Exploring the Field of Residents' Consultancy

Marilyn Taylor, Kamila Zahno
Stephen Thake, Melanie Nock, Kate Jarman

department for
education and skills
creating opportunity, releasing potential, achieving excellence

Exploring the Field of Residents' Consultancy

*Marilyn Taylor, Kamila Zahno
Stephen Thake, Melanie Nock, Kate Jarman*

Contents

Appendices

Executive Summary

1   Introduction

This research study was commissioned by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), and the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU) within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister as part of joint work on the potential contribution of residents' consultancy approaches. Six projects are currently being funded as pilot schemes testing out some of the issues involved. The primary objectives of the research study were:

- *to increase knowledge and understanding about activities falling within the broad definition of residents' consultancy, both in the UK and overseas; and*

- *to identify good practice issues in residents' consultancy and propose a framework for evaluating the six funded pilot schemes.*

The research was undertaken through Marilyn Taylor Associates, in partnership with Zahno Rao Associates and the Cities Institute at London Metropolitan University.

Key Findings

- Residents' consultancy schemes are part of a wide range of activities that aim to improve the quality of information available about how to:

    - run better neighbourhood renewal and community projects;
    - improve local services in deprived areas.

- The research found two primary strands of residents' consultancy activity underway in the UK: learning and skills transfer and community involvement and consultation.

- Residents with experience of effective community-based regeneration and neighbourhood renewal have a potentially valuable role to play in the promotion of good practice, particularly in providing inspiration to other residents about what can be achieved through their active involvement, and to those seeking to improve the quality of local public services in deprived areas.

- The development of residents' consultancy schemes presents an opportunity to improve co-ordination and availability of both informal, and more structured, learning opportunities for local people wishing to be involved in running renewal schemes and establishing community-led initiatives.

- The increasing need for effective, and more participatory, local consultation is being used as an opportunity for training local residents to carry out this work as part of local employment strategies. Whilst such approaches provide a valuable mechanism to increase local community involvement in regeneration schemes, they need good co-ordination and links with other local training providers and potential employers within the wider area to achieve positive long-term employment outcomes.

- Similarly, establishing resident-run companies to undertake local consultation and research needs considerable care in the processes of business development. They face particular challenges in being able to compete effectively in the open marketplace for such services. They also find it difficult to offer fulltime paid employment, or regularity of employment, thus presenting benefit complications to the unemployed local people who are their target participants.

- The findings of this research add weight to the case for increased flexibility in the

way benefit entitlement and benefit run-ons (including housing benefit) are applied when people enter short-term or uncertain paid work opportunities.

▪ The evaluation of the pilot schemes should aim to assess the impact of residents' consultancy approaches on service providers. What they did differently, and whether improved or more relevant services resulted are critical issues in learning about how to deliver mainstream services more effectively in deprived areas. The evaluation of the residents' consultancy pilot schemes is an important opportunity test to premise that local people undertaking consultation, as opposed to external consultants, produces a different, better quality information for service providers.

Background to the Research

The term "residents' consultancy" is relatively new, and is best approached as essentially an umbrella term encompassing various initiatives through which residents of areas undergoing regeneration share, or market, the skills they have acquired through participating in the regeneration process. Their focus is the promotion of good practice in community empowerment and involvement in neighbourhood renewal.

Many of the activities being developed under the banner of residents' consultancy, both in the UK and overseas, demonstrate innovation in the ways in which local people are expanding their involvement in regeneration activities and the delivery of local services. The aim of this research was to explore the extent of these initiatives, and provide more information about the way they are working, particularly:

▪ the powerful potential of transferring experience from areas where local people are achieving improvements in their communities;
▪ their potential to provide pathways to employment and skills development for unemployed people in deprived areas;
▪ the benefits of more participatory consultation and outreach activities by public service agencies;
▪ their organisational form, management and funding arrangements; and
▪ ways in which their effectiveness could be further enhanced.

The findings summarised below result from:

a. desk research and telephone enquiries in the UK and overseas;
b. detailed examination of twelve UK schemes/projects involved in residents' consultancy activity;
c. a networking seminar event for representatives from selected UK residents' consultancy schemes;
d. advice from the Residents' Consultancy Steering Group[1] overseeing the pilot funding being provided to the six pilot UK schemes by the NRU and DfES.

---

[1] comprising civil servants from the DfES and NRU, Active Communities Unit (Home Office), and community practitioners

Emerging Conclusions

This study research has indicated that there are two primary strands of residents' consultancy. Schemes in the UK tend to be operating in either one or the other of these strands, although organisations can develop capacity to do both. The two streams are:

1) LEARNING & SKILLS TRANSFER
- inspiring others and transferring knowledge about how success has been achieved elsewhere;
- providing information and practical help in undertaking community-based regeneration, or setting up community projects.

2) COMMUNITY CONSULTATION
- creating opportunities for residents to undertake local consultation and outreach activities; thus
- enabling community involvement;
- creating opportunities for training and employment;
- producing better local information for service providers; and
- ensuring local voices are heard.

Learning & Skills Transfer

At the heart of skills and learning strategies for neighbourhood renewal is a core question about how good practice can be identified, and more widely disseminated. Those active in residents' consultancy believe that experienced residents have much to contribute to this important agenda.

It is timely to be considering how best to approach and support this to happen over the next few critical years of the *National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal*, the general work of Local Strategic Partnerships and implementing the objectives of the *Urban White Paper*. The quality of resident-led learning is hard to beat as a stimulus of ambition to achieve the same as others have elsewhere. Service providers need ambitious and demanding residents to help them 'up their game' if they are to innovate and respond effectively to the challenging floor targets within neighbourhood renewal strategies, or to engage local people in partnership approaches to improving the quality of their environment and general quality of life.

Residents' consultancy schemes are active in:

- passing on their experiences in order to inform and inspire others through informal networking, hosting visits, and giving presentations about their work;

- using their experience to provide more structured advice and consultancy services to others engaged in community-based regeneration; and

- providing structured learning opportunities through formal training provision.

All these approaches have an important role to play in strengthening learning opportunities in neighbourhood renewal and effective community involvement. The following actions are suggested to further support this strand of residents' consultancy:

- Strengthening arrangements for networking at regional level so that residents can more effectively share their learning with others (both residents and 'professionals').

- Establishing supporting infrastructure, such as a clearing-houses for matching enquiries with appropriate 'hosts' for visits and exchange and this may need both a

'national' and a 'regional' approach to work best (with strong links to the NRU's new www.renewal.net).

- There is a need for improved skills training availability for those active in regeneration and community projects. Training provision could be co-ordinated regionally with assistance from Government Offices, or more locally by Local Strategic Partnerships (and Community Empowerment Networks in the 88 Neighbourhood Renewal Fund authorities), with the involvement of local colleges, adult education and other training providers. Such training could also contribute to DfES strategic priorities in relation to participation in higher education and improvement in basic skills.

Community Consultation

The desk research findings concerning approaches to community involvement and participatory consultation overseas highlighted several examples of schemes empowering local people to undertake their own research and influence service providers. These have parallels with current approaches to supporting local involvement in community consultation which were identified in the UK. These vary quite widely, but include:

(a)   Engaging research companies with a contract requirement to train and use local residents in consultation and survey work.

The aims of these schemes are both to provide mechanisms for increasing community involvement in regeneration schemes, and to create employment and training opportunities on the back of regeneration spend. The approach appears to be on the increase, as is the level of community surveys and local consultation required as part of current policy.

However, these approaches do not necessarily place residents' in a more active, determining role over the nature of the consultation process. Most of the employment appears to be in carrying out interviews, rather than in structuring the research process or in analysing the results. More work is needed in the UK to develop a more participatory approach in communities where consultation is critical to neighbourhood renewal agendas.

Considerably more use could be made of procurement processes and contracts to employ local labour within deprived neighbourhoods, not just through the research and consultation field studied in this research, but across a wider range of jobs. However, in all cases, there must be clear links through to further training and work opportunities, with career counselling and employment advice as a core element of the support provided.

(b)   Establishing resident-run companies to carry out local consultation and survey work.

These approaches could play an important role in placing the perspectives of local residents at the heart of the consultation and local research process by involving them directly in both organising and undertaking the work involved.

This particular strand of residents' consultancy is not currently included amongst the six funded pilot schemes, and consideration could usefully be given to including one or two examples within the pilot cohort in order that the evaluation can include an analysis of their approach.

Resident-led research and consultation companies face similar difficulties to those of any new enterprise seeking to establish in a competitive market. However, the nature of their work throws up particular challenges around short-term contract

opportunities for unemployed residents, who are usually their target participants. Some of the projects are considering whether becoming an *Intermediate Labour Market* scheme, through which participants receive a regular wage and training, might be a more helpful approach.

(c)   Utilising participatory approaches to consultation and outreach of local services in deprived areas.

The overseas experiences examined as part of this research have contributed a helpful framework within which to examine participatory approaches to local consultation and engagement with communities in deprived areas (particularly those whose voices are not so easily heard). Within this approach, residents tend to be involved, not as 'consultants' undertaking a piece of research, but as participants in a facilitated process which engages and empowers the whole community and aims to influence the policy making and service-delivery process.

Creating improved routes for local residents to be employed as community development or outreach workers by service providers or within regeneration schemes is an important approach to enabling improved community influence over local services, or improved take up amongst excluded groups. However, success of all such approaches ultimately depends on the willingness and ability of service providers to incorporate the views of local people within delivery. The six pilot schemes offer an important opportunity to measure the actual impact of participation and improved consultation.

Developing Residents' Consultancy Initiatives

In nearly all the UK case studies (11 of the 12 schemes examined), development of new community initiatives or organisations undertaking residents' consultancy activities involved critical input from external 'enablers' – other organisations able to give active help and ongoing support.

The issues facing residents' consultancy initiatives which are undertaking contracted services are, in many respects, similar to other voluntary organisations and social businesses which aim to develop and utilise specialised knowledge and expertise for the benefit of others. They are likely to have to rely on a mix of income from trading their service and from grants or other form of subsidy to sustain financially.

Increasing demand for consultancy and training provision offers opportunities for community and voluntary organisations to secure income from such services, increasing social enterprise and aiding the establishment of community businesses. The term 'community consultancy' may be a more accurate term for developing such opportunities as it encompasses the contribution of both experienced residents and voluntary sector staff.

Final Remarks

The work of this research study has spanned across a number of critical issues relating to current policy initiatives, including:

- developing active communities and active citizens;
- undertaking effective neighbourhood renewal;
- promoting quality public services and public realm;
- tackling unemployment, and
- promoting social enterprise.

Its nature has been 'exploratory' and the findings it contains should be considered as part of

'work in progress' by those interested and involved in spreading good practice and contributing support to 'what works' in regenerating deprived neighbourhoods and improving the standard of our public services.

However, at the core of residents' consultancies is the one thing that written research reports can never adequately capture - the energy and enthusiasm of local people and their inspirational commitment to making a difference. This is what we found in abundance in all the schemes we examined, and which no doubt exists in projects right across the UK and elsewhere. It is hoped that this research will go some way towards ensuring that they get the support they need to achieve their goals more successfully in the future.

1 UK Case Study Findings

1.1 Initial Scoping

This study's investigations into the current field of residents' consultancy in the UK commenced with a telephone survey and use of contacts known to the research team to have involvement and interest in the issue. A basic typology was drawn-up to guide investigations involving 3 main types of scheme (see Table One), and a total of 32 schemes (see Appendix C for the database details) were identified as of interest in illustrating this range of activities, including the six NRU and DfES funded pilot schemes.

TABLE ONE: Typologies

Type of Scheme	Services Offered
1. Consultancy or advice services operated by experienced local residents or community organisation	advice and support about neighbourhood renewal or particular activities/services relating to community involvement
2. Networking	exchange of experience through visits, presentations, training, mentoring support, etc
3. Provision of services	surveys; consultation; events; outreach/promotion of local services; property grounds maintenance; community newspapers, benefit/debt counselling; care services; estate maintenance; construction; facilities management

From the 32 initiatives thus identified in England, 12 were then selected for more in depth study, involving a visit to the scheme, and interviews with key players involved. Selection was based on the schemes' potential to illustrate different aspects of the three typologies. Nearly all the schemes were at an early stage in their development, but provided a sufficient richness of experience to illustrate the central issues involved in establishing successful initiatives.

The 12 case study projects are summarised in Table Two, with a more detailed write-up of their work provided in Appendix A. It should be noted that while the information on the case studies was accurate at the time of writing, it is possible that there have been a number of changes since reflecting the rapidly developing area of residents' consultancies.

1.2 Objectives & Outcomes

The 12 case study schemes are broad-ranging in their work and approach, and stem from a variety of motivations.

- For some, the primary motivation is in response to the question *"How can local people do the jobs that consultants/paid staff do?"*.

- Keeping regeneration money in communities, rather than it 'leaking' to external organisations, is also often raised as an important objective.

- Some of the schemes examined are focused on creating work experience and skills development opportunities in neighbourhoods of low economic activity.

TABLE TWO: The 12 UK Case Studies

Type One: Consultancy and Advice
*Regen School Community mentors work with people to help set up, run and manage regeneration projects through a programme of practical hands-on learning. The scheme is not run by local residents, but by experienced paid workers in the regeneration and voluntary sector in Sheffield. Run as a not-for-profit community organisation.
Crime Concern Local scheme in Wolverhampton based on Crime Concern national Neighbourhood Safety schemes and 'Home Watch'. Crime Concern paid staff working alongside residents; perceived as 'external' to distrusted local agencies. Model of involved and empowered communities – not just consulted, but actively engaged as real partners.
*Scarman Trust The initiative is based in the Liverpool Regional Office of Scarman Trust and involves range of neighbourhood organisations operating across Liverpool. Their scheme is based on one of their "Can-Do" grant recipients, a local Somali resident, who is now working to develop a range of initiatives targeted on the Somali community.
Central England 'People First' Independent organisation based in Northampton but associated with international movement for people with learning disabilities based on 'self-advocacy' principles.   Participants work as volunteers, identify strongly with the organisation and benefit from their consultancy work in terms of personal development. Mix of income (40%) and grants goes into organisation; see independent income source as important.
Type Two: Networking
*Regenerate **Co-ordinated under the auspices of the Churches National Housing Coalition through a contracted consultant and linked with residents from specific regeneration schemes (which feature in the handbook also produced) who host visits from other groups seeking to learn about good practice and what can be achieved.**
*Residents for Regeneration **Part of the Balsall Heath Forum, a resident-led neighbourhood renewal project. Aims to use residents' knowledge and skills about what works to help others regenerating their neighbourhoods. There are pre- and post-visits with projects assisted. They respond to requests, but do not market their services, and do not charge.**
Type Three: Services
Community Consultants (South Kilburn) Ltd This is a new, and currently quite small initiative, predominantly run by two local residents. It aims to provide local employment/paid work opportunities within local regeneration initiatives in Kilburn, currently focused mainly on minuting meetings and providing local consultation services.
Hagfold Estate-based, community-generated approach to involvement and consultation called "Community Mapping Group" which has evolved as a set of techniques/approaches to engage residents and get to the core of concerns and priorities. Tremendous satisfaction from their involvement. Spin-offs on the estate in improved services, levels of activity and involvement.
Humber Numbers Part of 'Humber Works' and linked to the voluntary sector option under *New Deal.* Local people are trained in research issues (not accredited currently, but seeking Market Research accreditation) and then based out in the field with voluntary organisations. 50% income from contracts.
Insearch Residents from an SRB5 area trained in regeneration and research skills. Further work resulted (20 contracts) and they are established as a local social business.   Not always able to provide full service (ie doing analysis and interpretation work) and sometimes partner with other mainstream consultancies, or use the services of their 'partner' organisation who helped set them up.
Prime Focus Community Consultants Part of range of initiatives by Prime Focus, a social investment agency developed by Focus Housing Group; developed in recognition of growing work availability in tenant surveys, social audits, etc and the desire to create training and employment pathways for local people. This remains their primary aim. Trained residents use expertise gained in their local communities, with their own projects, or to gain paid work.
Royds (also part of Regenerate) As a community-led SRB, they found themselves hosting visits and have developed their confidence to advise others based on their experiences.   Now developing as one of two trading subsidiaries of the Royds group, doing quite a wide range of work on a national basis. Also doing survey work (for which residents received training).

* NRU/DfES funded pilot schemes

- For others, residents' consultancy is about the *empowerment of local communities* to get involved in regeneration and renewal schemes, or to establish community projects. The focus is on spreading inspiration about what resident action can achieve, passing on tips and skills to other tenants and residents, mentoring skilled people with those just starting out, networking and exchange of experiences.

- Another important strand aims to *value the contribution of local people* and ensure that their knowledge and views are built into the design and delivery of local plans and services. The contribution of volunteering, of active communities and responsive service providers, is of central interest in current public service agendas across most government departments.

- These agendas also focus interest on the contribution of effective community-run projects and organisations in providing local services, pathways for inclusion and mechanisms for effective dialogue with local people.

- Some of the schemes we looked at are excellent examples of good *community involvement* and *volunteering* practice, or build on the rich traditions of voluntary sector support and information networks.

- Others demonstrate the benefits of participatory and action-based learning and creating pathways through to further skills and employment opportunities.

Views of those involved in residents' consultancies about their aims and objectives:

- our core aim is keeping regeneration money in the local "bucket"
- to improve our estates – residents are as good or better than anyone else at doing this
- we do it to contribute to the sustainability of our organisation
- removing barriers that residents face in accessing jobs, housing, education, healthcare etc
- it is a tool for empowering the community
- enabling local people to play a part in improving services and the local environment
- ensuring that the knowledge of people living in an area is built into any plans for its regeneration
- making people feel their contribution is valued
- it is a distinct form of consultancy done by the people in an area for the people in an area
- it is for uplifting community spirit, empowering people to act
- it is breaking out of blue collar and into white collar work opportunities
- putting local people 'in front'
- showing that approaches to regeneration have to be different this time
- it is for spreading good practice across deprived neighbourhoods

Taken from Seminar discussions with resident consultancy schemes

---

Given this wide range of objectives and outcomes, it is important to try and articulate the specific focus and contribution of residents' consultancy schemes, over and above that of other, more general, community development and social inclusion activities.

This research study has indicated that there are two primary strands of residents' consultancy. Schemes in the UK tend to be operating in either one or the other of these strands, although organisations could develop capacity to do both. The two streams are:

1) LEARNING & SKILLS TRANSFER
- inspiring others and transferring knowledge about how success has been achieved elsewhere;
- providing information and practical help in undertaking community-based regeneration, or setting up community projects.

2) COMMUNITY CONSULTATION
- creating opportunities for residents to undertake local consultation and outreach services; thus
- enabling community involvement;
- creating opportunities for training and employment;
- producing better local information for service providers; and
- ensuring local voices are heard.

The next sections therefore summarise findings from the 12 case study schemes within the framework of these two primary activities.
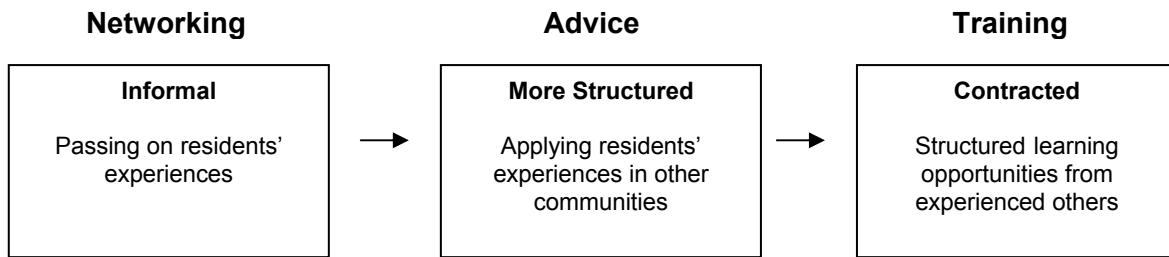
1.3   Learning & Skills Transfer Schemes

The schemes we examined which are based on experienced residents groups or regeneration schemes 'hosting' visits by others, or making presentations about their work, use the value of face-to-face learning, and 'inspirational' impact to spread knowledge and inform practice. The 'learning offer' is informal and very accessible. Such schemes are relatively low cost and do not require complex organisational arrangements. *Regenerate*, for example, uses its NRU/DfES funding to subsidise the travel costs of visitors, to contribute towards the hosts' time, to cover the costs of marketing and promotion costs, and those of operating a 'clearing house' for enquiries.

What commences as fairly informal availability of such experiences (eg visits and presentations) may develop into contracted consultancy or training advice, and hence into more formally-organised provision through a social business, or trading arm of a community project. *Royds* is a good example of this. This development will require the residents involved in expanding their ability to apply what they know within other areas and contexts, thus raising the potential need for training and skills necessary to do this effectively. The range of skills necessary will depend on the range of activities being undertaken; we found examples of organising elections, setting up projects, organising consultation events, carrying out consultation, and servicing meetings.

As the schemes develop, they also find they have to think more carefully about the 'quality' of the service they offer and their 'marketability' if regular income generation is a critical factor in their plans. *Regen School* is a good example of such a scheme, utilising the powerful impact of visits, run on highly organised lines, with good quality control, matching of appropriate mentors, follow-through action planning, etc. Again, this is a scheme built on substantial experience (albeit of paid workers in the voluntary sector rather than local residents themselves), with a strong and experienced management board, and paid staff to run the scheme. Participants pay for the service they receive, giving rise to the need to good quality control and maintaining a solid reputation for excellence.

