



Third Sector Research Centre

Conference Report

Looking to the Future:

Community Work in England

7<sup>th</sup> April 2016



## Introduction: About the day

Looking to the Future: Community Work in England was prompted by the announcement in December 2015 of the closure of Community Development Foundation (CDF). This underlined the loss of resources for community work at a national level and mirrored similar reductions at a regional and local level over recent years. The impact on the ability of community workers and the communities they serve, to have a strong voice, have access to learning opportunities and networks is evident. In the case of CDF the loss of this national presence in terms of voice and influence has implications nationally, across England.

However, the main purpose of the conference was to look to the future and to create a space for participants themselves, rather than present a specific solution or structure. The purpose of the event was to encourage ensure open ended discussion in order to ensure congruence with community work principles.

To this end, a number of workshops took place in the morning around themes suggested by those attending (see below).

### Morning workshops:

Workshop title	Host
Community Development/Community Organising and Asset Based Community Development; Common Grounds?	Marilyn Taylor/Marj Mayo
Opportunities for resourcing Community Work	Richard Quallington
Policy opportunities and spaces for Community Work	Karen Garry
New opportunities for Community Work: Health	Gabriel Chanan
New opportunities for Community Work: localism and neighbourhoods	Naomi Diamond
Social media as a tool for Community Work	David Wilcox
Building alliances with other professions and activists (This session will include feedback on the England Standards Board survey of trainers and practitioners)	Ann Hindley
The relationship between Community Work and Community Economic Development	Mike Phillips
Sharing Community Work learning and resources on line	Charlie McConnell

In the afternoon, eight parallel workshops explored strategies for developing community work in relation to:

- Learning
- Networks – locally, regionally and nationally
- Strategic voice and influence.

These were followed by three workshops focussing on each of these strands, pooling the thoughts generated in the previous group discussions. The day ended with a plenary with reports from the themed workshops, pulling together possible strategies for the future.

This report demonstrates the depth of discussions covered by the groups and workshops, which require careful reading in their own right. The plenary discussion reflected the understanding that the event was an initial facilitation of this process, rather than identifying or promoting concrete proposals.

The plenary report back highlighted the following points that could be taken forward:

- Offers to organise regional events, noting the success of previous roadshows and standing conferences, to ensure wider access to planning and discussions
- Opportunities to contribute to the work of the Federation of Community Development Learning (FCDL), Local Trust and Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) in supporting community policy across England
- Sharing of the attendance list at the end of this report also contains contact details for all participants (with agreement) and can be used for further networking and action.

Over to you!

Mandy Wilson, Matt Scott and Angus McCabe

### **Acknowledgments**

The organisers wish to acknowledge the Third Sector Research Centre at the University of Birmingham for hosting the event, Barrow Cadbury Trust for their financial support, all the workshop facilitators (both for their work on the day and in writing up workshop notes) and Helen Harris for all the administrative work ‘behind the scenes’.

## SUMMARY OF EMERGENT ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

(Compiled by Alison Gilchrist from workshop notes)

- Organise further events like this at regional and national levels.
- Address current fragmentation by networking at every level and sectors to find 'common ground' and shared commitments.
  - Reach out across different 'disciplines' to link up with like-minded people who are working with communities but may not use the same terms
  - Encourage the 'next generation' of community workers to connect with existing networks
- Look at the policy environment (e.g. devolution, localism and community rights) for opportunities to influence policy and practice
- Make space for informal learning, mentoring and critical reflection
- Make better use of resources and agencies already available, including our own time and energy to develop practice and training opportunities. Suggestions included
  - CDF archives
  - Local Trust and BL 'Reps' networks
  - Observe and learn from national networks in Scotland, Wales and Ireland
  - International networks such as IACD, European Community Development Network, Community Development Society (US) and others.
  - Look further afield in the world to identify good examples of participatory democracy (e.g. Brazil) and campaigning (social movements)
  - Academics, research centres and university courses (placements, etc.).
  - COLtd and the community organisers academy
  - Promote and adopt the National Occupational Standards (2015)
  - Develop and support quality training for new and experienced community workers
- Make greater use of online forums and digital media to hold discussions, collaborate on writing and reflection and ensure open access to existing resources and training materials.
- Future opportunities to develop this agenda:
  - IACD can help support the creation of an England network
  - FCDL is organising a conference in the Autumn
  - Forward this report to relevant foundations and the CD Legacy project, hosted by Local Trust

## Reports from the workshops

Please note that these are not edited – everything has been reproduced verbatim.

### Morning sessions

<b>Community Development/Community Organising and Asset Based Community Development; Common Grounds?</b> <b>Hosts: Marj Mayo and Marilyn Taylor</b>		
This workshop was quite full, so we started in three groups looking at the strengths and limitations/challenges associated with the different labels. These are summarised below:		
	Strengths	Limitations/challenges
<b>ABCD</b>	It is palatable to power holders Gives communities power over their own assets Builds on the assets already there	It is palatable to power holders/popular jargon Problems tend to be defined from outside Project focused Power holders and commissioners don't tend to see people in the community who are positive and want to contribute as an asset. Is it 'market language'? Where does the power lie?
<b>Community development</b>	Underpins all the other approaches Value driven Community led Supporting the grassroots into collective action for social change. Underpinned by learning Long legacy even if not currently in fashion Prevention of problems that would crop up further down the line	Sustainable? The rhetoric is Do-It-Yourself but needs a catalyst to get it going Need to address contradictions/potential for co-option by power holders Takes time Need to reclaim CD
<b>Community organising</b>	Starts with networking Connects to thoughts and feelings Goes out to the grass roots Organic Goes from needs to strengths to action About challenging power Empowering	Prescriptive, top down and Tory No links to local organisations Lack of resources/time to do it properly Dependent on talent/drive of the organiser Susceptible to commodification Gets focused on negotiating services/ not rights based.

Overall, there were some misunderstandings about different approaches (largely due to programme funders' rhetoric rather than being based upon direct knowledge of what was actually being achieved and how it was being achieved on the ground). In addition, there are different approaches within each 'category'.

But what became clear as groups fed back was that:

- There is more common ground than difference when the work is of a good quality: common values and principles, listening, starting from people's own concerns, networking, collective action, critical reflection, accountable to the community, challenging power, social change.
- But the language is easily co-opted by people who don't 'get it' and comes in and out of fashion.

There are lots of different ways to mobilise people but applying these different terms is unhelpful - in the end the strengths and limits of each are dependent on the quality of the work.

What these approaches have in common is the challenge they pose to other forms of professional practice and to the individualistic consumerism that shapes people's perceptions of democratic involvement.

The important thing therefore is:

- to foster mutual understanding;
- to resist attempts to promote one over the other but to promote the common values, principles and practice (Several people referred to the National Occupations Standards as a benchmark);
- to find ways of demonstrating the value and impact of these to policy makers and funders over the long term.

The reality is that communities organise for change, power holders resist and will find all sorts of ways to co-opt it. But there will always opportunities for those who look for them.



## **Resourcing community work**

**Host: Richard Quallington**

### **Opportunities:**

- strong impact agenda attracting other players such as universities who have personnel, expertise, venues and spaces which can be utilised
- small amounts of money are available mainly at a local level and sometimes a lack of money can be an opportunity for increased community action
- success breeding success, easy to get money on the back of good work but more difficult for larger projects
- innovative approaches being led by people's interests and needs for more inclusive engagement
- money is still available for where there are very specific pieces of work/niches e.g. young people
- a lot can be done with very little
- power and contribution of volunteers
- informal approaches increase reach and impact although good facilitation is always key
- helps when local people are leading work and are central contacts
- providing frameworks/structures for volunteering/involvement
- lack of support for those leading/facilitating work

### **Resources:**

- smaller organisations need somewhere to go for support and guidance
- creation of local networks through and with local partners
- people/groups coming together
- a lot is available and accessible online but this still needs wider promotion to ensure inclusive accessibility. Person to person support is still key where online is not an option
- need local, regional and national hubs for community work support
- passion and commitment
- role of other organisations where there is an overlap i.e. faith groups, housing associations, RCCs
- collaborative campaigning can help
- utilise existing and more sustainable infrastructure such as faith groups, sports clubs
- personal contacts and people's personalities can make the difference but how do we widen benefit of this if no space to share?
- Trustees having the right links
- Volunteering opportunities from corporates although this tends to be very patchy

### **Key actions:**

- More events like these
- Facilitation for the facilitators (mentoring)
- Free, accessible and quality resources need to be better promoted
- Looking at how a critical mass of community work activists can have an influence/voice
- Widening the scope of what we recognise as community work, who does it and where it happens (e.g. faith groups, new arrival communities don't get trained in community work, they just do it)
- Faith groups are a massive resource but society's attitude to them can dampen their potential to contribute.



## Policy opportunities and spaces for Community Work

Host: Karen Garry

How do we get CD ideas into policy?

How do we not lose all the learning and good practice from Neighbourhood Renewal?

