Evaluation of the Communities in Transition 2 Programme

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1. Executive Summary

When CIT was designed, resources were (rightly) committed more to the internal rather than external evaluation – this is also true of CIT2. The rationale was based on the principles of 'participative, action learning' which underpinned the overall evaluation effort – evaluation was designed to help develop practice, learn lessons, provide feedback and encourage reflection amongst all those engaged in CIT2. It was not about writing an 'end of term' report. Accordingly, the volume of work undertaken by the internal evaluator is by no means fully represented here.

Rather, this report does different things:

- Summarises the history of CIT2;
- Discusses the key issues arising out of its implementation;
- Illuminates the practice lessons for future programmes;
- Provides the external evaluator the opportunity to comment on the issues raised by the internal evaluation;
- Re-runs the methods developed in CIT1 for measuring the broader impacts of project activity;
- Proposes a range of initiatives that could be undertaken to animate a debate about the significance of this particular programme for other kinds of community interventions.

Internal

The Community Foundation for Northern Ireland (CFNI) launched the Communities in Transition 2 (CIT2) Programme in 2007, with funding from the International Fund for Ireland. The lessons from the delivery and evaluation of the first CIT Programme (2001 – 2007) had an impact upon the operational and practice models of the CIT2 Programme. Contextual differences had a further impact upon the nature of the CIT2 Programme, including political and administrative changes, the economic recession and resultant policy changes and reduced funding opportunities. This short evaluation report will highlight how all of the above have made a difference to the delivery and local (and wider) impact of the CIT2 Programme.

The changing nature of "excluded" communities on both sides of the political divide, as well as differences in how community tension is manifested locally, mean that models of intervention striving to tackle issues relating to community development and peacebuilding must remain flexible, community-led and adaptable to changing local needs. Gatekeeping, sectarianism, antisocial behaviour, racism, paramilitary influences and (violent) splits within communities remain prevalent in many communities across NI and are compounded by varied support/lack of trust in policing, weak 'community policing' policies and the general lack of a peace dividend for communities most impacted by the conflict. This underlines the need for models of community development and peacebuilding interventions like CIT in

order to help communities to tackle these issues from the ground up and to proactively support them at the local level to do so.

Finally, it should be acknowledged that the practical, operational and policy lessons derived from the CIT2 Programme have already begun to frame new models of support and development within the work of the Foundation. The new Causeway Communities Engagement Programme (CCEP) and the new Social Justice Approach to Community Development Programme, in particular, have been built upon this learning. Both new programmes have adapted the CIT model in new ways in order to suit the current context of community development and peacebuilding work in Northern Ireland: CCEP will use the CIT model as a framework for engaging local communities and other stakeholders with new processes such as community planning, the power of well-being and community policing. The Social Justice Programme is adapting the CIT approach in order to develop a tool-kit to enable groups to re-examine the role and purpose of community development through a rights-based lens. In so doing, groups will by default re-consider some of their existing and previous functions, actions and objectives and the ways in which these impacted/will impact upon the wider community, other communities, their external relationships, statutory structures and power relationships. In other words, these two new programmes are seeking to tailor the CIT model to further relate to two specific changes faced by local communities: CCEP in terms of political and administrative changes (namely, the RPA); and the Social Justice Programme in terms of the changing nature of "excluded" communities. Both have arisen directly from the experiences of the CIT2 Programme and its on-going evaluation.

External

The core question for the evaluation of CIT2 is whether it delivered in practice the kind of impact for which it was designed and whether it fulfilled its promise of innovation. It claimed to be innovative in:

- its capacity to integrate community development and peacebuilding practices;
- how the target areas are identified;
- the ways in which local organisation is developed and supported;
- its internal research and evaluation resources employed for ongoing learning within the programme, and;
- how information and learning are shared across projects.

In fact, there is a wealth of evidence that innovation occurred in all five of these elements. Despite the many difficulties chronicled below, the engagement between social exclusion and community cohesion remained an ongoing commitment. The selection process was both comprehensive and transparent – so much so it connected with contemporary debates about the nature of knowledge production in the 21st Century. Again, the internal evaluation did not make light of the difficulties (and failings) associated with developing local organisation while still recording substantial, (though uneven) development. There was substantial

investment in capacity building, information sharing and cross-project reflection throughout the programme.

What kind of change did these practices deliver? Like CIT1, the evaluation of CIT2 employed a Change Matrix device to capture the broader impacts of project activity. Through working with projects and support staff, this:

- defined a set of dimensions of change that were derived from the goals of the programme;
- questioned what priority each had for individual projects;
- asked projects to assess the degree of difficulty in achieving change with each element, and;
- estimated how much change actually occurred in each project area.

The results from projects were compared with those of support staff to provide a more balanced assessment. The full details of the methods employed and results are provided in Section 4. In summary, it was found that:

- projects tended to prioritise change associated with the development of community organisation, community participation and work around social needs compared to dealing with community tensions. Support staff, however, did prioritise elements of work linked to community tension;
- curiously, many projects estimated their own progress as visibly less than the associated support worker – perhaps related to staff having a more experienced view of what progress is feasible in difficult situations. Moreover, estimates of progress did vary across these dimensions – with projects emphasising funding, community facilities and community organisation. However, when change was weighted by priority (how did projects progress on the issues that were of most importance to them?) and changeability (how much progress was made on those issues of greatest difficulty?), support worker estimates were generally lower than projects'. This reflects the workers' emphasis on tough issues that were difficult to change;
- Estimates of overall progress by the various projects showed considerable differences amongst the group. Discussions about this with CFNI staff pointed to initial set-up problems that delayed progress and the role of gatekeeping in stifling overall community development.

A crucial issue for the evaluation was to consider how the lessons of CIT2 could animate the policy debate. In that respect, two contextual issues were considered paramount:

- First, the region has been suffering the effects of the global recession following the credit crunch with subsequent employment falls and unemployment increases. This has been connected to a range of fiscal strategies and benefit reforms that will disproportionately impact on Northern Ireland. In short, austerity is offering a bleak future for already marginalised communities;

- Second, however, there is a range of policy and structural changes that offer opportunity for new ways to approach old problems. The Executive deserves credit for launching a new anti-poverty initiative (the Social Investment Fund) in the midst of ongoing public spending cuts. It's important, however, that this kind of initiative be delivered in ways that both empower and include the weakest communities – CIT offers important lessons in how to do so. Similarly, the structural changes in local government, to take place in 2015, give local authorities new powers and responsibilities. The challenge of merging disparate areas will be heightened by taking on a whole set of new responsibilities. The need to involve communities (without compromising their right to criticism) in areas like well-being and community planning is paramount. CIT offers a font of experience and reflection on how some of that could be implemented. It has already influenced the design of new programmes – for example, the 'Think Big' application explicitly mentions the learning of CIT.

The policy challenge is thus to deliver a set of messages about how social exclusion and community cohesion can be tackled in an integrated and effective manner. The recipients of such messages should be: political parties; Assembly committees; local government; other, non-statutory funders and; and the communities in which these projects were based. There is no guarantee of an 'open door' to the practitioners of CIT, but if there is conviction that the lessons of CIT have something to offer to the contemporary environment, there should be a resolute policy focus at local and regional level. Beyond that communities in the UK and, indeed, the Irish Republic are also struggling with recession and fiscal retrenchment. There is thus scope for exchanging ideas outside the boundaries of Northern Ireland. Since anti-poverty strategies have been adopted by a number of local authorities in the UK, these might be the first point of contact. In short, CIT will only be a success when it informs and animates the broader policy debate.

2.   CIT2: Programme Development and Operational Practice

Context

In 2007, the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland (CFNI) launched the Communities in Transition 2 (CIT2) Programme, (CIT1 commenced in 2001), with funding from the International Fund for Ireland. The lessons from CIT1, in particular the model of support developed and the findings from internal and external evaluations impacted upon the shaping of the second programme.

The underpinning concept of CIT is that, despite decades of financial support for community development, many communities in Northern Ireland have "fallen through the net". Previously described as 'Areas of Weak Community Infrastructure' (WCI), CFNI has been conducting action research programmes to proactively target and support such communities since 1995. Frequently they are communities that have failed to avail of the resources and support from which other areas continually benefit. They have generally escaped the notice ofpolicy makers, funders and support organisations.

CIT has a particular interest in WCI areas where community tensions and/or residual paramilitarism exist and has developed a model of community development tailored to address such issues. The CIT approach has three distinct features[1]:

1) It is able to adopt a more risk-taking approach to outcomes-focused work than most mainstream, government-funded programmes.

2) It provides proactive, on-the-ground support to those areas most in need of this particular type of development. It 'stays the journey' with groups and doesn't walk away when problems arise.

3) Budget spend is flexible across the years of support.

The programme objectives are:
- To promote the establishment and development of community infrastructure in ten disadvantaged areas[2] and to nurture and sustain the participation of those excluded or at risk of exclusion;

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[1] The first CIT Programme was jointly funded by Atlantic Philanthropies and the International Fund for Ireland. Atlantic Philanthropies also had a long-term, flexible approach to the development of the model, which enabled work on the first Programme to continue for considerably longer than was initially planned. The approach and genuine interest of both funders has been critical to the development and success of the model and the first and second programmes.

[2] The original intention of the Programme was to support ten local geographical communities; however, a number of the areas were made up of more than one estate. A total of fourteen local estates/villages were supported under CIT2. In terms of the evaluation, these will be analysed as eleven separate projects due to partnerships between several of the areas: Cregagh and Clonduff, Lisanally and Alexander, and Antiville and Craigyhill. The original partnership planned for South Lurgan (see Partnership and Collaboration below) is being treated as two separate projects, as Queen Street and Avenue Road decided not to work together as one group.

- To develop the capacity of the selected communities and participants to engage in inclusive community organising;
- To identify and address the issues of cultural, economic and political alienation of community groups within areas of weak community infrastructure that are experiencing community tension;
- To influence policy-making at local and regional levels in relation to such areas;
- To impact on the current perceptions of a range of political parties, their representatives and a range of policy makers regarding the potential of community action and development.

The areas chosen for CIT2 were as follows:

CIT 2 Project Areas	Area profile	Perceived Tensions
Dromore village, Co Down	PUL[3]	Class, sectarianism, flags/ murals/bonfire
Seapatrick estate, Banbridge	PUL	Flags,murals, bonfire/ paramilitary influence
Cregagh and Clonduff estates, Castlereagh	PUL	Interface/ paramilitary influence/ sectarianism
Lisnahull estate, Dungannon	CNR	Alienation; murals; racism
Queen Street/Avenue Road estates, Lurgan	PUL	Interface; paramilitary influence; flags/emblems
Annsborough, Co Down	CNR	Sectarianism/flags/ Dissident activity
Lisanally and Alexander estates, Armagh	PUL	Alienation; interface; bonfire; flags; paramilitary influence
Parkmore estate, Craigavon	PUL	Bonfire; flags/emblems
Antiville and Craigyhill estates, Larne	PUL	Paramilitary influence; Flags/emblems/murals
Doury Road estate, Ballymena	Mixed- PUL and Traveller community	Interface/ flags/murals; paramilitary influence; drugs / crime

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[3] PUL = Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist and CNR = Catholic/Nationalist/Republican

Finally, the Communities in Transition model is underpinned by six key principles:

1. **Involvement** – Community development and peacebuilding work in areas of weak community infrastructure and community tension must be community led. Local people must be involved from the outset in identifying local needs and effective means of support, establishing an in-depth baseline position and deciding how to take work forward and how progress will be measured.

2. **Support Needed** – In areas with no/little history of community development where community tensions have contributed to this lack of development, it is critical that face-to-face support and advice accompany any package of financial support given. This is a long-term process and requires a considerable investment of time on the part of the agency or group delivering the support package.

3. **Overcoming Barriers** – The wider impact of the conflict in Northern Ireland, as well as the implications of many local barriers to development, mean that groups are not always able to predict, plan and chart their progress in a simple way. Once groups reach the stage where they've gained the confidence and trust of their community to discuss local (and wider) barriers, it is important that they realise that there will be setbacks that could not possibly have been predicted and planned for. Developing risk management strategies is often crucial to their success, but it is equally important that they are given ample time and space to learn from such setbacks through frank and honest analysis of the causes and outcomes. At the early stages of development, this is one of the main reasons that face-to-face support is so important for local groups. As the groups develop, they realise that more learning is actually achieved from activities and projects that did not turn out as they planned, than from activities that went exactly as expected.

4. **Representativeness** – Through developing an in-depth community profile at the inception of the models, groups are able to examine the make-up of their membership and to see if they are under- or over-represented by any particular element of the local population. While many groups start out by looking for equal representation by gender or age (and young people are often the most difficult to recruit to local community activities and groups), they often go on to examine additional categories, such as religious and political backgrounds, ethnic minorities, Housing Executive vs. private tenants and educational and socio-economic background. It is important to ensure that, when groups are discussing particular issues that may lead to or stem from local community tensions, all sides of the community affected by these issues are involved. This may mean holding parallel meetings with different groups at the initial stages.

5. **Risk Taking** – A generic community development model will not always succeed in areas of weak community infrastructure compounded by high levels of community tension. For this reason, it is important that any community development or peacebuilding strategy targeting these areas adopts a risk taking approach from the outset. Just as groups may not always be able to predict what local and external barriers may impede their progress, funders and support agencies must be willing to

take risks to ensure that the above four principles are adhered to. The biggest risk takers for peacebuilding and local community development are the local people willing to voluntarily commit to the process and it is important that their progress, development and willingness to stay with the project are recognised and supported.

6. **Flexibility** –The approach must be bottom-up, must begin at the most appropriate pace and starting point for the local people involved and must target responses to address needs as defined by the participants themselves. Any activities must seek to be inclusive, with local control and accountability. For this reason, any external involvement in this local development must adopt a flexible approach from the inception of work and must move at a pace and towards goals appropriate to local needs. The International Fund for Ireland (and Atlantic Philanthropies for the CIT1 Programme) have enabled the budget allocated to the local areas to be spent according to the developing needs of the areas, rather than constraining spend within financial years. This has resulted in spend to meet need, rather than spend to meet a deadline – and both programmes supported groups for an additional two years while budgets spent down.

Evaluation of the first CIT Programme: Implementing the lessons

The external evaluation of the first Programme was completed in October 2008. This found the Communities in Transition model to be distinctive in three respects:

- It targeted a disparate set of communities that had been mainly 'outside the loop' of mainstream community initiatives;
- It combined community development and peacebuilding to focus simultaneously on social need and the residual features of decades of community conflict;
- It offered substantial support resources to those committed to local change.[4]

The evaluation identified challenges arising when a programme seeks to transform within communities. Where community tension sits with underdevelopment and the persistent experience of social exclusion, generic community development and mainstream programmes are rarely effective. The external evaluation found two things were necessary in order to resolve such issues:

First, mainstream policy has to be targeted at the interface between social exclusion and social cohesion, including the persistence of paramilitarism;

Second, new models for working within such communities need to be developed that draw on the learning from community development and social inclusion programmes, but which also tackle the consequences of decades of political conflict.

The importance of the CIT Programme is that it strives to do the second while deriving lessons for the first.[5]

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[4] Morrissey, M. and Harrison, J. "Communities in Transition Programme: Summary Evaluation", October 2008. p. 2.
[5] Morrissey, M. "CIT: A New Model for Social Intervention in Contested Space?" November 2007, p. 38.

A number of changes have taken place in the operational and practice models between the first and second CIT programmes. These include:

1) the way staff are employed to support local development;

2) the opportunity for collaboration between areas/estates and to expand a geographical area to provide benefits to a wider number of participants;

3) the value of bringing together, on a regular basis, participants from each of the local projects in order to undertake joint training and to learn from each other's experiences, thus enhancing their capacity to develop cross community relationships;

4) the proactive engagement of young people within the local projects and also on separate initiatives both within their own areas and across the Programme, and;

5) the changing nature of "excluded" communities on both sides of the political divide, as well as differences in how community tension is manifested locally, ten years on from the development of the original CIT model and fourteen years on from the Good Friday Agreement.

Moreover, the context within which CIT2 operated was different. Political changes, including the devolution of policing and justice, the impact of the actions of those opposed to the Peace Process, the economic recession and resultant policy changes, the apparent lack of political commitment to a Shared Future, the stalled Review of Public Administration and other changes, have meant that the landscape has altered considerably for CIT2. In some cases, this has presented opportunities for local groups to actively participate in consultations about the future structures, policy developments and local service delivery that will impact on their day-to-day lives. However, it has also meant that there is substantially increased competition for considerably diminished resources and many agencies have become reluctant to engage with new groups/issues in order to avoid increased demands. Long-established groups have the capacity to advocate for resources, pushing new needs further to the margins.

