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**Social Capital Development in Two-Generation Programs:**

**Fostering Connections for Children and Parents**


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**Social Capital Development in Two-Generation Programs:**

**Fostering Connections for Children and Parents**


**by**

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# Abstract

## Social Capital Development in Two-Generation Programs:
## Fostering Connections for Children and Parents

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A growing body of evidence supports the use of two-generation approaches to address the economic security of low-income and poor families in the United States. Two-generation programs and policies seek to mitigate the effect of poverty in two contiguous generations – by helping young children get the best possible start in life while helping their parents become economically self-sufficient. Recent research has shown that successful two-generation programs all share three components, to a greater or lesser degree: an education component for parents and children, an economic support component, and a social capital component. There is a substantial evidence base to support the fact that education and economic supports lead to positive returns in well-being and family economic security and that they are critical components of two-generation approaches. However little research has been done on the role social capital can play in two-generation approaches.

The purpose of this report is to analyze social capital in relation to its role and manifestation in two-generation programs and its effects relating to outcomes for low-income and poor families. Research for this report was conducted through a review of the

extant literature, program evaluations, and case studies as well as information-gathering interviews with on-the-ground two-generation programs. The research suggests that embedding social capital development into two-generation programs has the potential to be a powerful economic development strategy.

Overall, the existing research supports the fact that development of social capital is critical to the well-being of individuals and society as a whole. Preliminary evidence supports the notion that social capital formation is a critical component of the two-generation framework. However, more research is needed to substantiate this claim and provide evidence of the role social capital formation plays in these approaches. Additionally creating an evidence base at the policy and programmatic levels will be critical in order to expand and make the case for family economic security strategies based on or incorporating social capital development.

# Table of Contents

# List of Tables

# List of Figures

# Chapter 1: Introduction

A growing body of evidence supports the use of two-generation approaches to address the economic security of low-income and poor families in the United States.[1] Two-generation approaches focus on creating opportunities for, and addressing the needs of, both vulnerable parents and children in tandem. The rationale for the promotion of two-generation approaches to economic security is grounded in economic theories relating to human and social capital.

Evidence shows that children raised in poverty experience poorer outcomes in a variety of areas than those who are not raised in poverty.[2] Children who grow up in poverty often experience adverse developmental outcomes, reduced academic achievement, health and behavioral problems, increased contact with the criminal justice system, and reduced earnings as adults. Furthermore, these children are more likely to live in poverty as adults, resulting in a cycle of seemingly intractable intergenerational poverty. Research has shown that high quality and targeted early investments in the cognitive and social-emotional development of children can lead to positive outcomes and ameliorate the negative effects of poverty.[3]

Adults lacking the human capital to compete in the job market face numerous barriers to meeting the basic consumption needs of their families, acquiring needed

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[1] See Ascend (2012); Glover, Smith, King, and Coffey (2010); Glover, King, and Smith (2012); Hsueh, Jacobs, and Farrell (2011); Sommer, T.E., P.L. Chase-Lansdale, J. Brooks-Gunn, M. Gardner, D.M. Rauner, and K. Freel. (In Press).

[2] Fass and Cauthen (2008); See National Center for Children in Poverty (http://www.nccp.org/) for facts relating to children living in poverty and low-income families.

[3] See Heckman and Masterov (2007) for data relating to rates of return on investment in children.

education and skills, protecting themselves from changes in the labor market, and lifting

their families out of poverty. According to human capital theories, adults can also benefit

from targeted services to increase their knowledge, skills and abilities thereby increasing

their chances of acquiring careers that afford them the ability to have family supporting

wages.[4] Research indicates that education and job training services can successfully raise

employment rates and earnings.[5]

Social capital is a relatively new concept in the social sciences and its application

to policy interventions to address poverty is newer still. In the last twenty or so years

social capital has come to indicate that networks of social relationships represent a

resource for both the individual and society.[6] It seems intuitive that one's social

relationships and ability to connect with the community in which one lives is important to

overall well-being. However, the more systematic way in which social capital captures

such an intuition has created a new theoretical paradigm and helped to develop a series of

innovative research programs in politics, economics, and the study of human well-being.[7]

Social capital theories of economic development posit that communities with a

high degree of social capital are in a stronger position to confront poverty.[8] A defining

feature of being poor, is that one is not a member of certain social networks and

institutions that could be used to secure good jobs and decent housing and ultimately lead

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[4] Becker (1993).

[5] Bureau of Labor Statistics (2009); King and Heinrich (2011)

[6] See Castiglione, van Deth and Wolleb (2008) for a review of the literature on social capital.

[7] Castiglione, van Deth and Wolleb (2008).

[8] UNESCO (2002).

to economic security.[9] Programs and policies that incorporate social capital formation will be better positioned to fully support families living in low-income or poor circumstances.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM

Policies and programs to address family poverty often target children or parents separately, as individual units requiring distinct interventions. Programs aimed at children generally focus on minimizing the developmental and educational deficits common among children living in poverty. Programs aimed at parents generally focus on improving their education and skills levels with the goal of improving employment outcomes to foster economic self-sufficiency. Even programs that take a two-generation approach are generally limited in scope e.g., early education programs that include a component aimed at increasing parenting skills without proactively addressing the employment and educational needs of parents. Conversely, a job training program may include a child care component, but lack sufficient focus on meeting the developmental needs of children and preparing them for future academic success. In the United States there are some examples of successful two-generation programs that successfully provide targeted family economic security strategies, i.e., educational, economic, and social capital supports, to parents and children concurrently.

Two-generation programs and policies offer a relatively new attempt to address persistent poverty by providing interventions for families as a whole.[10] In two-generation

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[9] Wilson (1996, 1987)
[10] Ascend (2012).

3

programs, services such as early education are offered to children to help them get the best possible start in life, while their parents are concurrently provided with educational opportunities or workforce training along with economic and social capital supports to help both generations become economically self-sufficient. Providing parent and children services in tandem provides a holistic approach to increasing family stability, alleviating intergenerational poverty, and raising the economic competitiveness of national and local economies. Two-generation approaches have shown promising early results for the families involved through the use of interventions grounded in human capital theories.[11] Relatively little research has been done on how social capital development can be successfully incorporated into two-generation approaches. Embedding social capital development into two-generation programs has the potential to be a powerful economic development strategy. The purpose of this report is to unpack this complex issue and provide insight on how social capital can add to and strengthen two-generation approaches.

**METHODOLOGY**

Due to the relatively new insight that social capital is an integral part of a two-generation framework,[12] this report is exploratory in nature. The methodology used in conducting this research is primarily based on a review of existing research and programs along with qualitative methods of analysis.

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[11] See Glover, King, and Smith (2012) for results from a promising two-generation approach.
[12] Ascend (2012).

This report examines how social capital development strategies can be successfully incorporated into two-generation approaches at a programmatic and policy level with a focus on the outcomes these strategies have on the economic security of families. In writing this report the following questions guide the analysis:

- What are two-generation family economic security approaches?

- What is social capital and what are its components, forms and sources?

- How can social capital be operationalized and measured?

- In what ways is social capital important for economic development?

- What does social capital manifest as in policies and programs that promote economic security?

- How can social capital development be used as a theory of change?

These questions will be addressed first through a literature review to assess the economic theories that underpin two-generation approaches and define the components of these programs. Then social capital will be analyzed through a literature review developed from the sociological, economic, psychological and political science academic literature relating to social capital, to define its meaning and components. In addition, research from major initiatives at the World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development focusing on social capital and poverty alleviation will be analyzed in order to gain insight on social capital formation as an economic development tool.

Additionally, the report will incorporate analysis of relevant innovative and promising on-the ground programs that have been identified as using a two-generation

approach. Programs will be assessed on their level of social capital incorporation into their program model as well as how social capital incorporation is used to address the barriers that families living in poverty and low-income circumstances face to achieving economic security and educational success. Two programs that have been identified as using social capital formation as a theory of change for moving families out of poverty will be assessed using a case study approach. Finally, information-gathering interviews with staff of promising two-generation programs were conducted and insights from these interviews were used to the guide the analysis throughout the report. A structured interview approach was used in order to maintain consistency in the questions asked of programs. See Appendix A and B for a list of programs contacted as well as a list of key questions that were asked relating to this report.

**REPORT ORGANIZATION**

Chapter 2 will review the literature regarding two-generation approaches to family economic security. This chapter will also examine the theoretical frameworks that undergird these approaches to addressing poverty and provide a case study example of a promising two-generation approach.

Chapter 3 will review the literature regarding social capital with specific emphasis on social capital effects on economic well-being. The review will also analyze the effects of social capital on low-income and poor communities, women, and people of color. The literature on sources, forms, and measurement of social capital will also be further explored.

Chapter 4 will examine social capital development strategies to address families' barriers to economic security in various policy areas and also provide descriptive evidence of social capital development in various on-the-ground programs.

Chapter 5 will provide two case study examples of innovative on-the-ground programs that use social capital development as the core of their theory of change for poverty alleviation. These programs will be explored in depth to understand how social capital formation is measured and what effect it has.

Finally, Chapter 6 will provide recommendations for further research and analyze gaps relating to social capital measurement and formation. Recommendations will be made on strategies to promote social capital development into policies and programs with special emphasis on outcomes and evaluations.

# Chapter 2: Two-Generation Programs

## BACKGROUND

Among developed countries, the United States has some of the highest rates of income inequality, poverty, and wealth inequality.[13] Success in today's economy requires education and skills training that is linked to living wage employment, future job growth and opportunities for advancement.[14] Research has shown that quality early childhood education is central to school readiness especially for children raised in low-income and poor circumstances, yet not all students receive it.[15] Similarly, postsecondary education is increasingly important to obtain a job that offers family-supporting wages, but significant challenges to college completion face students who are also parents.[16] Nearly a quarter of all college students today are parents, and thirteen percent of all college students are single parents.[17] For groups like women, people of color and the poor, their dearth of skills and educational credentials is an important factor in their low employment, income, and earnings, and inhibits their ability to advance in the labor market.[18]

Programs that provide education and skills training to adults often view children as a barrier to participation.[19] Programs focused on children often encourage involvement and participation of parents to foster children's education and development, rather than promoting opportunities for parents to increase their own education attainment and

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[13] Jantti, Sierminska and Smeeding (2008).
[14] Council on Competitiveness (2007).
[15] ASPE, (2010).
[16] Miller, K. et al. (2011); Graham and Dugan (2011).
[17] CLASP (2011).
[18] Holzer (2008).
[19] Ascend (2012).

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marketable job skills.[20] Recent research has shown that two-generation approaches are a viable option for increasing the economic opportunities of families by providing services for children and parents in tandem.[21] Moreover, it is becoming increasingly accepted that it is essential that services to alleviate poverty in the United States be provided to families as a whole.[22]

## TWO-GENERATION APPROACHES

The underlying assumption of using a two-generation family economic security approach is that successful child development is contingent on what children inherit from their parents and what their parents invest in them, both in monetary and non-monetary terms.[23] Low-income parents have fewer resources to invest in their children such as high quality childcare and schooling, positive role modeling, and extended social networks. The majority of policies meant to aid low-income families through education and training for adults and early childhood education for children are disjointed and operate independently of each other.[24] There are few examples of local, state, and federal policies that take a targeted two-generation approach. However, there are some promising on-the-ground programs that have sought to pilot and use a two-generation framework to promote the economic security of families. Two-generation programs seek to mitigate the

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[20] See Hulsey, L. K., Aikens, N., Kopack, A., West, J., Moiduddin, E., and Tarullo, L. (2011) for a review relating to parent engagement strategies in Early Head Start facilities; Ascend (2012).