Local Authorities now focusing only on statutory responsibilities – statutory duties to engage communities, importance of linking community activity into strategic agendas

### Opportunity 1: Devolved regions

e.g. within Greater Manchester, Wigan has adopted a community asset-based approach (also a Big Local area) – this has been shared across the 10 LAs as part of Devo Manc and Manchester now also considering taking this approach.

Director of Public Health in Stockport (Stephen Watkins) also supportive of CD.

Challenge with regional devolution is that it is an undemocratic structure – power held by elected Mayor & local MPs only.

Opportunity to get CD on the regional devolution agenda when LAs are coming together to have conversations about how they collaborate and integrate – as an underpinning principle for working together.

Challenge is to identify the key players who will listen, be open to developing a CD strategy and champion it. Need to develop arguments for the efficacy of CD, build a business case for bringing services together at a local level that supportive key players can use to influence/persuade others.

There is a lot of asset mapping going on and learning about asset management – how communities can be empowered to do this, especially as remaining public services are increasingly being co-located and more buildings become potentially available for community use.

Devolution is an opportunity to overcome some traditional barriers to collaboration between sections of the community e.g. opportunity to bring women's groups together to engage collectively with Health & Social Care and Human Capital devo strands – rather than competing. Having the networks/relationships to do this is very important. Using the devo agenda to cut across intersectionality, as an opportunity to collate data on who groups are connecting / working with – bringing that knowledge/those networks to think about the social enterprise opportunities offered by devo and embed CD in new structures.

CD never becomes self-sustaining – social enterprise works well in areas where capacity has been built but not in areas where people need support to grow. CDers are not going to be paid to do this work anymore (many already doing it as volunteers) – you can do a lot with volunteers but communities need paid support/co-ordination/infrastructure – people/grants/buildings.

There can be a tendency for groups/communities to be parochial but there are a lot of people/policy makers without a CD background who are interested in knowing how to engage people in policy agendas – they'll just get on and do it their own way if CDers don't step up – opportunity to influence and inform.



Where people are starting to work on co-design / co-production – how can CDers support and inform their developing practice e.g. in CCGs?

CD to inform the strategic development of co-production processes – including decision-making processes within LAs – changing their practices.

Need to create spaces for people to step aside from the institutional ‘selves’ to work in transformational ways – on the boundaries of professions / edges of institutions – CD is good at interpreting policy creatively.

Q. how do CDers get into institutional spaces when we are no longer being paid to be there?

CDers to be more self-organising now no longer govt funded to do it.

There are now lots of spaces to be creative (govt doesn’t care what CDers do) but no influence?

Progressive Tories are a possible asset.

### **Opportunity 2: wider political change movements**

John Trickett MP – citizens assembly on constitutional change

CD should be involved in this – how do CD practitioners form alliances with e.g. Democracy alliances, Occupy movement, etc. to influence change on a large scale? – How can CD values be shared with these movements?

Grassroots campaigns are not informed by CD values and reflective practice – CDers can bring these attributes to the table.

Campaign organisations need evidence of the difference CD approaches make / to help get them on board – demonstrating impact. E.g. co-production project on Health & Wellbeing including impact assessment.

Lots of re-thinking of democracy, local government etc. – look at Barcelona & Brazil – citizens committees & assemblies.

Global and online activism – lots of opportunities for collaboration.

### **Additional points**

Use the policy instruments we have to ensure existing rights are not eroded such as woman’s right to choose.

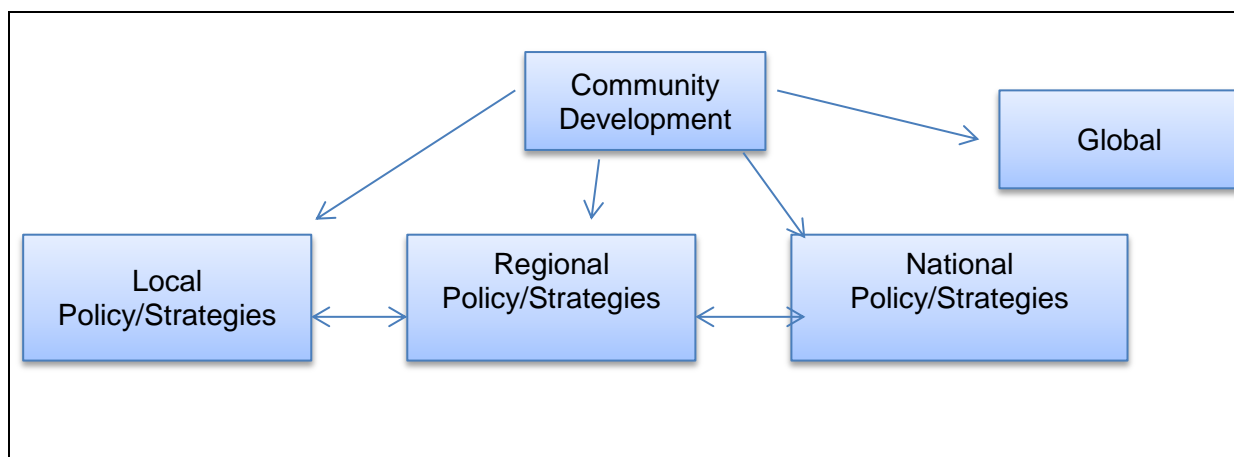
Mustn’t keep reinventing the wheel.

Big Local – active at the local level, puts local groups on the national map – but it is still a struggle to influence at the local level

EU funding is still an opportunity – lots of funding for action research but it goes into universities e.g. Connecting Communities, what spent on? CD as academic exercise.

How to get all existing CD resources online and freely accessible e.g. stuff produced under Labour govt.

Ageing CDers – not growing new ones – heritage issues, how capture knowledge & skills? Record the history of real communities that did some great stuff.



## New opportunities for Community Work: Health

Host: Gabriel Chanan

There were only seven of us in the workshop and we first discussed why health wasn't a priority for most delegates. All of us doing work in the health field could see multiple connections with mainstream community development, but acknowledged that others might think that health is an area too specialist for them to enter without particular skills. It is true that there have been limited opportunities for CD in health in the past, but the area shows signs of opening up, and it is important that people with CD experience should be aware of this.

Current health policy is seriously attempting to broaden out from the purely medical tradition to all the social determinants of health, in effect all other social issues, thus providing a platform for a wide generic approach. Public Health England issue profiles of social conditions in each locality that need to be addressed. Key new policy levers are given at the end of this workshop report.

We made a distinction between community engagement seen as top-down attempts by health agencies to engage people in pre-set agendas, and bona fide community development (sometimes promoted as 'the asset-based approach'). However 'community engagement' is the umbrella term for all relationships between health agencies and communities, and CD is seen as located within it. This is not ideal but it is a major foothold.

Delegates said from their own experience that there were a number of GPs and other health professionals who genuinely wanted to use community development, but there were blockages when they tried to put it into effect. Some GPs or commissioners lost interest when it became clear that the health benefits were long-term and would therefore not show up in their short term savings.

We acknowledged that CD could to some extent be done by other health professionals, but there was a dearth of suitable training that would enable them to do so. Patient Participation Groups (attached to each GP group practice) were in theory well positioned to be a link between primary care and the community, but most did not yet understand this potential.

We should urge health agencies to make more use of the Social Value Act, and to create CD partnerships with local authorities. Faith groups of all kinds are important in reaching into communities. We should also look to experience outside England, especially to Scotland. A model of

'Poverty Truth Commissions' developed there was being advocated for England by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Social prescribing can be a route to CD, but sometimes gets narrowed down to just referring patients to a voluntary organisation on a list. Every GP in Birmingham has a comprehensive list of voluntary and community organisations, provided by BVSC. But a much more proactive approach is needed, to strengthen the sector's capacity and development, which have suffered greatly through local authority cuts. Since health commissioners demand measurement, we should show them that it is possible to measure the effects of CD on the condition of the community sector in disadvantaged areas.

In the CD community we would like to see people becoming more aware and able to respond to opportunities that should emerge from current policy. These are the key policy levers: local health in England is now administered mainly by Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs). CCGs are required to have **community engagement strategies**. CD is mentioned in the policy documents and guidance to CCGs about community engagement<sup>1</sup>.

CCG plans for 2016-2021 are required to be 'place-based' as well as 'institution-based,' and need to reflect 'a shared vision with the local community'<sup>2</sup>.

To operationalise community engagement, current policy adopts six principles identified by the **People and Communities Board**<sup>3</sup>, a group set up to advise the Department of Health and **Vanguards**<sup>4</sup> on the development of this area:

1. Care and support is person centred: personalised, coordinated and empowering
2. Services are created in partnership with citizens and communities
3. Focus is on equality and narrowing health inequalities
4. Carers are identified, supported and involved
5. Voluntary, community, social enterprise and housing sectors are key partners and enablers
6. Volunteering and social action are key enablers.

