

# Empowering evaluation: evaluating empowerment

*a practice sharing report from CDX*



*How do you know if your community development or empowerment activity is making a difference?*

*How do you demonstrate the impact of community development and empowerment?*

*How do you learn from empowerment practice in ways which are themselves empowering?*

# Introduction

The questions on the facing page are increasingly urgent for practitioners, managers, commissioners and funders of community development and empowerment. There are a number of factors driving this interest:

- **Demonstration and justification:** Practitioners and those supporting them need to be able to argue convincingly for investment in community development and empowerment activity. We need to raise the profile of its achievements and increase understanding of its processes and professional status. Funders expect to see clear evidence of the impact of their investments.
- **Accountability:** As individuals and organisations we need to be accountable to the communities we work with and those that fund our work. This includes being able to assess confidently whether we have done what we set out to do and what differences we have made, whether intended or unintended.
- **Learning:** To improve practice and policy making, we need to reflect on and learn from community development and empowerment practice – as practitioners, communities, policy makers and funders. Reflective practice and encouraging communities to learn together are key roles for community development, recognised in the National Occupational Standards for Community Development Work.

As part of the Community Development Challenge group, CDX undertook research into evaluation practice in this field. We found that a commitment to empowering community members informs the approach to evaluation taken by many

community development practitioners, but that there is a considerable need for support and guidance with planning and evaluation in this area. The event which informs this report was developed as one way of beginning to address this need for support.

At CDX we see evaluation as an **ethical** as well as technical issue, about **power** and **purpose** as well as frameworks and processes. We know that evaluation and monitoring can sometimes feel imposed on practitioners and communities, a burden or distraction from frontline work. But we believe that **evaluation can and should be empowering** for practitioners and communities, and that this need not diminish its credibility. We hope this report gives a flavour of approaches which seek to achieve this.

We know that this is a complex area. Empowerment and community development are contested issues, and evaluation, measurement, impact and quality are terms which are often misunderstood or used with different meanings. When evaluation and empowerment meet, there are considerable challenges, such as the question of attribution – how do we isolate distinct factors which have made a difference in complex social processes?

This report, and the event on which it is based, are part of an ongoing dialogue. They are contributions to the development of a shared understanding of what empowering evaluation can be, and how it can be used to improve practice, empower communities and contribute to better policy making.

This report draws on a conference held in March 2008. The conference was organised by CDX and supported by the National Empowerment Partnership

### *What is the Community Development Exchange?*

CDX is the UK-wide membership organisation for community development. CDX works to ensure that community development is recognised and supported as a powerful way of tackling inequality and achieving social justice. CDX reflects a diverse range of interests in community development across all sectors and fields, and has members from across the UK.

### *What is the National Empowerment Partnership?*

The National Empowerment Partnership is a cross-sector partnership of organisations established to improve the quality, co-ordination and evidence of community empowerment across England. There are nine regional consortia and a national consortium, of which CDX is a member. NEP has recognised the need for more effective approaches to evaluation and measuring effectiveness in the field of community empowerment activity, and recognises community development as a key aspect of empowerment programmes. This report is funded by NEP as part of its national work programme.



# Empowering evaluation: evaluating empowerment

Mandy Wilson

My approach to evaluation is based on an ethos of reflection and learning from what we do. It is informed by a background in local and national community development practice and policy, and my belief that knowledge and participation can contribute to greater empowerment. My evaluation work is underpinned by the desire that all activity should empower – rather than disempower – all stakeholders involved.

## What is evaluation?

Don't let language get in the way! The language of outputs, outcomes, indicators etc is sometimes used to exclude people – presenting evaluation as something only certain 'experts' can do. This isn't the case – evaluation is simply a **thorough understanding of the object of the evaluation, and learning from action.**

Evaluation requires **exploration of the purpose of the programme or project from a range of perspectives.**

What was intended and why? Why were particular approaches implemented? What has been their effect? What has happened as a result?

Evaluation is about using monitoring, quality assurance, performance management and other information you collect to **make judgements** about your project. It can require a fair bit of detective work and necessitates capturing a range of views and perspectives.

It is also about **using the information to make changes**

**and improvements.** The results of an evaluation are intended to be used in future implementation.

There are many different perspectives and approaches to evaluation. Answering questions such as 'Why are we doing it?' 'Who is the evaluation for?' and 'What are the key issues to address?' will help you decide on the evaluation approach.

**Quality assurance** is about establishing standards of good practice and carrying out an assessment of current practice against them. This might be self-assessment or external assessment.

**Monitoring** is about collecting information in a routine way that will help you answer immediate questions. It is often based on a comparison of data from month to month or quarter to quarter.

