Third Sector Research Centre

Equalities Below the Radar

Below the Radar Reference Group and Research Slam

Fourth Meeting

27 September 2012

Key Notes

Contents

1. Introduction

> *'What research **mustn't** do is talk to itself. Nothing is easier than to get a gathering of researchers together to extol the value and insight of their research and to lament its marginalisation. Apart from the warm glow that this confers, it does not achieve very much.'*
> (With apologies to: Bernard O'Donoghue)

This year's Third Sector Research Centre's (TSRC) 'below the radar' research Reference Group was opened out for a wider audience to be presented with key areas of TSRC's work and reflect on the implications of those research findings for policy and practice in the third sectors.

The day was in two parts. In the morning there were presentations (followed by workshops) on three equalities themes and issues emerging from 'below the radar' work. These sessions were also an opportunity to celebrate the work of the Centre's associates with presentations by;

- Adrian Randall (TSRC Associate Fellow): *Who supports destitute migrants?*
- Dr Andrew Ryder (Research Fellow, University of Bristol and TSRC Associate Fellow with Phil Regan, Gypsy and Traveller Development Officer, Stableway Residents Association: *Gypsy and Traveller Community Organisations: History, Issues and Futures*
- Phil Ware (TSRC Associate Fellow): *Black and Minority Ethnic Voluntary Organisations: Voice and Influence*

The afternoon consisted of a 'research slam' – with keynote speakers presenting the news headlines (in three minutes) from different TSRC workstreams – followed by world café discussion on the implications of these for the Voluntary and Community Sector now

Presentations were by:

- Dr. Rob Macmillan: The Voluntary and Community Sector in Real Time
- Prof. Pete Alcock : The Voluntary and Community Sector: What the Numbers Say
- Dr Simon Teasdale: Legislating for the Big Society: The Case of the Public Services (Social Value) Act;
- Angus McCabe: Community Groups – Still Below the Radar?

The following report summarises both the presentations and subsequent discussions and concludes with participant thoughts on key areas for future research in the Third Sector. Copies of power point presentations are also available (ADD HYPERLINK).

Thanks to our presenters – but also to all those who participated in lively and informative discussions throughout the day.

This research is exploring the development of Community Sector Organisations (CSSOs) who support destitute migrants in order to:

- Understand the motivation of actors
- Describe the organisations and services
- Analyse the circumstances under which they may flourish (or fail)
- Identify who benefits (and how) and who does not

A comparative study of 3 cities will seek to identify key success factors to inform sustainability and/or replication.

Destitute Migrants

We define destitute migrants as those who, by reason of their immigration status, are unable to work (legally) or to access welfare benefits, UKBA asylum support or Local Authority social care (under the Children Act or National Assistance Act). It may include those who are temporarily unable to claim benefits because of some bureaucratic problem or those who are unable to claim whilst awaiting some action which is anticipated to resolve their immigration status. It will also include people where there is no medium term possibility of resolving their status. Destitute migrants in the UK include:

- Refused Asylum Seekers
- Visa Over-stayers / Student Over-stayers
- Fiancés / spouses without recourse
- Undocumented
- Workless A2 migrants (Romania, Bulgaria)
- Other EU migrants who are not workseekers

From interviews so far, refused asylum seekers are the most visible and numerous destitute group. Data about ethnicity or status is not always available from the organizations supporting them. Absence from organizational statistics may indicate support from within the particular ethnic community or isolation from this new informal welfare provision.

Recent History of Immigration / Welfare Restrictions

- 1994 Habitual Residence Test removed entitlement to social security benefits for people otherwise entitle who were not making the UK their main residents. This caused particular difficulties to UK citizens returning after a period abroad and to migrants from the EU seeking to settle here.

- 1996 Asylum and Immigration Act removed entitlement to social security and social housing to all new asylum seekers. This resulted in an epidemic of street begging before welfare lawyers secured judgement that LAs had responsibility to accommodate and support destitute asylum seekers under the Children Act 1989 or National Assistance Act 1948.

- 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act established the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) regime to support asylum seekers

- 2002, Section 55 of Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act removed entitlement to NASS support for people who did not claim asylum as soon as they arrived. Undermined by case law and eventually repealed.

- 2004, Section 9 of Asylum and Immigration Act threatened to deport the parents of "appeal rights exhausted" families who refused to leave voluntarily whilst taking children into LA care. Abandoned after small pilot.

- 2012 Changes to family migration rules which will require newly arrived dependants to be supported for longer periods without recourse to public funds and clear evidence of the sponsors ability to support before entry to the UK.

Discovery and exploration

The research is currently ongoing. So far we have used a top down approach to finding those organisations supporting destitute migrants:

- HOPE Projects provides cash using monies from small charities particularly 2 local trusts but also the NHS (seeking to support vulnerable women). HOPE also now provides housing leased to the organisation at peppercorn rents by a number of housing providers. The fund was started by former MP Clare Short and others in response to large numbers of asylum seekers being refused support under S55 of the 2002 Act. HOPE now primarily supports refused asylum seekers who are seeking to re-open their case. Bournville Village Trust was the first Housing Association to offer accommodation and HOPE now has 7 properties.

- Restore is a church based organisation providing friendship and support whose members found themselves needing to provide their users with physical subsistence. A number of local "welcome groups" also provide some material support.

- British Red Cross is an organisation with a long history of support to victims of war and disaster. They initially gave food parcels (but now supermarket vouchers) under a scheme funded by Big Lottery Fund.

- Wolverhampton Refugee and Migrant Centre is a referring organisation using material support from a local foodbank and some churches but also referring to HOPE in Birmingham and the Peace House in Coventry.

- Karis Neighbourhood Scheme was set up to provide support and advocacy for local people in a part of Ladywood, Birmingham. They found that users of their newcomers Welcome club were sometimes without means to support themselves and now provide food parcels donated by local churches.

