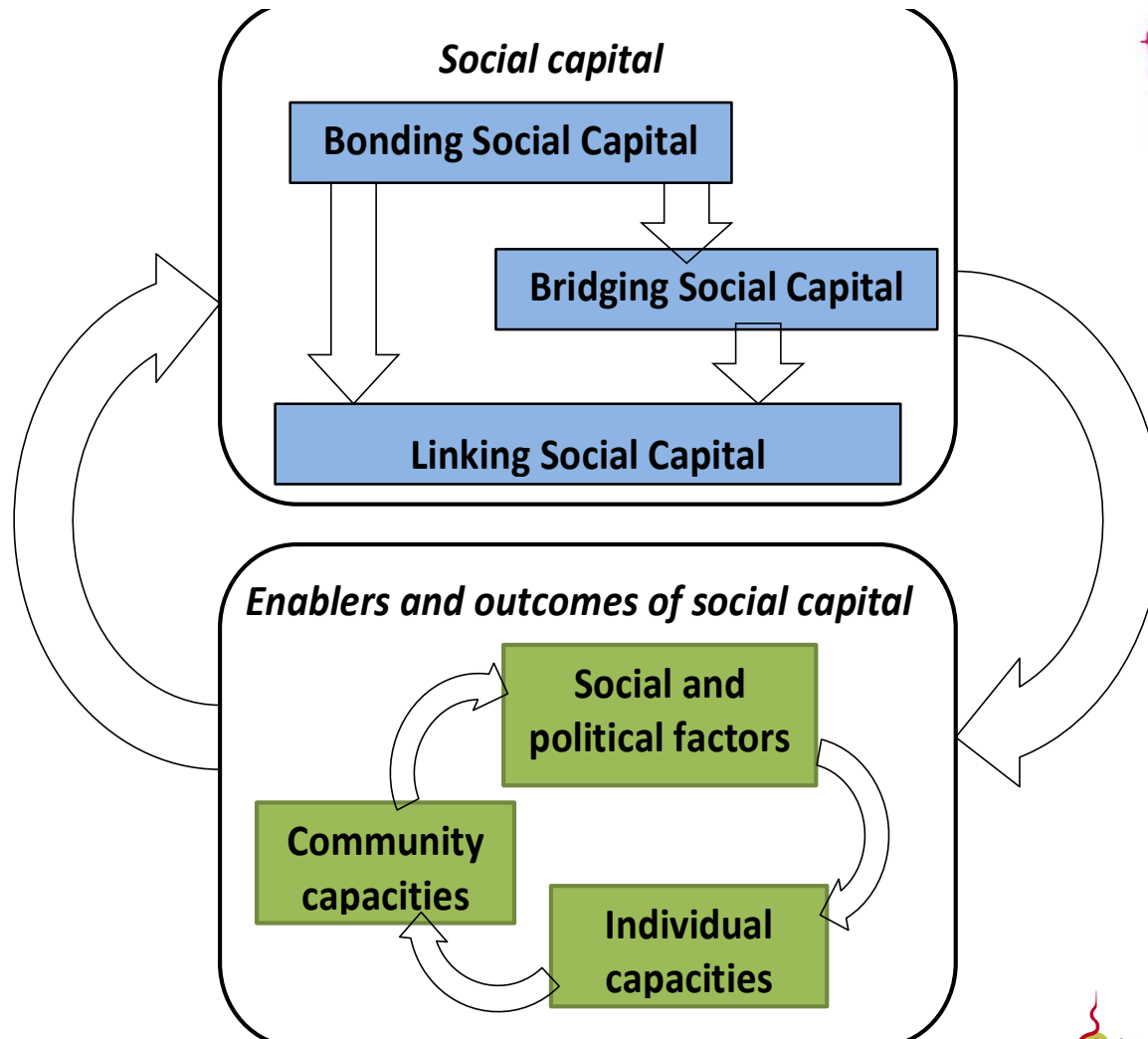˝ foster individual self-confidence and cultural self-esteem

Building Social Capital

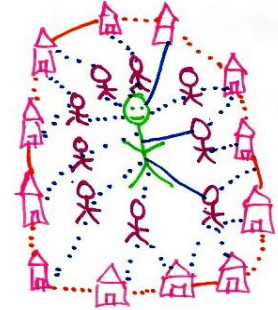Bonding capital and bridging and linking capital, are equally important