**Performance measurement** is the process of assessing progress towards achieving predetermined goals, often through identified progress indicators. It's a process which contributes to the effective management of (usually) staff teams in order to achieve high levels of organisational performance, and encourages review where performance is not progressing.

All of the above contribute to evaluation but aren't the same. Assessing 'value' or the worth of something – based on exploration of process and outcomes, and then using learning for future action, makes evaluation distinctive.

## *What is empowering evaluation?*

**If we are in the business of empowerment then we must walk the talk.** As people involved in community development, we should ensure that evaluation is undertaken with the same values as the community development work itself.

**Action-research** has a long history and involves the researcher or evaluator as a participant in planning and implementing change. Working this way we gain evidence and learning from being directly involved in the action and build this into ongoing practice. It means working with people rather than observing and questioning in a detached way.

**Participatory evaluation** is closely related to action research. It involves creating a learning process for the programme participants, involving them in identifying indicators and learning. It aims to mitigate against evaluation being something that is done to people, outside of their sphere of influence and alien to the real task of getting on with the job. It challenges the notion that evaluators are experts; when done well it raises the challenge of 'everyday' people being able to 'intellectualise' and analyse their lived experiences.

The main thing about participatory evaluation, like all participatory ways of working, is that it is not just a set of techniques but a rethinking of the process – who is involved, what they contribute, what they learn and how they benefit.

## *Benefits of this way of working*

- It can bring about a greater understanding of what is being evaluated. It allows for much greater exploration of what the programme is about and the theories of

change underpinning the programme. Working with a range of stakeholders throws up different motivations and agendas, and different stakeholders can develop a greater understanding of each other's perspectives.

- This depth of understanding can enable more relevant, purposeful and realistic recommendations and future proposals.
- In evaluations where community members are directly involved in collecting evidence and analysing findings you can reach communities that you might otherwise struggle to reach, especially the most marginalised. This way of working can demystify the evaluation process and encourage 'buy-in' and greater ownership of the evaluation findings and subsequent actions.

## *Principles and approach*

Try to build certain principles into evaluation practice:

- Negotiate criteria and methods with as wide a range of stakeholders as is possible. Try to involve evaluation commissioners, funders, programme or project managers and staff, participants and beneficiaries, and others working alongside them such as staff of other projects or council officers.
- Be as transparent as possible about which criteria of success are important to which stakeholders – there will be differences and these must be acknowledged.
- Avoid imposing indicators; enable participants and beneficiaries to contribute to identifying which indicators are most meaningful. The 'community' must be effective partners in the process and questions asked must be significant to communities. Evaluation processes can themselves enhance empowerment – if they are democratic and inclusive.

- Don't just think about planning at the start and evaluation at the end! Evaluation should be an ongoing process which is integral to the development of the community and the organisation. The evaluation process should help people acquire knowledge and skills for future action.
- Evaluation should contribute to highlighting and celebrating what's worked but it shouldn't be a PR exercise – it's about learning and development.
- Evaluation processes should involve imaginative and creative approaches to enable and encourage participation.
- Evaluation processes need to challenge discriminatory and oppressive policies and practice.
- Involve a range of stakeholders in varied dissemination processes to share what you learn.

## *Challenges and considerations of this way of working*

- **Meeting the agendas of different stakeholders:**  
The more stakeholders are involved, the more different perceptions and expectations need to be accommodated. How you balance these and retain some integrity is a real challenge. It can also be more than the evaluation commissioner bargained for! There will be differing views of what it is you are evaluating, the role of the evaluator, success criteria and the purpose of the evaluation. Investment is required at the start to build shared understanding and commitment to the evaluation as a learning process.
- **Extra demands on evaluator and participants:**  
This kind of evaluation makes extra demands on

stakeholders' time. We need to negotiate space for participatory evaluation and create access to participants. We must also avoid duplicating roles and competing for the time of participants and other stakeholders. It also makes demands on the evaluator to be creative and to engage participants and stakeholders in the process on a continuous basis.

- **Retaining legitimacy and independence:** This approach necessitates involvement in the programme – you are not a bystander. But it is important to resist being co-opted into the programme and to retain the ability to provide critical reflections or raise difficult issues. There can also be confusion about roles; the evaluator is not so detached but still needs to retain a separate role to project or programme staff and must retain their ability to make critical judgements.

**There is no right or wrong in evaluation – it's all about learning.**

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**Mandy Wilson** is a director of COGS, an independent research and consultancy organisation which specialises in community empowerment, neighbourhood involvement and voluntary and community sector development. Mandy has undertaken a range of project and programme evaluations, including the JRF Neighbourhoods Programme and the ODPM community participation programmes.  
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# What is community empowerment?