- BIRCH is an organisation set up recently in order to develop hosting as a way of meeting the needs of destitute migrants. It already has a small number of volunteers whist it develops support arrangements for the host and hosted.
- Food banks – not yet interviewed
- St Chad's and SIFA Fireside are organisations assisting destitute and homeless people who now find themselves supporting large numbers of migrants. St Chads Sanctuary is a scheme for migrants which provides food parcels, clothing and other household necessities: they support a lot of people recently given the right to remain.
- Church members + private hosting (only hearsay)

Rules and decision making

All the organisations interviewed have devised "rules" about who they will support and these are broadly compatible and complimentary. A hierarchy has developed where HOPE will support people who have made a new claim to UKBA for support under Section 4 of the 1999 Act whilst other organisations meet the needs of people in more fragile circumstances or with unclear prospects. All organisations recognise the inherent difficulty of providing continuing support for people who have no prospect of resolving their immigration status and have "rules" that acknowledge this. Of course, organisations providing support of this sort will usually be driven more by the needs of those they help than rules whether formal or informal.

HOPE supports people who can answer yes to these 2 questions:

1. Is the person destitute?
2. Is there a prospect of resolving their status? (in the case of refused asylum seekers have they made a claim as above)

A limited group of agencies can refer: these are agencies that HOPE knows are competent to understand immigration status and provide or refer for legal assistance as appropriate. These referrers along with Hope staff determine and review "eligibility" at a fortnightly panel. There is a question…whether they collude with each other for continuance or genuinely police to avoid inappropriate payment.

Service Matrix - Statutory to Informal vs. Rules to Informal

Statutory	Voluntary	Informal	
NIL	**Refugee Council = Referral to RCOs KARIS = Food parcels Restore = Food parcels**	**Black church members = Individual hosting**	**Informal Provision**
Referral to voluntary and informal sector	**British Red Cross = Shopping vouchers BIRCH = hosting Food banks**	**Welcome groups = hosting/food parcels**	**Intermediate Service**
Local Authorities UKBA	**HOPE = cash subsistence and housing**	**NIL**	**Whole service with rules**

Workshop commentary

It was suggested that the informal support provided by individuals would be best researched from the street up. Street research and interviews with asylum seekers may also identify the extent to which people move between different types of support. We should try to measure/describe this movement.

It was suggested that many refused asylum seekers are helped by friends who are still supported and accommodated by UKBA (not ARE-Appeal Rights Exhausted). It may be important to acknowledge/explore the extent of this.

SIFA advised that they are supporting a large number of EU migrants now destitute as a consequence of the recession. These are people entitled to state benefits but needing help to understand and access the system. It was suggested that many people will only access very informal support arrangements rather than anything more formal. We should also try to understand how people learn about the different support arrangements that are available.

An example was given of an organisation that was seeing women victims of domestic violence, but could not access funding to support them. They changed their mission to follow the funding and new service priority.

We still need to learn and understand more about the position of the undocumented.

Birmingham University needs ways to repay/reward small organisations we want to consult.

Ethnogenesis in an organised sense has not been an easy process for Gypsies and Travellers in the UK.

Gypsies and Travellers are one of the most excluded minorities in society, experiencing poor access to services and opportunities, acute levels of ill health and disadvantage (Cemlyn et al 2009). One of the clearest indicators of disadvantage is that economic and social exclusion is compounded by a lack of empowerment and civic inclusion. Despite an estimated population of between 200,000 and 300,000 Gypsies and Travellers (CRE, 2006), there are no Members of Parliament from this community and only two known local authority councillors. The weak state of the Gypsy and Traveller third sector in terms of the number of established community groups amongst Gypsy and Traveller communities is again a reflection of exclusion which has hindered ethnogenesis. The National Equality Partnership has noted the challenges posed in the development of the Gypsy and Traveller third sector: "*Gypsies and Travellers come from such a low base of engagement that a huge amount of work remains to be done in helping grassroots groups to grow and develop so as to have an effective voice in society. Many grassroots Gypsy and Traveller groups lack basic infrastructure and are thus unable to secure funding*" (2008, 54). Research evidence indicates low levels of educational achievement and participation have led to Gypsies and Travellers being described as the 'most at risk group' in the education system (Wilkin et al, 2009). Low education levels can have a negative impact on attracting funding. In a recent study it was noted that high expectations from funders and statutory partners were required from the third sector in terms of organisational capacity and business skills (Equal Support 2009). Thus a lack of formal education has impeded Gypsies and Travellers' ability to influence decision making processes and create organisational structures that are sustainable and able to gather funding.

High levels of discrimination towards Gypsies and Travellers has also impeded participation in a range of institutions and civic forums (CRE, 2006). Such trends have been accentuated by cultural and moral fears that Gypsies and Travellers have of the wider community (Derrington and Kendall, 2004). Bonding social capital (intense social networks) have acted as a form of self-help and defence against exclusion and discrimination. Through the maintenance of what Barth described as cultural boundaries, Gypsies and Travellers at times have kept their distance from mainstream society (Barth, 1975) which in turn has limited the development of formal organisation.. Bonding social capital, a lack of formal education and mistrust of wider society provoked through exclusion and discrimination, has worked against community development and ethnogenesis. However, important progress has been made in developing the capacity, resources and potential of Gypsy and Traveller policy and voice groups. Cemlyn et al (2009, 172):

In recent years a number of national or local community projects have become established which have pioneered important work in community organisation and service delivery which holds the potential for replication and the eventual establishment of a wider national network of community groups. All of these groups have had difficult histories, often lurching from one funding crisis to another as a result of short term project funding creating instability within these organisations. However, a number have entered into a period of greater stability, reflected in a broadening of the

services they offer and staff employed. At an even more localised level a number of residents groups now exist on the network of 320 local authority sites (Ryder, 2012).

A key development for the national organisations has been the increased level of employment of community members. In this sense, 'positive action' has played an important role. Positive action involves taking practical steps to support specific socially or economically disadvantaged communities with the purpose of helping them to achieve full and effective equality. Thus Gypsy and Traveller staff have benefitted prior to employment through targeted training and awareness raising about the organisations which employ them. For some intern positions, mentoring, volunteering or sessional employment have proven to be valuable first steps into more permanent employment positions (Ryder and Greenfields/ITMB, 2011). 'Knowledge of the community' has been listed as an essential requirement in job descriptions and is one factor that has assisted in the recruitment of community members. It should also be noted that the community groups offering positions have also effectively nurtured community staff by giving ongoing support and skills development, a process often helped by also having Gypsy and Traveller staff within the organisations providing informal support networks. Here staff from the community can act as role models for new incoming staff but also understand the challenges that can be experienced by working in what (for some Gypsies and Travellers) will be at first difficult and challenging work environments.

