Reviewer's report

Title: Measuring capacity building in communities: a review of the literature

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Reviewer: Helen M Keleher

Reviewer's report:

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
The research question driving the systematic review is not clearly stated. In the Introduction, the question is better defined than in the abstract which would be more relevant to readers if a sense of problem was stated in the abstract. And a clear research question would overcome the problems highlighted below.

It is not clear whether the authors think that the review is only useful for people working in Indigenous contexts (p6) or more broadly.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
What is the difference between ‘existing’ and ‘newly developed’ (p 9) ? Newly developed frameworks still exist…

Reading through the models from the so-called Group 1, I can’t see how some of them were not also developed for specific projects.

So, what I think the authors are saying is that some models were developed a-priori and applied to a project (Group 1) and others were emergent from the implementation and evaluation of a particular project (Group 2). Whether or not I am right, the explanatory description of Group 1 and Group 2 needs to be more easily distinguished for the reader.

P 16. ‘Multiple domains were used to assess CB’. Are these multiple domains from both Groups or just Group 2?
I realize the Tables make this clear but the text also has to be clear.

P 17 The language of previous models is confusing. What does previous mean here? Is it those a-priori models?

Then, don’t both Group 1 and Group 2 look almost identical? Shouldn’t you make some comment about that?

Some of the discussion that follows is not rocket-science. It is well documented (and common-sense) that communication is essential and how it can be improved. Ditto for needs assessment, dissemination and shared visions, process and outcome monitoring and so on. These aspects of community work are very well documented and it’s not clear how this systematic review is adding anything new to well documented processes. At this point, readers will be lost because they (like me) don’t see the point all these sections.
I thought the point of the review was in how these domains are measured/assessed. So this whole section needs to be rewritten.

3. Are the data sound?
Yes, with the proviso of my comments above in point 2. The data is sound to a point but the discussion from pp 17-24 loses its way.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
Yes

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
As per point 2 above, the discussion needs to be rewritten to focus on how the various domains are measured/assessed.

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated? N/A

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
Yes

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
The first paragraph of the abstract could be better framed around the sense of problem that the authors set out to examine.

9. Is the writing acceptable?
Mostly but some sentences are very long and/or unclear. For example:
The sentence (p6) beginning ‘To our knowledge…” is convoluted and needs editing to make it less wordy/repetitive and clearer.
There are similar sentences. Maybe this is a result of multiple author contributions. I suggest the authors read out aloud to edit for smoothing of the writing styles.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I declare that I have not competing interests