An independent **charter for community development in health**, launched in 2014, calls on health agencies to enable people to organise and collaborate to:

- identify their own needs and aspirations
- take action to exert influence on the decisions which affect their lives, and
- improve the quality of their own lives, the communities in which they live, and societies of which they are a part.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *Transforming Participation in Health and Care*, NHS England, Patients and Information Directorate, 2013, <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/trans-part-hc-guid1.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> *Delivering the Forward View: NHS Planning Guidance 2016/17 – 2020/21*, NHS England, Dec 2015

<sup>3</sup> [www.nationalvoices.org.uk/fyfv](http://www.nationalvoices.org.uk/fyfv)

<sup>4</sup> A number of CCGs and other bodies undertaking pioneering work to fulfil new health policy

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.healthempowerment.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/NHSA-CD-CHARTER-FINAL-7-July-2014.pdf>

Bridging these complementary perspectives is a **guide to community centred approaches** published by NHS England. This reviews extensive sources of evidence and sorts them into a 'family' of 15 approaches grouped into four strands<sup>6</sup> Community development features as part of the 'strengthening communities' strand, associated with asset-based methods and social network approaches.

In March 2016 **NICE** published **revised guidance on community engagement**<sup>7</sup>. Though not statutory, this carries much weight with health professionals. From a CD viewpoint it is much improved from the original 2008 version.

HELP (the Health Empowerment Leverage Project, attached to the NHS Alliance) is producing a **handbook on commissioning community development in health** to be published in summer 2016.

Contact [gabriel.chanan@talktalk.net](mailto:gabriel.chanan@talktalk.net) to be updated when it comes out.

Gabriel Chanan, Director, Health Empowerment Leverage Project (HELP)

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<sup>6</sup> Jane South et al (2015), *A Guide to Community-Centred Approaches for Health and Wellbeing*, NHS England

<sup>7</sup> National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (2016), *Community Engagement* [nice.org.uk/guidance/ng44](http://nice.org.uk/guidance/ng44)

## **Opportunities for community work: localism and neighbourhoods**

**Host: Naomi Diamond, Locality**

### **Key themes/topics**

Importance of community work underpinning any intervention in a community e.g. neighbourhood-planning, asset development

Importance of long term, sustained community development and resources available in all communities (not just deprived) for core community work to help communities get organised.

Community Rights and Localism Act offers tools and tactics from communities to make use of, but don't mistake them for empowerment or community development. However, do recognise their role in making communities more equal partners at the table.

Planners and regeneration professionals need to make better links with community workers and involve them and their skills from early on in any process

Policymakers will always get things wrong. Programmes will always be imperfect.

### **Key actions/proposals**

Connecting up communities and creating community networks is critical. Networking horizontally & vertically.

We need to work together to defend community/public space against corporatisation. This is the next big battle. Community work has a role in this through opening people's eyes – the Freirean role – and waking them up to who controls their places and spaces. (new allies?)

Use the Localism tools and resources tactically (see [mycommunity.org.uk](http://mycommunity.org.uk)). Make use of the grants where possible to support community work. Make sure community workers are aware of the legal rights and how to use them.

Make Neighbourhood Planning more accessible by explaining its role in shaping social and economic conditions for communities. (for CLG?)

Make links with Universities and using their resources – Planning/Regen Depts as well as community/social work.

## **Community Work and Community Economic Development**

**Host: Mike Phillips**

### **Key Themes/Topics**

Credit Unions Big Local Social investment

Local development of Social Enterprise

Developing the Local Economy

Time Banking

Urban Farm -Community Energy

SME's and relationships with communities

Town Centres – what's the deal for the community (S106 etc.)-role of Local Authorities

CD -are we best equipped? Do we need other support?

Other issues were:

shrinking assets for projects like Community Development Trusts

Some of our communities are becoming Dormitory Towns

There is a key change in the world of work

Reduction of support mechanisms – Business Link, Cooperative Development Agencies, Local Authority Cuts.

How do we get people involved?

Helping people stand on their own two feet

Successful Community Energy Projects

Becoming Non grant dependent

Skill sets (matching these to opportunities)

Options to develop Community Economic Development

- Social Enterprise
- Knowledge
- Green Movement
- Young People
- Crowd Funding
- 

### **Alternatives**

-structural unemployment – job loss and self-sufficiency can this be tackled on a local level

Grant Dependent – what about the future role of local authorities?

Long term problems -not just austerity

Individual / Collective response

12% Community Involvement so we need a long term strategy

Opportunities in some areas

Alternative economy (drugs)

Not risk averse

Drastic changes in the economy

Various theories now challenging neo-liberal views

Including Paul Mason and others

Citizens Income

## Ways Forward

Ask the questions

Critical voice

Share info



## Social Media as a tool for Community Work

Host: David Wilcox

We started with a couple of possible worldviews to prompt discussion. One digital sceptic: tech doesn't make much difference. The other digital idealist: it changes almost everything ... and people and organisations will need to adjust.

### Worldview 1: Digital sceptic - low tech impact worldview

1. Digital technology isn't very important - it is mainly another set of tools.
2. Online networks don't really change relationships and business models.
3. If people don't use digital technology much, it isn't a priority for organisations serving them.
4. Services are going online, but existing channels will generally be available, or friends will help.
5. Organisations just need to add some digital methods, update their systems, and get some training.

### Worldview 2: Digital idealist - high tech impact worldview

1. We are living through the digital equivalent of the industrial revolution.
2. Digitally-enabled networks change relationships, influence, power and wealth.
3. Organisations serving people less able to embrace change should be particularly capable
4. The shift of services to digital by default could severely disadvantage people unless they are co-designed
5. Organisations need to change style, culture and operations to survive and serve.

Some points from discussion:



- We agreed that among community workers and groups there's a wide range of attitudes, and very different types of usage of technology. The emailers, chat users, social media enthusiasts are almost different digital tribes.
- While for some people Facebook IS the Internet, others are not joining for ethical/ideological reasons. They don't want FB, Twitter and other systems to have access to their data, and/or don't agree with the ethos.
- While we have some norms and ways of managing behaviour in public social spaces, the same is not necessarily true of online social spaces. And while privately-owned social space might be rigorously "policed" the same is not true online. It can be a risky place.
- It can be difficult to establish what to trust
- Community workers are often working with vulnerable people where close involvement with social media may be inappropriate
- While social media offers great potential for cooperation, these are personal networking technologies, depending on personal commitment and skills. This has implications for the dynamics of community groups still to be explored.
- Particular benefits of social media mentioned included as a campaigning tool, for research, finding out about key stakeholders. It can also be valuable in raising the profile of groups and voluntary organisations - whether locally or around an issue.

#### Flipchart notes:

Online support for practitioners is key.

Inform practice in diversity of fields, e.g. social care.

Enabling and supporting practitioners.

Influence policy makers – local and national.

#### Functionality

TED talks – choose video on topics/time available.

Audio booths – podcasts

Practitioner networks.

#### Current projects

GCDEX – global archive of CD resources for trainers and practitioners.

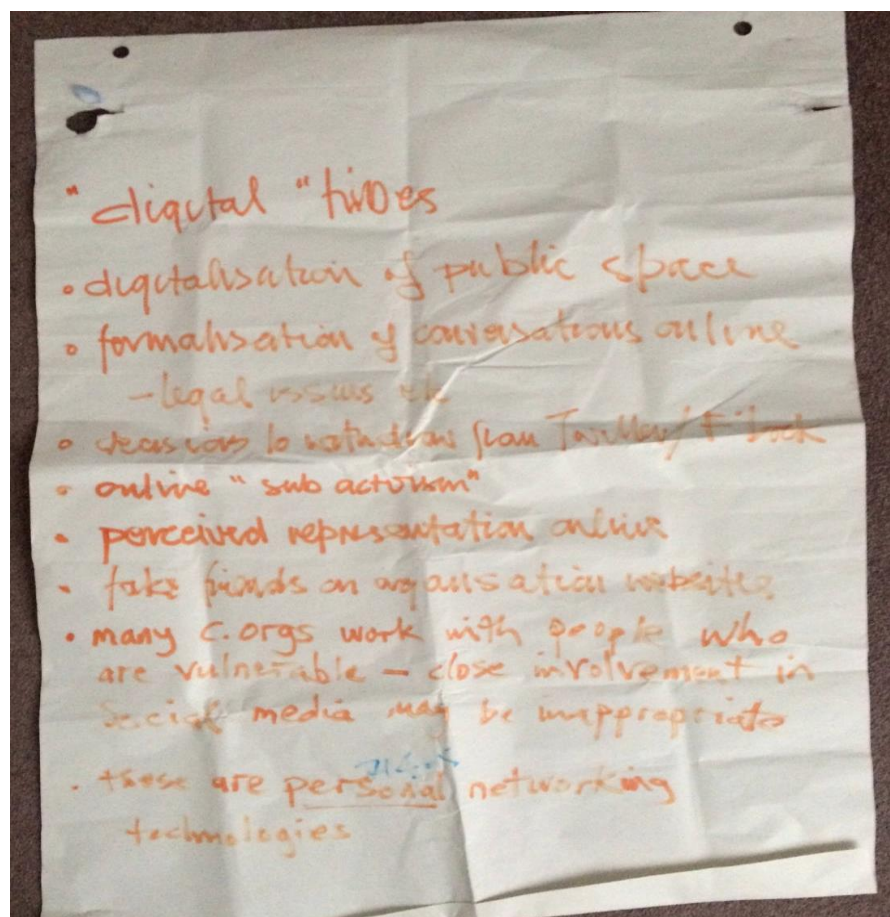
Online CE magazine – "isle of discussion".

