Developing Community Capacity in Belfast

A Conference funded through Building Sustainable Prosperity and the Belfast Area Partnerships

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BAP

Developing Community Capacity

A Conference on Community Capacity
and Urban Regeneration, Policy and Practice.
Lessons from and for Belfast.

HOSTED BY NORTH BELFAST PARTNERSHIP

6th December 2004

Foreword

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North Belfast Partnership, in association with Belfast Area Partnerships, was pleased to host this conference which considered practical experiences and lessons of capacity building from Belfast, Dublin, Glasgow and Birmingham; and regional and national policy formation and practice in relation to urban regeneration and neighbourhood and community development.

Funding from the European Union Building Sustainable Prosperity Programme, administered by the Voluntary and Community Unit of the Department for Social Development, is gratefully acknowledged and appreciated.

Those who were able to attend the conference will know that the conference achieved its twin aims of sharing experiences of community capacity building and addressing key policy and funding imperatives.

The current context of urban renewal and community development in Belfast is in flux. When was it ever any different? The community and voluntary sector has concerns about its current and future roles, core funding, and long-term sustainable future. The Government's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy in Northern Ireland is in the earliest stages of implementation, with uncertainty over the status and nature of Government support, financial commitment, and the likely implications for the local community and voluntary sector and community development infrastructures.

Reflection on best practice here and elsewhere throughout the islands of Ireland and Britain will help to maximise sustainable efforts in continuing to address poverty, social exclusion, and reconciliation building in a more peaceful Northern Ireland.

On behalf of North Belfast Partnership and the Belfast Area Partnerships, I particularly acknowledge and thank Claire McGimpsey, BAPs Co-ordinator, and my colleagues in North Belfast Partnership - John McCorry, Declan Steele and other staff - for their work in making the conference such a success.

Murdo Murray
Chief Executive
North Belfast Partnership

March 2005

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Introduction 2

The community and voluntary sector provides a major contribution to the building of a more inclusive society in Northern Ireland. It has helped to foster confidence within local communities, and in recent times within the context of a society emerging from conflict. Over the past decade there has been significant cross-community dialogue within the sector. Increasingly, the sector has become involved in wider urban regeneration activities, working closely with various statutory agencies. The five Partnership Boards in Belfast provide a practical model of how the community sector works with statutory agencies and political representatives towards the betterment of their respective areas. Much good work has been achieved, but more can still be done. The future success of this work will be enhanced, or constrained, by the capacity of the community and voluntary sector to plan and deliver a wide range of socio-economic initiatives.

There is a need to clarify the exact nature of 'community capacity' and 'capacity building'. While there is much academic debate about what these terms mean, they are linked in various ways with the concept of Social Capital and social, economic and cultural regeneration within local communities. Capacity building schemes aim to offer a governance strategy that permits a shift in development from the state to civil society. The relationship between the community and voluntary sector and statutory agencies has been central to the work of regeneration. Core funding in recent times has been a key concern of the sector, and is central to both short-term and long-term planning. The relationship between the sector and the future priorities of funding bodies will act as a guide to what capacity development will be required. This in turn will help to determine the most appropriate focus of capacity building within the sector.

Belfast Area Partnerships concluded that the best way to air debate on the future direction of the sector, within the wider context of Government policy and funding, would be to host a series of mini, city-wide and inter-city conferences attended by leading stakeholders involved with the sector. The Developing Community Capacity Conference was one of a series of such discussion forums. It sought to provide a review of current policy at national and regional level, supplemented with various practitioner experiences. The theme of social inclusion has been central to a number of Government policies, most recently in the area of local neighbourhood renewal. The Neighbourhood Renewal Programme is in the early stages of commencement in Northern Ireland, with a number of designated neighbourhood areas in Belfast.

The purpose of the conference was fourfold:

- Set community development within the wider policy framework of social inclusion and tackling disadvantage;
- Identify possible inhibitors to developing community capacity and social inclusion;
- Identify how local residents can be engaged and empowered to be active citizens in community and voluntary activities, and thus perpetuate social inclusion;
- Learn how others from outside of Northern Ireland have sought to overcome the barriers to community capacity building, and enhance community engagement in the social inclusion process.

The conference sought to bring together the main stakeholders within community development:

- Representatives from principal community and voluntary groups from all parts of Belfast and all political identities;
- Representatives from the main statutory agencies and funding bodies involved in community regeneration in Northern Ireland.

North Belfast Partnership, in its capacity as a member of Belfast Area Partnerships, undertook to organise the conference. It was decided to invite keynote speakers who would bring a wide range of experiences to the conference discussions. Examples of best practice in other parts of the British Isles were identified and speakers from Birmingham, Glasgow and Dublin were invited to lead workshop debate.