## A community development perspective

Jill Bedford

Community empowerment is about both processes and outcomes – how we work and what happens as a result. It is about empowering *processes* – taking an approach that is empowering for others, not dictatorial, bossy or directive. And it is about empowering *outcomes* – changes which are enduring and which contribute positively to people's lives and environment.

So community empowerment is not just about communities changing as they become 'empowered'. It is also about agencies changing the ways in which they work and taking 'empowering approaches'. The focus is on bridging the gap in the relationship between agencies and communities.

We take a community development perspective to empowerment, and view community empowerment as the result of putting community development values and commitments into action. These are values of:

**Learning:** recognising the skills, knowledge and expertise that people contribute, building on these and what has gone before

**Equality:** challenging discrimination and oppressive practices within organisations, institutions and communities

**Participation:** facilitating democratic involvement by people in the issues which affect their lives based on full citizenship, autonomy and shared power, skills, knowledge and experience

**Co-operation:** working together to identify and implement action, encouraging networking and connections between communities and organisations

**Social justice:** enabling people to claim their human rights, meet their needs and have greater control over the decision-making processes which affect their lives

When thinking about community empowerment, therefore, we can draw on decades of theory and practice concerned with defining and evaluating community development values and commitments.

*"community development is about building active and sustainable communities based on social justice and mutual respect.*

*... it is about changing power structures to remove the barriers that prevent people from participating in the issues that affect their lives"*

([www.cdx.org.uk](http://www.cdx.org.uk))

Because of our commitment to community development, we take power and the fact of unequal power relations as the basis for working towards community empowerment.

We have developed a planning and evaluation framework called DiCE, Dimensions of Community Empowerment. It identifies five dimensions of community empowerment.

These dimensions can provide a framework for planning work which is empowering for communities, however 'community' is identified and whichever area of work is



## Dimensions of Community Empowerment

### Working in ways which...

- Confident** ... increase people's skills, knowledge and confidence, and instill in them a belief that they can make a difference
- Inclusive** ... recognise that discrimination exists, promote equality of opportunity and good relations between groups and challenge inequality and exclusion
- Organised** ... bring people together around common issues and concerns in organisations and groups that are open, democratic and accountable
- Co-operative** ... build positive relationships across groups, identify common messages, develop and maintain links to national bodies and promote partnership working
- Influential** ... encourage and equip communities to take part and influence decisions, services and activities

being planned. They can also be used as a framework for identifying indicators and evaluating the work, helping us to make judgements about whether the processes and outcomes are leading to community empowerment. They offer a broad and comprehensive definition of community empowerment, and can act as a basis for developing locally meaningful shared understandings and indicators.

Despite the terminology, community empowerment is not just about communities, it is also about organisational structures and processes being 'empowering'. Communities could be confident, inclusive, organised, cooperative and influential as much as they like, but if organisational structures and processes work in a way which block and create barriers then nothing much will change.

It is at the point where public agencies have structures and processes that are 'empowering' for themselves and others, and where people in communities also have structures and processes that are 'empowering' for themselves and others .. that 'authentic community engagement' can happen.

**Jill Bedford** is a partner in '**changes**', a partnership of consultants specialising in community development, community engagement and active citizenship. She has over 25 years' experience of working within the not for profit and public sectors, and extensive experience in writing training handbooks and course materials. Her latest publication is the *Take Part National Learning Framework for active citizenship learning*, written with London Civic Forum. Jill represents the Take Part Network on the National Empowerment Partnership.  
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# What does government mean by empowerment?

Gabriel Chanan

Government is currently focusing its empowerment policy in England heavily on a single indicator - the percent of people who agree that they can influence local decision making. This is known as 'NI 4' - number 4 in the set of 198 indicators which make up the local government performance framework for 2008-11.

As with the other indicators in the set, the information on this will be collected systematically across the 150 principal local authorities in England. A baseline for it already exists from previous 'best value' surveys, with local levels of agreement from about 20% to 40%. It has also been measured, and will continue to be measured, nationally through the national Citizenship Survey, which uses a separate large random sample of the whole population. The national figure is around 32%.

The short answer therefore to the question of what government means by empowerment is that it means simply the proportion of the population who feel that they can influence local decision-making. Taken in isolation this is extremely limited – but of course it should not be taken in isolation.

Government is concerned with empowerment for at least three different reasons:

- it believes that greater user influence will improve public services by 'pressure from below'
- it believes that a greater subjective feeling of ability to

influence will reduce apathy and increase commitment to democracy

- it believes that this will reduce the alienation of disadvantaged or polarised sections of communities, reduce tensions and increase cohesion

Whether these meanings of empowerment are captured in the single NI 4 indicator is doubtful. Taking NI 4 together with the rest of indicators 1-7 gives a much richer picture.