Finally, the uncertainties that accompany policy, political and administrative changes and the straitened economic climate mean that the flexibility and risk-taking approach of the CIT model has been even more critical to the second Programme. The EU Peace Programmes that resourced many communities from 1996 are now much reduced in scope and nature. Competition for resources is fierce and debates within the community sector about collaboration/mergers, competitive tendering, service level agreements, and sustainability are complex enough for long-established groups, but well beyond the capacity of groups new to the community development process.

Most marked has been the reduced access to capital build or refurbishment grants. CIT2 groups found very limited access to this type of funding which has curtailed their capacity to deliver much needed projects. Alongside this, many other funding streams have decreased. To illustrate, the ten CIT1groups leveraged external funding exceeding £12million. Comparatively, the CIT2 groups leveraged just above £2million, with a considerable proportion resulting from partnerships in three of the areas with DSD's Areas at Risk Programme.

Selection of Areas

Initial key criteria:

- **Evidence of multiple deprivation;**
- **Lack of investment or access to funding and support;**
- **Lack of community engagement or activity;**
- **Evidence of community tensions/divisions;**
- **Size of area or potential to 'cluster' to provide sufficient scale to justify the investment.**

Research to compile a list of potential areas for CIT2 began in 2006. The Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (MDM) was taken into account in selecting CIT2 areas. MDM 2005 introduced the use of Super Output Areas as a local unit for analysis. This meant that, outside of Moyle Council and other large rural areas, the smaller spatial unit of SOAs more closely approximated real neighbourhoods. The use of Ward-level data can (and frequently does) result in small pocket areas of deprivation being masked within larger Wards, especially in the case of small, urban town estates and rural housing estates.

Many Government initiatives are targeted at areas that rank highly within MDM. Neighbourhood Renewal (NR) targets within the top 10% and some surrounding/contiguous areas. DSD's Local Community Fund (LCF) targets areas from 11% to 20%. Deprived areas of Belfast and Derry are relatively well covered under NR and LCF, in addition to many other current initiatives. It should be noted that, outside of Belfast and Derry, the amount of funding for neighbourhoods and estates from the Local Community Fund is usually quite small. For this reason, it was decided to take a first cut at identifying areas for consideration by looking at the top 30% of Noble MDM (exclusive of Neighbourhood Renewal, Belfast, Derry and areas covered by a CIT1 project.) This resulted in a list of 142 Super Output Areas.

The NI Housing Executive provided access to databases of local community groups/organisations for this exercise. In addition to providing the number of community groups within a SOA/Ward, the database also provided a ranking of these groups' cumulative annual income. Each group's annual income was ranked from 0 (= no income) to 8 (= substantial annual income – in excess of £200,000)and these were aggregated at SOA level. Withinthe 142 areas described above, 20 were found to have no groups/only one group and no annual income. These most closely met three of the above criteria (deprived area; lack of access to funding/support; lack of community activity).

The additional criterion of *size* was then taken into account with reference to maps of the areas, population estimates available from the Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service and potential for clustering. These areas served as the basis from which to begin the qualitative research.

2004-5 crime statistics were collected from the PSNI including the total number of offences within each area and the number of cases of offences against the person, burglary, theft and criminal damage. Press articles relating to reports on crime, including sectarianism and paramilitary activities for the areas, were also considered.

To capture a more qualitative picture of the areas, telephone interviews were conducted with Council staff, LSP staff, funders, the Housing Executive/NITAP (now SCNI), other network organisations and community development umbrella bodies for each of the local areas. Interviewees were informed of the criteria for selecting project areas, the nature of the CIT Programme and what it could offer. They were then asked to consider the suitability of the areas on the initial list of twenty, as well as to nominate other relevant areas that might not have come through the initial process - mainly as a result of being masked within a relatively affluent Super Output Area. Other areas, contiguous to NR areas and technically eligible for support, were put forward at this point as they were in danger of being discounted even though they lacked the capability or capacity to participate in NR. It was argued that the three-year+ proactive support of a CIT Programme at the local level would build their capacity to actively participate in NR in the future. CIT staff also considered other sources of funding and support that had not necessarily been mentioned by the interviewees (e.g. Peace II+ Measure 2.7 – Weak Community infrastructure).

A final shortlist of 20 areas, felt to most closely represent the selection criteria based on both the quantitative and qualitative research, was written up in detail and presented to a panel of practice experts (the Programme Advisory Group) in December 2006 so that the group could agree a methodology for scoring potential areas for inclusion in the new Programme.

Having agreed the range for scoring, the panel requested additional qualitative information on each area to enable them to score and reconvened to shortlist, resulting in a list of recommendations for the IFI Board in February 2007. The final ten areas were then agreed. The additional qualitative research carried out during the selection process subsequently fed into the baseline data for the areas selected. More detail of the unique nature of each of the areas selected is provided in the individual case studies.

Changes to the CIT Model: Recruitment and Employment

CIT1 offered resources for local communities to employ their own workers but many of them experienced significant difficulties in recruiting and retaining experienced workers. The Programme commissioned research to look at the difficulties associated with the recruitment and continued employment of suitably qualified and experienced staff in areas of weak community infrastructure and community tension. Paul McGill and Julie Harrison[6], who conducted the study through surveys and interviews, found that frustration over the instability of funding for community development posts generally and the short-term nature of contracts were the most prevalent reasons given as to why experienced workers did not apply for these jobs.

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[6] J. Harrison and P. McGill, "Where have the workers gone?", December 2003.

Another factor identified was that workers in such areas find themselves employed by new groups that have no experience of managing staff and this creates its own range of problems. Workers end up managing the managers! An additional pressure was:

> *'The extent of paramilitary influence and both inter- and intra-community tensions and disputes. This is a complex reality which [community development workers] have to deal with, and an additional factor which means that the work can be very stressful, even for workers with years of experience. Some of the areas most affected display fractured relationships within communities, even within families, and a sense that there is no way to challenge that.*[7]

Due to these difficulties, a different model of employment was explored for CIT2. The areas involved in CIT1 were geographically spread out, but there were several areas in CIT2 that were selected because they were within easy reach of each other. For this reason, the potential to hire one worker to cover more than one geographical area was possible. After negotiation with the selected groups, agreement was reached to have CFNI directly employ and be responsible for two Cluster Workers, one to cover the Craigavon Council projects (Parkmore, Queen Street and Avenue Road) and one to cover the County Down projects (Seapatrick, Dromore and Annsborough) with the groups contributing to the cost from their allocated budgets.

To ensure that the groups felt ownership of the workers and had an input into their workplans, quarterly meetings were organised for them with the Programme Manager. Initial teething problems at the local level were sorted out early in this process and these meetings helped to build trust with the core staff and also enabled the groups to get to know each other better. They also enabled discussion on the use of the central Capacity Building budget (see below) for identified training needs and topics for conferences and events organised centrally for all of the groups, including political and cultural tours and inter-group visits. By the end of year 2, all agreed that these separate meetings were a very useful tool at the early stages of trust building but were no longer necessary as communication with staff and the groups was well established.

In addition, two more senior Development Officers managed these workers and provided additional support to the other five project areas while managing the Programme Capacity Building budget (training and conferences/events). It is fair to say that this set-up provided a more supportive environment for the employed workers but it was not without its difficulties. One of the Cluster Worker posts was filled by three different people in as many years; one of the Development Officers had to be replaced and their work undertaken by other members of the core team. There were difficulties finding suitably qualified and experienced workers for both types of post and this put considerable pressure on other CIT2 team members who have had to develop direct support roles with more than half of the groups while managing the finance, capacity building, training, networking and conferences aspects.

Availability of experienced workers willing to undertake posts in the community sector remains an issue for many areas but is of particular importance for areas of weak community

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[7] Ibid.

infrastructure where relevant skills and experience become even more critical when the issue of low capacity sits alongside tensions and divisions. Many of the issues identified in the referenced commissioned research remain relevant. Many newly qualified community workers have a preference for employment with the public sector or larger support organisations.

As a result, alternative models for employing local support workers remains an issue after two Programmes and ten years. One such approach might be to appoint geographically based teams of workers with individual areas of speciality, including youth work, community development, health etc. This would provide workers with on-going peer support while enabling more flexibility and would provide support cover for groups even where there was worker turn-over.

The Capacity Building Initiative

The Capacity Building element of the CIT2 Programme sought to provide the support necessary to enable community leaders and activists to examine issues relating to participation, identity, community safety, peacebuilding, the sustainability of local community development work and the changing policy environment. This was achieved through regular seminars, workshops, residential conferences, training courses and the provision of platforms through which the local groups could learn from each other (including local site visits). In total, more than 50 joint events (some involving members of only two or three local projects, but several involving all or almost all of the local areas) took place over the five years of CIT2. The outcomes of these sessions were all very positive and evaluations of the events have shown that many of those who participated learned a great deal about community development, funding opportunities, community relations, intergenerational work, the changing policy and political environment and, not least, shared experiences with each other.

The first residential conference for all CIT2 groups took place in February 2009 in Cookstown and it included nine different training workshops, as well as presentations from three of the local groups on progress they had made in their local areas. Most of the workshops were on relatively basic and introductory subjects (such as finance, committee skills, monitoring and evaluation and group dynamics) since almost all of the participants were very new to community development at this early stage. The group presentations were very well-received and, for this reason, they became a regular part of the agenda for joint CIT2 conferences. All of the groups have now done presentations on their local work at joint conferences and this has facilitated a number of joint projects between them, site visits to learn more about initiatives, facilities and resources and successful endeavours in one area being tailored and replicated in another area.

The second residential conference was held in Ballybofey, County Donegal in November 2009 and this was the first time many of the local participants had ever crossed the border. Local groups were directly involved in setting the agenda for this conference and external facilitators were brought in to cover such subjects as working with ethnic minorities and

migrant communities; dealing with sensitive issues in the local area; managing group dynamics; funding opportunities and an input from the Access to Benefits initiative.

Also in 2009, the groups decided to have regular meetings between the Chairpersons of each group and CFNI staff. The focus of these meetings was to agree the subjects to be covered at all joint events to meet the needs they were facing locally and to discuss their progress and the barriers they were facing at the local level. These meetings also provided an opportunity for them to feed back on their experiences of employing Cluster Workers across more than one area and to address any issues arising. The six groups employing Cluster Workers also held regular management meetings from this stage onward.

A number of training events/courses were held between more than one CIT2 group, where it was felt that it would be beneficial and/or cost effective to combine people from more than one area into these sessions. Topics covered in joint training events included marshalling, youth work, the Review of Public Administration, community relations, Child Protection, First Aid and recruitment and employment procedures.

The May 2010 joint residential conference was held in the Waterside of L'Derry and the focus of this residential was on practical learning, particularly around funding applications, the Review of Public Administration and working with young people. In preparation for this conference, a joint CIT2 youth forum had been established and held its own conference a month earlier in order to assess whether there was sufficient interest and engagement to develop a programme for young people across the CIT2 areas. Challenge for Youth did an input at the May CIT2 conference and this resulted in young people from across the CIT2 areas participating together in summer camps organised by Challenge for Youth.

A cultural trip to Belfast and workshops on issues affecting interface communities was organised in partnership with Belfast Interface Project in September 2010. This was the first time a few of the participants had ever been to Belfast and the first time that any of them had ever done the cultural/political tour of the Falls and the Shankill. The workshops facilitated by CIT staff and Belfast Interface Project focussed on issues such as murals, flags, emblems, marches, shared spaces and residential segregation and practical solutions to difficult issues relevant to the local CIT areas.

The next residential conference in Newcastle had an explicit focus on sustainability, funding opportunities, writing successful funding applications and other non-monetary issues relating to sustainability, including volunteers and participation. At this residential, groups were also asked to consider the future of the Capacity Building Initiative and to identify future joint events, training opportunities and possible trips or site visits that might be most beneficial to their local work. A few of the groups had recently been on cross community cultural tours of L'Derry and Dublin, had had very positive experiences and suggested that these might be of interest to the other areas. This resulted in a cross community Derry/Londonderry cultural trip being organised in May 2011 (and repeated due to popular demand in April 2012) and a cultural/historical cross community three day trip to Dublin being planned for May 2012.

The May 2011 Derry/Londonderry trip was the first trip to the city for many of the participants and it included walking tours of the Walls, the Fountain and Bogside estates, the Apprentice Boys of Derry's Memorial Hall and facilitated panel discussions with Loyalist and Republican ex-combatants on their experiences of the Troubles in Derry/Londonderry. One of the main learning points articulated in the evaluation of the trip was how similar the experiences of both sides of the community had been, as well as the historical context (European) of the background to the conflict in L'Derry.

The October 2011 CIT2 residential was held in Dunmurry and included a site visit to Clonduff, to learn about the process the group had undertaken to achieve local management of its Community Centre. Where possible, all the residential conferences have included a site visit to one of the local areas (e.g. the conference in Newcastle included a site visit to Annsborough). Three workshops were also included in the agenda: Dealing with Difficult Issues, Successful Funding Applications, and Lobbying Effectively.

A final CIT2 residential conference is now being planned for October 2012. This conference will focus on the future sustainability of all of the local groups, but will also serve as a celebration event to mark the progress they have achieved to date and to launch the publications (including one for each local group) that have arisen from the five years of the CIT2 Programme.

The benefits of the conferences, site visits and other Capacity Building events to all the local groups and individuals involved in CIT2 extended well beyond just the specific learning and training they received through this element of the Programme. It afforded them the opportunity to work with and learn from people from right across Northern Ireland whom they would never have had the opportunity to meet if it were not for their participation in CIT. It also provided a safe space for many groups to engage with discussions and learning about contentious issues like bonfires, marches, flags, emblems, paramilitary controls and dissident activity. Indeed, the on-going relationships and networking developed across all eleven areas will surely be one of the best legacies of the Programme.

Programme Indicators and Local Progress

In order to monitor progress across CIT2 in terms of improving community relations, community cohesion and local community tensions, a set of 19 indicators was developed and the Change Matrix Evaluation method (see below) was used to gauge local progress from the point of view of CIT2 staff and local participants. These 19 indicators were:

- **Quality of Life**, a holistic indicator including measures of deprivation, health, crime etc. The impact of community development and activities at the local level should also contribute to local 'quality of life'.
- **Community Safety,** which includes issues relating to physical safety (e.g. road safety), as well as more psychological issues such as fear and intimidation.
- **Access to Services**, including local access to all relevant services, such as schools, transport, libraries, post offices, health care, policing, community centres etc.

- **Racism**, in this instance, means poor relations (both overt and tacit) between the traditional settled communities and "new" communities, including ethnic minorities and migrant workers. Where relevant, poor relations with the travelling community also fell under 'racism'.

- **Sectarianism** refers to overt and tacit poor relations between the two main traditional communities (Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist and Catholic/Nationalist/Republican). Overt examples would include sectarian attacks, and a complete lack of relations with the "other" community would also contribute to a low score here.

- **Interfaces** – The presence of a physical or perceived interface within a community and any associated trouble was a relevant issue for Doury Road, Queen Street, Avenue Road, Craigyhill and Antiville, Annsborough (rural interface), Lisanally/Alexander and Cregagh/Clonduff (although the interface here was in East Belfast, outside the direct local area, but involved people from both estates in the trouble over the summer of 2011). Any issues which did not relate to an actual physical interface/boundaries of residentially segregated areas were scored under 'sectarianism'.

- **Community Facilities** includes premises for the local community group to run activities and initiatives, as well as sports facilities, playparks, community centres etc.

- **Community Organisation** – The development and capacity building of local community groups, including proper governance. Local representation also featured in this category, in terms of gender, age, background, neighbourhood etc.

- **Community Confidence** on the part of the wider community to advocate on its own behalf and/or confidence on the part of the wider community *in* the local community group to lobby and advocate on their behalf. This also incorporates the confidence of individual committee members to do such things as meet with politicians and statutory agencies, speak publicly on behalf of the group, fill in application forms, attend networking events etc.

- **Environmental Issues** – All aspects of the physical environment, including housing. Area clean-ups, housing improvements, installation of community gardens and community art projects etc would factor in here.

- **Funding** – The amount of financial support available to/accessed by local groups, as well as the range and sources of funding. This should be indexed to actual plans requiring financial support, so ostensibly an area with a very small amount of funding, but modest development plans, might score higher than an area with substantial funding, but ambitious plans that haven't yet been matched to relevant funding support.