[21] Ascend (2012); King, Smith. and Glover, R. (2011 a,b)

[22] See Smith (2011) and literature on new federal initiatives relating to Promise Neighborhoods, Choice neighborhoods, etc.

[23] Becker (1993).

[24] Chang, Huston, Crosby, and Gennetian (2002).

effect of poverty in two contiguous generations – by helping young children get the best possible start in life while helping their parents become economically self-sufficient.

The idea of using a two-generation approach for alleviating poverty is not new.[25] However, there has been a recent resurgence in social policy, strategies, research and programs that validate and promote the use of two-generation approaches.[26] There is an increasing body of literature that supports taking a more proactive approach to implementing two-generation programs.[27] Research has shown that increasing parents' education and providing job training while children are young is more feasible and beneficial for parents, and that early childhood centers can provide an optimal vehicle for implementing adult career and educational pathways.[28] In a recent study analyzing parents' views about postsecondary education while their children are enrolled in an early childhood program, researchers found that early childhood education centers not only serve an important function for parents by nurturing their children; they also offer psychosocial benefits, provide parenting information and guidance, meet relational needs, and foster a sense of community that may make it possible for parents to understand and observe the connection between their own educational success and the success of their children.[29]  An example of a program that typifies a targeted two-generation approach is provided below:

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[25] See St. Pierre, Layzer and Barnes (1996) and St. Pierre, Layzer, and Barnes (1995) for a review of past two-generation / dual-generation approaches.

[26] See Hsueh and Farrell (2012); Glover, King, and Smith (2012); and Ascend (2012) for reviews of recent research on two-generation approaches.

[27] Hsueh, Jacobs, and Farrell (2011); King, Smith. and Glover, R. (2011 a)

[28] Glover, Smith, King, and Coffey (2010).

[29] Rauner, Brooks-Gunn, Gardner, Chase-Lansdale, Sommer and Freel (2010).

**Program Example: CareerAdvance® (Oklahoma)**[30]

*Program Model:* Career*Advance*® is a two-generation intervention program implemented by a comprehensive anti-poverty agency, the Community Action Project of Tulsa Community (CAP), which provides programs in early education, housing, and financial services. Parents of children enrolled in high-quality early education are eligible to participate in CAP's targeted workforce development program. The program started in 2009 and as of October 2011 four cohorts of parents have participated in the program. Prior to this project, CAP staff had no experience with workforce development programs. CAP partnered with other community programs such as Workforce Tulsa, Tulsa Community College, Tulsa Technology Center, and Community Education Department of Public Schools to coordinate job training, postsecondary education, and basic/ESL education.

The workforce development program was established with a sector-based focus on the healthcare industry providing occupational training for a nursing career ladder. The job and skill training and certification are geared to healthcare industry needs. The initial format of the program consisted of a three-part training program where participants first complete a Geriatric Technician/Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program, then a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) program, and finally a Registered Nurse (RN) program. This track was designed to enable participants to ultimately become employed in living wage jobs. Subsequently a track for training in Health Information Technology was incorporated into the program model. Another component of the job training and skill

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[30] Evaluation of this program is based on Glover, Smith, King, and Coffey (2010) and Glover, King, and Smith (2012).

development program of Career*Advance*® is contextual adult basic education and ESL services. Remediation classes are provided for participants and taught concurrently with the CNA classes and contextualized to the healthcare sector. Soft skills training is also provided to participants such as time management, resume writing, and professional dress.

Participants are placed in a cohort that enables peer mentoring and support. Weekly "peer meetings" are required and foster a culture of support and community for students. Income supports are also provided to participants in the form of conditional cash incentives. Participants who reached specific benchmarks can earn performance-based conditional cash transfers up to $3,000 a year. Additional support is provided through the implementation of a workforce intermediary that allowed Career*Advance*® to be more responsive to the demand side of the labor market. The program funded a position at Workforce Tulsa, the local Workforce Investment Board, which enabled the program to broker services to meet industry needs.

*Program Results:* Results for the program show early positive outcomes on both parent and children. The effects on children in the program showed positive results in terms of attendance, academic performance, and behavioral indicators. The job and skill training component of the program appeared to have positive effects on the parents in terms of increased self-esteem, identity transformation from poor parent to college student, and stronger engagement in social networks. The early childhood component and parent's positive effects led to improved performance, less delinquency and more regular

attendance in school, better parent-child interaction, and benefits from parental role modeling for the children of parents enrolled in the program.

### COMPONENTS OF A TWO-GENERATION PROGRAM

Building human capital through education for parents and children is key to a successful two-generation program. Education can be viewed as the foundation on which a two-generation approach lies. The underlying assumption is that by providing both a high quality and developmentally appropriate early childhood education component and a high-intensity education/workforce services component the life chances of both parents and their children will be enhanced. Both generations will demonstrate reduced delinquency levels, reduced pregnancy rates, increased ability to be informed and responsible citizens, and improved economic self-sufficiency.[31] However, education is but one component of successful two-generation approaches. Recent research has shown that successful two-generation programs all share three components, to a greater or lesser degree: an education component for parents and children, an economic/income support component, and a social capital component. [32]

### Education Component

A parent's postsecondary education and job training are a mechanism for improving both monetary and non-monetary investments in his or her children. Postsecondary education and training leads to increased financial stability and life-long

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[31] St. Pierre, Layzer, and Barnes (1995).
[32] Ascend (2012).

learning of low-income parents, thereby improving child outcomes.[33] Research has shown that a parent's stable employment in full-time jobs with wage growth potential positively impacts the developmental outcomes of children.[34] In depth analysis of the effects of educational attainment on children and adults is beyond the scope of this paper; however, key statistics and research related to this area will be provided below.

*Parents*

For adults, human capital development is largely done through the pursuit of professional/workforce training, college education and apprenticeships. In the prevailing economy, postsecondary credentials have become increasingly crucial to achieving financial and career advancement[35] since adults with only a high school diploma earn 20 to 40 percent less per week on average than adults with associates or bachelors degrees potential.[36] There are a range of policies and programs that focus on the development of human capital for adults. Adult workforce development programs seek to increase the human capital of individuals to enable them to become economically self-sufficient and contribute to the economy.[37] These programs have also been shown to lead to increase in self-efficacy and self-esteem for adults.[38] Typical adult focused programs seek to address the human capital needs of individuals through job training programs, postsecondary

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[33] Glover, Smith, King, and Coffey (2010).
[34] Yoshikawa, Weisner, and Lowe, (2006).
[35] Isaacs, Sawhill, and Haskins (2008).
[36] Bureau of Labor Statistics (2009); King and Heinrich (2011)
[37] Osterman (2005)
[38] Rauner, Brooks-Gunn, Gardner, Chase-Lansdale, Sommer and Freel (2010).

education, GED and basic education, adult literacy/ESL programs or a combination of these.

Evaluations of public and private workforce development strategies show that they can produce returns of 10 to 26 percent.[39] The intensity of workforce investments varies considerably, from the shortest-term job referrals to high intensity longer-term skills development that leads to occupational certificates and/or associates degrees. High-intensity programs have been found to be much more efficient and lead to increased earnings impacts as opposed to low-intensity programs.[40] In the above example of Career*Advance®* these high intensity workforce/education services are demonstrated by the use of a targeted track of post-secondary education and training that leads to living wage employment and contextual adult basic education and ESL services.

### *Children*

It is well established in the literature that children from low-income and poor households perform more poorly than more advantaged children across multiple dimensions, including physical, social, cognitive, and academic areas.[41] The sensitivity of early childhood to environmental influences has been demonstrated in a wide range of infant, toddler, and preschooler intervention studies. The effects of income on child development are often non-linear: with children from the lowest income families tending

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[39] King and Heinrich (2011).
[40] King et al. (2008).
[41] Duncan and Brooks-Gunn (1997); National Center for Children in Poverty (http://www.nccp.org).

to be more affected developmentally by income changes than are children at the middle and upper ends of the income distribution.[42]

Economists have also contributed to the theory and knowledge base regarding the effect of income and investment in a child's early years. Cunha, Heckman, Lochner, and Masterov proposed an economic model of development in which preschool cognitive and socio-emotional capacities are key ingredients for human capital acquisition during the school years. In their model, ''skill begets skill; learning begets learning'' as early acquisition of human capital can affect the productivity of school-age human capital investments.[43] They find that economic deprivation in early childhood can create disparities in school readiness and early academic success that persist or widen over the course of childhood. They posit that investing early in disadvantaged and at-risk children will create a domino effect of learning and skill acquisition that ultimately results in greater returns on investment.[44]

Research has shown that quality and consistent child-care and early childhood education have positive impacts on the overall well-being of children. This is especially important for children in low-income communities since research suggests that the quality of early care and education may be of greater importance to children who are otherwise at risk of poor developmental outcomes.[45] Based on this body of evidence, federal and state policies have been implemented to subsidize and promote the use of

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[42] Duncan, Yeung, Brooks-Gunn, and Smith (1998).
[43] Cunha, Heckman, Lochner, and Masterov (2005).
[44] Heckman and Masterov (2007).
[45] Adams, Tout, and Zaslow (2007).

early childcare and education for vulnerable children. Evidence shows that young children of low-income parents have positive outcomes if childcare subsidies allow parents to place their children in formal child care settings.[46]

Child-focused programs attempt to alleviate economic disadvantage early in the lives of children by improving their cognitive and social competence and preparing them to enter school on equal terms with more economically advantaged children[47]. Early Head Start and Head Start, the major federal early childhood programs targeting young children, typify this approach. Early Head Start and Head Start programs serve low-income pregnant women and families with infants and toddlers by providing high quality child development services and building family and community partnerships. Studies evaluating the efficacy of early childhood interventions have found that early childhood programs enhance children's cognitive,[48] language,[49] social, emotional, and behavioral[50] development. Evaluations of interventions for children from low-income families find that participants experienced higher achievement test scores, decreased grade retention, reduced time in special education, less crime and delinquency, and increased high school graduation.[51]   In the Career*Advance*® example of a two-generation approach this is evidenced by the high quality early childhood education component of the program.

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[46] Chaudry (2004); Weber (2010).

[47] Layzer and St. Pierre (1996).

[48] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (2002).

[49] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (2002); Wasik, Ramey, Bryant, and Sparling (1990).

[50] Brooks-Gunn, Klebanov, Liaw, and Spiker (1993).

[51] Heckman and Masterov (2007).

**Economic Support Component**

It is well established in the literature that economic supports, such as housing, transportation, financial education and asset-building, tax credits, child care subsidies, student financial aid, health insurance, and food assistance, etc. are important for moving low-income and poor families beyond poverty. Comprehensive analysis of the economic support component of two-generation programs is beyond the scope of this paper but evidence shows that millions more Americans would face poverty and severe hardship without programs like Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), housing assistance, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), unemployment insurance and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).[52] In addition, research shows that income supports are not enough for alleviating poverty and financial assistance for higher education, and financial literacy and asset-building programs are all important for moving families into long-term financial security.[53] In the above example of a two-generation approach, Career*Advance*® program, the economic support component is evidenced by the performance-based cash incentives provided along with subsidized early childhood education and financial assistance for post-secondary education.

