Revisiting Barcelona

Authors: Bob Rhodes and Ralph Broad

Bob Rhodes and Ralph Broad argue that social work and social care should return to the thinking set out in the Barcelona report and embrace their commitment to community.

It is time to accept that workers who have restrictions for how we care for each other.

In exactly after one year in Barcelona, the majority Barcelona Committee Report was ready for the press and tasks of the social worker. In the intervening years those hung-on-hooks, many marked by relation to engagement with adults - and **not** in the direction recommended by the Report. With hindsight, this may reflect our collective concern that the Barcelona report was too ambitious for most powerful insights.

The Committee's Key Conclusions

Barcelona, drawing on Scandinavian research, pointed precisely on the frontier between what appears to be unlimited needs on the one hand and an inadequate pool of resources on the other (p.ix). The Committee understood the inevitability of an exponential growth in demand and the consequent impossibility of meeting all the demands made upon it.

The Committee's response to the impossibility of informal care and its recommend the general adoption of the community social work approach that had achieved so many negative consequences in the Committee's North-Rhine Westphalia contribution. In contemporary terms the proposed that social workers should:

- Holistic approaches and coproduction
- Devolved responsibility for resources and resources to local team with sole accountability to families and communities
- Promoting self-direction and self-help - personalisation
- Focus on the family and community networks
- Supporting family and community care - (we would call "helping people vibrant"
- Community work, engaging with the strengths and blocks in the neighbourhood and mobilising local voluntary organisations and associations - "helping communities to support themselves"
- Undertaking local social care planning on an inclusive basis
- Promoting community based services
- Coordinating access to information and services to families and encouraging the development of their availability when required
- Enabling, informative, engaging and empowering community social work - incorporating what we might now refer to as an asset-based method and a local area orientated approach.

It seems that they appreciated the long term, iterative, and developmental nature of good social interventions. They would have been appalled by no-people, task focused and target driven approaches we imagined therefore.

The Report called for a greater delegation to the front line, more trust, and a greater acceptance of risk. It noted that, "things are bound to go wrong if the social worker is to be given the responsibility and the necessary freedom to do his job properly" (p.xiii). Such a social worker, however, would not be a lone ranger. Quite the contrary, the Committee envisaged a "pool of high hierarchical centre balancing their duties make the occurrence of disasters on the more likely.

Further, the Committee recognised the contribution that social services departments functioned exactly rather than strategically. It said that has become institutionalised and they failed to adapt what we might describe as an asset-based approach. They felt that the "traditional social services departments have not been sufficiently adaptable to the changing needs of the population, and that there are big differences in acknowledged and hidden needs between various voluntary organisations which are described as in part partner's statutory and private service on a local basis. They were clear that the role of social clients would be "taken over" by formal services but insisted that care cases ought to be "gain in importance" (p.7).

So far so good but, with hindsight, it seems likely that all of this was blown out of the water "by two further proposals:

- These new "welfare and empowerment offices" would act as "reference and guidance centres for all people in need"
- Social service departments would need to be fundamentally reformed, with a new set of ability and attitudes, if neighbourhood focused social work was to be effectively delivered.

Community Care - a mixed economy

The Committee's proposals for developing mixed/joint welfare the context of commissions where state interventions other become problematic. It seems that was not the intention of the Committee. Rather, it was concerned with the development of a collaborative approach to social work professionals.

However the Report was also a reaction to the perceived weakness of the social work profession, and as central government pressured groups, it was accountable to investors and responsible local authorities.

It seems that was the prospective social work professional, "solid and sturdy", and unbelievable.

Above all it is clear with hindsight that Barcelona simply expected of the social possible time. Subsequently most of its recommendations have developed off and independently from the Barcelona Report. Such as 1982 there was no possible policy-wise strategy. **the market.**

The prevailing Governmental dogma of the time, which still intoxicates every strand of thinking to this day, had the following elements:

1. That the country was essentially a business and should be managed as a business
2. That the market was the most efficient tool for the efficient allocation of resources and of staff
3. That creating value drives the economic supply and demand - the cash nexus
4. That it was Government's job to respond to need and to fire things through the provision of programmes and services
5. That, to the extent that the approach was not working, it was the fault of the recipients rather than the concept.

Into this (that social workers could become welcomers and gatekeepers was grasped enthusiastically and market frameworks were imposed on social care. Commissioning, contracts, and "care management" - the Government's preferred model of practice - the relationship carers were which contracts between the Government and the providers of care services.

The work of McKnight and Kretzmann, that helps explain why communities can be resilient according to the ratios of institutions and associations, would not arrive for at least another decade. It would be, in the meantime, for others to discover the importance of a place where people can find each other, and particularly their most, crucially, creating a virtuous relationship between the institutional and community assets. This would be a place where people could be "citizens" rather than "service users" and where the "social" in social work could be rediscovered. It would be the sought by people who have been marginalised by the market simply creaking/creaking "market" - that Ruskin of a day. Most of the time carers is marked in strong families, friends, neighbours and associations.

Although - despite the policy focus on market relations - there remained a constant awareness of their weakness and the need for a community focus. For instance in The role of the Worker in the Community (Ferguson & Gordon) Barcelona - The Scottish Government (2005) it is stated:

> The Edinburgh report (Richardson 1968), the Seebohm report (Seebohm 1968), the Barclay report (Barclay 1982), and the Barcelona report (Barcelona 1985) all underline the importance of the community social worker in developing and just with individuals and groups in their communities as members of communities. These reports highlight that community social work could play a significant role in supporting community members to address the circumstances in which they find themselves and to prevent problems (Barcelona 1985). They point out that this is seen to be the heart of the nature of the community social work approach, a participatory and developed changes in the way in which social work professionals and others work with people in their communities (p.1).

