

# **Conceptualising the ‘community’ as a recipient of money – a critical literature review, and implications for health and inequalities**

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## **Research Highlights**

- Focuses on interventions giving money to communities in high-income settings
- Examines multiple conceptualisations of community across those interventions
- Shows that flow of money and existing inequalities shape constructions of community
- Describes implications for evaluations of impact of money on health inequalities

## **Abstract**

There is increasing attention on how money may bring about positive changes to health, and money-based development approaches are becoming more commonplace at the ‘community’ level, including in high-income countries. However, little attention has been paid to how the ‘community’ might be varyingly conceptualised in these scenarios, or to the potential implications of this for interpreting the impacts of such health improvement approaches. This paper presents a critical interpretive review of literature presenting different scenarios from high-income countries in which the ‘community’ receives money, to explore how ‘community’ is conceptualised in relation to this process. Some texts gave

explicit definitions of 'community', but multiple other conceptualisations were interpreted across all texts, conveyed through the construction of 'problematics', and descriptions of how and why money was given. The findings indicate that the flow of money shapes how conceptualisations of 'community' are produced, and that the implicit power relations and inequalities can construct and privilege particular sets of identities and relationships throughout the process. This highlights implications for approaching public health evaluations of giving money to 'communities', and for better understanding how it might bring about change to health and inequalities, where the 'community' cannot be interpreted merely as a setting or recipient of such an intervention, but something constructed and negotiated through the flow of money itself.

**Keywords:**

Community; development; money; inequality; review; high-income context.

## Background

The 'community' has become a conceptual mainstay of much of the design of health improvement approaches globally (Morgan, 2001), and in policy discourses framing efforts to address inequalities. This reflects a social model of health wherein the engagement and empowerment of 'communities' are recognised as social determinants of health and as fundamental components of bottom-up approaches to improving health and health inequalities (Laverack & Labonte, 2000). The concept of 'community' and its definitions and uses are multifarious and much debated across the social sciences (Crow & Allan, 1994). There is a long, diverse history of theorising around 'community' (Howarth, 2001), among which, attention has been paid to the symbolic negotiation and construction of its boundaries (Cohen, 1985), as well as to the social processes of identity-making that can extend the 'community' beyond understandings of place and the 'local' (Anderson, 1983). Despite this theoretical richness around 'community', there has been a marked absence in policy-making of engagement with its conceptual intricacies and fluidity. The concept of 'community' is often operationalised uncritically in programmes and policies, without acknowledgement of its contested nature (Bertotti, Jamal, & Harden, 2012), raising questions about what can or should be interpreted from evaluations of 'community'-focused initiatives to improve health and inequalities.

Money-based initiatives are increasingly prominent within 'community' approaches to health improvement, with the transference of money to the 'community' theorised to increase wellbeing via material and psycho-social pathways (Rawlings, Serburne-Benz, & Van Domelen, 2004). Examining the ways in which 'community' is conceptualised around practices of giving money is important for understanding how these types of initiative might

contribute (or not) to health improvement. The role of money in improving health outcomes can be theorised, on one hand, as increasing access to basic material resources and services essential for wellbeing (Leatherman, Metcalfe, Geissler, & Dunford, 2012). The simple premise of 'giving money to the poor' may enable them to increase their standards of living, including material determinants of health and wellbeing (Hanlon, 2004). This 'asset transfer' approach implicates the 'community' as the setting in which the intervention is delivered, for example conditional cash transfer programmes giving money to households or individuals to prompt particular behaviours, such as accessing health services (Lagarde, Haines, & Palmer, 2007).

These initiatives reflect a utilitarian perspective, wherein the transfer of money at the 'community' level is undertaken to achieve specific, often externally-determined outcomes. Other initiatives reflect a more participatory premise (Labonne & Chase, 2008), engaging the 'community' in decision-making around money, with a view to changing the wider social and economic conditions of inequality that shape their health. These initiatives have included micro-financing programmes to reduce risk factors for HIV (Pronyk et al., 2008) and social fund initiatives in which the 'community' helps organise the funding of local projects (Rawlings et al., 2004). These initiatives reflect shifts away from a focus purely on material wellbeing towards a rights-based approach to improving health (De Vos et al., 2009; Wallerstein, 1993), in which empowerment strategies may lead to increased perceptions and mobilisations of control, recognised as a determinant of health and health inequalities (Bosma, Schrijvers, & Mackenbach, 1999).

These examples of money-based initiatives are all drawn from well-established practices to address inequalities in low and middle-income countries, but there is also increasing focus

on these approaches in some high-income countries. In the UK for example, political rhetorics advocating increased power and participation at the local level (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2008) have emerged alongside renewed calls to address inequalities (Department of Health, 2010). This has resulted in the development of initiatives seeking to engage the 'community' in decision-making around a broad range of social determinants of health (Milton et al., 2012), including deciding how funds should be spent at the local level (Kaszynska, Parkinson, & Fox, 2012). Many initiatives have sought to engage the 'community' in decision-making while giving established organisations responsibility for managing the money, for example the UK's *New Deal for Communities* programme (Lawless, 2012). However, recent approaches are looking to locate control over financial resources, as well as decision-making, in the 'community' itself. An example of this is the current *Big Local* initiative, in which one million pounds is given directly to 'communities' to bring about change in deprived areas (Local Trust, 2012).