**Social Capital Component**

There is a substantial evidence base to support the fact that education and economic supports lead to positive returns in well-being and family economic security and that they are critical components of two-generation approaches. However, little

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[52] See the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities website for evidence on safety net programs.
[53] See Cramer, et al (2011) for a review of asset building policies and also the Center for Social Development, Assets for Independence Program, Urban Institute, and Department of Education.

research has been done on the role social capital can play in two-generation approaches. In the Career*Advance*® program, the social capital component is made up of the use of peer-support groups, career coaches, and a workforce intermediary to link families to high-wage jobs.

The purpose of this report is to analyze and synthesize existing research on social capital and discuss its application to two-generation approaches. For the purpose of this report, social capital will be analyzed in relation to its role and manifestation in two-generation programs and its effects relating to outcomes for low-income and poor families. On-the-ground two-generation programs will be used as the unit of analysis and case-study examples of these programs will be provided throughout to help provide context and evidence of social capital as a poverty alleviation tool. The next chapter will provide a literature review on social capital along with illustrative examples of two-generation programs' use of social capital.

# Chapter 3: Social Capital

A simple way to think about social capital is that one's relationships and connections (e.g., family, friends, and associates) constitute an important asset that can be called upon in a crisis, enjoyed for its own sake, or used to gain access to resources like social services, jobs, or government contracts.[54] Defining social capital has been difficult due to the abstract nature of the concept. Based on a review of the literature there is no single agreed upon definition of social capital. However, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has identified four broad approaches to the concept:[55]

1. The anthropological literature posits that humans have natural instincts for association. The propensity for creating social structures comes from our species' innate tendency to seek out and maintain intimate and meaningful relationships.[56] For example, Fukuyama stresses the biological basis for social order and the roots of social capital in human nature.[57]

2. The sociological literature describes social norms and the sources of human motivation. It emphasizes features of social organization such as trust, norms of reciprocity and networks of civic engagement.[58] It refers to the resources (such as

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[54] Woolcock (2001); Schneider (2004).
[55] OECD (2001) p. 40.
[56] Baumeister and Leary (1995).
[57] Fukuyama (1999).
[58] Portes (1998); Bourdieu (1985); Putnam (2000).

information, ideas, support) that individuals are able to procure by virtue of their relationships with other people.

3. The economic literature draws on the assumption that people will maximize their personal utility, deciding to interact with others and draw on social capital resources to conduct various types of group activities.[59] In this approach, the focus is on the investment strategies of individuals faced with alternative uses of time.

4. A strand in the political science literature emphasizes the role of institutions, political and social norms in shaping human behavior. Recent work at the World Bank on the role of social capital in reducing poverty and promoting sustainable development has emphasized the role of institutions, social arrangements, trust and networks.[60]

In the literature relating to social capital there are many competing and complementary aspects of social capital. However two themes relating to social capital are highly relevant in their application to two-generation programs: (i) Social capital and human capital (more specifically education) are interconnected; and (ii) Social capital can be used purposively in order to promote well-being and receive benefits.

**Social Capital and Education are Interconnected**
Coleman defined social capital by its function stating that social capital "is not a single entity, but a variety of different entities having two characteristics in common:

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[59] Glaeser (2001).
[60] World Bank (2000).

They all consist of some aspect of social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of individuals who are within the structure."[61] Coleman stressed the role of strong communities and ties among parents, educators and pupils in fostering learning. Conversely education and learning can support habits, skills and values conducive to social cooperation and participation.[62] According to the OECD, good quality institutions, a highly skilled labor force and the prevalence of norms and networks facilitating social cooperation underpin economic development.[63]

### *Program example: Ecovillage at Berea College (Kentucky)[64]*

A two-generation program that supports this insight is the Ecovillage at Berea College in Kentucky. Guided by intertwined educational, environmental, and social goals, the Ecovillage is an ecologically-sustainable residential and learning complex designed to meet housing needs for student families, child care for campus children, and provide a living/labor opportunity for students interested in sustainability. Berea College serves students with limited economic resources and all students receive financial assistance to attend college. The Ecovillage primarily serves single parent families and results from the program show that more parents are graduating, children are provided with high quality early education, and parents and children are more aware and supportive of their social environment.

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[61] Coleman (1990) p. 302.
[62] Field (2005)
[63] OECD (2001).
[64]Ecovillage at Berea College website ( http://www.berea.edu/sens/ecovillage).

**Social Capital Can be Used Purposively**

Portes defined social capital as "the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures."[65] Lin further defines social capital as the "resources embedded in a social structure that are accessed and/or mobilized in purposive actions."[66] With regard to communities, social capital can be thought of as a structural aspect of communities, embodying the context-specific networks that people and institutions use to achieve their goals.[67] It has become common practice to use one's social network to help gain access to resources such as jobs and the term "networking" has become commonplace in today's lexicon. However, using social capital purposively goes beyond using immediate personal connections to access resources and also refers to the use of institutions to gain access to resources.

*Program example: Single Stop USA (Nationwide)[68]*

An example of this is the innovative program that bridges the information gap separating low-income families from public benefits, tax credits and other essential resources that may remain untapped and inaccessible such as food, health insurance, and child care benefits and tax refunds. Single stop agencies are located in multiple states across the United States and have shown positive results in benefits access and use for low-income families.

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[65] Portes (1998) p. 6.
[66] Lin (2001) p. 29.
[67] Schneider (2004).
[68] Single Stop website (www.singlestopusa.org).

**Bonding, Bridging, and Linking Social capital[69]**

Three basic forms of social capital have been identified: social bonds, bridges and linkages. *Bonding social capital* occurs within groups. The strong ties connecting family members, neighbors, close friends, and business associates can be called bonding social capital. These ties connect people who share similar demographic characteristics. Bonding social capital tends to be the strongest type of relationship and is excellent for reinforcing social and cultural norms. Bonding social capital is also good for allocating and conserving resources within a group. It also provides social and psychological support for individuals.

*Bridging social capital* is heterogeneous and spans gaps between social groups. The ties connecting individuals from different socio-economic, ethnic and occupational backgrounds can be referred to as bridging social capital. Bridging social capital is typically weaker than bonding social capital with much faster rates of decay.[70] Bridging social capital is a powerful tool for locating and securing new resources. Bridging social capital is not as strong, but it tends to be more inclusive and provide a forum for communication and sharing of resources. Bridging social capital is considered crucial for dealing with poverty and community mobilization and implies horizontal connections to people with broadly comparable economic status and political power.

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[69] Woolcock (1998).
[70] Burt (2001).

However, a theory of social capital that focuses only on relations within and between communities opens itself to the criticism that it ignores power.[71] Scholars at the World Bank have added the concept of *linking social capital* to describe relationships among people or institutions at different parts of the power hierarchy of a locality.[72] The capacity to leverage resources, ideas, and information from formal institutions beyond the community is a key function of linking social capital.[73] This dimension captures a vitally important additional feature of life in poor communities: that their members are usually excluded—by overt discrimination or lack of resources—from the places where major decisions relating to their welfare are made.[74] Linking social capital can also refer to relationships between community-based organizations and government or other funders.[75]

The World Bank's *World Development Report 2000-01: Attacking Poverty* (which deals extensively with the role of social capital in policies to end poverty) suggests that while the poor have plentiful bonding social capital, they require more bridging and linking social capital to connect them to external actors and policy makers.[76]

### Program example: Circles® Campaign (Nationwide)[77]

An example of a program that seeks to form bonding, bridging, and linking social capital for low-income community members is the Circles® campaign. Operating in

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[71] World Bank (2000).
[72] World Bank (2000).
[73] Woolcock (2001).
[74] Middleton, Murie, and Groves (2005).
[75] Schneider (2004).
[76] World Bank (2000).
[77] Circles® campaign website (http://www.movethemountain.org/index.php?page=circles-campaign).

communities around the country, each Circle® initiative consists of a family working to get out of poverty and several middle and upper income *Allies* who befriend them and lend support. The family is the *Circle Leader*, setting direction for activities. With the help and friendship of their allies, each family sets and achieves goals unique to their own needs. Early results demonstrate positive outcomes for families in both economic and social capital development. This program will be analyzed in detail in a later section of the paper.

**EFFECTS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL ON WELL-BEING**

Social capital theory posits that individuals are better off when they are connected to others because of the goods inherent in social relations. These goods or social capital include the ties and obligations individuals feel toward each other, and a sense of solidarity that results in the exchange of information, services, and norms.[78] There is a substantial evidence base that supports the necessity of social capital for individuals' well-being. Research shows that communities endowed with strong social capital will be in a stronger position to confront poverty and vulnerability[79], resolve disputes[80]and take advantage of new opportunities.[81] In addition, there is evidence that strong social capital i.e., diffuse and diverse connections, can support the resilience of individuals and communities. Research shows that a socially resilient environment is one that promotes

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[78] Coleman (1998).
[79] Moser (1996); Narayan (1997).
[80] Schafft and Brown (2000).
[81] Isham (1999).

connectedness.[82] These connections in turn provide a shared sense of commitment and meaning and encourage individuals to reach out to and help others, share a range of feelings, and foster hope.[83]

In Werner's seminal study on resilience, key social environmental factors that promote resilience were discovered i.e., social connections.[84] The study followed children raised in adverse conditions, such as family poverty, as they matured into adults and found that some of the children exposed to hardship were indistinguishable from children raised in more positive circumstances – i.e., these children were resilient. According to the study, being in contact with caring adults who valued them as individuals and participating in activities that allowed them to be part of a cooperative enterprise contributed to the capacity of these children to thrive over time. In adulthood, resilience was fostered by involvement in the military service and church activities, which embedded these individuals in groups that valued connection, provided meaning, and fostered growth.

Recent research has also found that social capital plays an important role in fostering resilient communities.[85] Studies find that community collaboration, shared identity, and empowerment increase bonding and bridging capital that promote the well-being of people under stress. They argue that an emphasis on community resilience

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[82] Zautra and Reich (2010).
[83] Walsh (2003).
[84] Werner (1993).
[85] Murray and Zautra (2012).

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places value on the social connections, policies, and programs necessary for resilience in different groups.

*Program example: Bridges (Florida)*[86]

The Bridges program is two-generation initiative of the Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County (CSC) located in Palm Beach County, Florida that seeks to tap into the resilience of individuals and communities. The goal of the Bridges program is to achieve CSC's key overarching child outcomes: that children are born healthy, are not abused or neglected, enter school ready to learn, and are on grade level by the end of third grade. The Bridges program is based on the theory of social capital and supports a community-networking concept to coordinate services; reduce duplication of efforts; engage residents; and build partnerships among businesses, nonprofits, municipalities, and civic and religious groups. The concept of building social capital is critical to Bridges, as it seeks to cultivate strong family and neighborhood bonds. Bridges programs employ a whole family and whole community approach to change the community conditions which have impacted child, health and well-being outcomes. Bridges uses a place-based community building approach and targets geographic areas that display the greatest need.

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[86] Bridges website (http://www.gocpg.org/bridges).

## SOCIAL CAPITAL AND VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

Factors relating to individual and community connections and social capital are especially important to low-income communities, people of color, and women and will be explored further below.