The Partnership was delighted that Joe Montgomery, Director General of the Tackling Disadvantage Group of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, delivered the keynote address at the conference. Joe has been in the forefront of the Government's policy on Neighbourhood Renewal in England and Wales. David Simmonds, Director of the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion, has been involved in social inclusion, labour markets, and regeneration policy for the past twenty years. He has advised Government on a number of leading initiatives in recent years, including welfare to work. David brought a national perspective to the issues of social inclusion and community regeneration. Dave Wall, Director of the Voluntary and Community Unit within the Department for Social Development, provided the local perspective, highlighting the recommended future framework for the community and voluntary sector in Northern Ireland. The recently published 'Investing Together' report has outlined a strategic direction for the community and voluntary sector, and possible future relationships with funding bodies and Government agencies.

The workshop forums provided an opportunity for participants to learn from the experiences of capacity building in three cities: Birmingham, Glasgow and Dublin. Hans Schlappa outlined the Birmingham experience of capacity building, using three case studies to examine various degrees of capacity building in the city. Margaret Daly outlined the formation of a Social Inclusion Partnership in Greater Pollok, an area of high deprivation and social exclusion in Glasgow. Frank Gilligan delivered a workshop that examined the background of Ballyfermot Local Drugs Task Force, which has brought together representatives from all statutory, voluntary and community bodies in the area as a response to the worsening drugs problem in working class housing estates. The workshops offered a range of case studies of how community and voluntary organisations have experienced capacity building, often with varying degrees of success. In some cases capacity building came about through a planned approach, and in other cases it evolved through a process of organisations seeking to tackle social problems within their communities.

It is hoped that the conference will stimulate future debate on how community and voluntary organisations can engage with 'capacity building'. While the conference did not seek to provide all of the answers to community capacity building, it is hoped that it provided a stimulus for critical self-assessment and debate within the sector. It is further hoped that the conference will prompt wider debate between the community and voluntary sector and other key stakeholders committed to the principles of community regeneration.

The Policy Context for Developing Communities 3

Capacity for what?

Tackling social disadvantage has been central to recent Government policy to promote active citizenship and foster more vibrant local communities, particularly in deprived urban areas within the United Kingdom.

David Simmonds opened the conference with an overview of current Government policy regarding the promotion of social inclusion and the empowerment of local communities in the regeneration of their areas. He outlined how social inclusion is a multi-faceted issue that requires interventions at a number of levels. It was highlighted that social inclusion needs to take place within the wider context of social and economic regeneration. David outlined four factors as the basis for genuine social inclusion to occur:

- Communities must be in work;
- Communities must be sustainable;
- Communities must feel safe;
- Communities must have a good physical environment.

Each of these aspects of community development is vital for meaningful and sustainable improvement in people's lives. Economic activity is an essential requirement to removing economic and social deprivation within local communities. Through employment, individuals can become empowered to take greater control of their lives. Employment and economic activity are the foundations to the wider prosperity of individuals and local communities. It also underpins the process of social inclusion. The importance of sustainability was emphasised, not just for social economy enterprises, but also in all aspects of community development. There will be increased focus on ensuring that funding invested in local communities is not squandered due to lack of sustainability. Local communities will need to retain or maintain the money coming into their organisations and communities. Communities also want to feel safe. There needs to be a level of confidence to tackle the sources of crime. This may entail working with young people in disadvantaged areas to prevent anti-social behaviour. Finally, communities need to have a physical environment that supports the confidence of local communities so that they become attractive places to live and work in.

For social inclusion to happen communities must be both *informed* of what is happening at policy and implementation levels, and *involved* in programmes that affect their communities. This is where community and voluntary organisations can play a key role of influencing policy and managing implementation at local level. As such, the capacity of these organisations is vital to the success of the various programmes of social inclusion and the regeneration of local communities.

David commenced his presentation with the question of 'capacity for what?' He offered six areas in which capacity building may impact on the community and voluntary sector. They are:

- Delivery of public services;
- Development of new services and self-help;
- Better representation of community interests to engage in partnerships;
- Management of local services and funds;
- Growth of social enterprises and entrepreneurs;
- Business development of enterprises.

Government policy in relation to the modernisation of public services offers possibilities for new mechanisms of delivery.

The community and voluntary sector is being encouraged to explore the opportunities of delivering some public services at a local level. This would complement the 'sustainability' issue of social inclusion discussed earlier. Community and voluntary organisations would not be as highly dependent on short-term grants and more focused on earning income through longer-term contractual relationships with statutory bodies. In England the management of some children's homes is now contracted to charitable organisations. David provided the example of the 'Futurebuilders' programme in England and Wales, which seeks to foster an investment culture within the sector. With 'Futurebuilders' the five areas of social policy which the Government sought to promote within the community and voluntary sector, included:

- Community cohesion;
- Crime reduction;
- Education and training;
- Health and social care;
- Support for children and young people.

