

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: New Lodge / Ardoyne

Theme: Restorative Practices

Date: 25.01.19

Number of attendee's: 14

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

Having explained that regional measures to address restorative justice were covered in a separate measure, the discussion focussed on how a restorative culture could be fostered at the local level. There were a number of detailed conversations around the types of interventions that could make a positive difference in terms of improving the lives of local residents. These included the following:

- There is a need to investment in mainstream accredited restorative justice and practice in the New Lodge and Ardoyne and also build on existing work. Currently there is no restorative justice programme operating in the New Lodge, and skeleton provision existing in the Ardoyne. There is an appetite across both communities for a more prominent and resourced restorative justice/practice programme. In addition there is a need for greater public information and mainstreaming to increase public understanding and confidence in restorative justice and practice. This includes engaging local residents, service providers and the media.

Currently restorative justice organisations have mainstreamed a lot of their practice and engage with multiple organisations but there remains a communication issue over the role and function of this work in 2019. Above all, there is evidence to suggest that the wider public, including service providers, fail to understand the wider context of restorative justice within restorative practices.

- All restorative justice must be properly accredited and scrutinised. Participants agreed that organisations formally promoting restorative practices but not accredited were failing to deliver work of an appropriate standard and that this was having a detrimental effect on public attitudes to restorative justice and practice. There was a clear message that restorative justice organisations must co-ordinate and co-operate with the police and other agencies within the criminal justice system.
- Restorative practice programmes should be developed with local pre and post primary schools. There is evidence of this working positively in the Boy's Model and this should be extended throughout the area. There was also an opportunity to build on existing relationships between organisations that deliver restorative programmes across the two dominant local communities and develop co-designed programmes of work that could be delivered in pre and post primary school settings.
- There could be a continuous programme of Level 2 OCN accreditation for youth workers, teachers, parish workers, and community workers in restorative practices and on issues of policing, law and order, and community safety. Programmes should be extended to include work streams that support more multi-agency working and allow restorative practices to be mainstreamed across other responses to issues around exclusion and marginalisation in the community. There should also be a series of bespoke local programmes aimed at building relationships between the community and the PSNI – opportunities to better inform the police of the local issues and identify key stakeholders that are underpinned by restorative practices.

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

Currently Community Restorative Justice Ireland (CRJI) has a limited presence in Ardoyne and no physical presence in the New Lodge. The Ashton Centre and STAR operate some programmes that have restorative elements to them. There is a strong and cohesive community infrastructure that has the potential to deliver programmes of work. Furthermore, the CEP and multi-agency partnerships service both areas.

In order to mainstream the restorative practices, bids could be encouraged from consortia, and capacity to act restoratively built into community partners, schools and other agencies. The role of the police as co-operative partner is also important.

3. Outcomes that participants suggested these interventions would achieve?

Together with participants, we identified five outcomes that would measure benefit for the whole community:

- Fewer young people getting into the criminal justice system;
- Community justice issues no longer dealt with through violence but through restorative practice where possible, and through law where not;
- Restorative practice embedded into local schooling with measurable impact on behaviour and educational attainment;
- Improvement in the delivery of local community services underpinned by a more holistic approach to the person;
- Systematic and appropriate relationships with services associated with the wider criminal justice system including PSNI, YJA and PBNI.

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

The indicators proposed included:

- Restorative justice is an accredited and is a transparent process;
- No paramilitary style attacks;
- No intimidation;
- An increase in confidence in the wider criminal justice system measured by increased contact and information;
- A normalisation in terms of the language local people use when referencing the criminal justice system.

5. Target beneficiaries/participants of the suggested interventions?

There was a consensus from participants that if delivered correctly (alongside all of the other actions) everyone would positively benefit. More specifically:

- Young people at risk of armed groups;
- Young people at risk of finding their way into the criminal justice system;
- Schools – pre and post primary children/young people;
- Families (specifically those facing social, health and economic issues);
- The entire community.

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

New skills and training will be required to ensure programmes were delivered appropriately and restorative practices were sustainable after the duration of B4.

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 proposed interventions will support existing work aimed at engaging those vulnerable to armed groups and ensuring that their narrative is countered. Accredited organisations have the skill, capacity and experience to challenge those engaged in these activities and strengthening this practice will ensure these behaviours decrease.

b. Citizens and communities feel safe and confident.

Through these interventions, those engaging (or at risk of) in illegal activity, anti-community activity and anti-social behaviour will be supported and provided with new pathways to modify the behaviours. This will improve the overall sense of safety in the community.

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

There will be an increase in the confidence of residents to engage with the criminal justice system, directly or initially through the linkages established between community based restorative practices and the PSNI.

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

The promotion of restorative practices as alternatives to violence or the threat of violence will ensure that those associated with these behaviours can access new pathways.

8. Any dependencies identified by participants?

The following organisations/services were identified:

- The role of DoJ is important in ensuring that accreditation is inspected and monitored and that the process is transparent;
- PSNI have a crucial role to play in their behaviour and relationship and supporting the development of these community-led approaches;
- Youth work programmes must be co-ordinated with restorative practices to ensure consistency in service provision;
- Resources must be timely and appropriate to ensure service with clearly spelt-out timelines.

9. Any risks identified by participants?

The main risks noted were:

- Non-accreditation continues and essentially delegitimising existing mainstream practice;
- Inadequate alignment to other elements of the programme or other organisations failing to deliver.

10. Any other comments made by participants?

No

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

Ensure that this is aligned with A5 and B5 in the programme.