### Low-income and Poor Communities

Distinguishing among different dimensions of social capital within (bonding) and between (bridging) communities is useful for understanding the problems faced by individuals living in poverty and low-income circumstances. A defining feature of being poor is that one is not a member of — or is even actively excluded from — certain social networks and institutions, ones that could be used to secure good jobs and decent housing.[87] Without access to employment information networks, residents of poor and low-income communities can find themselves trapped in low-wage jobs.[88]

Bonding social capital can have both negative and positive consequences and is highly relevant to poor and low-income communities. According to the World Bank, poor families typically have a close-knit and intensive stock of bonding social capital that they leverage to "get by"[89] a modest endowment of the more diffuse and extensive bridging social capital typically deployed by the non-poor to "get ahead"[90], and almost no linking social capital enabling them to gain sustained access to formal institutions such as educational institutions; banks, insurance agencies, and the courts.[91]   Accordingly, a key

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[87] Wilson (1996).
[88] Loury (1977).
[89] Briggs (1998); Bebbington (1999).
[90] Barr (1998); Narayan (1999).
[91] World Bank (2000).

task for practitioners and policymakers is to develop the vertical, linking component of social capital to ensure that the activities of the poor are "scaled up." [92]

**Racial and Ethnic Considerations**

Group differentiation by characteristics such as ethnicity and race can sometimes result in social fragmentation, with groups perceiving themselves as having distinct interests even though they may have similar socioeconomic status.[93] Ethnicity is based on perceived cultural differences between groups in a society, differences that form a powerful source of identity and a base for political mobilization.[94] Common ethnic affiliations can be a basis for bonding social capital providing community members with a range of benefits (credit, employment, marital partners) while imposing significant obligations and commitments (financial support, conformity). In interviews with program staff of two-generation programs, bonds to family members have often been cited as creating a barrier for parents seeking to complete higher education. One program administrator notes that many of the mothers in her program tend to put family members before themselves, resulting in the sacrifice of their education. Additional research shows that college attendance may build a larger social network with friends but may alienate college educated first-generation students from family and impair relationships with family and friends who are not in college.[95]

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[92] Uvin, Jain and Brown (2000).
[93] OECD (2001).
[94] Ritzen, Easterly and Woolcock (2000).
[95] Goldrick-Rab and Sorensen (2010).

Two authors stand out for their contributions to the research on social capital formation for people of color in the United States. Granovetter drew attention to the importance of ties beyond the immediate ethnic group to more expansive, loosely knit networks, with richer resources to achieve social and economic mobility.[96] Additionally Loury found, in his study of black youths, that youth from non-white groups are disadvantaged by lack of information on job opportunities and parental connections to the labor market rather than discrimination by employers. The parents of these youth did not have expansive social networks and so are much less likely to know where the jobs are or whom to call.[97]

**Gender**

Women represent disproportionate proportions of the world's poor, and overall, women with dependent children comprise two-thirds of the world's poor population, a phenomenon referred to as the "feminization of poverty."[98] In the United States, this is especially true for single mothers since women and children in single-mother families have disproportionately high rates of poverty. Nearly three-fourths of children living in single-mother families are low-income, compared to just under one-third of children living in married-couple families.[99] There is an increasing body of evidence on gender's influence on social capital. Research shows that gender discrimination squanders trust,

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[96] Granovetter (1973); Granovetter (2003).
[97] Loury (1977).
[98] Chant (2006).
[99] Redd (2011).

hinders family relations, restricts social networks, and depletes social capital.[100] Additionally, men and women can face different economic circumstances due to their differing social networks and levels of access to information.[101] Several studies have found that men and women's personal networks differ in composition, although they are similar in size. Male networks include more co-workers and fewer relatives than women's networks.[102] Women's networks tend to be informal and include more kin relative to male networks.[103] Traditionally, women are responsible for household welfare and child rearing. Reliance on informal exchange networks is necessary among women and their households to share resources, stabilize incomes, and reduce risks.

This lack of bridging and bonding social capital limits women's ability to gain access to resources and formal institutions. However, research has shown that women's close-knit networks can be useful in helping them to confront poverty. A study by Stack found that African-American mothers in poor urban communities were more resilient and did better because of the support provided by their social networks to assist in child-rearing.[104] Research finds that poor women rely heavily on relatives and other social networks to access social support and other resources.[105] Research also shows that social capital, as embodied through women's close-knit groups, can help to increase women's

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[100] Picciotto (1998).
[101] Kabeer (1996).
[102] Moore (1990).
[103] Moore, et. al. (2005).
[104] Stack (1974).
[105] Dominguez and Watkins-Hayes (2003); Edin and Lein (1997).

physical assets if information is disseminated through these groups.[106] Social capital can also be built through active civic, labor market and political participation of women.[107]

### *Program example: Family Independence Initiative (California, Massachusetts, Hawaii)*[108]

Although research shows that it is important to create bridging and linking social capital for low-income and poor communities, people of color, and women, an innovative on-the ground program, Family Independence Initiative (FII), takes advantage of the close bonding ties these communities have to help promote economic security. The program is based on the premise that these communities can advance together by reigniting the resource sharing, mutual support, and role modeling that historically has helped immigrant and socially excluded minority families exit poverty.[109] Families in the program self-organize into peer groups and turn to each other for help, support, and inspiration, instead of caseworkers or programs. The families involved obtain cash incentives when they make improvements in a variety of areas related to economic security. The evidence is limited due to how new the programs are but overall the results are promising and show that close families and friends can rely on each other for social support and that these social connections can promote economic development. This program along with program results will be explored in greater depth in a later section of this paper.

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[106] Quisumbing and Kumar (2011).
[107] OECD (2001).
[108] Family Independence Initiative website (www.fiinet.org).
[109] Stuhldreher and O'Brien (2011).

## MEASURING SOCIAL CAPITAL

Confusion about social capital in policy circles comes from the ways that researchers measure social capital. Robert Putnam has assumed a central place in the operationalizing of social capital. Putnam asserts that social networks have value and he defines social capital as the "connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them."[110] Therefore measures of social capital are normally acquired through counting the number of friends someone has or the number of organizations to which they belong as well as measuring perceived levels of trust.[111] Although this methodology makes it easier to define and operationalize social capital, it tends to overlook the broader institutional environment in which communities are inherently embedded.[112] In addition, researchers and policymakers cannot merely identify social capital by counting connections, because often the quality of these relationships is more important than the quantity.[113] The structure of each network—who interacts with whom, how frequently, and on what terms—has a major impact on the flow of resources through the network.[114] Those occupying key strategic positions in the network, especially those whose ties span important groups, can be said to have more social capital than their peers, because their network position gives them increased access to more and better resources.[115]

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[110] Putnam (2000) p. 19.
[111] Putnam (2000).
[112] Woolcock (2001).
[113] Schneider (2004).
[114] Grootaert, Narayan, Nyhan Jones, and Woolcock (2004).
[115] Burt (2000).

Research has shown that a connection is defined as social capital only if it includes three elements: networks, trust specific to that network, and the network enables access to resources.[116] Therefore social capital has a structural component i.e., a network that contributes to cooperation and provides access to resources and a cognitive component i.e., the trust specific to that network.[117] In quantifying social capital both components must be measured in order to adequately account for its effect. Researchers from the World Bank have also added to the literature relating to social capital measurement and propose the use of quantitative and qualitative measures for measuring social capital across six sometimes overlapping dimensions: (i) groups and networks, (ii) trust and solidarity, (iii) collective action and cooperation, (iv) information and communication, (v) social cohesion and inclusion, and (vi) empowerment and political action.[118] Although targeted to developing countries the authors note that these measurement tools and strategies can be applied to developed countries once adapted for local context.

## SOURCES OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

Social capital is built at the "level" of families, communities, and institutions.[119] In a recent qualitative study involving lower-income parents of diverse characteristics (gender, family structure, race/ethnicity, geography, and political affiliation) when asked about their social supports, parents cited family, friends, church, community, institutions

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[116] Schneider (2004).

[117] Uphoff (2000).

[118] Grootaert, Narayan, Nyhan Jones, and Woolcock (2004); Dudwick, Kuehnast, Nyhan Jones, and Woolcock (2006).

[119] OECD (2001).

and governmental programs as their sources of social capital.[120] Examples of parents'

responses were:[121]

> "I put **family, non-profit, churches and neighbors**." (Latina Single Mothers, CA)
> "I wrote **friends and family**, but I put down **community, church and government**, but the two were my top.  And the reason I wrote government as a support, is because **there's programs that they've given us**.  They give us **unemployment**, they have given us **Healthy Families** for people who can't, Social Security, disability. " (African American/Latina Married Mothers, CA)

Social capital is normally associated with interpersonal relationships but trust and

networks also involve public organizations and institutions. Social capital is embedded in

norms and institutions, which include public and legal entities.[122] Families create norms

and social ties, and provide a social network that benefits its members.[123] Communities

and neighborhoods also play a role in social capital formation.[124] Institutions also help to

form social capital since they can foster values for social cooperation as well as provide

"meeting places" where diverse networks intersect.[125]

In the next two chapters sources and formation of bonding, bridging and linking

social capital via institutions and programs will be further explored. Administrators and

staff of identified two-generation on-the-ground programs were interviewed to assess

their definition of social capital and use of social capital development strategies.

Programs reported either the use of social capital strategies to address the barriers

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[120] Lake Research Partners and American Viewpoint (2011).
[121] Lake Research Partners and American Viewpoint (2011) pg. 23.
[122] OECD (2001).
[123] Coleman (1990).
[124] Schneider (2004).
[125] OECD (2001).

customers of their programs face in achieving economic security and as ancillary to existing components of their model or identified social capital formation as the basis for their program's theory of change.

## Chapter 4: Social Capital Strategies in Two-Generation Approaches

Recent research from Mario Small[126] relating to the organizational embeddedness of social inequality shows that organizations can "embed" social capital into their programs and policies to positively impact the individuals who come into contact with the institutions. Small finds that some organizations promote more social capital formation than others and overall the individual will benefit directly from an organization intentionally embedding social capital into their practices. Qualitative program analysis of two-generation programs provides support for this insight and evidence that programs are intentionally embedding social capital into their programs in order to address barriers and promote the well-being of individuals participating in their programs.

Barriers to family economic security are highly relevant when analyzing social capital as a strategy for alleviating poverty. Moreover, these barriers are important when thinking of low-income communities, people of color, and women. In analyzing the literature on economic success of families and through program interviews with staff of two-generation programs several barriers were identified. Specifically, educational barriers relating to college persistence (student engagement, retention and completion rates) and college access (access to information such as financial aid and college enrollment); economic barriers such as financial constraints, access to information, and housing; and relational barriers such as a history of child abuse and domestic violence and mental health issues were all noted.

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[126] Small (2009).

Programs reported using strategies grounded in social capital theory to address these barriers. Below these barriers will be explored at a high level then illustrative examples of innovative interventions being used at the programmatic/institutional level to promote and "embed" social capital formation into the organization in order to address these barriers will be provided.