These other six cover:

- whether people believe that people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area (NI 1)
- whether people feel they belong to their neighbourhood (NI 2)
- civic participation (whether people take on decision-making roles in local bodies) (NI 3)
- overall satisfaction with the local area (NI 5)
- participation in regular volunteering (NI 6)
- whether third sector bodies feel that the public authorities have created a good environment for them to operate in ('environment for a thriving third sector') (NI 7)

Even these together would not cover a full concept of empowerment, but as a combined profile they provide a more adequate framework for interpreting what's going on.

However, if all seven were going up but at the same time

issues such as health, employment, education or crime were worsening, empowerment policy would become discredited. It is important, then, for community development to contribute to improvements on the mainstream issues and to collect objective evidence that it is doing so. To secure effective evidence, community development strategies must include negotiation with their mainstream colleagues on objectives, joint working and evaluation.

### *Community development responses*

The community development tradition can claim to be the origin of the whole idea of empowerment as a public objective. However, empowerment within community development discourse is a much more fluid and many-sided concept than is embodied in NI 4.

A creative response from the community development field would have three aspects. Firstly it would recognise that getting even a limited foothold for empowerment within the local government management system is a huge advance on our previous position. Secondly it would acknowledge that traditional methods of community development evaluation can benefit by including more objective data. To increase objectivity on a social issue entails being clear about what outcome/s you are seeking, and separating practitioners from beneficiaries, asking the latter neutrally-phrased questions about outcomes. Thirdly it would build wider evaluation around the core indicator and capture a much wider audience for the many-sided empowerment concept.

What we should be doing now, therefore, is:

- 'owning' NI 4 by becoming champions for it in our Local Strategic Partnerships
- asserting that empowerment is better understood as a

combination of NIs 1-7

- pressing government and local authorities to examine and show correlations across the whole profile of NIs 1-7
- incorporating the NI 1-7 factors into our objectives and evaluations, alongside inputs and processes

Evaluation is not perfect in any field. No one with a deep understanding of education would accept that exam results alone provide an adequate measure of its success. No one with a deep interest in health would accept that number of cancers eradicated is an adequate measure of health. But we rightly want to know these facts as cornerstones around which to build more sophisticated judgements. If we want community development to become a mainstream social commitment we too need to endorse – but extend – government's definition of empowerment.

**Gabriel Chanan** has worked for CDF for many years, variously directing its research, evaluation and communications programmes. He wrote *Measures of Community* for the Home Office, and *Searching for Solid Foundations* for the former ODPM. For the past two and a half years he has been part time seconded to the Department for Communities and Local Government, and has played a key role in the creation of the National Empowerment Partnership.  
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*Reclaiming the evaluation agenda*

# Reclaiming the evaluation agenda

Reclaiming the Evaluation Agenda is a community evaluation resource pack written with and for community groups, particularly smaller groups that have fewer resources for evaluation.

It is also aimed at funders, such as community foundations, who want to learn about the impact, learning and change that is occurring in communities as a result of their funding. It was developed by Gersh Subhra of the University of Derby in conjunction with Derbyshire Community Foundation.

The resource pack outlines a challenging approach to evaluation which encourages the community and voluntary sector to re-claim the evaluation agenda by becoming more assertive about the process by which evaluation material is generated, the tools that can be used to best tell their story, and who should be the primary beneficiary of the emerging evidence.