Some Gypsy and Traveller community groups have remained informal, lacking charitable or company status and in some cases even constitutions. For some Gypsy and Traveller activists it has, in their opinion, enabled them to remain in control of what they do. However, such informality has prevented them getting larger grants or employing staff and, in some cases, activists have been overwhelmed by demands for help which they have tried to meet - but in the process have suffered from exhaustion and stress. As a result of this, organisations have often not been able to evolve to meet growing calls for help from a highly excluded minority. As noted earlier, Gypsies and Travellers have wrongly or rightfully termed the Gypsy and Traveller third sector as part of a 'Gypsy Industry' in which outsiders, by virtue of their professionalisation, are able to carve out careers dealing with their communities but which is perceived to offer few opportunities for community members. This factor has been described as creating a ceiling which prevents Gypsies, Roma and Travellers from being able to have a meaningful role in the direction of community groups, a process described by one critic as 'NGOisation' (Trehan, 2001). Such perceptions have at times impeded opportunities for certain projects to forge meaningful links with the Gypsy and Traveller communities they serve and highlight the dangers inherent when projects do not create valid roles and a sense of ownership for community members. The paper presented to the TSRC (Working Paper 84) argued that there are a growing number of models of development which demonstrate that it is possible for 'NGOisation' to be overcome. These examples show that the community itself can have a growing and meaningful role in the direction of community groups which indeed is essential if community groups hope to serve and support Gypsies and Travellers through an inclusive community development model as opposed to one based on paternalism.

4. The Voice of BME Community Groups within and through the Voluntary Sector; Phil Ware

Aims

The research aims to identify the voice and influence of the BME Community and Voluntary Sector in relation to: -

a) The community and voluntary sector as a whole
b) Local, regional and national policy makers and funders
c) Mainstream provision

Methodology

- Literature Review
- Semi-structured interviews with Below the Radar (BTR) BME led community groups in Birmingham, Greater Manchester and London
- Semi-structured interviews with strategic voluntary and statutory organisations.
- Focus Groups in Manchester and Birmingham

Timescales

- The project was set up in November 2011
- Interviews have been undertaken from March 2012 and will be completed by December2012
- A TSRC Briefing Paper will be completed by March 2013
- Findings of the project will be disseminated between March and June 2013.

Initial Findings

Issues that groups are working to influence include the 2010 Equalities Act, Service provision, and specific campaigns e.g. anti-deportation.

The range of **strategies** being used includes: –

1. Capacity building
2. Political approaches - resisting takeover of agenda by large national organisations: *"race...never on their agenda".*
3. Demonstrating need(s)

Other findings include: -

- The uncertain position of the BME VCS within the wider VCS. *"The voluntary sector is not immune from racism, so has ways of marginalising certain voices..."*
- The current climate is affecting different parts of the Sector in different ways*: "...completely leaving communities like ours [Refugees and Asylum-seekers] out in the cold because... we're not local."*

- Many organisations feel that they are faced with a choice between focussing on their own survival or joining with others in taking a collective approach but thereby threatening their own future
- Some organisations feel less affected by funding issues.
- The impact of the Equalities Act 2010. *"Race, Gender, Disability... all need to be addressed in [their own] way."*
- Successes – there is a message coming across that persistence can pay e.g. Lawrence. Southall Black Sisters. Smaller groups reliant on own income: *"The very smallest groups... actually might be in better place."*

Questions and Challenges

- Has the Single Equalities Act diluted voice and influence?
- Are more established/white organisations claiming voice on behalf of BME/BTR? How are gender issues impacting?
- Is there a BME VCS sector? "...the BME sector is diverse; there is a lack of politicisation."
- Have BME organisations been distracted by agendas such as Community Cohesion and Preventing Violent Extremism? "We set out to meet the need not follow the money".
- Have BME groups been disproportionately affected by cuts? *"...disparity between [the white CVS] and the way funding is dispensed to the BME sector."*

Discussion within the workshop strongly agreed with the first two bullet points above: the Single Equalities Act had diluted BME voice and influence and this was being 'claimed' by larger 'mainstream' organisations in the sector. Additionally participants provided examples of where BME groups had been adversely affected by the cuts, confirming the above quote and research carried out by Just West Yorkshire.

Participants were wary of the notion of a BME 'Sector', but also expressed concern that there was a lack of coordination of action and voice (and a lack of funding for it).

(Please note that the quotes used in this document are directly taken from the transcripts of interviews carried out up to the end of September 2012.)

Workshop notes: Black and Minority Ethnic Voluntary Organisations: Voice and Influence

Twelve workshop participants discussed the five issues and challenges raised by Phil at the end of his presentation. The key points raised in discussion were:

- Noting a shift towards generic equalities rather than single cause funding and contracts, but the issue is not just about money – organisations appear to have lost the ability to articulate issues anymore
- Some groups (e.g. for older people) were favoured by local authorities because they were seen as professional and capable in dealing with local authority processes; larger groups were seen to have capacity compared to grassroots groups.

- Lots of smaller groups were going 'off radar' and larger organisations were trying to connect with them. There is lots of capacity building support out there – but very hard for groups to partner up and collaborate – the BME sector had been 'capacity built to death'.

- Very little national voice for BME groups now, and the CVS movement cannot articulate these voices. The Equalities Act is killing off the BME sector. This raised the query of whether there is a single sector: some BME communities are much stronger than others (noted by examples in terms of advice service provision).

- Local authorities tend to consult with 'mainstream' VCS organisations, such as CVSs – very few BME specific strategic organisations. None of the capacity building support has effectively been translated into strategic action, voice and influence - the voice is a 'squeak'. This is disappointing given that in several cities BME communities will form majorities of the population.

- The landscape is being dramatically skewed by the commissioning culture at the moment. Big national federations/primes are winning contracts and sub-contracting to local organisations.

- One example cited of the place of BME organisations was of one 'Transforming Local Infrastructure' programme, where from an allocation of £600K (over 18 months), 1/3 went to an IT project, and only £7.5K to BME communities. CVSs in the area used BME organisations to gain legitimacy for the proposal, but then left them on the side-line.

- The language of the BME sector is changing, so that whereas a few years ago people would talk of 'race' and 'BME', now they are increasingly talking in terms of 'equality and diversity'.

