

## **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](mailto:cit@cooperationireland.org) within one week of each participatory design session.

*Area:* New Lodge / Ardoyne

*Theme:* **Community development**

*Date:* 13.02.19

*Number of attendee's:* 3

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

- The participants believed that it was important to build on existing community development networks as the primary vehicle to address issues around confidence in the PSNI and wider criminal justice. The key was to ensure that there was accountability in the process of providing a service in which the public can engage with the PSNI and other relevant agencies, report crime and follow – up on developing partnerships to community-led policing and community safety programmes. This means that community-based engagement on policing must be under formal scrutiny from accountable public authorities;
- Improving the quality of community development entails investment in capacity on an ongoing basis, and the spread of skills outside a narrow clique of established practitioners. There is a need to encourage pro-social community activism and boosting the availability and quality of community organiser work/learning streams. One way to achieve this ‘continuous capacity-building’ would be through a formal programme of paid internship programmes that involve engagement with local stakeholders including schools and employers and recognised supervision;
- The expansion of quality community development could be supported by the production of a tool-kit around what ‘community development’ represents in the local community so that people have an understanding about what its role is and what purpose it has within the local community. This could include advice on governance, advice on managing volunteers, advice on finance, equality and

community development principles and on campaigns and service delivery. It could also include a community development 'health check' enabling groups to measure their own fitness and weaknesses and providing an evidence base for improved practice. Once standards were agreed and established, groups could then be asked to meet minimum thresholds if they are to be in receipt of public financial support;

- Support to ensure renewal of boards and encourage under-represented groups to participate in positions of responsibility in groups;
- Extending the horizon of community development through guided opportunities to engage with other projects. These programmes could be open to new entrants, aimed at diversifying participation in community development, and building open networks with other organisations through shared learning projects;

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

The 'Communities in Transition Project' has the opportunity to build a culture of community life that is firmly rooted in the core principles of community development-participation, transparency, self-determination, accountability and equality and is organised to deliver improvements in the quality of life. Ensuring that access to support for community development is widespread can make an important contribution to the capacity of communities for positive development and the resilience of communities to paramilitarism and unlawful practice. Community development, which is 'asset based' can also make a contribution to the culture of learning in the neighbourhood.

## **3. Outcomes that participants suggested these interventions would achieve?**

- Communities grow their capacity, capability and resilience by improving the practice of community development;
- Wider opportunities to participate in community life in a positive and lawful way, which enhances equality and inclusion;
- Individuals understand the value of learning through practical benefit and can identify their contribution to community well-being;
- More people have a stake in society and a sense of social connection to others and participation in a society and its improvement for all.

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

- Increased participation in community development activities, with evidence of new leadership emerging.

- Clear community agreement on what 'good quality' means in relation to community development and clear pathways for personal and group improvement.
- Clear commitment to the principles of the Tackling Paramilitarism programme in all funded community development and the full participation of the community.

**5. Target beneficiaries/participants of the suggested interventions?**

- Individuals and groups are supported to ensure a high-quality network of democratic community development.
- Everyone from the community form improved services and easier access to participate in community activity.
- Potential leadership and career benefits for those entering community development training and action.
- Under-represented groups in governance, management and leadership positions.

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

It was agreed that community development infrastructure in the New Lodge and Ardoyne was of a very high quality. However, there was a risk that community development was seen as a 'profession' rather than an opportunity for grass-roots engagement. To ensure that this balance was kept under review, there was a need to ensure a pluralism in delivery in which all groups shared common community development values. The focus of the project should be on the quality of community development and ensuring that the values and practice were consistent. In this way a culture of participation and democratic values could be nurtured and protected against negative influences.

**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.**

The alternative to paramilitary culture is a healthy culture of community and inclusion. Fostering the capacity of individuals and organisations both to make a positive contribution and to develop a culture, which is not characterised by paramilitarism, is a central purpose of the Communities in Transition Project. Embedding the principles

of community development widely in communities is a central contribution to this change.

**b. Citizens and communities feel safe and confident.**

Ultimately this is about reducing and eliminating the reach of a culture of violence, which exists in some parts of these communities, by promoting robust and high-quality community development.

**c. The public support and have increased confidence in the justice system**

Community development contributes to a peaceful and lawful culture by encouraging participation and giving a positive outlet for challenge, advocacy, education and change:

- Providing alternatives to violence which were supportive, restorative and pro-social at local level;
- Leading by example in relation to policing and restorative practices;
- Contributing to confidence in the justice system by making positive associations;
- Reducing the levels of anti-social behaviour and community conflict;
- Challenging the use of violence as a method of community advocacy.

**d. Support is available for those who wish to move away from paramilitary activity and structures.**

By ensuring that groups and organisations are built on sound foundations and have support to grow and develop in B4 areas community development support can be a central element in 'building the future' and not just 'addressing the legacy' establishing new norms and ensuring that every group contributes positively to the wider community.

**8. Any dependencies identified by participants?**

This potentially requires a regional focus across the 8 B4 areas. Furthermore, without political support and direction this initiative will struggle. Furthermore, this programme should be co-ordinated with other intervention programmes, to ensure that the requirements of other funding programmes such as PEACE IV or T:BUC are addressed within the community development curriculum. The curriculum of B4 community development support should be designed to 'kite mark' capacity and capability in communities. Those completing community development support programmes under the B4 project should have a clear understanding of and/or be

capable of meeting the minimum leadership, organisational and structural requirements for participation in other projects should they chose to apply.

### **9. Any risks identified by participants?**

**Risk:** the language associated with the programme of 'tackling paramilitarism' and 'promoting 'lawfulness' could identify the primary purpose of the programme as negative (against paramilitaries) rather than positive (building the resilience of the community). As the goal is to ensure that community development is organised on core democratic principles and delivered at a high level in the areas, it is important that this issue is properly monitored. Failure to do so may limit the effectiveness of any interventions and that those associated with community development fail to see the connection.

**Risk:** There is a difference between a clarity about core principles and a political monopoly of delivery. In other words, there should ideally be a wide range of participants in community development who do not see themselves as politically aligned but who share common values which are central to all community development organisations. Historically, there has been a history of managing risk through political oversight in some parts of NI. This has then established a pattern of political competition of control of community development organisations. The goal of this project is to enable pluralism, while supporting community development principles and capacity.

**Risk:** An allied risk is that competition rather than cooperation is encouraged among local organisations. The programme should seek to build relationships between community organisations and between the community and statutory sector – not to divide them.

**Risk of Duplication of investment:** The participants accepted that simply duplicating current investments would not achieve the required change. There was a very mature conversation about the need to ensure that resources were targeted and not based on general arguments of need. It was accepted that the mainstream community development service was well resourced in these areas. The primary focus was on improving quality not quantity at this stage.

### **10. Any other comments made by participants?**

N/A

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

N/A