

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: West Belfast

Theme: Addressing the Needs of Young People

Date: 17/01/19

Number of attendees: 13 / 16

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

An integrated support programme for young people and families to include:

- Mental health, addiction and trauma support;
- Education, training and employment pathways;
- Community education to help give young people a sense of place and community, encouraging active citizenship;
- The development of pathways to enable young people to play an active part in different aspects of community life;
- A community safety element that provides support for troubled young people engaged in anti-social and criminal behaviour while meeting the needs of victims of those behaviours.

Participants reiterated the multiple complex issues identified in Phase 1. The discussion pointed to the Integrated Services for Children & Young People (ISCYP) as something that had begun to address the key issues before its expiration in 2012. Participants suggested that what we may be looking at is an expanded, 'tweaked' version of that model which reflects existing capacity and the lessons of past experiences.

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

It was widely acknowledged that there is a well-developed community infrastructure in the area along with considerable experience of relevant forms of youth provision and the delivery of community-based services. There is a high level of capacity in this sense. The proposed intervention will seek to achieve:

- Better coordination around youth and community-based services;
- The bridging of gaps that have opened up or where services are being delivered in a bit-part, segmented fashion with little or no funding e.g. pathways to employment, a coordinated community education programme, mental health and trauma support, support for those going through the criminal justice system;
- A longer term approach to young people's development and the role of youth provision within a wider community context.

3. Outcomes that participants suggested these interventions would achieve?

- Move young people away from criminality and paramilitary activity towards employment;
- Combat poverty and mental health problems – which have been identified as contributing to trends in substance misuse, anti-social behaviour, criminality and paramilitary activity;
- Enable more young people to play an active role in community life;
- Strengthen the sense of place and community in young people;
- Improve long-term coordination around youth provision and community-based services and strengthen collaboration between community and statutory providers.

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

- An increase in the number of young people with qualifications and secure employment;
- A long-term improvement in outcomes for young people;
- A long-term reduction in the number of young people going through the criminal justice system;
- A reduction in the number of young people falling under the influence of paramilitarism;
- An increase in the number of young people involved in community organisations and activities;
- Community and youth providers feel that there is better coordination and increased capacity around the provision of services.

5. Target beneficiaries/participants of the suggested interventions?

There was a lengthy discussion on this issue during which the following key points were made:

(a) Young people sit on a continuum in terms of their capacity and needs. At one end there are extremely troubled young people who might be engaged in regular anti-social and criminal behaviour and/or are particularly susceptible to the influence of paramilitarism. At the other, there are those who are involved in various aspects of community life and are showing leadership qualities. In between there are large numbers of young people who are at different stages

of their development, are often overlooked by targeted programmes and require support around one or a combination of issues in order that they do not slip down towards the troubled end of the continuum.

(b) There is a need for targeted intervention to address the needs and build the capacity of troubled young people. However, participants stated that it is important to avoid the risk of 'boxing off' this particular group of young people from other young people on the continuum – including those young leaders who could exert a positive influence – or from the range of opportunities that exist to play an active role in community life.

(c) There are large numbers of young people and families in the area who have complex needs or are suffering from different forms of alienation that do not, at first, manifest themselves in outwardly destructive behaviours. In their case there is a need for preventative interventions that support their integration and development in a wider community context.

(d) These factors speak to a layered, whole community approach that provides different entry points to accessing support and encourages young people's long-term development at all points of the continuum.

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

- Will help to draw together and improve coordination between new and existing forms of youth/community provision, improving their long-term efficacy and sustainability;
- Will better integrate marginalised young people and families into community life, strengthening their sense of place and the community's resilience to address the range of issues identified in Phase 1.

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 intervention will seek to move young people and families away from involvement in criminality and paramilitarism while strengthening the community's resilience to address the range of issues related to the residual influence of paramilitarism.

b. Citizens and communities feel safe and confident.

Citizens and communities will feel safer and more confident where there are fewer people experiencing marginalisation and alienation, fewer people at risk of becoming engaged in criminality or falling under the influence of paramilitarism, and more are engaged productively in employment or community life.

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

The proposed intervention would incorporate a community safety element to support victims of anti-social and criminal behaviours while aiming to keep young people out of the criminal justice system, allowing the system to focus only on extreme cases and therefore function more effectively for the benefit of the community.

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

The proposed intervention would provide bespoke family support packages for those moving away from paramilitary activity and structures and those children are suffering the effects of a (past) association with paramilitarism.

8. Any dependencies identified by participants?

Participants agreed that one key dependency is meaningful statutory buy-in and partnership working in order that necessary and sustainable linkages can be made between different providers, thereby ensuring that existing provision is complemented and enhanced rather than duplicated. Again, the ISCYP model was mentioned as one that offered this kind of collaborative, whole community approach. The community planning model being rolled out at council level was also identified as a possible means of harnessing these different actors together.

As in Phase 1, concerns were raised around the way different actions from the Tackling Paramilitarism programme had been funded and delivered. There was a sense that statutory providers (including the PSNI) had been allocated funding that has already hit the ground, without a meaningful community consultation or any clear idea as to how they should be linked to B4. There remains a lack of clarity about the work that is underway and how its outcomes will be monitored within the wider Tackling Paramilitarism programme. In this regard, it was suggested that some form of community-statutory delivery and monitoring mechanism might be established.

It was also acknowledged that the success of the proposed intervention will depend on the buy-in and widespread participation of community and youth providers in the area, within a collaborative and inclusive framework. This can be encouraged from below but also in terms of how the proposed intervention is designed.

9. Any risks identified by participants?

As in Phase 1, participants identified the challenges associated with the geographical spread of the B4 area(s) and the different histories, political cultures, contemporary dynamics and capacity levels that pertain in each locality. Thus, the need for coordination and some form of universality across West Belfast must be balanced against the specific needs of distinct communities, to be addressed through in-built flexibility in how the proposed intervention is shaped and delivered at a local level.

It was also accepted that the need for structure and coordination should not result in top-heavy forms of implementation that end up diverting resources away from front-line service and programme delivery.

Finally, it was suggested that maximising community buy-in and resident participation would require that the proposed intervention accounts for some uncomfortable realities. Above all, the point was made that in some areas there are a significant proportion of families who are in need of multi-layered support but for historical or more contemporary reasons do not wish to engage directly with the police. It was suggested that reaching this constituency of young people and families may mean that statutory buy-in is balanced with an intermediary community safety element that does not imply PSNI enforcement, as proposed by a number of people in Phase 1.

10. Any other comments made by participants?

The discussion quickly turned to community safety & policing issues, with participants reiterating the concerns that they had raised during Phase 1. Police officers in attendance acknowledged that there were quick to point out that they rely on the cooperation of youth and community workers to ensure that young people do not end up in the criminal justice system. There was no consensus as to how historical or contemporary policing related issues might be overcome.

Returning to the proposed intervention, it was clear that participants felt that the Communities in Transition programme represents an opportunity to do something new and long-lasting.

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

It was suggested that there are key people who need to be involved in shaping and implementing the proposed intervention, but may not have participated in the process thus far. The potential need for a follow-up workshop was mentioned.