

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: Lurgan (Kilwilkie and Drumgask)

Theme: Community Development

Date: 21/01/19

Number of attendee's: 10

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

- Training is urgently needed to build up capacity both in individuals and community groups in confidence, leadership and governance skills of existing workers and volunteers prior to funding groups and consortia within the parameters of this programme.
- Work should focus on refreshing previously successful models of practice (examples included the zero-tolerance strategy initiated by the 4 leading Gaelic clubs in the area).
- Participants suggested that, in their experience, the most sustainable way of engaging in community development is to take a specific community issue such as drugs and activating the community around need (a key suggestion was to access parents through schools).
- Potential for exchange of best practice and experience between Kilwilkie and groups in Drumgask was discussed, particularly around relationships with policing (this was also discussed in the community safety and policing session). However, it was stated that the responsibility for engaging and developing isn't unidirectional towards communities, there is particular responsibility on statutory organisations and the Police to reflect on their approach. Promoting a 'culture of lawfulness' therefore does not only require citizens in communities to assess their attitudes and conduct, it also requires statutory organisations to do the same.

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

- Developing groups in the area currently have low capacity restricted to 1 or two paid workers and are mostly comprised of volunteers.

Participants from a community group in Drumgask stated that they find funding applications inaccessible and intimidatory at present.

3. Outcomes that participants suggested these interventions would achieve?

- A training and leadership programme would build capacity and networks for local community groups to avail of funding opportunities which at present they feel are beyond their reach.
- A knowledge exchange or mentoring programme between different areas and communities would contribute to potentially challenging existing narratives which are a barrier to transition. The point was made however by one participant that there needed to be a definition of what exactly 'mentoring' was, as there could be differing interpretations of the term.

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

- Increased networks and connections between community and statutory organisations in the Lurgan and Craigavon area.
- A greater capacity of community groups through an enhanced ability drawn from a wider pool of community individuals and volunteers.

5. Target beneficiaries/participants of the suggested interventions?

- Community residents
- Community organisations
- Ex-prisoners
- Statutory agencies

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

- Investment in the leadership and governance skills of individuals will ensure that community groups can effectively deliver services within this project, and not be overly reliant on outside agencies who do not have traction within the local community.

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.

- It is indicative of a commitment to transition that there is potential for the exchange of practice and knowledge between an area with existing and established relations with the police/statutory bodies (e.g. Kilwilkie) and areas with a legacy of conflict and significant ongoing issues with police (e.g. Drumgask). This openness to engage will assist with challenging community narratives and developing conversations around meaningful and sustainable transition. However, it is important that responsibility for transition isn't solely left to the community, it is critical that the police/statutory bodies also recognise their role within a transition process.

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8. Any dependencies identified by participants?

- Need to award tenders to the most appropriate delivery provider with legitimacy and authenticity within these specific communities.
- The strong culture and ethos of volunteering within the community should be supported by this project and not usurped by external organisations being awarded tenders to work in these areas.

9. Any risks identified by participants?

- Participants emphasised the need to establish partnerships, relationships and trust across delivery partners in the area before funding is granted. However, there is a big concern that this preparatory work, whilst critical, may take some time and questions were asked about whether or not the area would lose out on opportunities to access funding when the partnerships have been established if it is all granted to areas who already have the capacity to apply?
- Concern was expressed that statutory partners (specifically Council) may assume the lead partner role within a consortium and this could be problematic given previous community experience over being unduly 'controlled' by Council.
- Within a community development context, the funding process generally has become a 'box-ticking' exercise that unduly favours larger capacity organisations.
- A common issue across areas in relation to community development is a legacy of individuals with paramilitary connections deliberately usurping control of community groups. However, participants stated that ex-combatants should not be excluded from engaging in community development – they should be encouraged to do so – but with a differentiation made between those no longer active in organisational structures, and those actively involved in paramilitaries at the present time. It was also suggested, for example, that governance control of organisations should include a probationary period, or that community organisations could ensure that their governance structures ensure that individuals with paramilitary connections cannot seek to come in and dominate the grouping.

10. Any other comments made by participants?

- Participants maintained that information about this project has not got out to either community residents or community groups/organisations. Additionally, participants noted that in relation to applying through a tendering process they felt even developed community groups would be unable to apply due to needing sufficient capital to be able to deliver.
- A participant noted that this project inaccurately refers to the area as Kilwilkie when it should actually be Drumnamoe.
- There was a general feeling amongst participants that within community development there is a tiredness among existing groups and individuals, and from a developmental approach it is important to re-stimulate existing groups and activate new individuals. It was asserted that it is difficult to attract people aged 20-45 to community work and that existing programmes focus primarily on young people.

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

- Suggestion of facilitated workshop in each area to establish the potential of collaboration and partnership between community groups/service providers/Council/Statutory agencies.