

Britain has become a multicultural society social work essay



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Williams (1976) cited in Allott and Robb (2006) argues that the phrase communities were originally used to refer to the common individuals, as opposed to those of rank, or to a state or organised society. Smith (2001) view point is that communities are representations of groups of individuals with some shared experiences. Communities could be used to refer to geographic communities within towns, neighbourhoods, and cultural communities in ethnic groups, women's groups, or communal community (ibid). Communities are based on shared opportunity, beliefs, values and meanings between individuals (Yarnit 2000). The term community has also been used to describe central and regional government, budgets and grants, credit unions to housing associations, community centres, education and training schemes, and trading enterprises (Twelvetrees 2002). According to Hawtin and Smith (2007) during the 1960s the government's views were that community development could help discontented areas, bring separate communities together and reduce inequalities. This view was informed by President Johnson's Great Society Agenda in the United States which was designed to reduce poverty and national inequality. Community based programmes were central to the Great Society which reflected a fragile policy consensus that the best method to deal with poverty was not just to increase income levels but to assist the poor to better themselves through education, job training and other forms of self-help (ibid). Ewles and Simmnet (2007) determines from this that community development can reduce the shock of poverty on wellbeing. Community development is said to be the method of developing social resources. Community development is a method that emphasises the meaning of working with individuals to identify their own goals, organising funds, and developing an action strategy for <https://assignbuster.com/britain-has-become-a-multicultural-society-social-work-essay/>

addressing errors they have recognised (CDWW nd). Day et al (2006) suggest that since 1960s there have been a number of government initiatives in Britain to lessen the problems of poor neighbourhoods. In 1998 the Prime Minister (Tony Blair) launched a report which outlined a policy framework to tackle social exclusion on the 'worst estates' (ibid). However fifteen years later there has been no change in the levels of poverty in the geographical area of Neath Port Talbot (NPT), where the gap between the rich and poor has increase (Clarke et al 2002). NPT is a small town located in South Wales where coal and steel was the main source of employment in the welsh community(NPT 2011(D)). As stated by Statistics Bulletin (2012(C)) the population of NPT consists of 139, 700 and with individuals living longer the population is expecting to increase over the next five years (ibid). The decline of the coal mining and steel industries in the last decade has brought high levels of unemployment within the communities and has led to NPT communities being one of the most deprived areas in Wales (NPT nd(E)). NPT having 25% of the population between 16 to 64 claiming employment benefits. NPT has the ninth smallest average household earnings of the 22 Welsh local authorities and has 24. 6% of the working age population claiming benefits, compared to 18. 6% nationwide and has the seventh highest percentage of children living in unemployed households in Wales (NPT 2013(K)). A persons employment status can have an impact on other individuals perception of them and on their ability to participate effectively in their local community and society. A job can bring self-worth, financial stability and financial credibility in accessing mortgage's and other credit sources (Susses et al 2008). Life on low income means going without the bare necessities such as food or eat less well than individuals who are better

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off (Hawtin and Smith 2007). It has been outlined by NAW (2008(G)) that 19% of individuals in NPT areas fall in the 10% of most deprived areas in Wales and the majority of the areas are more disadvantaged than the Wales average. Cooper (2013) reported that a Conservative councillor stated that no one is going hungry in today's Britain (ibid). However it has been acknowledged that hunger is rising, this has been recognised through the communities of Neath who visit the Trussell Trust Fund (TTF) which has led to the establishments of food-banks led by a local Christian Aid organisation. In August 2011 the TTF set up a food-bank in Neath this was due to the increase in demand across the country within the last twelve months. The Neath food-bank is part of a charity association of food-banks managed by trained local volunteers in churches (Mason 2012). The TTF provides an emergency three days of good quality food for individuals who are hungry through ill-health, benefit delay or redundancy and can be extended if necessary (Mason 2012). Frontline Care Professionals (Doctors, Health Visitors, Probation Officers, Social Services and Police) manage the food vouchers to enable individuals to exchange them for emergency food which gives ten healthy and balanced meals. TTF volunteers support individuals by directing them to additional services to help to change lives and break the cycle of poverty (Church Urban Fund nd (m)) There is a strong stigma associated with poverty in society and receiving support from a food bank is seen as a representation of poverty and some families refuse to receive support as they are embarrassed (Kellaway 2012) TTF (2013 (A)) confirms that the TTF was first started in 1997 this was based on a programme 'Moved to help forgotten people'. The initial programme was based in