- **Gatekeeping** – An individual, group, agency, paramilitary group, politician, church or other agent who blocks power, information, funding or resources from reaching the community it was intended to reach.

- **Group Tensions** – Tensions within the local community group or between two or more local groups. This could be as simple as personality clashes and group dynamics or it could be based on competing paramilitary/political/sectarian/church loyalties or social class tensions.

- **Impact of the Conflict** – Issues directly relating to "The Troubles" continuing to have a residual impact on the local community. This could be violent manifestations, large numbers of ex-combatants or victims in a local area, residential segregation, lack of trust, seasonal tensions etc.
- **Isolation** – The isolation of an entire community or individuals/groups within it due to physical location (including rurality or peripheral location within a Council etc). For issues relating to community background, politics, age, ethnicity etc, see 'alienation' below.
- **Relationships with Agencies/Politicians** – The local group's/s' relationships with local politicians, the Council, the Housing Executive, DoE, Health, Education and Library Board, Roads Service etc. This category also incorporated relationships with the police, which changed the score significantly in some cases (as did the relationships with certain politicians in others).
- **Sustainability** – The ability of the group to continue with all of their planned activities, programmes and initiatives and to continue to develop to meet local needs beyond the life of CIT or any other support programme. This is not limited to financial sustainability, but also includes such issues as volunteer burn-out and continued community support etc.
- **Alienation** due to social class, age, gender, ethnicity, religion, political opinion etc. This could include alienation of an entire section of a community from relevant services, from the peace process, from community activities etc or it could include the alienation of individuals within a community from these activities based on one of these factors.
- **Overt Cultural Expression** refers to the overt assertion of a particular cultural identity through, for example, flags, emblems, murals, marches, kerbstone painting, bonfires etc. There is an issue with this indicator in terms of scoring in that some communities viewed this as a positive thing, whereas most thought it was negative.

External Funding

One of the quantitative indicators of the CIT1 Programme which showed the most marked success was the leverage of additional funding by all ten local areas. A large portion of this was used for substantial capital projects across most of the areas (community centres, community houses, playparks, sports facilities etc). By the end of the CIT1 Programme, the local groups had leveraged in over £12million in external funding. In sharp contrast, the CIT2 groups are considerably behind this, both in terms of the scale of funding leveraged (just over £2million) and the variety of funding sources used. In particular, there seems to be a significant lack of available funding for capital projects this time around.

Sources of funding accessed by CIT2 groups include:

- Affordable Credit programme
- Arts Council NI
- Assets Recovery Agency
- Awards for All
- Children in Need
- Corporate sponsorship
- Councils
- CFNI's Social Justice Programme
- CFNI's Anti-Poverty and Community Resilience Programme
- CFNI's Turkington Fund
- CRC
- DSD (Areas at Risk)
- Education and Library Boards
- FRESH Health Projects
- Groundwork NI
- IFI Community Leadership Programme
- John Moore's Foundation
- Lloyd's TSB
- Local donations
- NIHE Good Relations programmes
- Re-Imaging Communities
- Self-raised funds
- Sports Relief
- Sports Council
- Telecommunity Fund
- Turkington Fund
- Volunteer Bureau.

Area	Total Amount Leveraged to Date
Cregagh/Clonduff	£512,094
Craigyhill/Antiville	£447,000
Doury Road	£345,690
Parkmore	£260,485
Lisanally/Alexander	£218,600
Annsborough	£165,145.48
Seapatrick	£75,234
Avenue Road	£53,750
Dromore	£34,795
Lisnahull	£6,000
Queen Street	£5,985
TOTAL	£2,124,778.48

Almost £280,000 of this total can be accounted for by the three areas (Craigyhill/Antiville, Doury Road and Lisanally/Alexander) that received funding through the Areas at Risk Programme.

The difference in the availability of funding for capital projects is also apparent when the sources of funding are compared between the two phases of the Programme. The Peace Programme, Big Lottery, Sport NI, DARD and DSD/Modernisation Fund comprised the overwhelming majority of this in CIT1. None of these sources have been available to the CIT2 areas.

Indeed, previous sources of capital build support are no longer available in NI generally:
- The differences in the earlier Peace II and current Peace III/+ Programmes means that there is very little funding accessible to local communities for large-scale projects.
- A number of Big Lottery programmes previously provided significant help to local groups for capital build and other large projects, including Reaching Communities, Safe and Well, Live and Learn, Improving Community Buildings, Transforming Your Space, People's Millions etc.
- DSD Programmes that provided capital support, in particular the Modernisation Fund and Renewing Communities, have now closed. Due to the decentralisation of many DSD functions to their regional offices (e.g. Areas at Risk) and the potential further devolvement to the proposed new Councils under RPA, there is no certainty that capital or core running costs programmes will be available in the future. The responsibility for Neighbourhood Renewal also transfers to the new Councils under RPA.
- Funding for local communities through DARD's Rural Development Programme has also been replaced (since 2007) by the single Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 (NIRDP), and one fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) – all of which have complex application processes, beyond the reach of inexperienced groups.
- Finally, changes to IFI's funding priorities and the decision to 'spend down' by the end of 2013 have had and will continue to have a big impact on community groups. Programmes such as the CRISP Scheme and the Community Based Economic and Social Regeneration Programme have not been available to theCIT2 groups, but even more importantly, the IFI's recent priorities reflected their interest in areas/issues that lacked previous investment with profiles of tensions/divisions – those areas in need of support to undertake peace, reconciliation and community engagement work. Very often these areas neither have access to premises nor the wherewithal to commence their work.

The proposed £80million Social Investment Fund (SIF) will provide some financial support for capital build projects and refurbishments. The operational model for the SIF, the areas to be targeted, the means of allocating funding and many other questions have not yet been

formally agreed. The nature of the consultation process, however, led many to be concerned about the way in which local beneficiary areas and groups will be chosen.

Analysing the differences in the two CIT Programmes and the current lack of available support for capital projects leads to a number of questions for the sector in terms of how it can address this issue of diminishing resources. In particular, how can groups and areas that have never benefited from resources (when they were available) now "catch up" with those areas that did? This poses a serious problem in terms of sustainability for a number of the CIT2 groups that do not have local premises, apart from expensive commercially rented premises (which aren't sustainable in the longer-term)or occasional access to a church hall or community centre where there is competition with a range of other resourced groups including groups from the commercial sector.

In terms of the impact on local groups, the table below shows the types of premises/bases from which each group currently operates and from which they are able to run local activities. In stark contrast, at the end of the first CIT Programme, almost all of the local groups either owned their own premises or had leased access to a local community centre or community house. This new reliance upon commercially rented premises or negotiated partial access to Council- /church-owned premises means that groups are restricted not only in terms of their own financial sustainability, but also in terms of the number and types of activities they can run locally as most are not up to the health and safety standards that many activities require – particularly activities for young people.

Commercial Rent	Negotiated Partial Access	Community House/Flat	Community Centre
Dromore (moved 3 times)	Seapatrick (church hall)	Cregagh	Clonduff
Lisanally/Alexander (moved twice)	Queen Street (church hall)	Parkmore	
Avenue Road	Craigyhill (Councilcentre)	Antiville	
Annsborough(moved twice)	Doury Road (youth club)	Lisnahull (NIHE commercial)	

Volunteering and Local Participation

A total of 11,762 people participated, in one way or another, in the eleven CIT2 local projects. While a large percentage of the total reflects people who attended and helped with celebratory or seasonal events, trips or activities, over 3,200 people were regularly engaged in on-going initiatives, courses and programmes in the local areas. In addition, the eleven projects have a total of over 500 volunteers working on a regular basis for their local communities. This large volunteer base and large number of participants is concrete evidence of the high level of community support for the local projects, which is a key element of ensuring their continued sustainability.

Area	Number of Participants in Local Activities to Date	Number of Volunteers
Dromore[8]	5,728	109
Lisanally/Alexander	1,888	64
Cregagh/Clonduff	1,366	94
Craigyhill/Antiville	1,177	71
Annsborough	431	40
Lisnahull	251	12
Seapatrick	226	19
Avenue Road	212	26
Parkmore	204	31
Doury Road	198	24
Queen Street	81	15
TOTAL	11,762	505

Training and Employment

All CIT2 groups offered a significant number of training opportunities to their committee members and also provided training courses for their communities, generally based on the needs and interests identified through local surveys and public consultations. Each committee has completed Committee Skills and Office Bearers' Roles and Responsibilities training, often as a first step once the group was formed. Many members who were initially elected as Office Bearers (especially Treasurer) on their committee were very reluctant to take up these posts at first, due to a lack of confidence in their own skills, a lack of experience in these roles and a lack of knowledge about what the role would require. Each of these Office Bearers has received considerable support from CIT staff to increase their confidence and skills to carry out their duties. The CIT Finance Officer, in particular, has spent a considerable amount of time working with the local Treasurers to ensure they are confident in their ability to keep financial records and to set up and monitor their financial records and book-keeping systems.

In order to develop good governance systems in relation to finance, groups submit quarterly returns which are 100% verified. In this way, they learn on an on-going basis how to keep accounts and manage funds – all of this is critical to their future sustainability. All have managed money well, agreeing spend at committee meetings and being cautious about spend – only spending when necessary as they haven't been under pressure to use up monies within a financial year. Well into the fourth year of the Programme, all of the groups are still being supported from their original three year budgets – a lesson to funders to be flexible about end-spend deadlines as this can enhance value for money.

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[8]The large number of participants in Dromore is due to two annual week-long community festivals. Both had over 5000 participants, but this number has only been tallied once (in case of overlap). In addition, 728 people have been recorded as participants in separate events.

A number of other types of training have been very popular and valuable to the local groups, notably Child Protection training, marshalling training and a wide range of youth work courses. Seven members of local committees (including three young people from Parkmore) have completed or are in the last stages of completing degree level Youth Work qualifications since the start of the CIT2 Programme, while a further ten people are completing NVQ level 2 and 3 Youth Work courses.

Good Relations courses have also been popular, both in the local groups and in the wider communities. First Aid, Health and Safety, Marshalling and IT courses have also been delivered in almost all of the local areas. Courses relating to health (healthy living, nutrition, cook-it, mental health, suicide awareness, fitness and cancer awareness) have proven much more popular with the CIT2 groups than they were during the first programme.

Through residentials and cluster events, CFNI has offered a number of joint training opportunities for all eleven groups to come together. These have included Conflict Resolution, Engaging with Ethnic Minorities, RPA and Future Changes, Working with Young People, Successful Funding Applications, Lobbying, Dealing with Difficult Issues, Sustainability and Funding Opportunities, and Negotiation Skills.

Area	Number of Training Course Participants
Craigyhill/Antiville	397
Seapatrick	378
Annsborough	274
Lisanally/Alexander	267
Doury Road	224
Dromore	222
Cregagh/Clonduff	175
Parkmore	92
Queen Street	72
Avenue Road	44
Lisnahull	12
TOTAL	2,157

As the table above demonstrates, up to 2,000 people have participated in training through the eleven CIT2 local projects, including members of each committee. It is difficult to estimate the exact number, as some people have been involved in more than one course.

3. Reflections on Policy and Practice

Internal Evaluator

Communities in Transition is not a funding-led or funding-driven process; it is community-led, locally-driven, outcomes-focused and involves a process of continual reflection and on-going revaluation of local needs/priorities and the most appropriate and effective means for redressing local inequalities and social injustices. It is an Action Learning programme, on the part of the local communities themselves, as well as those delivering the Programme. Reflection on the policy lessons, the changing policy environment and the best means to influence policy in order to more adequately meet local needs for communities with weak community infrastructure and community tensions have been built into the model since its inception in 2001.

Community Engagement

The model for engaging with local communities (and animating community development work in an area for the very first time) through the Communities in Transition Programme has always centred on:

- developing locally based, community-led initiatives;
- working at a pace that suits the local people themselves;
- providing substantial, appropriate support;
- seeking out the most marginalised and alienated communities;
- proactively assisting them to identify local needs and target resources into appropriate strategies;
- not foisting an external agenda onto a local area, but rather working with local groups and individuals to adopt an appropriate strategy to deliver on agreed outcomes.

However, the very nature of these communities and this approach means that the model must be sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of each local context. Although all of the elements of the model reflect the principles of good community development and peacebuilding practice, there is no "one-size-fits-all" or "out-of-the-box" solution to developing community infrastructure in areas of community tension. The model itself and the initial steps in engaging with local communities must take account of local sensitivities, (real and perceived) local injustices and local barriers from the outset in order for the endeavour to succeed.

The model has been written up[9] as having eight essential components: 1) Area profiling; 2) Developing local relationships through direct contact; 3) Assessing support for a community development project; 4) Establishing an initial community group; 5) Area needs assessment and action planning; 6) The development phase; 7) Continuous recording, monitoring and evaluation; 8) Consolidation and sustainability. All of these elements are underpinned by continuous direct contact, support and resources; access to small amounts of flexible funding;

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[9] Healy, K. and O'Prey, M., "Challenges to Community Development in Areas Affected by Community Tension: The Communities in Transition Model", 2006.

and information, training and capacity building support. Critically, they must also continue to reflect on the most appropriate pace for local development work suited to the needs of the local community.

The initial stages of engagement in a local area are often slow and time-consuming. Sometimes a "critical event" occurs within this stage which helps to mobilise local action. Due to the nature of the communities involved, this can often be an event which is traumatic for the local area and this can lead to the need for a much more hands-on, supported process. Sometimes local engagement relies upon the role of local (or even external) "gatekeepers"[10] and this can require support staff to adopt a challenge function, while simultaneously ensuring that the voices of the wider community are heard. In all cases, good communication is paramount in the initial engagement stages with both negotiation and mediation skills required. Those involved in the animation of local development must be willing to engage with all parties (even if only through shuttle mediation at first), especially when the perspectives of key actors in certain local situations may differ significantly. In areas where paramilitaries (or individuals perceived to have links to paramilitary organisations) are the "gatekeepers", care must be taken to assess how this impacts upon the local community and action taken to ensure that no-one feels threatened or anxious about engagement. This situation often requires a parallel approach for a period of time.

Dealing with Community Tensions and Sensitive Issues

There have been a number of notable differences in the ways that local communities have discussed, engaged with and overcome (or refused to do all three!) local sensitivities and community tensions since the start of the CIT Programmes. In some instances, the response of the two main communities has been reversed since CIT1; i.e. in CIT2, the PUL communities were immediately more open to addressing the tensions/ divisions and the impact of the conflict in their local areas but the two CNR communities were less willing to acknowledge or engage with these issues–the exact opposite experience toCIT1. This may be explained by a variety of both local and wider factors: some of the PUL areas engaged key people with influence from the outset andmanaged to take on board sensitive issues like bonfires, flags and emblems, sectarianism or racism at an early stage – the Dromore and Parkmore groups are good examples of this. As a result of the networking events between the groups, contacts were made and some of the key influencers supported other groups to also undertake this kind of work. Varied degrees of progress were made across the areas/groups but at least there was acknowledgement and some effort made to deal with the problems arising. The CNR areas were more complex; in one, class division was tangible and had to be addressed while in the other, the impact ofgatekeeping, changes in local support for

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[10] In the context of community development in Northern Ireland, a "gatekeeper" is a group, agency or individual that controls or blocks access to resources, information, funding or other support local people or communities need to develop. Gatekeepers can be real or perceived power brokers (politicians/self-appointed community leaders/ paramilitaries/agencies or networks etc) in a local area. In the context of a programme like CIT, the nature of power relations at the local level necessitates working with local gatekeepers in order to restore (or create) representative and participative democratic structures through a facilitated process.

the Good Friday Agreement and policing,compounded by the lack of any peace dividend, contributed to slow progress.

Since the start of the CIT2 Programme in 2007, tensions within both communities have become increasingly pronounced. For some CNR communities, the rise in dissident support created challenges to the status quo with resultant tensions. For some Loyalist communities, tensions were most evident in South East and North Antrim, but have since spread into Ballymena, Coleraine and L'Derry, mid-Ulster and Armagh where elements of some of the paramilitary groups asserted (or reasserted) their powerbases and began to take over community activity or engage in overt cultural displays – flags, murals etc. This has had an impact on Craighyhill/Antiville, Doury Road, Seapatrick, Dromore, Queen Street/Avenue Road, Cregagh/Clonduff, Lisanally/Alexander andParkmore. This was perhaps most acutely felt in Craigyhill and Antiville and, at the outset, the CIT2 Programme had to develop a parallel negotiation and engagement strategy. One of the areas in particular voiced fears about engagement for fear of reprisal. This has gradually been overcome and resulted in much positive work for local people including new services and facilities, activities and environmental improvements. Much remains to be done, but active community groups with local support now exist and enjoy huge voluntary support.

