

SCCD & SCDN Conference: Neighbourhood Renewal – Reinventing the Wheel or Breaking the Mould?

Conference Report

Tuesday, 12 February 2002
Kelvin Park Lorne Hotel, Glasgow

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SCCD & SCDN Conference Programme

Neighbourhood Renewal – Reinventing the Wheel or Breaking the Mould?

**Tuesday, 12 February 2002
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- **Panel - Perspectives on Neighbourhood Renewal:**
 - Colm Bradley, Director of Community Technical Aid, NORTHERN IRELAND
 - Raj Patel, Head of Research & Development, Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, ENGLAND
 - Derith Powell, Chair of Community Development Cymru, WALES
 - Louise Christie, Representative from Communities SCOTLAND

- **Discussion Groups**

- **Community Development & Neighbourhood Renewal – Sharing experience and breaking the mould**

- **Issues emerging from the morning discussion groups**

- **Margaret Curran, Deputy Minister for Social Justice in the Scottish Executive**

- **Plenary with questions to speakers and discussion**

- **Concluding comments**

GROUP DISCUSSION NOTES: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL – SHARING EXPERIENCE AND BREAKING THE MOULD

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

Involvement of Communities

- Engaging relevant communities early and including them in whole process (at board and community levels)
 - E.g. Community Forums include marginalized groups as a vehicle for change
 - E.g. A development trust were able to purchase 9 houses which were in a state of disrepair and the community helped to bring them up to standard and rent them out to local people.
 - E.g. Work on small housing estate with regeneration programme – local people were empowered to be involved in setting the agenda and developing a community action plan / devise solutions to local problems. The only issues that went into the action plan were those that people would sign up to take forward in partnership with the community – not their own agency solution.

Individual Initiative

- Good worker seizing opportunities to help when they find them
 - E.g. Skateboarder bumping into health worker results in youth involvement in council meetings and the creation of an urban skate park

Co-ordination

- Co-ordinating resources to assist CD
 - E.g. A community led group experienced lots of tension as it was made up of volunteers with no one particular person in charge. After funding a worker was employed from the public sector and helped people work together.
- Using 'men in suits' to help small community organisations to write funding bids and fill in monitoring forms etc.

EXAMPLES OF BAD PRACTICE

Top-down, exclusionary approach

- 'Planners know best', 'politicking' – no consultation with community
 - E.g. An employment project where the local authority and managers from other agencies promised action to the communities involved but did not consult with the communities themselves as to what they wanted.
 - E.g. problems devising community learning strategy - workers brought in with little community knowledge, no community participation
- Attempts at consultation that have not followed through
- Unrepresentative and exclusionary consultation
 - E.g. deliberately no black and minority ethnic representatives on housing working group

Structures setting communities against each other

- E.g. Funding climate - Where groups may keep good practice, ideas and initiatives to themselves for fear of losing out on funding to 'competitor' groups
- Structures offer lack of support for new and 'embryonic' community groups
 - E.g. 'Parachute funding' where locals had set up a community group and were then offered money to help run it. However, they had no experience of funding requirements and it took them 3 years to set up fully with paid staff in place.
- Delivery not as promised
 - E.g. Parr Sure Start, a community initiative employing local people but the delay affected relationships and contributed to a breakdown of trust

Misplacing credit and reward

- E.g. Councils and agencies taking credit for local work, even when they may initially have resisted supporting the project – e.g. funders taking credit for initiatives if they prove successful

GROUP DISCUSSION NOTES: PRINCIPLES OF & LESSONS FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

PRINCIPLES	LESSONS
<p>Getting Communities Involved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities need to be involved in identifying issues and developing solutions • Awareness of the community and what is needed to fill gaps in provision • Communities should be equal partners with other agencies • Partnerships need commitment • Need for workers to be continually finding opportunities to involve communities in CD opportunities • Need to get the 'right' people involved (i.e. representative) – although everyone has the right to refuse participation • Devolved decision making to local strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing the 'before' process: Identify needs from communities themselves, lifting them from the small to the 'big stuff' • Agree the role of the community group from the start • Always consult and follow up during the whole process - Community feedback needs to be built into all planned action • Need agencies to 'come into the real world' and learn about their communities in order to effectively join up with them • Achieve consensus but don't attempt to divide people • The term capacity building is still assumed to relate to communities rather than institutions – needs to be turned on its head and institutions need to understand capacity building i.e. institutional capacity building • Resources to support community participation usually targeted at specific community representatives who are already included – need to spread resources • Need to involve relevant, willing community members and not be 'tokenistic'