The four corners connected

VCSS Camp

Net Squared groups

Datakind UK



Pro Bono Economics  
OR Research  
New Philanthropy Capital  
Nesta

### **Challenges**

Need a brand – kitemark  
Costs/management  
Attrition eg marketing  
Need for partnerships...  
Online systems – skills gap  
Serve needs of different audiences.

## **Building Links and Alliances with other professions.**

**Host: Ann Hindley**

### **Key themes/topics**

Only three people attended this session but all had some really valuable insights to bring – one from a social care background working with learning disabled people using personal budgets to remain active and independent in communities, one working for a local authority on a project that was inspired by the police and another who was involved in arts and creative work and work with offenders, thus demonstrating the sheer diversity of areas and roles in which community development values, skills and experience have a part to play. Other professional areas identified that have much to benefit from working with community work are libraries, housing associations, social enterprises, faith organisations, parish councils, the private sector, fire and rescue, schools, health. The NHS Alliance was mentioned as a useful network to make contact with.

They emphasised the importance of both working on the ground with local groups and networks and at a global level using social media.

Building on strengths within communities is important in terms of developing resilience

We need a way of seeking clarity through the whirlwind of what is happening.

### **Key actions/proposals (please add any relevant contact details)**

A network is needed to campaign for the sector. We need to show other professions/occupations how community development can help them to meet their targets and help them to incorporate it into their working practice.

Community development needs taking out of its silo and needs to be a part of other organisations' work with people. We need to shout more about the work that is happening.

People need accessible mentoring to help them work things out, especially through the whirlwind mentioned above.

We need ways of learning from each other's practice.

## **Strategies for Community Work Teaching and Learning – on line**

**Host: Charlie McConnell**

### **Key themes/topics**

**This session looked primarily at two practical examples of how CD/CW teachers and practitioners can share their materials across the UK and worldwide.**

**The first is the initiative from the International Association for Community Development called - the Global Community Development Exchange (GCDEX).**

GCDEX will be an on-line 'place', where community development teachers, practitioners and learners can share their teaching and learning approaches, tools and resources. In partnership with the US and the NZ CD associations, IACD is currently planning to develop a system which has the following features

Free, open source

Low maintenance, there will likely be very little admin support for this so needs to be a system which academics can easily self-post and retrieve

Low bandwidth to make it accessible to developing states

Simple and intuitive to operate

Scalable so that if it gets up-take we can later add some more sophistication in filing

Does not harass the users with endless alerts

Able to run on earlier versions of software

Crisp and clean and uncluttered

Can sort material by date deposited, or date of issue; resource media type; author or depositor and some developing sub headings

Only a bona fide member of IACD or CDS will be able to deposit and access the teaching and learning resources, which will include teaching materials, films, power points, games and other exercises for use with CD students. With members issued a logon and password.

**Next steps:** IACD expects to have a live version to share with interested members and practitioners at the IACD/CDS Minnesota, USA conference in July and to have the system fully operational by October 2016.

### **The second was The Four Corners of the Land.**

This is a UK social enterprise that is establishing an online paid subscription services, whereby community workers and trainers can log, search and view the results of activity across sectors - such as health, housing and community safety - and by demographics from ward to regional level. Organisations and networks can also download this insight to help improve their own impacts and outcomes.

There then followed a general discussion on the huge opportunities that the internet now provides

for inexpensive online networking and, for the depositing and sharing of teaching and learning resources for both pre and in service support and for pre degree activist training. It was noted that in Leicester, there were plans to deliver training entirely online. The OU and OC have long developed such opportunities. It was felt that online networking must however complement face to face training and that it must include field placements with quality CW supervisors.

There was concern expressed that CW/CD training at undergraduate level had declined with less courses now available in England. Existing training providers (and new ones), teachers and students would benefit hugely from accessing resource materials from across the world.

Concern was raised that we must not lose the work relating to the National Occupational Standards for CD/CW; about the weak nature of the CW/CD training courses endorsement system compared with Scotland and Ireland; and the fragile nature of the Federation of Community Development Learning. A rethink was needed here and perhaps a merging of existing national and regional support organisations in England. We should also learn from the past e.g. the broad nature of the interests that created PAULO and the Sector Skills Council.

### **Key actions/proposals**

There was a strong feeling in the workshop that whatever new structure supporting CD/CW in England is set up, it needed to include trainers/academics and not just CD practitioners. Any new English network should have links with other national associations and with existing and developing on line teaching and learning resources, and make more creative use of on line opportunities for CD practitioner, teacher and student networking.

Contact:

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## Afternoon Parallel Workshops 1: Voice, networks and learning

### The future – reports from afternoon session 1 workshops

Eight parallel workshops all looking at networking, voice and influence, and learning.

**Facilitator: Alice Wilcock**

#### How do we develop:

##### 📌 A strategic/policy voice for community work

#### What is there now and what would we like to see?

##### Current position;

- Commissioning of services from larger organisations, which means small ones miss out
- Local strategy in Gloucester – “you’re welcome” uses an asset based approach starting to influence thinking of strategic authorities – who don’t really know how to respond
- County wide open workshops used to listen to local voices
- Depends on how loud the voice is – e.g. Citizens UK – does it impact on strategy?
- Government officials are stepping into positions they shouldn’t to fill the vacuum left by no longer funded voluntary sector organisations

##### What is working/is challenging?

- CD NOS (national occupational standards) – values, standards and principles, need to be supported
- Needs to be QA – the need to provide something consistently to protect future advisors and/or wages
- Incoming trends like ABCD use cd terms, but don’t relate back to the NOS

##### What is the voice/influence/policy for?

- Do we need a policy voice – what would happen without one?
- What policy/what strategy? Government is devolved now
- What do we know about how community voice can inform strategy
- Role of the academic/research link with cdw?
- No commitment to the social value act
- How to turn power upside down so agenda is driven by citizens – statutory agencies want involvement but in **their** agenda
- What about the European voice for cd?

##### What have we decided?

- We need a consistent voice for the NOS – a informal membership organization or social enterprise partnership
- Local change can be slow – at the area’s pace – a tension with national change – quick wins

and faster pace

- Policy codifies actions that disguise inequality – will talking to them do the job of equalizing society?
- Using our role to ensure community voice informs policy and strategy

### **How do we develop:**

#### **☐ Formal and informal community work learning**

### **What is there now and what would we like to see?**

#### **Current Position**

- Community organisers ltd
- FCDL
- SCDC
- IACD
- Warwickshire cd workers network plus neighbourhood network
- Locality ????
- Big Local areas
- Voluntary community action networks
- The problem with networks is that they need resources to exist which can lead to need to co-opt
- Make lemonade – we all need friends

#### **What do we like/find challenging**

- Sharing, learning and collaboration
- Very disparate and almost accidental
- Talking to people
- You're not going to get nowhere if you don't network!

#### **What is a network for?**

- Connecting offline and face to face – using online support for offline work
- This is difficult work to do on your own – helps motivation and energy
- Peer support
- Share resources and ideas
- Problem solving and collaboration
- Building the evidence base
- Supporting fundraising efforts

#### **What have we decided?**

- Understanding networks are important resources and can be valuable
- Feeling connected as practitioners is important – titles are not, but we are all connected as cd workers
- We can't depend on programmes /government to do it for us
- Networking is very important and the basis of community



- How do we avoid organisations competing for funding?
- Place based commissioning versus issue based commissioning?
- Support (not run) informal networks

### **How do we develop:**

#### **? Support for community work network locally/regionally/nationally**

#### **What is there now and what would we like to see?**

#### **Current position**

- More free courses needed
- If it's called cd it don't happen – say we use the approach and call it something else
- Does it need to be accredited?
- MOOCS – massive open online courses
- Webinar courses
- Some courses have stopped

There are existing or new platforms that could be used for info sharing:

- Potential to use [www.thefourcorners.org.uk](http://www.thefourcorners.org.uk) as a sharing platform for practitioner networking
- Also the pelican network (platform for evidence based learning and communications for social change) <https://dgroups.org/groups/pelican>

#### **What do we like/what are the challenges?**

- Learning
- Sharing skills, knowledge and experience
- Reflective practice and supervisions
- What is the community solution? No top down options
- Grass roots/hands on learning
- Self help and mutual help
- Steep learning curves (challenge!)
- Use of online platforms to complement face to face learning
- Mentoring

#### **Why is learning important?**

- Keeps us interested
- How not to compete in a commissioning environment
- How/where do you learn to be a good neighbor
- Who does the quality assurance
- Need to continually improve – new tools, ideas, approaches
- Not reinventing the wheel
- Other organisations are accessing learning – where from?
- Link to European learning (and funding)
- CD is a state of mind – need to keep asking