Bulgaria and expanded in the United Kingdom (UK) through a couple who live
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in the town of Salisbury and were known in the community for their charitably work in Bulgaria. The couple received a phone call from a mother requesting help to feed her family. As a result of their research the couple was astounded at the amount of families going hungry in the community (ibid). Local documents of deprivation shared with reports from social services established that thousands of individuals on low incomes hit crisis and struggle to put food on the table (TTF nd). This prompted the start of the TTF to provide a food-bank in their back garden shed, giving local individuals with three days of food supplied by local business and charities. In 2004 Britain's food-bank network was launched and the TTF educated communities and local churches nationwide to start their own food-banks (TTF 2013(A)). In the last twelve years the TTF food-banks have grown to 148 across Britain (Lambie 2011(B)). The TTF is a non profitable organisation and does not receive government support relying on the kindness of the community, local businesses and charitable trusts (TTF 2013). Community profiling can be a comprehensive description of the needs of a population within a community and the resources that exist within the community. NPT community profiles are taken by a variety of different agencies for different reasons. Legal agencies may be required by central government to assess local needs as they may use community profiles of obtaining accurate information of significance to policy development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. However voluntary or community organisations may initiate a community profile as a way of demonstrating unmet needs or inadequate resources, or as part of a community campaign (Hawtin and Smith 2007). NPT LA can find out about their communities by listening to communities, performing a community profile is likely to be more productive

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and more sympathetic, these can be collected through social surveys.

Surveys can be carried out by telephone, post, electronically, social networks or face to face (Twelvetrees 2002). TTF (2012) comments that the demand for support is going to increase significantly due to the Welfare Reform Act 2013 this will put pressure on the food stocks. The TTF's main concern is to provide emergency food to individuals in crisis and, is open to discussing mutual solutions with LA who want to work with the TTF using their data on hunger issues to add pressure to influence Local Government policy.

However food-banks must do this without risking the core values or becoming a legal arm of the welfare state. TTF are happy to receive capacity building grants from the LA to help meet increases in demand however; TTF would be particularly cautious of entering into any contractual agreements to provide welfare services as the TTF is a voice for individuals who are experiencing hunger poverty in Neath. Netmums is a social network and was established in 2000 and is one of the fastest growing pressure groups of the UK's parenting organisation. Netmums is a family of local social support forum sites that cover the UK and offers information, support and guidance for parents, to ensure that every family has access to local support and advice from professionals to other parents, to bring individuals together, to give parents a voice, locally and nationally on issues that are important (Netmums 2013). A pressure group can be defined as an organisations of individuals who believe in similar causes with strong views and desire to influence Local Government. They can described as interest groups as they are able to obtain adequate support to drive government to alter legislation (Trueman 2013). A recent account by Netmums found that 1 in 5 mothers skip meals to feed their children. TTF Food-banks meet mothers daily, but to <https://assignbuster.com/britain-has-become-a-multicultural-society-social-work-essay/>