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to dissolve apathy of some community members (e.g. view of does it matter; not being able to make a difference; not wanting to fit into a structure) by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Changing structure of community involvement (e.g. AGMs may be seen as old fashioned and uninteresting) ○ Organising participation events to suit community – e.g. go to them, give time/notice, provide childcare ○ Invest in training for skills / knowledge development ○ Offer frequent tangible gains to see that changes can take place but don't change the goalposts unnecessarily as this could lead to frustration ○ Offer shared ownership of activities so that community has stake in what's happening ○ Co-ordination not isolation
<p>CD is a long-term process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CD takes time to embed itself but cannot keep uprooting it – nurturing and support it as a long-term policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No such thing as 'bad' community development – Just bad practices as CD is a process • Need realistic time scale for bottom-up approach • Attempt to work out timescales • Problem of sustainability - need for government to include CD as part of core agenda with similar strategic plans to health, education etc. • People on the ground need frequent tangible gains • Sustainable communities not projects alone

<p>Joined-Up CD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E.g. An effective project to help teenage / single mothers to budget cook healthy food would need to be joined up with education and health agencies
<p>Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible, accessible & sustainable funding / resources are needed to support community participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding mechanisms can help or hinder – funders agendas can work against community-led agendas or can support them • Competition for funding can set community groups against each other and so can lead to conflict – important to have a process to manage that • Often no level playing field in funding climate – e.g. community groups competing with businesses • Funders need to consult communities before setting criteria for funding and create simplified, accessible funding channels • Still lots of fragmentation in the context of ‘joined-up’ funding - need to be more joined up • Call for independent funding for community forums rather than partnerships who may have a vested interest – e.g. direct funding from the Scottish Executive • Difficult for communities to influence funders and mainstream budgets – will LSPs make that happen? • Make application simpler for community groups – ‘ring-fenced pots’ for small groups with support at point of application

<p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communication is vital and needs investment• CD can learn from past mistakes and successes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share information as widely as possible with everyone concerned• Language used should be flexible and accessible – e.g. tailor language for different audiences such as BME / disabled etc.• Share good and bad practice examples• Community feedback needs to be built into all planned action
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GROUP DISCUSSION NOTES: CONTEXT AND INFLUENCING POLICY

Important changes which have taken place in the context in which community development is operating

- Devolution - Four-nation development offers opportunities to learn from others and look at approaches elsewhere in England, Wales etc.
 - Communities Scotland created
 - Community planning commencing – local partnerships, sometimes set up for 'sub-areas' and staff to work on it
 - Locality planning processes disengaged
 - Community learning plans
 - Focus on social justice
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QUESTIONS FOR THE PANEL

What is the Scottish Executive's attitude to long-term funding?

Margaret Curran:

There is value in short-term funding but sustainability is secured through long-term funding. One option is to bring regeneration and CD into the agendas of those organisations who already have long-term funding, e.g. health boards and educational establishments. In this way the 'mainstream' players can contribute. Also need processes to assist long-term funding.

Raj Patel:

Focus on public services – to what extent they are contracted out and funding voluntary organisations.

Derith Powell:

The negative side of short-term funding includes the raising of expectations and lack of consistency, and the focus on securing short-term funding takes time, energy and resources away from CD work.

Community forums benefit CD but they need to be supported – will the Scottish Executive ever directly fund CD?

Margaret Curran:

This is a common enquiry – local authorities currently fund groups and are accountable, but need to maintain a dialogue with them about funding sustainably. The aim is to develop a more coherent funding structure and discuss how to fund voluntary organisations.

Colm Bradley:

In Northern Ireland there is the RCN – Rural Community Network – which funds some groups over 5 years and sometimes straddles local authority funding. There is also a Regional Department for Social Development, which has a recognised role for intermediary organisations.

What can be done to ensure that community representatives on decision-making bodies are able to effectively represent the views of their community?

Raj Patel:

The Community Empowerment Fund is channelled via government not LSPs. In the New Deal for Communities 50% of the resident population are active on all programmes – this involvement obviously affects outcomes. The US demonstrates how public-private partnerships can work, such as in asset transfer options.

Margaret Curran:

Not one voice for CD but many, such as the community planning taskforce. There is a degree of preciousness around CD which needs to be overcome to achieve goals, as the focus should be on outcomes not on definitions. CD's base strength is in various organisations – need to bring the agendas of those agencies together.

A delegate then commented on the trend for 'paying lip service' to community engagement but not acting to improve it:

There is an ongoing dialogue and strategic discussion regarding taking forward ideas with agencies like Communities Scotland and SIPS. It is important to focus on what brings people together rather than what forces them apart.

How clear is Communities Scotland regarding CD (as distinct from capacity building)?

Louise Christie:

Communities Scotland aims to build capacity to empower communities, need to respect other's perspectives and not get hung up to academic arguments.

Clarify approach to training and capacity building among officers (middle management) in large organisations whose work brings them into contact with communities.

APPENDIX 1: PANEL PRESENTATION - COLM BRADLEY, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY TECHNICAL AID

Community Technical Aid provides community planning and architectural services to:

- Assist local groups to develop regeneration skills and knowledge;
- Facilitate participation in planning and regeneration processes
- Assist the development of community plans and projects

Neighbourhood Renewal - The Background (1970s and 1980s):

- Primary focus on physical regeneration of city and town centres;
- Wide range of funding mechanisms;
- Little strategic co-ordination.