The resource pack considers issues such as

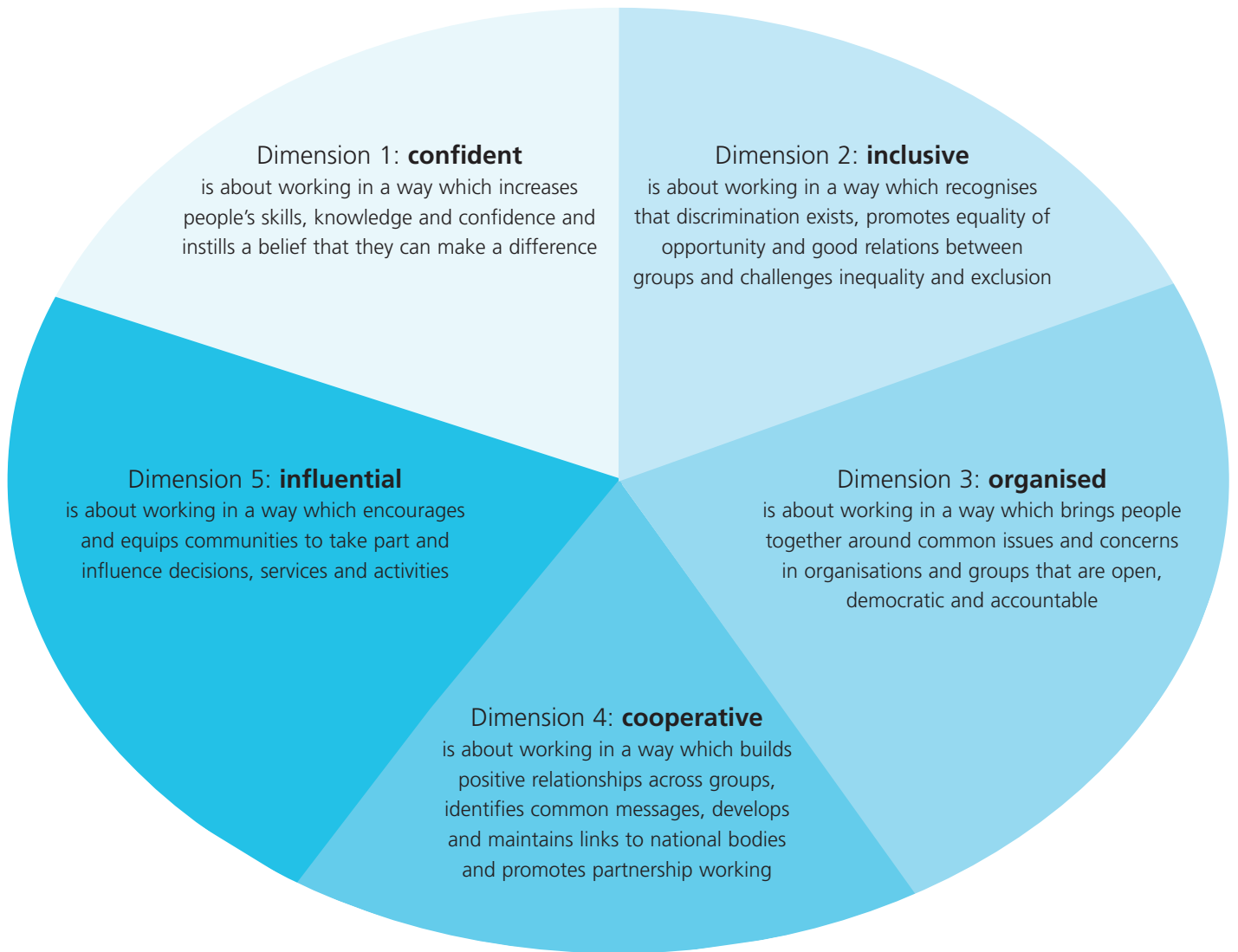
- historical influences on evaluation
- who is evaluation for?
- funder-focused evaluation and community-focused evaluation
- benefits of evaluation
- outcomes, outputs and indicators
- perspectives from funders and community organisations

The resource pack encourages organisations to develop a policy for evaluation in much the same way as they do for equal opportunities or health and safety. The policy should ensure that the approach to evaluation is consistent with the organisation's approach to working in the community. This pro-active approach may encourage volunteers and staff to 'own' or 're-claim' evaluation as a process they design and use.

The resource pack also includes templates for recording and capturing information in creative and accessible ways.

Overall, the resource pack argues that evaluation takes time and resources to get a good result. It outlines a step by step approach process which involves integrating community development values and methods into the evaluation process. A key aspect of this is to design evaluation as a process which is educational, empowering and beneficial primarily to local people.

For more information contact Gersh Subhra  
Head of Centre for Community Regeneration  
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01332 594081 email:v.subhra@derby.ac.uk



*Five dimensions of community empowerment*

# DiCE: Dimensions of Community Empowerment

## *planning and evaluating community empowerment and community wellbeing*

DiCE (Dimensions of Community Empowerment), developed by **changes**, is the new title for a planning and evaluation framework for putting community empowerment into practice.

The ideas contained within DiCE are not new; they build on decades of theory and practice. They have grown from the application of frameworks such as ABCD (*Achieving Better Community Development*, CDF 2000) and DCD (*Doing Community Development*, **changes** 2006).

Community empowerment is at the core of the DiCE planning and evaluation framework, informing

- processes – ensuring that the way in which we work is empowering for others
- outcomes – planning what we want to achieve and understanding what has happened

DiCE recognises that there are five dimensions of community empowerment, pictured opposite.

