

Community Development and Older Men's Programming: An International Case Study

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A growing body of research points to men's groups as a benefit to communities because of their volunteerism and community-based programming. Older and retired men's continued participation includes developing meaningful initiatives through these community resources. Little research, however, has explored groups for older men from a community development perspective. The purpose of this article is to describe a case study using photovoice methodology with two men's groups from Canada and two from Australia. We discuss men's group participants' perceptions of their groups' contributions to the well-being of their members and the broader community, from a community development approach using photos as a key part of the study. Findings revealed older men's volunteerism towards events and maintenance of community parks and museums, as well as mentorship activities, contributed to the well-being of a range of community members, while fostering a sense of accomplishment, friendship, and other benefits.

Key Words: community, older men, Men's Sheds, Photovoice, volunteerism, mentoring, wellbeing

Community Development with Older Adults

Community development involves creating initiatives aimed at enhancing the capacity and resources of groups, communities, or neighborhoods (Austin, Des Camp, Flux, McClelland, & Sieppert, 2005). As a practice, community development can take place through partnerships between a range of members: this may include universities, other communities, or a range of service providers (Austin et al, 2005). The core assumption behind a community development approach is that the communities have expertise regarding their own needs, resources, and solutions to challenges (Kloseck, Crilly, & Mannell, 2006). As such, this approach seeks to integrate, involve and empower community members. Briefly detailed in the following is an overview of community development initiatives that have specifically targeted older men. Community development initiatives in Canada have most often targeted communities in low-income neighborhoods, newcomer communities, and youth (Shan, Mu-hajarine, Loptson, & Jeffery, 2014; Torres, Spitzer, Labonte, Amaratunga & Andrew, 2013; Valaitis & O'Mara, 2005) with fewer such initiatives focused on community-dwelling older adults (Austin et al, 2005). In order to better meet the caregiving needs of older

adults, Kloseck, Crilly and Mannell (2006) suggested that healthy older adults may provide volunteer care for other older adults who may need it. These authors gave the example of the Cherryhill Community Complex for older adults in Ontario, Canada – a complex that houses the “Cherry Hill Healthy Aging Program” – as an initiative that utilized this method of caregiving.

Articles have been published related to the value of older adults' mentorship and leadership in developing the capacity of younger community members. One example is intergenerational mentorship programs through Men's Sheds – a community-based non-profit and non-commercial organization accessible to older men where members participate in a safe and friendly environment on meaningful projects and community service¹

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Many Men's Sheds across Australia have incorporated intergenerational programming with children or teens (Cordier & Wilson, 2014). Wilson, Cordier, & Wilkes-Gillan (2014) explored the perceptions of one Men's Sheds intergenerational mentorship program on teen-aged boys' behaviors and attitudes towards school. In this example, the Men's Shed collaborated with a high school in Australia so that Men's Sheds members (older men) could provide teen boys with the opportunity to learn practical skills such as repairing wheelchairs. Some of the benefits the boys identified included learning in a relaxed atmosphere outside the classroom, receiving a more positive understanding of older adults, and learning the value of helping others. Some of the boys appeared to develop a more positive view of school overall as well as aging and of older adults. For the older male mentors, they had a strong sense of generativity and experienced a values-led reconnection with the boys (Wilson, Cordier & Wilson-Whatley, 2013). Whitney (2009) argued that as people age they lose leadership roles, in the traditional sense where leadership is defined as having power and influence. However, Whitney (2009) noted that older adults in particular have a greater capacity for a type of influence denoted to as referent power, which is a sense of influence (leadership) that is developed when an individual has a strong sense of caring and respect for others. Whitney notes that older adults, who have a lifetime of experiences, are in a good position to develop referent power. Furthermore, volunteer-based community service settings are ideal settings where this leadership capacity can be developed.

Men's Sheds

Men's Sheds is an example of a community based program available to older men, and an example of a men's group driven specifically by men in the community (Wilson & Cordier, 2012). To elaborate, Men's Sheds originated in Australia in the 1990s, and emerged in response to high levels of unemployment and the need to better integrate men into the community, but has now grown to be an international movement with over 1,500 now in existence, globally (Golding, 2015). This program provides a place for men to drop in to participate in activities such as woodwork, repair projects, crafts, and socializing. Men's Sheds has come to attract older and retired men in particular, as it has been reported that Men's Sheds help with adjustment to retirement and other life changes, as well as providing continued community participation and a sense of camaraderie (Cordier & Wilson, 2014; Milligan et al., 2013). Through the course of the Men's Sheds movement, Men's Sheds have been

started as both stand-alone member-led volunteer organizations and as programs that are under the auspices of existing community service organizations, often with paid staff.