Bonding Capital

Bridging and Linking Capital
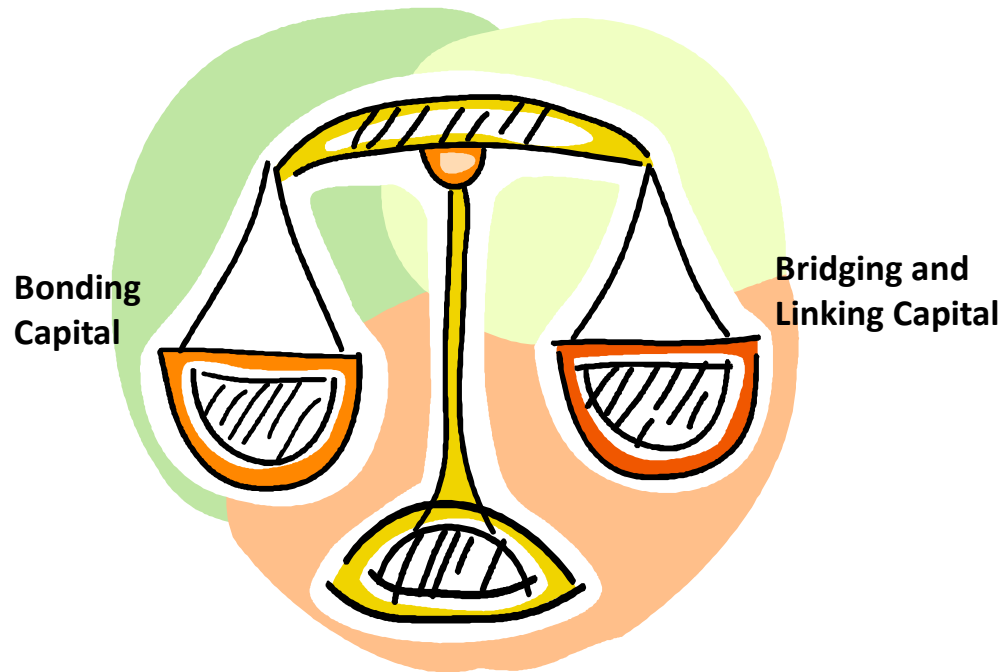
Building Social Capital

Social Capital as a cycle

Social capital

Bonding Social Capital

Bridging Social Capital

Linking Social Capital

Enablers and outcomes of social capital

Social and political factors

Community capacities

Individual capacities

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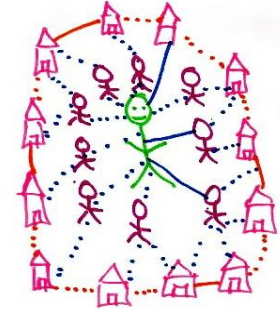Centre for Refugee Research

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The Tools

″ **The Social Capital Evaluation Tool – Objectives and Indicators for Social Capital Projects with Refugees Settling in Australia**

″ **A Guide for Designing and Evaluating Projects to Increase Social Capital in Refugee Communities in Australia**

The Social Capital Evaluation Tool

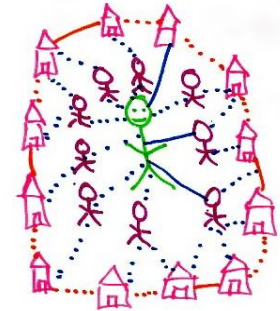**Social Connection and Network Objectives and Indicators**

Social Capital Relational Norms Objectives and Indicators

Social Capital Enabler Objectives and Indicators

Social Connection and Network Objectives and Indicators

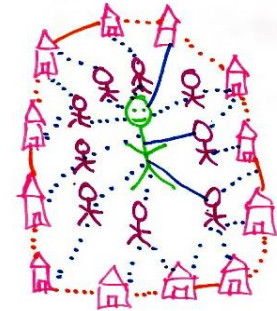| SCN Objective 6	Indicators
Established, Strengthened or Expanded employment related networks and opportunities	6.1 Increased contacts in relevant employment related fields 6.2 Increased access to employment opportunities 6.3 Increased access to professional development, training and work experience

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Social Capital Relational Norms Objectives and Indicators

SCRN Objective 2	Indicators
Increased trust	**2.1 Increased willingness to seek help from others** **2.2 Increased willingness to engage with people outside one's own community** **2.3 Increased willingness to participate in community organisations** **2.4 Increased willingness to engage with political structures, authorities and institutions**

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Social Capital Enabler Objectives and Indicators
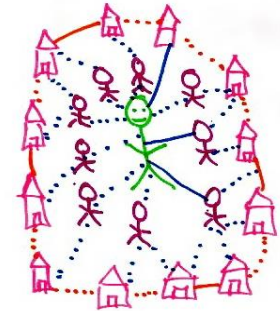
SCE Objective 7	Indicators
Increased self-confidence, self-esteem and self-worth	7.1 Increased confidence in one's professional, linguistic, social or familial abilities 7.2 Increased ability to calmly handle difficult/culturally challenging situations 7.3 Increased educational and employment aspirations 7.4 Increased engagement with people or organisations outside one's own community 7.5 Increased willingness to take on new roles

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Social Capital Objectives

Your project may have a combination of social connection and network objectives, relational norms objectives and social capital enabler objectives.

Project Evaluation

Sets out a number of ways in which the Objectives and Indicators can be used to design and evaluate new and existing projects.

It outlines a number of ethically based and participatory Tools for project monitoring and evaluation.