It can be said that residual Loyalist paramilitarism of all descriptions (UVF, LVF, UDA and South East Antrim (breakaway) UDA) has had an impact on CIT2. In some cases this took shape as a territorial power struggle between different organisations; in others, it was a case of local people coming forward to challenge the paramilitaries as not representing their views; in some cases, it meant that the local Council or other statutory bodies had refused to work with a group or area due to its perceived affiliation with paramilitaries. In all cases, it meant that the approach for engaging with local people had to be both sensitive and tailored to meet the local needs and context, to ensure that they did not feel endangered by becoming involved.

The contacts that the Community Foundation had through programmes such as Prison to Peace[11] or the SEARCH Project[12] were critical in some areas in the early stages of

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[11]The Prison to Peace Partnership consortium emerged as a result of a long established working relationship, built between the range of politically motivated ex-prisoner groups and the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland. The programme focuses on three collective themes: (i) Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding; (ii) Work around Youth Development and Citizenship; (iii) A focus on Social Change and the nature of current challenges at community level. The participant groups include An Eochair (former Official IRA prisoners); Charter NI, Charter Regional, Prisoners in Partnership, the Prisoner's Support Project and the North Belfast Community Development and Transition Group (former UDA prisoners); Coiste na n-Iarchimí (former Provisional IRA prisoners); Ex-Prisoners Interpretive Centre (EPIC) and The Hubb (former UVF prisoners); and Teach na Failte (former INLA/IRSP prisoners).

[12]South East Antrim Resourcing from Conflict to Hope (SEARCH) is an EU-funded empowerment initiative focussed on the geographical area taking in the Newtownabbey, Ballymena, Carrickfergus, Larne and Antrim Borough Council zones. SEARCH supports around 2,000 ex-combatants and political ex-prisoners in the area in order to build the capacity of groups and individuals to address the legacy of the conflict.

engagement. Sometimes these contacts were necessary in order to ascertain who the "critical influencers" were in a local area as a first point of contact; at other times they were useful in order to provide background and context to explain local (and historical) power struggles in an area; occasionally they were necessary in order to challenge local gatekeepers that purported to be connected to a paramilitary organisation, but who had no such connections and were only claiming them in order to intimidate sections of the local community and gain control or indeed, at times, it presented an opportunity to challenge the control a particular organisation held over an area. These connections remained critical throughout the course of CIT2. In one local area (Dromore), a key community activist from Prison to Peace was able to use his influence, community development and community relations experience in a positive way from the outset. A PSNI audit on paramilitary flags in 2005 showed over fifty flying in Dromore and by 2010 this number was reduced to less than ten, due in large part to his capacity to negotiate this (he was also the Chair of Dromore in Action at this time). He and the group were also successful in negotiating the removal of a UFF mural from a gable-end wall. Finally, through contacts made at the CIT2 networking conferences, he worked with a few of the other CIT2 groups to help them negotiate similar community-led and agreed outcomes.

Tensions over bonfires and bonfire sites also arose in several areas and in most cases the local Council had identified this as a priority issue prior to the start of CIT2 although they had done little to resolve the issues. In the case of Parkmore, a very successful community art beacon project (which involved young people creating and then burning artwork) was staged instead of the bonfire in 2008 for the first time. This was a marked change from previous years when the bonfire was located in the centre of the roundabout at the entrance to the estate, which attracted rubbish and dumping from the surrounding area for months in advance. The new option had been selected by a clear majority of the community through surveys and consultation well in advance of the 11th night. The group repeated a similar art project in 2009. In 2010, through Neighbourhood Renewal and CIT2, they bought a beacon for the area to replace the bonfire, supported by the large majority of the local community. While having a beacon was seen by all as progress, it has created its own problem for the group as they have to pay for filling, removal and storage/return each year – a service provided by Groundwork NI but at a high and unsustainable cost to most community groups (approx. £3,500 each year). More work needs to be done by Councils and other stakeholders to enable groups to use, fill and store beacons as this issue affects many groups that have worked hard to enable this change to take place. An investment in this would mean a huge saving to the public purse.

The removal/relocation of bonfires or changing a traditional bonfire into an alternative celebration (such as a beacon or art project etc) has also been a key issue in Cregagh, Clonduff, Antiville, Craigyhill, Seapatrick, Avenue Road, Dromore, Doury Road and Lisanally/Alexander. In other words, it was relevant in ten of the local areas. In all of these areas, it was viewed by the local Councils as a priority; yet, in all but one area (Seapatrick), the Councils have failed to provide adequate support and help move the process further on. The alternative is that the hard work and risk taking put into securing changes by local people

will come to nothing – the "I-told-you-so" brigade will win – and this is not a process that a community can usually go through successfully more than once.

Local sensitivities with flags, emblems and murals have also been dealt with in many of the CIT 2 areas. Parkmore, Dromore and Seapatrick, in particular, have worked to reduce the numbers of flags and emblems, improve their local environment and removeparamilitary murals. Craigyhill and Antiville recently carried out a survey of over 2,800 houses to get a local consensus on bonfires, flags, emblems, kerb painting etc in the area and are in the process of setting up a local working group to deal with these issues. These sensitive issues are yet another example of why the six key principles of the CIT model are necessary to bring about lasting change in a local area. Any external agency (such as a Council, statutory agency, funder, network etc) seeking a quick fix to a local problem without taking these six principles into account, is likely to have limited success and generally, it will be the local community that pays the price.

Heightened tensions between the mainstream and dissident Republican communities were evident over the life of the CIT2 programme (including Eirigi, Republican Network for Unity, 32CSM, RSF, ONH and the 1916 Societies) with some organisations escalating their armed campaigns. This has had an impact in some parts of Dungannon/Tyrone and, coupled with lack of engagement with policing by many communities and the rise of anti-social behaviour, has contributed to reluctance to engage with community activity. Lisnahull had a particularly brutal incident where a prominent local community leader was murdered by youths from a neighbouring estate, generating fear and anger. Other murders with racial and/or homophobic overtones have increased these tensions and anxieties. A great deal of patience and sensitivity has been required to get the community to the point where they see a value in getting together to meet local needs, but progress is now being made.

Annsborough was originally selected for inclusion in the CIT2 Programme in part due to tensions between RIRA and Sinn Fein in the wider Castlewellan area. Graffiti, vandalism of premises and a local monument plus several cases of intimidation were cited as examples. Since the establishment of the project, there have been two large weapons finds linked to dissidents in the area. However, members of the Annsborough Community Forum maintain that this is not a problem for their area and have focussed on challenging class-based divisions and getting young people engaged with the project – both of which have been successful for them. This reluctance to deal with the broader tensions is not unique to Annsborough; many Catholic/Nationalist/Republican communities across NI are finding it difficult to acknowledge and come to terms with these new tensions, partly for reasons of safety. This is also quite different from the intra-community Loyalist tensions above: large portions of many Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist communities didn't historically support one or other local Loyalist grouping, whereas the communities within which these new Republican tensions are being most acutely felt are communities which had a shared historical support for the Republican movement. This shared history can make the fall-out between former allies even more bitter and is one of the main reasons that local communities are unwilling to acknowledge the current tensions, perhaps until they begin to be manifested violently.

The changing nature of the political landscape on both sides of the divide raises a number of critical issues for discussion, of interest to policy makers and community development practitioners alike and are constantly discussed within the local projects. Gatekeeping, sectarianism, antisocial behaviour, racism, paramilitary influences and (violent) splits within communities remain prevalent in many communities across NI and are compounded by varied support/lack of trust in policing, weak 'community policing' policies and the general lack of a peace dividend for communities most impacted by the conflict.

Currently, the CIT Programme and Areas at Risk are two of the few initiatives seeking explicitly to help communities to tackle these issues from the ground up and proactively supporting them at the local level to do so. The CIT Model and its six key principles have been widely shared within the sector over the last ten years. Local groups and individuals have told their stories in publications, at conferences and events and during site visits by policy makers and funders to their local areas. However, CIT and Areas at Risk remain the only programmes of support to adopt this particular proactive and hands-on model for overcoming community tensions. While labour intensive, it brings sustainable results and is worth consideration of broader up-take.

This leads to a series of questions:

> Are policy makers, funders, local and executive government concerned with the complexity of the (re-)emerging community tensions and their impact in local (PUL and CNR) areas?

> What might convince them to adopt a pro-active support model like CIT/AaR to address these issues in a co-ordinated and strategic initiative across Northern Ireland? A number of other sensitive issues are already havinga profound effect on local communities, particularly communities with local tensions and profiles like the CIT areas. These are post-conflict issues requiring strategic interventions and thought. They include:

> - Disaffection with the peace process/ potential for a return to armed conflict;
> - Dissidents and policing / security;
> - Failure of community policing in its current form;
> - Communities policing themselves;
> - Vulnerability of working class young people in areas which continue to feel the impact of the conflict compounded by the impact of economic recession and lack of hope/opportunity (specifically, paramilitary recruitment /fear /suicide/mental health/crime/relationships and home building/ drugs/alcohol abuse/ community recrimination/threats/punishment);
> - Lack of participative democracy;
> - Decommissioning and the impact on intra-community tensions (Republican and Loyalist).

Many of these issues have now been discussed at a relatively general level within the individual groups involved in CIT2 and by all of the groups at the networking conferences/seminars through the Capacity Building programme budget. A few of them have been highlighted as important issues through the groups' self-evaluation work; however, there is certainly no consensus of opinion across the CIT groups on any of these issues. There is often not even consensus within a group. Finally, a few of the groups remain in denial that some of the above are, in fact, issues that have/will have an impact on their local communities (from the denial that decommissioning *has* taken place to cynicism about the ready availability of weapons in both communities to the denial that drugs/paramilitaries/dissidents are an issue in the area, to acceptance/resignation/contentment about the way communities are controlled and, finally, perception that for the 'other' community, everything is better).

Communication and Working with Other Programmes and Agencies

Communication is not just key to success in the local area, but at a much more strategic level, in instances where more than one programme of support is attempting to work with a local community at the same time. In CIT1, only one area had more than just the CIT Programme at the engagement stages – North Cavan had a number of Peace 2 funded capital projects in the six local villages – and CIT paid particular care to ensure that there was a strategic approach by working closely with the Peace 2 team and agreeing complementarity of action to meet the needs of both programmes as well as the local communities. Throughout the course of CIT1, the DSD developed the Areas at Risk Programme based on the CIT model, one of the biggest policy successes of the first Programme (the influence of the CIT model upon the development of a mainstream government initiative). Two CIT1 areas (Seacourt and Harryville) went on to be supported through Areas at Risk and CFNI staff developed a close working relationship with this Programme.

This enabled the two programmes to work closely together during CIT2 when both programmes started work at the same time in Doury Road, Lisanally/Alexander and Craigyhill/Antiville. This strategic and co-operative relationship allowed the two programmes to have a synergistic impact on these communities. In particular, in Doury Road and Craigyhill/Antiville, there was an opportunity to look at both budgets together and plan spend in conjunction with the local communities – a participatory budget approach was utilised – and will be referenced in a separate policy document. The relationship with Lisanally/Alexander was more complex as a third party, REACT Armagh, was a partner to the AaR initiative. This created relationship problems for the local group from the outset as it felt its independence as an organisation was compromised as agencies and, in some instances, their local community viewed them through the REACT lens which, they felt, had particular political connotations. The legacy of this partnership continues to be worked through.

In addition, CFNI has been able to bring a few of its other support programmes to the groups participating in CIT2, based on relevant local work and needs fitting with the strategic focus and themes of these programmes. Notably, a number of the areas with substantial elderly populations have benefitted from the Turkington Fund; two local groups (Doury Road and

Cregagh) are now part of the new Anti-Poverty and Community Resilience Programme; and three local groups (Clonduff, Lisanally/Alexander and Parkmore) are engaged with the new Social Justice Approach to Community Development Programme. This has been achieved through ensuring that a strategic focus underpins the groups' and communities' plans for sustainability.

Relationships with other stakeholder agencies and the local projects have had a fairly consistent pattern over both programmes. With the exception of Seacourt, Larne in CIT1, relationships between the local groups and the Housing Executive developed rapidly and were generally positive. (This relationship was fraught in Seacourt initially as housing demolition plans were opposed by local people. More positive relationships emerged later after a lot of negotiation.) Likewise, positive relationships with Health and Social Services were relatively consistent but less so with Education and Library Boards in terms of support and engagement, with pressure of resources often the reason given. Relationships with Council officers varied most – some positively helped on environmental issues where the return was a saving to the public purse (area clean-ups etc) but were less engaged on good relations issues or community services support. Many were defensive about lack of engagement using a decrease in their resources or theyused the groups' access to CIT resources as the reason for not offering support – neitherof which are acceptable.

Interestingly, relationships with local councillors (and MLAs) were generally positive, particularly for CIT2, and this was often the conduit for change. The learning from this struggle to build relationships with Councils has influenced the development of a follow-on programme in one of the proposed new Cluster-Council areas. It will entail a parallel engagement strategy with local areas and Councils/agenciesfrom the outset.

Where networks or support organisations were strong (and this varied significantly, contributing to weak infrastructure compounding weak support), good working relationships developed (for example, Annsborough with the East Down Rural Community Network and LEDCOM with Antiville/Craigyhill, in particular) and connected groups into local structures and programmes, which will help/has helped sustainability.

The Employment Model

CIT2 changed the model for employing local support staff to reflect learning from the first Programme. Although the revised model of centrally managed and employed Cluster Workers was more effective and cost-efficient than the original, it was not without its own difficulties. The learning from both programmes and recommendations from both external evaluations have led CIT to develop a third model: a team of specialist support staff to cover a wider geographical area. This model will be tested (on a small scale) in CIT's new Causeway Communities Engagement Programme (CCEP), which has been developed to meet the needs of the changed policy context and the learning from both CIT Programmes.

Partnership and Collaboration

A few of the areas participating in CIT1 combined a number of local estates and villages, thus maximising the local impact and user benefit of the projects (notably the six local villages involved in the North Cavan project and the five local estates involved in the Strabane forum). CIT2 incorporated this learning into the selection criteria for areas to participate in the programme, by looking favourably on local communities in which more than one estate could benefit from the support. This resulted in the selection of four areas with more than one neighbouring estate: Queen Street and Avenue Road (Lurgan), Cregagh and Clonduff (Castlereagh), Lisanally and Alexander (Armagh) and Antiville and Craigyhill (Larne). The experience of the Programme in developing partnerships and collaborative working across these four areas (eight estates) is varied. All are single identity, Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist, urban estates so there were no issues relating to cross community working or urban-rural approaches which might have created a different dynamic in determining whether or not the partnerships were a success.

Of these four areas, two (Lisanally/Alexander and Craigyhill/Antiville) have developed successful partnerships which should continue to operate across the two local estates; one (Cregagh/Clonduff) worked together over the course of the Communities in Transition Programme, but has now decided to discontinue the formal partnership, although they will continue to do some joint working; and the Queen Street and Avenue Road groups made a decision to work separately fairly early on in CIT2, although they do have some joint activities planned at this current point in time. A number of factors contributed to whether or not these planned partnerships succeeded: First, the estates that are less geographically distinct have had considerably more success in partnership working. Craigyhill and Antiville are two large estates in Larne with few characteristics distinguishing one from the other. The quality of housing, local environment and demarcating features are nearly identical yet work to encourage them to work together for the greater benefit took huge effort and sensitivity because of fear of paramilitary reaction. This is now working well. In Armagh, Lisanally and Alexander are two estates which a non-local would have considerable difficulty determining the boundaries between (apart from relying on the names on individual street signs) and from the outset, the areas agreed to work together.

Queen Street/Avenue Road and Cregagh/Clonduffare both made up of one considerably larger (Cregagh and Avenue Road) and one smaller estate (Clonduff and Queen Street). In addition, there is a difference in these areas in terms of perceived paramilitary influence. Both Queen Street and Clonduff would traditionally have been perceived as having connections to the UVF, whereas Cregagh and (to a lesser extent) Avenue Road would have been perceived as having UDA alliances. Finally, Neighbourhood Renewal made a difference in the South Lurgan area, with part of one estate being Neighbourhood Renewal (with the neighbouring Mourneview estate), whereas the other estate was completely outside the area eligible for NR.