Because of Men's Sheds' focus on re-integrating men into the community, they have been recognized for their potential to promote men's health and reduce isolation and depression (Misan, 2008). This has been explored in the context of men who have been marginalized. In Australia, Southcombe, Cavanagh, and Bartram (2015) explored the role of Indigenous men's groups and Men's Sheds in capacity building among Indigenous men. They conducted a case study with focus groups and individual interviews with group leaders, including 15 men's groups and Men's Sheds, to explore how capacity building was fostered among group members. They found that the men's groups and Sheds acted as a resource for members to gain access to important resources such as housing information. Interviews with the leaders revealed that they intentionally built relationships with government and other service providers because they recognized these connections as key to their role in conveying pertinent information to the members. Findings also revealed a barrier for indigenous men in accessing mainstream health and social services that was revealed through focus groups and interviews – namely, that the men expressed that they felt misunderstood by White female service providers, making the men's groups a preferable space to access information. Clearly, race plays a role intersecting with gender in how men perceive their welcome and participation in these groups.

Similarly, other studies have pointed out that Men's Sheds offer a space in which men can learn about and discuss health-related topics more readily than they would through accessing mainstream services (Golding, 2015; Reynolds, Mackenzie, Medved, & Roger, 2015). Other non-health related benefits to Men's Sheds members included the sense of fulfillment in participating in projects that give back to the community such as providing equipment repairs or grounds maintenance and formal collaborations such as the school mentorship program discussed earlier (Golding, 2015; Cordier & Wilson, 2014; Cordier, Wilson, Stancliffe, MacCallum, Vaz, Buchanan, Ciccarelli, Falkmer, 2015). Men's Sheds therefore provide health and wellness benefits to its members, while also providing resources and education to their communities.

In light of the benefits of Men's Sheds to both members and communities, the present study sought to explore men's groups through a community development lens. Our case study using individual photo voice interviews included participants at four sites in

different geographical regions and in two countries. The aim was to uncover Men's Sheds members and leaders' perceptions of how their men's groups contribute to the well-being of their members and the broader community, in terms of enhancing community resources and capacity-building.

Methodology

Study Design

A qualitative case study design using photo-voice interviews explored our research question through an in-depth examination of one example or a conceptual 'case' (Sandelowski, 2011; Stake, 2005). In our study, the conceptual limits of the 'case' are defined by the focus on older community based men's groups. By using this definition of such a 'case', we collected information related to social, physical, economic, and cultural conditions (Stake, 2005). The case study was considered appropriate for the present study because there are only a few studies that have explored the role of men's groups in the development of communities in which they are situated, including the use of photographs as a way to elicit data.

In photo voice research, participants take photographs related to the research topic or issue (Han & Oliffe, 2015), allowing them to express their point of view through personal photography; participants then meet with the researcher/interviewer to discuss the meaning of their photos, through group interviews (Blackman & Fairey, 2007; Creighton, Oliffe, Butterwick, & Saewyc, 2013; Wang & Burris, 1997). The core aim of photo voice is to understand the meaning of the photos from the participants' point of view, and to use the photos not only as an additional form of data but also as a means to enriching and deepening the interview process. Finally, the photos can be shared with communities, policy makers, or other leaders in order to develop strategies for change (Wang, 1999). In the present study, the photos not only reflect what Men's Sheds are, but more importantly, how they might grow or develop into something new based on the gaps participants communicated through their images and individual interviews (Blackman & Fairey, 2007; Han & Oliffe, 2015; Wang & Burris, 1997).

Recruitment

We recruited a purposive sample as our aim was to include examples of Men's Sheds and other emerging men's groups who differed in terms of region, how

long they have been in operation, organizational structure, and demographics of group members.

Recruitment took place in Australia and Canada. A collaborating researcher from Western Sydney University recruited participants through visits to two Men's Shed in NSW, Australia; one in a heavily urbanized area of Sydney, the other on the rural outskirts of Greater Western Sydney. In Canada, two men's groups participated; one in a rural area of a Western province and one in a rural area of central Canada.

Participant Sites

Four men's groups made up the present study. These included: 1. Camden Men's Shed in Australia; 2. Harry's Shed in Australia; 3. Pemberton Men's Shed in Canada, and 4. Reviving the Past men's group in Canada. They are grouped together as a case since they are defined by being community based men's groups, and primarily refer to older men.

