

## Abstract

### “Loose Change”

Much research exists indicating the benefits of father and child however this almost exclusively concentrates on the effects on the children. CLD (community learning and development) staff connected with three MATCH (Men & Their Children) Groups from a schools cluster in south west Scotland, observed that over the time of their involvement some participants exhibited growth in self-confidence and *self-efficacy*; what is referred to in CLD as personal *capacity*, or, in sociological terms, *agency*. This study examines whether this view of change is shared by the men, and if so, how they perceive it, and what they say about it and the factors which have brought change about.

Primary data were gathered via six one-to-one interviews and a focus group triangulation session involving four more fathers selected from past and present members of the groups' organisational committees.

The findings appear to confirm that the accrual of *social capital*, via participants' development of social networks in the groups, contributes to an enhancement of personal agency in several respondents, in some cases leading to greater community activism. The factors facilitating this agential development are found to be the homogeneity and the egalitarian ethos of the group.

The research has revealed evidence to support the expansion of an established triple-dimensional conceptual model of social capital by applying an additional positive/negative variable to each aspect. Also offered is a development of the discourse on agency and social capital, positing that the two are actually *mutually* affective and capable of generating spirals of change in individuals and, by extension, the groups and wider communities. The adjunct is that whether the change is positive or negative depends on the underpinning values of the agent.

The results add support to such intergenerational learning and will influence the support team's approaches to enhancing participants' group experience and their personal development and, it is hoped, to CLD practitioners elsewhere.

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