

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: Health and Wellbeing

Date: 29/01/2019

Number of attendee's: 7

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

Participants felt that a lot of intervention work was already being undertaken within the community (predominantly Kilwilkie, although there was support for introducing similar programmes to Drumgask); albeit on a volunteer basis with little or no funding. Participants strongly expressed a desire to see that work adequately funded to support and extend the capacity of volunteers and not transplant in larger external organisations who have little or no connection to the local community.

Suggested intervention programmes included:

- Mental health workshops for children and young people primarily targeting the months of September to March when the GAA season has ended (and starting as young as 10-12 years of age).
- Given the critical issue of drug debt being used as a recruitment tactic (and to coercively control young people and their families) by criminal gangs and paramilitaries, it was suggested that disaffected and 'vulnerable' young people need to be engaged with in an education process – it was suggested that a bi-lateral community and school approach is needed and a participant identified Coiste as a potential delivery partner.
- The correlation between social media and mental health issues necessitates bespoke education programmes as well as signposting to agencies and organisations who can respond to the mental health needs of young people.
- It was evidenced that current approaches, such as information evenings at schools, do not attract all parents and it was suggested that information and knowledge awareness packs could be developed and given to all community residents (around issues such as alcohol or substance addiction, mental

health, suicidal ideation, debt management etc.). This was believed to have been successful when implemented in the community in the past around the specific issue of suicide – until funding for the resource ended. An additional suggestion to make it easier for parents and concerned residents to engage anonymously around such issues was the creation of a telephone hotline. (It was suggested that current hotline provision ended at 9pm and was therefore not available to those who may need it outside of this time).

- Connecting to previous PDP workshops, participants identified a role for a restorative practitioner to act as a ‘neutral actor’ to give space through the implementation of narrative dialogue principles of restorative practices for the community, young people, the families of young people and the criminal gangs/paramilitaries to discuss the issues of, for example, drug debt.
- There was support to learn more from other areas (and countries) about the introduction of community drug courts (such as the pilot drug and alcohol court piloted through Fresh Start in County Down).
- Mindfulness courses for men aged 30-60 to address underlying mental health issues.
- There is a need for inter-generational work in both Kilwilkie and Drumgask - it was suggested by a participant that such work could include educative work bringing together ex-combatants and young people susceptible to coercion by criminal gangs/paramilitaries.
- In response to the issue of lack of physical space within the community a participant suggested converting haulage containers into multi-purpose facilities (as has occurred on the Newtownards Road in East Belfast, which is now being used as a community café).
- Participants unanimously endorsed the ‘Generation Transformation’ programme that was piloted in Kilwilkie that activated up to 260 people (age range 2-82 years old) in a community development health and wellbeing programme.
- The health and wellbeing needs of ex-combatants and their families have not been addressed in either Drumgask or Kilwilkie. A participant noted the work of organisations such as Coiste in other areas and expressed a desire to see such interventions introduced to both Kilwilkie and Drumgask.
- Participants discussed the issue of loneliness and disconnect amongst older community residents and mentioned the success of the ‘Golden Mile’ project that was launched in Kilwilkie. To respond to the issue of loneliness, a walking group was established that identified walking routes within the Kilwilkie area.

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

- Community capacity to respond to issues such as drug debt and suicide is low with participants stating that most young people who become indebted to criminal gangs and paramilitaries turn to their parents for support, who in turn do not know who to go to for help and end up having to pay off high-levels of debt to the criminal gangs and paramilitaries.
- Take up of courses and programmes is huge; but supply is unable to meet demand due to a myriad of factors, including lack of available

resources/funding; lack of physical space; dependence on volunteers who also have full-time jobs to fulfil.

- Statutory participants noted that volunteers and community groups need to be better informed of funding and support resources that are currently available to them (and to which they are entitled to apply for).

3. Outcomes that participants suggested these interventions would achieve?

- Greater levels of community cohesion (including better inter-generational relations)
- Decrease in suicides amongst young people
- Healthier community residents of all ages
- Decrease in drug debt and drug addictions

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

- Suicide rate
- Mortality rate
- Crime statistics (particularly Anti-social behaviour)
- More funding applications from community groups

5. Target beneficiaries/participants of the suggested interventions?

- Young People
- All community residents

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

- The community already has some capacity to respond to the issues outlined above. However, that capacity is dependent on volunteers and their impact could be significantly enhanced with more support, both financially and physically.

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.**
- The critical community issues - drug debt, drug addiction, mental health issues, illicit sexual behaviour – serve to create underlying conditions whereby

'vulnerable' people can become influenced and/or recruited/controlled by criminal gangs/paramilitaries. The participants identified interventions to support, not only young people; but also their families and the wider community. By implementing the interventions, it was generally felt that the coercive control and capabilities of criminal gangs/paramilitaries will be undermined. However, participants strongly argued that the interventions alone will not meet the overall objectives of the Tackling Paramilitarism Action Plan and it is critical that both the Police and ultimately the Criminal Justice System itself supports the community in tackling and stopping the activities of the criminal gangs/ paramilitaries.

8. Any dependencies identified by participants?

Drug dealers are actively targeting young people and their families through the accumulation of debt for drugs given to 'vulnerable' young people. Participants emphasised that it is critical that the criminal justice system is equipped to effectively and efficiently deal with drug dealers to remove them from the community.

9. Any risks identified by participants?

- Having identified the need for drugs awareness and education programmes for young people and their families both within a community and schooling context, participants stated that it must be both bespoke and delivered correctly - as poor service delivery could do more harm than good. Participants believed that the target demographic should be primary school children and young people aged 11-14. A risk identified by participants was the issue of youth disengagement and non-attendance at school and with youth provision within the community. It was suggested that in order to overcome the prevailing issue of how to engage with the most marginalised young people that sport, culture and identity (possible through the arts) could be the 'hook' to attract young people in - prior to introducing specific drugs intervention programmes.
- Participants agreed that the presence within the community of influential negative role models could serve to negate the impact of intervention programmes with some young people.

10. Any other comments made by participants?

- There is insufficient detached youth work being carried out on the ground with little non-sports related youth provision in either Kilwilkie or Drumgask generally.
- There is a base of young people (such as those travelling to underage disco's or gathering in large groups in the centre of Lurgan) who are being actively targeted by drug dealers as part of their 'socialising'.
- A participant stated that there was a legacy of a lack of support from statutory bodies (in this instance it was suggested, the Public Health Agency) for community campaigns around issues such as suicide, drugs, alcohol, sexual health. It must be noted that no representative of the Public Health Agency was in attendance to respond to this perception.

- Participants believed there was a strong correlation between the suicide of community members (principally young men) and the debt issues associated with drug use and drug dealing.
- Participants maintained that the success of interventions is dependent on them being conducted and implemented by a local community delivery partner.
- Participants with experience of running community programmes in the areas of Kilwilkie and Drumgask cautioned that there is a need to ensure that funds are available for the necessary follow-up programmes that will be necessary - evidence indicates that once a group is formed and becomes comfortable with one another, issues can arise around, for example, mental health and trauma. Subsequent programmes must be ready to respond to community need.
- Given the dependence on volunteers, it is important that they are supported before they 'burn-out'.

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

- No further workshop required