Site 1, the Camden Men's Shed (Australia) is situated in the town of Camden approximately 65km from Sydney. Camden is a renowned agricultural town with approximately 3000 people of mostly Anglo-Irish origin. Camden has a large equestrian park and showground where the annual Camden Agricultural Show is held, and on which the Men's Shed is located. The Men's Shed was established in 2008 as a partnership between the local council, the equestrian park committee and a group of men wanting to start a Men's Shed. The main activities are maintenance of the grounds, refurbishment of bridal/walking paths, repairs of fences/bridges, and control of noxious weeds in the waterways. In 2011, a group of the shed's members started volunteering to work alongside young men with intellectual disabilities as part of a skills transfer intergenerational mentoring program.

Site 2, Harry's Shed is situated in the City Canada Bay, approximately 13km west of the Sydney CBD. Canada Bay has about 75,000 people and is a typical multicultural suburban area of Sydney. Harry's Shed opened in 2013 and is situated underneath an old council-owned lawn bowls club that now hosts a community centre. It is typical of many Australian Men's Sheds in that it is a workshop-based environment. The Shed receives financial support from the local council and a number of the founding Shed members that had previously been involved in intergenerational mentoring programs with local at-risk youth.

Site 3, Pemberton Men's Shed (Canada) is located in Pemberton, a rural village of about 3,000 people. This village is in the Pemberton valley, in the interior of the province of British Columbia, Canada. The Pemberton Men's Shed was started through the Pemberton Valley Seniors Society, whereby a staff member (who is originally from Australia) recognized

a need for services for older men, and subsequently applied for (and received) a government grant to start a Men's Shed. At the time of this study, the Pemberton Men's Shed had formed a committee of men to organize and run a Men's Shed tool lending library to serve the town and surrounding area. Because of the historical context of Indigenous communities in this area, the organizers of the Pemberton Men's Shed also undertook strategic activities with the hopes of including Indigenous men and bridging the gap/restoring strained relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. This remains one of their mandates as they move forward. Pemberton participants currently include three men who were members of the Pemberton Men's Shed and two staff members who were actively involved in developing the Men's Shed.

Site 4, Reviving the Past Men's Group, was a men's group located in the small rural community of Creek, Manitoba, Canada. This group emerged out of a community need for help maintaining the Cook's Creek Heritage Museum – a museum which centers on preserving the area's Eastern European heritage, including repairing farm, kitchen, and Roman Catholic religious artifacts brought by early settlers. Subsequently, several older and primarily retired men in the area began meeting weekly throughout the summer months to provide these repairs. This emerged into the Reviving the Past group, a small group of 4 men. At this site, there was minimal funding and museum volunteers and wives of the men who participated frequently contributed food to the men's lunches. The group here was relatively new, and the men who participated in this study did so with a fair amount of prompting from the (female) museum volunteers. Reviving the Past study participants included three men who were participants of the men's group and two volunteer staff.

Individual Participants

Site 1 and 2 each included six participants - five photo voice participants who were Men's Shed members and one participant who was the Men's Shed leader. It is important to note that the two identified Men's Shed leaders from Australia, at both site 1 and site 2 did not take photos but participated in individual interviews related to their role as leaders. Site 3 (Canada) included 6 photo voice participants and site 4 included 5 photo voice participants. Since site 3 and site 4 were newly emerging men's groups in Canada there were no identified group leaders. Demographics were collected from 22 of 23 participants (see Table 1).

Table 1- Canada/Australia Demographics

Age	
50-54	1
55-59	---
60-64	4
65-69	4
70-74	4
75-79	8
80-85	1
Education	
High School	2
College/University	6
Graduate Degree	5
Trade/Technical	7
Unknown	2
Marital Status	
Married	18
Common Law	1
Divorced	1
Single	1
No answer	1
Occupational Status	
Retired	21
Employed Full Time	1
Income	
\$0-19,999	2
\$20-34,999	4
\$35-59,999	8
\$60,000+	7
No answer	1
Population Group	
White	22

*One participant did not fill out the survey

Study Procedures

Ethics approval was obtained through the University of Manitoba and Western Sydney University research ethics boards and data collection took place from June through September, 2015.

Training sessions and introduction. All participants who took photos participated in photo-voice training sessions. At separate time points, research assistants (one in Canada and one in Australia) travelled to each site and provided training sessions and introductions to the study with the participants who took photos. Included in these sessions was a PowerPoint presentation on the purpose of photo voice, a discussion of cameras (all participants used their own smart phones or digital cameras), issues related to taking photos such as power and safety of people in their photos, signing waivers for permission to use photographs, and writing in photo voice log sheets. Prior to

beginning the training sessions, these participants received a package with two consent forms, a waiver, and photo log sheets. They provided signed copies of the consent forms (one to keep) prior to beginning the session. The two Men's Sheds leaders at site 1 and site 2 who did not take photos did not participate in the training sessions. They received a modified version of the consent form prior to participating in individual interviews.