The description of such initiatives as 'area-based' denotes implicit framing of 'communities' as people living within a given geographic location (Lawless, 2012). However, this definition will rarely account for the complexity of conceptualisations (and experiences) of 'community' in terms of social and / or spatial identities (Bertotti et al., 2012), nor of the negotiations and contestations of these identities among different groups of people (Cohen, 1985; Howarth, 2002), that might be anticipated in a 'community'-based initiative. The narrowness of such framings may go some way to explaining the paucity of current evidence of the impacts of such initiatives on health inequalities (O'Mara-Eves et al., 2013). If the way(s) in which 'community' is conceptualised influences how the impacts of such initiatives on health can be interpreted, the transference of money may add further complexity, given

the differing roles money can play in mediating relationships between people and context (see for example Bloch & Parry, 1989; Maurer, 2006).

To generate a deeper understanding of how giving money directly to the 'community' might influence health, specifically in high-income settings, it is important to consider how 'community' could be conceptualised in this scenario. The transferability of evidence of effective money-based initiatives from low and middle-income countries is questionable, given that *relative* deprivation and perceptions of inequality are arguably more influential factors for health in high-income settings than absolute deprivation (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2007), and thus the pathways and effects of giving money directly to 'communities' may differ. Hence, it becomes important to ask what kinds of 'community' are assumed, constructed and experienced through flows of money given directly to groups of people, and how these may be shaped by the different contexts in which money is given.

A critical review of literature was conducted to address the following question: how is the 'community' conceptualised in scenarios of receiving money in high-income country contexts? This paper presents the findings of the review, to help understand how conceptualisations of 'community' may contribute to interpretations of the impact on health of initiatives involving flows of money.

## **Methods**

### **Methodological approach**

A traditional systematic review methodology was considered inappropriate for this review, which did not seek to present an exhaustive synthesis of all literature on 'community' and money, or to generate 'robust evidence'. To explore the conceptual framings of

'communities' receiving money directly, from (likely) disparate and heterogeneous bodies of literature, a critical interpretive synthesis approach (Dixon-Woods et al., 2006) was considered appropriate. This methodology was developed to generate theory from a variety of types of 'evidence', using an interpretive approach to synthesis rather than the aggregative approach of the traditional systematic review (ibid). The methodology calls for reviewers to adopt a critical lens to examine how the literature '*constructs its problematics*' – or the issue(s) presented as being of key interest – and the '*nature of the assumptions*' on which each of the publications draw (ibid., p2), and was thus suitable for interpreting conceptualisations of the 'community' in receipt of money across a wide range of literatures.

### **Search strategy**

An iterative approach was taken to develop the final search strategy, to ensure a body of texts that was varied but manageable in scope for the review. This involved several preliminary searches to explore the breadth of relevant literature, and identify key search terms. Reflecting on these searches, the authors discussed to identify – from a potentially very broad set of literatures – the types of scenarios that might be most relevant to informing interventions in which money is given to 'communities' to improve health and inequalities. Consequently, four 'domains' of scenarios in which 'communities' might be given money directly were identified, and used to tailor the search strategy towards the most relevant literature. The four domains included:

- *Development*: money received for the purposes of economic, social, health, or other types of development);

- *Windfalls and income shocks*: unexpected receipt of money, for example collective lottery winnings or dividend payments;
- *Compensation and reparation*: money received in acknowledgment of health or social harms suffered in the past, or risk of such in the future;
- *Research participation*: money received in exchange for participation in research activities.

Pilot searches were then conducted to refine the key search terms under each domain, before the final search strategy was agreed (see *Table 1*).

A range of electronic databases and 'grey' literature resources were identified to provide access to literature from multiple disciplines and of different types. The four sets of search terms were applied to each of the following seven databases:

- *Academic research databases*: International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS), PubMed, Academic Search Complete, GEOBASE, Web of Science;
- *Grey literature databases*: GreenFILE, Open Grey (Europe).

### **Inclusion and exclusion criteria**

The main rationale guiding selection of texts for the review reflected the increasing focus in high-income contexts on engaging the 'community' in health and social development agendas by giving them money and control over it (Kaszynska et al., 2012). As such, included literature was restricted to papers that described scenarios of direct transfer of money to 'communities', as opposed to transfer of other types of resources, or the transfer of money via third parties such as non-governmental organisations or local councils. A (predominant) focus on high-income country contexts, using membership of the

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (<http://www.oecd.org/>) to denote a country of high-income, was also stipulated. No time period restrictions were applied to the search strategy or inclusion / exclusion criteria. The full inclusion and exclusion criteria are presented in *Box 1*.

### **Synthesis and interpretation**

All records identified through the search were downloaded to EndNote 7 and titles and abstracts were screened for inclusion by the lead author. The full texts for those not excluded during screening were retrieved and read, to assess further their eligibility for inclusion. The final set of eligible texts was then uploaded to QSR Nvivo 10 for interpretation and synthesis by the lead author. Descriptive information was extracted from each text to record the country/ies and population(s) of focus, rationale for giving money to communities, general disciplinary perspective(s) and a summary of the main arguments of each text.

Following Dixon-Woods *et al* (2006), the review focused on interpreting the content of texts rather than assessing their quality. The steps of synthesis involved identifying concepts of, and relating to 'community' presented explicitly and more implicitly across the texts via an inductive approach, and grouping these into common themes. Following reading each text, codes were developed and assigned to relevant concepts presented explicitly in the texts, and also to those interpreted by the lead author through close reading of the texts. These codes were then grouped by identifying common meaning in an iterative manner, to generate themes, which were then discussed among the authors to identify and synthesise broader conceptualisations relevant to the focus on health inequalities.