If Government policy is to outsource delivery of more public services to community and voluntary organisations, then this will have major implications for the sector. There will be a need to invest in the capacity of organisations to deliver such services, particularly in the area of management training and systems of internal governance. Not for profit organisations will have to compete with the private sector in winning contracts awarded by statutory agencies. Not only will they need the technical knowledge of the tendering process, but the confidence to sell their services to Government bodies. Government will need to invest in the capacity of such organisations to compete on a level playing field. Whether this is an area that the community and voluntary sector wish to go down will be the subject of much discussion. This issue was raised during the workshop sessions. There are challenges, both positive and negative, in getting closely involved in the delivery of public services and wider regeneration programmes. Research suggests that entering into contracts with public agencies to provide services can have far reaching organisational impacts.[1] It also raises important questions about the purpose of such organisations and whether they are willing to undergo such a significant change of goals and mission. Some community and voluntary organisations may be willing and ready to grab such opportunities, while others may not see this as fulfilling their existing role of influencing Government policy and engaging primarily in self-help to meet the needs of their local communities.

Closely related to this is the capacity of community and voluntary organisations to develop new services and self-help. David stressed that in this case capacity is not the issue, but the personal conviction of those in leadership positions to undertake this role. As this is essentially a bottom-up approach, the calibre of personnel and level of innovation within community and voluntary organisations would be vital. In England some Charitable Trusts fund 'unpopular' causes and services that Government does not currently support.

The issue of better representation of community interests raises a number of important points. Participation of local citizens is viewed as an important contribution to the goal of a more inclusive society. How to increase the depth of community representation is a major challenge for those in the community and voluntary sector. The cost of the time commitment required from community representatives is often not considered, highlighting the importance of personal commitment to community and voluntary principles.

David provided the example of New Deal for Communities, a Government programme to regenerate 39 highly deprived areas across England over a ten-year period through encouragement of local control of community services and funding programmes. New Deal for Communities also links to the issue of influencing the 'mainstreaming' of Government funding in local communities. How can local communities influence decision-making within the main statutory bodies? There may be an opportunity to obtain more funding for disadvantaged communities and groups in the short to medium term, but more importantly is

[1] Schlappa, H. "Small Voluntary Organisations in Neighbourhood Renewal", in Talking Point, No. 198. p. 2.

how existing mainstream funding can be delivered better to those most at need, and so enhance the possibility of social inclusion.

The last area reviewed by David in his presentation was the growth of the social economy. The social economy has grown steadily over the past ten years and this is set to continue over the coming decade. Social economy enterprises are unique and distinctive in their commitment to addressing the double financial and social bottom line - i.e. generating surpluses to ensure sustainability of the business and the ability to achieve their social or ethical mission. They can make a significant contribution to both social and economic regeneration.[2] It is suggested that social enterprise promotion needs to be mainstreamed into Government business development programmes. A number of support mechanisms are already in place to support social entrepreneurship. Government will continue to encourage a greater role of the social economy. In Northern Ireland the contribution of the social economy has been receiving greater recognition in recent years. The recent 'Developing a Successful Social Economy' strategy document sets out Government thinking on how the social economy can be an integral and vital contribution to the Northern Ireland economy. The growth of the social economy also provides a challenge to the community and voluntary sector. Community organisations may need to be thinking of developing income generating social enterprises, with less dependency on a grants mentality culture. Often people within community and voluntary organisations have the ideas and motivation to develop social economy enterprises. However, there is a need for investment, particularly in terms of skills training and start-up assistance. Even so, it would not be feasible for every organisation to move in the direction of social enterprise. Some may not see it as being consistent with the central purpose of their organisation.

David concluded his presentation by highlighting that capacity building is not an end in itself, but a means to achieving higher goals. In strategic terms the question is where does the community and voluntary sector want to be positioned in the medium to long-term future. Ultimately, this must be related to the kind of outcomes required by local communities and clients. Government, statutory agencies, and the community and voluntary sector will have their own interpretations on this. Though the routes may differ, all stakeholders are agreed on wishing to see improvements in the quality of life of all citizens and communities.

Community Investment

Dave Wall, in the second presentation, offered an overview of the community and voluntary sector in Northern Ireland. He outlined the background to the Task Force on Resourcing the Voluntary and Community Sector, and the resultant 'Investing Together' report published in October 2004. The Task Force found there was a lack of long-term strategic funding for the sector, with organisations focused on short term funding applications and associated monitoring requirements. The five key recommendations of the Task Force are categorised under the following areas: Funding - An Investment Approach, Community Development, Internal Governance, Management and Accountability, Modernising and Change, and Implementation. The report recommends that the sector will require a longer-term funding focus, possibly up to a ten-year timescale. There will be a need for agreement on long-term outputs by both the sector and funding bodies. Dave emphasised that growth in community sector funding had come to an end. The issue in the future, therefore, would be the more effective deployment of limited funding sources. Funding in the future will be more investment driven, and organisations will need to focus on a more strategic approach to their service provision.