Photo-voice interviews. After participants completed photo-voice training sessions, they took photographs and then sent them to the research assistants by email. Individual photo voice interviews took place June through September, 2015.

Prior to the interviews, participants selected between two and four of their photos and the interviewers referred to them throughout the interviews, using open-ended questions that were adapted and slightly modified as per the photo voice technique developed by Wang (1999). The questions are based on the photos and are, according to Wang, intended to identify participants' perceptions of the strengths and gaps that exist, based on their reflection on why they took each photo. Our questions added to Wang's technique by tailoring the wording to reflect the context of the Men's Shed or men's group. Selected photos are used below in the discussion in tandem with the accompanying interview data.

Men's Shed leader interviews. Two interviews with the Men's Shed leaders at site 1 and site 2 focused on the structure and operations of the Sheds. All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Data Analysis

A thematic content analysis was used to analyze the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic content analysis is an analysis process whereby data (transcripts, for example) are reviewed for recurrent words and phrases that are then organized into themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Initially, two research team members independently analyzed 12 of the 23 transcripts. These team members reviewed different transcripts and then compared the emergent themes that each team member identified. This comparison revealed that the primary theme reflected a community development approach for older men (which then supported our literature

search). The research team members discussed similarities and differences in the sub themes they each found and a final list was agreed upon. A third student assistant then reviewed each of the 23 transcripts to code for the selected themes after which the coded data and additional transcripts were once again reviewed by the team members. Throughout the analysis process, consideration was given to relevant literature in this area. Once this process was completed, the final coding was run by both the research assistants who had conducted the interviews (in Australia and in Canada) and the Australian research team member to see if new or additional themes were missed, and if so, all interviews were recoded to select for those themes.

Rigour. Multiple members of the research team analyzed the transcripts separately, leading to the creation of our themes - this is considered peer review (Braun and Clarke, 2013). We kept the main research question and extant literature review in mind throughout the research process, adding to theoretical sensitivity on the topic. Furthermore, overall discussion with the team over time, as well as with other researchers, led to integrity of the analysis regarding the purpose and meaning of this study. By saving the documentation of each of the steps of our data collection (e.g. field notes, interview data, all photos) and analytic sequences and processes, and by reviewing these throughout the study in an ongoing way, we maintained confirmability. Finally, the different backgrounds of the research team – social science, nursing, applied psychology, clinical psychology – ensured theoretical triangulation through each stage of the analysis.

Findings

The primary themes that emerged matched the following three levels of community development and impact. First, men spoke about how their groups and activities led to benefits for the larger community; next, they spoke about how their activities led to benefits to their particular group or Shed members; finally, the participants spoke to benefits to themselves in a very personal and individual way. The following Table II reveals the key themes and sub themes constructed along these lines.

Table II – Key Themes

1. Community Benefits (capacity)	2. Shed Benefits	3. Member Benefits (capacity)
Serving the community	Community contributing to shed	Sense of personal accomplishment
Community pride		Friendship
Bringing the community together		Learning
Including 'others'		Health and support
Maintaining community history		Enjoyment
		Using work-related skills

Community Benefits

The men's groups benefitted and impacted the community in various ways. The following sub-themes expand on these.

Group serves community. This sub-theme describes the way in which the men's groups provided services that directly benefitted their communities – in fact, the majority of the projects that the groups centered on were aimed at giving back to their local communities. These ranged from maintaining grounds and buildings, organizing and labelling museum artifacts, to repairing buildings and building new things. The Pemberton Men's Shed, for example, built boxes for the local library, and one participant explained:

We were putting together some library boxes for our local library where they we will put them out in the community, and you know, retrieve books. (Pemberton Men's Shed)

Other participants explained in detail how their groups made valuable community contributions through the work the members did. At the Camden's Men's Shed, for example, the primary focus was for shed members to maintain the grounds and buildings where their shed was located – and in exchange, the

Shed used the space. One participant explained the contributions the Shed makes:

This is an equestrian park of some 80 hectares and we do maintenance and improvements on it, we do building fences and certain structures around, around the place. The Shed first initiated this because of the need to help the council with the cost of running it. (Camden Shed)

Community pride. The theme of pride was strong at all of the sites wherein the men's groups were proud of their community contributions. For example, one coordinator explained a photo of three group participants doing a woodworking project:

The content of the photo is as I entitled my photo voice journal, guys getting together for good times and bonding over a fun and friendship based wood crafting project. It shows that especially when you have a valuable project, a project that is meaningful to others in the community as it was to the kids and their parents on Canada Day, when we presented 40 of these little birdhouse kits to them to be assembled...kids just really got into it and enjoyed it and were very appreciative and very proud of the work you know of the uh, the final product that they have there, a little birdhouse and so forth, you know the parents being very grateful and appreciative for the work that we were doing (Pemberton Men's Shed).