**What have we decided?**

- Register of freelancers who are quality assured against cd NOS
- Use existing uni courses (eg Goldsmiths) to accredit informal
- Need to link independent consultants with a learning culture/opportunity
- Need to support the design of new courses
- Explore using four corners (or other online platform) to connect practitioners

**Facilitator: Sue Shaw****Voice**

In terms of VOICE the following organisations were mentioned:

- Youth and Community Training Agencies Group for national, local and international conferences.
- IACD
- Big Local 150 Trusts - but viewpoint is not CD oriented nor national
- Community Sector Coalition
- Rural Coalition/ACRE
- National level representation has virtually gone: but there are still Just W Yorkshire, FCDL, WEA, National Association of Neighbourhood Management, NALC.
- There is a Welsh group which meets four times a year, they come to share a consensus around NHS development, even though they experience it in different ways, there is a common base, a common voice. Are involved in policy and contribute to the fact that the NHS has developed differently in a range of ways in Wales vs England - this is about organic and evolutionary learning

Under the Radar research found very little nationally, a few at regional and local areas varied

**Need:** No doubt that need exists, the challenge is to get all the various organisations and interest groups in the same room, coordinate, coalesce into a more powerful voice with critical mass. Organisations are mostly focussed on survival at this point. Some have stability - such as Faith in Action. There is a real need for some sort of facilitative mechanism.

Are Universities a possible way forward: e.g. Birmingham, Durham CSJCA, Manchester etc. also Chicago, Nova Scotia, Vancouver etc.

There seem to be various strands articulated here, one strand around a need for co-ordination and unity, another around space for difference, is it possible to construct a mechanism which can facilitate both?

Big question about most appropriate mechanisms to facilitate networking

Perhaps we need to get organisations together and focus specifically upon the issue of exploring possibilities for networking and co-ordination

How about a Standing Conference? This model has worked in the past? Look at example of previous

networks: ACW/SCCD/CDX. Community Sector Coalition still going

Also local coalitions. BME sector: national level, none; regional some, sub-regional some organisations - (Just West Yorkshire?).

Could it be issue based? Big Local Trusts take an issue based approach, similar to Church Action Against Poverty

Thematic may be a way forward: Child Poverty Action Group, or the Mumsnet Model - online only and not about an organisation.

How develop?

- There is a need as evidenced by interest in this event
- Need for facilitation/co-ordination
- More time at present being given to survive than other functions which support CD and community workers
- Role for universities?
- Look to influence organizations that are more sustainable and likely to be around to take up issues and put these on their agenda
- Issue with the term 'voice' what does it mean, who's voice is it, where is the mandate?
- Need to look for different models that enable voice/influence

## Learning

Case studies: National Youth Agency, Occupational Standards, 3 years degree? Masters; Directory of Social Change.

Current options: TAG = National organisation for training Community workers has potential for co-ordinating role at that level

Group felt very strongly that the CD Accreditation scheme and core competencies should be retained and continued via portfolio learning, practice based. It was very high quality and practice based.

Carol Packham at Manchester Met University evaluated it and has info.

Professionalization debate continues - core skill set needs to link front line activists with training and Universities.

Could we perhaps have academics and practitioners come together in the form of an Institute  
Centre for social justice at Durham is about learning

The CDF had a depository and an archive, we need to make this available, silly to lose the knowledge and don't want to reinvent the wheel.

Do we need benchmarks and accreditation criteria - who would feel comfortable with benchmarks (not many). Learning has to take account of voices and difference and innovation

We run courses for CD practitioners, trouble is they are not afforded the same professional status as say social workers and they need to be

We also need to think about learning models, e.g. the portfolio model needs to enable people to integrate learning with action on the job, we need to bring this back and raise the profile of this form of accredited learning

Need equal standing and recognition - especially facilitation skills which are fundamental.

CJSCA mentioned as championing participatory research and action, Ethics guides.

Politics of influencing - tactics for marginalised groups; share info and skills; being gagged at election time needs challenge; contracts with public money mean some organisations are not allowed to

campaign.

Need a personality to lead/ PR voice like Shami Chakrabati.

- Community work does not have the same standing as other professions, how do we promote this?
- Need to identify core skill set and provide opportunities to build on this.
- Core competencies need to include facilitation and training skills - what we do is to enable people to do things for themselves.
- Need for learning on the 'politics' of learning, negotiating policy environments and mainstreaming marginal interests.
- Who can speak with legitimacy? Section 28 restrictions/containment, how do we get around this? We need a lobbying and campaigning function for the sector. Who speaks up for us?
- Role of celebrities/well known people in promoting social causes, what and who informs their mandate?
- It's not about who we do it with but HOW we do it, i.e. enabling/empowering/facilitation
- Opportunities to share learning from other countries
- We have no brand, no mandate - who can articulate our way of thinking and working?
- Need a clear agenda of how to proceed - we operate a hidden process that is vital to finding solutions to current and increasing problems.

Today is a vital first step - it demonstrates need, urgency, the depth of expertise and experience that still exists but lacks focus, agency, voice and credibility.

We need a new Coalition that represents a broader and more inclusive compass, e.g. New Arrival Community, Rainbow.

#### **Networks:**

- Opportunities for Local Trust to co-ordinate? (using CDF legacy money)
- Need a coalition approach or we just attract the same people all the time
- Role of academic organisations like in the US
- Local Trust to ensure CDF archive is accessible and improved over time
- WEA worth exploring?

Big problem with networks is that interests don't necessarily cohere, i.e. some of the players who are now in the community development field are very well resourced, in it for the money, or with mainstream political agendas, so problems around commensurability of interests and resources. You have also got the tension with networking that there is a need for infra-structure, but one which operates in a way which is flexible, open and able to change.

Also have to be mindful of changing environment, as the environment changes so too do needs and possibilities for networking.

**Facilitator Helen Garforth**

Across all the three areas we asked ourselves (but didn't answer!) – **"Is what we want for**

**Community Development more of the same to fill in the gaps and slightly tweaked, or is it something radically different?"** We didn't answer it completely!

#### **How do we develop: A strategic/policy voice for community work**

##### **What is there now?**

- A (diminishing) clamour of fragmented voices proclaiming their own models and approaches....
- ...highlighting differences not similarities
- Creative funding bodies e.g. (sometimes) Big Lottery Fund, Local Trust etc.
- Professional silos, and 'brands' of community development
- Specialized voices, not mainstream
- Locality

##### **What would we like to see?**

- Make alliances with other professions' training - provide input to embed a CD approach. Principles across other professions e.g. health, schools and other corporate and public sector professions
- Simple statement of principles to which different institutions can sign up to – (1 pp A4 only – short and sweet)
- Network (Community) builders strategically as well as locally
- Different ways of resourcing/ funding CD that is collaborative not competitive, and cross sector

#### **How do we develop: Formal and informal community work learning**

##### **What is there now?**

- Formal and informal learning through local infrastructure bodies
- Recognition schemes for people involved in paid and unpaid activity
- Youth and community work courses in higher education institutions
- WEA courses
- People are having to take / increasingly taking more responsibility for their own learning – including digitally
- Increasing demand for endorsement/ accreditation of university and college courses in CD
- ESB
- Use of National Occupational Standards 2015
- High quality talks and lectures on subject online
- FCDL (albeit on a small scale)
- Blogs and online discussion groups
- Short courses and workshops organized by think tanks
- Use of own networks, networking
- Everyday life and conversation (therefore hidden, opaque, ephemeral)

##### **What would we like to see?**

- More learning from other practitioners doing similar things e.g. Community Builders
- Harness people's capability in their own learning (e.g. using google, YouTube etc.)

- More opportunities for intrinsic learning
- National networks
- Access to peer support/ knowledge, informal learning, etc.
- Units of CD learning/ training that could be used with different workers doing some kind of CD (within a wider role?)
- A return to the Achieving Better Community Development model as a way of understanding and delivering CD
- YouTube instructional videos on how to do CD!
- Networking opportunities to increase digital and face to face
- Network thinking
- Talk with/ involve/ be led by young people – as experts in digital context
- More opportunities for informal community work training locally
- Value of informal learning recognized, not compared to formal – valued as different and resourced
- Funding for training built into new work.

### **How do we develop: Support for community work network locally/regionally/nationally**

#### **What is there now?**

- Individual/exclusive organisations (not joined up?)
- Big Local
- ACRE
- Co-production practitioner network and local networks of NEF
- Facebook groups – local, national and international
- International Association for CD (several of us hadn't heard of it until today)
- Plunkett Foundation
- Social Enterprise Networks
- NHS Alliance
- Notion of a Common Good Framework beginning to be developed

#### **What would we like to see?**

- Time allowed in work to attend and create networks
- National networks
- Cross sector networks that connect economic with social and community development
- Digital networking

#### **Headline comment to round up:**

Networking seemed to be the key word here, so we might like to ask, going forwards:

- Where are the people who are good at building networks?
- Who pays the network builders?
- How do we support networking (or community building, or connecting) (incl. face to face and digital – mixed media) at a strategic level?