Dave also highlighted the potential for the community and voluntary sector in the frontline delivery of public services. This would mean that organisations would have to compete for contracts from Government departments. However, many community and voluntary organisations that bid for contracts are often not competing on a level playing field as funders expect a contribution to the costs of

[2] *Developing a Successful Social Economy,* Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment. p. 17.

the service through core costs.[3] It is therefore recommended that service level agreements between Government and voluntary and community organisations must be based, as a minimum, on the recovery of full costs of service delivered. The issue of full cost recovery in funding applications, or in tender bids, would need to be addressed if the sector is to become more involved in the delivery of public services.

Community capacity building will require a skills strategy for the sector. The proposed Community Investment Fund, which is to be phased in over the next three to five years, should assist in this aspect of capacity building. The issue of internal governance and accountability will need to be examined to ensure a common approach throughout the sector. There will be a need to invest in systems of internal governance within the sector. The possibility of formal accreditation of such systems needs to be explored. Dave emphasised that the community and voluntary sector will require modernisation and change. The Task Force has recommended a Modernisation Fund towards facilitating organisational change and wider capacity building within the sector. A skills strategy will contribute to this change management process.

Finally, implementation of the recommendations of the 'Investing Together' report will require the combined commitment of the Government Minister, senior civil servants and the community and voluntary leaders.

In conclusion, Dave stressed the challenges facing both the sector and funders. The sector will require a change of focus from the current short-term operational horizon to a longer term funding focus, with more emphasis on demonstrating 'added value'. There will be a need to develop a reserves policy in the sector in order to promote a more secure foundation for the valuable work undertaken by community and voluntary organisations. The development and implementation of a policy across Government that enables reasonable reserves to be established is critical to the future sustainability of the community and voluntary sector.[4] The issue of full cost recovery in funding and tendering applications will need to be clarified if the sector is to compete on a level playing field for public service contracts. For funders the implications are equally challenging. There will have to be longer-term funding commitments. Funding bodies need to be flexible in their monitoring and audit procedures. The issues of a reserves policy and full cost recovery in funding applications are areas in which funders can review their policies. A satisfactory resolution of these issues would allow organisations to develop sustainable activities.

Neighbourhood Renewal

In the afternoon session Joe Montgomery provided an overview of neighbourhood renewal and social inclusion, drawing upon the experiences in England. Joe highlighted that there is a clear geographical dimension to social exclusion. Multiple deprivations, as measured on a range of indicators, tend to be clustered in certain neighbourhoods. In 2001 the Government launched 'A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal' programme. This programme seeks to tackle social exclusion in the top 10% of most deprived wards in England. The aim is to allow these poorest communities to benefit from:

- Economic prosperity and a reduction in joblessness;
- A safe and clean local environment that is free from crime;
- High quality schools;
- Decent housing that is well managed;
- Better access to health services generating longer, healthier lives.

The research evidence, which indicated the geographical concentration of deprivation and social exclusion in local neighbourhoods, revealed that mainstream public services delivered poorer outcomes in these most disadvantaged areas. There are many dimensions of social exclusion, linked and mutually reinforcing. Some groups are particularly vulnerable, such as single parent

[3] Investing Together, Report of the Task Force on Resourcing the Voluntary and Community Sector. p. 17.

[4] *Investing Together,* Report of the Task Force on Resourcing the Voluntary and Community Sector. p. 25.

households and the long-term unemployed. The growth of social exclusion in recent years reflects a wide range of economic and social changes. It also reflects the inadequacies of some policy responses from Government and failures of service delivery. The relationship between poorer public services and inequality may be two-fold. Poorer public services help to perpetuate levels of poverty and social exclusion, but in poorer communities the uptake of services is sometimes lower than the national average.

The Social Exclusion Unit, which produced the strategy, identified six critical barriers that impeded earlier efforts to bring about change in disadvantaged neighbourhoods:

- The failure to address the problems of local economies;
- Failure to promote safe and stable communities;
- Poor core public services, such as health and education;
- Failure to involve communities;
- Lack of leadership and joint working;
- Insufficient information and poor use if it.