Figure I : Pemberton Men's Shed - Birdhouse Kits

This theme was evident in the projects that the men's group completed that were visible to the community.

Bringing community together. The men's groups were described as initiatives that helped to bring communities together. They did this through planning and holding community events and through the process of planning for the future, helping to keep community attractions open, and through the development of new groups.

The Pemberton Men's Shed members planned and hosted a community event (Figure I). These members put together birdhouse kits for children to put together on Canada Day, and this generated a lot of interest in the community, culminating in a community event with good turn-out. The following participant explained the satisfaction members experienced:

As they saw the results of it and the joy the children had in participating, so from that perspective, I think it's good for the community. It certainly is very satisfying to the individuals involved and I think it speaks to the potential to have a very successful operation of this type where you involve seniors and the rest of the community (see Figure I). (Pemberton Men's Shed)

It was noted by a Shed member how these type of initiatives for seniors bring communities together in the development of future initiatives. One participant explained,

this photo is very symbolic for me because it really to me is where coming together as two groups to be one group - the senior society board and all of the men in the men's Shed - came together to do a wonderful morning of strategic planning to see where we could go forward as a group.

Some of the sites helped to keep events and attractions open and running. At the Camden Men's Sheds the men contributed to community events through helping to set them up. For example, the group members set up the tracks for a community dog walk in the park. One participant explained that events such as these that the Men's Sheds help plan "brings a lot of people into the park, it opens up the exposure to the park, it's surprising how many people do use it" The main purpose of the Reviving the Past men's group centered on keeping the museum updated and running and they did this through maintaining, researching the history, and organizing the artifacts (including farm equipment) which centered on maintaining the history of the local area. In this sense, without the men's group contributions, the museum would not be able to showcase all of the artifacts. In this site, however, one man voiced frustration in terms of bringing people in to visit:

Communities are funny in that when something's been here for a long time it gets taken for granted and people don't realize how much work is involved in maintaining it, and even though a museum has artifacts that are old, we also have bu-

ildings that we consider to be artifacts, and they have to be maintained, and that's an even bigger struggle and expense. It's been a disappointment that some of the locals haven't become involved but still I mean they're coming around (Reviving the Past).

Despite the challenges regarding community involvement, the existence of the men's group helped to generate a new group:

It's not just this men's group. Liz started a Polish chat group. Liz and I took Polish lessons at the university two years ago and we thought we're not gonna drive back and forth in the winter so she had the bright idea let's do a Polish chat and I thought oh it'll never happen cause we do this in the summer and the Polish chat was in the winter. We had almost 25 people...And they go into the church basement and we're not really teachers but we just do some fun stuff and everything so it's part of the museum too you know. It's just snowballed.

Including others. This sub theme describes the ways participants talked about inclusivity more broadly, in terms of the inclusion (or non-inclusion) of community members who were underrepresented in their groups. These included Indigenous people, people living with disabilities, and people with criminal histories.

At the Pemberton Men's Shed, inclusion was talked about explicitly because it was the intention of the group organizers to involve Indigenous communities in the area. One of the participants explained this, and its relevance in terms of the (Canadian) context of their group:

This challenge is how to integrate more and more with our First Nations because this is a First Nations community, there's two different tribes and there's reservations here, and you go to the village right now and you go and sit down and a cup of coffee you'll sit next to a First Nations person. We're all together but there still is that. This is what we have to get going, the linking up. We have to find the ways to link up with shared experience, that's what we have to find, that's one of our stated objectives. We've had a couple of First Nations people come to some of our events but we don't have any regulars. And so that's a challenge... how do we break that down, now I have had a couple of First Nations people who have come to the tool library... whether it's men or they're not looking for it as a men or a women's thing, they're just looking at it as a I need a tool...and that's maybe what we have to do is be that neutral about what we're doing and find the ways for people to fit into it. (Pemberton Shed)

There was recognition of the need to include others in the Men's Shed, however, this was clearly some thing that the group was still trying to figure out how to change.

One of the sites in Australia, the Camden Men's Shed talked about including others who had intellectual disability or who had a criminal background. However, in this site inclusion was talked about more in terms of providing a service or helping others, rather than seeking to make them a regular part of the group. It was described how young men with intellectual disability visited the Shed after another organization had requested that the Shed host a visit from them. However, in this instance the idea of inclusion was around the Shed providing a service to the community. For example, when asked whether those men with intellectual

disability are members of the shed, a participant said No, they're not members. We have had a few who have been here virtually from the start of the program...once they've finished they moved on. (Camden).

Another participant noted the many benefits to including men living with disabilities:

Or like the certificate, they did work on the park and the park benefited...And the men's shed benefited from participation in that process too. (Camden Shed).