**Facilitator: Alison Gilchrist**

**How do we develop:**

**A strategic/policy voice for community work**

**What is there now?**

- *Hostile political environment – with strong emphasis on self-sufficiency in communities, but without guidance and support*
- *Opposition and critiques to current government becoming increasingly difficult*
- *But statutory-based CD work is being re-discovered and implemented in some areas.*

**What would we like to see?**

- *More links with global networks and sharing of good practices internationally.*
- *Neighborhood networks, supported by CVSs and similar infrastructure bodies.*
- *More sharing across different disciplines – planning, health, etc.*
- *Cultural change needed in local authorities and in government in order to understand how CD can help them to ‘mobilise’ communities.*
- *Use of the concept of co-production to persuade people to engage with communities.*

**How do we develop:**

**Formal and informal community work learning**

**What is there now?**

- *Universities provide a pool of interested people who are still committed to community work.*
- *Professional qualifying courses in youth and community work still exist; though most are now heavily oriented towards youth work.*
- *Independent CD short courses (such as run by Community Works, and formerly CDF)*
- *Apprenticeships – make more use of these schemes to create CW posts*
- *Community organisers academy*
- *FCDL (just about)*
- *Sector Skills Councils and the updated NOS*

**What would we like to see?**

- *Preserve/nurture academic traditions and critiques so that there continues to be an informed foundation of theory and evidence.*
- *E.g the Planning Alliance based at University College London.*
- *More accreditation of experiential and prior learning.*
- *A repository (for all the archives) where guidance on different tools and techniques for CD can be accessed – perhaps as ‘open source’ materials.*

## How do we develop:

### Support for community work network locally/regionally/nationally

#### What is there now?

- *Successful national CD network examples in Scotland, Wales, Ireland and around the world*
- *NatCAN and NCIA exist as online forums and sources of information*
- *Collapse of England networks and infrastructure bodies – CDF, CDX, Community Matters, Urban Forum, etc. Why? Have we become too reliant on resources provided by government (molly-coddled with expenses, etc)?*
- *Fragmentation of communities and of the field*
- *Reduction in public spending has led to high levels of voluntarism, community activism and freelance working*

#### What would we like to see?

- *An annual conference like today's.*
- *Co-ordinated self-help, self-organising to establish some kind of national infrastructure with a central focus – needs leadership, support and resources*
- *But 'no money means no strings' so emergent organization could be very independent*
- *More use of social media and online forums*
- *IACD may be able to offer support to developing an England-wide network.*
- *Would be good to have this linked in to local and regional levels as well*
- *Need to involve newer, younger community workers and those from BME communities, who may not use the term community development but are certainly working to empower communities.*
- *Potential resources to draw on: from Local Trust (the CDF legacy money) or linked to the Strategic Development Goals which require national plans and strategies to be developed.*

## Facilitator: Eve Davidson

### Policy

Policy - what issues do we want to raise?

Can we have ambassadors to influence policy?

Choosing Programmes vs skills sets of workers

Praxis first - policy voice - fighting against massive land grab by government

Civil society has fundamentally changed. It is a commodity through funded programmes

### Voice

Do we need a national voice? How would a new org / body be valid for the communities we work with?

How do we respond to national and international events and policy?

We need a voice to challenge poverty and austerity

Where is the anger?



How do we still stay on the government agenda?

On ground networking mediated by web ... but good reasons to have influence!

Systems changed to meet ideology of exclusion. No oppositional culture - divided people no voice

Bring together for voice

How can we best use social media?

CW can have voice and influence if comes from grassroots.

We need to have a real / authentic voice with a radical edge - where is the anger?

We need to build from the ground up. How can we make sure our concerns stay on the agenda?

### **Networking**

Can we have a federal approach?

Can networks be funded?

Need Dialogue space that will include those not heard e.g. refugees

How do we share skills?

There is a disconnect between academics and communities - how can we create space to have dialogue?

### **Neighbourhoods**

Community atomisation How do we unlock neighbourliness?

Issues around housing / health / education

There is a vacuum between Government and neighbourhoods. However, Local Trust will have 10 year programme.

Where does a neighbourhood meet Gov?

### **Community Development**

CD needs not to be precious.

No connection between practice and schools of thought / critical dialogue – both of which CDX et al were good.

Lack of true diversity CDX et al were good at both of these

Big Local well-funded for training but what informs this approach?

Values and opposition versus professionalization - self-interest - “sold our souls”

Multiple different sectors in 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector. Citizen action, salaried action

Motivated by doing the doing - what can we do without £? What do we need £ for?

Should not be about grants / programmes but CD should be value based.

Legacy of CDX etc - £ and knowledge

We need paid workers with longevity

**Facilitator Alana Gooding**

General Comments Made: Are there any direct connections with the voluntary / community / faith sector organisations and the DCLG now?

*Those responding to this questions felt that it tended to be fragmented with possibly Faith Action & Health (check with Gabriel) having the more easily recognizable routes to influence*

- Need to learn from the experience in Scotland, Northern Ireland & Wales
- Need to connect up learning / influence and networking
- Need to unpick what we mean by self-sustaining networks (map what's there) and ensure connectivity to be able to meet challenges effectively

How do we develop:

- ☐ A strategic/policy voice for community work

What is there now and what would we like to see?

NOW:

- Community Organisers
- Notts County Council Community Empowerment & Resilience Programme – public sector want a single point of contact with VCS & VCS want a single point of contact with the public sector & Notts CERP seeking to facilitate this
- Varies hugely between local areas e.g. Brighton; Oldham Co-operative Councils
- Some good stuff happening but fragmented
- Compass – how to make community voices heard in its own organization
- Constitutional reform – interest in (deleb?) & participatory decision-making

What would we like to see?

- Re-address / review “Community Planning” with underlying CD principles to create sustainable community groups that act themselves & hold authorities to account – need someone to start it off & set it up
- Understanding influence through network mapping
- Treat communities as clients
- Professions should not just listen but also join the debate
- Develop conversation on and off line
- Educating & empowering communities with their rights
- Could Local Trust fill some gaps?
- Need to archive stuff from the past
- Single point of contact
- Given government is not interested, how to we promote CD on a national level? Where are the people who might listen to us? Need to identify allies
- Participatory budgeting
- Joseph Rowntree funding to input into constitutional reform

Distrust

Ideas

Commitment

Expectation

Delivery



How do we develop:

☐ Formal and informal community work learning

What is there now and what would we like to see?

NOW:

- Lots of CD training resources – FCDL / ESB / SOSTENGA
- Recognition programmes run through Sostenga and endorsed by ESB
- Some degrees – very few & may be Youth & Community (Balance? Focus? Practice placements?)
- MMU – Asset Based CD (Oldham)
- Northern College approach
- NHS Alliance
- Local Area Co-ordinator (LAC)
- Informal collaborative training (residents & frontline workers) at a local level

What would we like to see?

- LinkedIn Community Development Group
- Informal collaborative training (residents & frontline workers) at a local level
- Introductory online courses to keep the field of work alive & healthy
- Regular regional meet ups / network
- Regional events
- 1:1 conversations
- Is there a national online forum for CD practitioners to share info & advice?
- Reflective practice
- Status of community workers in change projects ?
- Annual conference
- After so long how come there are community workers who are not aware of the CD NOS?
- Value accreditation in CD higher
- Set some form of requirement for basic skills but not in such a way to stifle grassroots activists – “balance needed”
- Get informal learning from FCDL learning written up
- Training in CD for professionals

- Gap between national level & small local groups
- Sharing of learning opportunities within Big Local & Community Organising programmes

How do we develop:

☐ Support for community work network locally/regionally/nationally

What is there now and what would we like to see?

NOW:

- SCIP (local) – Swindon Community Infrastructure Partnership
- Community Media Association (national)
- Prosper Communities (local CIC – Surrey) – bringing CD workers together
- NCVO
- NAVCA
- Community Catalysts CIC – have developed a website / directory for community enterprises where they can get support from the organization and peer support
- “Notts Help Yourself” – web-based
- Nottingham Together - infrastructure network / CVS
- One Request – online networking app
- “Strengthening Communities” (local – Rotherford)
- Big Local
- Community Organisers
- London CD Network
- CCWA (Churches Community Work Alliance) – support & encourage CD based principles in faith-based organisations doing social action & community work
- Streetlife – online local networking

What would we like to see?