The national strategy for neighbourhood renewal was designed to improve standards of health, education, housing and the environment, and reduce crime and worklessness, and to close the gap between the worst-off neighbourhoods and the rest of the country. The strategy included a variety of new programmes, but above all sought to improve the way mainstream programmes and services are delivered in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.[5]

Joe emphasised that the aim of neighbourhood renewal was not to throw more money at deprived areas, but to utilise existing mainstream services more effectively. 'Mainstreaming' is probably the key issue under neighbourhood renewal. The aim is to realign the allocation of mainstream resources to better target the most deprived areas. Joe highlighted that neighbourhood renewal funding is pinning less than 1% of all Government spending in these areas. Therefore, the key to neighbourhood renewal has been to ensure that public services are improved and that possible new means of delivery be explored. This relates to earlier discussion by David Simmonds and Dave Wall on community and voluntary organisations having the capacity to enter these areas of activity. In tackling social exclusion a number of aspects of disadvantage must be engaged. Housing improvement alone will not lead to economic regeneration. It also requires communities to feel safe and people to be economically active.

Joe also highlighted that neighbourhood renewal is about reinvesting in the communities, which will lead to long-term dividends. There will be a need to challenge the grant dependency ethos. Neighbourhood renewal offers a more holistic model of regeneration. There will be a need to create an asset base of sustainability, as regeneration money will come to an end at a certain point.

It is interesting to note that neighbourhood renewal in England involves an element of direct democracy. Local residents must comprise the majority grouping on New Deal for Communities boards. These positions are filled by elections, which have typically seen voter turnout rates that are higher than those for European or local authority elections.

There are quantitative and qualitative indicators that the programme is making a real difference. There has been a start in narrowing some of the gaps of deprivation, such as in the areas of educational attainment and the levels of some reported crime. For example, overall crime rate in neighbourhood warden areas has been reduced by 28% compared with a 5% increase elsewhere. However, in other aspects improvement has been low, such as in life expectancy rates, employment rates, and teenage pregnancies. Qualitative indicators have shown improvements in residents' perceptions of their areas. Residents wanting to stay in these neighbourhoods have increased from 59% to 68%. Surveys indicate an increased perception of community cohesion, with most residents believing that their areas have improved since the commencement of the programme. The New Deal for Communities programme has led to improved levels of

[5] http://www.renewal.net/

partnership, community engagement and enhanced inter-agency working.

The case of the Harlem district in New York is an example of how a neighbourhood has been transformed over the past twenty years using private sector investment.

Joe outlined three key contributions to the successful implementation of neighbourhood renewal:

- Statutory agencies must improve the delivery of public services;
- Private sector must be encouraged to identify market opportunities in the areas;
- Local communities must be engaged in civic renewal.

Therefore, the key issues that neighbourhood renewal must address include:

- Level of crime must be tackled;
- Planning must facilitate private sector investment;
- Under-served markets for products and services need to be highlighted for inward investment and development.

Workshop Forums 4

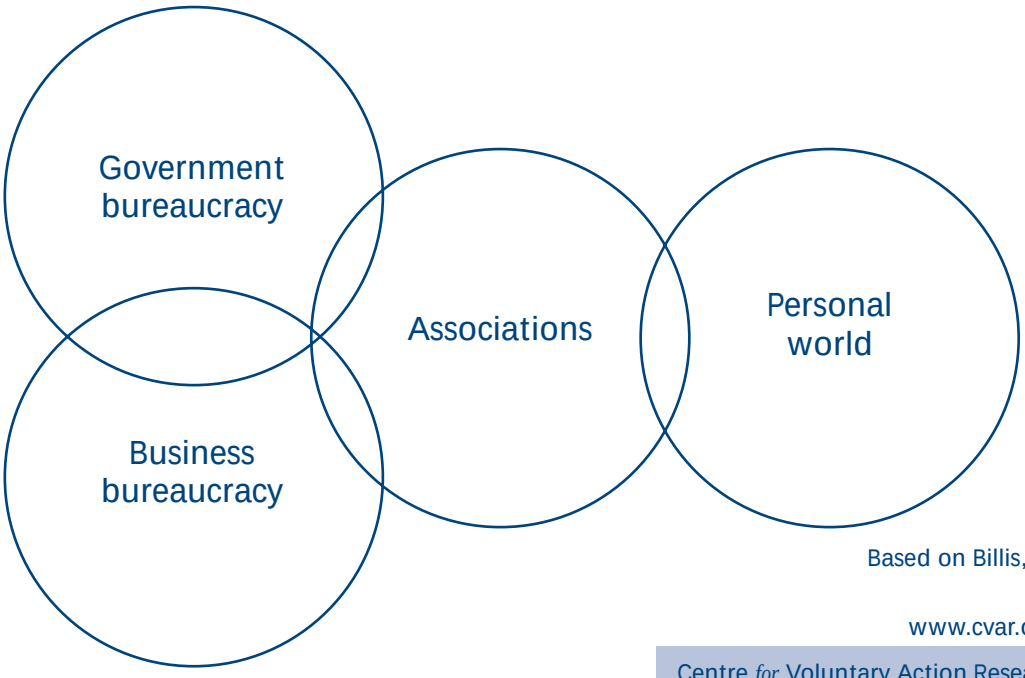
The Birmingham City Experience

Hans Schlappa presented an overview of three experiences of capacity building in Birmingham, with particular reference to the voluntary sector. He also provided an overview of a number of theoretical models of capacity building. Hans commenced his presentation by indicating that 'capacity building' is usually discussed only for the voluntary and community sector in the public policy context. It is interesting that capacity building has not been viewed as relevant to the public or business sectors. In these sectors a variety of business models are used, such as benchmarking, service level agreement targets, and performance management.

