

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: Shankill

Theme: Young People

Date: 17/01/19

Number of attendee's: 3

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

- There needs to be job opportunities tied to training schemes. Participants noted that current employment schemes do not necessarily have sustainable, paid jobs for young people at the end of training and induction courses.
- Participants often emphasised the need for Global Service Learning to assist young people in broadening their experiences beyond the limits of their area. It was noted that many young people have little or no opportunity to engage beyond the Shankill.
- Participants stated it was critical that there was a single-identity focus to the work and curriculum as young people in this Protestant Unionist Loyalist community suffer from an endemic lack of confidence and identity issues; which often manifests as an inability/reluctance to engage within a cross-community context.
- Participants referred to the lack of confidence amongst young people from the area in attending educational classes (at tech), or in venturing into Higher Education. This was in part linked to experiences whereby young people from the Shankill were criticised by classmates for being 'loyalists' and were then blamed for a litany of events during the 'Troubles' – and the young people from the area did not have enough knowledge/confidence to engage in a discussion around the issues and thus 'dropped out' of the course.
- It was suggested later in the discussion that educational work/engagement initiatives should address and tackle many issues (some of which may be viewed as contentious) including; historical facts pertaining to the Troubles, and the role of loyalism (past, present and future). The

overarching aim would be to instil a sense of confidence and knowledge in young people about their past.

- Participants posited the need for educational awareness courses within the community to make explicitly clear to parents and young people that many young people in the community would be regarded by employers as unemployable. Participants felt that young people especially needed to acknowledge how potential employers view them; in order to make clear the need for change in relation to their capacity to gain sustainable employment.
- The associative work with parents, in addition to young people was according to participants, critical to working towards a culture change within the area.
- Participants noted that in their experience for example, “*Young people from the Ardoyne want to do education programmes. Young people from the Shankill don’t.*” Work with parents and families was therefore viewed as important, as negative attitudes in the home to education or cross-community work (for example) could undo some of the progress made in other contexts (school, youth clubs etc.).
- It was also noted that at times there were behavioural issues which could lead to young people being sacked from a job or suspended from a training programme for inappropriate behaviour – this requires engagement around the world of work and expected standards of behaviour.
- The participants were particularly keen on a leadership programme to work with young people who they said were easily identifiable from a relatively young age (primary school – with one interviewee suggested engagement should start at p4/p5). This could involve those young people who carry sufficient respect amongst their peers - but rather than automatically utilising this leadership role in a negative way, could be engendered within a leadership programme to act more positively within their community and set an example for other young people (and within their own families as well). It was felt that any such ‘leadership’ programme should be in a school and community setting.
- The ‘poverty of hope’ and lack of aspiration within young people in the area could be tackled with the promotion of community champions who can illustrate the potential pathways for young people within the area.
- Participants noted a lack of understanding between generations manifested as significant inter-generational issues and suggested educational and awareness classes to increase knowledge and understanding across the generational spectrum could be useful.
- A crucial issue identified by participants was that there was ‘nothing open at weekends’ for young people in the area, particularly for young people in Glencairn and the Lower Shankill. There was some detached youth work, but it was suggested there was a lack of available youth provision. It was suggested that a scoping exercise on youth provision in the area should be completed prior to improving the provision itself.

- Another key issue identified were the attitudes of some police officers to those living in working-class communities such as the Shankill. It was further suggested that education/cultural awareness work needed to be improved in the training stage for PSNI officers to challenge stereotypes of people living in the B4 communities (at present it was felt there was a snobbishness or elitism amongst some officers who perhaps had a 'bad attitude'). To encourage the community to have greater confidence in policing also requires the community to have a positive experience of engagement with the police. It was also suggested that the PSNI should have more openness and greater flexibility in bringing young people from communities such as the Shankill in to their organisation – not only for potential work experience (which at present it is very difficult to do), but to also see the job as a potential career. It was felt that this was a significant potential problem for the PSNI moving forwards (referred to as a 'ticking time bomb') – whereby the demographics of the police are not reflective of areas such as the Shankill.