These different levels of input and approach can be illustrated as follows:

Networking		**Advice**		**Training**
Informal Passing on residents' experiences	→	**More Structured** Applying residents' experiences in other communities	→	**Contracted** Structured learning opportunities from experienced others

The case studies also indicate some emerging characteristics about how such residents' consultancy schemes develop. Providing inspiration and help to others appears to grow out of long-established projects, from substantial experience and the confidence that this brings. This is certainly evident with *Royds* and the schemes involved with *Regenerate*, *Regen School,* and *Residents for Regeneration*.
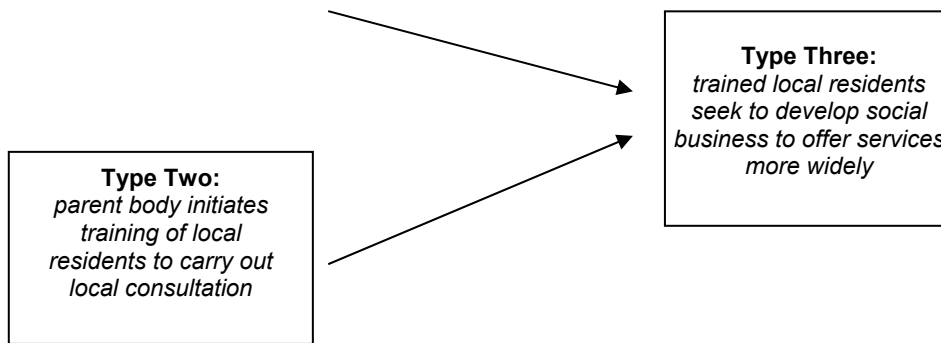
There would not appear to be any shortcuts to amassing such experience, and hence confidence, to impart inspiration to others.   Also, most of the schemes examined are embedded in a supportive network, or are part of an organisation that has sufficient income streams - through grants, service contracts and/or programme funding - to employ staff, develop a local infrastructure and establish a reputation that extends beyond their immediate locality.

1.4   Community Consultation Schemes

There is a growing trend in securing the involvement of residents in carrying out local consultation and local research. Several of the case studies are engaged in this activity. They are rooted in the premise that consultation carried out by local people will produce better, more appropriate, information.   They also offer immediate opportunities for encouraging community involvement in regeneration activity.

- Some schemes, such as *Hagfold*, have been, and remain, entirely community initiated and organised – in their case devising an approach to local consultation based on 'community mapping', facilitating widespread community engagement in articulating their problems and needs from their own perspective. *Hagfold* face similar challenges to those of any active and innovative tenants' or residents' group in achieving effective partnership with local service providers whose willingness to listen and respond are essential if the schemes are to be worthwhile.

- Other schemes have been initiated by external, or parent, bodies (eg *Scarman Trust*, *Crime Concern*) and build the skills of local people in undertaking community development activities (particularly with hard-to-reach groups) or providing support to ensure residents' voices are heard and acted upon by local service providers.

- Several of the schemes have their roots in efforts to improve access to training and work opportunities for local residents in deprived areas. The case studies illustrate two primary 'types' of initiatives in this area, leading in some cases to a third type as schemes develop and grow, as demonstrated by the diagram overleaf:

Type One: *consultants are engaged with a requirement to or employ (and train) local residents in the carrying out of local consultation*

Type Two:
parent body initiates training of local residents to carry out local consultation

Type Three:
trained local residents seek to develop social business to offer services more widely

Type One schemes are based on similar approaches to those used to achieve local employment in construction ('blue collar') through local labour requirements in contracts, this time applied to jobs associated with research and programme evaluation ('white collar'). The approach seems be growing (see box for example) but is sometimes thwarted by perceived barriers to the inclusion of such requirements within procurement regulations.[2]

Turning to Types Two and Three, the experiences of *Insearch* and *Prime Focus* are particularly useful. Both began as Type Two schemes, now seeking to develop into Type Three models. The issues they face are instructive, and include:

- *Payment/Benefit Issues*

The primary focus (evident in most of the schemes examined) of working with unemployed residents gives rise to a number of approaches to the complexities of benefit implications, including:

- provision of training and work experience
- payment of expenses only, and/or childcare costs
- payments 'in kind' such as trips away
- operating as Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) schemes (providing a proper wage alongside training) eg, *Humber Numbers*
- paying 'lump sums' so that declaration of income is infrequent and does not impact on benefits

The projects we looked at are finding it difficult to develop sufficient regular work opportunities to enable people to risk moving off benefit and take a sustainable paid position. If residents can only be taken on as casual staff, on an occasional basis, the effects on their income of erratic benefit claims can make this a very unattractive option for them.

- *Skills Training*

The level and degree of skills training for carrying out consultation and local research is extremely varied across the projects. For example, *Prime Focus* has trained their participants to NVQ2 level. However, even for NVQ2 level qualifications, many residents require substantial language, literacy and numeracy skills support, and may need quite extended and intensive training support to gain a qualification.

---

[2] Joseph Rowntree Foundation are currently supporting research into the use of social considerations (like employment) in contracting. This is being carried out by Richard Macfarlane and Mark Cook (Anthony Collins Solicitors), with the help of officials from HM Treasury, the Office of Government Commerce and the Scottish Executive. It shows that, despite common perceptions, considerable flexibility exists in UK and EC procurement policy and rules, and this can facilitate the achievement of social outcomes.

Paid staff (who may not necessarily be local residents), or other organisations, are sometimes used to carry out more complex tasks such as questionnaire design and analysis. To operate as stand alone consultancy organisations, generating sufficient business and competing for contracts may require more intensive skills training for key residents to form the core staff. For example, *Prime Focus* is considering NVQ3 training, and *Humber Numbers* is seeking Market Research Association accreditation (definitely important for open competition in the wider marketplace). It is noteworthy that its participants began as relatively well-qualified individuals in comparison to others experiencing un-employment.

- *Developing as Sustainable Businesses*

As resident-led consultation companies seek work contracts outside of their immediate area, it becomes important for them to be able to differentiate/articulate their unique value as opposed to any other consultancy business. As many schemes base their marketability on their roots in <u>local</u> knowledge, when marketing outside their own locale, they will have to rely on 'selling' the particular benefits (in terms of the quality of approach and results) assumed to result from using a service designed and delivered by a group of local residents, albeit from a different neighbourhood or local area.

They also need to be competent to run along business lines, eg develop expertise in tendering and costing jobs, etc. As with the learning and skills transfer organisations summarised above, the role of enabling, or parent organisations in providing support appears to be critical, as is the contribution of paid staff who may or may not be local residents (eg who had undergone higher skills training – see above). Alternatively, schemes can partner with other companies who would bid for and hold the contract, with the Residents' Consultancy arm forming part of the team.

The most critical issue of course, is securing enough regular work opportunities to sustain the income necessary to support staff and basic operating costs.

Other local services can also be included in such schemes. For example, *Community Consultants (South Kilburn) Ltd* is carrying out a range of activities, including minute-taking of local meetings and the organisation of events and consultation.

The research found good examples of successfully established, trading organisations, although they are as yet in the early stages of securing their position in the longterm. For example, although *Insearch* and *Royds* are securing work beyond their original locale, their business planning and financial management is still very much in development and raising some difficult challenges around sustainable income flows.

1.5   Common Findings from the UK Case Studies

Whilst the schemes examined vary considerably in the scale and focus of their activities, all share the outcome of improving the quality of 'information' available to people to:

- run better neighbourhood renewal and community projects; and
- improve local services in deprived areas.

It is important to note that none of the schemes examined are "static"; all are at various stages of development and growth, and some that are at one stage now, may develop into

other models as time goes on. Issues are constantly coming to the fore and being addressed, moving the schemes on and increasing their competency. All demonstrated a need for assistance and support at the various stages of their development. The role of external 'enablers' or an 'enabling environment' appears to be a critical factor.

For example, *Residents for Regeneration, Royds*, *Central England People First* and *Crime Concern* demonstrate the role of a strong parent organisation in underpinning the organisation of residents' consultancy activities. Core funding is to the parent organisation, with the residents' consultancy activities either assisted and/or financially underpinned through it. Or in some cases, the residents' consultancy activity contributes income towards the parent organisation.

Not all schemes are delivered by local residents. For example, *Regen School* utilises the skills of experienced staff from well-established, community-based and voluntary sector projects to provide structured learning opportunities and ongoing mentoring support. Alternatively, in some schemes, whilst residents are centrally involved in delivery (eg hosting visits/making presentations or carrying out consultation), they are relatively dependent on the input of staff or others who are not local residents for overall management and co-ordination (eg *Scarman Trust, Regenerate, Humber Numbers,* and *Insearch*).

The question of 'reward' or payment for residents involved in delivering services (unless based on voluntary effort such as *Hagfold* or *Central England People First*) was found to be challenging across all schemes. If work opportunities are irregular, residents cannot necessarily be taken on as paid staff, and difficulties in re-establishing benefits is a disincentive to take on casual paid work. Schemes may therefore necessarily only pay little more than expenses to those carrying out consultation or advice work. The benefits for participants therefore need careful consideration. They go beyond those of paid work and the extent to which participants progress into paid work opportunities, to more general – and difficult to measure – benefits such as greater involvement, skills and confidence development, employability, etc.

For example, several residents involved in *Community Consultants (South Kilburn) Ltd* have recently been successful in obtaining employment in regeneration schemes locally – demonstrating the project's success in increasing employability but, ironically, making it more difficult for the consultancy to field experienced people in delivering the local contracts it has secured.

The issues facing residents' consultancy initiatives which are undertaking contracted services are, in many respects, similar to other voluntary organisations and social businesses which aim to develop and utilise specialised knowledge and expertise for the benefit of others. They are likely to have to rely on a mix of income from trading their service and from grants or other form of subsidy to sustain financially. Otherwise charges for their services would need to substantially increase – a potential deterrent for the very people they aim to reach. The thorough business planning evident at *Regen School* for example provides useful learning about these complex juggling acts.

There are also strong parallels between the experiences of the UK case studies and those of participatory research and associated initiatives taking place overseas. These are summarised in the next section of this report. We then, in the final sector, draw findings together to suggest some emerging conclusions and recommendations about supporting further successful development of residents' consultancy in the UK.

2 Summary Findings from Overseas Research

This section summarises the findings from research undertaken to identify community projects and approaches taking place overseas that have relevance to the development of residents' consultancies in the UK. Contacts were made with practitioners and organisations specialising in overseas development and a literature search was undertaken of books, pamphlets and websites both within Europe and worldwide.

Much of the literature pertains to community participation and we identified four models of relevance to residents' consultancy:

- **Participatory Research** –
  research and community profiling that is carried out with and by
  local people

- **Community Participation in Service Delivery** –
  community based organisations or residents in local neighbourhoods getting involved in design and delivery of services

- **Promoting Municipal Services** –
  local people undertake outreach on behalf of the service delivery agents and in doing so influence policy makers

- **Community Networking** –
  networks of community based organisations that share and transfer good practice amongst themselves.

The four approaches are described below (with illustrative examples provided in Appendix B with a summary table overleaf). Key points are made about how their work and experiences might be useful in the context of establishing residents' consultancies in the UK.

2.1 Participatory Research

Research strategies that emphasise participation are increasingly being used in the developing and developed world (the South and the North). Participatory research is carried out with and by local people, rather than on them. The key difference between participatory and conventional research methodologies lies in the fact that the location of power in the research process is with the residents themselves. What is different, therefore, about participatory research is not the methodology but the context of the application and in the attitudes of the researchers.

Most participatory research focuses on 'knowledge for action' i.e. it will take into account local priorities, processes and perspectives and the results are to be used to formulate programmes and activities that will change things locally. The emphasis is on 'bottom-up' approaches. The strength of participatory research is that by exploring local knowledge and perceptions solutions tend to be found that will work locally. It is about engaging local people as active contributors in the research process.

However, there are various levels of involvement under the name of 'participatory research' and it is important to distinguish these and to understand the advantages and disadvantages:

TABLE THREE: The Overseas Examples

Type One: Participatory Research

Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC)
SPARC is an alliance of three Indian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) wishing to influence policy makers and strengthen the voice of the poor. One of the partners, the National Federation of Slum Dwellers organises Enumeration Melas where poor people themselves collect information about their own communities and use this to start the basis of dialogue with policy makers.

Type Two: Service Delivery by Residents

Orangi Pilot Project (OPP)
OPP works with neighbourhood community organisations in Pakistan to tackle major problems with sanitation by giving technical know how and administration. Empowers neighbourhood organisations to finance and manage infrastructure projects themselves.

El Mezquital
An informal settlement in Guatamala City, El Mezquital provides an example of how a community organised its own infrastructure development, at the same time acquiring negotiating skills, management and personal skills, and employment.

Type Three: Community Promotion and Influencing

Vizakhnapatam
Community workers in Vizakhnapatam, south India, introduced new mechanisms to ensure Neighbourhood Committees represented a diverse mix of the whole community.

Bangladesh Rural Advance Committee (BRAC)
Using models of community empowerment BRAC encouraged the formation of a network of women health promoters in Shibpur, Bangladesh, centred around a health clinic. Fieldworkers identified and trained promoters whose outreach work resulted in more use of the clinic facilities.

El Mezquital
The work of the Intergrated Health Programme in El Mezquital involved a system of microzones, the communities of which elected health representatives to undertake training and to promote the benefits of basic health care and vaccination. The training programme let to a greater self esteem amongst the participants who were mainly women.

Type Four: Networking and Transfer of Good Practice

Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC)
The Mahila Milan groups of women pavement dwellers, supported by SPARC, shared their knowledge with other communities through exchange visits which enabled other communities to try out solutions and adapt them to suit their own circumstances.

Orangi Pilot Project
OPP transferred its model of sanitation infrastructure development in Orangi to other settlements in Pakistan, learning and recording lessons from both successful and non successful transfers. In this way it was able to record what works and why.

Styria
Residents in Styria, a rural region in Austria, designed a solar powered hot water system which could be built on a DIY basis. An Association was set up to spread this technology to other regions and neighbouring countries.

Asociations Migrations et Developpement (AMD)
Moroccans who had previously been resident in France were funded by the French to set up an association whose members used their own skills and personal finances to develop projects around water, health, roads and literacy. This resulted in the Moroccan villages being made more attractive for the returning Moroccans to live in.

- **Contractual** – local people are contracted into the work of the researchers i.e.

local people might act as interviewers and on occasion may assist with statistical analysis. This is a common model, both worldwide and in the UK (as illustrated by case studies in the previous section). Researchers are usually paid for completion of each questionnaire. Training is given and the contract is usually on a one off basis.

- **Consultative** – local people are asked for their opinions before the research is formulated, but the research is carried out either by formal agencies such as the local authority or by external consultants.

- **Collaborative** – researchers and local people work together on projects, but the control of the research is managed by researchers.

- **Collegiate** – researchers and local people work together as colleagues with different skills to offer. Local people are brought into the research as owners of their own knowledge and the role of the professional is one of facilitator.

Participatory research is in theory located at the 'collegiate' level of participation, but up until recently this is rarely achieved. For example the method known as Rural Rapid Appraisal, which has its origins in the South, tended to involve people as informants and rarely offered processes going beyond consultative research. However, relatively new approaches such as Participatory Rural Appraisal, Participatory Action Research and Development Leadership Teams in Action (DELTA) are now much more common in the South. These tend to emphasise the empowerment of local people to take action to transform their lives. Thus the role of the professional is to facilitate local people to produce and analyse their own information. These approaches recognise that people's knowledge is valuable, that people are agents not objects and they can analyse their own situations and design their own solutions. The UK has much to learn from these techniques that could apply to the neighbourhood renewal agenda, and indeed Oxfam is using such participatory techniques in neighbourhood areas in the UK.

2.2 Service Delivery by Residents

Residents can become involved in delivery of services on a paid or voluntary basis and there is scope for setting up residents' organisations undertaking such services (eg Resident Services Organisations in the UK). While these may not be 'consultancies' as such in that they are generally delivering a service on an ongoing basis, they can offer models for residents' consultancies in the way they have been set up and managed, and in the community involvement that they practice. There are many examples in the South of residents undertaking services and infrastructure projects themselves, particularly where the state is not able to undertake them. The main rationale behind such organisations has been that participation in service specification, implementation and management is much more likely to result in services being provided that are needed and appropriate to local neighbourhoods.

Factors Affecting Residents' Participation in Service Delivery

There are a number of factors that affect the likelihood of local participation and although the examples may be different from what might happen in the UK (eg it is unlikely that local residents will get involved in infrastructure projects on the same scale as in the South), the principles remain similar:

- **The type of service:** services that do not require large-scale construction (such as building complex water supply projects) are more likely to be managed by local people.

- **The geographical level:** services organised at a neighbourhood level such as establishing hand-pumps and standpipes are more likely to work than those at the level of the municipality. However, that said, the success of initiatives at neighbourhood level often depends on the municipal authorities providing the necessary secondary level facilities. Some municipal authorities have, however, found ways to extend the community role to the secondary level.

- **The stages of service delivery:** local people are more likely to be involved in subsequent operation and delivery if they have also been involved in construction.

- **Quality of service delivery**: typically quality control is led by planners and engineers. This can lead to problems if the community is not consulted. If a major infrastructure project does not meet the community's needs, people may be unable to pay and thus municipalities cannot afford to maintain or improve the facilities. This may have some resonance in the UK where improvements in social housing has led to rising rents and service charges, the implications of which have not always been fully explained to residents.

Participation in the Project Cycle

Project delivery can be divided into five phases: project identification, planning and design, implementation, financing, and monitoring and evaluation. It is important to emphasise that the participatory research techniques outlined in the previous section should be used throughout the project cycle, particularly at the project identification and design stage, and in the evaluation stage. The following gives examples of where and how communities have been involved in each of these phases.

Project identification: many large scale projects in the South are identified by governments and international donors rather than poor people themselves. Poor people are then sometimes told they must participate. It is better if communities are encouraged to select where best to locate projects. For example, in Ahmedabad, Gujerat, the Slum Networking Project encouraged communities to volunteer their neighbourhoods for upgrading and neighbourhoods were not included in the city-wide upgrading programme unless they had voluntarily elected to undertake the project.

Project planning and design: the majority of infrastructure projects have been dominated by an 'engineering' vision i.e. a supply side decision about what the community needs. This dictates what communities need, where and how it will be provided, to whom and when. Rarely do poor communities themselves make these decisions despite their knowledge of their own neighbourhoods. Participatory planning has been used to provide a mechanism through which community needs can be translated into neighbourhood level plans. There are successful examples of local people being involved in needs assessment. In Cosenza in Italy, young people have been involved in the design and management of a "children's town". In Kosovo, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is overseeing the reconstruction of a number of schools. Unicef selects the schools and CRS then sets up a Parents' Council to bring the community together to plan, implement and oversee the physical project. Once the school is complete, CRS will encourage the Parents Council to look at further projects. Women are well represented on parent councils and it is hoped that these school projects will promote their involvement in community decision-making.

Project implementation: this can take the form of sub-contracting for construction or service delivery, or can be done wholly by the community, where cooperatives are established. Where implementation is limited to labour, it can be exploitative and

many work for low rates of pay. This can be avoided if local people are trained in contractual procedure and technical expertise. For example in Cochin, Kerala, the city corporation was keen to let local contracts for housing construction but had to work hard to ensure that procedures were put in place that facilitated community contracting. This included assisting on the tender document and financial management, waiving the security deposit, and providing an advance for materials. These are all familiar hurdles that get in the way of any community contracts being let in the UK. In the El Mezquital case (see Appendix C), the whole of the programme's management was led by residents.

Project financing: a number of projects promote community participation by incorporating a community financial contribution to the cost of project works. This promotes community self-reliance and increases community accountability and a sense of ownership. This means the community becomes the client and therefore the local municipality must ensure they meet the community's needs in a timely and effective manner. This may not at first seem relevant to the UK situation as the fiscal system ensures that major infrastructure projects are financed and planned by local or central government. However, this may have applicability in neighbourhood renewal programmes where mainstream resources are 'bent' and pooled into a certain area, and managed by local communities who then do become the client.

Project monitoring and evaluation: efforts to involve the community have hitherto been fairly limited. Funders and donors are particularly concerned to have evaluation done in a certain way and require it to look at certain outputs. However, from the community's point of view evaluation should involve the assessment of impacts, not just outputs and should have a problem solving orientation so that they can see that change has resulted from the project. In Burkino Faso, Work Neighbours, an international grassroots development organisation, set up a self evaluation programme for farmers in a remote rural area of the country. Over a three-year programme the farmers tested improved seed adapted to low rainfall against local varieties on small plots of land. Village organisations set up experimentation and dissemination committees which received technical training to conduct the trials and the committees met at the end of each year to discuss the degree of satisfaction with the objectives, the degree to which the activities were implemented and any difficulties and constraints encountered. At the end of the three years an impact assessment was carried out over 2 months, including sampling, data collection, focus groups and household surveys. Analysis and interpretation of the results was discussed with whole villages. In Bangladesh, a three-year community based Flood Proofing Pilot was initiated by CARE Bangladesh. Using participatory techniques, villagers identified a range of flood proofing activities and carried out their own monitoring and evaluation over three sessions.   The villagers themselves determined the indicators of success each year, and met at the end of the year in focus groups to assess the impact of the implementation. Success indicators ranged from health aspects such as access to safe water, reduction in diarrhoea and skin infections, to household concerns such as physical damage, storage of food, to general indicators such as reduction of loss of life, shelter in raised households by neighbours. Villagers themselves collected the information and reported on it.