Hans outlined that the voluntary sector overlaps with a number of other domains, namely the personal world of individuals, Government bureaucracy, and business bureaucracy. This illustrates the intermediary position of the sector, and highlights that the sector has the potential to link the altruism of private individuals with the institutional resources of both Government and business (Fig. 1).

There are two principal concepts of capacity building. The instrumental approach, or deficit model, views the voluntary sector as one of many conduits for the discharge of public policy objectives, and one which requires support to overcome its inherent weaknesses of organisation and management. The empowerment approach, on the other hand,

Fig. 1 The Worlds of the Voluntary Sector



Based on Billis, 1993

upholds the distinctive features of the voluntary sector and aims to strengthen its ability to bring about social change. In policy and practice, however, the boundaries between these two concepts are blurred, resulting in lack of conceptual clarity and ambiguity about the underlying motivations of capacity building initiatives. Hans outlined that the capacity building process can occur at four levels. Capacity building tends to begin with changes in the capability of individuals, through to internal organisational change, external organisational change, and ultimately changes impacting the wider society. Strategies of capacity building need to consider a more holistic approach, with funders, service providers, beneficiaries, and voluntary and community organisations co-ordinated in this process of improvement.

The three case studies reviewed in the workshop session were:

- The Diocese of Birmingham - a study on the role of local parishes in local communities;
- B:CAN! - an evaluation of a voluntary sector capacity building programme;
- Aston Pride - reflections on a New Deal for Communities Initiative.

The **Diocese of Birmingham** project emanated from an initiative by the Bishop of Birmingham to review the impact of parish activities on civil renewal, social cohesion and neighbourhood renewal. The study was a self-analysis of the Church's current activities in developing and supporting marginalised communities. The Church was already involved in many urban regeneration initiatives and knew from experience that some of their activities were having a positive impact, while other interventions were less successful. However, there was no coherence to all of these activities and no sense of how their contributions might assist to the growth of social capital/social cohesion and social inclusion. The purpose of the study was threefold:

- To identify what were the distinctive features of the work done by local churches;
- To assess what contribution parishes make to civil renewal, social cohesion, and neighbourhood renewal;
- To examine what barriers were being encountered in the work done by the Church.

There were a number of outcomes of the Diocese of Birmingham study. Firstly, the Diocese has become more focused about its capacity building needs. It now has a clearer appreciation of the impact it has with local communities. It has also a clearer understanding of how it contributes to the concept of social capital/social cohesion and social inclusion. The study has led to a better understanding of the leadership role of the local clergy. The training needs of the clergy in relation to capacity building have been identified, such as change management skills, funding applications, and understanding of volunteer motivations. The study has allowed the Church to assess where it is now in terms of capacity building, and this has provided a baseline from which to enter into a dialogue with public funders on the scale and type of support needed in order to make a structured contribution towards public policy goals on civil renewal and social cohesion.

The **B:CAN!** capacity building programme is a £4 million, six year Single Regeneration Budget programme led by the Birmingham Voluntary Services Council (BVSC) which has the aim to strengthen the voluntary sector's independence and to increase the organisational capacity of voluntary organisations in terms of skills, structures and processes. The programme, therefore, emanates from the empowerment as well as deficit models of capacity building. The outcomes of the B:CAN! programme have been patchy. The internal governance, management and accountability processes of BVSC have been strengthened significantly, and helped BVSC to position itself as the lead agency for the voluntary sector in Birmingham. Some effective projects were developed. However, the post-programme research indicates very little discernable impact on the wider voluntary sector. Indeed, there is evidence that it may have increased antagonism between those groups that benefited from the programme in terms of funding, and those that felt they had not benefited from new resources. A few poor

projects were also developed under the programme. There was still a sense of confusion within the sector about the purpose of B:CAN! Research would indicate that to a large degree the funding was used by voluntary organisations to do more of what they were already doing instead of developing organisational or sectoral capacity. Therefore, the B:CAN! programme has not been an example of effective capacity building in terms of outputs. Birmingham Voluntary Services Council has learned from the experience and is now feeding this experience into the development of the local ChangeUp programme to ensure that planned Government funded capacity building initiatives avoid making the same mistakes.