Reflections on Policy and Practice: **External Evaluator**

Selection of Areas

The CIT programme has always utilised a relatively resource intensive area-selection process. It is clearly necessary in Northern Ireland, where spatial competition for programme resources is complicated by contests amongst residentially-segregated communities, to provide a transparent, evidence-based template for channelling funds to particular communities. For this purpose, the Multiple Deprivation Measure has been a useful instrument - based on a large number of disparate factors aggregated to a single measure on which relatively small areas can be ranked. Its utility, however, should not mask its limitations. First, its spatial units are essentially administrative in character rather than representative of real communities. Second, while consideration has been given to how a measure of community infrastructure might be included, this has not yet proved practicable. Third, it fails to capture 'left over' issues from political conflict - residual paramilitarism, inter and intra community antagonisms, bonfires and other symbols of contest. Yet, such issues are clearly relevant to the quality of life of many local communities.

CIT has tried to deal with such 'MDM deficits' by constructing an elaborate process that incorporates a wide range of quantitative and qualitative evidence which is interrogated by practice experts. As such, it explicitly commits to a form of 'knowledge production' that synthesises academic, professional and popular forms of knowledge. Many would argue (e.g. the Great Cities Programme in the US) that this is the essential character of 21st Century knowledge. CIT represents a practical example of how this form of 'synthetic knowledge' can be applied in practice. This is a crucially important feature of the programme - prefigurative of policy development in the future.

However, it remains resource intensive compared to other selection mechanisms that have been employed in community programmes. It must therefore demonstrate a 'costs/benefits gain' before being adopted by other programmes.

The Participative Action Learning Model

In any community-targeted programme, there is an inevitable challenge in reconciling the high-level goals of the programme with the autonomy of projects to locally define need and implement strategy. Imposing a particular template on a group of projects undermines the fundamental values of community development, but idiosyncratic definitions of need or strategy can lead to mission drift for the programme as a whole. The resolution of this tension is only really possible when the programme adopts a comprehensive learning posture, in which programme managers, workers and projects explicitly commit to learning together. Thus, it is anticipated that programme goals will be refined over time and that projects will be open to the information/research/lessons generated by programme managers.

Evidence of this can be seen in explicit commitments to inter-project exchange and the availability of internal research/evaluation resources to individual projects, particularly in the

Capacity Building Initiative. The investment in learning in CIT2 has been among its most important features.

A key challenge for the community sector lies in finding innovative ways of working in an uncertain future. Innovation is essentially driven by investment in human resources and critical reflection on existing practices. CIT2 is explicitly committed to this process.

The Problem of Capital Deficits

The internal evaluation indicated that a key difference between CIT1 and 2 was the difficulty experienced by second programme projects in obtaining resources for capital investment. This was explained by the scarcity of relevant funding programmes for the second programme. An important conclusion of the internal evaluation was that capital deficits had an inhibiting effect on the development of CIT2 areas. If so, then there is a clear imperative to think about how new programmes (e.g. the Social Investment Fund) could be structured to grasp this particular nettle.

At its most basic, the issue is about affordable accommodation or premises. If small community organisations have to pay commercial rates for premises, what is available to invest in actual programmes will be significantly diminished. In the table in Section 2 of this report listing the variety of tenures experienced by CIT2 groups, it should be noted that three of the four projects paying commercial rents have had to move more than once. Such instability is not conducive to effective development and the high cost is likely to be unsustainable. Moreover, there is the problem of 'increasing returns of scale' where larger organisations that attracted previous support for capital programmes will have an unending advantage because of the long life of capital assets. Since CIT explicitly targets communities that have previously been 'out of the loop', they are unlikely to have accumulated capital assets from previous funding programmes. The problem of capital deficit raises the spectre of permanently under-developed communities.

Communication and Working with Other Programmes

CIT2 was distinctive in that it shared its target areas with other programmes, some statutory and others also managed by the Community Foundation. There is thus a question about maximising the synergies between CIT and whatever else is happening. There may be scope for exploring with communities how multiple programmes that operate simultaneously could be co-operatively organised to maximum impact.

This might be considered as a 'lite' version of 'participatory budgeting'. While requiring negotiation amongst programmes, the key is community discussion about what it wants from a set of programmes working within them.

CIT2 explored participatory budgeting exercises with at least one of its project areas - an experiment that is at the critical edge of policy development. The Total Place (HM Treasury and Communities and Local Government, 2010) programme adopted this approach to reduce spending overlaps, empower communities and make programmes more cost effective.

With local government about to be reformed and restructured in Northern Ireland in 2015, the proposed 11 new local authorities will face a key challenge in operationalising their responsibilities for community planning and citizen well being. The learning from CIT's piloting of participatory budgeting approaches could assist this process.

Changing the Employment Model

The idea of making available specialist expertise from theme based workers across projects is important. By definition, any set of programme workers will have different (and different levels of) experience and capability. Particular projects might thus be advantaged/disadvantaged by exclusive access to particular workers and the new arrangement tackles this issue. There remains, however, the difficulty of recruiting and sustaining staff with appropriate experience and expertise. It is not obvious why it would be easier to recruit more specialist, as opposed to generic, community workers.

Some of the difficulty may lie in the way involvement in the community sector has become increasingly professionalised. In the1970s and 80s, when there were relatively few paid workers outside of the public sector and the bigger community organisations, local community leaders emerged with strong commitment to their area and its issues. They enabled people to become involved and volunteer – much was achieved, mainly with local fundraising and there was little fear that protest or campaigning would jeopardise funding since there was little funding around.

The professionalisation of the sector in the 90's began to change this and, with better salaries and job opportunities, there was more competition for jobs. Qualifications took precedence in job selection andunqualified, but experienced, community activists found it difficult to find paid employment. One result was the loss of community activism and the introduction of a whole infrastructure that became the buffer with the state – community development was more about helping local services to be effective than challenging power. The voluntary sector began to replicate the statutory sector and salaries were comparable and much sought after. The rise of partnerships and the raft of special initiatives made the relationship with the statutory sector more cosy and less challenging. Community work was thus more career-oriented and more incorporated as an instrument for service delivery (See the Treasury 'Cross-Cutting Review, 2002). It was also more concentrated in areas with already developed infrastructure.

This is relevant to CIT2 for two reasons: First, it seeks to re-establish a form of community activism similar to the 1980s, based on local control and local volunteering - subordinating professionalism to local participation.   Second, it targets areas 'outside the loop' thus remaining tangential to avenues of career development in community work. It is difficult to see how it can attract and hold onto those with ample experience and capability when career opportunities lie elsewhere.   This is why an investment in the development of local community leadership was so integral to CIT2 and access to a capacity building budget was so critical.

Community Tensions and Working with Paramilitary Organisations

At the core of CIT has been engaging with community tension, legacy of the conflict and residual paramilitary issues. There is a wealth of experience in dealing with such issues in both programmes - learning that is relevant to a host of other interventions in Northern Ireland.

This is particularly important in the context of traditional community development practices tending to distance themselves from such tough (even dangerous) issues. There is no doubt that the Peace Process has resulted in a 'historic compromise' between Northern Ireland's two dominant religious/political traditions. There is, however, an ongoing danger of compromise and engagement at the top and continuing cantonisation at the bottom – when the results of the 2011 Census are published later this year, it will be possible to see whether residential segregation has declined in the 13 years following the Good Friday Agreement. CIT2 worked with a set of communities in which division, contest and paramilitarism remain features of everyday life. They are not a unique group – the initial trawl found 142 SOAs that met the selection criteria. Despite the accomplishments of peace, there remains an imperative to find a form of development that grapples both with the problems of poverty/exclusion and such 'legacy of conflict' issues.

The headline development agenda being pursued in the region seeks to bury these issues in the past. There is clearly more capital in commemorating (celebrating the tourism dollars?) the centenary of the Titanic sinking, particularly in the form of a futuristic building that rivals the Guggenheim in Bilbao or having the Ulster Agricultural Society move to the Maze. The fact that Derry managed to secure the UK City of Culture 2013 in competition with the UK's biggest city is undoubtedly a triumph. However, it is not to tarnish any of that glitter by posing questions about how the lives of citizens battered by recession/welfare reform and still experiencing the residue of what was a bitterly fought conflict could be bettered. CIT suggests an integrated approach to issues of both exclusion and cohesion provides the best chance of making a real difference.

A major challenge for the programme is how to engage with paramilitary organisations and still develop community capacity and capability. For CIT1, this was presented as the effort to create pluralist communities - recognising that paramilitaries had a legitimate place in the community, but not as the single, or even dominant, source of knowledge, authority and access. Operationally, the challenge has been to find a form of dialogue that doesn't produce instant rejection, but is still critical and change-producing for the paramilitaries concerned. Amongst other things, this involves their recognition that others will be fearful about voicing disagreement or criticism.

A key issue is how changes in various paramilitary organisations since CIT1 can be understood - particularly for Loyalist paramilitaries which were the dominant form of paramilitarism in CIT areas. To the external evaluator, there appears to be growing disquiet amongst Loyalist groups about what they see as a deteriorating situation for themselves and their communities. There is a general feeling that their access to decision makers has declined

as the DUP has taken a hegemonic position within Loyalism. This has been accompanied by a sense of paranoia that the Historical Enquiries Team (and the new supergrass trials) is focused almost exclusively on Loyalist organisations. Finally, there is the sense that Catholics have been the major recipients of any social or economic gains of the Peace Process.

Whether the basis for such grievances is real is difficult to determine. Certainly, it would appear that predominantly Catholic areas are more represented in the least deprived categories of various deprivation studies (MDM 2001, 2005, 2010), but the majority of the most deprived are still predominantly Catholic. It may also be that greater scrutiny by the PSNI is connected to the level of unsolved cases. How real is this sense of grievance or are we witnessing no more than renewed effort to re-exert paramilitary control over community?

Simultaneously, there has been a growing resentment within some Republican circles about the progress of the Peace Process which sees Sinn Fein as abandoning both the national struggle and its radical social programme. While this was not the dominant experience of CIT2, the extension of the CIT approach to other areas would undoubtedly encounter this phenomenon.

Not dealing with these issues is to leave a field of unexploded mines – look at Inner East Belfast in 2011. It makes little sense to intervene only when the crisis erupts. However, the crucial question is: what form should pre-crisis intervention take?

The internal evaluation of CIT reflects on how such issues manifested themselves in CIT2 projects. The difficulties of this kind of engagement are not obscured, but the key seemed to lie in utilising the experience, contacts and networks developed in CIT1 and in other programmes for which the Community Foundation was responsible. The idea of 'cross-programme' contacts is important - the legitimacy and authority gained from other programmes fed into successful negotiations with paramilitary organisations. While recognising the sensitivities and confidentialities involved, a useful contribution to the whole peacebuilding/conflict resolution debate could be made if the lessons from this work could be distilled and made widely available. Some work has already been done in that respect (See Healy & O'Prey, 2010), but this should be an ongoing process.

4. Measuring Impact

Introduction: The Challenge of Measuring the Impacts of Community Projects

A perennial problem for community programmes lies in identifying exactly what they have achieved - what change can be attributed to their initiative and efforts. In part, this is connected to the fact that area-based programmes are not experiments where the subjects can be isolated from all other influences. Unrealistic expectations that community development can effect structural change in a short period of time cannot be met and the socio-economic profile of an area may thus remain unchanged despite significant programme success.

Accordingly, although many community projects make great efforts, any general impact in terms of community development may be lost by changes over which small communities have no control. The problem is double edged. Because of the difficulty of isolating community action impacts from everything else affecting communities, there are also difficulties in distinguishing between projects that are genuinely attempting to affect change and those that merely concentrate on protecting the organisation and being gatekeepers for their constituent community. In short, there is a pressing need to distinguish between effective and ineffective community development (if only to concentrate resources on the former), but the tools available for measuring community impact remain relatively underdeveloped.

Typically, evaluations of community-based programmes seek to measure activities and intermediate outputs (meetings held, events organised, volunteers mobilised, training completed, resources attracted to the community etc.), thus capturing what is easiest to measure. The bigger questions, such as how much development has actually taken place or whether the community has changed for the better tend to be ignored because of the measurement problems set out above.

Capturing Achievement

For a number of years, however, there has been an ongoing debate about how such broader community impacts could be measured. For example, the New Economics Foundation pioneered a method known as 'Social Return on Investment' that attempts to monetise the non-monetary benefits of community activity. The result is a ratio between investment (the amount given to the project by a funder) and outcomes (the total financial and social impacts translated into a money metric), which allows judgements about which projects gave the greatest return on investment. In the evaluation of CIT1, a bespoke evaluation tool was developed to capture some of the broader impacts that are frequently ignored by traditional evaluation methodologies – a 'Change Matrix'. It was developed around a set of basic principles:

- First, that project participants should be the primary drivers of the evaluation process. This simultaneously generates better data, empowers those involved and creates an inbuilt mechanism for project improvement;

- Second that evaluation must capture the total range of project effects - processes, relationships, benefits and engendered change;
- Third, that despite the conceptual and technical difficulties, the bottom line of the evaluation exercise is about assessing outcomes and the degree of change effected by project operation;
- Fourth, that evaluation itself must be cost effective – if it costs almost as much to evaluate an intervention as to deliver it, evaluation has 'crowded out' impact.

These principles suggested a particular approach to evaluating CIT1.

(1)   First, to ensure the process was driven by participants an **Empowerment Evaluation** approach was employed. Empowerment evaluation employs a range of methodologies, but has an unambiguous value orientation -- to help people improve projects using a form of self-evaluation and reflection. Participants conduct their own evaluations; an outside evaluator often serves as a coach or additional facilitator (critical friend) depending on internal programme capabilities. It is necessarily a collaborative group activity, not an individual pursuit. An evaluator does not, and cannot, empower anyone; people empower themselves. The process is fundamentally democratic in the sense that it invites (if not demands) participation, openly examining issues of concern to the entire group:[13]

(2)   Second, that the **outcomes the evaluation seeks to capture should be directly derivable from the programme objectives** - the achievements the evaluation seeks to measure should be directly focused on what the programme is about. CIT is about integrating community development and peace building practices and accelerating the development of communities that:

- are lacking in infrastructure;
- have been largely ignored by mainstream programmes;
- have experienced some form of community tensions, particularly in terms of residual paramilitarism, sectarianism or difficult relations with other communities;
- have problematic relationships with statutory providers/local politicians, and;
- while not among the most deprived, are considerably less than affluent.

The programme objectives are to assist in the creation/development of some form of community organisation that:

1. brings together all groups in the community (**inclusive**);
2. does not seek to appropriate all forms of local power (**pluralist**);
3. listens to, and speaks for, the community as a whole (**voice**);
4. focuses on helping weaker community members (**reach**);
5. encourages the involvement of many community members (**participation**);
6. moderates conflicts within the community (**conciliates**);

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[13] See the Mid-Term Evaluation Report for a more detailed explanation of Empowerment Evaluation.

7. builds relationships with other communities (**engages**);
8. works with statutory and other providers (**advocates**);
9. identifies and campaigns around community-defined needs (**develops).**

In short, the programme tries to do three things: first, help develop a particular form of community organisation; second, encourage the adoption of specific kinds of local process; third, assist in developing strategies to tackle local social need. It does so fully acknowledging some of the key limitations of local action, specifically - that structural change actively under-develops vulnerable communities and marginalises their members (community development cannot solve structural poverty) - even the issues around which community development has a practical relevance can take a very long time to exhibit any kind of change.

The first step in assessing programme impact was to define a set of 'change dimensions' that naturally emerged from these nine programme objectives. This was done via discussions with projects and programme team rather than externally imposed by the evaluator. That process generated the following matrix.

Programme Objective	Change Dimension (definition of these dimensions are given in Section 2 of the report)
Inclusive	• **Isolation** • **Alienation**
Pluralist	• **Gatekeeping**
Voice	• **Community Confidence**
Reach	• **Quality of Life** • **Community Safety**
Participation	• **Community Organisation**
Conciliates	• **Group Tensions**
Engages	• **Impact of the Conflict** • **Racism** • **Sectarianism** • **Interface** • **Overt Cultural Expression**
Advocates	• **Funding** • **Relationships with Agencies/Politicians**
Develops	• **Access to Services** • **Community Facilities** • **Environmental Issues** • **Sustainability**

(3)   The third idea was that **changes in these dimensions could be best captured by asking the people involved to rate their importance (priority for the project), the level of difficulty in actually making change in that dimension (changeability) and how much change has taken place as the result of programme activity**. To avoid this being no more than a process of self-congratulation, the views of projects and the CIT staff who worked with them were each checked against the other. Each group of programme stakeholders was asked to complete the following matrix

Project Name					
Change Dimension	Priority	Changeability	Position 2007	Position 2009	Position 2011
Quality of life					
Community Safety					
Access to services					
Racism					
Sectarianism					
Interface					
Community facilities					
Community organisation					
Community confidence					
Environmental issues					
Funding					
Gatekeeping					
Group tensions					
Impact of the conflict					
Isolation					
Relationships with					

agencies/politicians					
Sustainability					
Alienation					
Overt cultural expression					

Each cell in the matrix was to be scored from 1 - 10. For Priority, a score of 1 signalled least importance for the project and 10 most importance. For Changeability, the order was reversed - 1 meant most difficult to change, 10 least. The participants were asked to indicate the baseline state of this dimension, the position in 2009 and the position in 2011, again on a 1 - 10 scale where higher scores signalled an improved position. Project and programme staff scores for each project were collected and analysed.