Figure II : Camden Men's Shed – Training Program

Another way the inclusion of others was talked about was through the description of a program where the Men's Shed could provide work-related training to men who were participating in a program for:

They work, and such, that's been emotionally a very good thing; and the other thing we've done recently with ... I don't know how I call them, they weren't from jail but they were from some sort of disciplinary place.

Maintaining Community History. Two of the sites in particular played a central role in helping to maintain the history of the local area. This was done through re-creating buildings from the past, and through research into how early settlers to the area lived.

At the Camden Men's Shed members had been involved in a project to re-create exact miniature replicas of local buildings in the town. They researched records

of building plans at the local museum in order to build several miniature models of local buildings. One participant chose a photograph of one of these replicas for the photo-voice interview and described the benefit to the community:

I think the picture (Figure II) reflects the potential of the, an increase in the relationship between the community and the group and the park in that it'll be another one of the physical things that you can see the little scale models of various parts there, of historic interest around town (Camden Men's Shed).

Similarly, at the Reviving the Past men's group, members researched the history of how the tools and equipment (that they repaired) were once used. This knowledge would then be accessible to museum visitors. This was seen not only as a contribution to the museum space itself, but to the overall education of the community:

We have all kinds of things in the past and sometimes I find you can relate to the present and the future if you could also relate to the past. Otherwise it leaves you in limbo if you understand what I mean. Know where you're going - so I see a museum as instrumental in that way. The men who were part of the group here are really contributing to that sense of self I guess for the community. And discovering who they are. And look how much more convenient the stuff we have now...and who knows what we're gonna get in future. Because people, bit of a day out and seeing how, maybe if only to see how lucky they are cause this is old stuff they must have really had to struggle with this stuff. (Reviving the Past)

So, while there were tangible outcomes related to restoring historical aspects of their towns, participants of these men's groups also viewed their groups as making contributions that would contribute to the long-term sense of community identity.

Shed Benefits

The communities supported the men's groups in various ways, depending on the characteristics and resources of each site. The men's groups benefited through community donations, through grants that staff or volunteers applied for on behalf of the men's groups and through the leaders efforts to leverage support from key community members.

Within the two Australian sites participants discussed several instances where donations were made toward sustaining their Men's Sheds. For example, at Harry's Men's Shed, the members built bird cages and cricket boxes to sell at markets. The council, however, donated money to cover costs for these materials, as one participant explained:

Same with the cricket boxes (Figure III) we got, they gave us quite a big donation...we costed the materials and we asked them for...a percentage on the materials...they come up with a cheque and was quite a bit more than the cost of materials so that was, that was a bit, good thing for the Shed (Harry's Men's Shed).



Figure III : Harry's Men's Shed – Cricket Box

At the Camden Men's Shed, direct donations were given; one participant said that "we had a surprise come in, that fellow that's retiring donated a full industrial machine till shop for us, so in the lathe industrial pedestal drill, milling machine."

Another key aspect to generating benefits to the men's group was through efforts to leverage support from key community members and secure grants. A photo voice participant at the Pemberton Men's Shed explained this process:

[A city official], through his office, made a significant financial commitment to help us set that tool library up and money for buying tools. We've got some brand new tools we've been able to buy through his donation. (Pemberton Men's Shed)

However, some groups faced challenges regarding keeping the groups going. The Reviving the Past men's group was smaller and had no paid staff or council involved. As such, they noted difficulties in funding. In discussing a photo of the lunch that was prepared for the men's group, the group volunteer said:

It's a strength in that the food is so important, the gathering to eat. But it's also a concern in that's, that's a lot of our cost involved you know, preparing the food and buying the food. It does take a lot of time and effort to do that. (Reviving the Past)

Member Benefits. This theme describes the many benefits the men's group members described. These included a sense of personal accomplishment, friendship, learning, health and support, enjoyment, and using work-related skills. *Sense of personal accomplishment.* The participants described their participation as giving providing opportunities to accomplish a meaningful goal. Many participant produced photographs chronicled completed projects. For example, one participant discussed a photo of a picnic shelter he and other group members built, saying "I feel great, see it used as was intended, so it's been a benefit to all of us but mostly to see people using it and enjoying the facility that we put there for them" (Camden Men's Shed). Similarly, another member explained:

I took it upon myself to install the stained glass back in there. It looks nice for sure. It'll look a lot better after it's all in there... Yea again if I can do the job to my satisfaction in a way it's a confidence builder too cause I've never done this before. (Reviving the Past)

Friendship. Having the opportunity to make friends through shared projects and teamwork was talked about as a benefit of the men's groups. However, for one of the participants who had a hearing impairment, participation in group projects was limited.