5. Research Slam Headline Presentation *"The Voluntary and Community Sector in Real Time"*; Dr Rob Macmillan

This mini-presentation raised the issue of time in relation to community action, drawing from TSRC's 'Real Times' in-depth long term study of third sector organisations. It was set in the context of a great 'unsettlement' for the voluntary and community sector; one where resources, relationships, approaches and understandings are all called into question. Voluntary organisations and community groups are having to come to terms with some significant shifts around public spending austerity and changing political priorities. These issues are being discussed through a series of debates and dialogues on 'Third Sector Futures' hosted by TSRC - a dedicated website provides more information and details of how to get involved http://thirdsectorfutures.org.uk/.

The 'Real Times' study has been following a range of third sector organisations since 2010. The headline picture is one of organisations experiencing anxiety about current and forthcoming cuts, through various restructuring processes in the midst of cuts, followed by a sense of thwarted ambitions and plans, and slower progress in a more constrained environment. But this overall process encompasses a great deal of diversity: the process affects different organisations in different ways.

By way of illustration, the presentation discussed the contrasting fortunes of two initiatives - a heritage centre and a new horticultural social enterprise - in a former mining village in the North of England. The discussion was framed by a wider question of what happens when the money and political will for coalfields regeneration runs out. Over a two and half year period from Spring 2010 to Autumn 2012, the two initiatives experienced different fortunes in the same context: the heritage centre struggled to keep going and has had to move into smaller premises and sell off much of its heritage exhibition in order to raise funds, whilst the horticultural social enterprise began to gather momentum, energy, interest and attract new funding. The contrasts revolve around dwindling infrastructure support, the cost of space and premises, the difficulties sustaining community action amongst an ageing cohort of activists, and the role of key 'movers and shakers' in developing new initiatives

The concluding discussion stressed the need to look beyond the 'here and now' of community action experiences to examine the wider context in which it operates, informed by a slogan on a piece of mining heritage: *'The past we inherit, the future we build'.* The metaphor of layers sedimentary rock may also apply to successive periods of community action as investment and disinvestment of time, money, energy and mobilisation of others in specific places. Community action and development, in coalfields areas as much as anywhere else, involves effort and is said to take time (with policy and practice questions over how long it should take) and leaves legacies (with policy and practice questions over how strong these are).

6. Research Slam Headline Presentation: The Voluntary and Community Sector: What the Numbers Say; Prof. Pete Alcock

This presentation focused on three examples of TSRC's statistical analysis of the sector. This revealed three interesting developments:

- The Third Sector workforce has been growing, in particular compared to the public and private sectors, but now under threat. Employment in the sector fell by 8.9% in 2010/11 (compared to a drop of 4.5% in the Public Sector and 1.5% growth in the Private Sector. There has been a slight recovery over 2012 – mainly accounted for by part-time working/temporary contracts but, overall, employment rates remain approximately 5% below their 2009/10 peak (See Table 1).
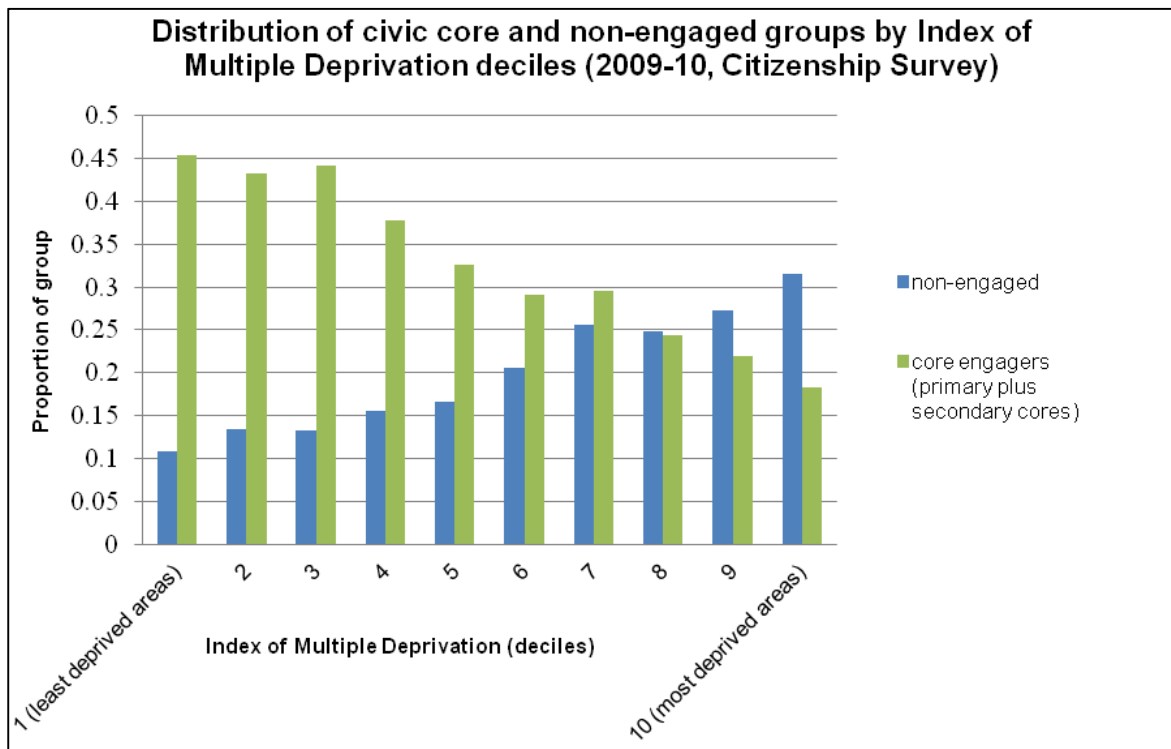
Table 1 – Voluntary Sector Workforce
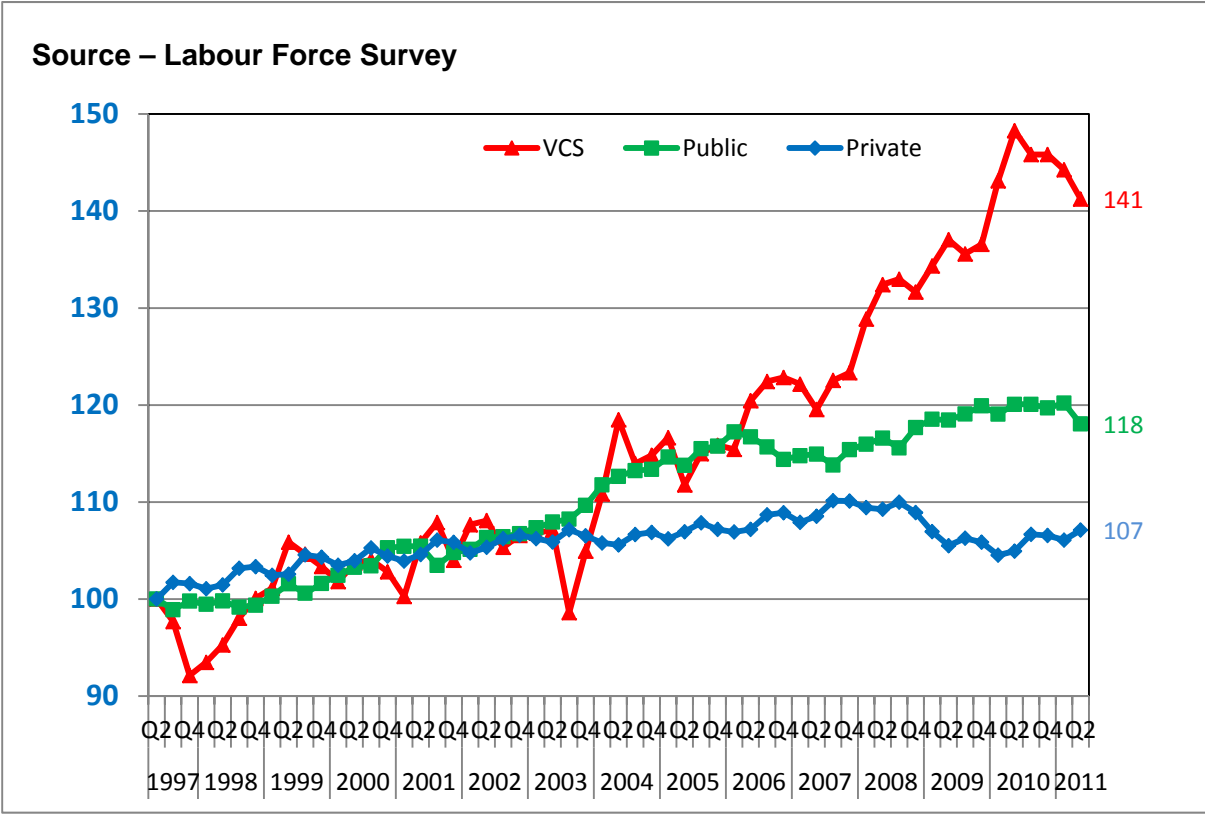
- Expenditure cuts could threaten third sector organisations, especially in areas of high social and economic deprivation, where reliance on public funding is greater. Table 2 illustrates the levels of reliance on public funding against levels of deprivation