Should programmes, like CIT, rely on essentially subjective estimates to measure their results? The main concern is that when critical questioning is directed by the participants of a project rather than an external evaluator, there is a loss of objectivity – projects give themselves an 'easy time'. Yet, the opposite tends to be the case. External evaluation is frequently associated with the quest for further funding. Project participants seek to give the external evaluator the best picture possible of project achievements. With retrospective, summative evaluation, much of the relevant information is difficult to retrieve. Moreover, funders naturally worry about the propriety of project spending and thus considerable effort is focused on financial auditing – but, even when money is properly accounted for, it may still be thrown at ineffective actions. This approach changes the game by focusing on learning and improvement rather than judgement and by eliminating the 'end of term' report. The experience has been that projects are remarkably more self-critical than when reporting to an external evaluator. Participants find the process empowering, by focusing on self-directed continuous improvement and reflection they find 'voice' and participate in pluralist project governance. Value assessments and project plans are subject to an ongoing process of reflection and self-evaluation. Participants learn to continually assess their progress toward self-determined goals, and to reshape their plans and strategies according to this assessment.

Thus, so long as the measurement and capture of harder outcomes is also carried out, the approach is perfectly valid.In any case, field work by the World Bank (2011) actually showed that 'community targeting in poverty programmes produced better results'. In short, the World Bank was better able to target poverty by relying on local people's estimates of who were the poorest members of their own communities.

The Achievements of CIT2 – Progress on Programme Objectives

The change matrices were completed with each CIT2 project by the internal evaluator. This process utilises Nominal Group Technique (NGT), pioneered in previous CFNI projects. NGT is a qualitative method that can be used to illustrate more detailed interactions, factors and circumstances to supplement quantitative measurements of gross or net impact. NGT is designed to draw on participant knowledge rather than opinions (the subject matter of focus groups). It first elicits individual responses about outcomes and the means to achieve them and then through collective discussion focuses down on those areas which are deemed to have highest priority amongst the group. It is then about facilitating a discussion about what changes have occurred as a result of project activities, the benefits or costs involved and the means to achieve greater positive impact. It thus allows for understanding of policy impact and social phenomena from the perspective of individuals and groups who experience it in specific social contexts and is recommended by HM Treasury as an appropriate tool in policy evaluation. The external evaluator undertook a similar exercise with CFNI staff that supported the CIT2 projects. The result was a set of estimates, from both projects and workers, of:how important these elements were; how difficult it would be to bring about improvement, and how much change was actually achieved. It should be remembered that these numbers are just estimates – how much change people believed took place. However, differences between projects and worker estimates are interesting in themselves.

Figure 1 depicts the relative priority given to each change dimension.

Figure 1
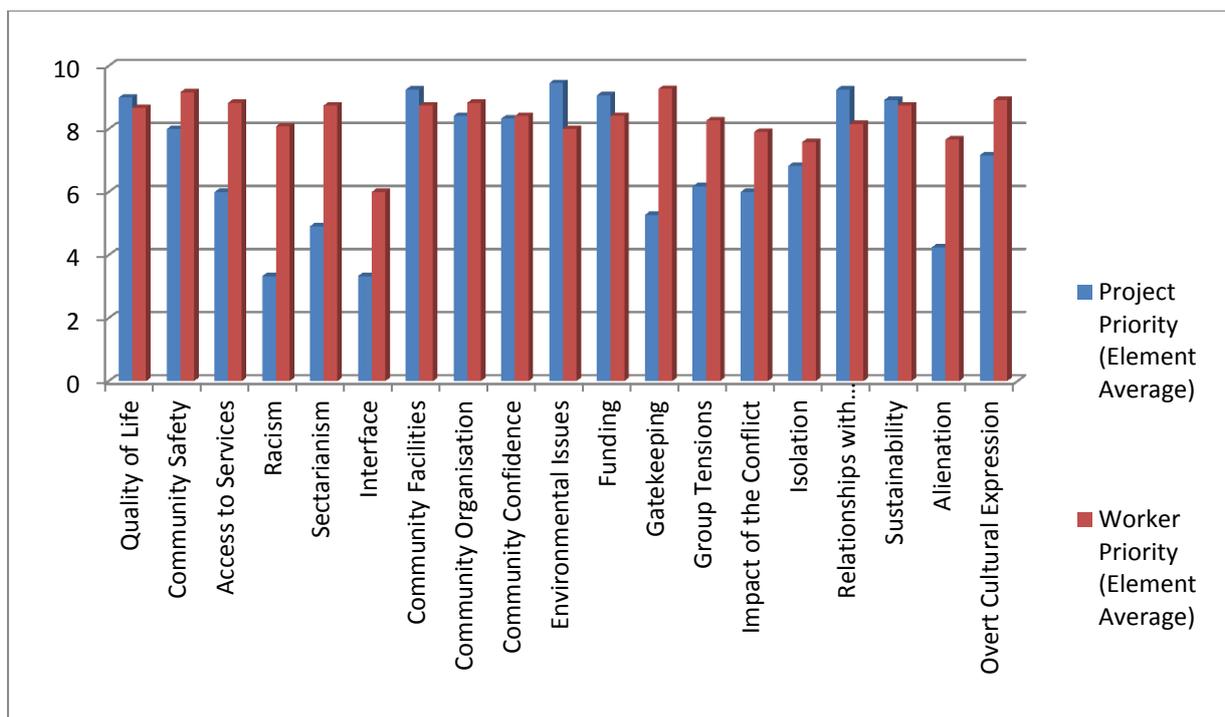
Almost half of the 19 elements were given a priority of 8 or more by both projects and CFNI support staff – 12 were assigned a priority of 6 or more. Only three elements were scored 4 or less by projects (racism, interface and alienation), though each were scored significantly higher by support staff. When a project is working with multiple objectives, almost half of which have very high priority (top quintile), the danger is a lack of focus on a limited number of objectives where change is most possible and benefits are highest. This concern will be explored when examining estimates of progress.

There is an interesting pattern of difference in the respective priorities assigned by projects and their support workers. In general, project put more emphasis on things like community facilities, environmental issues, funding, quality of life and relationships with statutory agencies – in short, the traditional goals of community development. In contrast, workers gave greater priority to a set of issues that revolve around the programme goal of resolving community tensions – racism, sectarianism, interface, group tensions, impact of the conflict, alienation and overt cultural expression. There was also a visibly greater priority given by workers to issues like gatekeeping and community organisation – a concern about pluralism within the community. The exception to this pattern of difference was access to services, where one would have expected greater emphasis from projects.

There may be a number of reasons for this pattern of difference:

- CFNI staff may be more 'programme aware' than the participants of projects (who tend to be task rather than programme focused) and the former may therefore give greater emphasis to CIT's integrative character (peacebuilding and community development). The programme does explicitly attempt to deal with this 'exclusively

internal focus' by bringing project participants together on a regular basis, particularly in the Capacity Building Initiative;

- The difference might relate to how projects perceive the difficulties of changing some of these big community tension type issues (see Figure 2);
- Traditional areas of community development work might be regarded as 'safer' particularly in the formative stage of building organisation and engaging with the community. This raises the question of when the tougher issues will be tackled. The fact that CIT support workers gave more emphasis to these suggests that projects have not been able to avoid them.
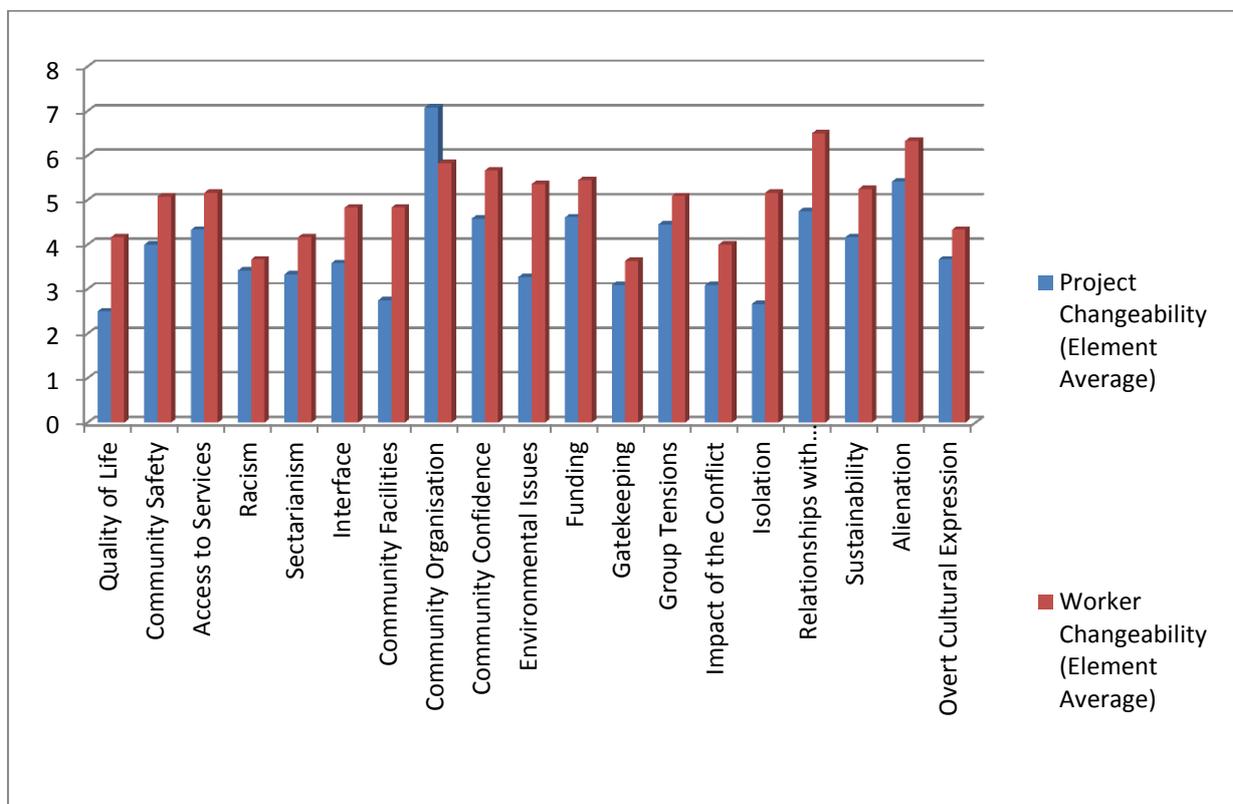
Figure 2

Figure 2 explores differences between projects and support staff in their estimates of how easy (or difficult) it was to achieve change. It should be remembered that the ranking here is reversed – low numbers indicate an estimate that change is difficult to achieve, high numbers that it is easy to achieve. In this case, support workers felt that change was easier to achieve (higher scores) in all but one element – community organisation. The elements that offered the greatest obstacle to change (scoring 3 or less) were, according to the projects, quality of life, community facilities, gatekeeping, impact of the conflict and isolation. This is a mixed bunch with three falling into the traditional goals of community development, and two reflecting the peacebuilding dimension of the programme. As regards the latter, it should be noted that racism, sectarianism and interface issues were also regarded as relatively

intractable – scoring less than 4. These were also amongst the lowest estimates provided by support staff.

From Figures 1 and 2 it would appear that the peacebuilding elements of CIT are interpreted as amongst the hardest in which to achieve progress – hardly surprising given the protracted and difficult process of peacebuilding that Northern Ireland generally has been going through. It is also the case (possibly as a result of the perceived difficulties?) that projects also assign these areas of work a lower priority than those associated with traditional kinds of community activity. To be judged successful, CIT has to demonstrate the practicality of its integration of peace building and community development. Care has thus to be taken that the selected areas and their associated projects fully internalise the programme's goals. However, the key question in that respect is about where projects and support staff saw greatest progress.

Figure 3
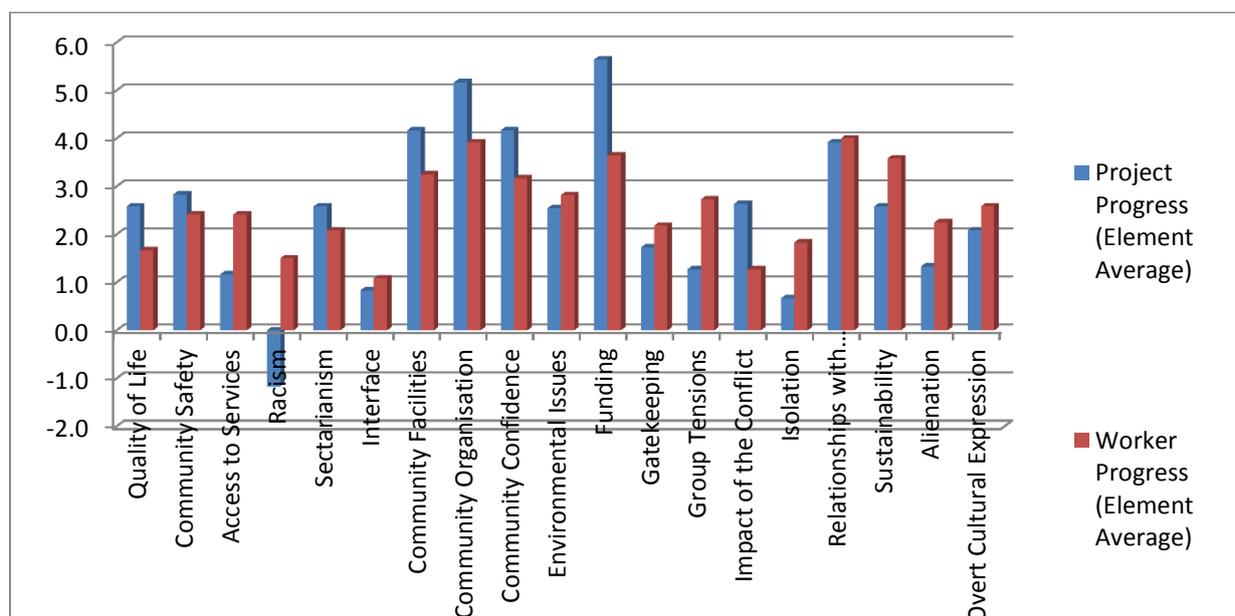
The definition of progress here is a simple one – the estimate of the position of this element in 2011 minus the 2007 estimate.[14] While it is possible to calculate progress as a percentage of the baseline value [(2011-2007)/2007], this tends to inflate those projects with low baseline scores. Given that a ten point scale was employed for scoring, each point represents 10% of the scale.

What stands out is that, across projects, the position regarding racism was estimated to have deteriorated over the period. It's not that projects promoted racism, but rather the judgement that the position had deteriorated despite project activity. The growth of racism generally in Northern Ireland has been noted, for example, in the PSNI's annual hate crime statistics and

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[14] Note: the mid-term evaluation looked at 2007-09 and 2009-11 estimates. Here the intention is to gauge progress over the whole programme, so the period is 2007-11.

in many media reports. But, this result reflects a more complicated reality than the average suggests. For a number of projects, there was no progress recorded on this element because the issue was not seen to be relevant in the area. Moreover, three projects recorded deterioration rather than progress with racism (in two cases by 7 scale points), which gave a negative average for all projects. Finally, support staff, while recognising marginal progress, did, nevertheless, identify some – more than with, for example, interface issues or impact of the conflict.

Indeed, for a majority of the change elements, support staff estimated more progress than projects themselves – perhaps reflecting a broader view of what is feasible in complex and difficult situations.

It also possible that local projects living with these complex issues, and no experience of previous engagement with them, have no measuring stick – no sense of knowing how such change is necessarily slow and often process orientated rather than product driven - and therefore don't view the small steps towards change in as positive a way as those with the broader view. Projects tended to be more optimistic about change around more traditional community activities –quality of life, community safety, community facilities, community organisation, community confidence and funding. This may again reflect the difference between local experience and a broader, more regional viewpoint.