## Results

### Overview of search results

A total of 4814 separate texts were identified, and their titles and / or abstracts screened using the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Of these, 46 were identified for possible inclusion and their full texts sought. Subsequently, 24 texts were included in the review. The formats of the texts were varied and included historical and non-historical case studies (seven), empirical research reports (six, of which five were qualitative); theoretical and methodological pieces (three); programme evaluation reports (two); policy analyses (two); discursive or position pieces (two); and literature reviews (two). The texts spanned several high-income countries (the UK, the US, Canada, Australia, Hungary); three did not refer to a specific country. A wide range of disciplines were represented including the physical sciences (environment, energy and engineering disciplines), and humanities and social sciences (psychology, sociology, social policy, development studies, law and history), and most texts seemed to straddle more than one discipline or field. *Table 2* summarises the characteristics of each text, main discipline(s), rationale for giving money, location (country) and population, theoretical framings, and overview of each text's main focus.

Described below are the variety of ways in which 'community' was conceptualised across the texts reviewed, and how these linked with the contexts for giving money to 'communities', the related 'problematics' identified, and to the different framings of the flows of money to 'communities' from other groups. While there was limited explicit consideration of 'health' in the texts reviewed, the synthesis process helped identify cross-cutting conceptualisations of (in)equality, which are relevant to questions of how giving money might impact on health inequalities. See *Table 3* for a summary of the ways in

which conceptualisations of 'community' were presented and the interpretation of these in relation to conceptualisations of (in)equality.

### **Explicit conceptualisations of 'community'**

There were limited examples across the texts in this review of explicitly stated definitions of 'community', with far more conceptualisations indirectly implied. The explicit definitions given in several texts drew on ideas of shared characteristics, such as cultural heritage among indigenous populations (McLean, 2012); ethnicity among African Americans (Franklin, 2012; Fullinwider, 2007); and political interests and modes of organisation for protecting these (Fenge, 1992):

*"Those communities with shared political and administrative interests, and, most importantly, those with shared land use, were grouped together into six regions" (Fenge, 1992, p133);*

Other texts acknowledged more contingent constructions of 'community', relative to emerging projects such as commercial or energy developments (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2007; Bristow, Cowell, & Munday, 2012; Cowell, Bristow, & Munday, 2011, 2012; Esteves, 2008; Esteves & Vanclay, 2009; Feldman, 1991; Klassen & Feldpausch-Parker, 2011; Vari & Ferencz, 2007), defining them as *"affected"* or *"local"* to the development of interest (Esteves & Vanclay, 2009, p143).

### **'Community' characterised by the rationale and context for giving money**

Across the texts there emerged a range of different ways in which the description of rationales for giving money conveyed assumptions about 'community'. While

acknowledging some conceptual similarities, scenarios of ‘compensation’ and ‘reparations’ have been separated here, reflecting the language used in the respective texts, and a distinction between money given for specific loss of benefits or risks thereof (compensation), and money as recognition of guilt or responsibility for more systemic discrimination (reparations).

*Compensation for harms experienced and/or anticipated*

The majority of texts framed the giving of money to communities as ‘compensation’ for harms (environmental, economic), or for anticipated risks thereof, describing scenarios of the impacts on ‘communities’ of the siting of industrial developments such as mines, dams, irrigation and energy developments, and also commercial developments (Allan, McGregor, & Swales, 2011; Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2007; Bristow et al., 2012; Campbell & Hunt, 2013; Cowell et al., 2011, 2012; Égré, Roquet, & Durocher, 2007; Esteves, 2008; Esteves & Vanclay, 2009; Feldman, 1991; Klassen & Feldpausch-Parker, 2011; Lucas-Darby, 2012; McLean, 2012; O’Faircheallaigh, 2004; Saito, 2012; ter Mors, Terwel, & Daamen, 2012; Vari & Ferencz, 2007). The depiction of these scenarios appeared to frame ‘community’ as an entity impacted upon, vulnerable to the forces and interests of external entities such as energy companies and commercial retail developers.

Yet, there were also framings ‘community’ as an entity with potential to influence the success (or otherwise) of a venture, with money mediating relationships between the ‘community’ and external entities, to generate ‘acceptance’ of a development, for example a nuclear energy facility (Vari & Ferencz, 2007):

*“The local population’s consent was obtained via negotiations where the prime stake concerned the financial compensation of the host and neighbouring settlements.”* (Vari & Ferencz, 2007, p189).

In some scenarios, this conveyed the ‘community’ as having interests distinct from those of other, for example corporate, entities but which could be closer aligned through the transference of money, manifested in support for a development (Allan et al., 2011; Cowell et al., 2012; Égré et al., 2007; Esteves, 2008; Klassen & Feldpausch-Parker, 2011; ter Mors et al., 2012). In other texts, however, the money was presented as highlighting, and even cementing the distance between these sets of interests, through depictions of the ‘community’ rejecting compensation as ‘bribery’ (Allan et al., 2011; Esteves, 2008; Vari & Ferencz, 2007).

### *Reparations for past injustices*

Texts describing reparations for historical injustices faced by particular ‘communities’, including slavery and discrimination faced by African Americans (Franklin, 2012; Fullinwider, 2007), damaging policies targeting Aboriginal Australians (Berndsen & McGarty, 2012), and damages faced as a result of urban redevelopment (Lucas-Darby, 2012), firmly conceptualised the ‘community’ as the ‘victim’, relative to much more powerful, dominant entities. It was implied in these texts that the process of agreeing and giving money as reparations was instrumental in ratifying the identity of the ‘community’ as victim and wronged. Overlaps between compensation and reparation were indicated in one text (Akashah & Marks, 2006). Here, money given to the ‘community’ in recognition of harms suffered – including to health – was presented as compensation to help restore well-being, but also as reparations to acknowledge the wrong done to the ‘community’ in the

past. As well as the 'community' being conceptualised as a victim, it was also framed as playing a role in influencing social relations beyond its boundaries; by receiving reparations the 'community' helped dissuade future harms to others:

*"In this context, compensation has emerged as an attempt to help victims of human rights violations reclaim aspects of their former health and to dissuade future acts of wrong-doing"*  
(Akashah & Marks, 2006, p259).