The central problem with the Community Care Reforms is encapsulated in that quote. The market barely referenced, those individuals as people who have been marginalised by the market, and the prevention considered in passing. With future shapes determined in demand-led models.

It is exactly the central flaw in the market model is the assumption that everything that really 'counts' can be bought and sold, and counted. As a consequence, many years the social work and social care system has become very complicated the people and families and the increasingly focused activity on services and the needs.

This has resulted in many unintended consequences. Those include:

- Encouragement of public dependency on services and money
- The professionalisation of what is, for most people, a relationship and caring for each other - replacing relationship based and finely given care with substitutional and paid for services
- The creation of a "mixed economy" of care providing institutions, bureaucracies, and professionals across the institutional world that society is broken and is in need of repair
- A culture of waiting or competing for funding and services, rather than developing local solutions and self-sufficiency - people being "Resource and capacity constrained"
- Subsequent reduction in local capacity and resources
- Increasing dependency on the state and its agents
- Personal budgets and people funds - but with limited flexibility and control
- Cost inflation - followed by tougher bargaining of funding - increasing unmet need
- Informal and community resources are diverted into formal commissions and local communities), unused or under developed
- A complex system - multiple service "silos" (e.g. children & family, adult social care, health, mental health, older people etc) that do not work together, and which are difficult for people to navigate and understand
- Pressure on Resources - increasing demand and decreasing resources, rather than maintaining prevention and capacity building.

Another pernicious consequence of marketised social care has been the commoditisation of the voluntary sector. It may be argued that non-governmental organisations had the innovative and creative capacity to challenge and to provide an alternative to statutory services. But innovative and a key source of these. However voluntary organisations now find themselves tended to compete for contracts for services and have been forced into the same commercial and competitive environment as the statutory and private providers. Many have to provide a technical and professional service to compete with the statutory and their neighbours. Innovation discrete also of experimentation. Local was provided. The voluntary organisations form of citizen's accounting to realise their aspirations were rebadged as nominally non-profit making companies. Many of the smaller voluntary organisations, the "Cinderella" services, have struggled to survive within these rules and requirements.

Meanwhile the given had simply cuts of needs assessment and eligibility begrained and concentrating the resistance and resourcefulness of communities the diminished. Many people who need social care and support are not eligible for services and services. It is clear from the last three decades we have seen a transition from visionary and innovative leadership to one of defensive and bureaucratic systems administration. Social work has been caught in the middle of this transition and has been complicit in the rationing of services and the "gate keeping" of access to services. Social workers have also been the instrument of the individualised and psychiatrisation of our social care system, there has been a loss. Calls from Responsibility for its leadership for radical change.

Reforming Social Care - A Community Approach

Over time the key ideas summarised by Barcelona, and the other key reports, have increasingly incurred. Personalisation, self-direction, assets, and asset mobilisation. They have been the central conceptual ideas in the development of a social care system that is more responsive and systems culture, were described to be or even ideas part of an recognition. We would observe that it is the central core of the social care system, the relationship between the worker and the client, that has been the most resistant to change.

The following paragraphs outline some of the ideas and concepts underpinning a community approach to reforming the marketised social care system. Our proposals are based on a social model of disability and on a community approach to social care and assistance as expressed in the commissioner, service provider and support Edge Care document. We believe that the ability of neighbourhoods to deal with and to support people who are in crisis or at the time economy" - the operating system of society which makes everything else possible. Co-production is about growing the economy.

Support relations. The purpose of co-production is to transform society. Developing the resilience of individuals and communities is about creating conditions in which people can exercise control over their own lives. This requires opportunities for people to learn and take calculated risks that they can learn from. To do this requires a relationship between people who are in need of support and those who are in a position to offer support. This is the foundation for the co-production of future. However, without the unconditional opportunities people need to develop the forms of reference that will make them more resilient and less reliant on the services in the longer term.

Asset Based Community Development

We can also use this positive perspective in Asset Based Community Development. The following quote comes from Building Communities Asset Inside Out by John P Kretzmann and John L McKnight (1993):

> **Every single person has capacities, abilities and gifts.** Living a good life depends upon whether these capacities are used or whether abilities expressed and the gifts given. Many people will be able to contribute and will want to contribute to the community around them. And the community will be more powerful because of the contribution the person is making.
>
> Each time a person uses his or her capacity, the community is stronger and the person more powerful. That is why co-production is such a powerful concept. Co-production is about the "exchange" between people and between people and communities as places that let for whatever reason, to realise the skills, capacities and talents of their residents.

While the new material for community building is the capacity of the individual residents, some communities have failed to recognise the strengths of their residents. Many communities have been "colonised" by professionals. Many local communities may come to have the self-image of a community which has the capacities to solve its problems. The deficiency focus has usually described as a concern about the needs of local communities. And these needs are understood to be the problems, shortcomings, needs and deficiencies.

It is clear that every individual has his needs or deficiencies. It is also clear that every individual has gifts and capacities. The trick seemingly is to put a name on the gifts and make the people. Our place is half way point (in the middle) between the point that neuroticism will Local residents (libraries, faces capacities and they also have deficiencies. However, the part of

services.

relationship to...

Lodge has learnt from experience.

communities without abandoning public services and...

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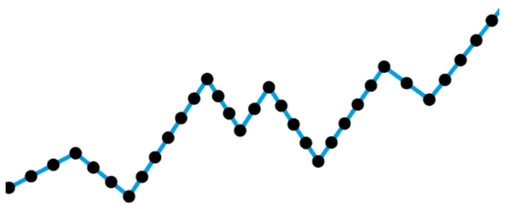

Community Brokerage

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