The third case study reviewed was the **Aston Pride New Deal for Communities** programme. This programme emanated from the Government's 'A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal' programme. The programme, which is still ongoing, has a budget of approximately £50m over a period of ten years. The Aston neighbourhood area has a high ethnic minority concentration, high deprivation, a community fragmented by faith, ethnicity and location, and a high level of gun-related crime. The aim of this New Deal for Communities programme was threefold:

- To influence mainstream statutory agency bodies in the delivery of public services;
- To assist in building greater cohesion within the highly fractured communities;
- To enable communities to engage with local regeneration and be involved in decisions relating to the delivery of public services.

The outcomes of the programme to date have led to a number of large scale projects, with a wide range of smaller projects. Approximately twenty staff are employed directly under the programme. A CCTV initiative has encouraged the community to feel safer - one of the key performance indicators in neighbourhood renewal programmes. The programme has resulted in good appraisal, approval, monitoring and accounting processes. However, there has been piecemeal success in terms of collaborative planning and implementation. There has been little impact on the aim of fostering greater community cohesion. Only incremental improvements in the quality of life within the area are discernable, though it must be remembered that the programme is still on-going. Increased community engagement in local regeneration still demonstrates a high reliance on the established community leaders and activists.

In summary, the Birmingham case studies reveal that capacity building occurs at different levels. The **Diocese of Birmingham** case study shows that through a self-analysis exercise the organisation was able to perform an audit of their current activities, and through this identify what capacity building meant for them. From this baseline an Action Plan can be developed to bid for funding to resource future community development work. The **B:CAN!** programme defined capacity building as skills and organisational development, and sought to empower the organisation and gain the involvement of the wider voluntary sector. The Birmingham Voluntary Services Council has undergone internal organisational change. This has improved the capacity of the organisation to co-ordinate and lead a large voluntary sector consisting of approximately four thousand individual voluntary organisations, but so far has had little impact on improving inter-organisational capacity within the sector. The **Aston Pride New Deal for Communities** programme has sought to deliver capacity building at neighbourhood level. Government, local authority, public agencies and local communities have collectively sought to define what capacity building means for them, and then sought to implement this through a long-term action plan. Again, the outcomes have been mixed. While internal structures were developed to facilitate more effective interaction with public agencies, such as governance and accountability, the impact on quality of life so far has been more problematic.

These case studies highlight the importance of approaching capacity building from a position of voluntary organisations making informed choices about what they need in terms of capacity building, and then securing the resources to achieve this. The Aston Pride case represents a top-down approach, with Government defining what needs to happen.

The outcome has been deeply problematic. The B:CAN! Model is a mix, where Government funding came with lots of strings attached which limited the options for BVSC. There have been complex problems in trying to carry out a capacity building programme for a 'voluntary sector'. Finally, the Diocese of Birmingham study illustrates a good practice example where the capacity building process is preceded by research into the question: what do we need in terms of capacity building? This was followed by a programme of activity concerned with fund raising and delivery of capacity building interventions.

Greater Pollok Social Inclusion Partnership

Margaret Daly delivered a presentation on the formation of the Greater Pollok Social Inclusion Partnership and its experience of community capacity building within a deprived area of south-west Glasgow.

Greater Pollok Social Inclusion Partnership was set up in April 1999 as part of Scotland's attempt to regenerate those neighbourhoods with concentrations of deep-seated poverty and disadvantage. It has brought together the voluntary sector, the public sector, business sector and local people to work together to improve the quality of life for everyone living and working in the area.

The Partnership area covers seventeen different communities or neighbourhoods, which have suffered in the past from under investment. The catchment area has a population of approximately 39,000, representing 7% of the total population of the city. The economic and social profile of the area indicates many of the symptoms of social disadvantage and neighbourhood decline. High unemployment, low income, poor environment and poor health issues are all issues that blight these communities. During the 1990's there was a 6% decline in the overall population. Approximately 35% of families are headed by a lone parent. Forty four percent of the working age population are economically inactive, with 9% having never worked at all. One quarter of the population has some form of long-term illness that limits daily activities or working lives. Just over one in ten of the population are involved in some form of caring role. The demographic profile indicates that 35% of the population is under the age of twenty five. The level of self-employment in the economically active population is lower than the city average.

The Partnership operates through a Board of eighteen members: six are elected political representatives from the area, five are representatives from the Greater Pollok Community Forum, one from Greater Pollok Voluntary Sector Forum, and the remainder are representatives from various statutory agencies. The Board meets six to eight times a year, and is responsible for policy and overall strategic direction of the Partnership. A quorum of seven members must be present to hold a Board meeting, and there must be at least two Community Forum members present at all meetings. The Board allocates funding and monitors performance of programme initiatives. The Partnership has been allocated £18.65m by Communities Scotland up until March 2005. In addition, it has successfully leveraged an additional £15m from other funding sources.

Community representation on the Partnership Board is formalised through the Greater Pollok Community Forum, which has recently become a Company Limited by Guarantee. The Forum meets monthly and has approximately 900 members. It actively seeks to involve the local community through information provision and organising community events. In the past these have included 'Big Day Out' and 'Big Night In' events.