It should be noted also that progress of 3 or more (on a 10 point scale 30%) was recorded by projects and support staff on six elements (almost a third of the total) - again, however, in areas where projects were not struggling against the legacy of conflict and tension (organisation, funding, facilities, relationships with statutory agencies and providers), projects were more optimistic than support staff about achievements around sectarianism and impact of the conflict. One would expect the external workers to be more objective on such assessments.

Nevertheless, the bottom line is that both groups of stakeholders did perceive progress across projects across a range of elements. In terms of the programme objectives set out above, least progress was achieved under the heading of **engagement** which covered the broad area of peacebuildingactivity.In other programme objectives (e.g. **voice** and **participation**), significant accomplishments were recorded.

It is possible to bring all these elements together to create a single indicator of progress. The method chosen here was to multiply the progress and priority estimates (giving greater weight to progress in areas that had high priority) and divide the result by the changeability estimate (to deflate the result for those elements where progress was regarded as easiest to achieve) – (Progress * Priority)/Changeability. It is important to stress that the resultant number is primarily about how progress was perceived for elements that had high priority and for which it was most difficult to affect change.

Figure 4

Progress Weighted by Priority & Changeability
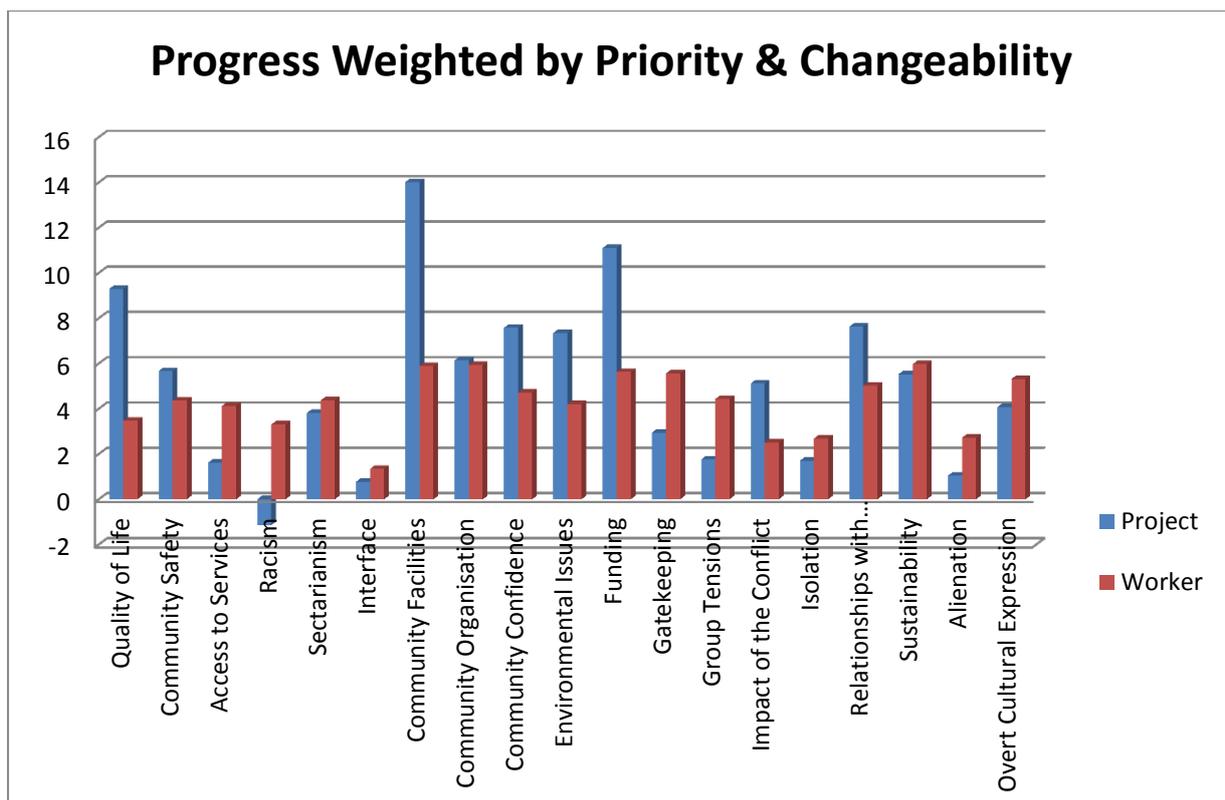
The theoretical maximum here is 100 (progress 10 multiplied by priority 10 and divided by changeability 1). In practice no element was scored anywhere near that. In any case, the important thing is not the numbers, but the relative ranking of individual elements and differences between project and support staff estimates.

On this weighted indicator, projects estimated progress to be greater than support staff in half of the change elements – again reflecting fairly traditional community development activities like quality of life, community safety, community facilities, community organisation, confidence, funding and relationships with statutory agencies. Support staff saw greater relative progress in the much tougher areas of racism, sectarianism, group tensions and overt cultural expression. Thus support staff tended to see more progress than the projects themselves in the most difficult areas of work, arguably those at the core of the CIT concept. Undoubtedly, even the support staff saw greater progress in some of these less challenging areas, but in elements like community safety, sectarianism, gatekeeping, group tensions and overt cultural expression, the support staff saw solid progress.

What does this add up to? Here an exercise was carried out designed to capture change across the core programme objectives of CIT2 – areas in which it is difficult to conceptualise and measure change. The method employed did rely on subjective assessments of progress, but these were generated in critical engagement with evaluators, who, though friendly, remained critical and demanding of evidence to support the estimates given. This method has been tested in a number of programmes and has been recommended by the Treasury to capture qualitative impacts. Three things emerged from the data:

- Projects tended to give greater priority and (with some exceptions) saw most progress in building effective community organisation and mobilising local participation;
- Support staff tended to emphasise the more integrative character of the programme, in particular emphasising its peacebuilding characteristics.
- While there were many differences between project and support staff estimates of progress, nevertheless in some key, complex and difficult areas (racism and sectarianism) support staff saw greater progress than projects – the latter were being too hard on themselves.

The Achievements of CIT2 – Project Performance

Just as it is possible to aggregate estimates for each change element to see the focus of change accomplished by CIT2, it is equally possible to aggregate estimates for each progress – a measure of project performance within the programme. Considerable caution has to be expressed here. The previous exercise aggregated estimates for each element (the risk being that individual estimates were generated by different groups with possibly different models of reality in their heads), but each was treated separately. Here elements that are qualitatively different are being aggregated to give a single indicator of project performance. Certainly, it would be possible to analyse each project's performance for each element, but with 12 project areas and 19 elements that would require over 200 mini-analyses, complexity beyond the scale and scope of an evaluation exercise.[15]

Figure 5

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[15] The dataset that permits analysis of individual projects by individual elements has been created and will be available to deal with specific queries.
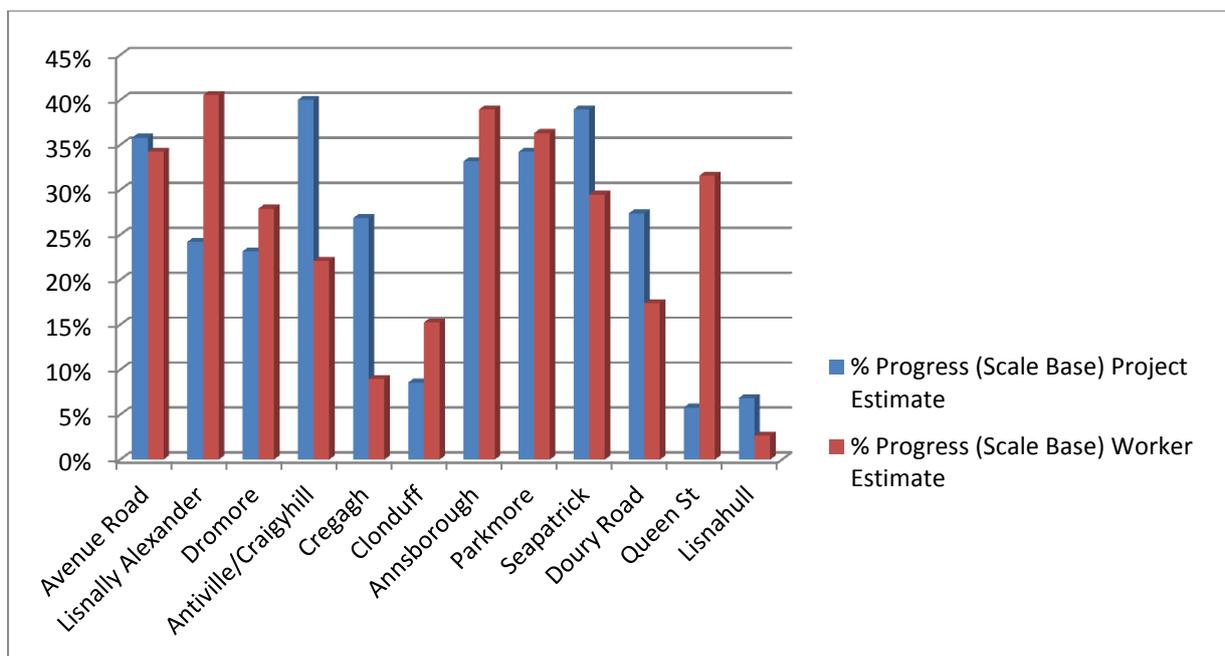
Figure 5 depicts the average progress (as a % of the full ten point scale) of each project area across all 19 change elements. It compares the estimates generated by each project with those provided for the project by the relevant support worker. In half of the projects, project estimates of progress were greater than those provided by support workers. In the other half it was the reverse. Thus some projects felt they had achieved more than their support worker, but for others the support worker saw greater progress than the project itself. The estimates from support staff were particularly low (compared to the project itself) for Cregagh, Doury Rd and Lisnahull. Support staff progress estimates were highest for Avenue Rd, Lisnally Alexander, Annsborough, Parkmore and Queen St.

The pattern of differential development is explained mainly by the complexities of individual situations and the difficulty of initiating the CIT model of development. For example Doury Rd has been described as a 'complex and very deprived estate with gatekeeping, drugs and paramilitaries…. A slow start to work in a very complex area has now built the foundations for very steady growth'. The Programmes Manager commented (Comments to the External Evaluator on Differential Development, p5):

> *…we have overcome some significant barriers in many of the areas and strong progress has been made in most – although this was not possible in some until quite late in the programme when the early groundwork paid off. Where I have identified weaker progress, it is down to gatekeeping and our inability to put strong workers on the ground to deal with this. To break down gatekeeping takes constant work and relationship building – where this does not happen, nothing changes.*

It is important to say that such differences do not permit judgements about the effectiveness or otherwise of particular projects that operate in different contexts and face different challenges. Rather the purpose is to stimulate a conversation about where the best practice lessons can be found and what performance issues should be highlighted.

If a weighted progress indicator is constructed by the same method as above [(Progress X Priority)/Changeability], the relationship between project and support staff estimates changes.

Figure 6
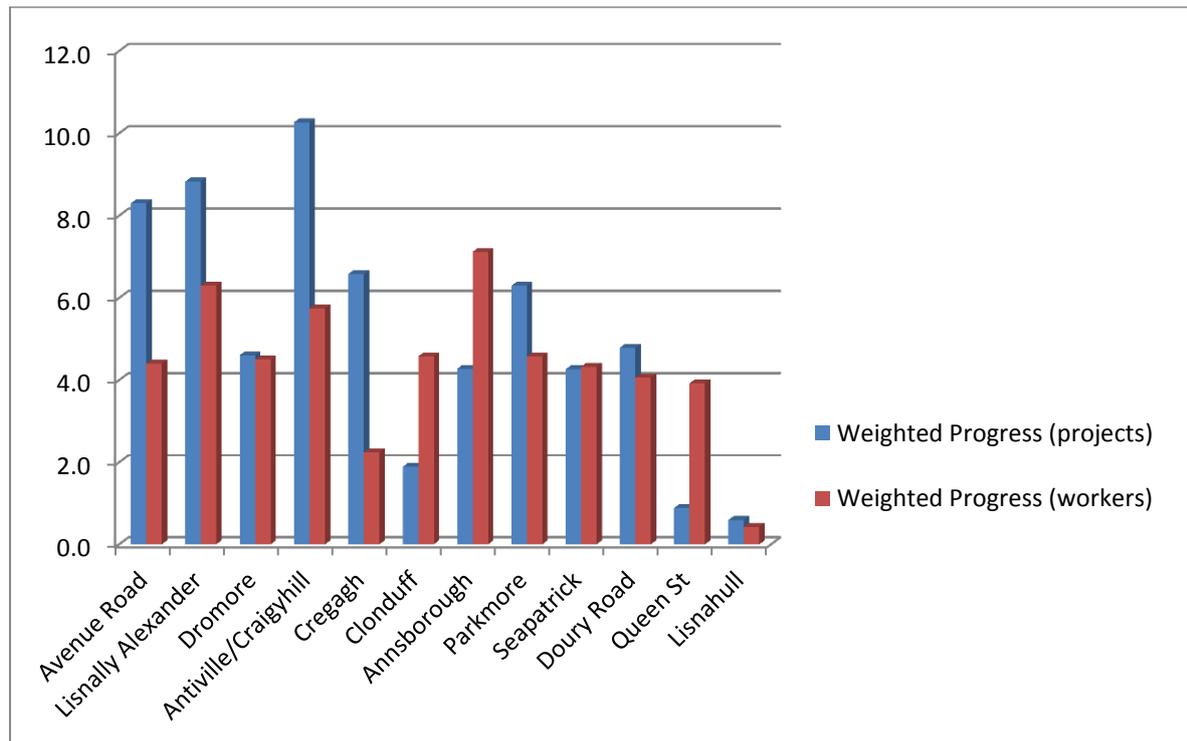
On this indicator, a majority of projects gave higher estimates of their progress than support staff, but with interesting exceptions – Clonduff (*slow to start, currently well networked and assertive*), Annsborough (*previous lack of community involvement in the area and friction between 'middle' and 'working class' participants – sectarianism is a problem of the other side*) and Queen St (*one affable, clever and well-educated gatekeeper has ensured that very little happened in this area, apart from quite benign classes and summer programmes, until fairly recentlywhen more developmental programmes, including a new historical and photography project with an exhibition, were developed and at last some movement has been made with a cultural awareness and identity programme*).

This is an area for further study. In general, one would expect projects to be less self-critical than staff more directly connected to programme rather than area goals. Thus, a pattern of higher project estimates of progress is no more than to be expected. Yet, even on this complicated, aggregated indicator, support staff saw more progress in some areas than the

projects themselves. One result of the evaluation should be sessions with CFNI staff to discuss the implications of the results that came out of these estimates.

As stated earlier, the purpose of this evaluation is not to provide an 'end of term' report on CIT. It is to work with the programme to elicit as much learning as possible and to identify lessons for similar or future programmes. CIT presents itself as an innovative model of community action, particularly relevant in a region with a legacy of conflict and where community development resources and organisation have been historically concentrated in particular spaces. The use of social need indicators alone to target resources has, if anything, reinforced this concentration. CIT selects areas of significant underdevelopment of community organisation, but where the legacy of the conflict is apparent and seeks to build something entirely new. In addition, it employs a novel evaluation strategy – ongoing with an interactive relationship between internal and external evaluations and a reach for big picture outcomes. In short, it seeks to combine innovative practice with a novel (perhaps too novel) form of evaluation.

Despite this, evidence emerged here of the ways in which the evaluation activity encouraged projects (and the people who worked with them) to:

- Think about **what was important** (prioritise) and concentrate activity. Certainly, it's true that not every area was concerned about all of the change elements that were taken from the programme's objectives, but that was reflected in the scores they gave;
- Think about what was **difficult to change** and what would be the value of attempting to change the most difficult issues;
- Think about what **changes had actually taken place** as a result of project activity.

While the numbers generated have been analysed and diagrammed above, the really important issue is to get projects engaged in these three processes.

5. Policy Implications of CIT2

Introduction

Section 3 of the evaluation report discussed what were considered the key lessons for practice that came from CIT. This section looks at the relevance of the programme for policy making, particularly with respect to area-targeted, social-inclusionprogrammes. It covers three broad themes:

- What are the prospects for weaker communities in Northern Ireland over the next period and how well can existing policy initiatives deal with the problems they face?
- What are the key policy lessons that have emerged from CIT2 and how do these relate to existing policies?
- Who should be targeted with these lessons and by which mechanisms could CIT be made relevant to the policy debate?