## EDUCATIONAL BARRIERS

### Higher Education

There is a substantial body of research relating to barriers to post-secondary education attainment for low-income communities, parents, and people of color. Research shows that rates of persistence and credential completion remain distressingly low and there has been a recent push at the policy level to increase rates of completion for students.[127] The reasons behind this problem are myriad: some have to do with the students themselves (e.g., the challenge of balancing work, family, and school responsibilities) and others are the result of institutional or policy constraints (e.g., insufficient advising and financial aid).[128] In interviews with program administrators, lack of student engagement and a support system as well as financial constraints were cited most often as barriers to educational success. Overall many program administrators also

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[127] President Barack Obama's American Graduation Initiative proposes to increase the number of students graduating from college (including two-year and certificate programs) by five million by 2020. The White House (2009, July 14). Remarks by the President on the American Graduation Initiative. Retrieved from http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office.

[128] See National Center for Postsecondary Research (http://www.postsecondaryresearch.org/) and MDRC (www.mdrc.org) research on higher education for a comprehensive review of the data relating to college persistence.

noted that students' lack of information on available services was a constraint to their educational and economic success.

In recent years, a popular response to address student retention is to promote their engagement in the college experience and build a community of support, especially for students that are academically underprepared or face challenges to completion such as being a parent or person of color.[129] Institutions of higher education have increasingly promoted the use of expanded and intensive student support services such as learning communities, peer supports, mentoring, and cohort models in order to achieve this goal.[130] These services help to create bonding social capital for students helping them to feel more connected to each other and engaged in the institution and creating a culture of support.[131] Practitioners report that student engagement and motivation are crucial to success and that higher education institutions play a critical role in promoting student engagement.[132]

*Learning communities* usually consist of a set of courses organized around a theme, taught by faculty members working as a team, and taken by the same cohort of students. Learning communities boost opportunities for educational interaction, shared inquiry, and a coherent learning experience.[133] Students, as a cohort, take all the courses offered through the learning community and they often work together in groups. Learning communities tend to emphasize collaborative and student-directed work, and they often

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[129] Rutschow, et. al. (2011)

[130] See Scrivener and Weiss (2009); Weissman, Cerna, Geckeler, Schneider, Price, and Smith (2009) for examples of learning communities, cohort models, etc.

[131] Engstrom and Tinto (2007).

[132] Pascarella & Terenzini, (2005).

[133] Engstrom and Tinto (2008).

create an intensive learning environment because students spend so much time together.[134] *Student cohort models* are used in a wide range of higher education institutions. Overall research has shown that student cohorts lead to strong relationships among students, creating both personal and academic support networks.[135] The use of *peer supports and mentoring* is another innovative intervention to foster bonding social capital. Research shows that peer mentorship helps students build levels of trust and credibility with peers that are more difficult to foster with a faculty member or professional adviser.[136]

***Program Example: Mothers Living & Learning College of Saint Mary (Nebraska)***[137]

The Mothers Living & Learning program is an innovative residential option for single mothers and their children who are pursuing a college degree full-time while living on campus. The program is for women who have up to two children (under the age of 10 by the mother's graduation year), are dedicated to continuing their education, and are seeking community living opportunities that recognize they are parents as well as college students. Students participating in this program are organized into a cohort and one of the goals of the program is to help the student parents and their children develop a sense of belonging in their community through community based events; peer mentors in the form of residential assistants who provide coordinated programs and mentorship; and participation in hall meetings and mediation. According to the director of this program

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[134] Tinto, (1993, 1997).

[135] Visher, Schneider, Wathington, and Collado (2010).

[136] Cerna, Platania and Fong (2012).

[137] MLL website (http://www.csm.edu/Student_Life/Residence_Life/Mothers_Living__Learning/).

the model they use seeks to intentionally build social capital for the single mothers in their program through the provision of one-on-one support and the supportive community of a cohort of students that are in similar circumstances. The support of the cohort and the environment of shared learning lead to greater success and retention for the mothers.

Research has also shown that the promotion of bridging and linking social capital promotes postsecondary education enrollment and persistence by providing access to relevant information relating to finances, bridges to individuals who may help to enforce attainment norms, and support for navigating the postsecondary education admission system.[138]

### *Program Example: CNM Connect (New Mexico)*[139]

In February 2011 the Central New Mexico Community College (CNM) system implemented a new model to help students gain access to information and resources called CNM Connect. Located on all six of CNM campuses, the general concept for CNM Connect is to act as an informational hub for services that are available to students, both at CNM and in the community. An achievement coach and a small team of faculty are available to share their expertise on how to access services. Achievement coaches help students in the areas of financial aid and scholarship planning, budgeting, community resources, exploration of career pathways, etc. According to the executive director of CNM Connect, the organization's use of financial education for both students and community members helps to build social capital by both increasing students' access

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[138] Puyosa (2009).
[139] CNM Connect website (http://www.cnm.edu/connect/).

to information on financial aid but also by intentionally changing community perceptions around who accesses these services. A major push they have in the community is to change people's belief systems about students accessing financial services. The program has had positive outcomes so far with more students reporting that they are aware of the services available to them at the community college.

**Early Education**

Research suggests that it is important for parents to build social capital since the positive effects of social capital will translate to positive outcomes for children.[140] Early education centers can play an important role for building the social capital of parents and children.[141] Small's study of childcare centers examines the embeddedness of personal networks in early childhood organizations and the resulting effects of these networks on mothers' well-being.[142] He finds that organizations can be useful in building personal networks if structured in such a way to incentivize participation in collective tasks and repeated informal encounters. More specifically early childhood organizations build bonding social capital for parents with each other, bridging social capital as they form ties with individuals not in their current social network such as other mothers in the program from different backgrounds, the staff of the centers and other partner organizations, and linking social capital through the provision of information relating to resources for themselves and their children in the community.

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[140] Coleman (1988, 1990).
[141] Small (2009).
[142] Small (2009).

***Program Example: All Our Kin (Connecticut)***[143]

  All Our Kin is an innovative program that trains parents on public assistance and low-income parents to become child care providers in a nurturing, two-generational program that supports the whole family. The model promotes economic development and job training of parents while expanding access to high-quality childcare for children. According to the director of All Our Kin the program promotes social capital in three ways: (i) by linking participants to other resources and opportunities that they weren't connected to before, such as a free class for kids, a college course, a museum visit, access to pediatricians or specialists, etc.; (ii) creating bonding social capital for their network of providers by providing a support network to reduce providers' isolation in a significant way, and; (iii) creating bridging social capital through mixed-income networks and connecting parents from different backgrounds and ethnicities.


***Program Example: Catholic Charities Early Head Start of Hartford County (Maryland)***[144]

  Catholic Charities Early Head Start of Hartford County is a more traditional provider of early education services that endorses a whole family approach to service provision. They view parents as the primary nurturers and educators of their children by supporting individualized educational and developmental outcomes and productive family goals. According to the administrator, the program builds social capital for parents by supporting a network of community among the parents. This support system is necessary to offset the familial pressure some parents face regarding breaking the

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[143] All Our Kin Website (http://www.allourkin.org).

[144] Catholic Charities of Hartford County website (http://www.catholiccharities-md.org/children-and-families/head-start/harford-county/).

generational cycle of poverty. She notes that some parents face cutoff and pressure from family and friends for making change and being different. The bonding social capital of a community of parents who are in similar circumstances – pursuing training and education to ultimately make a living wage – can offset the negative bonding social capital of close family members and friends.

## ECONOMIC BARRIERS

### Benefits Access

Based on the review of the literature and through the interviews with program administrators, financial constraints were cited most often as being a barrier to achieving educational and economic success. Program administrators most often mentioned costs relating to childcare as the most significant barrier for parents in their programs. This is supported by the literature relating to financial constraints of parents. According to the White House Council on Women and Girls, the cost of child care has grown twice as fast as the median income of families with children since 2000. In 39 states, child care fees are higher than a year's tuition at a four-year public college.[145]

America's basket of programs for the poor and low-income consists of many benefits programs that seek to offset the effects of poverty. These are made up of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and child tax credit, Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), housing assistance subsidies, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, child care subsidies, etc. However many low-income and poor families aren't aware of or don't take advantage of the suite of services available to them. An

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[145] White House Council on Women and Girls (2012).

important way that organizations build social capital for individuals is by linking them with information on government resources.

***Program Example: Single Stop USA (New Jersey, New York, Florida)***[146]

Single Stop USA is a national nonprofit that facilitates access to a wide array of public benefits and services. Single Stop uses a holistic approach by providing a comprehensive suite of services under one roof, including benefits counseling, free tax preparation, legal assistance and financial counseling. Experienced counselors provide individualized counseling to clients, guiding them through the process of applying for benefits, tax credits and other services. Those programs include health insurance, nutrition, federal and state subsidies for childcare, housing assistance, welfare-to-work initiatives and tax credits. Single stop agencies are located in multiple states across the United States and have shown positive results in benefits access and use for low-income and poor families.

**Asset building and Financial Literacy**

Michael Sherraden laid the groundwork for asset-based social policy arguing that assets promote a longer planning horizon, which promotes long-term investments and more careful husbanding of resources. [147] Additionally, asset holdings promote a variety of positive attitudes and behaviors, including personal efficacy, social connectedness, physical and mental health, civic involvement, children's educational success, family

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[146] Single Stop (www.singlestopusa.org).
[147] Sherraden (1991).

stability, and neighborhood stability.[148] These behaviors in turn lead to economic self-sufficiency.[149] One of the major tools for asset building are individual development accounts (IDA), which are matched savings accounts that allow poor and low-income participants to save for specific investments, such as a home, new business, or postsecondary education. IDA programs incentivize savings among low-income families through matching funds, provided by government and private foundations, and through supportive services such as financial education, credit counseling and credit repair. This builds linking social capital by connecting low-income and poor communities to formal institutions such as banks and credit unions and providing information on how credit works. This is especially important since many poor and low-income families are the targets of predatory lending practices.[150]

### *Program Example: Garrett County Community Action Committee (Maryland)* [151]

The Assets for Independence (AFI) program[152] provides federal funding up to $25 million per year for competitively awarded state and local IDA projects nationwide.[153] The AFI program's recent two-generational initiative seeks to link asset building to the early learning community, including Head Start and child care providers. This helps to connect families with young children to the asset building community.[154] The Garrett County Community Action Committee, an AFI grantee, is a comprehensive anti-poverty

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[148] Edwards and Mason (2003).

[149] Scanlon and Page-Adams (2001).

[150] CFED (2011).

[151] Garrett County Community Action Committee (www.garrettcac.org).

[152] Established under the Assets for Independence Act (AFIA, Public Law 105-285, enacted on October 27, 1998).

[153] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Community Service.

[154] Assets for Independence website (http://www.idaresources.org).

agency that provides programs in early education, housing, health and nutrition and asset building. The organization is in the process of implementing a new strategic plan using a two-generation approach to put families at the center and help families develop a self-sufficiency pathway that leads to economic success. According to the program administrators they build linking social capital through providing support and relaying information on IDAs, first-time homebuyer programs, EITC and savings accounts. According to the administrators, social capital formation through asset development is critical to creating a pathway to economic success.

**Housing**

Housing assistance in the United States has undergone a profound transformation from previously segregated housing communities to the promotion of mixed-income housing.[155] The goals are to replace distressed developments with healthy mixed-income communities; help residents relocate to affordable housing, often in the private market; and empower former public housing families toward economic self-sufficiency.[156] The underlying rationale for this transformation is the hope that public housing residents would benefit both socially and economically from living in more diverse, higher-opportunity neighborhoods.[157] Relocating families to mixed-income communities builds bridging social capital and breaks down the social barriers of formerly segregated public housing residents. However research has shown that in order to promote the economic security of families housing authorities cannot merely relocate families and must instead

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[155] Turner, Popkin, and Rawlings (2009).
[156] Turner, Popkin, and Rawlings (2009).
[157] Joseph, Chaskin, and Webber (2007).