#### *Land claims agreements / settlements*

Several texts centred on the transfer of money to 'communities' in agreements around collective land claims. While these texts shared some similarities with texts describing compensation, the processes and relationships depicted around money for land agreements conveyed distinct conceptualisations of 'community'. These texts focused on notions of 'traditional' rights to land, with reference to the ethnic and / or cultural heritage claims of particular indigenous 'communities', (Anders, 1989; Campbell & Hunt, 2013; Dayo & Kofinas, 2010; Égré et al., 2007; Fenge, 1992; McLean, 2012; O'Faircheallaigh, 2004). The emphasis placed in these texts on the transference of money from the state to 'communities' conveyed constructions of the 'community' centred on historical identities and claims to physical resources, and on distinct forms of collective 'ownership' and 'property', often at odds with a dominant capitalist economy (Anders, 1989; Dayo & Kofinas, 2010; Fenge, 1992; O'Faircheallaigh, 2004):

*"With thousands of years of experience in holding communal property and relatively little experience living with private property, it's no wonder that conflicts arise between the new land tenure under ANCSA [land settlement act] and the older notions of communal property."*  
(Anders, 1989, p289).

Descriptions of land agreements also implied a broader process through which 'communities' come to be recognised externally, acknowledged as legally-recognised entities with whom the state can cooperate (Anders, 1989; Dayo & Kofinas, 2010). Echoing explicit conceptualisations of the 'community' as sharing characteristics, these representations implied a homogenous and distinct group of people, historically situated in long-established struggles for identity and resources against the dominant state.

### **'Community' constructed through descriptions of the flow of money**

Depictions of the flow of money in the texts also conveyed conceptualisations of 'community'. In many, the flow was framed as dictated by dominant groups in possession of greater resources, such as state or corporate entities, and thus, again, constructing the 'community' as a subordinate, and passive entity, whose identity and eligibility to receive money – such as compensation or reparations – rested in established hierarchies of power and inequality. More complex pictures of the 'community' and its agency in relation to the flow of money were also presented, however. For example, the description of 'benefits-sharing' – the sharing of financial outcomes from energy developments between the owning corporation and affected 'community' – presented the 'community' as situated in a more dialogic relationship with a corporate entity (Allan et al., 2011; Égré et al., 2007):

*“Monetary benefit sharing mechanisms can thus be implemented even in cases where there are no project-affected people. The interest of such mechanisms reside in their potential to support long-term beneficial partnerships between developers and concerned communities”*  
(Égré et al., 2007, p235).

This conveyed the 'community' as playing a more instrumental role in the ongoing success of a development, and having similar interests in potential profits as the corporate entity. Other texts portrayed claims to money being made by the 'community', for example in establishing 'community benefits agreements' with urban developers (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2007; Lucas-Darby, 2012; Saito, 2012). This suggested a much more agentic, active and strategic interpretation of the 'community', though still one arising from contexts of inequality, power and resources.

### **'Community' constructed through framing of problematics**

Three prominent themes were identified across the framing of problematics – or, the key arguments or issues - in the reviewed texts, which revealed assumptions about the conceptualisation of 'community' in the scenarios described.

#### *Negotiated and contested identities of 'community'*

Several texts described the difficulties faced by indigenous 'communities' in establishing themselves as legal entities recognised by the state in negotiations over land settlements, conveying the 'community' as struggling to assume a form that can participate in decision-making over resources (Anders, 1989; Dayo & Kofinas, 2010; Fenge, 1992):

*The process of selecting land for villages, as well as regional corporations, was a challenge in ANCSA because it required meeting the requirements of the settlement while also negotiating conflicts with private in-holders of property. (Dayo & Kofinas, 2010, p149).*

Similarly, in other scenarios the 'community' was presented as lacking in particular resources recognised by external entities, for example corporate developers, and needing

to acquire these before being able to enter into negotiations over claims to benefits (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2007). Critiques of the extent to which the ‘community’ can enter into a true partnership with other entities also reflected the political or commercial value for some entities – such as energy developers – in being seen to engage the ‘community’ (Cowell et al., 2011; Esteves & Vanclay, 2009; Lucas-Darby, 2012).

Other texts described competing claims to ‘community’, highlighting conflicts between internal and external constructions of a ‘community’ identity, such as the perceived ‘inadequacy’ of local government categories of ‘community’ employed in processes for allocating financial benefits for land use to Aboriginal groups (Campbell & Hunt, 2013). There was acknowledgement of the different sets of power relations among groups with different interests that shape these conflicting claims to ‘community’, for example in situations of determining compensation for the siting of energy developments (Bristow et al., 2012; Cowell et al., 2011, 2012):

*“The notion of community, like that of scale itself, is therefore being shaped by inherent power relations or who is making claims for the affected ‘community’ and for what purpose”*  
(Bristow et al., 2012, p1116).