Table 2: Distribution of Public Funding

Receipt of statutory income, by Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)
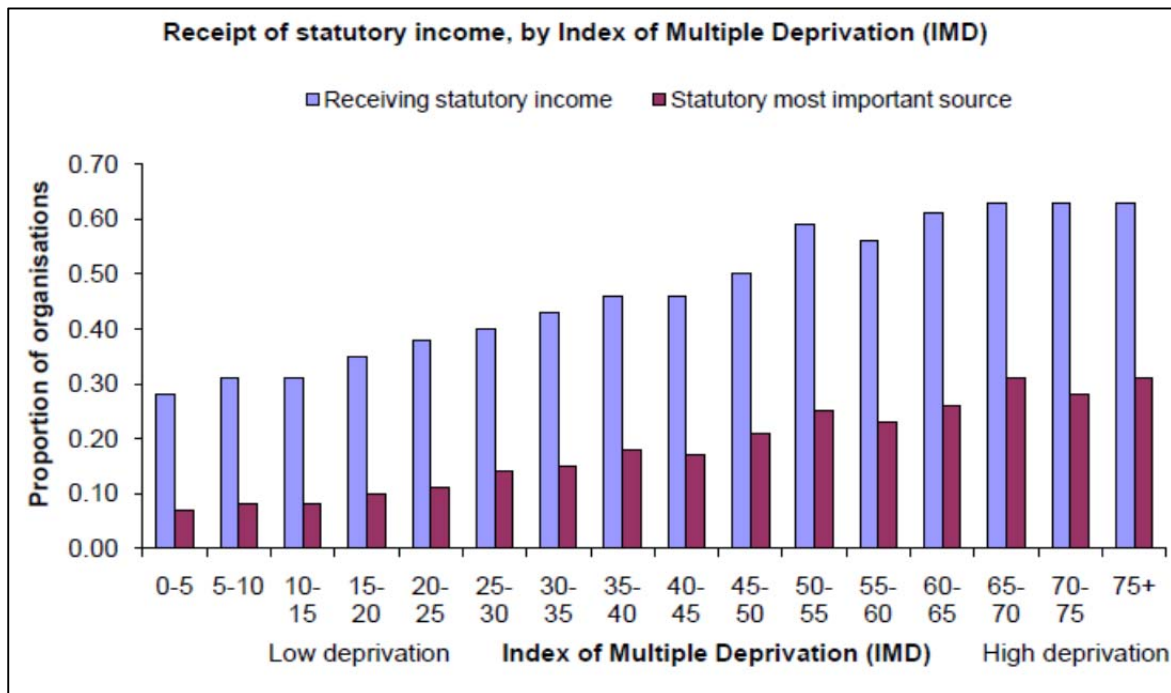
- There are geographical and social inequalities in voluntary action, with more of the 'civic core' of engaged volunteers and donors being located in less deprived local areas (See Table 3).

Table 3: Where is the Civic Core

Distribution of civic core and non-engaged groups by Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles (2009-10, Citizenship Survey)

7. Research Slam Headline Presentation: Legislating for the Big Society: The case of the Public Services (Social Value) Act; Dr Simon Teasdale

The Conservative Party approached the 2010 United Kingdom (UK) general election with the 'Big Society' as a central element to their manifesto and campaign message. One aspect of this idea was an enhanced role for voluntary and community organisations and social enterprises (VCSEs) in the delivery of publicly funded services. Since coming to power as prime minister of the Coalition Government, David Cameron has continually re-emphasised the Big Society message as being central to Government policy. However this has to some extent been overshadowed, or even contradicted by the decision to make drastic cuts to public spending.