Neighbourhood Renewal - The Background (1990s):

- Focus on disadvantaged areas;
- Attempts to co-ordinate action;
- Linkages between needs and opportunities underdeveloped.

Neighbourhood Renewal – Lessons Learned

- Focus on most acutely deprived neighbourhoods;
- Greater emphasis on social regeneration needed;
- Co-ordinated action across Government essential;
- Sustain action over a longer period.

Neighbourhood Renewal – Draft Proposals

- Area and needs based approach;
- Target a small number of most deprived neighbourhoods;
- Empower local communities;
- Partnership delivery;
- 7 to 10 year commitment.

Neighbourhood Renewal – The Challenges

- Co-ordinating all Departments and funders;
- Gaining political approval for selection of neighbourhoods;
- Low levels of social capital in some neighbourhoods.

Neighbourhood Renewal – Some Reflections and Suggestions

- Develop skills and knowledge for partnerships and regeneration;
- Targeting by voluntary organisations?
- Bottom up / top down as a continuum?
- Community stakeholder plans.

**APPENDIX 2:
PANEL PRESENTATION - RAJ PATEL, HEAD OF RESEARCH
DIVISION, NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL UNIT**

The National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (England)

Introduction

- What is the problem?
- What is the Vision?
- What are the key components of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal

What is the problem?

In comparison with the rest of the country, deprived areas have:

- 300% more burglaries
- 30% higher mortality rates
- 300% more poverty
- 70% of all Black & Minority Ethnic residents

In the 10% most deprived wards (containing 14% of the national population):

- 25% of adults are out of work
- 44% of adults are on means-tested benefits

Young People

E.g. Teenage Pregnancy

- The risk of becoming a teenage mother is almost ten times higher for a girl whose family is in social class V (unskilled manual) than those in social class I (professional)

E.g. Young people in care

- Leave school without qualifications (75% compared with the national average of 6%)
- End up in prison (26% of prisoners, compared with 2% of the general population)

International Comparisons – Children Living in Low Income Households

Community Engagement

- Communities marginalised in terms of influence and shaping priorities
- Lack of 'ownership' – working to others' agendas
- Ineffective community development practice
- Poor timing – communities left behind
- Inappropriate styles of working
- Failure to recognise skills and transfer new skills

Social Exclusion

Not just poverty:

- Housing, crime, education, transport, leisure, health...
- Problems are inter-related
- Solutions must be joined up

Neighbourhood Deprivation

Not just physical:

- Stigma
- Aspiration
- Cohesion

What is the vision?

Over the next 10 to 20 years no one should be disadvantaged by where they live

Two long term goals:

- Lower worklessness and crime, better health, skills, housing and the physical environment
- Narrow the gap between the most deprived areas and the rest

How many deprived neighbourhoods are there?

- No exact definition of neighbourhood – perceptions will be influenced by many factors
- Deprived is a spectrum, but policy focus is on the 10% most deprived wards (841 wards)
- 82% of these wards are in the 88 most deprived districts

NR Strategy built around four main principles

- Reviving local economies
- Reviving communities
- Ensuring decent services
- Leadership and joint working

What is Different?

Four key dimensions:

- New policies and funding – floor targets for all relevant departments
- National and regional support
- Better local co-ordination

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- Community empowerment:
 - Funding and support
 - Representation at all levels

Main NRU programmes of direct intervention

- New Deal for Communities – 39 neighbourhood partnership each given £50m over 10 years
- Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders
- Street Wardens and Neighbourhood Wardens
- £36 million Community Empowerment Fund and £50m Community Chest
- Black and ethnic minority engagement
- Programme to promote better sharing of knowledge about 'what works
- Programme to ensure that everyone involved in Neighbourhood Renewal has the skills to make a difference

Community Empowerment Fund

£36 million over 3 years to:

- Provide outreach, training and support
- Develop and enhance the local infrastructure
- Engage with the most excluded communities
- Establish local community networks
- Ensure voice / influence within LSP

What issues do we face?

- Finding an effective community voice
- Identifying & supporting community reps on LSP
- Shifting the culture / capacity of key partners
- Combining neighbourhood and strategic perspective
- Ensuring good communication and accountability
- Finding agencies with skills, capacity, commitment

In conclusion

- A 10 to 20 year strategy
- Real, measurable results
- Better services and improved business
- Real community empowerment
- Genuine partnership through accreditation

APPENDIX 3: PANEL PRESENTATION - LOUISE CHRISTIE, COMMUNITIES SCOTLAND

Communities Scotland

- Dynamic Context
- Community regeneration remit
- Focus on people and place
- Emphasis on effective delivery

Community Regeneration

Key features:

- Improving public services
AND
- Building community capacity

Our Role

- Promoting community led approaches
- Working more effectively
- Increasing pace of change
- Solutions which work
- Involving people
- Clear measurable outcomes