2.3　Community Promotion and Influencing

This section explores some examples of communities involved in promoting local services and influencing the way those services are delivered. These examples involve training local people, mainly women, to promote services to the wider population and have been the basis of fundamental change in the way services are delivered. The community promoters of El Mezquital in Guatamala City provide one example of this method, as does the work of the Bangladesh Rural Advance Committee (BRAC), both of which are described in Appendix B.

One of the issues which has relevance to deprived communities in both the South and the North is how to establish channels which ensure that resources are allocated and services reach those in most need of them. Outreach and promotion of services at the neighbourhood level is a good way, but selecting who is do this and how they ensure services are successfully promoted is a critical issue. In India, representative structures in poor neighbourhoods typically take the form of building blocks starting at a very local level and leading to a committee at ward level. Thus neighbourhood groups of 20 to 40 households appoint a representative at the Neighbourhood Committee which represents about 200 households. In turn these Committees elect representatives to the Community Development Society at ward level. While this sounds ideal, in practice the model works best where areas are homogenous in terms of caste and ethnicity, otherwise there can be problems of under-representation of various interest groups. In Allepey in Kerala, for example where the community is a mixture of Hindus, Christians and Muslims, representation became a thorny issue. The Vizakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh) case study exemplifies how the Neighbourhood Committees sought to be more representative.

There is also an issue about volunteering. In the case studies we looked at the promoters were unpaid volunteers. As a result after an initial spurt, activity in El Mezquital slowed down as women had other responsibilities to take care of at home. There are examples in India of volunteers being paid a small honorarium but there are issues relating to this as well because the whole dynamic changes as people become more 'professionalised'. Also the honorarium can look like low pay and is thus open to exploitation. This issue of volunteering versus paid employment emerges as equally important within the UK research findings.

2.4　Networking and Transfer of Good Practice

SPARC and Orangi (see Appendix B) both have experience of networking and transferring good practice. SPARC's whole ethos is about communities learning from each other, but emphasises how important it is, not only to share experiences, but also to analyse why something works in one area, and how it might work in another. Orangi has replicated its sanitation programme in several areas in Pakistan, with varying degrees of success. It makes a point of evaluating each replication to see what factors breed success and which are likely to result in a slowing down of the complex process.

Although some contacts expressed a degree of scepticism as to whether specific overseas neighbourhood initiatives can be transferred to other areas with different circumstances, the examples given above demonstrate that:

- Solutions designed and tested by one community can be transferred to others, but it is important to approach it in a structured way, to learn lessons about what works and why, and how best to adapt a particular initiative to suit local circumstances.

- Both SPARC and Orangi did not regard 'failures' as negative experiences. They both emphasise the importance of evaluation to learn about what can be replicated in different circumstances. Thus exchanges and replication should be formalised, structured and recorded. Key lessons should be written down and

disseminated.

- Replication through community exchanges and networking can address needs that are not resolved at the neighbourhood level. Through collective action and demonstration projects, communities can exert influence at a higher level (eg local, regional or national).

These lessons, and other key findings from examining overseas projects, are further explored in the next, and final, main section of this report.

3   Conclusions and Recommendations

Although this research study represents an early stage in developing understanding about the contribution of residents' consultancy activities, this section presents some initial observations from our overseas and UK research about how these activities might best be supported to produce successful outcomes.

The lessons from the overseas case studies on transferring and supporting good practice emphasise that is important to approach such activities in a structured way. At the moment, the findings from this research indicate that the field of residents' consultancies in the UK is evolving spontaneously, and in quite an ad hoc way.   Therefore, this section aims to explore options for a more structured approach, linked to current policy initiatives and developments now taking place in neighbourhood renewal, social enterprise and greater support to the involvement of voluntary and community sectors.

The section is organised around the two primary strands of residents' consultancy activity we have found to be underway in the UK:

- learning and skills transfer, and
- community consultation.

3.1   Learning and Skills Transfer

Informal Learning (Networking)

Assessing the impact of informal learning through visits and presentations is suggested as a critical objective for the pilots' evaluation. Other key issues are suggested as:

- Is there a pattern or typology for the sorts of groups who benefit most from such opportunities?
- Is such learning an important 'first stage', leading in turn to more specific and focused learning needs?
- What sorts of skills do those delivering the learning opportunities need to have, or how does the visit need to be organised for maximum effectiveness?

Visits to successful schemes for inspiration are clearly popular, as evidenced by demand for *Regenerate's* scheme[3]. However, there are number of ways through which we suggest the quality of the visit experience might be improved:

- training in basic presentation skills for those hosting the visit;
- preparation of good presentation materials;
- preparation for the visit (by both hosts and visitors);
- equal opportunities and diversity training (we found evidence of some difficulties when residents sought to impart their skills within more multi-racial areas than they were used to from their own situations);
- capturing the learning achieved through action plans, and follow-up contact;
- improved 'matching' of hosts and visitors so that the learning offer is better targeted.

Some of the 6 pilot schemes are already exploring these mechanisms and approaches as they develop and improve their work.

Existing residents consultancy initiatives are also already beginning to network and share

---

[3] Also supported by the evidence from other research, such as that commissioned by Government Office for London into the training needs of NDC board members in which resident board members singled out visits to other schemes as their preferred method of learning in nearly every case.

experiences. There is interest and energy amongst residents to pass on what they know. Approaches to improved networking opportunities are being explored as part of the NRU's Skills and Knowledge Programme.[4] Strong regeneration networks across the nine English regions could benefit residents' consultancy approaches quite considerably.[5] There is also a potential role for Regional Centres of Excellence. However, it is important to note that it is not only residents who can learn from other residents. Their experiences are just as relevant to the learning required by public service front-line staff, those co-ordinating services to deprived areas or groups within the community, and those responsible for regeneration management and policy. The work of *Central England People First,* which was examined in the UK Case Studies, in aiding service providers to see things from users points of view is highly transferable to regeneration and working in deprived neighbourhoods.

Community Empowerment Networks within the 88 local authority areas that are receiving Neighbourhood Renewal Fund resources also offer important opportunities for resident-to-resident networking and exchange between grass-roots community groups, especially with the advent of community learning chests.[6]

Structured or more Specialised Learning

Introducing more 'structured' approaches to learning such as the approach of *Regen School* involves more complexity in scheme organisation and delivery, and increases costs, (some of which can be recouped through charges for services or training provided). The focus of learning is more likely to be on key individuals from communities or organisations, and may involve more specific learning in the skills needed to run projects successfully.

Activities such as effective operation of community facilities, being a board member of a regeneration or neighbourhood management scheme or setting up specific initiatives such as childcare, may requires specific, specialist knowledge and skills. Similarly, tackling crime, or the other central issues being targeted within the neighbourhood renewal strategy require specialist input or access to information about strategies that have been most effective.

The following questions might be usefully explored as part of the pilots' evaluation:

- What type of organisations or individuals need more focused learning, at what stage, and how can it best be delivered?
- Is there a different impact from such learning, over and above that obtained through more informal and less structured approaches?

Consultancy Support/Mentors

The role of skilled and experienced organisations (eg *Scarman Trust, Community Matters* or *Crime Concern*) working alongside residents to impart skills represents another form of learning support. Such approaches are often focused on key individuals within communities. The pilots' evaluation will offer opportunities to measure the outcomes gained from this method of learning support, particularly:

- Their contribution to engaging hard-to-reach communities or those profoundly disengaged from local community involvement.
- Their contribution to increasing levels of community engagement.

---

[4] see www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/skills/index.htm for more information on these various initiatives
[5] see Marilyn Taylor Associates "Networking across Regeneration Partnerships", Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York, April 2002 (www.jrf.org.uk)
[6] a grants fund aimed at helping residents in the 88 most deprived areas learn the skills and knowledge they need to be able to play an active role in neighbourhood renewal; funding for exchange visits to learn good practice is specifically mentioned as a fundable activity

The pilot scheme being undertaken by Regen School, which aims to support 'neighbourhood' mentors, is a particularly interesting approach to testing out more localised and community-based delivery models. Also, its mainstream work, utilising skilled workers as mentors to those on the training courses, is a good example of approaches to mentoring.

Similarly, the NRU and Government Offices are making available consultancy-type support for Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) and other key initiatives such as *New Deal for Communities* (NDC) schemes to draw down expertise. Through the scheme, approved individuals, known as *Neighbourhood Renewal Advisers*, can be utilised by partnerships at no cost to them. Community activists, and skilled staff from the voluntary sector, are already being included in these initiatives, and it is important that experienced residents should also be encouraged to get involved.

Training Courses

Organising quality provision of short courses for community groups (as part of community capacity building) has historically been undertaken by Councils of Voluntary Service and their equivalents. As these organisations are heavily involved with *Community Empowerment Networks* (CENs) and LSPs within the new frameworks, the focus of such courses might usefully begin to add theme-based sessions, to reflect neighbourhood regeneration issues and needs arising from Community Chest funding, Community Champions, etc. However, the regular topics such as *how to run meetings, undertake fundraising, organise volunteers* (to name a few examples) will remain an ongoing need by most groups and individuals getting involved in community activity. Similarly, local short courses to support community organisations and community involvement can be part of Adult and Community Education Services. Exploring local provision and its accessibility (eg using local community venues) – and the links between these and other adult learning such as literary and numeracy – could usefully form part of local strategies under LSPs and CENs.

Another approach which might usefully be considered is for training providers to partner with resident and community groups so that the trainer can provide structure/learning support, leaving residents free to concentrate on getting across their experiences and main messages. Again, *Regen School* provides an example of this approach. There is also a plethora of organisations operating nationally which offer valuable training courses such as the National Tenants Resource Centre at Trafford Hall and the Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation (to name but two of many similarly available) which aim to utilise best practice experiences in their work.

Support and Organisational Issues

The research indicates that organisational support is important in the general operation of learning and skills transfer residents' consultancy schemes, such as a central point for marketing, handling enquiries, matching hosts and visitors, bookings, networking opportunities across schemes, providing information about training or consultancy support organisations, etc. Findings from the pilots' evaluation should aid consideration of:

- the most appropriate scale (national, regional, sub-regional, local authority area, neighbourhood) for the co-ordination of visits and exchange; and
- ways of increasing accessibility to marketing information.

There might be a potential role for the NRU's proposed Knowledge Management System to facilitate access to learning from good practice. Channelling enquiries for visits to such schemes through some form of regional clearing house (as Regenerate are currently doing nationally) might be a helpful adjunct to the relative 'remoteness' of web-based learning.

Regenerate's work is important in increasing understanding about what is required from an effective clearing house service, and the costs involved.

Co-ordination services might also be carried out through regional networks or Regional Centres of Excellence (as previously described above) as *Regeneration Exchange* already does in the North East[7].

Demand & Supply Issues in Learning & Skills Transfer

At the heart of skills and learning strategies is a core question about how good practice can be identified, and more widely disseminated. The impact of Government Offices, CENs and LSPs being encouraged (required in the 88 Neighbourhood Renewal Fund areas) to develop learning and skills strategies is likely to increase demand for accessible provision.

All of the various strands of learning and skills transfer considered in the above sections come under the broad banner of "capacity building". It should be noted that the Home Office *Active Communities Unit* is currently co-ordinating an Inter-Departmental Working Group on the provision and funding of community capacity-building and a report is expected by the end of 2002.

Working with bodies such as regional regeneration networks, regional voluntary sector forums and through CENs will enable the development of improved regional knowledge about who is doing what and knows about what.

The research suggests that there is no short cut to residents and professionals amassing skills and expertise in how to undertake successful regeneration and community initiatives. However, as NDCs, later round SRB schemes, Surestart and neighbourhood management initiatives become more established in their operation, there will doubtless be increased opportunities for those schemes demonstrating success to transfer their experiences.

It is timely to be considering how best to approach and support this to happen over the next few critical years of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal. Rolling out the enthusiasm and learning from effective work in NDCs and neighbourhood management pilots will be an important contributor to mainstreaming work across all deprived neighbourhoods. The quality of 'resident-to-resident', or 'resident-to-professional' learning is hard to beat as a stimulus of ambition to achieve the same as others have elsewhere. Service providers need ambitious and demanding residents to help them 'up their game' if they are to innovate and respond effectively to the challenging floor targets within neighbourhood renewal strategies. It is salutary to note that the recent report reviewing the contribution to learning and mainstreaming from area based initiatives (ABIs) concludes that: "The evidence from all ABIs is of either the marginalisation of community interests and/or of their difficulty in gaining an equal seat at the table of partnership."[8]

3.2   Community Consultation

The overseas findings explored how residents were empowered to undertake their own research and influence service providers by:

- using participatory research techniques;
- engaging with public service providers to influence delivery and relevance;
- participation at various stages of the 'project cycle'.

---

[7] see www.regenerationexchange.org
[8] 'Collaboration and Co-ordination in Area Based Initiatives' published by ODPM, May 2002; available from www.neighbourhood.gov.uk

The following section examines the position of each of these approaches in the UK and explores how they might be strengthened or made more effective.

Participatory Research and Consultation

In the UK much of what passes as participatory is where local people undertake the fieldwork but professional researchers design, manage and analyse the results. There are a number of barriers acting against the widespread use of true participatory research:

- Control over research is rarely devolved to local people since those commissioning it often demand formal evaluations and certain outcomes i.e. the agenda is really set by the client.
- Local people may be sceptical as to whether it is worth investing their time and energy in the project, particularly if it seems to offer little in terms of direct benefit.
- It can be hard for researchers and those commissioning research to let go of the concepts of what passes for neutrality and objectivity in research.
- Many consultancy companies are not aware of how participatory techniques can be applied to research.

This study found three primary approaches to participatory research underway in the UK:

(a)   Companies engaged with a contract requirement to train and use local residents in consultation and survey work.

It was noted that this approach appears to be on the increase, and is generally welcome as a way of utilising programme spend to increase opportunities for residents' wider involvement. However, the approach leaves control of the research firmly in the hands of the funder/commissioner and there is often little involvement of local people in the way that the information collected is written-up and presented.

The primary aim of such approaches is usually to create opportunities for skills development and routes through to further employment. In this case such schemes must be properly set up to provide adequate training support, employment advice, links through to local colleges and the wider jobs market. Otherwise the benefits to residents participating may be short-lived.

As this approach is on the increase, it may be useful to explore opportunities for evaluation (as this type of scheme is not currently included amongst the existing six residents' consultancy pilots), especially the outcomes for:

- employment and training;
- impact on market research companies approach to assignments in deprived areas; and
- impact on the way local services are delivered.

(b)   Establishing organisations run by residents to carry out consultation, research and survey work.

Residents' consultancies are being established where local people are trained to become involved in participatory research techniques either inside or outside of their own localities on the basis that people from poor neighbourhoods would have a greater understanding of the kind of issues that are likely to arise and potential solutions that might work. There are training and skills needs relating to this which go beyond those needed in the 'contractual' model above. These include:

- institutional knowledge which provides them with an understanding of how the

municipal machine operates;
- participatory skills which include the tools and techniques of participatory planning e.g. needs assessment, social mapping, visioning;
- technical knowledge of how to analyse the advantages and disadvantage of various options;
- negotiating skills enabling local people to engage in a dialogue with local partners;
- conflict and dispute resolution skills;
- confidence building skills;
- literacy and numeracy skills;
- financial management skills.

The UK research found that considerable difficulties are being experienced by these types of initiatives in developing sustainable businesses, and in generating sufficient and regular work opportunities to enable residents to become salaried employees. It has been suggested that Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) approaches to local research and consultancy offer a potential solution to some of the problems around benefit entitlement and payment (for example *Humber Numbers, Insearch* and *Prime Focus*). Such approaches offer the certainty of a regular wage and structured training for participants, albeit for a fixed period of time (usually 12 months). However, the recent action plan "Jobs for All", which looked at mechanisms for reducing the difference in levels of worklessness in poor neighbourhoods, has some concerns about the costs involved in such schemes. It recommended that:

"…… intermediary bodies running work experience programmes have an important role to play in bridging the divide between low employment/high unemployment neighbourhoods and employers. But the link with employers is critical. Work experience divorced from the work place is likely to be less effective. The high cost of such intermediate labour markets also means that such projects should generally not be used as a first resort. As in the case of the New Deal for Young People, they are better deployed in support of people for whom other interventions have proved unsuccessful. It is, in other words, for organisations delivering labour market interventions locally to make sensible use of intermediate labour markets as part of a mix of policies to help people from deprived neighbourhoods make the transition into work."[9]

However, an ILM model focused on work experience in local consultation and research might be appropriate at the level of local authority areas, or within sub-regions or regions, if strategically approached and organised. If key local 'commissioners' of such services (such as the LSP members etc.) were all committed to using a particular scheme for their work (eg as part of contributing to local regeneration and community-based initiatives), sufficient tasks might be generated to enable an ILM to be effective, especially if linked to local independent firms and follow-up on work opportunities as highlighted in the above report. This raises the whole question of 'procurement' practices, and the ways in which local organisations can be brought into the delivery chain – an issue which is further explored later in this section.

It should also be noted that recent initiatives by the Department for Work and Pensions are beginning to address the difficulties around benefits reclaim entitlements. For example, rapid reclaim procedures are being tested in Job Centre Plus in relation to Job-Seeking Allowance entitlement. However, our enquiries indicate that there are equally serious difficulties involved in Housing Benefit. The *'Jobs for All'* report referred to earlier recommends that "steps should be taken to ease the transition by guaranteeing run-ons of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit until a revised in-work rate has been calculated, and guaranteeing quick re-establishment of benefit if a job collapses". It also proposes piloting changes to rules governing casual earnings.

---

[9] The PAT Action Plan 'Jobs for All' www.dwp.gov.uk

(c)   Participatory approaches to consultation and service outreach.

Creating employment opportunities within deprived neighbourhoods is a critically important need. However, equally important is the need to get 'better' at ways of consulting through more imaginative methods, in ways that reach those whose voices are not so easily heard, and enabling community groups to play a stronger and more effective role in representing user views and helping to skill and inform frontline service staff. Within this approach, residents tend to be involved, not as 'consultants' undertaking a piece of research, but as participants in a facilitated process which engages and empowers the whole community and aims to influence the policy making and service-delivery process, to which we now turn.

Influencing Services

There are long traditions of user involvement in public service consultations, a vibrant history of the development of community and voluntary sector organisations whose role is service influence, and various 'duties to consult' binding on public authorities. It is a highly complex field, fraught with tensions around the role and value of community volunteering versus employment or others forms of payment for community involvement. Many community activists are deeply fulfilled by their activities and have no interest in receiving payment, or achieving employment through such activities. In other instances, residents are increasingly questioning the lack of remuneration for their work, particularly if it involves being on committees and giving-up large amounts of their time (as being a board member of an NDC certainly involves for example).

Creating improved routes for local residents to be employed as community development or outreach workers by service providers or within regeneration schemes such as NDC is also an important approach to service influence.   The pilot evaluation offers an opportunity to assess the effectiveness of community outreach consultancy work in reaching disengaged communities. There are lots of other initiatives underway, eg work by SureStart schemes (recently boosted by increased resources) to encourage residents to fill health jobs in deprived areas, or to utilise local parents in Home Visit Teams.

However, it is suggested that the most important issue for evaluation is the impact of residents' consultancy schemes on service providers, their policies and how they set about delivery, service standards, etc. Community consultation and involvement may be a good approach, but the key test is whether it makes a difference. What do service providers change or do as a result of the consultation? Are local views really listened to?

The Project Cycle: Project Design; Implementation; Management; Evaluation

All stages offer opportunities for community engagement and much innovative work is currently underway within the UK policy environment. Examples include Project Cycle Management techniques involving local people in identifying appropriate interventions, local management of services (Tenant Management Organisations), development of participatory monitoring approaches (where residents identify the impact indicators that should be used to assess projects and service effectiveness), neighbourhood management, resident-led regeneration partnerships, and the contracting of voluntary organisations to deliver services. The latter is already prevalent, particularly within social and care services, where recent research indicates that some two-thirds of voluntary organisations are engaged in some form of service contracting.