The call for an enhanced role for VCSEs is often one element of a market liberal discourse prevalent within the Conservative Party. Here, the state is perceived to 'crowd out' voluntary action: substantial cuts to the size and reach of the state will thus lead to an increase in VCSE activity. However, this is not necessarily the intellectual basis of the Big Society; for instance, an influential 'Red Tory' think tank close to the heart of the Conservative Party have vociferously argued that building the Big Society may require active state support and intervention, including funding (Blond, 2009; Singh, 2009). Perhaps nowhere is the tension in current Conservative governing philosophy more apparent than in the field of public service delivery. For while faced with a fiscal 'crisis', Conservatives have promised to drastically reduce public spending *and* sought to give an enhanced role to VSCEs in service delivery. From a Big Society perspective any rebalancing of the welfare mix goes beyond simply commissioning services from the lowest cost provider, instead seeking to give advantage to VCSEs in recognition of the social value it is claimed they create. However herein lies a paradox. Achieving this aspect of the Big Society requires formal legislation, to which many in the Conservative Party are traditionally hostile.

The recently enacted private members bill, and subsequent Public Services (Social Value) Act, provides a window through which we can explore how this contradiction in Conservative philosophy is played out. The original Bill sought to provide VCSEs the ability to 'compete on a level playing field' in the delivery of public services by ensuring that public bodies commissioning services include provisions relating to social value. It was presented by its sponsor as (light touch) legislation to develop the Big Society through allowing VCSEs to secure reliable sources of income, and as a means to introducing the concepts of social and environmental value to all public sector contracts. It was widely supported by VCSE representative bodies – this is not just a Parliamentary issue.

The progress of the Bill through Parliament afforded an opportunity for an exploration of possible contradictions in political principle made explicit in political practice that lie at the heart of the Big Society discourse and across competing political governing philosophies in the Conservative Party. The Hansard record of the Parliamentary debate over the second reading of The Public Services (Social Enterprise and Social Value) Bill provides a detailed insight as to how legislation might be used to take forward aspects of the Big Society. Our analysis of this debate reveals some of the contradictory discourses within the Parliamentary Conservative Party around three key issues:

1. Should VCSEs be given a fiscal advantage to deliver public services?
2. How should social value be conceptualised?
3. What should be the role of legislation in creating the Big Society?

These are symbolic of wider unresolved tensions within the Conservative Party, which are played out within the Big Society agenda. Predictably how these questions are answered in Parliament is, at the extreme positions, dependent upon members' moral and ideological compasses. But at the centre of the Conservative Party there is no obvious compromise. The support of the Government for the principles of the Bill would suggest that the Big Society is in the ascendancy. But whilst the initial proponents of The Bill may have sought to legislate for a Big Society, the outcome of the Parliamentary debate was a Government led compromise which appeased almost all those favouring a Market Liberal approach to public service delivery.

The debate over the second reading of The Public Services (Social Enterprise and Social Value) Bill provides interesting insights into current tensions within the governing philosophy of the Conservative Party when it comes to the question of commissioning public services. Significant fault lines are exposed. While both Market Liberal and Big Society proponents wish to see the role of the state in the delivery of public services reduced, there are distinct differences as to how this strategy should progress. For Market Liberals there are two dynamics at play. First, the size of the state is criticised: the state should withdraw from many of the activities it is currently engaged in. Second, there is no specific preference for which organisations pick up this activity – the market should be free to all; the most efficient (typically large private sector companies) will win out. The picture is more complicated for proponents of the Big Society. While they share much of the critique of the over-weaning state, there is a preference for service delivery by VCSEs because of the social value their activities generate. Unlike Market Liberals, the extent of public services is not necessarily reduced; rather the mode of delivery is changed. But this opens up a second fault line: it implies active state intervention (central Government legislation) to support such organisations at the same time as the Big Society promotes localism – local control of decisions about commissioning and the like. The Government's response indicates a reticence to legislate: but no legislation ends up appeasing the Market Liberals and large-scale private providers, as evidenced by the recent allocation of prime contractors for the Department of Work and Pensions' new Work Programme.

In a sense, the debate over the Bill (and broader debates around the Big Society) is exposing well-established tensions within Conservative philosophy given that the Party is home to (amongst others) Market Liberals and those with more traditional commitments to stable community, self-help and local distinctiveness. Whereas the Conservative Party under Thatcher saw a 'free market-strong state' compromise within the party influenced by the ideas of the New Right (Gamble 1988), the debate over the Public Services Bill provides evidence that the Party is engaged in a new battle of ideas. Evidence from the debate – and the broader response to the current fiscal crisis – suggests that in practical policy terms it is likely to be the Market Liberals who win the day.

Please note that a paper on which this presentation was based has recently been published: Teasdale, S., Alcock, P. and Smith, G. (2012) Legislating for the Big Society? The case of the Public Services (Social Value) Bill, Public Money and Management, 32(3):201-208.

8. Research Slam Headline Presentation Community Groups: Still Below the Radar?; Angus McCabe

- Small community groups are numerically the largest part of the Third Sector – but remain the least researched

- The distribution of community groups and activities is uneven (a post-code lottery?). However, substantial levels of community activity exist in areas where, using official data such as the Charity Commission, there are apparently 'charity deserts'.

- Community groups may deliver services for and with the public. These are not, however, public services. The motivations for establishing and sustaining community activity lie outside official policy agendas – though those groups may deliver policy benefits (e.g. health and wellbeing outcomes).

- There is no evidence that small community organisations want to 'scale up' to take on local services/management of assets etc. Activity is rooted in the community (of interest or geography) and community issues rather than, necessarily, a motivation for organisational growth. There is more interest in supporting others to replicate successful activity in their communities – rather than 'delivering on their behalf'.

- Community activity can make substantial changes in the lives of individuals and groups – but do not have the capacity (in terms of time/resources etc.) to address structural inequalities and broader social needs (e.g. poverty).