prevent dependency on food-banks individuals are only permitted to have three repeated food-bank vouchers. To support individuals break out poverty, TTF recommend organisations to resolve the underlying problem (Kellogg's 2013(N)). Figures released by TTF illustrate that the current economic climate is having a considerable effect on individuals struggling to put food on the table. Over 45, 000 children were fed by food-banks in 2011-2012. The numbers of people being fed nationwide has increased from 61, 468 in 2010-2011 to 128, 697 in 2011-2012 and is expecting to rise to half a million by 2016 (Neath Foodbank 2013). Office of National Statistics (2012) cited in Dickens (2012) reported that household wages in Wales have fallen over the last four years by £80 a month which is 12% lower than across Britain. According to Kellogg's (2013(N)) that research from TTF foodbanks show that it is not just the homeless or disadvantaged who are on welfare benefits who have limited financial resources, and are often in need to access crisis loans. Due to the current climate of economic issues working families are also finding their wages do not cover the rising food and fuel costs. It has been identified by Butler (2012) that there is a higher amount of working families who are in need of these services. Bytheway et al (2002) comments that due to low income wages and reduction in hours, families are faced with high level of unavoidable expenses in household bills, the amount of money remaining would leave very little for purchase of food and services (ibid). However in NPT employed women continue to struggle with only earning 80% of men's wages in the same job and working part-time the number drops to 60-70% (Davies 2009). Due to the recession more individuals are on the breadline however it is important that the Prime Minister is aware of the reasons why individuals are turning to foodbanks <https://assignbuster.com/britain-has-become-a-multicultural-society-social-work-essay/>

across Britain. A report from Downing Street stated that " foodbanks are there for people who ' feel they need a bit of extra food' and that benefits were set at a level that means people should not go hungry" (TTF 2013). According to TTF (2012) Community Care Grants and Loans for living costs will be cut in April 2013 and funding will be made available to unitary and greater Local Authorities (LA) to 2005 budget levels, resulting in less finance being available. The Welfare Reform Act 2013 will impact on LA and it has been acknowledged that they will be trying to find ways of helping individuals who rely on grants from the Social Fund (ibid). Social Fund is a scheme that supports individuals with loans or payments for emergency crisis or to buy items which they are unable to purchase from regular income (DWP 2013). NPT are creating initiatives with South West Workways project, Genesis project, Coastal projects, Citizen Advice Bureau and NPT Credit Union (NPTCU). These are led by employment projects supported and sponsored by Communities First (CF) and Jobcentre Plus in trying to target and reduce the amount of individuals unemployed. The organisations work with disadvantaged families, individuals, young carers, young offenders and disadvantaged groups to build up on confidence and skills to ensure education, financial, employment and training issues and opportunities are available(ibid). The Welfare Reform Act 2013 is going to have a negative impact on communities however; by ensuring that a strong network of support is available will help to address the barriers to cope with the changes (NPT 2013(I)). Having development workers in communities can empower marginalised individuals to recognise outcomes and performance for change by providing frontline help through activities, projects, festivals, self help work, advocacy, outreach and community initiatives (Communities First <https://assignbuster.com/britain-has-become-a-multicultural-society-social-work-essay/>)

2012(F)). CF is about empowering a community's ability and skills to identify its own struggle and work together with public service providers so that they are aware of a community's wants and aspirations and can take action as a result (Communities First 2007). CF is a project aimed to support services that meet the particular needs of Neath communities. CF is addressing financial and debt issues within the communities of Neath and have made strong links with NPT Credit Union and NPT Welfare Rights Unit who provide a range of advice on debts, savings, loans, benefits and issues such as fuel poverty. CF is working alongside 'Fuelling Kids' project that provides families with advice and promotes breakfast clubs, after school clubs, free school meals and a 'passport to leisure' scheme. In developing links with local traders, CF initiated Neath's first Food and Drink Festival launched in 2009. Individuals received lessons in how to cook simple healthy and cheap meals and also receive advice on fire safety and a range of lifestyle issues (Communities First 2010). The introduction of the Welfare Reform Act (2013) will bring consequences to communities, some individuals may be forced to lose their homes, face mental breakdowns, some may commit crime and families could break down due to the impact of the financial strain. The NPT TTF enables local communities to address hidden problems that are happening, allowing communities to come together to bring empathy and support back into the community and to recognise what is needed to have an impact on their wellbeing (Lambie 2011(J)). Third Sector Research Centre (TSRC) established that learning and skills progress in community groups had little to do with training and education and more to do with experience from associated groups and social networks (Hudson 2013). TSRC research established through 'pilot interviews with 15 community groups' and found <https://assignbuster.com/britain-has-become-a-multicultural-society-social-work-essay/>

