

Briefing paper:
**Exploring the role of Communities for Children
(CfC) Facilitating Partners**
**Impact on Service Delivery and Collaborative
Partnerships 2019**



The project

Dr Yvonne Parry of Flinders University and her team were commissioned by five Communities for Children Facilitating Partners to evaluate the impact of a number of reforms that they believed had changed their interactions with their Communities for Children service providers, specifically the introduction of Facilitating Partner process engagement changes in 2014.

Project participants

- Communities for Children Facilitating Partners:
 - Salvation Army Salisbury
 - Anglican Community Care Inc, Murray Bridge
 - UnitingCare Wesley Country SA Inc in Port Pirie
 - AnglicareSA Ltd Hindmarsh
 - Uniting Communities Port Adelaide

Aims of the project

- To evaluate the effectiveness of and the determinants of success for Communities for Children Facilitating Partner collaborations across South Australia.
- To evaluate the impact of changes such as 'evidence-based' practice requirements on service provision across South Australia.

Data collection strategy for project

The team engaged directly with 109 stakeholders including Facilitating Partners, Community Partners, local Communities for Children Facilitating Partner committee members and other local service providers, through face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, focus groups and site visits. Additionally, an online survey had over 223 respondents.

Key findings

- The Facilitating Partner Community Partner relationship improved the provision of delivery of evidence-based programs.
- Reduction of support from Facilitating Partners reduced the presence of the Communities for Children Community Partners in local collaborations.
- The more appropriate the programs were to the region, the better the quality of the activities in that region.
- The strength of the Facilitating Partner and Communities for Children Community Partner relationship was crucial to engagement with marginalised and disadvantaged clients.
- Inter-agency activities such as staff training and exchange of information were of great benefit.
- 'Turfism' or territorialism between agencies decreased significantly.

Conclusions

- Facilitating Partners have a key role in providing clear vision, goals and interpretations of government policies.
- Facilitating Partners have a role in assisting Community Partners to obtain evidence for effective community programs.
- Facilitating Partners have strong leadership of Communities for Children across South Australia.
- Facilitating Partners provide valuable support and funding for Community Partners to be trained and upskilled.
- The requirement to allocate 50% of service delivery funding to evidence-based programs has had limited effect.
- Funding model changes may have a negative impact on future service delivery, as the increased administrative burden is not sufficiently cost effective.

Suggestions

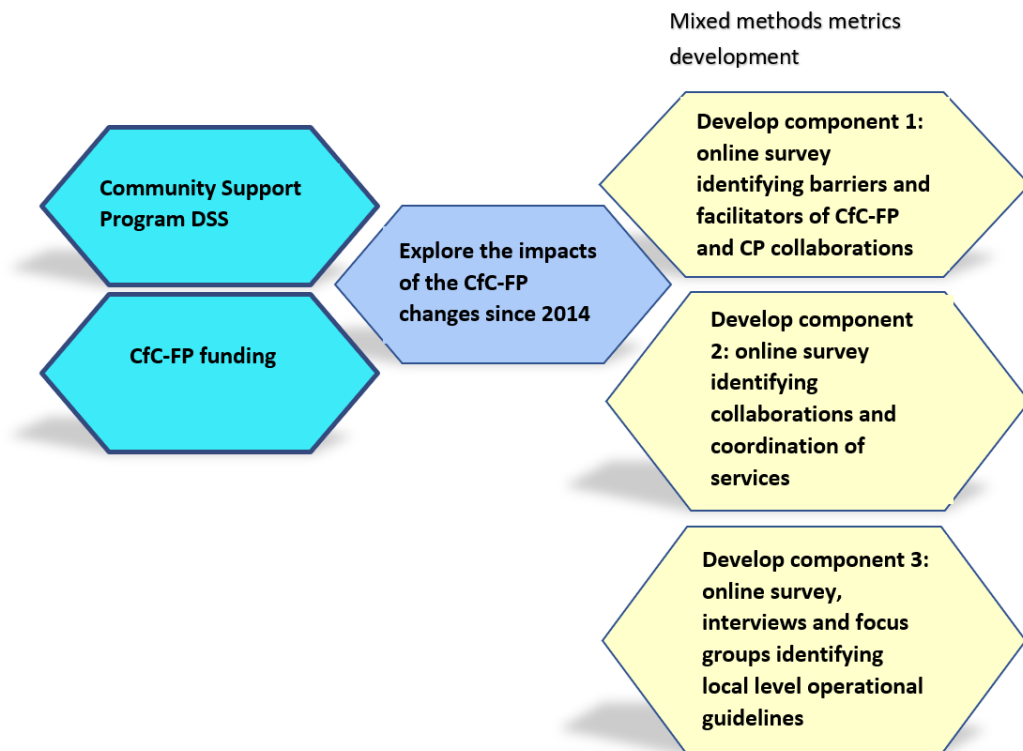
- Collaborative training sessions would enhance the relationship and the knowledge of Community Partner service providers.
- The Community Partners were clear that evidence-based programs that met the specific needs of their communities were the most useful and effective, and the Facilitating Partners have a role in assisting Community Partners in obtaining evidence for effective programs.

- Facilitating Partners have a role in expanding both government and community knowledge regarding the importance of early intervention and consistent funding.

About the project

This research project represents the engagement of the South Australian communities for Children Facilitating Partners in the development of evidence-based methods, processes and strategies to identify their impact on relationship building, service support and connection, and knowledge transfer in their communities.

The research was conducted from September 2017 through to November 2018 using focus groups (across 14 Communities for Children Facilitating Partners), surveys (completed by 223 respondents) and qualitative data collection interviews (with 109 participants).



Further details of the methodology and findings of this project are contained in the full report – *Exploring the role of Communities for Children (CfC) Facilitating Partners and their impact on service delivery and collaborative community service delivery 2019* (Parry et al 2019).