- Active listening
- Building trust & respect within your communities
- Demonstrating good practice
- There are a lot of us out there but often working in isolation
- Collaborative support at a personal level – understanding the dynamics of personal networks (social agency etc.)
- Learn & Mean CD Network – uses social media & meetups that are financed by the members & delivering what the members want. We should be able to do this !!
- RSA is a nice model
- Use social media more with occasional meetups
- Get all generic CD workers together in a locality to support each other
- Understand / identify assets in networks & willingness to share
- Study network resilience and risk – use network analysis to evaluate performance (measure changes in connectivity over years)
- Map the networks using events, surveys etc to identify influencers at different scales (levels?)
- Incorporate local knowledge in network databases

OFFER:

- FCDL – host September 2016 gathering / event

TO DO

- Community Development Blogs / Papers – small groups writing papers online together → creating an informal network for producing a product



**Facilitator: Tony Herrmann**

**How do we develop a strategic/policy voice?**

- **What is there now?**
  - Lots of informal 'shaping' of views
  - Community & voluntary sector
  - Unions (Unite)
  - Organisations doing engagement inc Councils
  - Networks
  - Research?
  - Influencing/fitting with councils' policies
  - Localism Act, Neighbourhood planning
  - Big Local – Local Trust: Lots of practice, evaluation and research
  - DCLG Community partnership Board – need for CD representation
  - Think Tanks, IPPR?
- **What would we like to see?**
  - A practitioner led national network
    - connecting to networks that already exist
    - Sharing and growing
    - 'We can show you how' approach
  - Use local academic institutions and 'what works' to influence all including the media
  - We need to move away from constantly talking about WHAT is CD (and arguing internally about it) and talk about HOW to do it – use examples in practice e.g. Big Local

**How do we develop formal and informal community work learning?**

- **What is there now?**
  - Universities
  - OCN accreditation (is it still valid?)
  - Open university
  - Faith communities learning
  - Big Local funded
  - Apprenticeships
  - Informal learning in the community
- **What would we like to see?**
  - Use legacy money for national network of training offers
  - More coming together of practitioners and academic world. There is a current gap between (some) academics and practitioners.
  - Universities and colleges making broader offers in the community e.g. getting involved in community projects and organisations, research, students, information etc.

## How do we develop support for community work networks locally/ regionally/ nationally?

### • What is there now?

- Big Local – reps and local areas
- My Community
- CD networks e.g. London
- Community empowerment on social media
- Local informal networks

### What would we like to see?

- Local networks – linked by national practitioner led network (**Use Legacy money**)
- Can use <MeetUp.com> to find & setup local networks?
- We need to ‘infiltrate’ everywhere i.e. talk about and use CD approaches to influence all kinds of people, organisations, professions and networks such as
  - Police
  - Health
  - Local government
  - Housing
  - etc
- Themed networks as well as local CD networks

## Facilitator Ann Chapman

### How do we develop:

#### 📌 A strategic/policy voice for community work

### What is there now?

- ..... “a prolonged silence”
- Some institutions but not a strategy: - Locality, Local Trust
- Absence of a collective voice for community work
- No locus/focus, no place where the different strands of community work are brought together
- Not a “digital voice”
- No professional body – though professional standards
- Some held the view that the world is a very different place to environment of CW in 70s and 80s, that communities of interest were now more important than those of place and that this changed the whole notion of CD– some commented that the environment has always varied/changed in different times and places and that communities of interest have always existed with varying levels of significance in CD

### What would we like to see?

- A difference of opinion in the group:-
  - Want a local England voice for community work. One which is visible for policy makers. That can capture the diversity and different voices in the field
  - Don’t want one voice



- Local Trust to be asked to host social media space and networks for community work debate and sharing
- A place for policy makers and other to go to for community development
- To find out what CD is and what the current debates are
- A voice for community work that captures the very different ways in which cw practice operates and is seen and which links this to thinkers and writers
- Questioned and debated the merits of a new national organisation – no agreement reached. Also debated if there was a new national organization should be run e.g. a membership organization funded by subscriptions, run by community workers or by government (which department?)
- A national CW voice needs to consider who it is talking to - up ( to communities, ) down (to government) , across ( to community workers and other agencies)
- Need to consider other ways of organizing for CW e.g. UNITE model – i.e. with radical voices and movements outside of the mainstream – movements outside of standard traditional community work activity, need to engage with these movements –with young people who are campaigning for a different world
- Zeitgeist mentioned i.e. a need to consider "the defining spirit or mood of a particular period of history as shown by the ideas and beliefs of the time".

#### **How do we develop:**

##### **2 Formal and informal community work learning**

#### **What is there now**

##### **Formal Learning**

- Many university courses are struggling to recruit viable numbers
- Part –time courses especially are experiencing problems and difficult to recruit to
- There is no real appetite in some areas e.g. Sheffield for students to take up community work courses. Felt that this was different in London where there was an appetite
- The health field had been successful in getting community work into other curricular – some felt that this was a problem as health courses were using a health not a social model

##### **Informal Learning**

- Digital and data skills learning are very popular with community groups although less so with infrastructure organisations
- Still battling to show the impact of informal learning – felt there was a need for better data to show impact
- Big barriers exist now for informal learning opportunities – funding opportunities and provision of crèches are much reduced. Cuts to Children’s Centres have had a negative impact. Previously this was a key route for recruiting white working class communities into informal community work learning and often led to jobs in the field – funding cuts have meant opportunities for routes into cw employment are poor. Pressure from job centres to evidence job seeking also a barrier to taking up informal cw learning opportunities
- Volunteering opportunities in community work often taken up by highly qualified young people
- Progression routes from informal to formal learning and/or jobs also felt to be poor

### **What would we like to see?**

- Free online courses – lots of them
- Also learning opportunities that include interaction (face to face and online) with others
- Clear, accessible, varied “continuum of learning” – from volunteering to PhD
- Resources to support access
- CW courses in the Health, Housing and Faith fields where there was felt to be big demand
- Peer to peer mentoring and learning schemes – these do not necessarily need to be accredited – mixed views on the benefits/costs of accreditation
- Discussion on learning as a “transactional” arrangement
- More informal learning and sharing

### **How do we develop:**

#### **2 Support for community work network locally/regionally/nationally**

### **What is there now**

- A few scattered local and regional networks e.g. Northumberland Community Development Network
- Durham – Sarah Banks - training model for Social Justice
- INFED
- Specialist networks e.g. health, community economic development

### **What would we like to see?**

- A thorough look at what is happening regionally – identifying lessons learnt and sharing these
- Turning to and developing digital technology as a means of networking
- The start of a new, modern grassroots movement, grown from grassroots community groups – grow a new federation



**Bringing it all together – the final three workshops bringing together ways forward on learning, networks and voice**

**Networking**

**Facilitator: Shamsheer Chohan**

**Key points:**

- Purpose of any networking should be better outcomes for communities
- Who is building networking skills and capacity?
- There is a definite need for a national network
- Familiar structures are busted!
- Why can't we organise ourselves?
- We need to make a distinction between networking and networks
- We need something that fits the current environment and needs
- We need a space to talk about practice
- Due to cuts we need cheaper and easier ways to network – technology has an important role to play but can't be the only thing
- Networks are needed/important at all levels
- We need to understand how networks work – how best structure for maximum impact
- Networking needs to include voice/influence and learning to ensure they are more sustainable
- Need to be conscious of what terminology we use as recently calling anything CD has killed it
- We don't have to look for good examples i.e. Scotland/Ireland successfully running networks
- Needs to be inclusive of ALL people with interest in community work i.e. practitioners, academics, researchers, etc.

**Action, So what are we going to do?**

- Gemma Novis shared her online platform for networking and is happy to share wider (Four Corners)
- Matt Scott offered to do an event in London including Arts groups that play an important role
- Shamsheer Chohan offered to support co-ordinate any activity around Nottingham/East Midlands
- Dave Furze from CCWA interested in any activity in the south west (previously involved in CDSE) as well as being on any steering group nationally ([dave.furze@hotmail.com](mailto:dave.furze@hotmail.com))
- Wider engagement roadshow suggested (in regions?) for wider consultation and involvement in development of anything national

**Other points:**

- Need to develop links with other networks who do community work/CD but may not call it that i.e. Faith Regeneration Network
- Need involvement of academics (practitioner plus)
- 'We' created previous infrastructure...we can do it again)

- Technology is important but can't be the only consideration
- How we brand it is important
- Important to share learning about ways of organising ourselves as workers and activists (including via trade unions like UNITE).
- Big Local have CDF legacy money which has been matched so have a total of £40,000 to do a CD legacy project which could present opportunities

What also seemed clear is that people were saying, due to the demise in the numbers of CD/CWorkers that any new structure needs to appeal to those doing community work but who may not call it this. The work of a number of new groups from refugee/asylum seekers and migrant communities comes to mind as well as the work of many faith groups who we work with. They don't and won't have had (or need?) CD training but they are certainly doing CD.

## **LEARNING**

**Facilitator: Tina Hearn**

### **1. MOOCs & DIGITAL MEDIA**

Lots of ideas around MOOCs, could have online tasters and with AMDs, the possibility for distance learning and accreditation?

MOOCs could be put together which are about informing and inspiring as a form of evocative learning

Digital opens up a whole raft of interesting possibilities, but issues around age, digital exclusion and so on.

We need to explore funding for a hub, so things like MOOCs, CDF archives etc. can be collated?

What about a community portal which houses resources and contains links, directories etc.?