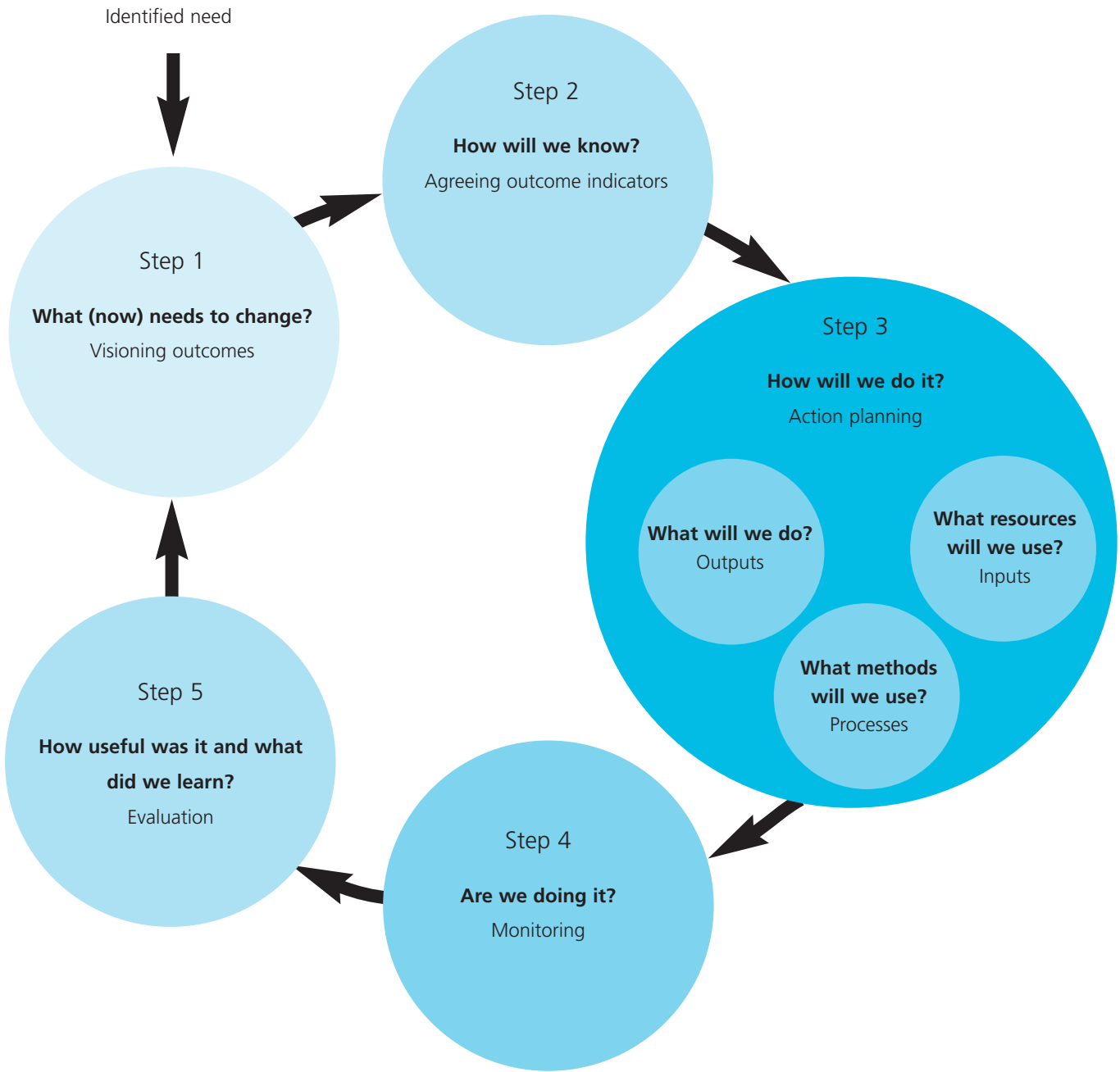
These dimensions are about putting community development values of social justice, participation, equality, learning and cooperation into action.

DiCE helps to demystify what ‘community empowerment’ is. It breaks it down into five bite-size chunks and helps us to identify the difference that community empowerment makes to people, communities, organisations and wider society.

DiCE doesn’t prescribe evaluation methods for you to use, it helps you to clarify what it is you are hoping to achieve and develop measures and indicators for community empowerment.

**changes** believe that it’s possible to take a community empowerment approach to practically anything that you do, as well as explain what that means and identify the difference that it makes. They have developed DiCE to help do this.

For more information contact **changes** on 01743 350198, [admin@changesuk.net](mailto:admin@changesuk.net) or visit [www.changesuk.net](http://www.changesuk.net)



*The LEAP planning and evaluation cycle*



# LEAP: Learning, Evaluation and Planning

LEAP is a learning based planning and evaluation framework, developed by the Scottish Community Development Centre. It is a practical toolkit to help us

- plan more effectively
- work in partnership with each other and members of the community
- identify and evidence the changes we hope to make
- learn from our experiences

The LEAP framework guides us through five steps in a planning and evaluation cycle. It can be used at policy, programme and project level and guides users through key questions:

- What need are we responding to?
- What needs to change?
- How will we know if things have changed?
- What actions can we take to achieve this change?
- Was this action effective?
- What have we learned?