#### *Calculating the ‘right’ amount of money*

Several texts presented the difficulties in calculating and assigning monetary value to harms or risks faced by the ‘community’, and in doing so often conveyed the ‘community’ as a set of resources (social, physical, economic) that may be ‘used up’ or disturbed by developments or acts of harm (Akashah & Marks, 2006; Allan et al., 2011; Esteves, 2008). Descriptions of perceptions of injustice in the process for determining compensation, for

example for land use, implied that the value of a 'community' and its resources may be perceived differently by those deemed within it and outside it (Klassen & Feldpausch-Parker, 2011),

### *The lack of impact of money on the disadvantaged 'community'*

A number of texts conveyed the 'communities' receiving money for harms or from land settlements as disproportionately disadvantaged compared to other sectors of the population, (Cowell et al., 2012; Lucas-Darby, 2012; O'Faircheallaigh, 2004; Saito, 2012), for example low-income residents facing potential harms from urban commercial development:

*"These projects tend to reflect the policy interests of affluent members of society and negatively impact low-income communities." (Saito, 2012, p130).*

Some texts argued that money given as compensation or reparations would not improve the levels of social and economic inequality that the recipient 'communities' faced (Anders, 1989; Franklin, 2012), or that the money given would not adequately address the harms faced by 'communities' (Égré et al., 2007; McLean, 2012). Across these texts, therefore, were implied conceptualisations of 'community' as defined by, and situated in a complex context of inequalities which would be little affected by the receipt of money.

## **Discussion**

The powerful influence of money on health is well-documented (Benzeval et al., 2014; Ecob & Davey Smith, 1999) and initiatives in which money is transferred to disadvantaged

populations have the potential to bring about positive changes to health (Leatherman et al., 2012). Many of these initiatives rest on participatory principles, seeking to engage the 'community', but critical consideration of how 'community' is conceptualised in this role has been lacking. This critical literature review sought to explore how 'community' has been conceptualised across a range of scenarios in high-income countries of giving money directly to groups, to contribute to theorising on how the health impacts of giving money to a 'community' can be evaluated and interpreted.

While only one text in the review made explicit reference to health, describing the types of harms suffered by 'communities' for which they might be compensated (Akashah & Marks, 2006), the remaining texts depicted elements of the processes and impacts of giving money to 'communities' that can be interpreted and evaluated as broader determinants of health and inequalities. These included access to physical, social, political and economic resources (Milton et al., 2012), and capacity to participate in the wider contexts shaping access to these resources (Campbell & Jovchelovitch, 2000). The multiplicity of conceptualisations of 'community' identified across the texts – and the different ways in which these were conveyed or implied within texts – resonates with theoretical debates on the concept and meaning of 'community' (Crow & Allan, 1994). Furthermore, it reflects that multiple, different identities may be variously, and continuously, negotiated within and between groups of people in any particular context, spatial or non-spatial (Anderson, 1983; Stephens, 2007).

Moreover, the review indicates the influential role that money plays in such scenarios. The flow of money contributes to the ongoing construction of identities around 'community' through its symbolic and material role in mediating – and sometimes reaffirming –

inequalities of power and access to resources between different groups (Campbell & Jovchelovitch, 2000). This suggests that attempts to evaluate the impacts of giving money to 'communities' should not only be explicit in defining 'community' at the outset – for example, as conflated with a defined, geographical area (Lawless, 2012) or as a complex, ecological system (Hawe, Shiell, & Riley, 2009) – but must also explore the multiplicity of identities of 'community' that arise through the processes of the flow of money.

The conceptualisations of inequality that underpinned much of the literature in this review, commonly depicting the 'community' as marginal, subordinate and vulnerable, resonate strongly with rights-based, empowerment approaches to health improvement (De Vos et al., 2009). However, the potential implications of adopting such a framing of 'community' in evaluating the impacts of giving money must be carefully considered. If an evaluation starts, uncritically, from a perspective of the 'community' as disempowered, the agency of members to negotiate 'community' identities around money (Bloch & Parry, 1989), and the mobilisation of these to bring about change to determinants of health, may be overlooked. A minority of papers in this review gave more nuanced depictions of agency in relation to the transference of money, for example the 'community' actively making claims to monetary benefits (Saito, 2012). Tendencies to present the 'community' as a unified, homogenous entity – either by shared cultural or geographic characteristics, or by relative deprivation or poor health – may result in misleading assumptions of the fixedness and coherence of a group of people (see for example Mitchell, 1998), and an obscuring of the plurality of power relationships between individuals, and within and between 'communities' (Howarth, 2002).

This review also suggests that scenarios of receiving money may lead to increased emphasis on assessing 'eligibility' to be part of a 'community'. The processes of negotiating eligibility, and the values and power relations on which it rests, both within and beyond the 'community', are likely to have differing impacts on levels of participation and perceptions of control and access to resources – all key determinants of health. Careful attention to these processes in context must become a fundamental component of attempts to evaluate and understand the health impacts of giving money to 'communities' (Marston, Renedo, McGowan, & Portela, 2013).

### **Implications for public health evaluation**

The common depictions here of the 'community' in receipt of money as subject to harms (either historical, or potential risk thereof) holds important implications for how to assess the health impacts of giving money. Links between harms (experienced directly or indirectly) at a structural level and observable inequalities in health have been theorised, for example, as 'structural violence' (Farmer, 1999). Public health evaluations of interventions seeking to address health inequalities by giving money to 'communities' must therefore be attuned to the broader structural relations within which interventions are contextualised. They should consider the extent to which the giving of money could be (unintentionally) complicit in 'harmful' relations between those with access to resources – and good health – and the 'community' without. Evaluators should furthermore examine assumptions about the role money given to the 'community' is expected to take in relation to protecting against future health and social 'harms' (inequalities), or in mitigating the effects of those already experienced, and assess the success or otherwise of an intervention in achieving this. The extent to which money reaches and benefits those most at risk of such 'harms' is important

to evaluate. A critical, reflexive approach within evaluation work, drawing for example on principles of ethnography (Reynolds et al., 2014), might help unearth implicit and structurally-embedded contexts of inequality which a money-based, 'community' intervention could perpetuate or even exacerbate.