48

provide comprehensive services to address the complex challenges many of these families face.[158]

### *Program Example: Warren Village (Colorado)[159]*

Warren Village is a two-generational housing program that helps motivated low-income, previously homeless single parent families move from public assistance to personal and economic self-sufficiency through subsidized housing, on-site nationally accredited child care, intensive case management, education guidance and career development. Residents can live at Warren Village for up to two years while they pursue their education and career goals and their children are provided with high quality child care. According to the program administrator, Warren Village builds bonding social capital by creating an intentional community and using the motto "from required to desired." The program starts out with required activities such as life skill courses, events on site, etc. but they find that the more families complete these requirements the more connected they become to the community. The community members ultimately become very involved and form a network and support system for each other (bonding social capital). Warren Village also builds bridging social capital by fostering relationships with other organizations and community members to diversify the families' support network. The program builds linking social capital through their advocacy efforts and empowerment of community members with the skills, tools, and knowledge on how to advocate on their own behalf.

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[158] Theodos, Popkin, Guernsney and Getsinger (2010).
[159] Warren Village website (http://www.warrenvillage.org/).

**Domestic Violence/Child Welfare and Safety**

Issues relating to child welfare and domestic violence are highly relevant when analyzing barriers to low-income and poor families. Program administrators often cite a history of abuse and domestic violence as a barrier to families reaching economic success. Child abuse can occur at any socio-economic status yet neglect is more prevalent in families that are poor and lower-income.[160] Putnam reports a strong and significant correlation between measures of social capital at United States state level and a composite measure of child welfare, controlling for characteristics such as race, income and level of initial education.[161] Parents with a social network of emotionally supportive friends, family, and neighbors often find that it is easier to care for their children and themselves.[162] Research has shown that children of parents who are isolated, with few social connections, are at higher risk for child abuse and neglect.[163] In addition, one in every four women experiences domestic violence during their lifetimes and approximately 15.5 million children are exposed to domestic violence every year.[164] Social networks and support can decrease the likelihood of domestic violence. Building the social capital of families can have positive effects on both child abuse and domestic

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[160] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2011).
[161] Putnam (2000).
[162] Garbarino and Sherman (1980).
[163] Korbin and Coulton (1997).
[164] National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (2011).

violence and a recent study finds that increasing social capital decreases the odds of neglectful parenting, psychologically harsh parenting, and domestic violence.[165]

***Program Example: Nurse Family Partnership (Nationwide)***[166]

The Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) is an evidence-based home-visiting program, which is well supported by research for having positive impacts on child and parental well-being. The model is to provide home visits by registered nurses to first-time, low-income mothers, beginning during pregnancy and through the child's second birthday. Programs generally provide parents with in-home instruction in child health and development, referrals for social services, and social and emotional support. Such programs improve parent-child relationships and promote healthy child development. They also provide early detection of developmental delays, improve family economic self-sufficiency and stability, help prevent child maltreatment, and are used as a tool to provide mothers with knowledge on domestic violence prevention and link them to mental health and substance abuse services. The program builds bonding social capital for the parent through the connection with a supportive case manager and linking social capital through the brokerage of information on resources.

***Program Example: Eastern Michigan University Keys to Degrees: Single Parent Program (Michigan)***[167]

Keys to Degrees: Single Parent Program is designed for academically-qualified single men and women, between the ages of 18-24 at the time of their enrollment, who

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[165] Zolotor and Runyan (2006).

[166] Nurse Family Partnership (http://www.nursefamilypartnership.org/).

[167] Eastern Michigan University (http://www.emich.edu/keystodegrees/).

are the custodial parents of one child, age 18 months or older when the program begins. This is a newly developed program that started in the summer of 2011. The program is organized using a cohort model although the parents and children do not all live in the same residential hall. The program fosters social capital through skills courses relating to transitional living, interpersonal skills, intrapersonal skills, and financial literacy. The program administrator noted that this course was created for the students based on their need for additional skills training. She found that most of the women in the program had dealt with a history of domestic violence and abuse and that additional support through the counseling and skills workshops was needed. Life skills training relating to domestic violence and relationship building was identified in most programs that were interviewed, especially programs that were explicitly for single mothers.

**Mental Health Issues**

In general, people with low educational attainment, low income and who live in deprived neighborhoods are more likely to suffer from mental health problems than the general population.[168] In the United States, one in four kids in low-income families lives with a parent displaying mental health symptoms, more than double the portion in higher-income families.[169] Eleven percent of infants living in poverty in the United States have a mother suffering from severe depression.[170] The literature indicates that higher education is in general associated with a lower prevalence of mental health problems.[171] One of the

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[168] OECD (2010).
[169] National Center on Children in Poverty (2010).
[170] Urban Institute (2010).
[171] Ross and van Willigen (1997); Chevalier and Feinstein (2007).

pathways through which education may promote good mental health is by enhancing

individual and area-level social capital.[172] Individuals with more education may be more

likely than less educated individuals to be socially integrated, and to have opportunities to

meet socially within their communities, factors that promote social capital accumulation

at the individual level.[173] Individuals with higher levels of social capital or who live in

areas with high levels of social capital enjoy good mental health.[174] Mental health issues

constitute a barrier for many low-income and poor families achieving economic and

educational success. Program administrators noted that mental health problems were

present among many of the individuals involved in their programs and consistently

reported the incorporation of mental health services into their two-generational

approaches to addressing family economic security.

### *Program Example: Housing Opportunity and Services Together  (Oregon and Illinois)*[175]

The multisite Housing Opportunity and Services Together  (HOST)

demonstration tests innovative, two-generation service models to improve the life

chances of vulnerable low-income families living in public and mixed-income housing

communities. At its core, the demonstration aims to address parents' key barriers to self-

sufficiency — such as poor physical and mental health, addictions, low levels of literacy,

lack of a high school diploma, and historically weak connection to the labor force—while

simultaneously integrating services and supports for children and youth. The core

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[172] OECD (2010).
[173] De Silva et al. (2005).
[174] Almedon (2005).
[175] Popkin, Scott, Parilla, Falkenburger, McDaniel, and Kyung (2012).

components of the HOST model consist of intensive case management, job training and development, and mental health services. According to staff related to the project the mental health component is extremely important to the success of the program since so many of the families face mental health barriers.

# Chapter 5: Social Capital Based Programs

This chapter will provide in-depth program analysis of two case study examples of innovative on-the-ground programs that use social capital development as the core of their theory of change for poverty alleviation. Administrators of both programs were interviewed and identified social capital formation as the primary vehicle for improving the family economic security and well-being of individuals participating. The programs that will be analyzed are the Circles® Campaign and Family Independence Initiative. The program models will be explored to understand how social capital formation is measured and what effect it has. Both programs have recently undergone independent evaluations that will be used as the primary means of assessing program outcomes and impacts.

## CIRCLES® CAMPAIGN[176]

Circles® is an innovative model based on the body of research relating to social capital and seeks to form bonding, bridging, and linking social capital for low-income community members. The Circles® Campaign is an approach of the Move the Mountain Leadership Center, launched nationally in 2007, following 10 years of program development and evaluation. Circles® has drawn national attention for helping to move families out of poverty. Several national organizations have members who have initiated implementation of the Circles model, including United Way, Goodwill, the United Methodist Church, Lutheran Social Services, Community Action Partnerships, and Catholic Charities. Additionally Circles® is being adapted for use by community

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[176] Evaluation of the Circles® program is based on the following sources: Collier and Lawless (2012); National Circles® Impact report (2011); National Circles® evaluation report (2011) all available on the Circles website and interviews with program administrators.

colleges, housing corporations, workforce development centers, human service systems, and hospitals. Each member receives training for its staff and volunteers, as well as fund development coaching. The National Campaign office also provides phone and email coaching and performs regular fidelity site visits to ensure that the programs in which members have received instruction are being implemented to the fullest extent possible.

**Program Model**

Operating in communities around the country, each Circle® initiative consists of a family working to get out of poverty and several middle and upper income *Allies* who befriend them and lend support. The family is the Circle Leader, setting direction for activities. With the help and friendship of their allies, each family sets and achieves goals unique to their own needs. Circles are conducted in cohorts of up to 25, to ensure that Circle Leaders have peer support from each other (bonding social capital) as well as the support of their Circle Allies (bridging social support). Each cohort begins with training for Circle Leaders as a group, using a variety of training curriculums. During the first few months of Circle Leader training, participants assess their current relationships, resources and reason or purpose for making the necessary changes to escape from poverty permanently. During this time Allies attend training sessions that increase awareness of poverty issues within the families they will be matched with as well as issues that affect the community as a whole.

Both the Circle Leader and Ally Training curriculum teaches participants to better understand the "hidden rules" or "social norms" associated with class in the US as well as how to build a long-term vision for their future both individually as well as for the

56

community. Looking at poverty in a more holistic manner is necessary for both Circle Leaders and Allies once they are matched in an intentional team for a minimum of 18 months. Helping each family set and achieve goals unique to their own needs will be the responsibility of Circle Allies, who are middle to upper income community volunteers. Leaders and Allies meet monthly to build relationships, review goals that have been set, discuss and problem-solve barriers to getting out of poverty, such as improving self-sufficiency, expanding social networks, and enhancing academic performance of both children and parents. Another component of the program is their use of weekly and monthly meetings. Weekly community meetings gather Circle Leaders, Circle Allies, and other interested community members to provide support and networking opportunities. Big View Meetings are held once per month and feature a far ranging discussion of the causes of poverty in the community and how to address them for the long-term, in the process removing systemic barriers. See figure 1 for a representation of the model.

The program also builds linking social capital through their Guiding Coalitions which are composed of community leaders, low-income individuals, Circle Leaders, Allies, elected and appointed officials, and volunteers. The coalition works to change the mind set and policies of their community with respect to poverty, utilizing the Circles® model while also tailoring the approach to their community's needs.

Figure 1: Model of Circles® program

**Evaluation**

  Wilder Research, a division of the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation based in St. Paul, Minnesota, worked with National Circles® Campaign staff in the development of a consistent evaluation instrument for use in all participating sites. With the support of Move the Mountain, a progress report for Circle Leaders was developed and piloted in 2009. The Circle Leader Progress Report is completed by each Circle Leader and at least one trained staff, volunteer, or ally working together to answer the questions. It includes 80 closed-ended questions that assess household composition, financial status (including sources and amounts of income, public benefits, assets, and debt), health conditions and health insurance, education, employment, housing, social support, child care, transportation, and community engagement. It also includes two open-ended questions to

identify the most important goals the Circle Leader has set for the coming six months as part of Circles® and the goals that have been accomplished during the preceding six months as part of involvement in Circles®. Staff at participating sites are trained in the use of the instrument. Circle leaders are asked to submit personal progress reports at six-month intervals. There are several data points that Circle Leaders report on:

- Income: Earned Income, Social Security Income, Child Support

- Public Assistance: Food Stamps, Cash Assistance, Unemployment, etc.