### **2. THEORY AND PRACTICE**

Real need to bring theory and practice together, a lot of critical, reflective practice has been lost.

This is particularly important in relation to say anti-racism, equalities, feminist and sexualities issues.

We do include anti-racist and critically reflective practice in our programme

Well, I'm talking about something beyond that – it's about critical reflection on the ground, about knotty political issues and beyond

### **3. MENTORING**

Provision for mentoring would be great - lots of people are starting out anew and could do with facilitating in a whole range of areas - collate a resource bank of people who would be willing to do mentoring?

### **4. DEVELOP & EXTEND EXISTING RESOURCES**

TAG could provide possibilities here

Lots of points in workshop 1 raised again  
Brokering service?

### **Actions**

- (1) Big Local – School of Community Development
- (2) Meetings like today – Unis?
- (3) Explore further – English Standards Board re portfolio based accreditation

### **Solutions**

Learning = multifaceted

Content + process + delivery + infrastructure

MOOCs + professional learning + accredit.

Mentoring – dissent – skills

Theory and Praxis Re-Links – e.g. anti-racism, unis and practitioners – social and economic analysis. AS Hubs.

Co-ord – Big Local + Local Trusts + CDF as facilitators of ???

Partnerships. Fed of CD Learning.

Alternative accreditation?

### **Policy**

#### **Facilitator: Nicky Stephenson**

Local activity/strategy.

National activity and strategy.

Regular/annual conference.

Networks/online network.

Challenging 'power' and using power.

Collecting evidence/case studies.

Focus on spec groups e.g. young people.

Different organisations/disciplines.

Need a succinct message backed by evidence.

England Standards Board doing research.

Depends who message is for.

Create simple straplines → tactics and strategy.

Who is the acknowledged body?

Mandate

Political lobbying.

Influence practice (various sector) – CDWs ageing group.

How to influence innovative thinkers.

- Develop a group to promote community development/work in the Labour Party.
- Coalition of existing orgs (national) to be a proactive voice into govt.
- From this conference ask attenders to respond to strategies in certain forums (that need to be offered).
- A mailing list (email) (like the community media association has).
- Publicise existing networks and co-ordinate their voices.
- Start a community work reminiscence group so we don't lose our history – and make younger generations aware.
- Strengthen opportunities to link CD practice with universities to influence policy in key areas.
- How can decisions better be localised along with resources – is “economy of scale” always king?
- Develop structured local and regional networks which cover consultation, voice, influence, advocacy work → accessible, digital forum/directory required. Make it work for local/regional and national levels.
- Do councillors really represent our ‘voice’ as a locality? What do we do instead?
- Is there a level/scale where ‘aggregated’ voices become meaningless?
- Use evidence of impact of Big Local to influence community engagement in devo max – role for TSRC?
- Promote the type of community work which CHALLENGES POWER AND ORGANISES PEOPLE. COLTD?
- Together!! Take the “challenges” of community development to our political affiliation
- Action planning conferences.
- Make this conference an annual event.
- Creating a loose national network of those interested in CD – with single interest themes e.g. health, local government etc.
- Organise a conference on zeitgeist change - bring those now writing those groups, organisations and communities who already are “ahead” and into the next zeitgeist (there are a lot of these). Speed up the removal of neo-liberalism as the current zeitgeist. NESTA?
- An annual conference to develop ideas and gather voices?
- Request seedcorn funding from Local Trust to set up a national network to be a ‘voice’ for CD.
- Spaces to resist and activate. Create safe spaces to be angry, on issues that oppress the Y&CD sector, which is open and accessible.
- Look to wider range of facilitators for voice and influence – e.g. academic bodies.
- Challenge – we have the right to challenge public policy.
- What could be a recognised social change lobbying body? Joseph Rowntree Foundation?
- To have and develop a voice – or voices – we need dialogues and connections across practitioners, academics and political struggles.
- Need to influence the media, not just policy and government! Develop stronger voice on radio/TV. Become visible!
- ACRE – a focus for rural community work.
- National Institute for Civil Society.

- How does the 'group' and 'individual' voice mesh – does 'more' mean 'better'?
- Together!! Launch a national debate re the relationship between public institutions v citizens and their assocs.
- Spaces for radical, critical, independent and analytical work out of political and social movements and conformed by these community development principles and values → to own these and value these.
- Commissioners need to see that community insights are good and often come up with surprisingly good solutions.
- Small good stuff – website development.
- Making policy makers/budget holders understand the benefit (financial and social) of community development.
- CD/CW working with community forums/networks to review/discuss/critique existing policy and work with communities to make changes.
- Use local networks (£ from CDF legacy) to influence 'workers', CD workers and others (health/police etc.) to practise effective 'real' CD and shout about it.
- Develop a National Alliance for Community Work...Voice.
- CD/CW needs to link more with urban planning and policy work and offer skills and values to work with communities fairly and equally.
- Accredited/professional/skilled community development needs to be valued and invested in; needs resources. Part of funding programmes?
- What do the national decision makers/policy writers already regard as having that role – in my experience, locally it's regarded as the VSC? (not saying that's appropriate).
- Voice, influence, support services, network, learning (and others) are all related and could usefully be brought under one roof.
- We need practitioners with government access, rather than the 'professional voice'.
- Need a body to mediate between frontline practitioners, academics, funders (?) across sectors.
- Get existing umbrella bodies together to agree a lead body or merge to form one = Locality? NANM? Local Trust?
- Linking into Labour party/opposition parties. Constitutional assembly process starting in June re participative and deliberative democracy.
- Selling our approach to other professional bodies.
- Use opportunity of development of combined authorities to embed community voice through civil society networks in new infrastructure.
- Developing strategy re devo max.
- Grow a voice by the bottom up. Who is not here that we need to hear from? How can we invite them? How can this voice be heard at a local level? How can this be the voice of citizens?
- Utilise local voices e.g. in Big Local areas to influence key policy areas.
- Explore setting up and/or linking up with UNITE, bringing paid staff and unpaid activists together, with support structure of UNITE.
- Online 'magazine' style peer led resource for practitioners.
- An online forum for sharing info and advice around CD practice.
- Online co-ordination of existing repositories of info and proactive sharing – Local Trust?



- Online forum – place for voices and debate – place for co-ordinating – place for explaining definition and value of CW. Hold CW digital resources.
- A membership structure a) to provide income and b) to tell the “voice” what to say!
- Use existing informal networks to draw out Community Development issues to influence: clarify what to influence to whom.
- Who do we want to communicate to about what? ID “Ears for the Voice” at local, regional, national level. ID Clear message to present to these “Ears” about what we would like to influence!
- Identifying who we want to influence and sharing contacts.
- Influencing Local Authorities via LGA (using case studies etc).
- We actually must influence PRACTICE. CD is a bit like a tribe where the young are moving out or unmotivated and uninterested in the traditions. The critical groups to influence are new practitioners in communities – CD workers and generalist workers.
- Showcase examples of where people and institutions find common ground when you’d otherwise expect them to be antagonistic or competitive.
- What ways are there of ‘tracking’ where our inputs do and holding people accountable?
- Setting out the ‘business case’ for community work – what can we help you to achieve?
- Need to have nationally recognised standards of community engagement/voice in each new policy/strategy that is legislated.
- We don’t all speak the same language literally! How to engage non-English speakers.
- Developing an evidence base for community work in rural areas – case studies. ACRE.
- Case studies of positive impact written in a way that those outside of community development will understand.
- Support/skills etc for exposing bad policy/practice eg sanctions making campaigning interesting.
- Make sure Local Trust consults on its new funding from CDF and how this can be used for networks.
- Finding sympathetic organisations to work with/partner.
- Pilot testing more different non-organisation affiliated approaches to engaging people and communities at a local level below of Borough organisations and to work across Borough.
- Establishing a Go To website – which is not controlled by any one body – but where we can share resources, links, blog etc. – communally owned.
- Linking across different levels and disciplines (e.g. planning, health, regeneration) to inspire and share practices/values.
- Open channels for groups to use by identifying routes to influence at local, regional and national levels – through identified CD organization (CD friendly?)
- Focus on promoting CD/CW as a proactive/generic approach that works – i.e. evidence based policy making.
- Recognition of the genuine value that agencies and communities working together have. Collective issue tackling – preventative and active too.
- Find and link up unlikely champions for community work/actions in a range of different but powerful institutions.
- Need to mobilise more online resources → social media, open access etc. to run groups who are interested in policy, policy processes and policy design.

- Voice in relation to what? Policy. Resource. Power. Democracy. May need different approaches.
- Connect all organisations working at strategy level on community development. DH, Public Health, NCVO, DCLG, WHSE, NHS Alliance. Join the policy dots – Care Act, Five Year (forward view), Public Services Act etc.
- Use statutory duties of community engagement to collate community voice and influence policy e.g. Healthwatch.
- Voice(s) has to come from ‘lived experience’ and critical analysis, theory, practice. Praxis.



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The following list contains the names of all those attending and those that gave apologies – and gave permissions for their email contact details to be shared.

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### 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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