Public health rhetoric assumes that 'bottom-up' interventions hold potential to address inequalities by engaging those otherwise excluded (O'Mara-Eves et al., 2013). However, this review suggests that processes of defining a 'community's' eligibility to receive money often reflects existing social and power hierarchies. Thus, it is plausible that interventions to address health inequalities via the transference of money may serve to entrench further the disparities of agency and power that underpin the identification of the recipient 'community', and / or lead to new struggles for access to resources between members of that 'community'. Therefore, evaluations of such interventions must pay careful attention to the negotiations of 'community' identity and their inherent power dynamics, to examine the possible negative effects of giving money to 'communities', and for whom health inequalities persist, or worsen, as a result (Lorenc, Petticrew, Welch, & Tugwell, 2012). Though this review did not seek to assess the effects of giving money to 'communities', the indication in several texts that money did little to address existing positions of relative deprivation, suggests this is an important concern for public health evaluations of such interventions.

### **Limitations**

The methodology used for this review relied on interpretation of themes across texts, and thus is not reproducible as a traditional systematic review aims to be. However, efforts were taken to maintain a 'critical voice' throughout the analysis and interpretation by all

authors, and to ensure interpretations were grounded in the texts reviewed, thus establishing the transparency and plausibility of the findings (Dixon-Woods et al., 2006).

The review was potentially limited by its search strategy which reflected the aim of synthesising a varied set of texts on 'communities' receiving money in high-income countries, rather than an exhaustive mapping of all relevant literature. The vast majority of the texts included in the review comprised journal articles published in the past couple of decades, perhaps reflecting the bias of electronic databases toward journal articles rather than books or monographs. Despite no limits set on the time interval searched, the earliest text reviewed was published in 1989 and the majority published since 2004, which might reflect recent political and technological developments that have given rise to scenarios in which 'communities' receive money.

The lack of explicitly health-focused literature in this review must also be noted, acknowledging other, related literatures that speak to money, the 'community' and health outcomes in high-income countries. These include research on the impacts of profits from gaming sites on native Indian populations in the US (see for example Stephenson, 1996); on other types of 'community' development or regeneration initiatives and health inequalities (see for example Mathers et al., 2008), and the vast literature on reparations, and specifically, on reparations and health (Williams & Collins, 2004). The absence of these literatures likely reflects the specific focus on money being given *directly* to 'communities', as opposed to other, subtly different mechanisms of funding, and other terms used for groups of people. This serves to highlight the importance of acknowledging not only the plurality of the term 'community', but also the conceptual and semantic spaces around it. Further attention to this might unearth different ways of imagining flows of agency and

resources, and among groups of people identifying themselves in different ways, for example as a online, disease-oriented 'community' (Radin, 2006), that could inform approaches to evaluating the health impacts of giving money to groups of people.

## **Conclusion**

This review illustrated the conceptual complexity of the 'community' as a recipient of money in high-income countries, and the embedded relations of inequality influencing the negotiation of identities and eligibility to receive money. With emphasis in public health literature of the importance of 'upstream', systems-level approaches to addressing health inequalities, intervening on the "*distal and structural causes*" of relative poor health (Diez Roux, 2011, p1631), the complex social, political and economic relations that shape how a 'community' in receipt of money is conceptualised has clear implications for attempts to address health inequalities. Evaluations of the impacts on health and inequalities of initiatives giving money directly to the 'community' must take a critical approach to examining the relationships of agency and power that cause the identification of a particular group, by another, as a 'community' eligible to receive money. This critical approach should extend to considering the types of interpretations of impact on inequality that can be made, given the construction of 'community' at the outset. Attention should also be paid to the processes of the initiative, through which the ongoing negotiation of identities and eligibility, within the 'community' and between the 'community' and external groups, will invariably be shaped by the specific flows of money within broader contexts of inequalities, and thus influence how, and for whom, changes to determinants of health can be identified.

## Acknowledgments

This study was funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR)'s School for Public Health Research.

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**Table 1** Search terms for scenarios of ‘communities’ receiving money by domain

Domain	Search Terms
Development	(money OR grant* OR cash OR monetary OR invest* OR donat*) AND (“social fund*” OR “social investment” OR “community chest*” OR regenerat*) AND (impact* OR effect OR influence* OR change* OR outcome* OR interact* OR negotiat* OR value*) AND (social OR health OR identit* OR economic) AND (communit* OR group* OR household* OR family)
Windfalls and income shocks	(money OR grant* OR cash OR monetary OR invest* OR donat*) AND (“social fund*” OR “social investment” OR “community chest*” OR regenerat*) AND (impact* OR effect OR influence* OR change* OR outcome* OR interact* OR negotiat* OR value*) AND (social OR health OR identit* OR economic) AND (communit* OR group* OR household* OR family)
Compensation and reparation	(money OR cash OR monetary OR in-kind OR benefit*) AND (settlement* OR compensat* OR reparat* OR payment*) AND (energy OR development OR frack* OR harm* OR legac* OR damage*) AND (social OR health OR identit*) AND (communit* OR group* OR household* OR family* OR village* OR population* OR public)
Research participation	(compensate* OR payment* OR fee*) AND (research OR study OR program* OR project*) AND (“community partner*” OR “community participat*” OR “community-based partner*” OR “community-based participat*”)

## Box 1 Search inclusion and exclusion criteria

### Inclusion criteria:

- Journal articles, reports, grey literature, books.
- Empirical, discursive or theoretical papers focusing on real scenarios of giving money directly to 'communities'.
- High income country setting (denoted by OECD membership).
- Exploring process and/or effects of giving money to 'communities'.