- Assets: Checking and Savings Account, Individual Development Accounts

- Debts: Back rent, overdue utilities, unpaid student loans, unpaid medical bills, wage garnishments, overdue credit, other bills

- Employment: Began employment (part-time or full-time) at some point in their participation of Circles®

- Education: Enrolled in a formal training or educational program as some point in their participation of Circles®

- Insurance: Obtained insurance at some point during their participation in Circles®

- Transportation/ housing:  Change in stability of transportation and housing

- Community Engagement: Having support system and being connected to the broader community (volunteerism)

The national data collection process began in July 2008 and baseline data for each community was compiled as new Circle Leaders joined the campaign. On May 1, 2010, the data collection system moved to an on-line administration, overseen by Communities

Collaboration Incorporated (CCI). Data from July 1, 2008 through April 30, 2010 was merged in the new on-line database.

**Program Results**

The expected outcomes of the Circles® are increased social capital for Circle Leaders, to help them attain increased self-sufficiency; and a transformed public attitude about poverty and a community commitment to end poverty. Early results demonstrate that for every $1 spent on the program, $2 in welfare and food stamp subsidies was returned to the state, and $4 to the community as new earned income. As of September 2011, there are over 1200 Circle Leaders who have participated in an evaluation process, which includes tracking of Circle Leader income, education, assets and social networks over time. The early results show positive gains are being made by Circle Leaders across the country. The biggest gains are in the area of social capital. For the questions relating to increased support system and community volunteerism respondents of the program reported there was a 69.9% and 72.5% increase respectively in positive answers to these questions.

**Lessons Learned**

According to the program's latest external evaluation the model is based on consistency and best practices, while offering options for local sites to adapt to address particular challenges (generational poverty combined with racism, or re-entry after incarceration) as well as opportunities (corporate job-training programs or college bridge programs). Concrete goals include building a sustainable, systemic set of practices based

on reliable outcomes assessment, in order to move families out of poverty and engage communities in changing structural barriers. Curriculum and training materials are being expanded and piloted to increase relevance and effectiveness. Currently, quantitative measures of Circle Leader progress are being improved and valid and reliable instruments and procedures are being tested. As noted above most evaluation questions focus of individual educational and economic gains and only two indicators relating to social capital formation are captured despite the program's basis on social capital development. The evaluation process of the program is ongoing due to the newness of the program.

## FAMILY INDEPENDENCE INITIATIVE [177]

The Family Independence Initiative (FII) is a nonprofit, community-based organization that is considered an on-the- ground social laboratory for new strategies to tackle poverty. The program started in 2001 in the San Francisco Bay Area as an experiment in live social networking. FII has pilot demonstration sites in San Francisco, Oakland, Hawaii, and Boston. Their philosophy is that low-income people can advance together through the use of resource sharing, mutual support, and role modeling. The underlying logic is that individuals will leverage their bonding social capital and close networks of support to access opportunities such as jobs, assistance with child care, getting a loan, which will ultimately lead to them exiting poverty. The program is structured around the idea that families can lift themselves out of poverty if they have a

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[177] Evaluation of the Family Independence Initiative program is based on the following sources: Kubo, McKenna, Baum and Andrews (2011a); Kubo, McKenna, Baum and Andrews (2011b); Stuhldreher and O'Brien (2011) and Miller (2011) and interviews with program administrators.

sense of control over their daily lives, an awareness of the options available to them, and a diverse and active social network.

**Program Model**

Family Independence Initiative works neighborhood-to-neighborhood using a snowball approach to identify a small cohort of five or six families. As part of FII, working-poor families recruit each other and self-organize into peer support groups. There is usually a degree of relationship among families although the ties may be weak. Families are encouraged to recruit others who share a similar outlook – a positive future orientation, a successful venture, and a willingness to take a chance on something new. Participants set personal goals for their families and obtain cash payments for reporting monthly progress, such as raising children's grades, improving their credit score, or building their savings. Every month, participating families log onto an online reporting system to record what actions they took. They also meet monthly with their peer group to discuss their challenges and successes. Family cohort meetings are a time when families support each other and brainstorm together solutions to problems that one member might be having. Families meet in their cohort groups for two years and during this time they are expected to pursue goals that will advance their well-being: financially and generally.

Family cohorts meet together once a month with an FII liaison whose job is to do as little as possible. FII liaisons provide linking social capital by connecting family cohorts and individual families to resources outside the group when needed and when asked. The liaisons' most critical role is to collect data on families' progress to inform the field on the role of choice, options, and social connectedness.  FII requires participating

families to provide an extensive amount of financial and other behavioral data to the online program on a monthly basis and provides them with a computer to do so. This aspect of the program serves as a data tracking and accountability purpose but also reinforces the families' self-determination. The liaisons pay families to report data and when families are able to report concrete progress on their goals the liaison credits them with $30 and each family is eligible to receive up to $600 in such payments every 3 months.

**Evaluation**

Liaisons collect and verify both quantitative and qualitative data from families. Quantitative data includes evidence of income and expenditures, and qualitative data includes information on events occurring in individuals' lives as well as decisions individual family members make. Every month participants input their activities from the prior month. People track their activities in six different areas: health/wellness, income/savings, education/skills, housing/environment, networking/helping others, and resourcefulness/leadership. FII collects up to 230 unique data points to for evaluation. In external evaluations of the program, evaluators found that the FII process of collecting and validating family data is rigorous, thorough and accurate.[178]

FII primarily collects and reports information relating to concrete outcomes tied to income, assets, homeownership, etc. Evaluators of the program recommend an expanded evaluation framework for ongoing analysis and data collection to collect and analyze family and community-level data. The proposed evaluation framework would

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[178] Kubo, McKenna, Baum and Andrews (2011b).

allow FII to assess the fidelity of program implementation within and across neighborhoods, measure the impact of the program on key characteristics of participating families, document the ripple effect of the initiative on the community and begin to track progress towards long term policy change.[179] Another key evaluation strategy is to incorporate the increase of bridging social capital of families. Evaluators noted that at baseline families participating in the program reported feeling socially connected but their connections were primarily to individuals like themselves, i.e., they reported high bonding social capital but there is little evidence to suggest that they have many bridges to people different from themselves or linkages to resources in their social networks. The proposed evaluation plan has not been implemented to date due to administrators' concerns that the data collection process will become too cumbersome and burdensome for the participants of the program. FII is currently in the process of refining their evaluation methods to better capture social capital formation.

**Program Results**

The program's results are promising, showing increases in savings, home ownership, entrepreneurial activity, and positive impacts on children's grades in all four demonstration sites. To date there are no published reports relating to increases in social capital or community impact assessments. However, independent evaluation of the program identifies the following outcomes relating to the social capital framework:

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[179] Kubo, McKenna, Baum and Andrews (2011a) pg. 23.

- FII provides bonding social capital through the use of a cohort model and peer supports. Group participants benefit from a supportive environment, positive role modeling and individual support.

- FII provides a structure within which individuals work towards a goal and liaisons provide linking social capital through referrals to resources such as training classes.

- FII fosters bridging social capital and broadens and deepens social networks since participants with higher levels of social connectedness are able to provide information or refer peers to other services that work. Participants are also able to establish new relationships outside of their current network.

FII reports the following results:[180]

Table 1: Outcomes from Family Independence Initiative Demonstration Sites

| Outcomes Avg. increase since enrollment (Excludes FII awards) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Demonstration site | Boston | San Francisco | Hawaii | Oakland |
| # of adults/kids | 152 | 310 | 86 | 121 |
| # of Households | 35 | 65 | 18 | 25 |
| Time period | 12 months | 24 months | 20 months | 24 months |
| Income increase | 13% | 207% | 18% | 27% |
| Savings increase | 225% | 250% | 377% | 141% |
| Homeowner | 3 | 3 | 1 | 9 |
| Businesses | 12 | 10 | 6 | 22 |
| Kid Grades up | 22% | 77% | 40% | 27% |
| | | | | |

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[180] FII website (fiinet.org).

**Lessons Learned**

Proponents of FII's approach cite the combination of supportive social networks, consistent benchmarking of progress, and—most importantly—personalized paths out of poverty designed by the families themselves, as the key ingredients of the approach's success. However, as noted above despite being built on a framework of social connectedness, FII does not capture many outcomes that directly link social capital development to well-being of participants. Future refinement of the evaluation process will benefit the program's ability to capture the effects of social capital development. Communications with program staff indicate that to date a refined evaluation strategy has not been put into place.

# Chapter 6: Recommendations

IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL CAPITAL TO THE TWO-GENERATION FRAMEWORK

Based on the review of the literature and qualitative analysis of on-the-ground programs it is evident that social capital is an important component of the two-generation framework. This framework posits that successful two-generation programs all share three components, to a greater or lesser degree: an education component for parents and children, an economic support component, and a social capital component.[181]  Analysis of the social capital component provides evidence of its importance based on the following:

**Support of the other Components of the Framework**

Social capital development strategies supplement the education and economic components of the two-generation framework and are used at the institutional level to offset barriers individuals face in these areas. Based on the analysis of the sample of two-generation programs, programs reported consistent use of interventions to foster bonding social capital, through the use of such things as social support networks, social connections, and engagement strategies; in order to improve outcomes of participants in their programs. Additionally, development of linking social capital was seen in most programs through the brokerage of information to access services and connection of participants to formal institutions. Formation of bridging social capital was least evident in program design although development of this type of social capital often occurred by chance due to participants' exposure to a diverse social network such as the expansive networks present at colleges.

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[181] Ascend (2012).

**Key Component of the Framework**

Social capital development is important in and of itself to alleviate poverty and promote individual well-being and can be used as a strategy at the institutional level to achieve these goals. Based on the literature review and evidence from programs that use social capital as part of their theory of change, social capital formation is an important dimension to be explored by programs that deal with poverty and social exclusion. Preliminary evidence exists from the two on-the-ground programs, Circles® and Family Independence Initiative, that seek specifically to build social capital in order to lift families up from poverty. Preliminary outcomes from these pilot programs show that social capital formation is a worthwhile economic development tool and that concrete individual gains such as increased income, assets, and education for participants can be achieved. However more evidence is needed on the collective impact of social capital based strategies in communities and quantitative data on the gains in social capital of individuals due to program involvement.

**Strengthening the Framework**

Lastly, formation of social capital can be used to strengthen the two-generation framework to incorporate relational issues that manifest due to mental health concerns, domestic violence, child abuse and parenting/relational skills. Evidence from the program interviews shows that many programs targeted to individuals living in poverty and low-income circumstances incorporate services relating to mental health, domestic violence and parenting/life skills development. These additional services should most likely not be included separately into the two-generation framework due to the risk of conflating the

framework with other holistic approaches. Additionally, incorporating numerous other services could potentially lead to the two-generation framework being considered a "catch-all" of social service provision. As it stands, interventions that lead to social capital formation result in increased trust and networks of connections which in turn can have positive impacts relating to mental health, domestic violence and parenting/life skills development. Therefore these types of services could potentially be considered as part of the social capital component of the two-generation framework once further research is done to substantiate this assumption.

## KNOWLEDGE GAPS AND AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This report has been exploratory in nature with the goal of examining the role of social capital in two-generation programs. Due to the small sample size of programs interviewed relating to their program models and overall lack of data in this area, future research must be done to fully analyze this component of the two-generation framework. Additionally, gaps remain relating to the research on the concept of social capital and evidence of the effect of social capital based strategies in two-generation programs. These gaps lie primarily in the areas of measurement and evaluation.