In this situation, his role was quite limited. Upon discussing the benefits of being a part of the men's group, this participant said:

It's mostly this (working on the tractor in the photo) because I don't hear that well so I don't get involved. Even with hearing aids by the time I understand what somebody said they're onto something else usually [laughs]. (Reviving the Past)

Learning. Learning new things was seen as a benefit to participating in the men's groups. This was talked about in terms of building projects together as a team and through being exposed to new people. One of the participants described the new skills he acquired as a result of various projects he took part in:

When we come in we can be given any job. One day we were given a wagon wheel to fix. I've never fixed a wagon wheel before, so that was something new. Another time we were given a barrel to fix, I've never done a barrel before [laughs] so you learn a lot... That's a pleasant surprise... you also learn some- thing, that's what I like about it. (Reviving the Past) At the Camden Men's Shed, having the opportunity to have men with intellectual disability visit the group was talked about as being a valuable learning experience for both group members and the visiting men:

Health and support. Participants discussed the benefits of the groups in providing healthy activities and social support. The groups were described as a place where they could go to stay active. One participant said "once the men Shed became available I thought well this is a good way for me to get a bit more fit, a bit more exercise and I enjoy the outdoor life and it gives me a lot of pleasure" (Camden Men's Shed).

An additional sense of support was noted as well. The men's groups were described as a space where men could talk about health-related issues. One participant said that he had the opportunity to talk with people about depression:

The meeting up with people from different walks of life, and a few people have a few little depression topics you know... Or but I am quite open with it. I even I told them 'you don't know what depression means' and I start to cry in front of everyone. (Harry's Men's Shed)

However, it was clear that the groups may not have been equipped to support or welcome all individuals. One participant described the situation where a man had attended the Harry's Shed had been involved in a negative interaction and this was attributed to a mental health-related issue:

We've really only had one incident which is not yet resolved of a person who suffers physical and mental issues living in public housing. I don't know if it's schizophrenic or what, who created a situation here...where he started trying to be in charge of a certain area. And he's not shown up since. (Harry's Men's Shed)

Enjoyment. The participants overwhelmingly attended the men's groups because they were enjoyable. Attendance at the Camden Men's Shed was described as "for our benefit. At the end of the day this would have benefit cause if we didn't get anything out of it we wouldn't be here." At all the sites most participants enjoyed attending and some participants got the opportunity to enjoy projects they would not otherwise take part in. A Pemberton Men's Shed participant said "I'd never really had an opportunity to work with guys my age on a project similar to this, and in terms of just well the dynamics, it was just a really enjoyable experience."

Although most participants spoke about the enjoyment they got from attending the groups, there were situations where this was not shared. One participant talked about a project as more of a chore they (the men) had to do, rather than one he enjoyed:

And people like to see it so we have to upgrade it or repair it. And I happen to be stuck with making the steeple and I say stuck because I didn't appreciate the job at all. This was a job that I didn't know how to tackle. And for one thing I didn't have the proper equipment either (Reviving the Past).

Using work-related skills. Many participants talked about the groups as places where retired men could continue to use their specialized skills and knowledge. This seemed to give them a sense of pride and allowed them to continue to contribute to the community:

there's a really wide range of backgrounds and trade backgrounds and ability...we have a treasurer whose his whole life working his way through a big business and so he brings something totally different to the Shed and it makes him a good treasurer. And other guys who are the coordinators they've had practical experience and some of them have been mentors and teachers and trainers themselves so they're the sort of people that we need to pass on their skill really (Harry's Men's Shed).

Discussion

Our findings highlight that older men can and do contribute in significant ways to their communities, communities support sheds, and men benefit from these

mutual relationships in a way that fits the model of community development. It was evident, for example in the theme related to community benefits in particular, that the older men's leadership roles benefited the community. For example, the tool lending library was run and maintained by the members of the Pemberton Men's Shed and was made accessible to all community members, providing them with access to low-cost tools. Similarly, the *Reviving the Past* men's group provided repairs that kept the museum operational and, therefore, available to the community.

While participants at the sites did not specifically discuss a formal mentorship program, the findings point to the potential for intergenerational relationships and other types of mentoring relationships to benefit community members. The children in Pemberton, for example, who participated in the bird-house activity, received guidance from Men's Shed members. This reflects the great potential of intergenerational relationships as discussed by Whitney (2009), who described the community benefits of utilizing older adults' leadership capacity in the context of community volunteering. Young men with intellectual disability and members of the Camden Men's Shed had the opportunity to work on a project together. This also reflects an emerging understanding of men's groups as a space where mentoring relationships can be built with younger generations, similar to the program described by Wilson, Cordier, & Wilkes-Gillan (2014). Furthermore, the participants identified that these mentorship relationships were beneficial to their Men's Sheds because the mentees provided real contributions. In that sense, mentorship programs may help to reduce stereotypes around aging and help to build capacity of the community.

