

Communities In Transition

Participatory Design Process – Reporting Template

Please complete this report following each participatory design session (i.e. one per session) to record the key of the discussion. Please use the sections below to structure the report. If any area was not covered during the discussion, please note that in the relevant section.

Please return the completed report to cit@cooperationireland.org within one week of each participatory design session.

Area: Carrick/Larne

Theme: Restorative Practices

Date: 28/01/2019

Number of attendee's: 2 (a third attendee was sent by the office at Larne Town Hall to the wrong location when arriving late to the meeting)

1. Proposed interventions discussed to address the issues identified in Phase 1 fieldwork?

- Participants, in noting the small attendance, identified that there has been no investment (either statutory or community) in restorative practices in Carrick and Larne. Consequently, general knowledge and awareness of restorative practices across each area is scant. Participants also maintained that restorative practices are not a priority issue for Carrick/Larne and it should be seen as a longer-term aim. The priority issues of foundation work in relation to community development and building community capacity were seen as much more important for the B4 communities in both towns.
- In terms of the possible development of restorative practices, attendees expressed an interest in exploring the potential use of the approach in schools as a means of responding to common schooling issues of truancy, mental health and ultimately educational attainment in working-class Protestant areas. These issues are also potential 'risk' factors for young, disaffected young people to join gangs or armed groups. Participants cited the work already being undertaken in schools such as the Boys' Model in Belfast and Newtownabbey High School as of particular interest. It is important to note however that no school representation was in attendance.

2. Comments on current community capacity to address issues identified?

- Participants recognised that there is a lack, not only of community capacity, but also of potential delivery partners in the B4 areas in Carrick and Larne, particularly given the paramilitary tensions and perceived associations of community-based restorative justice organisations established in other areas.

3. Outcomes that participants suggested these interventions would achieve?

- This question was not directly addressed. However, raising awareness for statutory and community partners of the potential of restorative practices as an alternative to the CJS was viewed as a possible avenue for exploration in the longer-term.

4. How did participants suggest will we know if these projects/interventions have succeeded? (indicators/measures)

- Again, given the low attendance at the meeting, this was not specifically addressed in-depth. However, the potential use of restorative justice in schools was referred to as possibly improving attendance and raising educational outcomes for those young people who may be most vulnerable to being recruited by paramilitary organisations.

5. Target beneficiaries/participants of the suggested interventions?

While there was an interest in the concept of restorative practices, it was felt that ground work in terms of building capacity and skills in terms of community development within communities was required first. That said, potential benefactors of a restorative programme could include:

- Young people in schools;
- The community more generally (in terms of reduced rates of anti-social behaviour and repeat offending etc.).

6. How did participants suggest these projects/interventions will build the capacity/capability in the community?

Again, it was felt that the ground had to be prepared in terms of developmental work to build community capacity first. It was felt that restorative practices required more awareness raising in the community. There is also the added question of who the most appropriate delivery partner would be in the B4 areas in Carrick and Larne.

7. How did participants suggest these projects/interventions will support the overall objectives of the Tackling Paramilitarism Executive Action Plan...?

- a. Paramilitarism has no place.**
- b. Citizens and communities feel safe and confident.**
- c. The public support and have increased confidence in the justice system.**
- d. Support is available for those who wish to move away from paramilitary activity and structures.**

See answer to question 6.

8. Any dependencies identified by participants?

The community generally (and statutory partners) require greater awareness and education on the concept of restorative justice, how it works in practice and what the benefits are. It also must be considered who the most appropriate delivery partner on the ground is, given that participants felt that current factional community tensions would include current accredited community based restorative justice organisations from working effectively. Similar question marks over the state's ability to deliver restorative practices on the ground in the B4 communities in Carrick and Larne were also raised.

9. Any risks identified by participants?

- Potential lack of delivery partner on the ground for restorative practices in the B4 areas in South-East Antrim
- Given that the foundations of community development are sorely lacking in the area, other thematic interventions (such as restorative practices) will not have a realistic prospect of sustainable success until community infrastructure/capacity/skills are better developed.

10. Any other comments made by participants?

- Participants could not identify a group or individual with the capacity to engage with paramilitaries to facilitate the development of a community-based restorative approach at present and pointed to the need to focus instead on foundational community development work as a priority.
- Participants agreed that restorative practices are something for 'much further down the road' and the community does not have the capacity at present to initiate restorative practices for itself. Additionally, the community would not be receptive to "experts" coming in and implanting restorative practices.

11. Is a further follow-up workshop required? Please provide details.

No further follow-up is required. All participants agreed that the small attendance was in part linked to the lack of knowledge and awareness of restorative practices in the areas of Carrick and Larne, and the discussion highlighted that the theme was not perhaps one of the current priorities for the area.