Neighbourhood management approaches may offer increased opportunities for exploring local contracting. The experiences of Resident Services Organisations are helpful here[10] as is interest in developing and supporting the role of social enterprises in local service delivery. These issues are being explored in a number of different ways across England - for example the cross-cutting review underway on the role of the voluntary sector in public services delivery (led by Paul Boateng, Financial Secretary to the Treasury) and the work of the Social Enterprise Unit within the Department for Trade and Industry. The processes and procedures involved in current Best Value requirements might offer some more imaginative ways of linking the procurement process to neighbourhood involvement and participation, and expanding local contracting opportunities for voluntary and community organisations, but there is little evidence of such approaches currently.[11]

Given that local regeneration partnerships offer such important opportunities for community involvement in all stages of the project cycle, and that many of these are formalising their boards as local community companies, it is important to look at their developing roles in providing residents' consultancy services, and local services generally. There are complex issues involved in growing these organisations in a sustainable way (sometimes described as 'development trusts'[12] or 'anchor organisations'[13]), but given that such initiatives are based in the most deprived areas of our towns and cities, how they approach the sustainability of their work is critical. Many later-round *SRBs*, *Housing Action Trusts*, *Surestart*, *New Deal for Communities*, and *Neighbourhood Management* pilots may all provide further opportunities for developing understanding about how such neighbourhood-based organisations can be successfully established.[14]

Royds, one of the UK case studies in this research, is an example of such an approach. The initiative has developed over time, developing a range of income generation strategies. Such organisations may seek independent income (through the management of a physical asset) to deliver services within their neighbourhood, or take on contracted responsibilities for public service delivery, seek grants, or undertake wider work outside of their area to earn income. We suggest below some 'characteristics' for such organisations:-

---

[10] see the recent PEP report, 'Learning from Real Life' www.pep.org.uk
[11] see Marilyn Taylor Associates, "Supporting Social Enterprise" produced for the Cross River Partnership in London (020 7263 4978)
[12] see Development Trusts Association (www.dta.org.uk)
[13] see Stephen Thake, 'Building Communities, Changing Lives: the contribution of large, independent neighbourhood regeneration organisations'; Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York 2001 (www.jrf.org.uk)
[14] the London Development Agency have recently commissioned research into how the development of such organisations can be supported: 'Putting down the Anchor' by Thake, Taylor and Hill (April 2002)

Defining Characteristics of Anchor Organisations

Historical Associations
Developed over time, grown from existing organisation or regeneration initiative

Specific Area Focus
Focused on a neighbourhood, or ward/s, of approximately 10,000 people

Community Managed/Locally Accountable
Resident/target community make-up minimum one-third of governance structure
Community outreach/local accountability structures
Independent (company, charity, or other incorporated structure)

Holistic/Multi-Faceted Programmes
Operates a wide range of initiatives, including economic interventions
Annual budget in excess of £250,000

Staff/Management Expertise
Range of staff skills/domain expertise; management capacity; performance
   monitoring

Delivering Others' Programmes
Act as a delivery agency/contractor for government programmes

Secure Resources
Access wide variety of funding sources

Assets/Buildings
Operates from local centres of activity
Seeks to develop assets/asset ownership

Long-Term Vision/Plan
Articulated long-term vision of role within neighbourhood
Business development strategies for sustainability

3.3   Parallel Developments

Before concluding with some recommendations for future action, reference to a piece of parallel research commissioned by Government Office for the West Midlands is of interest and relevance to our emerging conclusions. Instead of the term 'resident consultancy' they are using the term 'community consultants' (which may often be a more helpful and more inclusive term as it acknowledges the contribution of paid staff within the voluntary sector), and the initiative is interesting because it is taking a regional approach to exploring the issues involved in a structured way.

Community Consultants: Feasibility Study

The primary objective is to prepare a reasoned case and process for developing community consultancies in the West Midlands Region. In order to satisfy this objective, we will investigate:

- the need/opportunity for community consultancies
- the extent of support that could come from LSPs and CENs
- 'what works' – good practice from elsewhere
- who might take up this option (who and where are the target participants?)
- training/support needs, delivery agents and costs

Topic List of Possible Activities for community consultants:
Mentoring; Research; Consultation; Investigation and Sharing of Good Practice; Community Advocacy; Capacity Building; Influencing (surveys, management, delivery, monitoring); Promoting Access; Street Representation; Organising Elections, Referendums and Forums; Project Development; Communication.

Government Office for the West Midlands

The study is not completed, but the above sections from the research brief are quoted because they draw together may of the issues involved, particularly around supply, demand, and organisational support. The focus is on a range of community organisations, not just residents' organisations, in contributing to local provision. The study also includes gathering information on procurement practices, which as noted above, is a critical issue if community consultancy and community-led organisations are to be able to successfully trade and compete.

3.4   Conclusion

This study has been predominantly exploratory in its approach, responding to the brief regarding the need for increased knowledge about 'residents' consultancy' approaches both here in the UK and overseas.   It does not claim to have identified all such practices, but clearly those organisations carrying out local consultation and research consider themselves as residents' consultancies just as much as those which are focused on the transfer of learning and good practice. As this strand is not currently included amongst the six funded pilot schemes, consideration could usefully be given to including one or two examples within the pilot cohort in order that the evaluation can include an analysis of their approach.

Marilyn Taylor
Marilyn Taylor Associates
72 Corbyn Street
London N4 3BZ
020 7263 4978

Kamila Zahno
Melanie Nock
Kate Jarman
Zahno Rao Associates
94 Stapleton Hall Road
London N4 4QA
020 8342 8298

Stephen Thake
Cities Institurte
London Metropolitan University
Ladbroke House
62-66 Highbury Grove
London N5 2AD
020 7607 2789

Appendix A: UK Case Study Summaries*

1.   Residents for Regeneration

Balsall Heath Forum, Birmingham

Background

Residents for Regeneration (R4R) is a project run by the Balsall Heath Forum in Birmingham. Balsall Heath is an inner city area of the city which used to be notorious for high crime (particularly prostitution and drugs), poverty, unemployment and deprivation. In the 1970s local people came together to form a community action group, and worked to set up an adventure playground, pre-school playgroup and a community newspaper.

Over time a few small community groups for the various BME communities in the area also formed. The Balsall Heath Forum was set up as an umbrella body for the small groups and communities across the area in the 1980s. In recent years there has been some success in improving the image of the area, as well as the reality of living there for residents, with crime and unemployment reducing, house prices increasing, etc.

The Forum operates as a limited company (no charitable status) and is led by a board comprising of elected residents. It employs 10 people (full and part time) 70% of who are local residents, and had an income of £300k in 2000.

The Forum runs several projects including:

- capacity building for residents groups;
- crime reduction, including the management of a CCTV scheme with the assistance of a police secondee;
- running a team of civilian neighbourhood wardens;
- an environmental project which is employing New Deal workers to clear rubbish and overgrown plots, work in a community plant nursery, and maintain gardens under contracts with organisations such as Housing Associations.

The R4R project has been running in practice for over 10 years. The aim is to network and share good practice with other communities both in Birmingham and nationally. It started as a response to other groups (both nationally and locally) approaching the Forum for advice on regenerating their local communities and working statutory bodies.

Current beneficiary organisations include:

- The Stubbin Estate, Sheffield. This happened after David Blunkett visited the estate and recommended that the residents speak to R4R.
- Work with Leicester City council after local community approached R4R for advice. R4R due to make presentation to the Leader of the Council concerning community needs.
- Birmingham City Council 'Flourishing Neighbourhoods' neighbourhood support project.

Work carried out with beneficiary organisations varies enormously and is dependent on what they want. They see themselves as being enablers and having a supporting role, however, the work being undertaken in Sheffield and Leicester appears to be led by R4R in partnership with the local group.

Participants

Depending on the nature of the enquiry from the outside organisation, any one of a number of interested residents will take part. Paid staff ascertain what is required and then recommend the way

---

forward to the board who then recruit people to the project. Local residents with relevant experience then get involved.

Training and Pay

Training for residents is through informal means, the emphasis being on learning through participation. The most experienced residents get involved. Residents constantly reflect on what is happening in their local area. Pre and post visits to beneficiary organisations participants and staff come together to discuss and reflect. They can also benefit from the Forum's capacity building programme.

All residents who participate get their expenses paid for taking part in visits. Some are on benefits, and some get an annual income from being on the Board.

Demand and Marketing

There is a huge demand as so many communities do not have access to expertise and good quality advice on regeneration. R4R only work with organisations which approach them. As they do not have the capacity or funds to further develop the number of communities they work with or respond to further demand, they will not be marketing themselves for the foreseeable future. See their USP as being experts in local regeneration issues.

Evaluation

An evaluation exercise is currently being carried out by a freelance consultant, as part of an action research project to inform the future development of R4R. Beneficiary organisations past and present will be contacted to ascertain where the work of R4R has made a positive impact. The evaluation is in its early days and the report is due in May 2002.

Funding

Funded by the DfES since 1999. Long term aim is to see project as an income generator, as they feel that most projects, no matter how small, have the capacity to pay for their services. At present R4R is not charging the existing beneficiary organisations. R4R is therefore dependent on the income of the Forum.

Issues

- Further funding to increase capacity is needed to meet the demand.

- Networking should be developed through regional centres of excellence led by the third sector.

- Believe that residents' consultancies are unique and their key success factors lie in the length and quality of the experience of residents, commitment from residents to take part, having a track record and excellent reputation.

- Barriers to success lie in bureaucracy and lack of commitment for true resident empowerment at the centre, in local authorities and LSPs.

2.   Hagfold Community Mapping Network

Atherton, Wigan BC

Aims and Operation

The initial aim has been to produce a Community Plan for the Hagfold Estate.

Hagfold is an 'estate' of 2,600 households - 5,000 people - close to Atherton town centre, which is now part of Wigan BC. The housing stock is mainly pre-war but also includes examples of post war housing. It is almost entirely local authority rented stock.

The Community Plan was prepared through a series of community events co-ordinated and largely delivered by the Hagfold Community Mapping Network

Origins

In 1996 the community organised itself to take over the community centre from the local authority. At the time 'it was closed more often than it was open and when open empty more often that it had any one in it'. Now it is open seven days a week catering for the elderly, people with learning disabilities, young people, parents and toddlers and adults. The activities are equally diverse - keep fit, dancing, boxing, coffee mornings, benefits advice, a day centre, art classes and youth clubs.

In 1997 they helped the Atherton Traders Association to raise £14,000 to improve security in Atherton Town Centre and set up the Atherton Environment project. In 1998, the community took over the lease (only 5 years) of the community centre and in 2001 the local authority opened an enterprise centre in an adjoining building. It provides training, career advice and an ICT suite. They also became involved in the board of the local SRB partnership. This year the toilets and kitchen will be upgraded and a nursery will be opened - the outdoor play equipment is currently being installed. The primary care trust is also looking to open a health centre on the Hagfold estate.

In 1998, the local authority undertook a residents survey and discovered that the residents of Wigan held the local authority in low regard thinking of it as being very distant from ordinary people. The council's response was to launch two community mapping pilot studies - one in Standish, a reasonable well off neighbourhood, and the other in Hagfold, recognised as being one of the poorest areas of the local authority. It was meant to be a six month study. They had some initial help from the local authority in the form of officer time in setting up the mapping team.

Client Groups and Activities

The Community Plan was produced for the community and also to inform and influence the local authority. To prepare the Community Plan, Hagfold Community Mapping has devised a series of techniques/products as well as a process. The events are organised for the community and are listed below to indicate the breadth of consultation activity that the community has undertaken. It would have been impossible to undertake this level of consultancy using external consultants and even if the local authority had tried, the cost would have been prohibitive.

Coffee Morning Consultations These made use of the coffee mornings that took place in the community centre.

Environment Week A week long series of activities around the theme of the environment - one of the issues identified in the coffee morning consultations - culminating in the painting of a giant mural. The projects identified were then prioritised - now, sooner, later

Age Groupings Consultation with different demographic groups - children and families, young people, the elderly and other adults. The residents led on the elderly and other adults. The local authority led on youth and children with families. The elderly consultation took the form of outreach work, visiting the elderly in their own homes, and through consultation bingo. The other adults consultation focused on the regular residents open meetings that took place of a Thursday evening.

Feedback Consultation The Feedback day lasted from 10.00 am through to 8.00 pm and the community minibus was used to bring in the elderly and people in from outlying places.

Summer Festival This was funded by the local authority and the local community helped to organise it; the Community Centre provided the hub. Dancing, events, samba band, ending with a firework display. The field surrounding the Community Centre was full. It is still talked about.

Community Survey A door-to-door survey with questionnaires to reach a community which did not respond to the other forms of consultation.

Report Preparation Susan Loudan took the responsibility for bringing the written report together in consultation with the Mapping Team. Developed a partnership group with local authority and presented the findings. This partnership group formed the basis of a successful SRB bid.

Launch Party Community Centre was used and decked out to promote the publication of the report. Major stakeholders attended as well as the Leader and CE of the local authority.

Community Conference The purpose was to review progress on the action points chosen in the Spring of the previous year and to update the targets for the following year.

Community Compact This year's project is to develop a service level agreement devised by the community and offered to service providers to accept. This will be launched in April.

Organisational Form

The Hagfold Community Mapping Network has no organisational form. It has no constitution of memorandum and articles of agreement.

Management

The Hagfold Mapping Group has a number of core members who are also core members of the community centre. It is however a separate organisation, not a sub-group of the community centre, although it uses the community centre as its base and most of its community activities take place there. Although the Community Mapping Group is not a product of the community centre, it would not exist had the community centre been there in the first place.

The Community Mapping Group deliberately got off to a slow start. It was important that they got to know each other first and also got to know their estate before launching off into the unknown. They also decided to extend their brief to cover social and aspiration mapping as well as the physical mapping that had been initially envisaged.

Funding and Turnover

The Hagfold Community Mapping Group has no bank account. The funds are raised on an ad hoc basis and they other people to pay. Turnover is minimal. The largest amount of money they have required has been the £2,000 to print the report.

Staffing

There are no full time or part time staff. Susan Loudon brought together 15 'movers and shakers' in the local community - some residents, some local authority officers, the local policeman, a local businessman and a couple of 'local' councillors - i.e. loyal to the community rather than the council. There are about 15 core volunteers and a further 15 - 20 who join in to help with particular initiatives/events. Other members self-select or are talent spotted. There is no formal training.

Benefits to those involved

The benefits are qualitative. No one gets paid and no one seeks to take the glory. There is a great sense of comradeship and of working with like-minded people. Different people have different roles and each is respected. Each has grown in confidence and ability and have added to their skill base as a consequence of being involved. One woman said that she could not wait to be retired in order that

she could spend more time on the Community Mapping work. It had 'given her a new lease of life'. It has also been rewarding to have their worth recognised outside their neighbourhood.

Quality Control

Quality control is established through the consensus of the core group of the Mapping Network. The quality of the services is judged by:

- how successful local people believe the events to be, ascertained through informal feedback;
- the influence that they have on the institutional partners and changes in their neighbourhood.

Evaluation

There has been no formal evaluation. Success is measured in a number of ways.

First, more people are participating. The Community Centre is a hive of activity from morning to night time. Improvements are taking place. Response rates are up, apathy and alienation rates are down.

Second, residents are coming forward with their own ideas for improvements and asking the Mapping Group if they can make it happen. People are looking to the community for leadership, no longer relying on the Council. They are also thinking about issues that go far beyond the locality.

Third, the local authority is adopting their ideas i.e. Network of Networks and the Environmental Health Department which is seeking 'Beacon Status' is calling the work of the Community Mapping Team in support of their application.

Fourth, the local authority would not think of doing anything on the estate without consulting the Community Mapping Team first and/or using it to consult with the residents.

Their success is a product of an eager and enthusiastic approach. They are open, honest and down-to-earth. They are local people, people-like-us, not men in grey suits. Nobody else can achieve the results that they achieve. Their proposals are aspirational but also practical and deliverable.

There are two sets of barriers to success. The biggest barrier that they face is the lack of awareness of what they have achieved. The second lies in the culture of the institutional partners. Will they listen? If they listen, can they act? If they can act, do they have the will to do so? Will they have the courage to entrust budgets and responsibilities to local organisations?

Outputs

There are no formal outputs in terms of qualifications or employment gained as a consequence of the activities of the Community Mapping Network. However, there have been positive outcomes for the residents of the 'estate' - new fencing, door entry systems, demolition of unwanted properties, a new caretaker, computers, art classes, additional youth club sessions, better street lighting etc. Practical, in-your-face improvements.

Current Developments

Initially the Hagfold Community Mapping Group focused entirely upon the Hagfold 'estate'.

The Hagfold Community Mapping Team is now engaged in a similar exercise in a neighbouring pit village of Howbridge Consultation - a much more difficult area to work with.

Wigan has been impressed with the work that has taken place in Hagfold and is now intending to incorporate the approach in its LSP Neighbourhood Strategy and roll it out across the borough as a Network of Networks.

Wigan is beginning to move towards devolved area management - Township Management - based on the old townships. The Hagfold Partnership will be instrumental in deciding what happens.

Future plans

Hagfold Community Mapping Network is at a turning point. Last year they won recognition as one of the commended projects in the BURA Community Awards. The Trafford Hall Seminar for residents' consultancy schemes in March also provided an important context for what they have been doing. As a consequence they are beginning to appreciate what they have achieved and are going to take time out to think through what they should do next and what they might be doing in 5 years time.

Difficulties

The local authority and the Hagfold Community Network took different approaches to the consultation process. The local authority approach was to extract information to support funding bids and to promote local authority services - not to find out community needs or to promote community empowerment. The residents had suggested peer-to-peer consultation but the idea was rejected in favour of an experts-to-residents approach.

There are real difficulties with the voluntary, un-funded approach - it is very hand to mouth. It is difficult to plan activities that require significant funding. Their influence comes through the information, enthusiasm, proposals and moral authority that they bring to the table. Although they have got under the skin of the local authority they still struggle to get individual departments to take action to redress long term under funding/neglect e.g. the local park.

Key support actions

Public agencies need to treat residents as equals. They need to accept that everybody brings something to the table. The local authority needs to recognise the contribution that residents can make. Then there will be an improvement in communication and also an improvement in the flow of information. Changing the culture is the key.

3. Focus Community Consultants

Birmingham

Background

Prime Focus is a Social Investment Agency which grew out of Focus Housing Group. In 1997 the housing group broadened the focus of its activities to become a social investment agency. A wide range of services is provided by the Prime Focus Group including Focus Housing and Black Star Housing (RSLs), Focus Home Options (managing shared ownership and market rent properties), and Focus Pathways (the training agency for unemployed people), Prime Focus Finance (the special purpose borrowing vehicle for the RSLs). The Social Investment Centre is part of the group and is involved in a wide range of regeneration and community involvement activities throughout the West Midlands.

Origins of the Project

The programme has been developed in response to the increased level of research activities taking place in the West Midlands. There is a significant need for research relating to housing and regeneration programmes and to inform a wide variety of strategies for housing and regeneration partnerships. Tenant satisfaction surveys, community surveys, social audits, tenant and community participation are all areas where increased research is taking place.

The Social Investment Centre has been thinking about formalising resident involvement in regeneration and obtained Housing Corporation funding under the Innovation and Good Practice Fund to test out approaches in three areas: Coventry, the Black Country and Birmingham. In Birmingham the funding was used to test out the community consultant approach in Saltley and Small Heath. Saltley and Small Heath SRB1 programme is coming to the end of its 7 year programme and is looking at a succession strategy. The SRB partnership wanted an up-to-date picture of the area and was interested in getting residents involved in researching the baseline information. This provided the impetus for a collaboration with Prime Focus to pilot a training programme for residents to research their own neighbourhoods.

Objectives of the Consultancy Project

The wider objectives of setting up the Community Consultants project are to:

- Create a mechanism for proactive participation of residents in regenerating their own neighbourhoods;
- Ensuring that services are more responsive to the needs of the local community;
- Create and retain wealth within the local community;
- Provide local people with an opportunity to gain knowledge and skills in research;
- Provide local people with access to further education and/or paid work;
- Provide local people with the opportunity of gaining credits in recognition of their learning achievements.

Delivery

The Housing Corporation funding was used for a programme manager to organize the recruitment and training of local residents, as well as the delivery and management of a household survey. The community consultants programme gives local people the opportunity to be directly involved with research activities and to increase their knowledge of research methodologies. It can also act to enhance the confidence of local people through developing new skills, thereby increasing capacity in the community. The programme helps communities to realize their full potential through participation in discussion and tasks. A practical element of the training programme provides the consultants with the opportunity of practising the knowledge and skills they have learnt form the theoretical segment of the programme.

In summer 2001, residents were recruited from 3 wards in East Birmingham: Nechells, Washwood Heath and Small Heath. This was done through posters and leaflets being placed in community groups, take away outlets, tenants units, shops etc. Open days were held in each ward explaining the purpose of the project, what residents would get out of it and what was involved in terms of training and research. Recruitment did not only target unemployed people, but also those not in receipt of JSA, as well as those in part time work and at college. Interested residents filled in a form which acted as a selection process. Basic English skills were required and the application form was constructed to test this. More residents applied (about 50) than were able to be taken on and selection of 12 was based both on basic English and on a short statement of why the individual wanted to play a part in regeneration. This ensured that residents were committed to the principles of community involvement rather than only being driven by a desire for the qualification and employment prospects – although these were obviously important aims for them as well.

Training Programme

This involved 10 full day sessions delivered over a 6 week period during the summer of 2001. The sessions included communication skills, research and evaluation skills. The training drew on participants' personal experience of their locality, for example at the micro level of the street. It was progressive in that it also built up a team. Childcare and travel were included as well as out of pocket expenses up to £15 a week.

Induction: introduction to learning strategies; accreditation requirements; establishing team spirit.
Regeneration and Community Overview: perceptions and determinates of regeneration; what are community consultants; who is the community; skills in community working; why the project is needed.

Research skills: techniques including focus groups, questionnaire design and interviews.
Communication skills: forms of communication including body language; listening skills; customs and cultures.