The LEAP framework is based on the principles and values that underpin community development. It encourages an approach to change and development that is:

***Need led*** We should set out to respond to the experiences and concerns of communities and issues of inequality and social justice

***Change/outcome focused*** We should focus on achieving real and measurable change in the quality of personal and community life

***Participatory*** We should involve all those with an interest in the change we hope to make, particularly the community itself

***Concerned with building partnerships*** We should aim to build and develop relationships between stakeholders, particularly between agencies and community organisations and members

***Concerned with capacity and empowerment*** We should understand development as a process in which participants come to understand more about the factors which affect them, and increase their capacity to engage with and control the change process

***Concerned with learning and continuous improvement*** We should aim to understand change by capturing and reflecting on as much of the process as possible, and use the lessons learned to guide future action

For more information contact Susan Paxton, LEAP Support Unit, [susan@scdc.org.uk](mailto:susan@scdc.org.uk) or 0141 248 1964, or visit [www.leap.scdc.org.uk](http://www.leap.scdc.org.uk)



# Ready Steady Go ...

## *A community development approach to building and measuring social capital*

Fence Houses is a former coalmining community located within the South West Coalfield area of the City of Sunderland. A community development project undertaken by Barnardo's in the Fence Houses area has resulted in a Good Practice Guide to help local people, groups, voluntary, community and public sector agencies understand 'what works' in building and measuring social capital from a community development perspective.

The guide is split into three sections

- part one (Ready) details the practice developed in the Fence Houses area
- part two (Steady) details the frameworks and models
- part three (Go ...) contains the tools used to carry out the work

Alongside well established tools such as SWOT analysis, the Guide includes new tools that have been adapted from World Bank materials to measure social capital in accessible and empowering ways. They focus on five areas:

- groups and networks
- trust
- collective action
- social inclusion
- information and communication

The Guide includes questionnaires and visual techniques to use with children, young people and adults to measure levels of social capital and to gather feedback on a project's

services. When used within an overall community development approach, the use of the frameworks, models and tools used within the guide contribute to effective and meaningful engagement with communities.

The project has drawn from the following definition of social capital to inform the work:

***Bridging capital*** – which is inclusive and outward looking, encompassing people across diverse ethnic, cultural and social cleavages, e.g. youth service groups, ecumenical religious organisations and anti racist organisations.

***Bonding capital*** – which is by choice or necessity inward looking, and tends to reinforce the identity and confidence of homogeneous groups, e.g. ethnic groups, homeless groups, special interest groups and religious groups.

***Linking capital*** – which is the extent and nature of relationships and trust between different decision-makers and those with power, e.g. funders, a local authority and a residents group who work together to improve the local area.

For more information about the Good Practice Guide contact Sue Robson or Marian McGuinness  
sue@suerobson.co.uk Tel: 07813 109 215  
marian.mcguinness@barnardos.org.uk Tel: 0191 584 5729

# Questions and reflections

## *A place for conflict?*

Some participants and speakers were concerned about the sanitising language of empowerment policy, questioning whether ‘the smothering embrace of partnership’ is draining communities of the will or ability to fight for what they want. While partnerships can be positive, there was concern that there is not enough recognition that they involve competing priorities and unequal power. Working with conflict was thought by some to be fundamental to understanding empowerment, and managing conflict in ways which don’t leave community representatives burnt out and disempowered. Policy developments such as the Community Empowerment White Paper are important levers and opportunities, said one participant, but “most people in this room are working with people who are angry and we have to find ways of doing that”.

*“As a policy manager, today’s event has given me an insight into the concerns and experiences of practitioners”*

## *Use what’s useful*

One participant asked how to choose between the different evaluation frameworks and quality benchmarks which are available. The answer from the speakers was simply to use whatever is useful, but not to feel constrained by any one framework. Each has been developed to be used in particular contexts, and practitioners should feel confident in adapting tools to fit their working contexts or the communities they work with. There are links to useful tools on both [www.cdx.org.uk](http://www.cdx.org.uk) and [www.cogs.uk.net](http://www.cogs.uk.net), and further signposts are given in this report.

*“Lots of ideas about how I build in empowering evaluation within my own organisation, in work with LSP partnerships I’m involved in and in our LSP Community Engagement Strategy”*

### *Objective evaluation?*

There was a discussion about whether evaluation can ever be considered truly objective. One view was that quantitative data gathered through population surveys, using government indicators, provides a more objective measure which is taken more seriously by policy makers. However, it was acknowledged that these measures provide a superficial snapshot, and do not constitute evaluation in themselves, simply one form of information that could contribute to an evaluation.