that individuals learn by 'seeing and doing', and social networks are key to identifying and attracting the skills they need (TRSC nd). While it is often assumed that community groups need specialist technical skills to flourish, this research highlights the importance of interpersonal and transferrable skills are gained from work or other experiences (Hudson 2013). A report published by Rowntree Foundation cited by Ramesh (2012) argues that individuals are becoming better educated. With an increase in the number of 25 to 59 year olds obtaining university degrees. This has increased from 4% in 1981 to 25% in 2011 and graduate unemployment has increased," in that Britain is creating a "better educated workless population". Local Government and LA have a responsibility to provide effective and affordable transport links. Due to public transport being cut, employed professionals are having to use their own personal transport this results in less spare money which may cause families to make choices as to whether they cut back on food to meet the fuel prices (Hudson 2013). Poverty (nd) outlines that local transport services have cut their services and are not meeting the travel needs for the majority of individuals in any part of Wales. Transport prices have increased by 31% in Wales this is more than in other parts of the UK, this has had an impact on individuals being able to access facilities. Being without accessible transport can mean that individuals are unable to access facilities, jobs, or supermarkets to purchase cheaper food or healthy options on offer at local suppliers (ibid). CF can offer suggestions on healthy choices to help promote good nutrition however; some NPT amenities are locally available but for majority of individuals the option to have local amenities are unavailable therefore, transport is a major issues and associated to limited finances can cause problems that could mean individuals feel

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isolated and going hungry (FIND REF). TTF (2012(L)) claim that the LA have approached TTF to investigate how they can work as a team to support individuals who previously relied on funding by the social fund. NPT TTF deliver food boxes to individuals who live in rural areas who cannot afford transport or social transport is difficult to access visits to the TTF. Foodbanks in Canada are able to donate fresh, frozen and non-perishable food they receive from donors. However due to some food being lower quality the items frequently given have been past their best by date, fresh vegetables are wilted and have mould. In Canada a legislation was passed in 1992 to prevent foodbanks from becoming liable for any incidents that may occur to recipients. Some of Canada's foodbanks volunteers have been found with low sanitation standards, lack of respect towards clients and allegations of foodbank volunteers taking donated food home for their own consumption (Food Banks 2010). However as TTF are independent charities, each of the TTF foodbank's have to meet the statutory requirements in terms of governance, accounting and reporting. They receive support in this from the trust itself through a quality audit system, which also checks that food is managed appropriately and health and safety requirements are met (Vark 2012). Partnerships and cooperation are well-known in the voluntary sector, many charities are finding new ways to work together on joint projects. To save on budgets, LA can encourage charities to join together on projects that target collective recipient. However working in collaboration is sometimes more difficult than working alone, therefore it is vital for groups to communicate how they will perform, defining their responsibility, roles and contract. Local Councils can help in these discussions. NPT LA have created a voluntary sector forum to provide a safe environment for organisations that

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are involved. Employment does not guarantee freedom from lack of food. High fuel and food prices, demand from a growing population, are pushing NPT community people further into poverty and hunger (Argofuels nd). Local Governments have a responsibility to guarantee that everyone has enough food. The TTF believes that foodbanks will not solve the problems of individuals going hungry. Food insecurity is primarily due to a lack of money, education, skills and support. Food banks were created in the 2004 to help people who were at risk of being hungry. But without social justice measures such as a guaranteed adequate income or a living wage to ensure food security, the growth of foodbanks will maintain to offer individualistic solutions to social problems. The power of the TTF style is that it provides an off-the-shelf opening for community action. However providing a supportive network can help individuals find it easier not to go hungry.