Practical research: health and safety; planning and research schedule; carrying out the research; evaluation of processes undertaken.

Evaluation and Interpretation: introduction to evaluation and interpretation techniques; establishing the validity and reliability of research data; understanding the ways in which information can help to meet the community's needs; contribute to the presentation of research findings and conclusions.

Research Programme

This involved a household survey and a postal survey. The survey was also part of the training programme, demonstrating the practical research skills needed for the NVQ 2 certificate that participants were working towards. The residents looked at a range of questionnaires to pick out what works and what does not, and had input into designing the questionnaire used. The participants got paid £5 per completed questionnaire which took about 45 minutes to complete. They did about 15 questionnaires each.

The results of the research were launched at an awards ceremony at which local agencies and the Mayor were present. The results are being used to inform the succession strategy for the SRB programme. The survey gave a detailed picture of local needs, broken down by ethnicity. It also had a more indirect effect as the participants have started to use their newly gained skills to inform the way they work, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity (see outcomes below), thus influencing the way they are delivering services.

Outcomes for Participants

Of 16 original participants, 2 dropped out, and 12 obtained the NVQ with a further 2 needing to do some more work on their portfolio to complete the assessment process. All 14 are involved in something, whether that is voluntary work, paid work or training. A number of participants gained jobs in regeneration, for example one has a job as a street warden. There is now a small pool of residents available for future consultancy work.

More qualitative outcomes included greater confidence in a learning situation, greater understanding of the local community which has helped some people in their own voluntary work. We met three participants who told us the following:

- One participant is a volunteer in a local Cyber Café which he helped to set up. He is interested in local regeneration which is resident led and thought the training course would help him to develop the Centre. Although he found studying in a formal setting hard and found the homework given quite difficult to prioritise he thought it was very helpful to him in his work in the Cyber café. He is keen that this sort of initiative is continued because "it is good that local people can do something normally done by professionals. Local people have got the knowledge but don't know they've got it. The professionals ask questions and then leave. And their questions often skim the surface. We need a more elastic approach and qualitative work might also need to be done."
- Another is chair of the tenants association and uses the research skills to reinforce things she does in a voluntary capacity.
- For another the course has raised his enthusiasm to the level he now wants to be a councillor.

Welfare Benefits

Benefits would have been an issue for some people and responsibility for declaring any income was left up to participants. However, a number of participants were not JSA claimants and this included some people who were entitled to JSA but did not wish to claim.

Future Developments

The consultancy idea is being developed. A second tranche of the research is currently under way contracted by the SRB programme manager. This is an extension of the original household survey and consists of a 6 page self completion postal questionnaire supplemented by face to face interviews and 6 focus groups. The issues covered include health services, public transport, crime, local amenities and employment and training. To encourage residents to fill in the questionnaire they can return it to a local venue (getting help to fill it in if necessary) and collect free energy savings light bulbs and other household items. The survey is being coordinated by a publicity company which does a lot of grass roots work and the analysis is being undertaken by an external consultant.

Prime Focus now wants to develop the training programme up to NVQ 3 by adding research analysis and presentation of results with a view to setting up a community enterprise. They believe that they would need to run the course a few times in order to build up a pool of people who want to work on a full time or part time basis.

They are also wanting to develop a youth strand. In north west Birmingham Prime Focus has been working with youth groups and are looking to set up a Youth Senate with representative voices of young people. They would like to equip the members with skills to do research with their peers.

Sustainability

Prime Focus has recognised the value of what the residents are doing and sees a sustainable market. There is a regular stream of work from their own stock audits and tenants' surveys. Also focus groups are useful ways of gathering tenants' views on the quality of the housing service.

Although the core group has been developed in East Birmingham, they could operate across Birmingham and perhaps the rest of the West Midlands, although travel might be a problem. They also see the advantage of the core group being able to 'buddy' fledging groups or other trainees in other areas of the West Midlands.

However, a sustainable market is not the only issue affecting sustainability. Prime Focus recognizes that if it goes down the enterprise route it will have to look at the competition. There is not only competition from conventional consultant firms, but soon there may also be competition from similar residents' consultancies. It will need therefore to examine what support such a community business would need to tender for jobs. One way would be to develop a number of partner consultancy firms who are in the regeneration research market and who regularly need community consultants. It was thought that commissioning agencies should be thinking about putting in requirements to recruit local researchers in their tender specification.

Prime Focus is very keen on building on the training course to enable residents to get involved in Project Cycle Management, especially on the evaluation side. They have had initial discussions with the Greets Green NDC programme manager on this aspect.

Challenges

The key challenges to be faced in the medium term future are:

- Developing the next phase at an advanced level;
- Recruitment and retention;
- Developing a social enterprise with a core of employed people working across a number of projects and perhaps a number of areas.

Barriers to Success

- Getting to grips with the payments system so that the benefit trap can be avoided;
- Regeneration agencies need to recognise the value of this approach and set up procedures to encourage it e.g. examining their tender specifications.

Opportunities

- Birmingham City Council is keen on the PCM approach and resident involvement in this is part of the model;
- Specialist areas/strands could be the involvement of groups who are usually consulted on, and not normally involved in their own consultation e.g. young people, BME groups.

Next Steps

- Develop the NVQ 3 course to enable the consultants to be more analytical;
- Test the feasibility for setting up a social enterprise;
- Develop other strands – they feel that developing the youth model could be the biggest potential. The Chief Executive of Connexions is fully behind this approach as they need the views of young people. The LSC is also signed up to this approach.

4.   Central England People First

Northampton

Background to the organisation

Central England People First started life as Northampton People First some 11 years ago. It was originally set up by a group of people with learning disabilities who wanted something different from the traditional day centre provision they were receiving. Although the founder members all used different day centres, they saw each other often enough to be able to discuss the possibility of doing something different. Eventually they organised a half day seminar, with some support from the CVS and Social Services, to find out whether other local people with learning disabilities felt the same or whether they wanted to stay with the day centre arrangements. The seminar was well attended and it was agreed to set up a People First group. (People First is an international movement although all groups are fully independent entities). Shortly after this, the local Mencap group acquired some funding to appoint a self advocacy development worker. The founders of Northants People First were invited to be part of the interview panel which appointed Neil who continues to be their support worker. Some two years later, Mencap let CEPF take over Neil's employment contract and they and the CVS released the funding they held on CEPF's behalf. CEPF is a self advocacy organisation and its aims are to empower people with learning disabilities, supporting them to make their own choices about their own lives.

CEPF's original funding was very small scale and came via Social Services.   They then obtained Joint Finance funding, followed by a lottery grant. When the lottery grant ran out some two years ago, CEPF took a close look at how it was operating and introduced a more business like approach. All the 35 volunteers now have specific job roles and new volunteers are recruited for a specific purpose. They have a dedicated "grants officer" (volunteer) and a strategic approach to their funding based on drawing up project specifications, then looking for appropriate sources of funding. Approximately 40% of their income comes from consultancy, the rest from grants. They have two paid "support" workers; Andy who supports their operations and Neil who supports their strategic development.   The organisation, however, is run and directed by people with learning disabilities.

Consultancy

The first consultancy project took place fairly early on in their development. Buckinghamshire Social Services contracted out their residential provision for people with learning disabilities and mental health problems. The new contractors, the Freemantle Trust, approached CEPF to provide training for their staff and a user conference. This was followed by Wolverhampton Council who asked them to undertake a consultation project with their service users. The turning point with consultancy came in 1993 when CEPF decided they wanted to go to an international conference in Toronto and had to raise the money to pay for 9 delegates. At this point, they won a £10k contract from Northants Social Services to undertake consultation on community care issues. Together with some grant aid, the contract paid for CEPF to go to Toronto and brought with it the realisation that consultancy would allow the group to earn the money to do the things the group wanted to do and to make their own decisions.

Approach to consultancy

The members of CEPF are very concerned that any work they do elsewhere leaves something behind for the local people with learning disabilities. The values of a self advocacy organisation inform their consultancy style. Where the consultancy involves running a workshop or conference or offering training, they involve local people with learning disabilities in the design and delivery. For example, the first contract with the Freemantle Trust involved 10 meetings with local people to design the conference which was then chaired by a local service user. Typically, a training event will involve a local person supported by two CEPF members who, in turn, are supported by Neil if necessary. Where they run more general consultation events for local people with learning disabilities, they try to include a session where they consider whether the local people would like to set up their own People First group. And where a new group has been set up, they continue to provide support, usually by bringing it within the federation of what is now Central England People First. They always seek the

"permission" of local people before undertaking any work to set a new group up and are conscious of the need to avoid pushing "choices" on to people.

Consultancy work comes by word of mouth and via their (very clear) website although increasingly, they are taking part in open tendering competitions. They see the extent of their business as testimony to their quality. Clients have included local authorities, the King's Fund, Joseph Rowntree and international learning disability organisations. They have developed collaborative relationships with three universities (Open University, Northamptonshire University College and Leicester University) whom they *subcontract* to provide additional expertise when required. The universities' involvement also provides CEPF with learning opportunities. An example of that is where on eof their members is a member of the Rampton review panel and an academic undertakes research to support her input to this panel. They have also recently entered into a collaborative arrangement with a market research company to undertake a specific piece of research; as part of this work, CEPF will pay for 10 days of advice from one of their partner academics on how CEPF should cope with the meetings with the market researchers. They are very aware that there are considerable power relationship issues when they collaborate with other groups or organisations but feel they are growing in self confidence about how to manage these relationships and are now much more likely to be the lead partner.

They charge the going rate for the consultancy work they undertake but, because of the benefits issues, individual members of CEPF who undertake the work can only be paid an honorarium; the bulk of the income goes to the organisation itself. It does not appear to be the case that individuals see the work as a stepping stone to independent employment. Neil said that this was probably because of the strong sense of belonging which members gained from CEPF.

Competition from other user led groups does not appear to be an issue. The local People First groups are connected within the CEPF umbrella and all consultancy is handled by head office. Although there are some 300 other People First groups across the country who may undertake "consultancy" at some level locally, the majority, in Neil's view are not as outward looking (perhaps less ambitious) and not competing for national contracts.

Issues

They identified a number of barriers they have experienced in developing their consultancy work

- Tendering processes. They particularly resent the apparent lack of transparency in the Department of Health's tendering processes. They feel that organisations have to be within the "club" to get access to the information they need about opportunities. They noticed that the market research company they are working with finds things dropping on to its desk. Where things are advertised, it is in the European Journal only – they feel that excludes small or user led organisations. There is also an issue about the cost of tendering and interviews which clients do not want to pay for. And many tenders are unclear and difficult to understand. Where people with learning disabilities (and probably other disabilities) undertake consultancy, they need support which increases their costs and makes them less competitive.
- Benefits issues.
- Accredited learning. They see themselves as a learning organisation and want to find an easy and cheap route to accredit what they learn. They feel accreditation of this kind will enable their members to become more mobile.
- Pace. Timescales are very short which poses a particular difficulty for people with learning disabilities.
- Fear and suspicion. Local authorities in particular can find them too radical and may not be completely comfortable with their independence.
- Power. Although invited to be on bodies such as DoH task forces, they are always in the minority and feel that their contribution is not valued in the same way as other members.

They also feel in relation to neighbourhood renewal that, as a community of interest which may be quite dispersed, a focus on small geographical areas may potentially exclude people with learning disabilities even more than they currently are.

Reflections

CEPF have a niche market which has enabled them to develop their consultancy but there are some aspects of their story which seem particularly relevant to our project

- They have stayed with their values of empowering the local people and leaving a real benefit behind. The implications of a lack of perception of opportunity (or desire ?) for personal gain from what they do by the members may be a factor. No one sees this as a passport out of anything or a stepping stone to anything.
- The concept of the acknowledged need for support – both internal and external.
- A very clear understanding of power dynamics
- A determination not to see themselves cheap
- An understanding of the benefits to the organisation of gaining the majority of its income from independent sources
- the benefits of continuity – they see themselves as a learning organisation and there is plenty of evidence to support this but the fact that many of the personnel have been there for a long time (and intend to stay there) may have enabled them to get the most from their learning.

5.   Humber Works and the Humber Numbers Project

Background

Humber Works is an ILM in the Humber Region that has been running since March 2001. Its origins lie in the Humber Community Partnership (HCP): a partnership of the 8 CVS in the region who came together due to early development work under SRB1. The Partnership successfully bid for the voluntary sector option of the New Deal and set up a trading arm in 1998: Humber Works was developed out of this. Humber Works is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee whose strategic management is overseen by the HCP and its board made up of voluntary organisations.

The programme is aimed at people who have been unemployed for 6 months or more, although the emphasis is on those unemployed for more than 3 years. They operate under various New Deal programmes. Participants (workers) are given training by Humber Works and placed in voluntary organisations for work experience. The aim of the programme is to improve employability, provide real jobs, and to capacity build the voluntary and community sector in the region. Examples of placements include:

- Community development workers in community based organisations including child/youth workers and crime prevention workers;
- Painting and decorating for low income families and the elderly;
- Community centre jobs such as working in the crèche, providing transport etc.

The programme lasts for one year. So far, 211 people have been recruited to the programme. Training is tailored to the individual, and always results in some kind of recognisable qualification. Workers are paid £4.10 per hour for a 37.5 hour week. It is early days as the first year is coming to an end, but their evidence suggests that 70% will be going into sustainable employment, of these 35% have found jobs with voluntary organisations.

There are 40 staff running Humber Works based in offices across the region. Most staff have come from the private sector and pay rates are good for the area. Income for the ILM is £2.5 million: 45% ESF Obj 3, 23% SRB6, 10% in kind voluntary sector match funding, balance from the Employment Service New Deal funds.

Market and Sustainability

Marketing consists of the soft approach. Because of the links with over 250 voluntary organisations via the Humber Community Partnership, they have found that the voluntary organisations are coming to them to offer placements. The trustees on the partnership did the original marketing through networking and using contacts.

In the medium term they aim to work with the private and public sector as well, and are making links with major employers such as BP through using them to provide health and safety aspects of training for example. Other future plans for strategic development include becoming a broker for 3rd party linkages i.e. setting up ILMs between 2 other parties.

Issues

- Major issue is based around funding. All ILMs have to work within the EU 12-month rule on such schemes. In reality, there is a case for longer ILMs to suit the individual's needs and until sustained work is found;

- Would like to develop scheme wider to encompass, for example, inactive people and returners. However, the programme is 100% reliant on existing funding opportunities and there is little room for the flexibility that is required;

- There are problems with operating as a social enterprise, as the ILM would like to become in the future. Issues around how social enterprises are perceived and the support they receive, i.e. none available from Business Link. The RDA and regional economic strategy do not see se's as a

business, just as another term for the voluntary sector;

- Nature of labour market in Humber Region is unique. No head offices based there, therefore major employment decisions are taken elsewhere with no prospect of local people or organisations having an influence;

- See USP as having the aim to capacity build both individuals *and* the voluntary and community sector in the region.

The Humber Numbers ILM

Background

Humber Numbers is one of the ILM projects run by Humber Works. It was set up in recognition that the voluntary organisations who are members of the Humber Community Partnership have limited or no access to good quality and affordable research/data. The project has been running since January 2001.

The aims are to:
- collect information about economically and socially disadvantaged people in the sub-region;
- establish what voluntary and community sector organisations can do now and in the future to meet the needs of these people;

resulting in:
- the capacity building of the voluntary and community sector to meet the needs of the disadvantaged;
- building up the not-for-profit social economy in the Humber region;
- defining needs that are not yet met so that they can be met.

The Researchers

Currently there are 17 researchers working for the project. The workers have been identified as being very different from the average Humber Worker taking part in the other ILM schemes. This is due to qualifications and aptitude. Nine of the researchers have degrees and one is a chartered engineer. All of them have been unemployed for 1 year or more, in reality much longer than that for most of them. Aptitude, enthusiasm and the ability to work as part of a team have been crucial in recruiting researchers, although few of them had any direct research experience. The pay and working hours are the same as all other ILM workers. Researchers are recruited in 'batches' throughout the year so that there is a rolling programme of people starting and coming out of the programme.

The Research Work

Researchers are based either at the host organisations or at head office in Hull. Host organisations are voluntary and community organisations (part of the HCP and mostly CVS) who 'host' a researcher for 'free'. This entails providing the researcher with desk space, equipment and day-to-day supervision. In return the researcher will be carrying out research work as needed by the host organisation. The researcher is managed by the Humber Numbers co-ordinator and looks to the central team for peer support and assistance with research design. Humber Numbers pays and trains the researchers. Researchers are at the host organisation for a variable amount of time i.e. 1 day per week, or full time for a set period, depending on the work required. Typical work might be drawing together data to justify a funding application for a small group, or undertaking client satisfaction surveys.

Various research contracts are also being undertaken for a variety of clients. At present these are:

- Hull CVS
- Employment Service
- St Mary's College
- City Vision (SRB6)
- Beverley CVS

- Samaritans
- EYCVS
- Brough Community Partnership
- VA Scunthorpe
- Humber Community Partnership
- Gypsyville, Hull

The nature of the research is either desk research of existing data and information or designing and undertaking (predominantly) survey work.

Training

The training programme was devised by the project manager (who does not have a background in research). It is based on the training package used by a small private market research company with whom he has contacts, and it is hoped that 'retro-active approval' by the Market Research Society will be gained. Accredited training is required by the Employment Service, but this is not perceived to be an issue. The training is in research methods, research design, team working, ICT, communication skills. They have all been trained in participatory appraisal techniques but these have not been required as yet.

Finance

Humber Numbers has secured £80,000 in research contracts in its first year of operation. Income covers about 50% of the wages bill. New Deal covers wages costs for 6 months, the remainder is subsidised by Humber Works. When pitching for contracts they tend to go on the low side as voluntary organisations cannot afford private sector rates.

Market and Sustainability

They obviously have an advantage in having a 'captured market' with the HCP members. In the early days it took some of the CVS some persuasion to take become hosts, mainly because there is no tradition of research use. They are now building on their reputation and are finding that they are being approached to bid for contracts i.e. the SRB6 work, and have not had to go and 'tout' for work. See their USP as having their roots in the community and voluntary sector, but acting as independent researchers who will provide a quality product. Also, the capacity building factor is crucial (the reason they believe they got the SRB6 contract). They avoid 'think tank' work as they want to establish themselves as trustworthy, reliable, and most of all independent. Evidence suggests that there is a huge market out there for them, as there is little competition, and no other non-profit making consultancies operating in the area.

Quality and Evaluation

As it is early days and most of the existing research work is at the pilot stage, no evaluation has yet been carried out and there is no process in place to measure this to date. Equally, there is no specific quality system in place. All research projects are subject to the same process of research design, all the documentation is standardised, and all research work is looked at by the team as a whole.

Issues

See above for issues relating to all the Humber Works ILM programmes.

The inflexibility of the funding regime means that they are unable to offer researchers employment for more than one year. As it is clear that there is a sustainable market out there, the aim is to try and develop more contracts to make researchers permanent or on a contract basis. To achieve this the aim is to establish Humber Numbers as a social enterprise.

6.   Scarman Trust

South Liverpool Project

Background

The Scarman Trust was established by Lord Scarman in 1991 to promote and enable creative citizenship - tapping into people's latent ideas, skill and commitment so that they can build healthy communities for all. The focus is on individuals (Can Doers) who have a passion and determination to improve their own communities and neighbourhoods by inspiring others and influencing institutional change.

Mission

The Trust acts as a vehicle for releasing resources to help communities to bring about change in the way they want, through concrete action which builds genuine collaboration with decision makers.

Aims

a) To reach out to and build the confidence, skills and staying power of can do-ers.
b) To help to establish a role for people which enables them to make a meaningful contribution which is both significant and valued.
c) To build effective communication and working relationships across social, professional, ethnic, geographical and institutional boundaries.
d) To enhance the capacity of institutions to respond to new ideas and experiences in their policies, structures and institutional culture.

Within these overarching aims, The work falls into three categories:

 - Investing in Can Doers (small grants)
 - Capacity building for individuals and their groups
 - Collaborative action: developing prototypes for social change

Scarman have developed a wide range of approaches and activities across the regions where we work and work in partnership with a variety of; institutions agencies, local groups and individuals.

South Liverpool Project

Area of Benefit

The network is spread across the city. The Scarman Trust is in the centre, the NSP is based in Croxteth, the Speke Credit Union is located in Speke and the Somali/Yemeni communities are live mainly in Granby.

Aims and Operation

The consultancy is to work with the Somali community in Granby/Toxteth area to establish a sustainable community organisation for the Somali/Yemeni communities.

Scarman Trust – the Liverpool Regional Office is the account holder for this project but it is in reality a project delivered by a network of local organisations.

Neighbourhood Services Partnership (NSP) - is based in Croxteth has origins that go back to the early 1980s as well. It has a driving mantra 'don't give a grant, give us a contract'. It four elements:

Neighbourhood Services Training Company attracts local people - New Deal, Employment Services, through the door - and, through the 580 Development Association, runs training programmes which lead to qualification in building maintenance, painting and decorating, landscape and gardening, security, catering, business administration and IT services. They then offer a job placement either in

the Neighbourhood Services Company or with the private or private sector employers.

<u>Neighbourhood Services Company</u> has established a number of social enterprises which mirror the same areas as the training company. They tender for contracts from the public, private and non-profit sectors.