### Exclusion criteria:

- Newspaper articles and other literature not based in empirical or theoretical research, and which do not refer to 'community'.
- Literature focusing on hypothetical situations of giving money to 'communities', e.g. compensation willingness-to-accept studies.
- Papers with predominant focus on low or middle-income countries.
- Papers focusing primarily on other forms of financing where money is not given directly to 'communities'; on micro-credit or micro-financing processes of giving loans which need to be repaid; on types state-managed social welfare.
- Papers not published in the English language and without English translation.

**Table 2** Summary of texts included in the review

<b>Author &amp; Year</b>	<b>Type of Text</b>	<b>Main discipline(s) &amp; conceptual framing</b>	<b>Rationale for money to community</b>	<b>Location and population</b>	<b>Key focus / statement of problem</b>
<b>Akashar &amp; Marks, 2006</b>	Theoretical / methodological	Public health; law. <i>Social justice; health &amp; human rights</i>	Compensation / reparations for harms	No specific location or population	Argues a lack of equity and transparency in determining compensation; describes challenges of costing wide range of harms, including to health.
<b>Allan et al, 2011</b>	Theoretical / methodological	Energy studies; development studies. <i>Economic impact analysis; participatory development.</i>	Compensation for disruptions	UK (Shetland Isles); rural island population	Describes and evaluates different approaches to estimating economic impacts to community of wind farm development.
<b>Anders, 1989</b>	Case study	History. <i>Participatory development; social identity theory.</i>	Settlements for land rights and use	US (Alaska); indigenous population	Explores challenges for native communities of establishing corporations to negotiate settlements for land use.
<b>Annie E. Case Foundation, 2007</b>	Programme report	Development studies. <i>Participatory development; corporate social responsibility (CSR).</i>	Community benefits agreements (CBAs) (compensation)	US; urban, low-income population	Describes supporting urban communities in their negotiations of CBAs; identifies the range of resources required by communities to enter into negotiations.
<b>Bernsden &amp; McGarty, 2012</b>	Empirical research (quant.)	Psychology. <i>Social identity theories.</i>	Reparations for historical injustices	Australia; indigenous and non-indigenous populations	Explores resistance by non-indigenous people towards compensation and reparations for indigenous people; describes how entitlement is perceived from different perspectives.
<b>Bristow et al, 2012</b>	Empirical research (qual.)	Energy studies; development studies. <i>Participatory development.</i>	Compensation for disturbances; to generate support for development	UK; no specific population	Critical exploration of competing perspectives to define the community in negotiations around compensation for wind farm siting.

<b>Campbell et al, 2013</b>	Programme evaluation	Development studies. <i>Participatory development; social justice.</i>	Compensation for land use	Australia; indigenous population	Considers the best uses of payments to the community as compensation for land use for mining, and in contexts of community-led development.
<b>Cowell et al, 2011</b>	Empirical research (qual.)	Energy studies; environmental science. <i>Social justice; environmental planning.</i>	Compensation for disturbances	UK (Wales); rural population	Explores range of influences on negotiations around acceptance for energy sitings via focus on community benefits.
<b>Cowell et al, 2012</b>	Position paper and case study	Energy studies; development studies. <i>Participatory development; social justice.</i>	Compensation for disturbances	UK; rural and coastal populations	Critiques compensation as a means for generating acceptance for energy projects, and describes how affected communities are often disproportionately disadvantaged.
<b>Dayo &amp; Kofinas, 2010</b>	Case study	Development studies; history. <i>Participatory development; social identity theories.</i>	Settlements for land claims	US (Alaska); indigenous population	Describes challenges of entering into land agreements, given communities' traditional cultures of collective ownership of resources.
<b>Égré et al, 2007</b>	Literature review	Development studies; history. <i>Participatory development; social justice.</i>	Benefit sharing from dam developments	Canada; indigenous population	Describes different approaches to compensating communities affected by dam development, and questions of ensuring equitable benefit sharing.
<b>Esteves, 2008</b>	Empirical research (qual.)	Business studies; development studies. <i>Participatory development; CSR.</i>	Social investment	Australia (& Southern Africa); no specific population	Explores approaches for companies to provide money and support to host communities to ensure ongoing relationships and mutual benefit.

<b>Esteves &amp; Vanclay, 2009</b>	Theoretical / methodological	Business studies; development studies. <i>Participatory development; CSR.</i>	Social investment	No specific location or population	Explores how mining companies should understand development needs of host communities and provide social investment.
<b>Feldman, 1991</b>	Policy analysis	Policy studies; environmental science. <i>Social identity theories; environmental planning.</i>	Compensation for land use	US & Canada; no specific population	Describes difficulty of aligning competing values and priorities in relation to water policy: compensating communities for loss of land versus broader environmental concerns.
<b>Fenge, 1992</b>	Policy analysis	Policy studies; history; sociology. <i>Participatory development; social identity theories.</i>	Settlements for land claims	Canada; indigenous Inuit population	Describes a newly agreed land settlement; presents the political and policy barriers overcome by Inuits in desire to settle land agreement.
<b>Franklin, 2012</b>	Discursive piece	History; development studies. <i>Social justice; social identity theories.</i>	Reparations for historical injustices	US; African American population	Argues for money to support social development initiatives for African Americans as form of reparations; describes debates over who is responsible for paying reparations to communities.
<b>Fullinwider, 2007</b>	Case study	History; legal studies. <i>Participatory development; social justice.</i>	Reparations for historical injustices	US; African American population	Describes challenge of deciding who is liable and who is entitled to reparations; suggests targeting reparations towards persisting inequalities faced by African Americans.
<b>Klassen et al, 2011</b>	Empirical research (qual.)	Environmental science; development studies. <i>Participatory development; environmental planning.</i>	Compensation for land use	US; no specific population	Describes challenges faced by communities in engaging with discussions around energy developments; presents different models of community engagement.