Beyond the benefits of capacity building among group members and other community members was the discussion of inclusivity more broadly. While Men's Sheds in Australia have been tailored to promote health and build capacity among Indigenous men (Southcombe, Cavanagh, and Bartram, 2015) this was understood as an essential next-step at the Pemberton Men's Shed in Canada. This group was working through how they might make the group more welcoming to Indigenous communities, given the history of colonization in the region and the need to repair relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

Our data show that group participants advocated for their groups by lobbying key community members for support. In Pemberton, for example, community support was obtained for the tool lending library. This is similar to other findings that show that group coordinators leaders can act as a liaison between government service providers and the participants (Southcombe, Cavanagh, and Bartram, 2015). It was clear

that participants advocated for continued support of the men's groups due to the value and potential of their groups as a community resource.

The benefits identified by the group members themselves included health and support, including the ability to talk about topics such as depression. This reflects similar research findings elsewhere (Golding, 2015; Reynolds, Mackenzie, Medved, & Roger, 2013). Other benefits to group members included the sense of fulfillment in participating in projects that give back to the community such as providing equipment repairs or grounds maintenance. Through these initiatives, community building becomes central to the way in which older men can defer isolation and depression.

Key in all of these findings was the use of photos to engage the older men in this study. It was primarily through the photos that the men showed interest in the project and that they opened up to talk more intimately about the meaning and value they attributed to their projects. The photos became an invitation to talking, where talking may not have been easy or the first choice for older men (Oliffe & Bottorff, 2007). Photos became an invaluable vehicle for promoting the idea that their projects and their contributions to community were valuable, while also engaging them in research – something they may otherwise not have found a valuable use of their time. In this sense, the photos acted as an intervention for a hard to reach cohort – one which is at risk of depression and suicide as we know, one which is increasing in number in Canada and Australia, and one which may not have otherwise felt very willing to come forward and be part of a research project.

In particular, our use of photos in this study supports the view that research participants are experts in their life experience, and here, that they do provide mentorship and support to others including younger generations. The photos become a possible intervention for these men and another way to celebrate this reality and the discussions of the photos also revealed areas for improvement. Some participants noted that they did not enjoy the projects they had been expected to do, and a participant living with a hearing impairment was not able to fully participate. The photos made visible and more available valuable information about their contributions and community involvement. In this way, the use of photos acted to engage a hard to reach cohort, they served to fuel the participant's pride in their work and allowed them to talk, and they became a useful form of data in itself for the research aspect of the study.

Similarities emerged between the Australian and Canadian sites highlighting the need to further explore and develop international research on this topic. While the Australian Men's Sheds were further developed and better-funded, it was clear that the Canadian sites

were moving in the same direction, in terms of developing programs that centered on maintaining community spaces. Similarly, the focus on including those who have been under-represented in the sheds was an important focus in both Australia and Canada, and one that requires further research internationally.

Our study had a number of strengths, including our focus on community development across four different men's groups from two different countries. There were, however, also limitations, including a need for further research to learn how men's programs can be further developed in a way that is inclusive, as this was clearly a question Canadian groups were thinking about. Further research to understand the perspectives of Indigenous men and of men living with disabilities such as hearing impairments will help men's groups develop in a more inclusive way and, therefore, have greater community impact. Another limitation of our study was that we only conducted two leader interviews (that did not include photos) and these took place at the two Australian sites. In this way, the interview data collected across the four sites differed to some extent. Finally, given more time, the study could have included more photos and interviews of men including a stronger representation of diverse populations such as Indigenous community members, men with disabilities, and men who belong to the LGBTQ community.

In conclusion, our findings show that men's groups contributed to capacity-building of group participants and communities in a way that fits the model of community development described earlier. The presence of Men's Sheds and men's groups acted as a resource for communities to access events, tools, or community spaces such as museums, for example. The photo voice discussions also revealed challenges and the potential for men's groups to expand in a way that will make them more inclusive of older men who may be most isolated.

Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge the contributions of the research assistants, James Urquhart and Hayden Jaques, in both Canada and Australia who conducted all of the individual interviews with the participants. We would also like to acknowledge the contributions of the men's groups and participants for sharing their experiences with us. This work was supported by a Movember Foundation Canada grant to develop the Men's Depression and Suicide Network (www.menshealthresearch.ubc.ca) by [grant number # 11R18296].

Note

1. Australian Men's Shed Association: <http://mensshed.org/what-is-a-mens-shed>

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