<u>Croxteth Community Trust</u> which runs the Communiversity. They took over an old peoples home (999 year lease) with a range of institutional stakeholders on board. The other stakeholders dropped out leaving them on their own. It is a lifelong learning centre and majors on performing arts. The building provides the base for the activities of the NSP.

<u>Gillmoss Training Ltd.</u> has been set up in partnership with private bus operators in the Liverpool area to train local people to get a PVC license.

Altogether the Neighbourhood Services Partnership employs 60 people and has a turnover of £1 million per annum.

<u>Speke Credit Union</u> - is based in the Speke Shopping Centre. Predatory lending is very expensive and the consequences of non-payment are horrendous. The Credit union has running for 11 years, has 3,000 members and is gaining about 50 new members a month. The Credit Union has about £1/2 million pounds out in loans at any one time. It has established a mechanism whereby benefits are paid directly into their systems by direct debit. They also run a Baby Barrow scheme which allows households to consolidate their child allowances and maternity grants. It is run entirely by volunteers and has no grant support.

Origins

The Scarman Trust made a Can Do Grant to Abde Jama, a Somali community leader in Granby. He is a refugee, speaks eight languages and also paints. He had been in the Somali Army and had been trained in the Soviet Union. The NSC has been working with him over the last 14 months, brainstorming and setting up the Merseyside Education and Cultural Association. But they were making little progress. The local authority did not see them as a priority and other black support groups have different objectives.

The Scarman Trust applied for and got one of the DfES/NRU Pilot Resident Consultancy Grants of £25,000 to support the setting up of a sustainable Somali/Yemeni Community organisation and infrastructure. It was meant to be a 3 month development project. It has turned out differently.

Organisational Form

Each element of the network is a separate legal entity. The people provide the linkages. They have established a very powerful 'sub-city' network. Scarman acts as the public face, getting to places the locals cannot go and drawing in money from national programmes. The other parts of the network act as team taking the lead where and when appropriate and bringing in other where and when necessary.

There is also a degree of mutuality - the Credit Union provides financial advice to the NSP and the NSC decorates the Credit Union Offices. Mike Knight whose day job is running the Scarman Trust is also chair of the Credit Union. Phil Knidd and Tommy Smith who work for the NSP last year also worked for the Scarman Trust implementing the Individual Learning Account Programme.

The project has been established with the local community in overall control. There is a steering group of 10 people drawn from the Somali community and Abde Jama acts as the programme manager. The project is based in two adjoining shops on the Granby High Street. One shop is for training and the other is a advice/community centre.

They think of themselves as 'sub-city' sustainable activity below the 'regeneration industry'. It has grown organically and, with the exception of the Scarman Trust, is virtually grant free.

Management

The Scarman Trust acts as the account holder and is responsible for the administration of the consultancy. The delivery is 'sub-contracted' to the NSP which assembled the team - mostly from within its own staff - to run the project. Phil Knidd acts as Project Manager.

Staffing

The people at the centre of Scarman Trust, the Credit Union and NSP come from different backgrounds and have known each other and worked together over a long period of time.

Seven of the core NSP staff have been involved in setting up the South Liverpool Project. Each took on a particular task - project director, property search and leases, training providers, training programmes, advice centre, building repairs, working with volunteers.

Client Groups and Activities

The aim is to establish a viable Somali/Yemeni association in Liverpool - one of the five UK cities with a significant (3,000 people) Somali community.

The project has seven elements which started before and run on after the DfES/NRU grant. Taken together they provide a 'supply chain' of activity running from the identification of initial need through to the self-sufficiency of the established agency.

Talent Spotting

The Scarman Trust's 'Can Do' grants help to identify local people with drive, enthusiasm and creativity. Their funding - albeit small - helps get an idea off the ground. Abde Jama was a Can Do grant holder. NSC worked along Abde Jama, a Somali community leader, for a year to find out the depths of the problems facing the Somali community, what he wanted for his community and help to get the community organised. It also helped to identify the topmost priorities - in this case young Somalis.

Training

The training programme is transferring parts of the NSP training programme across the city. It will involve training, job placement and employment. The first two trainees start on Monday. In addition the WEA and City of Liverpool College will be providing on site ESOL and IT training. In the longer term it is envisaged that the Somali community will be the commissioning agent.

Advice

The community advice centre will employ an advice worker to link the Somali community into the existing infrastructure. The final element of the programme focuses on research. Chrome, a community based research group, will be based at the centre in order to work with the Somali community and help them undertake a survey of needs and aspirations of their community and to establish a data base. The local community will be instrumental in shaping the questionnaire and will also be trained to undertake the field work and analysis.

Aftercare

Once the South Liverpool Project is up and running, it will become part of the extended network of community-based organisations. The NSP and Scarman will continue to provide support and advice but the project will also feed into the work of the wider network.

Benefits to those involved

The question of benefit was seen as irrelevant. Nobody gets paid anything additional for the consultancy work. It is seen as what they are in business to do. 'It's our job. Nobody else is going to do it'. The network has grown up in adversity. All the members are therefore committed, tested and are activists.

Quality Control

There is a layered approach to quality control. The Scarman Trust at a national level oversees the work of the Liverpool office and has a strong vested interest in ensuring that the project succeeds. The Liverpool office is responsible for monitoring the work of NSP and Phil Knidd is responsible for the individual aspects of the project. The Somali/Yemeni Steering Committee signs off on individual elements.

Outputs

There are two shops on the High Street where before there was no meeting place. They are providing a drop in centre an information exchange. The training programme has started and the first two students have enrolled - others will now follow. Instead of thinking that nothing will happen, the feeling is now that anything can happen. The shops have been renamed the Hope premises. People can see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Difficulties

The project depends upon the trust and commitment of the core group of people involved in the 'sub-city' network. They are flexible and entrepreneurial. There are no job descriptions and no laid down responsibilities. They are able to recognise and nurture local talents and have an eye/nose for niche markets for social businesses.

The downside is that the audit trails necessary to show how the money was spent on specific items might be lacking. It is also difficult to establish the boundaries between the 'contract' finishes and the 'commitment/activism' takes over.

There are also institutional difficulties. There are three main barriers to the consultancy being successful.

First, everything is done on a shoestring with little recognition or support from the local institutions. Scarman Trust brings in money - not very much - from outside the area. Second, within Merseyside everything is tied up by the local authority. There are £10 million worth of project bidding for the NRF fund. Of those over £7 million are from the local authority - only £1 million for the community. The NRF will be used to make up the cuts that the local authority has introduced to cut the council tax - the community will not get a look in. Even if they manage to get through the complicated bidding procedures there is a cabinet committee which has the final say. The community gets more frustrated and alienated. Third, Liverpool is also a very divided city. Granby/Toxteth is the 'black ghetto' and the Somali community is one of the most marginalised. Children fail their GCSEs and are unemployable. When the community approaches the Employment Service for assistance only 2 of the 21 names put forward are accepted. It is asserted that many black training agencies are more interested in getting the money for people to attend courses than they are in helping the people on those courses to succeed.

Funding and Turnover

This is the first 'consultancy' project that the network has undertaken and it has been entirely funded through the DfES/NRU pilot project fund and their own internal resources. There is the expectation that the project will be self-supporting and that it will be able to reimburse the network for the on - going services which it will provides.

The consultancy work is not accounted for separately in their accounts.

Sustainability

The NSP has taken a risk on the South Liverpool Project. The DfES/NRU grant runs out at the end of the month. Nevertheless they have taken out leases on the two shops for six months. In that period it is planned that the training programme will take off and the income generated will provide longer term financial stability.

The ultimate success will come when the Somali community are able to run on their own and then help set up another local organisation in the way that NSP has helped them.

Future Plans

At this stage the intention is to consolidate the work done with the Somali community and with it to secure a sustainable income stream to support the infrastructure that they have put in place.

Key Support Actions

There needs to be a new form of community governance with local schools, health providers and community groups at the table. There needs to be devolved budgets and decision making. 1% of central budgets should be identified for independent community activity. That would give local communities easier and independent access to funding.

7.   Royds

Bradford

Background

Royds was established as an idea in 1991. It was formally established in 1995. It covers 3,500 homes in three estates - Woodside, Delph Hill and Buttershaw - on the periphery of Bradford. They are physically separated but similarly deprived. Royds is a name chosen to give coherence to the campaign.

Royds was the first community-led SRB programme and it comes to a close at the end of March 2002. It is also the focus of an SRB scheme to develop an Enterprise Park starting in 2002. At the same time the Royds area is doubling in size to cover almost the whole of south Bradford in anticipation of the creation of a new RSL based on the local authority stock transfer.

Origins of the Consultancy

Consultancy activity started from day one. Many people came to visit them to find out how they had achieved their success. They advised and visited other potential SRB partnerships but received no payment.

The consultancy activity has expanded over time. It is a function of having a secure income, undertaking trail blazing activities and accumulating a great deal of expertise.

Now they moving into the next phase of their development. Unless they generate income then they will not be able to provide services locally.

Motivating Factors

Consultancy activity is seen as a business activity providing income, employment and contributing to sustainability. They realise that they have a 'product' and also they have a competitive advantage over other consultants. The consultancy activity also provides a means by which Royds breaks out of the local authority straight jacket. It provides a form of marketing and publicity.

Administration

At the moment they have no clear idea of their consultancy income or expenditure. The business is substantial and growing but work has been undertaken on an ad hoc basis - each project is individually costed and managed.

As from April 1st Royds Consultancy will be established as one of the two trading 'subsidiaries' of the Royds Group - the other deals with physical developments. Any profits will be covenanted to the parent organisation.

The Royds Consultancy will be separately constituted with its own board. It will allow the consultancy activity to focus on its particular business and also overcomes the restrictions imposed by the charitable aims of the parent organisation.

A business plan is currently being developed and a financial plan has been prepared which shows that the income profile for the next 18 months looks strong.

As of the 1st April a consultancy manager and five staff (the research team, the resident consultancy team and the community bus driver) form the core staff of the consultancy activity.

Geographical Spread of Assignments

Royds have undertaken work in Newcastle, Middlesborough, Hull, Cleethorpes, Sheffield, Rotherham,

Doncaster, Barnsley, Blackpool, Preston, Blackburn, Knowsley, Luton, Leicester, London and Brighton.

Types of Clients

NDCs, SRBs, LSPs, RDA, ROOM and local groups. They do very little work for local authorities. They maintain that the local authority locally is hostile to Royds' existence and jealous of its success. It has been excluded from Bradford's Regeneration Forum and they believe that the local authority continues to spread foundless and destructive allegations about Royds.

The size of assignment varies a great deal. The income derived from each visit is quite small. Others such as the work for Huyton NDC will total £50,000 and they are about to be appointed to undertake a 2 year assignment for the RDA and LSP valued at £300,000.

Consultancy Products

1) Presentations

   Board members respond to invitations from community groups to describe their experience. Groups will come to Royds or they will go to them. In many instances there are repeat visits - more staff, different committee members, different focus of enquiry. The presentations also give rise to informal free advice and can also provide the opening for more formal discussions for paid advice.

   They will undertake about 150 presentations each year. Fees are paid either by the organisation themselves - if they have the resources - or through Regenerate (see below).

2) Ad hoc Consultancies

   Senior staff - the chief executive (Tony), Project Manager (Raj), Finance (Steve), Economic Development (Lisa), Community Co-ordinator (Marie), Human Resources (Christine) and Environment (Dave) are all available to undertake individual consultancy assignments.

   Individual requests are received, assessed as to whether they have the capability/capacity and a bespoke team assembled to undertake the project. Steve puts together the bids with inputs form Tony and Raj.

   Individual will take time out form their 'day job' to undertake the consultancy projects.

   Projects will vary. In North Huyton, they were appointed, in competition with KPMG and PWC, to advise of the appointment of their chief executive. Further work has followed. In Luton, they were appointed to supervise the local elections for the NDC. The work for the RDA/LSP will be different again.

3) Research

   Two people take the lead on undertaking surveys - questionnaires design, door-to-door interviews, data analysis. With the setting up of the consultancy service in April four other people will be trained to use the market research software packages.

   In addition they have trained a group of 20 residents - up to Market Research Society accreditation - to undertake surveys in the Bradford area. When they go further afield they will train local residents to be the field workers.

4) Resident Liaison

   The two person resident liaison team (plus the yellow consultation bus) undertake resident consultation projects - neighbourhood presence, door-to-door visits, advice and follow up.

5) Individual Assignments

Senior manager will be approached undertake special assignments. For instance, Tony, recently went to the Braunceston NDC to sort out the operational difficulties that had paralysed the Partnership Board.

Benefits of Participation

The residents engaged on consultancy activity do not get any additional payment, though they will have their costs met - hotels, meals, travel etc. In itself that is a boost - being treated like professionals. Most importantly the benefits come from non-monetary rewards:

- a new challenge;
- validates their own experience 'Yesss! We were brilliant!';
- opportunity to meet new people;
- upgrades existing skills;
- opportunity to influence outside the local area.

The organisational benefits come from having a highly motivated staff team and a staff team who which, through travel etc., better understand what they are trying to do in Bradford.

The sessional workers - surveys etc. - are paid per assignment. Payment is real difficulty: once and income is passed benefits can be withdrawn on a £ for £ basis. Many people will refuse to take the money because if they lose their right to benefit, it can be very difficult to be re-registered when the need arises.

It is a problem for volunteers as well because if they put in more than 15 hours a week their benefits can be in jeopardy. Nevertheless all get paid their expenses.

Measuring Success

Each project is evaluated in a number of ways:

a) has the contract been fulfilled, is the client happy, has the invoice been paid;
b) were there any technical short falls i.e. even if the project met the first criteria were there elements not achieved;
c) has Royds as an organisation grown/learned from the assignment;
d) have individuals on the assignment grown/learned from the experience.

 In addition there is the informal feedback that comes during the doing of the assignment plus the stream of letters of thanks/commendation and the repeat business.

They have not been the focus of any external evaluation.

Competitive Advantage

They have been doing it for seven years. They know what they are doing. They are also evangelists. Their success means that Royds is competing with some big hitters. Their advantage stems from being practitioner consultants - when prospective client look at them they are looking at themselves.

Difficulties

Local authorities are tempted to play safe. Professional consultancy firms have a track record and the local authority knows what it will offer. Royds is perceived as a risk option which can come up with uncomfortable recommendations.

Local groups are not confident in Royds' competence - 'If you are like us how can you do what you say you can, because we can't?'

Also the senior mangers are a finite resource. There is tension between consultancy and managing the core business. 'If the consultancy is too successful, will it hollow out Royds?'

Key Support Actions

Royds wants the role of social enterprises in the delivery of local services recognised. They should be seen alongside schools, health centres, local housing companies as core local institutions and funded as such.

8.   Regenerate

National

The Organisation

Regenerate is a project run by the Churches National Housing Coalition (CNHC). CNHC is an ecumenical organisation with a membership of some 500 individuals and organisations which is working to combat homelessness and poor housing. It pursues its objectives through

- High profile campaigns. The two most recent have been "The big question", run in conjunction with nine other major homelessness organisations (including Shelter, Crisis and the Big Issue) which successfully campaigned for the reintroduction of the Homes Bill.
- Support for others' projects and for projects at a more local level. This includes support for "Homelessness Sunday", a campaign run at individual church level; support for a Triodos (the "ethical" bank) initiative to get people to save in a loan fund for housing projects. Regenerate is included in this category.
- Internal persuasion. CNHC has persuaded the church commissioners to offer redundant land to social housing providers and has a panel of Christian architects who will undertake feasibility studies on redundant church properties.

CNHC is an influential body within a number of churches and is able to call on the services of an extensive network of supporters within these churches.

Regenerate

Regenerate is managed by Keith Proctor, a Christian architect, who first became involved with CNHC as a consultant some 4 or 5 years ago when he was commissioned to establish a national panel of architects and Housing Associations to develop church land. An approach was made to the Housing Corporation for funding to support more work in this area which resulted in a commission for the Estates Regeneration Handbook – with a brief to produce a guide to community led regeneration which had no jargon, was not boring and was a good read.

A year later, the Regenerate "service" was established, comprising a "one stop" estate regeneration hot–line; the handbook; site visits; a panel of professionals willing to give some initial free consultancy. The advice provided via the hot line is primarily onward referrals – to the people including the residents who wrote the book, to the panel of professionals or to other organisations. Regenerate has run three regeneration conferences which operate on a self funding basis, charging low fees (the 1999 conference cost residents £12). They have set themselves the objective of helping 12 estates to reach the same position as Royds.

Regenerate has its own steering group of two people plus the Director of CNHC and is ultimately answerable to the trustees of CNHC. A consultation group of people who wrote the handbook, other leaders in the field of regeneration and some users has also been set up. Keith coordinates the project on a contract basis via his company, Keith Proctor ltd. The project is based in Totnes where Keith lives. CNHC via Keith also employ a part time administrative assistant for the project.

The Housing Corporation, Tudor Trust and Esmee Fairbairn provides around £70k in funding per year (on a three year agreement). CNHC takes a management fee and the core costs are around £40k.

The Handbook

The handbook is Regenerate's most concrete output. Keith coordinated its production; initially he visited potential case study estates and was going to write most of it but he subsequently thought it would be more powerful to invite residents to write up their own case studies – these now form about half the handbook. Residents were not paid for their contributions; Keith believes they were willing to

do it because they trust the church. Additional more technical sections were written by professionals – many of these were identified via church contacts. The first edition of the handbook was sold but the NRU funded the second edition to enable it to be given away.

The NRU/DfES Pilot

Now funded through the NRU/DfES pilot scheme, they are building on the handbook by facilitating visits to the estates featured in the handbook by residents of other estates. The funding allows for the travel expenses of the visitors to be paid and pays the hosts to compensate them for the time and other expenses incurred in hosting a visit. Regenerate acts as the travel agent, receiving the requests for visits and passing them on to the hosts but it is left to hosts and visitors to agree the details of the visit between them. There is no set format and no guidelines.

Funding was only confirmed just before Christmas so the scheme has only just got going but some visits have already taken place and some 55 more visitors are having their visits arranged. Literature about the scheme will be sent to everyone on the Regenerate database which comprises all local authorities, 400 or so Housing Associations, Tenant Participation officers and projects, everyone who has received a handbook and other contacts. They do not expect to have any problems in meeting their output targets.

Visitors are asked to complete a very simple evaluation form at the end of their visit; the primary purpose of this is to prove that the visit took place. Comments recorded to date on these forms suggest that the initial visits have gone well and been well received. There is no space and no opportunity for visitors to reflect more on the visit or to consider how they might act on what they have learned. Keith is aware of this and is considering introducing a competition to encourage visitors to produce fuller, more reflective reports of their visits.

Evaluation

Regenerate is currently undergoing an external evaluation which will be published shortly. This is being conducted by a "resident".

Issues

Regenerate itself sees the visits very much as a pilot and believes that if they prove to have value, they need to be rolled out on a regional basis to enable people to visit other estates relatively close to home and where circumstances are likely to be reasonably similar. They also think the hosts should have access to "career development" (i.e training) and should be encouraged and supported in learning from these visits themselves. They would like to develop a stronger and larger network of resident advisers/helpers.   They acknowledge that the handbook needs revising and updating again and needs a new "entry level" pack – meeting or reading about estates like Royds may verge on the unhelpful for people just starting out.

Reflections

Whilst it is clear that site visits are very powerful, there are issues about how visitors and hosts are supported in ensuring that the visits can be turned into useful longer-term learning. There is currently no mechanism for helping visitors think through what they want to get out of the visit nor is there any follow up to help them draw out the key learning points and work out how these might be applied in their own situation. Equally, there is no training or guidance for hosts to support them in turning their specific experience into learning points with more general relevance. Quality control is dependent on the short evaluations completed by visitors – if these indicated that a particular host site was not meeting expectations, action would be taken but there are no processes or systems to try to ensure that visits are run to certain minimum standards to begin with. Some issues have already arisen where hosts and visitors are from different ethnic groups but there is no training in place to assist hosts in working with visitors from different cultures.

9.   Crime Concern

Neighbourhood Safety Programme - Wolverhampton

Background

Crime Concern is an independent, national organisation set up in 1988 to help reduce crime and create safer communities. They established the Neighbourhood Safety Programme (NSP) in 1998, with the publication of *Reducing Neighbourhood Crime – a Manual for Action*, sponsored by the Home Office. In order to demonstrate the impact of the neighbourhood safety approach, 5 pilot projects were set up in Blyth, Mansfield, Southampton, Stoke and Wolverhampton. Each project had a dedicated project manager who, together with local people and partners, developed comprehensive, long-term action plans to tackle crime, the effects of crime and, importantly, the causes of crime within those neighbourhoods.

The ethos of the programme is based on building the capacity of local people and improving the quality of life in neighbourhoods blighted by crime. They base their work on extensive consultation with local residents, using a particular model of working called *audit to action* which enables the local community to drive forward a local plan of action with the police and other agencies. Part of the approach involves supporting local people to set up a Neighbourhood Action Group and to ensure that people are involved in a real partnership in a comprehensive and meaningful way.