Prospects for Weaker Communities

The mid-term evaluation (p.20) described conditions in Northern Ireland at the beginning of 2011 as:

> *The recession that struck the UK economy in 2008, had particular implications for Northern Ireland. In the first phase, the regional economy held up well because of Keynesian spending by the then Labour Government. However, the fiscal retrenchment announced and implemented by the new Coalition Government had powerful implications for a region where public spending amounted to 66 per cent of GDP.... Finally, the proposed changes in welfare benefits have severe implications for a region where 20 per cent of all household income is made up of benefits. ...The Institute of Fiscal Studies undertook an assessment of the impact of benefit changes on the lowest income groups and suggested that income loss for these groups in Northern Ireland would actually be greater than elsewhere – amounting to a 4.5 per cent drop in net income. ...The Centre for Cities found that in 2010 Belfast had the worst unemployment record amongst 64 UK cities. Between 2010 and 2014, the Executive budget will lose £4 billion in real terms while capital investment is to be cut by 40 per cent – with profound implications for the construction industry. The reduction in real benefit levels will amount to a £400 million disinvestment in the local economy.*

The impact of the recession on the local economy continued to be felt right through 2011. Output in Production and Services industries remains around eight per cent below their 2008 peak, while construction remains 30 per cent below its peak. Employee jobs have fallen by almost 40,000 while claimant count unemployment has risen from 23,600 in February 2008 to 61,500 in January 2012 – the highest percentage increase of any UK region (DETI, March 2012). House prices are projected to fall again in 2012 as are social housing starts. Certainly, Northern Ireland has seen some recent growth, but there is still a mountain to climb before the output levels of 2008 are regained. Admittedly, the region has been somewhat protected from the full rigors of austerity – public sector job loss is lower than in the UK – but, the prospects of significantly reducing poverty are much less in the current economic and policy climate than they were in the decade prior to 2008.

In addition to the weakness in the economy, reforms to taxation and benefits continue to impact most severely on the lowest income groups. There has been no update of the Institute for Fiscal Studies' (IFS, 2010) Northern Ireland report. Its latest assessment (2012) of the impact on household income (for the whole of the UK) following the 2012 budget announcements concludes that the three lowest deciles of household will suffer the greatest percentage income loss. In terms of household types, the greatest impact will be on couple and single households with no one employed and with dependent children. Indeed, the IFS estimates that the income loss of the bottom decile of working age households with children will amount to almost four per cent. These projections are for the UK as a whole, but the higher benefits dependency in Northern Ireland, particularly of working age households with children suggests that the relatively greater Northern Ireland impact identified in the IFS 2010 report still holds. That report identified Northern Ireland's relatively greater dependence on Incapacity Benefit and Disability Living Allowance as creating particular vulnerabilities as these are progressively reformed. Recent reports on the percentage losing Incapacity Benefit following review make the point that these changes are being rapidly implemented. Moreover, while the major taxation reforms of the Coalition Government have already been put in place, almost 80 per cent of public spending cuts have still to unfold.

What is frequently unacknowledged is that such changes to the personal incomes of the poor also represent a process of public disinvestment from poor communities. The micro-economies of such communities suffer as the flow of income reduces. There is some evidence that the circulation of income within such communities is already low – most income is spent, but on goods and services outside. Thus, a worrying consequence of public disinvestment is the economic and social under-development of communities that saw very little share of Northern Ireland's decade of prosperity.

The Northern Ireland Executive is grappling with these challenges, but its response is limited in two important respects:
- The Northern Ireland spending limits are determined by the Treasury - the Executive has thus to manage with what it has been given. Moreover, while there has been some criticism of its use of limited fiscal powers to support those higher incomes (e.g. the rates cap), it has also launched specific policy initiatives, like the Social Investment Fund, targeted at the poor. Nevertheless, the total resources with which it works are determined at Westminster;
- The Northern Ireland Executive implements but does not determine benefit levels, which are fixed at UK level. Reductions in benefit have thus major impact on a region where 24 per cent of household income comes from tax credits, pensions and social security benefits (Regional Trends, 2011).

There have been a series of long-standing programmes targeted at the most deprived communities. For example, Neighbourhood Renewal now focuses on 39 (largish) areas in both urban and rural settings. This is not the place for a critical assessment of Neighbourhood Renewal except to note that many of the areas targeted have been the sites for a generation of area-focused anti-poverty strategies, yet consistently appear among the most deprived in a

succession of deprivation studies. The latest in a long-established suite of anti-poverty initiatives is the Social Investment Fund, a four year programme, budgeted at £80 million and targeted at eight broad localities across the region. Its purpose is to:

- build pathways to employment;
- tackle systemic issues linked to deprivation;
- increase community services; and
- address dereliction.

The programme is to be implemented by eight local steering committees whose activities are to be meshed with existing neighbourhood programmes, which will spend a year establishing baselines, working with stakeholders and designing a local programme. Their work will be supported by a Learning and Advisory Forum designed to share information and learning across all eight.

In the midst of the biggest cutback in public spending in decades, the Northern Ireland Executive deserves considerable credit for launching a new and explicitly anti-poverty programme. The problem is that it's all very familiar, reconfiguring bits of previous programmes, defining a very wide target area (what's left out?) and attempting to develop a complex and numerous set of functions that depend on a level of co-ordination and integration that has eluded previous initiatives. It was Einstein who quipped that repeating the same actions and expecting different results is one definition of insanity. Moreover, while again credit is due for planning an £80 million investment in an anti-poverty initiative given that resources are tight, this total is about a fifth of the public disinvestment resulting from tax and benefit changes.

It may be that greater risk should be taken with bold and innovative initiatives drawing from programme experience in the UK, the Irish Republic and Europe. CFNI's response to the Social Investment Fund consultation (2011) pointed to the relevance of:

- The **Total Place** initiative focused on liberating and bending mainstream savings into new community programmes;
- **Participatory Budgeting** experiments, where local communities identify the total public spending in their area and are given responsibility for budgeting at least a proportion of that to achieve greater congruence with conceptions of local need and greater reach than achieved by mainstream providers;
- Initiatives in the **Co-production of Public Values** – where communities, together with providers are fully involved in the design, delivery and evaluation of public services.

The central point here is that Northern Ireland has been relatively well endowed with area programmes of the past three decades, including elements of the Peace Programme, but has yet to find a way to tackle cycles of area deprivation and persistent poverty (households in poverty in three of the previous four years). This puts a premium on sponsoring innovation as much within community programmes as in the economy.

Two Key Messages from CIT2

CIT's fundamental claim to distinctiveness is that it is innovative in:

- its capacity to integrate community development and peacebuilding practices;
- how the target areas are identified;
- the ways in which local organisation is developed and supported;
- its internal research and evaluation resources employed for ongoing learning within the programme, and;
- how information and learning are shared across projects (prefiguring the SIF?).

From this, a set of key messages emerges:

(1) Community development cannot overcome structural inequalities, but it can do four things:

- By building pluralist, participative structures and by fostering the development of relationships within and between communities, it can improve **community resilience** which is about the capacity of communities to deal with risks and shocks. This concept is usually seen as having three forms; surviving, coping and thriving. In difficult economic times, it can make the difference between surviving and coping, even if thriving is off the agenda;
- It can advocate for change in the ways in which **individuals and communities receive services** and it can **call those in power to account**. More than ever, there is a need to 'speak truth to power'. We have a political settlement that has no legislative opposition. Internal rivalry amongst the Executive parties is inhibiting rational debate – look at health. Given the paralysis of political discourse, the challenge has to come from civil society based on carefully monitored interventions that demonstrate with robust evidence that there is a different, better way to do things. In the long run, these are more effective than attempting to build 'cosy' relationships with statutory providers in the hope of being favoured when money is scarce;
- It can deliver some local services in a **more inclusive and participatory way**;
- Finally, it can sustain a **dialogue within communities about what kind of future they want and how that can be achieved**. In doing so, it can engage with those with different versions of that future, for example, residual paramilitaries and, by facilitating communities to 'vision' their futures, is fundamentally empowering.

There is a 'back to the future' character about these assertions. Community development was criticised in the 70s and 80s for its inability to challenge structural change ('Gilding the Ghetto), although the past decade has revealed the relative impotence of even national governments in a globalised economy. In the 1990s, it appeared to have been supplanted by partnership as a new form of local governance bringing together community, the public and private sectors to tackle together the multiple problems facing local neighbourhoods. The experience of partnership in Northern Ireland has been mixed, but it would be difficult to

demonstrate that it has evolved into a new, collaborative form of local governance. Public agencies and politicians remain careful about the devolution of their power and responsibility to untested organisational forms – if only because of the threat of financial auditing. Moreover, the interests of communities and other sectors might significantly differ and this cannot be concealed by the false collectivities of partnership. Indeed, internal differences within and between communities frequently manifest within partnership structures. In reasserting both the possibilities and limits of community development, CIT2 gives greater focus on the practical empowerment of community members rather than the involvement of community leaders in a complex set of supra-community structures.

(2) The second key message from CIT2 is that in many places in Northern Ireland, **community development is anecessary but not sufficient process for mobilising communities**. At local level, there continues to be a legacy of conflict that needs to be addressed. This is not to belittle the achievements of the Peace Process, but co-operation and sharing at the top do not necessary translate into pluralism and inclusively on the street. While regional surveys, like the Life and Times, continue to report improvement in community relations attitudes, other research focused on specific areas (e.g. Belfast Interface Project, 2004; Concilium, 2012) continues to show suspicion, fear and division at community level. The PSNI Hate Crimes database provides evidence of a continuing large number of sectarian, and a growing number of racist, incidents. Paramilitary organisations have split and re-split and even apart from the growth of dissident republicanism, there is evidence of loyalist paramilitary disenchantment with what has happened in the past decade – little gain from the Peace Process, the perceived policy use of the Historical Enquiry Team, alleged greater experience of deprivation by the Protestant working class. In these circumstances, the imperative is for a form of community development that is integrated with peacebuilding. Only by learning from the lessons of peacebuilding experience both in Northern Ireland and elsewhere can community development begin to assist communities to tackle the problems they face.

This concern to ensure that peacebuilding is an integrated element of community development programmes has already been expressed in the CFNI response to the SIF consultation: 'The programme should incorporate greater attention to promoting social cohesion, good relations between communities and cooperation in interface areas.' The challenge, however is to give operational substance to this aspiration, particularly in the context of concern that 'Co-operation, Sharing and Integration' is fundamentally less ambitious than the 'Shared Future' it replaced. Both CIT programmes represent an important body of evidence on how this integration of peacebuilding and community development was attempted. The record is of both success and failure, but the process has been fundamentally a learning one that policy makers can tap into.

The contention here is that the experience of CIT offers insight into tackling a set of problems of concern to policy makers, but which have persisted despite historic efforts to address them. Moreover, it provides a perspective into how the Peace Process can be extended and deepened within communities that see very little difference to their lives:

- Its targeting criteria were more broadly based than the sole use of the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure – i.e. estimates of the capacity and capability within deprived communities. It was thus more flexible than, for example, the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme and, indeed, influenced the development of the Areas at Risk programme;
- It worked with a development model, based on relevant experiences from community development and peacebuilding, to affect the future trajectories of these communities with the aim of sustainability rather than dependence. It is thus an archive of practices and skills at the interface of inclusion and cohesion;
- It was client-centred, client-customised and client driven. Putting clients at the heart of social programmes is the declared aim of the UK government's public sector reform programme – CIT represents a case study of how to do so;
- It insisted on pluralist rather than exclusivist forms of community leadership – no element should be excluded from leading the community but, equally, no one had the 'a priori' right to lead;
- It nurtured independence, self-confidence and autonomous decision making while providing ongoing mentoring, research and support.

The evaluation report for CIT1 characterised its potential as (p.35-36):
*CIT's relevance to the debate about how inequalities and divisions are addressed can be articulated at three levels. First, it offers a form of intervention for those communities that fall outside the relatively cumbersome targeting criteria of programmes like Neighbourhood Renewal – it may thus be **complementary** to mainstream effort. Second, it may be considered an **exemplar** for how such programmes could be reformed to be better targeted and more effective. Third, it can be seen as **prefiguring** the ways in which social service delivery as a whole needs to change to meet the challenges of the contemporary world and this is congruent with the government's own reform agenda.*

The evaluation of CIT2 suggests that this tripartite statement of the programme's potential remains valid.

Who Should Be Targeted for these Messages and How?

Amongst the thousands of evaluations of community programmes in Northern Ireland, there is probably enormous learning that hasn't been captured and does not enter the policy arena. There are frequent complaints of reports that 'sit on the shelf', but following a conference/seminar to publicise the results, this is often exactly what happens. Part of the problem lies in the policy-making cycle and the windows it offers for consultation and comment – exacerbated by the cynical view that policies are already decided and that

consultation is no more than an exercise in legitimation. Part of the problem lies in the coalition nature of the Northern Ireland Executive where the complex, sometimes competing and contradictory, agendas of what is now a five-party set have to be accommodated. Certainly, a key element of the current policy environment is an ongoing shortage of resources, very different from the previous UK's government's four per cent annual increase in public spending supplemented by, what was even in EU terms, an extraordinarily generous Peace Programme.

However, decision making in Northern Ireland is now firmly repoliticised – the bureaucratic decision-making model of the Direct Rule years has been replaced by political dialogue and contest. The challenge is to find a way to enter the dialogic space of the political arena in a world already characterised by extensive and intense information flows. In short, the issue for policy-focused evaluation is how to bring the learning of a programme to the attention of those who design, fund and implement community programmes. The mid-term evaluation suggested four ideas in this respect:

- Engagement with the advisers of key politicians;
- Participation in local and regional consultation exercises;
- Partnership events to demonstrate the value of this approach;
- Having local projects as hubs to explore co-operation at local authority level.

In retrospect, these seem fairly rudimentary and do not reach the critical mass necessary to influence policy making. In an information-rich environment, the CIT message has to be distinctive and focused on opportunities to exert influence. The following are some ideas about how that might be organised:

- Given the amount of internal research and external evaluation of CIT, there is an opportunity to create a **CIT Community Practice information hub**. It could be web-based linked to the CFNI website. It should contain: a detailed exposition of the operational principles of the programme: case studies of projects from both CIT1 & 2; copies of any research papers generated during the life of the programme, and all evaluation reports from both. Moreover, it should be open to new CFNI programmes to make available learning as it develops. In principle, it should also be open to other thoughtful pieces of research and reflection on the challenges of community practice in a region with conflict legacy and undergoing a period of public spending austerity. Ideally, material could be distributed via a web-based newsletter as well as being accessible to enquiry. The hub should also be the source of responses to consultation exercises from government programmes – civil servants and others should be made aware of this information resource and what it could contribute to policy making;
- Second, the impending changes in local government structure raises questions about how the **responsibilities for community planning and citizen well-being** will be carried out in practice. Throughout the life of CIT, there has been ongoing discussion about running a series of pilot exercises with the shadow local structures on how the experience of CIT could assist new local government to carry out its responsibilities. One idea discussed previously was an exercise (bringing together local government

and the PSNI) to examine how community policing/community safety could be tackled within the new structure. Other themes suggest themselves – e.g. in line with the CFNI response to the SIF consultation, what would a Total Place initiative look like within a new local authority? CIT2 experimented with Participatory Budgeting exercises – there is surely scope to discuss how the learning from these exercises could assist the shadow authorities.

- Third, **government is not the sole funder of community targeted programmes**. Big invests substantial funds as do Children in Need, Atlantic Philanthropies, Sports Relief, the IFI and other philanthropic organisations. There is both a need and the opportunity to convene a forum/seminar series on lessons from community-targeted programmes and to draw other funders into a dialogue on models of best practice;

- Fourth, CIT has frequently discussed the idea of **political briefings**, particularly the advisors of Northern Ireland ministers, but little has yet happened. There is no reason to abandon this, but perhaps an interim step could be a series of briefings of MLAs with a strong community development/action background. Such individuals, and it's not hard to see who might be on this list, already appreciate the challenges and potential of community practice;

- Finally, CIT should consider the possibility of its **local projects sponsoring seminars** for their local authority/statutory providers on how to bring politician, providers and communities into a closer working relationship.

The important thing here is not a set of proposals, which, in any case, depend on the availability of personnel and resources to implement, but rather the need for a policy-focused culture within CIT. While large in community development terms, CIT still works with sets of micro, struggling communities whose aggregate efforts are not sufficient to trigger change. If CIT has really brought something new to the table in the shape of innovative community development, it needs to find ways to engage with the mainstream policy-making process where the resources and programmes that can really make a difference are located.

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