<b>Lucas-Darby, 2012</b>	Case study	History; development studies. <i>Participatory development; social justice.</i>	Reparations for injustices through developments	US; urban, low-income population	Describes rise of urban community activist groups seeking benefits for injustices; argues those most impacted are those already disadvantaged.
<b>McLean, 2012</b>	Case study	Environmental science; political science. <i>Participatory development; post-colonial theory.</i>	Compensation for harms	Australia; indigenous population	Describes problems of representation for indigenous groups in negotiating compensation; presents challenges of partnerships between groups with different values.
<b>O'Faircheallaigh, 2004</b>	Case study	Development studies; policy studies. <i>Participatory development; theories of the state.</i>	Compensation for land use	Australia; indigenous population	Highlights issue of benefits received from companies for land use being used to provide community services in absence of state provision.
<b>Saito, 2012</b>	Empirical research (qual.)	Development studies; policy studies. <i>Participatory development.</i>	Community benefits agreement: compensation for loss of benefits	US; urban, low-income population	Describes embedded inequalities surrounding urban developments and rise of community groups negotiating compensation, setting precedents for other communities.
<b>ter Mors et al, 2012</b>	Literature review	Environmental science. <i>Social justice; environmental planning.</i>	Compensation for disturbances and risks	No specific location or population	Reviews literature exploring effectiveness of compensation for overcoming opposition to carbon developments; community-level compensation may be more effective than individual.
<b>Vari &amp; Ferencz, 2007</b>	Case study	History; policy studies. <i>Participatory development; participatory democracy.</i>	To generate local support for developments	Hungary; no specific population	Describes increasing opposition to nuclear waste, and community claims to compensation; summarises processes of negotiation around acceptance.

**Table 3** Conceptualisations of ‘community’ and their construction in the texts reviewed

How Constructed in Texts	Conceptualisations of ‘Community’	Conceptualisations of (In)equality
<b>Explicitly defined</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group of people with shared ethnic or cultural heritage; shared experiences of harm; or historical connections to land or physical resources.</li> <li>• Group of people ‘affected’ by a development or project, defined geographically or otherwise.</li> </ul>	<p>Relative marginalisation or vulnerability of the ‘community’ linked to their shared characteristics. Inequality embedded in historically-situated relations, or more contingent, in relation to new developments.</p>
<b>Through descriptions of rationale for money</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Compensation</i>: the ‘community’ as victim of loss of benefits or resources, impacted upon, requiring and deserving of remuneration; the ‘community’ as having a distinct set of interests.</li> <li>• <i>Reparations</i>: the ‘community’ as victim of systemic discrimination or harms, subjugated; identity of ‘community’ ratified through reparations process; emphasis on historically situated, shared ethnic or cultural heritage.</li> <li>• <i>Land claims agreements</i>: the ‘community’ as minority, with historically-situated ethnic / cultural origins; defined through historical claims over physical resources; the ‘community’ as having a distinct organisation and set of knowledges that must be assimilated with dominant state.</li> </ul>	<p>Assumed potential for money to address inequalities experienced as a result of harms or injustices faced or anticipated by nature of ‘community’ identity, but embeddedness of inequalities undermines this.</p> <p>Ownership of resources (e.g. land) is disempowering in face of goals of more powerful corporate / state entities, indicating unequal status afforded to different sets of values.</p>
<b>Through descriptions of the flow of money</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ‘community’ as a passive recipient in a flow of money dictated by more dominant entities, such as compensation.</li> <li>• The ‘community’ as having a distinct set of interests to be reconciled with those of a corporate entity through the profit sharing from a development.</li> </ul>	<p>Lacking equality of power, voice or capacity to participate in discussions about money.</p> <p>Attempts to reduce the inequality of status between the entities, but through mechanisms which protect the status of the more powerful entity.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 'community', or some of its members, as agentic, making claims to money through the acquisition of particular skills or resources.</li> </ul>	<p>Unequal distribution of skills, but which can be overcome to help 'community' address other inequalities of resources.</p>
<p><b>Through framing problematics of giving money to communities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Negotiating relationships between the 'community' and others:</i> the 'community' as an entity requiring modification or accumulation of resources to negotiate with more powerful groups; the 'community' as an entity with political or commercial value for external groups.</li> <li>• <i>Calculating the amount of money:</i> the 'community' as an entity with a worth that may be viewed differently by different groups;</li> <li>• <i>Lack of impact of money on the 'community':</i> the 'community' as marginalised and disproportionately disadvantaged; as entrenched in persisting structures of inequality, despite receipt of money.</li> </ul>	<p>Marginalised communities must be more closely aligned with values of dominant entities to be able to influence the inequalities they face.</p> <p>Power relations around negotiations of money reflect – and may perpetuate – existing inequalities.</p> <p>Existing structural context of inequalities faced by 'community' cannot be overcome by transference of money</p>