### Gaps in the Evidence Base on the Concept of Social Capital

Measurement of social capital is difficult since it centers on trust and levels of engagement or interaction in social or group activities. Putnam, in his analysis of differences in social capital across U.S. states, has made extensive use of a wide range of

cross-sectional and longitudinal data sets.[182] His measures of social capital are typically based on a composite index containing the following elements: (i) intensity of involvement in community and organizational life; (ii) public engagement (e.g. voting); (iii) community and volunteering; (iv) informal sociability (e.g. visiting friends); and (v) reported levels of inter-personal trust. However, it is important to note that what is relevant to social capital is tacit and relational, defying easy measurement or codification.[183] Individual attitudes (e.g., trust) or behavior (e.g., joining organizations and voting) provide proxy measures of social capital, but these measures should not be confused with the underlying concept.[184] Developing better measures of social capital in social groups, as well as improved measures for individual access to social capital is important to fully understand the role of social capital for improving well-being.

Recent measurement instruments from the World Bank have been developed for this purpose. They propose the use of complementary quantitative and qualitative measures for measuring social capital across six sometimes overlapping dimensions: (i) groups and networks, (ii) trust and solidarity, (iii) collective action and cooperation, (iv) information and communication, (v) social cohesion and inclusion, and (vi) empowerment and political action.[185] Although targeted to developing countries the authors note that these measurement tools and strategies can be applied to developed countries once adapted for local context. The instruments are designed for use by

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[182] Putnam (2000).
[183] OECD (2001)
[184] OECD (2001).
[185] Grootaert, Narayan, Nyhan Jones, and Woolcock (2004); Dudwick, Kuehnast, Nyhan Jones, and Woolcock (2006).

researchers, evaluators, and managers of projects and programs, those conducting poverty assessments or national social capital surveys, and those developing national poverty reduction strategies. However these instruments are newer and no evidence exists regarding their validity or reliability.

Moreover the OECD notes that there is still the need to further the conceptual development of the idea of social capital. Measurement of social capital and linking the concept to empirical work will help define social capital. They note that this will also involve further developing our taxonomy of different forms of social capital, and identifying the fields of analysis and forms of social capital where application of the concept is most fruitful.[186]

**Gaps Relating to the Effect of Social Capital in Two-Generation Strategies**

Two-generation programs are based on the premise that concurrent, targeted and intensive education of parents and children will lead to long-term economic security for both generations. Therefore in analyzing two-generation programs it is important to clarify the links between human and social capital to explore how social networks can promote the education of individuals and how education can promote social capital. This will be important moving forward in the development of more two-generation programs and creating social capital development strategies.

The research conducted for this report was exploratory and information was gathered on program models from a small sample of administrators of two-generation programs. This was sufficient to gain an initial understanding of the role of social capital

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[186] OECD (2001).

in two-generation programs, however much more research needs to occur to truly substantiate its role. Large scale qualitative interviews with staff and participants of programs and the examination of quantitative measures of social capital will be necessary in future research. However, in order to examine qualitative and quantitative measures of social capital these data must first be collected at the programmatic level. In many instances programs implemented social capital based intervention strategies based on a hunch or intuitive belief that the creation support networks was important for participants of the programs. Increasing the evidence base for why these supports work will be critical in the future.

PROGRAM DESIGN IMPLICATIONS

Social capital resides in social relationships, implying that programs will often be facilitating or supporting the development of social capital, rather than actively creating it. However, institutions play a critical role in the development of social capital for individuals. This is especially true for individuals living in poor and low-income circumstances. On-the-ground programs should seek to intentionally embed social capital development while simultaneously creating systems to capture its effect.

**Intentionally Promote Social Capital Development**

It is clear from the information-gathering interviews that on-the-ground programs deem social capital a critical component of strategies to support families seeking economic security. However many programs appear to view social capital development as a byproduct or facilitator of their core strategies and are not intentionally embedding

social capital development into their program design. Based on the evidence that high levels of social capital relate to improved well-being it would behoove programs to become more strategic in the design of their program models. Social capital development strategies should be incorporated at all levels of programs in order to foster bonding, bridging, and linking social capital. Based on the review of program components of two-generation approaches it is evident that programs have a lot of flexibility in achieving this goal and should adapt their social capital development strategies to best suit the needs of their clientele and the purposes of the specific program.

**Incorporate Measures of Social Capital into Program Evaluations**

Results from future program evaluations of the Circles® campaign and Family Independence Initiative (FII) programs will provide insight on the effect social capital can have on individuals and communities in alleviating poverty. These types of evaluations are necessary to gain a better understanding of what works in promoting social capital, and the contexts in which the promotion of social capital yields most benefits. To date there is little quantitative evidence on programmatic design that will lead to increased social capital. Even the programs that are grounded in social capital theory have not formulated a substantive evidence base. Moving forward, as these programs continue to refine their evaluation mechanisms, promising evidence should be garnered. However, although these programs are based on social capital, they lack evaluations that are experimental or quasi-experimental which suggests that information gathered will be primarily relating to outcomes and pre-post changes without the ability to garner data on long-term impacts.

**Create a Culture of Evidence**

Additionally, through the interviews with the programs it was clear that many programs completely lacked an evaluation strategy to capture outcomes relating to the economic or education components of the two-generation framework much less the social capital component. Institutions using a two-generation framework will need to create and sustain mechanisms to gather quantitative data and qualitative feedback specific to the social capital components of their programs. Creating a culture of evidence and continual improvement can help institutions implementing a two-generation approach be intentional in searching for areas of possible weakness, identifying areas of strength, and constructing powerful and equitable programs that lead to family economic security. Something as simple as a pre- and post-test survey relating to the forms of social capital and the perceived effect of the social capital based intervention would prove fruitful in evaluating whether participants are benefiting from these interventions and whether they are essential to helping address the barriers these populations face. Small programmatic changes such as this would benefit programs' capacity to make the case that these innovations can significantly increase the well-being of families living in poverty and low-income circumstances.

POLICY DESIGN IMPLICATIONS

The role of government in sustaining social capital is less clear and may have the role of facilitator versus developer of social capital. Government and other public

agencies can have a diffuse yet powerful influence on social capital formation. Agencies whose actions have influence on social capital are spread throughout government and the public sector. Local and regional levels of government will often have particularly important roles.

**Fostering Bridging and Linking Social Capital**

Specific types of social capital may also be particularly relevant to policy – in particular, bridging and linking social capital. One option might be to target attempts to form social capital at the community and neighborhood level especially for areas that are significantly lacking social capital such as high poverty communities. Recent federal initiatives seeking to address neighborhood deficiencies simultaneously are the Department of Education's Promise Neighborhoods effort and the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Choice Neighborhoods program.[187] These initiatives are place-based and intended to transform neighborhoods by coordinating improvements across multiple sectors, such as housing, education, employment, transportation, and health. These models are supposed to reflect local opportunities, needs, and objectives, with considerable input from—and coordination with—residents, community leaders, and local institutions.[188] Initiatives like these will necessarily increase the bridging and linking social capital of communities and should be expanded. However evaluating these programs may be difficult especially when trying to pinpoint interventions that prove

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[187] See Departments of Education and Housing and Urban Development websites.
[188] Smith (2011).

most beneficial at alleviating poverty.[189] Incorporating measures of social capital into the evaluation design will prove helpful to capture social capital formation for these communities.

Another possible policy intervention to foster linking social capital is to continue and expand the Assets for Independence (AFI) program. As the primary source of federal support for IDA programs, AFI has helped to expand IDAs from the handful of accounts in the 1990s to more than 115,000 accounts to date.[190] The *Stephanie Tubbs Jones Assets for Independence Reauthorization Act* (H.R. 1623) was introduced to reauthorize the program on April 15, 2011 and proposed raising the authorization from $25 million to $75 million a year. Expansion of the program will be valuable in developing the social capital of low-income and poor families.

**Fostering Bonding Social Capital**

The role of policy in the development of bonding social capital will be to foster innovations at the institutional level. Recent initiatives in education reform such as the Race to the Top[191] grants seek to reward innovation in primary and secondary education and can be replicated in other areas of government. Changes in existing legislation such as the Workforce Investment Act (WIA)[192], Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA),[193] and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)[194] block grant

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[189] Smith (2011).
[190] Corporation for Enterprise Development (2011).
[191] United States Department of Education.
[192] Public Law 105-220.
[193] Public Law 110-315.
[194] Public Law 104-193.

program can be made to foster innovations that form social capital for disadvantaged individuals and families. These laws are all up for reauthorization in the next few years and it would be a prime time to incorporate social capital development.

Experts on TANF posit that the goal of reauthorization should be to create effective pathways to economic opportunity, including access to individualized services for those with barriers to employment.[195] These individualized services to address barriers could potentially come in the form of creating bonding social capital through specialized support services that utilize cohort models, peer supports or individual counselors. Recent research supports the use of TANF dollars to fund these types of innovations and provides evidence that these types of strategies can increase TANF recipients' persistence in postsecondary education and training, and boost earnings.[196] Changes to WIA could potentially require that training programs at One-Stop delivery systems incorporate bonding social capital development in the hierarchy of workforce services and prioritize individualized assistance from one-stop staff (assessment, counseling, financial management, training assistance, additional placement services) and utilize cohort models for job training.

CONCLUSION

Overall the existing research supports the fact that development of bonding, bridging and linking social capital is critical to the well-being of individuals and society as a whole. Preliminary evidence supports the notion that social capital formation is a

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[195] Lower-Basch, (2011).
[196] Hamilton and Scrivener (2012)

critical component of the two-generation framework. However more research is needed to substantiate this claim and provide evidence of the role social capital formation plays in these approaches. Additionally creating an evidence base at the policy and programmatic levels will be critical in order to expand and make the case for family economic security strategies based on social capital development.

## Appendix A: List of two-generation programs interviewed

- Acelero - NJ, PA, NV

- Bridges of Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County - FL

- Circles Campaign - Move the Mountain - National

- CNM Connect, Central New Mexico Community College - NM

- Ecovillage at Berea College - KY

- EduCareers at the Educare Center, the Tulsa Children's Project - OK

- Educational Alliance - College Preparatory School for Adult Learners NY

- Endicott College Keys to Degrees Program - MA

- Family Independence Initiative - HI, MA and CA

- Jeremiah Program - MN, TX, ND

- Keys to Degrees: Single Parent Program Eastern Michigan University -MI

- MoJo: Moms and Jobs - MA

- Mothers Learning & Living at College of St. Mary - NE

- Single Stop - NY, FL, NJ, CA, NM

- Tulsa Community Action Project's CareerAdvance® Program - OK

- Warren Village - CO

- Women with Children Program at Wilson College - PA

## Appendix B: List of structured interview questions

- Name, title, organization, years worked in the field, specific population served, mission of organization

- When you hear the words "two-generation strategies," what do they mean to you?

- Do you think this is an effective description for services provided to parents that are coordinated with services provided to children? If not, why? How do you refer to these services?

- Can you describe your own programmatic model?

- What do you perceive as the biggest barrier to economic security for the families you serve?

- What do you perceive as the biggest barrier to educational success (specifically completing postsecondary credentials – those beyond high school like certificates, 2-year degrees, or 4-year degrees) for the families you serve?

- What do the words "social capital" mean?

- Does your organization work to build social capital or social networks among families? If so, how?

- Can you describe your evaluation efforts, and can you tell us what outcomes you have been tracking, if any?

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