Wolverhampton NSP

In Wolverhampton the NSP is underway in the Bushbury and Low Hill estates area, a very low image area of the city in which crime was very high, and there were particular problems with drug users. Residents were deeply sceptical about the effectiveness of public agencies and angry at the neglect and poor management they had experienced for many years. They can tell the difference between 'consultation' (token) and real opportunities for involvement and partnership.

Crime Concern appointed a project manager at the commencement of the NSP. Local people interviewed say that his approach was important because he was "someone coming in from the outside" – not from existing, distrusted organisations. He did not see residents as a "threat" and he took the time to approach them on their terms, not trying to 'sell' them a particular scheme. The attitude of "can-do" and allowing residents to express the truth about the effect of crime in their neighbourhood and on their lives made a powerful difference to the way people began to think about the issues. Key activists (the "can-doers") became involved. The whole process was driven by local views. For example, early 'quick wins' to tackle identified problems – such as the installation of improved street lights – were locally determined. The approach is "expertise on tap not on top".

The scheme has been very successful locally.   All NSPs were evaluated in July 2001 and Wolverhampton demonstrated the following:

Crime Type	National Change	Wolverhampton performing better than national figure*
Domestic burglary	-10%	-23%
Theft of vehicles	-7%	-69%
Robbery	+21%	-21%

* figures for 12 months only, to September 2000

They calculate that reduced crime in the area has saved some £252,000, but perhaps even more importantly, the community have demonstrated that they can be effective, that they can take action to improve things, and they can get local service providers to listen. 19 out of 45 local streets are now covered by "Homewatch" co-ordinators.

However, establishing trust within communities deeply affected by crime is a long process. Pulling-in key individuals, and helping them develop the confidence to go on and motivate and support others takes time. There is no quick fix.

Rewind – supporting people affected by the misuse of drugs

One local resident (Joanne Stonier) who has been heavily involved in the NSP, and in their Homewatch Scheme, has been supported to set up a local organisation to provide support and guidance to people affected by drugs. *Rewind*, as it is called, offer a service, run entirely by local residents with experience of the problems, including a Help-Line, confidential counselling, support and drug awareness courses for parents and families who need to know more about the affects of drugs. Rewind was a winner in the 2001 Community Safety Awards Scheme. Joanne is also a Community Champion.

Issues:

a. Volunteering

The NSP approach is based on peoples' voluntary effort and input. Local people undertaking key pieces of work for the NSP have been paid out-of-pocket expenses, but both lack of funding (eg for more paid staff) and difficulties with peoples' benefits being affected have meant that volunteering – rather than paid work opportunities – has to be the approach. However, the funding obtained for Rewind means that Joanne is now paid as the project Co-ordinator.

b. Future Development

The Lowhill South area is a priority neighbourhood under the LSP, and there is also an NDC scheme in Wolverhampton. Residents are beginning to have contact with residents in other areas, to explain what they have achieved and how.

10. Community Consultants (South Kilburn) Ltd

West London

Background to the Organisation

This new community business (registered October 2001) has been initiated by local residents active in regeneration in South Kilburn. The impetus behind its formation is a desire to promote more local involvement in regeneration – instead of using external consultants – and to create opportunities for local paid work.

They began with minute taking for all the local regeneration committees and associated meetings. This was developed with the assistance of a local community group with URBAN funding to provide a 'community friend' who began to do skills audits with individuals. Around 20 or so people were drawn-in through this process and began to see themselves as skilled and useful people. The Civic Trust got involved in helping them develop their objectives and ideas to the stage of establishing themselves as a local company.

Who is Involved

CC (SK) is a registered company limited by guarantee, with 5 directors currently (provision for up to 11) who are the founding members. Under the Mem & Articles, in future Directors will be appointed by the members. Members are any individuals who support the aims of the company (and there is also provision for membership by supporting organisations, but without voting rights). Approximately 40 local people have become members, all with varied skills to input to the work of the company, attracted through adverts and local meetings. About 10 people are 'active'.

How does CC (SK) Operate?

Each member joining CC (SK) undergoes a skills assessment to determine what services they might be able to carry out. At the moment there is no skills training provided, although it is recognised as an important next development as the project gets underway. So at the moment residents are active on the basis of their current skills and experience, often amassed by local voluntary work, etc. Those individuals contracted to deliver CC (SK) services are paid £15 an hour, with tax deducted at source.

The running of CC (SK) is organised on a voluntary basis at present.

Service Contracts

CC (SK)'s primary client is currently the NDC project with which it is most closely associated. They service community meetings within the South Kilburn area, taking and distributing minutes etc. They also run training in Project Cycle Management and Appraisals for all partners in the NDC processes. They have been asked to undertake work for the local Health Action Zone programme, such as facilitating a focus group for young people to generate input to a bid for a Healthy Living Centre. The HAZ worker also uses CC (SK) to advise on funding sources for local community initiatives (using Funder Finder) and to train and mentor community representatives involved in chairing meetings etc. They are also providing support to local voluntary initiatives such as Paddington Churches Housing Association residents who are engaged in an organic gardening project on one of their estates; and other work for two local Sure Start programmes.

Charges are based on £15 an hour, plus a 10% administration fee.

Funding

CC (SK) has received a £500 start-up grant from the Groundswell project. They have received assistance as a new business start-up from the Civic Trust, involving five training and advice sessions.

They have put in a bid to the Chartered Institute of Housing under their "Innovation into Action" programme for core funding to enable them to employ a p/t Co-ordinator and p/t Administrator, and cover equipment purchase and basic running costs.

Outcomes

The project has already seen 6 of their members progress into paid employment (often as a result of providing cover for absent staff or staff vacancies). Whilst this clearly demonstrates the success of the project in creating pathways into employment for local residents, it leaves them with the difficulty of losing key members with skills, thus presenting problems in undertaking their work.

Local service providers are clearly keen to use CC (SK) as a way of implementing commitments to community participation and local employment.

Future Plans

CC (SK) is still a very new business. They have clearly articulated their vision (and have a business plan) but are at a very early stage in organisational development. They need to attract core funding to really get underway with expanding their services. The contracts they have currently are all based in their own locale, and are relatively small scale. However, they do not see their role as purely local and want to expand to other areas of London.

At the moment, they are also finding it difficult to recruit members with the skills necessary to undertake the types of work they are getting, and know that the ability to provide training is a critical need. However, this will need either funding, or a clear partnership with local training programmes and providers. They hope to undertake a Skills Audit (which they are designing) for the NDC which will help in planning future recruitment and training approaches.

General Comments

This is an ambitious and innovative project, community-led from the bottom-up, rather than any top-down initiative. However, as a new community initiative, CC (SK) need advice and help in developing their organisation, seeking funding, etc. They are receiving a lot of interest in their services from local regeneration organisations keen to promote resident participation and employment initiatives.

They are also facing difficulties in utilising unemployed people on JSA and other benefits, because of the impact on benefit entitlement of the level of wages that they pay. However, they are not generating sufficient work for people to risk coming off benefit. They would like more flexibility around the issue of benefits, or to find a way of paying people without affecting benefits. They have thought about purchasing computers for people (ie payment in kind) and have also developed an idea about using a savings scheme approach that would allow individuals to bank money earned while they do work trials, but not access it, thus not affecting their entitlement to benefits. The savings account might take the form of a trust that the person cannot access until they sign off. As it's a work-trial they should be allowed to get out of pocket expenses (travel, lunches, childcare, etc.), but not their actual 'wage'.

11.   Regen School

Sheffield

Origins and Background

Regen School has grown from the experience of regeneration practitioners in Sheffield and South Yorkshire. The Manor & Castle Development Trust, and other projects, were experiencing heavy demand for visits by others wanting to learn how they had set about their work, but were concerned that 'visit' experience wasn't providing adequate learning opportunities, or support. The project got underway in 2001, and is still very much in its early stages although the first course intake (which commenced in July 2001) have 'graduated' (nearly 40 people in all), and the School is now underway with the second intake, as well as work in the North East to potentially replicate the model there, and a new initiative funded by the NRU to support and establish 'neighbourhood mentors'.

The project is incorporated as a company limited by guarantee, and is responsible to a Board of Management comprising 10 provider (see below) directors, and 6 independents drawn from the private sector, educationalists and the local authority.

Mission and Aims

The mission of Regen School is simple: promoting and delivering community based learning through the sharing of experience. Delivered by:

- Ensuring a sustainable future for Regen School as an independent trading entity beyond the end of the grant period in July 2004;
- To ensure full capacity on four courses per year – 20 pairs of students per course with 80 pairs of students in total over the year;
- Establishing a school along Regen School principles in each English region and UK devolved country that wants one by 2007;
- Developing new courses and programmes;
- Ensuring equality of opportunity and accessibility for all those wanting and needing the skills and knowledge training that Regen School can offer.

The overall aim is to promote effective learning ("really useful knowledge") for people involved in regeneration and community initiatives, utilising the wealth of skills and experience amassed by local project staff acting as 'mentors', taking the learning out of the classroom into real-life situations, whilst providing opportunities for structured learning in interesting and relevant ways. It is a community-based 'school' based on an 'apprenticeship' approach through which students work alongside a 'mentor', both in the mentor's project, and in-situ in the student's project, as well as experiencing structured topic-based learning.

The emphasis throughout is on 'learning by doing'. The school's approach is to enrol students <u>with</u> their projects, ensuring that individuals develop specific skills while at the same time their projects are supported and fast-tracked. It is a cross between a course and a support system. Their approach is not based on a 'deficit' approach – eg you lack skills, you need this – but on harnessing the unique strengths and experiences of individuals. They believe that regeneration is about people, not just a set of skills.

How is the Course Structured?

The course involves 20 days with Regen School, over a 6 month period. The emphasis is on flexibility in order to accommodate the students who may be volunteers in their project, and who would find it extremely difficult to get away for longer periods of time. The aim is to utilise the range of effective learning approaches, including visits, mentoring, placement, shadowing, handholding, coaching, consultancy, networking and brainstorming.

They also use a 'pairing' system to ensure mutual support, such that 2 people are involved from the same project. This can be paid workers or, volunteers, committee members, or even a relevant local

authority officer or relevant official connected with the project or initiative.

The overall structure of the approach is as follows:

Introductions
Tour of local projects and introductions to staff who will be working with students.

Mapping
One day in the school working with mentors 'mapping' what students what to achieve from the course, and structuring individual learning plans. The resulting 'action plan' is taken back by participants and shared with their project, forming the basis of an agreed contract.

Mentoring
The students are paired with their mentor for a total of seven days. These seven days are tailored according to the student's individual action plan. It may involve visits to the mentor's or other's projects and will usually involve an element of 'consultancy' at the student's own projects. The exact mix and balance of activities depends upon the individuals' action plan.

Residential Conferences:
There are 2 residential learning events during the 6-month course, offering specific topic and skill workshops (eg business planning, working with local authorities, funding etc.) and opportunities to network with other students on the course. The emphasis is on developing a student's capacity to know what questions to ask, who to ask, where to get information, how to plan, etc.

Swopshops:
There are 6 swapshop choices available, from which the student group chooses four that then each individual student choose two to attend. This involves day-long events with workers and volunteers from different projects and organisations passing on their 'tricks of the trade'. The emphasis is on finding solutions to immediate problems and issues.

Helpline:
Mentor support continues to be available for up to 6 months beyond course completion.

Staffing

Mentors are drawn from 11 'provider' organisations - South Yorkshire projects ranging from an established development trust, a city farm, a youth involvement project, a social firm working with people with learning disabilities on waste reclamation and other schemes demonstrating success in social inclusion and enterprise. These organisations are paid £20,000 annually to cover the input of mentors (64 days), hosting visits and participating in Swopshops.

There is also a core staff at the school comprising a School Director, Learning Director, School Manager, Development Manager, and an Administrator.

The School subcontracts Northern College to organise the residentials, and input the more structured learning elements based on their approaches to adult and community-based learning. They are developing a 'quality and competency' framework for mentors and mentor organisations.

Student Recruitment

Regen School is now training over 160 students a year from 80 projects (2 from each project), through four 6-month courses. The School has a clear approach to marketing, utilising brochures, adverts etc. Potential students are all interviewed prior to selection. The 'contract' is with the project, not the individuals. The course does assume a fair level of literacy and English ability but their approach is to strive to remove every barrier, and if these issues were a problem they say they would find a way round it. Students on the first courses have come from a variety of projects including community forums, development trusts, enterprises, training initiatives, health projects, residents associations, youth groups, and minority-ethnic projects.

Accreditation

All students have a personal folder in which to document their progress and Record of Achievement. Currently students obtain a Regen School 'Diploma' at the end of the course, and the residential elements count as 'credits' under the Open College Network. The School is currently working on accreditation of the whole 'school' approach.

Finance

Regen School has produced a 3 year business plan and has obtained European Social Funds funding towards projected costs of the first 3 years. Costs:

Core Staff:	£146,000
Provider Organisations:	£220,000
Programme Delivery:	£95,000
Premises/Admin:	£19,000
Total	*£480,000*

The projects participating in the school each pay £6,000 although this has been discounted to £3,000 per student during the first full year of operation (following the pilot programme in 2001/02) which covers all fees, travel costs, childcare allowances, lunches and other expenses. Finance raised from the fees is currently being placed into a 'Development Fund' to finance further development of the school, replication of the model in other areas, and a Bursary Scheme.

Evaluation & Quality Control

Because the scheme is very much in its pilot and developmental stages, they have taken a rigorous approach to evaluation and quality control. Extensive evaluation of the various elements of the school (eg the 2-day mapping, the experiences of mentors, experiences of students, residential learning, swopshops, etc.) has been undertaken by Northern College.

12.   Insearch

Kirby

Background

The Northwood SRB5 programme had a year starting up but little happened until the project managers were appointed in March 2000. One of the first priorities was to build the capacity of local people to take part in regeneration. This would involve not only enhancing their understanding of regeneration, but also increasing local unemployed people's self confidence. They commissioned a local consultancy Comment, which has a considerable track record in undertaking such training for local residents. The SRB workers were keen that the training would involve general assertiveness and confidence building, but would also contain research skills training with a practical exercise collecting the views of people living in Northwood. 11 residents were trained up to NVQ level 2 in July 2000 and a very creditable piece of research was undertaken. They received OCN accreditation in November 2000.

This was a very successful piece of work and when the residents presented it to an audience that included the key agencies, including the Chief Executive of Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council, a very positive reaction was given. Individual participants of the training all took part in the presentation and found they gained much confidence from this as it made them aware that their contribution mattered.

Origins of the Project

The group wanted to stay together and use these new skills. They attended the ILM conference in Manchester at the end of the year 2000 and this inspired them to explore the possibility of setting up a community business. They believed there was a ready market for locally based research which they thought they were well able to do. They set up a Steering Group to look at what was needed to set up a business, and applied for a grant for core funding from Northwood SRB. They received funding in 2001/02 for two core staff and running costs. The core staff manage the research programme, and provide administrative and financial back up. After an open recruitment process, two staff were recruited who had in fact undertaken the original training and were local residents. A management committee was set up to include residents, a person from the local FE college, a local headteacher, a secondary school deputy, and an SRB person is coopted onto the management committee. After a six month period based in an enterprise centre in a secondary school, Insearch moved into a unit on an industrial estate, along with other community business such as Community Transport.

They immediately attracted pieces of research work including:

- Knowsley Disability Employment Forum: research into the employment barriers for disabled people;
- Knowsley Primary Care Group – research into people's attitudes to their GP services;
- Sure Start – survey of providers and parents on health and other provision for 0-4 year olds;
- SRB interim evaluation survey of 500 households (under sub contract with Bostock Marketing Group and Ecotec);
- Knowsley Compact – evaluation of the work shadowing project;
- Age Concern – Shopmobility.

They have delivered 20 contracts.

Objectives

To achieve a community voice using community research through the establishment of a community based business. This will be achieved by:

- Accessing training and development opportunities to enable community members to gain the confidence to have a voice;
- Targeted training and development in research skills;
- The development of a trading community business;

- Job creation and on the job skills training;
- The establishment of suitable premises and resources to establish a sustainable community business;
- Involvement of Kirkby residents in training and employment opportunities.

Structure of Organization

Not for profit community business. Steering Group comprises local residents and statutory agencies. This will become management board once a company has been registered.

Funding

They are funded by SRB:
- 2000/01 – small set up grant
- 2001/02 - £78,438
- 2002/03 - £57,269
- 2003/04 - £48,914

The tapered funding takes into account an increased revenue stream from the consultancy work.
They are in the process of applying for an ERDF grant.

Staffing and Wages/Expenses

Two staff: one works on developing the contracts, working with the volunteers and managing the training while the other looks after developing the business side. They also use a pool of about 21 volunteers who have been on the training course and are able to pay expenses. Volunteers are local unemployed people and are provided with training. The volunteers do the research, the administration (non chargeable) and also access training courses, and are paid expenses to do all of this.

Expenses are better than wages for the researchers as it enables people to claim benefits at the same time, providing they are volunteering for under 16 hours a week. However an interesting tension has started to arise now the business is trying to compete in the research marketplace. Expenses, such as childcare can be expensive if childcare for several children is paid. They currently pay £6 a day for expenses and £10 a day for the first child and £5 a day for others. In trying to be commercial they are finding that it is better and more transparent to pay people the rate for the job per hour/per interview. On the one hand this is easier to record administratively and allocate cost codes for each job. On the other hand it can be worse for people with children who might then not be able to earn enough to lift them out of the benefit trap. They find themselves in a dilemma:

- Are they aiming to be a commercial sustainable consultancy who raise all their income from consultancy? If so they will not be able to employ unemployed people with several children as contracts requiring field work are intermittent and require people to come off benefit and then go back on again. Their market researchers will have to be those not in receipt of income support.

- Are they a business with social aims, getting people employable? If so they will probably require a level of funding to cover training, work experience and expenses. This is the transitional labour market idea – giving marketable skills to people who can then gain work experience and then find employment on the open market.

Qualifications

The volunteers have been trained to NVQ2 and some have now been through a business development course. There is a proposal to get this accredited at NVQ3.

The Market

The market for local market research is there. The statutory agencies and partnerships are all having to undertake baseline surveys, evidence based research (tracking participants/beneficiaries of a project), best value, community planning, etc. The market they are in is also linked to their skill level and their attributes.

Their unique selling point is that they are local – and local people respond to them. They understand the Merseyside culture and are good at outreach work and eliciting responses. They give an example of the council wanting to undertake a garden extension project from some derelict land and wanting to find out residents' views on this. The council could not engage the interest of residents because of a lack of trust. However, once the Insearch team got on the case, they engaged the residents and gave their views. Indeed clients have said that the Insearch team are getting a better response rate for local people than is usual in their experience. The preferred market is the local Knowsley one as they don't have transport. Eventually they might be able to work across the whole of Merseyside as the working class culture is pretty similar.

However, at the moment they are not doing the analysis and interpretation work from surveys, although they collate the information. For example they undertook the SRB baseline survey, but do not feel able to undertake the analysis and policy recommendations. So a partnership with Ecotec worked well in this respect. They also buy in analytical skills from Comment, the consultancy that helped set them up. They are now thinking of recruiting someone with more analytical skills and also undertaking higher level training to enable them to do this as it is a market they want to get into.

Outputs

The funding outputs include jobs created (2), qualifications gained, volunteers (13 in 2001/02, rising to 20 in 2002/03 and 2003/04).

Success Factors

- They get a higher return than many similar surveys;
- They also get improved qualitative feedback because local people are more honest and open as they recognize that the interviewers come from a similar background;
- The fact that it is a local community business is attractive to local commissioning agencies;
- They have the support of a commercial consultancy Comment who give advice and support and training.

Challenges

- Sustainability is the key challenge. Insearch probably needs to remain funded at a certain level because of the way they wish to pay volunteers. Volunteers are paid out of pocket expenses for administrative non chargeable tasks and for attending training courses (unless the courses themselves also pay expenses), as well as expenses for any research work they undertake. This can mean that volunteers receive expenses that can almost equate to a weekly wage, and this is not sustainable given the current proportion of chargeable work. Because they are relatively inexperienced they are probably not charging the rate for the job. They need specific budgeting skills as they do not seem to break down consultancy jobs into cost codes and do not have a specific knowledge of how much time is being spent on what job, or whether it is profitable. Basically they are using the income as cash flow;

- Expectations of what can be achieved by volunteers who have been long term unemployed is also a key challenge.

Barriers to Success

- Credibility of a community consultancy and the willingness of statutory agencies to take a risk could be barriers. However, local statutory agencies have committed themselves to Insearch and the consultancy is building up a solid reputation. SRB and Comment hve acted as champions to an extent and have marketed the consultancy to the local council. They need to continue to build up credibility and a track record;
- Lack of awareness/skill to understand the business of consultancy – e.g. tendering, charging, keeping track of costs and reining in over-runs, invoicing etc;
- Quality could be an issue – e.g. they are not affiliated to the Market Research Survey. For large surveys e.g. the SRB mid term evaluation the technical quality was overseen by Ecotec;

- There is a skills issue, acknowledged by Insearch itself, around analysis and report writing;
- Other commercial consultancies have tended to exploit them by paying them below the rate for the job;
- The funder (SRB) may not have a detailed understanding of how to grow a social enterprise. They have stipulated that if over £10,000 is made in profits from the consultancy they will claw back the grant. This does not act as an incentive to grow reserves for the business.