There was also a view that evaluation can never be truly objective; everyone brings assumptions and expectations to the evaluation process. The way to deal with this is to seek perspectives from a range of stakeholders, gathering different types of data from different sources. Many participatory evaluation approaches work in this way. In research this is known as 'triangulation' – using a range of research methods and perspectives together.

*“This event will definitely impact on the planning and evaluation processes of my work”*

### *Do you feel empowered?*

A question was asked about the role of subjective feelings of empowerment – whether people actually feel powerful, that they can make a difference. It was felt that this is crucial to whether people take action – if people don't feel they can make a difference they won't try. Therefore efforts to increase skills and confidence are a crucial part of community empowerment. It was noted that this subjective experience of empowerment is also relevant within agencies. Many people working with communities feel they themselves have very little influence within their own agency, and this reduces their ability to respond to community needs.

*“It has given me a new and renewed perspective on evaluation and the ability to reflect on my practice”*

# Further resources

## General resources

### **ABCD – Achieving Better Community Development**

Community development planning and evaluation framework.

[www.cdf.org.uk](http://www.cdf.org.uk)

020 7833 1772

### **Assessing Community Strengths: A Practical Handbook for Planning Capacity Building Initiatives**

Steve Skinner and Mandy Wilson (2002)

A systematic approach to assessing the strength of the community sector in your locality.

[www.cdf.org.uk](http://www.cdf.org.uk)

020 7833 1772

### **Changecheck**

Chris Church and Steve Skinner

Practical guidelines on how community organisations can assess their impact.

[www.bassac.org.uk](http://www.bassac.org.uk)

0845 241 0375

### **Charities Evaluation Service (CES)**

Provides advice, resources and training on quality systems and evaluation for the voluntary and community sector. Includes range of publications on evaluation.

[www.ces-vol.org.uk](http://www.ces-vol.org.uk)

020 7713 5722

### **Churches Urban Fund Project Reflection Workshop Tool**

Guidance and materials for running participatory workings for planning and evaluating projects.

[www.cuf.org.uk](http://www.cuf.org.uk)

020 7898 1647

### **Evaluating community projects - a practical guide**

Marilyn Taylor, Derrick Purdue, Mandy Wilson and Pete Wilde (August 2005)

A guide based on the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's Neighbourhood Programme.

[www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop](http://www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop)

01904 629241

### **Evaluating your community development activity**

Guidance framework from Community Development Cymru.

[www.cdcmru.org](http://www.cdcmru.org)

01686 627377

### **Making community participation meaningful: a handbook for development and assessment**

Danny Burns, Frances Heywood, Marilyn Taylor, Pete Wilde and Mandy Wilson (2004)

Handbook providing tools to ensure that community participation is effective.

[www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop](http://www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop)

01904 629 241

### ***Proving and improving***

Online version of 'proving and improving: a quality and impact toolkit for social enterprise', from New Economics Foundation. Includes personalised online tools, descriptions and links for a range of frameworks and systems for judging quality and impact. [www.proveandimprove.org](http://www.proveandimprove.org)

## ***Quality standards and occupational standards***

### ***Community Development Performance Management Framework***

A framework of seven outcome areas with three levels of performance, to guide Health and Personal Social Services organisations in Northern Ireland in mainstreaming community development. [www.cdhn.org](http://www.cdhn.org)  
028 3026 4606

### ***How good is our community education and development? Self evaluation for quality improvement***

Quality indicators for community education and development from HMI Education Scotland (2006) [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk)  
01506 600 200

### ***PQASSO (Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations)***

Self-assessment tool developed by the Charities Evaluation Services (CES) specifically for small voluntary organisations with up to 20

paid staff or for projects within larger organisations. [www.ces-vol.org.uk](http://www.ces-vol.org.uk)  
020 7713 5722

### ***National Occupational Standards for Community Development Work***

[www.lifelonglearninguk.org](http://www.lifelonglearninguk.org)

### ***National Standards for Community Engagement***

Performance statements to help with planning and assessing the quality and process of community engagement. Developed for use throughout Scotland. [www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk](http://www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk)  
0131 313 0044

## ***Measuring social capital***

### ***Toolkit to measure the added value of voluntary and community base activity***

Set of indicators and sample questions to help gather information about levels of social capital in neighbourhoods and communities. Developed for Northern Ireland Dept for Social Development. [www.dsdni.gov.uk](http://www.dsdni.gov.uk)

### ***Social Capital Assessment Tool (SOCAT)***

World Bank tools for measuring key dimensions of social capital at household, community and organisational levels. [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org) (search for 'measuring social capital')



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