- In the context of 'Big Society' and deficit reductions – on some (entirely self-funding groups) there is little or no evidence of impact – yet. For others (with small grants etc.) there is emerging evidence of 'compound disadvantage' – or multiplier effects – loss of small grant, loss of free/affordable places to meet, increased difficulties in recruiting volunteer support and loss of pro-bono advice.

- Learning in community groups tends to be peer lead and experiential – learning by seeing and doing rather than formal training/use of the internet. However, depending on geography and relative wealth access to networks that support active community learning are unevenly distributed

- There is an emerging picture (which requires further research): community groups (and communities?) opting out of the political debate/process: *the political language has nothing to do with our lived realities.*

9. World Café: Discussion on the Implications of Research Findings for Policy and Practice

The 'World Café' discussions were linked to each of the key presentation themes from the research headlines exercise. The aim was to explore the implications of TSRC findings for policy and practice. Underpinning the discussions was the feeling that, in a period of rapid change and uncertainty in the Third Sector, there were perhaps more questions than answers . This is reflected in the key notes from each theme presented below.

Theme 1 – Community Groups/Below the Radar

Is there a connection/disconnection between 'traditional' below the radar organising in communities and new forms of activism – e.g. Occupy or 38 Degrees?

Are there things to be learned from those new forms of activism and how can this be supported? Is there a need to move away from formal organisation/structures to more networked ways of working?

How can the voluntary sector (and small community groups in particular) effectively lobby to influence local/national contracting processes and decisions?

How/will below the radar groups benefit from right to manage, right to challenge, right to buy?

Are we returning to Robert Owen mutualism/socialism or laissez faire capitalism under Big Society – and which would better serve neighbourhood development?

Need to explore changing ideas of community – e.g. with social media not geographical any more.

Community activism is a self-sustaining eco-system that can be diverted by top down policy initiatives and by discrimination

Theme 2 – The Voluntary and Community Sector in Real Times

How do you build the confidence of communities to 'come up' if they want to?

How do we sustain resilience? Not put up and shut up but health/wellbeing, stamina and opportunity.

Do we need to pay more attention/know more about the natural life cycle of community activism?

Do some people/groups just burn out? Do we need a mix of people to enable community groups to regenerate themselves?

It's important that people feel that they can 'let go' and others bring in new ideas

Does community development have an impact in sustaining community activity?

Why does community activity happen in the first place? Is it just a response to external threats?

How/does gender 'play out' in terms of volunteering and community action?

Are the new infrastructure arrangements meeting the needs of community groups?

Local Authorities and the large voluntaries need to 'open up' to support smaller groups.

'Below the radar' counters the idea of 'broken Britain' – but talk of diversity means that the message of people's commonalities is being lost

There needs to be a greater understanding in policy of the diversity of community activism – of those that 'are heard' and those that are 'not heard' (either by design or choice).

Theme 3: Social Enterprise/Public Services (Social Value) Act

Can you/should you monetarise the social value of everything? What really is the added social value of voluntary and community activity? Are there other ways of 'measuring' the value of this?

Social enterprise is very now – will it last? Will it bring about new ways of organising/working?

Theme 4 – What the Numbers Say

Is there a contradiction in the state seeking to encourage volunteering?

Is the definition of volunteering too narrow? Many people who are active in communities would not define themselves as volunteers

People who work are more likely to be volunteers than the unemployed. Is this just about a lack of resources or is something else happening?

The less well-off give a larger proportion of their incomes to charities, does this suggest that third sector fund-raisers should focus more on the rich?
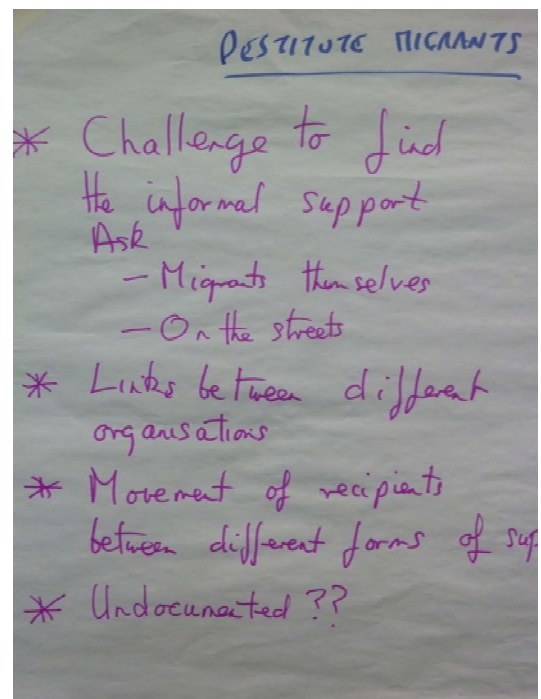
Miscellaneous

How does TSRC define itself/its role?

TSRC research methodologies should be empowering and not done onto communities.

Professional ideas of community are out-dated – how do we change this?

There are changing boundaries between what communities 'do' and the role of the state. How do we better understand this? What should those role boundaries be?

DESTITUTE MIGRANTS
* Challenge to find the informal support Ask
  – Migrants themselves
  – On the streets
* Links between different organisations
* Movement of recipients between different forms of sup
* Undocumented ??

10. Potential Research Areas/Questions

This session, in three groups, explored potential future key research questions and issues for the third sector.

GROUP 1

How to build confidence in communities to 'come up if they want to'.

How do we sustain' resilience': not 'shut up'/'put up' – wellbeing, life expectancy, stamina, opportunity.

Nature of community activism is changing (e.g. Occupy/32degrees etc.). What can we learn from them and how can they be supported?

Exploring the role of social media – a changed sense of community that is not geographic.

Scored out – but interesting question – Social value – how do we define it in ways other than monetary?

Question submitted by email from this group after the event: should below the radar use the community arts work to explore other under-researched areas of the (below the radar) Third Sector – e.g. sports groups etc.?

Two observations/questions from this group that are not research questions:

- How does TSRC define itself?
- TSRC research methods should be participatory and not done onto communities

GROUP 2

Connect/disconnect between new forms of activism (Occupy etc.) and traditional methods of below the radar organising

Impact of privatisation on below the radar groups – hijacking voluntary effort? Linked to – Are we Robert Owen mutualism/socialism or laissez faire capitalism in a Big Society and which would best serve neighbourhood development?