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

- Current (and historical) capacity in individuals is low in the area and participants suggested that the target age range for interventions with young people should be lowered to focus on primary school children initially and then progressed to include years 8-11 in secondary level education.
- It was also noted that there was a lack of coordination among groups in the area and at times an ethos of competition was more prevalent than one of cooperation.

3. Outcomes that participants suggested these interventions would achieve?

- Participants highlighted that some in the older generation do not respect education and there is a generational legacy within the community of a negative attitude to education. It was suggested that this programme alone cannot achieve a widespread cultural shift in attitudes, but it can begin to add to the conversation.
- Greater youth provision in the area could lead to fewer young people on the streets at night at weekends, which in turn could lead to fewer incidents of anti-social behaviour.

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

- An emergent narrative to counteract the prevailing narrative of despondency of hope/aspiration.
- How young people express themselves and their thoughts in relation to identity, history and culture.

- Increased confidence among young people in the community.
- Challenging (public and privately) of the community mentality and narrative.

5. Target beneficiaries/participants of the suggested interventions?

- Young People
- Parents and older generations
- Children (by experiencing a changing culture/narrative within the community)

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

- Participants noted that a critical issue for young people is a lack of confidence and self-awareness. Participants believed that by helping young people to better understand themselves, their community and the wider Protestant Unionist Loyalist community (beyond their immediate locality) could not only engender more confidence in young people, but also build their resilience. Participants explained that diversity programmes, and programmes which focus on personal development for example, could be tailored to focus on the diversity within the community.
- Participants suggested that initiatives could build the capacity of young people by enabling them to challenge and think differently themselves about the narratives they hear and experience.
- Participants suggested that by improving youth provision in the area, there would be fewer young people on the streets in large numbers, which in turn could improve relationships with the community more generally (who often view crowds of young people on the street as a threat and contact the PSNI – even if the young people are not doing anything wrong).

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

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

This question was not directly addressed by participants.

8. Any dependencies identified by participants?

- Young people need to be engaged with.

- Concern about lack of youth provision at weekends in some areas of the Shankill (such as Glencairn and the Lower Shankill).
- Programmes and interventions need to sustain capacity through employment and not merely stand-alone training programmes with no employment attached.

9. Any risks identified by participants?

- With training and employment schemes there is a high drop-out rate as young people are unaccustomed to the demands of work and due to their lack of capacity they often fail to adhere to the demands of the scheme until it is too late and they are excluded from it.
- Participants noted that it can be difficult to attract young men to programmes and initiatives but they have had more success in engaging young women.
- Participants pointed to previous initiatives with parents that had no sustainability. According to participants it is hard to get parents to come to one-off events, let alone get sufficient numbers to engage in a programme lasting any length of time.
- Participants believed that political weaponisation was serving to undermine community narratives and community development.
- There are a lot of groups on the Shankill, but this should not be assumed to be indicative of significant capacity. Participants said that although there was a lot of groups there was little to no coordination between them and it was recommended that a scoping exercise of youth provision (both community and statutory-led) was carried out.

10. Any other comments made by participants?

- The events could have been better advertised. Participants suggested a good way to engage with local people was through the widely read Shankill Mirror (a free monthly paper). Additionally, information through the PSNI social media feeds could also attract more people.
- Participants stated that the reporting and portrayal of loyalist communities within the media (both locally and nationally), was significantly engendering inaccurate and detrimental stereotypes of people from this community background.
- The culture for young people generally has changed so much in the last decade and the older generations either cannot relate to young people and their lifestyle or 'won't accept it'. As an example, a participant noted that young people gathering on street corners are no longer drinking (like young people of previous generations) but intergenerational tensions mean those young people are still being reported to police. Participants said there was little empathy or understanding between generations.
- It was noted that the PSNI should be more open and up front about issues – either why they have to do a particular operation, or admit when things have gone wrong or could be done better – improved honesty and transparency

would improve relationships and confidence between the community and the police (including with young people).

- One participant felt that it was important to maintain the concept of promoting a 'culture of lawfulness' – and to put that back to the community in the sense of explaining why/challenging perceptions of 'bias' against the loyalist community at present in terms of policing.
- It was suggested that political unionism and loyalism were divided which did not help in terms of promoting community confidence and capacity.

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

- All comments within this workshop should be caveated by recognising that only three people were in attendance.