Opportunities

There is a great opportunity as the statutory agencies are keen to give contracts to a local social enterprise, there is a good market, and the RDA is keen to develop a social enterprise support strategy.

Reflections

Insearch has been very successful and have just delivered its 20th contract. This model of part funding, part income can work. It is possible that the model would be attractive to regeneration agencies as it could fulfil multiple objectives: local community enterprise, empowering local people, increasing employability – as well as the advantages of using local researchers. Statutory agencies are falling over themselves to issue contracts to Insearch, but sooner or later they will have to enter into the competitive tendering market. They believe that this is best done in partnership with a friendly commercial consultants – like Comment, like Ecotec who have an understanding of the aims of a local social enterprise and who specialize in regeneration consultancy. However, they run the risk of being exploited by the larger very commercial market research agencies such as BMG and MORI who traditionally pay quite low rates to field workers and who would have very little interest in community consultants other than having to fulfil an increasingly common requirement to use local researchers. A way forward for Insearch might be to form a close partnership with two or three regeneration consultancies and bid for contracts in partnership, rather than as a sub contractor.

Appendix B: Overseas Examples

1.   Participatory Research

1.1   Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC)

The Aim
To empower poor communities to engage in dialogue with the State and to influence policy by producing and presenting up-to-date information about their own communities.

The Organisation
SPARC is an Indian NGO set up in 1984 in partnership with Mahila Milan, a women's organisation which seeks to develop the skills of women to participate in processes to improve their conditions, and the National Slum Dwellers' Federation (NSDF), which was born out of a wish to influence policy makers and to inform them of the needs and experiences of the poor. SPARC saw the limitations of many NGOs which were delivering services to the poor but did not seek to solve the causes of poverty. The Alliance of the three partners seek to strengthen the voice of communities in their dialogue with the State.

The Process

A good example of research involving local people is the way NSDF organises Enumeration Melas. Marginalised people in India are often under-enumerated, making it difficult for them to articulate their needs as they are invisible to funders and policy makers. NSDF sees it as very important to get poor people in informal settlements involved in creating information about themselves which then becomes the basis of a dialogue with the city on policy, resource allocation and entitlements. Data is collected and collated by the people themselves and city officials are invited down to the Melas where the information is presented and discussed. Community representatives within the Federation come from other cities where they have experiences of the same processes and therefore can challenge the administrators if they start undermining the community. This whole process, undertaken by poor communities themselves, starts the basis of dialogue with the administrators and puts their priorities on the map.

The Outcomes

The communities are properly engaged in the research and are involved in the dissemination. They have learnt negotiating skills which has enabled them to engage in a dialogue with local partners. Because SPARC has developed a network, other communities who have previous experience in such dialogues can support the host community in their dialogue with local administrators and policy makers. Final outcomes have involved real changes in policies affecting the communities.

Reference

Sheela Patel. 'From the Slums of Bombay to the Housing Estates of Britain'. Centre for Innovation in Voluntary Action, 1997

2.   Service Delivery by Residents

2.1   Orangi Pilot Project

The Aim
To set up community organisations to tackle problems in sanitation through self help.

The Organisation
The Orangi Pilot Project was established in 1980, originally to tackle sanitation in Orangi Township in Karachi, Pakistan. It was grounded in the principle that the emergence of neighbourhood community organisations would help to tackle major problems in sanitation, although it was clear that local people would require technical guidance and managerial support to implement the solutions.

The Process
Lack of an underground sewerage system meant that sewage was flowing into the lanes of the township and damaging the foundations of housing as well as being unhealthy. What worked well was that a small number of households in a lane (20-40) organised together and each appointed a lane manager. Once these lane organisations were established, OPP undertook estimations for the work to be done. The lane manager collected money from the people and organised the work, and OPP supervised it. The model works because social, economic and technical barriers are overcome: the social because a small lane organisation is formed and is able to identify an immediate and practical objective; the economic because it is affordable; and technical because OPP made available designs, estimates, tools and training for implementation. The scheme also worked because low income neighbourhood level organisations were able to finance, manage, build and maintain the sanitation system.

However at the secondary level the municipality would not fund the collector drains necessary to take away the neighbourhood sewage. OPP enlisted the technical help of academic institutions which actually helped to change the technical curriculum and hopefully this could lead to graduates joining government agencies being able to change the perceptions and attitudes of government officials. Government agencies and international donors need to fund the expensive trunk sewers and treatment plants. With the support of the lane activists, OPP was able to lobby Karachi municipal government to finance this itself.

The Outcomes
The case study illustrates how neighbourhood organisations were able to finance and manage infrastructure projects, and to influence local government policy. Orangi has also become a model which has been replicated elsewhere (see further case study). OPP has, over the years built on the success of organising at a neighbourhood level and has diversified into housing programmes, micro-credit, education and health.

Reference
Arif Hasan. 'Working with Communities'. City Press Pakistan, 2001.

2.2   El Mezquital

The Aim
To set up the structure and funding for a community to organise its own infrastructure development

The Organisation
El Mezquital was an informal settlement in Guatamala City established in 1984 by an invasion of settlers. Originally 1500 households were involved but it has expanded to a settlement of 20,000 residents. The case study illustrates how the community took the major part in planning its own infrastructure since the government was unwilling to respond to their needs since it was an illegal settlement. However, development agencies and NGOs supported the development of the settlement. The processes of community organisation in El Mezquital has been very successful, especially in the formation of cooperatives which organised the construction of infrastructure, including a piped water distribution system and the work of community-based health promoters. These initiatives have stimulated

innovations across Guatamala City.   Here we concentrate on the way in which the community organised their own infrastructure development.

The Process
The state failed to evict the first settlers and the settlement expanded and consolidated, thus strengthening community organisation. The settlement organised management boards at the sub-divisional level as well as setting up street level organisations. The sub-divisional management boards collaborated in a settlement wide association and thus residents became a significant pressure group. Various problems had arisen through lack of clean water and sanitation and the community was not helped by the local authority because of the illegality of the settlement. However, under pressure from the community the government agreed to sell them the land they occupied. Once the settlement was formalised and eligible to receive funding the settlers had to be assured that the organisations they had formed were formally constituted and above any corruption. El Mezquital organised a cooperative (COIVES) in 1990 which had various Boards including an education committee and boards for water, credit, building materials and housing. Thus the planning, management and implementation of the settlement was entirely resident led.

In the mid 90s a wider programme of infrastructure development began, funding internationally. PROUME, as it is known, included housing improvements, the provision of drinking water, infrastructure development and community development. The cooperative, COIVES was responsible for receiving and managing the funds and administering loads to residents, as well as administering the implementation of all the projects and loans. Many of the projects were implemented using community labour.

The Outcomes
The case study shows how a community can successfully lobby to get funding for basic services and infrastructure, and acquire not only negotiating skills, but also management skills, personal skills and employment. However, the community were less able to influence the government policy than international agencies. The community has also been less successful at moving forward and identifying current priorities in any formal way. Thus it has found difficulties tackling problems of a more settled community: community safety, recreation and employment.

Reference
Andreas Cabanas Diaz et al. 'El Mezquital – a community's struggle for development'. IIED, 2001.

3.   Community Promotion and Influencing

3.1   Vizakhapatnam

The Aim
To ensure that neighbourhood committees represented the full diversity of the local community.

The Organisation

In Vizakhaptanam in south India Neighbourhood Committees were introduced through the Vizakhapatam Slum Improvement Project to represent community interests in their areas. Consisting of both men and women, the Committees are seen as the interface between resident and the Municipal Corporation for planning and implementing urban poverty programmes.

The Process

A critical issue was how far the Neighbourhood Committees were representative. Representatives tended to be a combination of interested and active individuals, and traditionally powerful groups. Women traditionally played a marginal role, except in health and education. In recognition of these limitations, community workers introduced new mechanisms to ensure that the Neighbourhood Committees were more represented, and one of the requirements was that the Committees must have 50% female representation. They now recognise existing community based organisations and try to include these; in addition they encouraged the establishment of new groups, particularly women's groups. Only through such groups will all the needs of the diverse community be addressed.

The Outcomes

Not only were the Committees more representative, this approach was appreciated by local groups and the work of the groups was strengthened as a result since local groups started to work together for mutual benefit. New women's groups also grew up and this primarily occurred through the formation of savings and credit groups. This provided the space for women to develop their confidence and skills to participate in larger forums such as the Neighbourhood Committees. The case study illustrates the importance of promoting gender equality, not only through existing community based groups, but also through supporting the development of community capacity and organisation.

Reference

Janelle Plummer. 'Municipalities and Community Participation: a sourcebook for capacity building'. DFID 1999

3.2 Bangladesh Rural Advance Committee (BRAC)

The Aim

To use programmes of self help and outreach to encourage local people to use preventative health services.

The Organisation

The Bangladesh Rural Advance Committee was founded in 1972 to alleviate poverty and starvation created by the war. It has moved from being an organisation offering relief in a crisis situation to using models of community empowerment.

The Process

It has encouraged a network of women health promoters in Shibpur, near to Dhaka. The community there is centred around a health clinic. BRAC employs six field supervisors from within its own organisation, and one of their roles is to establish a network of 174 Community Nutritional promoters, most of whom are local women, who undertake outreach to educate members of their own community and to encourage a programme of self help. BRAC sent in a number of fieldworkers to identify and train local volunteers who would act as the promoters. In time the promoters set up networks and were also able to obtain further training in their field of interest.

The Outcomes

There have been a number of outcomes, not least in health improvement. One outcome has been an increase in trust between the field supervisors and paid health workers which will in turn lead to more use of the clinic facilities and more health awareness. Working as a community network has also led to local people being aware of, and able to make use of, other forms of assistance, such as access to micro credit to start up small enterprises. And the promoters themselves have learnt formal skills which may increase their own employability.

Reference
Notes taken by Steven Nesbit of the UK DFES on a visit to Shibpur

3.3 El Mezquital

The Aim
To use networking and outreach by local health promoters as a means to encourage local people to take up basic health care.

The Organisation
In El Mezquital, alongside the work of the cooperative previously described, was the development of the Integrated Health Programme which arose from the need to confront serious health problems in the community in the face of indifferent government agencies.

The Process
The organisational process was based on a system of micro zones comprising 50 families who elected one person as their representative on the programme. These representatives or 'reproinsas', all female, received part time training for a year with UNICEF support, and learned basic health care which they provided for the community and also encouraged people to become vaccinated. This lead to a wider network which spread throughout Guatamala City. These reproinsas also began to change the perception and status of women through their role as community developers, and the women became involved in literacy programmes and programmes to increase the self esteem of young women.

The Outcomes
The Integrated Health Programme thus started off a complex and profound developmental process: from being a project for others, they created a space for reflection regarding identity and the particular problems faced by women. They have formed UPAVIN (Women United for a Better Life) which has 67 members, more than 50 of whom work in the local handicraft workshop. They also have a clinic, a nursery, a laboratory, a health child programme, a dental clinic, a breast feeding programme and a scholarship programme for children.

Reference

Andreas Cabanas Diaz et al. 'El Mezuital – a community's struggle for development'. IIED, 2001.

4. Networking and the Transfer of Good Practice

4.1 Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC)

The Aim
To provide a means whereby local poor communities can pass on knowledge and experience to other communities through a programme of local exchanges.

The Process
SPARC is committed to developing the way communities learn from each other and in developing methodologies for this. Early work that SPARC undertook was with women pavement dwellers in Mumbai, providing them with a place to meet, developing ways of dealing with common crises such as harassment and eviction and helping them to deal with the bureaucracy necessary to obtain food ration cards. The women formed groups known as Mahila Milan (Women Together). As these groups developed an approach that worked they would pass on their knowledge through community exchanges. SPARC is committed to horizontal learning and sharing which involved the training and support of community activists to take their messages and experiences into other cities, and indeed SPARC has been successful at developing exchanges internationally in South Africa, Thailand,

Cambodia and Laos.

But exchanges do not just happen; they are quite structured. They are creating knowledge for action and include not only sharing experience but also reflection and analysis. Communities identify their own needs and priorities, and through discussion with the Alliance, develop a strategy to address them. One or more communities agree to try out the strategy and they become an example of how change can occur. Although strategies are not always successful, communities can learn from the experience.

Once a solution has been developed however, community exchange visits enable others to try out the strategy and adapt it to local circumstances. The refined solution is then explored on a larger scale within a city and again shared through exchanges. The Alliance then builds a core team from those who implemented the solution and they visit other cities to demonstrate how it worked. They also put pressure on local officials and politicians for change to support more community action.

The Outcomes
The exchanges provide a number of outcomes:

- they draw on large numbers of people, especially excluded people, into the process of learning and disseminating good practice;
- supporting local sharing of experience enables the urban poor to own the process of knowledge creation and skills sharing;
- strong personal bonds between communities who share common problems are made;
- they encourage the creation of organised grassroots groups who can put pressure on policy makers to change things that affect their lives;
- they break down national boundaries, thus stimulating new ideas internationally.

Reference
Sheela Patel and Diana Mitlin. 'SPARC, the National Slum Dwellers Federation and Mahila Milan'. IIED, 2002.

4.2   Orangi Pilot Project

The Aim
To replicate its model of infrastructure development and to learn lessons of what works and why. The Orangi Pilot Project supported several NGOs to replicate the low cost sanitation project previously mentioned. Some of these were very successful while others never got off the ground, or started but fizzled out. However, lessons can be learned from failures as well as successes. Below we give an example of each.

A successful project: the Anjuman Samaji Behbood in Faisalabad
Anjuman Samaji Behbood (ASB) is a welfare organisation operating in the urbanised village of Dhuddiwala in Faisalabad since 1964. There had been some difficult relationships between ASB and other NGOs due to the way ASB worked and organised in a political way, but the director was interested in the OPP approach and made several visits there. In 1994 it was agreed that ASB would try to replicate the approach. But first trust relations within the community had to be rebuilt because of previous difficulties. This was done by establishing a micro credit programme which could be seen to be of practical benefit for local enterprise start ups. After this success a water supply project was financed and managed by the community. To sell this idea ASB had to prove that the cost of the project would save them money in the long term as they would now longer have to buy in water, or pump if from deep wells. They would also save on medical bills because sanitation would be improved. Community activists were then identified who would support the programme and whom the community would trust. A Water Supply Committee was formed and they had the responsibility of specifying, organising and supervising the work. Once success had been provide ASB initiated a sanitation project along the lines of OPP. As the project was seen to work, more donors came on board, including a commercial developer of a shopping complex

who could see that it would benefit the shops, national and international NGOs and government agencies.

The Outcomes
The project has changed and influenced government: the Social Action Programme of the Pakistani government has visited. As the project developed new needs emerged at the request of communities, and together they were able to change the attitudes of government and donor agencies. The reasons for its success were:

- It adapted, not adopted, the OPP approach to suit the local circumstances without losing the community led approach;
- It did not start off by holding public meetings, but identified respected community members to gain support;
- It used early successes to publicise its work. It turned every piece of development work into a public event to be celebrated.

Projects that slowed down or fizzled out
OPP attempted to replicate the project in various locations in Pakistan through local NGOs. In Lahore, Gujranwal, Okara, Sialkot and Muzaffargarh the sanitation projects slowed down or fizzled out.

The Outcomes
These projects were all examples of projects that were not sustainable and the lessons learned were as follows:

OPP had developed very strict principles where communities at the neighbourhood level paid upfront for the sanitation work to be done. This allows people to become owners of the programme rather than dependants and it is far more likely to be sustainable. In some of the replicated projects, the sanitation work and micro credit schemes overlapped and this confused communities. On the one hand they were being asked to collect money and invest it in sanitation, and on the other they were being given money as small loans. Not surprisingly the loans were used for the sanitation projects and local people found it difficult to pay back the loans. The loans therefore acted as a subsidy for the work, which was not considered a sustainable model.

There is a need to create an effective core sanitation team within the NGO replicating the programme to deal with the sanitation programme. In cases where this did not happen, the projects fizzled out due to lack of technical expertise. There was a tendency for some NGOs to overstretch themselves in terms of capacity. They got involved in other initiatives which weakened them, and some lost interest in the sanitation projects. Sometimes there was not enough preliminary research done and this led to an over-estimation of potential participants meaning that financing the scheme was a problem. Some areas did not have external sewerage development and this led to delays. There were a couple of projects which did not remain in contact with OPP and therefore donor funding from Wateraid which kick-started these programmes had to be withdrawn. OPP also needed to learn lessons about working with NGOs and CBOs and needed to better respond to their needs, especially in terms of training.

Reference
Arif Hasan. 'Working with Communities'. City Press Pakistan, 2001.

4.3   Styria, Austria

The Aim
To spread the benefits of locally developed and cost effective technology to rural communities

The Organisation

This project started in the Styria region of Austria, an Objective 5b area, whose economy is based on hillside farms. It is very rural, unemployment is relatively high and incomes relatively low.

The Process

In the 1970s, two local residents designed a solar powered hot water system which was efficient, cheap and could be built and installed on a DIY basis. To spread access to their system, they set up DIY groups of 15 –35 local people who built their own systems for their own needs. Each group then set up another so passing the technology on throughout the area. Eventually an Association was set up to facilitate the spread of the technology and to introduce other similar technologies. Now the project has spread throughout Austria and into neighbouring countries. The Association employs 11 people and trains consultants. Local authorities have provided access to cheap loans for those installing the systems.

The Outcomes

Amongst the benefits have been:

- enabling farms to make significant savings on heating;
- the project capitalised on local skills – farmers have the range of skills necessary to do this kind of DIY work;
- the Association has provided technical assistance with other environmentally friendly energy systems;
- jobs have been created;
- the area has developed a stronger sense of "collective spirit and solidarity".

Reference

European Leader Database: http://www.rural-europe.aeidl.be/rural-en/action

4.4   Associations Migrations et Developpement (AMD)

The Aim

To support the reintegration of Morrocans back into their communities and to use the skills they had developed when living in France to develop the rural economy.

The Organisation

In 1985, a group of Moroccan immigrants in France were laid off and were "encouraged" to return to Morocco. However, there was some reluctance to do so as living conditions in their original villages were less attractive than those in France were. They were given help by the French to set up a number of village NGOs under an umbrella organisation (Associations Migrations et Developpement – AMD) to help them re-integrate into their villages and at the same time to use their skills and personal finances to promote developments there which would make the villages more attractive places to live (e.g. by supplying clean water and electricity).

The Process

A typical example was the village of Ait Iktel. All villagers joined the village Association which then worked in conjunction with the traditional village "council" to develop projects around water, health, roads, literacy. Through the Association, local people manage the projects and own any assets created. The villagers set the charges and do manual work to maintain the assets.

The umbrella body has encouraged the formation of village NGOs on a much wider basis including in villages with few or no emigrés. It has also encouraged urban Moroccans to contribute financially to their home villages.   It has encouraged successful networking between the village NGOs.

The Outcomes
Success seems to have been due to:

- the very local nature of the projects which allows everyone to be involved in the planning and to feel real ownership of the projects. By making decision makers and beneficiaries the same group of people, costs are reduced;

- the joint involvement of villagers and emigrés gave the villages considerable resources of cash and skills;

- the investment has contributed to making the villages stronger socially, economically and politically and thus more attractive for a future generation of skilled emigrés to return to;

- the processes brought new forms of involvement via an NGO together with traditional forms of involvement and ensured that new technology was successfully merged with traditional values and lifestyles.

Reference

European Leader Database: http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/index_en.htm

Appendix C: Bibliography & Contacts Database

OVERSEAS RESEARC

- Shawkat Ara. 'Participatory monitoring and evaluation in flood proofing pilot project, CARE-Bangladesh.' Participa... IIED, 1998.
- Paul Bandre. 'Participatory Self Evaluation of World Neighbours, Burkino Faso'. Participatory Learning and Action...
- Andreas Cabanas Diaz et al. 'El Mezuital – a community's struggle for development'. IIED, 2001.
- Andrea Cornwall and Rachel Jekes. 'What is Participatory Research?' Soc. Sci. Med. Vol 41, No 12, pp 1667-167...
- Arif Hasan. 'Working with Communities.' City Press Pakistan, 2001.
- LEADER database: www.rural-europe.aeidl.be/rural-en/action
- Steven Nesbit. Notes from a visit to Bangladesh. Unpublished, 2001.
- Sheela Patel. 'From the Slums of Bombay to the Housing Estates of Britain.' Centre for Innovation in Voluntary Act...
- Sheela Patel and Diana Mitlin. 'SPARC, the National Slum Dwellers Federation and Mahila Milan.' IIED, 2002.
- Janelle Plummer. ' Municipalities and Community Participation: a sourcebook for capacity building'. DFID, 1999.
- EU URBAN database: http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/index_en.htm

UK RESEARCH

- Marilyn Taylor Associates "Networking across Regeneration Partnerships", Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York, Ap...
- 'Collaboration and Co-ordination in Area Based Initiatives' published by ODPM, May 2002
- The PAT Action Plan 'Jobs for All' www.dwp.gov.uk
- Priority Estates Project report, 'Learning from Real Life' www.pep.org.uk
- Stephen Thake, 'Building Communities, Changing Lives: the contribution of large, independent neighbourhoo... Foundation, York 2001 (www.jrf.org.uk)
- 'Putting down the Anchor' by Thake, Taylor and Hill (April 2002); unpublished report produced for the London Deve...