How can the voluntary sector best take advantage of current opportunities – e.g. lobbying locally/nationally and influencing local (service) contracts?

How much use are below the radar/community groups/voluntary organisations making use of the right to challenge/manage etc. (Localism Act)?

GROUP 3

How/will private sector organisations work in collaboration with the voluntary and community sector-contracting, funding, resources, training?

Using the social value act – will TSRC consider doing research within the public sector about how this is being implemented – do they know of its existence and how have they interpreted it? (And prepared for it?)

Map differences between central and local Government funding streams

Impact, if any, of initiatives such as local elected Mayors/Police and Crime Commissioners/Troubled Families initiative in terms of opportunities/loss of opportunities for the voluntary and community sector.

Overall theme from discussions – a period of rapid change in the voluntary and community sector with the breaking down (perceived) of traditional definitions of the voluntary/private/statutory sector – how can research help us understand this period of rapid change?

11. Event Evaluation

The final exercise was an evaluation of the day using 'archery targets' (see photographs). Overall, 14 people completed post-it comments and with 6 scoring the day as 'excellent', 6 as 'very good' and 2 as 'good'. No-one scored the event as 'fair' or 'poor'.

Scores	Comments
Excellent	- Great – and useful - Great to be around like minded people and explore ideas and issues - Brilliant organisation and management of the event - Fabulous – never enough time but a lot was gone through - Interesting day: liked the short punchy presentations with table discussions. Makes a change to spend a day with researchers who have a different perspective on issues - Very informative – sharing views and ideas. Looking at different areas to work with voluntary sector organisations
Very Good	- Interesting and stimulating presentations – great networking - Good networking. Fascinating discussions but a little broad and unfocused - Stimulating - Very useful session and discussions. Some good contacts made - Good to interact with people from different sectors - Networking interesting and getting other people's perspectives. Nicely organised workshops and event as a whole
Good	- Gypsy and Traveller workshop: some more discussion rather than more presentations would have been helpful - Interesting subjects – especially in relation to volunteering – should everyone play a role? Can't people just say that they are not interested without feeling guilty
Fair	
Poor	

EQUALITIES BELOW THE RADAR

Third Sector Research Centre

Reference Group Meeting and Research Slam

27 September 2012

Birmingham Voluntary Service Council (BVSC)

Participant List

Attendance

Name	Company
Nadia Ahmed	Pathfinder Healthcare Developments CIC
Pete Alcock	Third Sector Research Centre
Randi Baden	Federation for Community Development Learning
Belinda Blake	Rights and Equality Sandwell
Sarah Cemlyn	University of Bristol
Eileen Conn	TSRC Associate Fellow
Marina David	Barrow Cadbury Trust
Pam Dixon	
Chris Ford	Newcastle University Business School
Jayne Francis	M-E-L Research
Jacqui Francis	AdinaMay.co.uk
Cath Gilliver	SIFA Fireside
Katherine Gordon	Birmingham Chinese Community Centre
Claudette Graham	Interchange/ University of Liverpool
Louise Hardwick	University of Liverpool
Naomi Landau	Third Sector Research Centre
Natalie Lynch	Involvement Innovation
Rob Macmillan	Third Sector Research Centre
Angus McCabe	Third Sector Research Centre
Steve Miller	Faith Based Regeneration Network
Hemant Mistry	Hertfordshire Equality Council
Catherine Mugonyi	Blackpool Council
Debbie Pippard	Barrow Cadbury Trust

Adrian Randall	TSRC Associate Fellow
Phil Regan	Philip Regan Creative
Sean Risdale	Advisory Council on the Education of Roma and other Travellers
Kenneth Rodney	CfED
Andrew Ryder	TSRC Associate Fellow/ University of Bristol
Christina Schwabenland	University of Bedfordshire
Robin Simpson	Voluntary Arts
Kamalpreet KaurSingh	Involvement Innovation
Simon Teasdale	Third Sector Research Centre
Phil Ware	TSRC Associate Fellow
Bob Williams	Kings College London

Apologies/Unable to attend

Asif Afridi	BRAP
Carl Allen	
Jane Andrews	Aston University
Surrinder Bains	Bains Consulting
Douglas Bennett	
Gaynor Brooke	Victim Support
Dawn Carr	Stroke Association
Edward Coley	Two Heads
Lesley Connor	Freelance
Gary Craig	University of Durham
Robert Darko	Department of Community Development, Ghana
James Derounian	University of Glocestershire
Dlamini Dlamini	University of Swaziland
Steve Forrest	IASS University of Birmingham
Ben Gilchrist	Tameside Third Sector Coalition
Margaret Harris	IVAR
Christina Hyland	Newman University College
Scott Jacobs-Lange	Bristol Community Housing Foundation
Llinos Mary Jehu	Bangor University
Momodou Lamin Manneh	Foundation for Disabled People
Janice Marks	Federation for Community Development Learning
Owen McFarlane	

Muhammad Mukther Uddin	Fahima Tourism Network
Florence Namachanja	Women Without Borders Kenya
Amanullah Nasrat	HEWAD Reconstruction, Health and Humanitarian Assistance Committee
Iram Naz	WEA
Alaba Okuyiga	AOK Training
Samuel Owusu	Protect The Needy Foundation
Val Paramar	Away Forward Foundation
Terry Potter	Newman University College
Hakeel Qureshi	Greater Manchester BME Network
Pauline Roche	RnR Organisation
Mandy Wilson	Independent
Joy Warmington	BRAP

About the Centre

The third sector provides support and services to millions of people. Whether providing front-line services, making policy or campaigning for change, good quality research is vital for organisations to achieve the best possible impact. The Third Sector Research Centre exists to develop the evidence base on, for and with the third sector in the UK. Working closely with practitioners, policy-makers and other academics, TSRC is undertaking and reviewing research, and making this research widely available. The Centre works in collaboration with the third sector, ensuring its research reflects the realities of those working within it, and helping to build the sector's capacity to use and conduct research.

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Below the Radar

This research theme explores the role, function, impact and experiences of small community groups or activists. These include those working at a local level or in communities of interest - such as women's groups or refugee and migrant groups. We are interested in both formal organisations and more informal community activity. The research is informed by a reference group which brings together practitioners from national community networks, policy makers and researchers, as well as others who bring particular perspectives on, for example, rural, gender or black and minority ethnic issues.

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