The Partnership's strategy is based on the themes of physical, social and economic regeneration. It has also become involved in physical regeneration, though not part of its original remit, largely due to the chronic shortage of office, training and meeting space accommodation in the area. There are three major priorities and three cross cutting priorities. The three major priorities are: Working & Learning, Health, and Safe Neighbourhoods. The three cross cutting priorities are: Childcare, Young People, and Capacity Building. The Partnership has been involved with other social partners in the delivery of a number of successful initiatives

since 1999. The following are just some of these initiatives:

- Greater Pollok Healthy Living Initiative;
- The CALM Project;
- Pollok Credit Union;
- Carers Support and Development Centre;
- Greater Pollok Development Company;
- Greater Pollok Youth in Action;
- Greater Pollok Citizens Advice Bureau;
- Greater Pollok Childcare ILM Project;
- Kool Kids Programme.

The Partnership has been able to use its core funding as leverage to gain additional sources of financial support. The Partnership has established effective working relationships with statutory agencies to identify ways in which local services can be improved or targeted more effectively towards those who really need them. However, more work is still required in the area to influence mainstream funding and improvements to public services. As the work of the Partnership has evolved there have been changes to the original strategy, highlighting that capacity building is an evolving process. Margaret concluded her presentation by highlighting that the regeneration of Greater Pollok is still a 'job half done'.

The Social Inclusion Partnership has made inroads on its goal of promoting a more inclusive community. There have been a number of positive outcomes over the past five years. These include community involvement in key decision-making processes on determining priorities and funding. Community representatives come to the Partnership not to represent specific geographic areas, but to work for the betterment of Greater Pollok. This would indicate that a wider sense of community has developed. A community representative is now Chair of the Partnership Board. Community surveys were carried out to identify issues of concern to local residents. Local people are encouraged to become active citizens through involvement with community projects and activities. There are signs that change is happening. Alongside the new houses being built in the area, people are beginning to see improvements in their health and quality of life. Recent surveys in the community have reported that people believe there have been improvements in the area. The participation of local residents and community and voluntary organisations has been a major strength of this Partnership approach. It illustrates that by itself the Partnership Board would not be able to achieve significant results, but through engagement with others the partnership structures can achieve real progress. An independent evaluation report, published in January 2004, states that the Social Inclusion Partnership had made good progress in a relatively short period of time. The report also found that the community and local voluntary organisations are playing an increasingly important role in deciding how funds are used in Greater Pollok. It concludes that there is genuine partnership work being carried out.

In conclusion, the Greater Pollok Social Inclusion Partnership is an example of an effective partnership at work. The Partnership has successfully brought together the community and voluntary sector and statutory agencies to maximise opportunities for people in the area. A Capacity Building Steering Group was established to develop the role and processes for community involvement in the area. This group evolved into Greater Pollok Community Forum and now employs its own community development staff. There have been real changes at ground level, with local people perceiving improvement in many aspects of community life. The Partnership is working to capitalise on new employment opportunities in the construction sector and there will be more new opportunities in retailing when the refurbished Pollok Shopping Centre is completed. Through the Greater Pollok Working Initiative, the Partnership is working with local training providers to ensure that local people can avail of these employment opportunities. Physical regeneration is helping to change the environment in which local people live. There has been genuine success in engaging the local community in the goals of the Partnership. The Partnership has also shown good practice in enabling effective inter-organisational collaboration to tackle the six priority areas within the strategic plan. There are still challenges facing the Partnership in terms of future funding and possible changes in administrative boundaries. The Partnership is currently in the process of integrating new Community Planning structures in Glasgow, in

line with all Social Inclusion Partnerships in Scotland's local authority areas. However, Greater Pollok provides many examples of best practice in community capacity building and social inclusion which others can learn from.

Ballyfermot Local Drugs Task Force

Frank Gilligan delivered a presentation on the formation of the Ballyfermot Local Drugs Task Force, which emanated from the worsening drugs related problems in west Dublin. The case study illustrates the experience of community capacity building within a local community blighted by drug misuse and associated problems of intra community conflict. The tackling of this specific social problem provided an opportunity for the community to explore the wider social, economic and physical problems within the area. Thus, the Ballyfermot case study provides a valuable lesson of capacity building within the context of tackling a specific social problem.

The catchment area has a population of approximately 21,000 persons. It is an area of high social disadvantage across many economic, social and physical indicators. Approximately 40% of the population is under 25 years of age. Almost one quarter of households are lone parent families. Approximately 13% of the population have some form of disability. Forty seven percent of the population have no formal educational qualifications, and only 4% have continued education until the age of twenty. Many of the problems are related to young people. Parents are involved in a constant battle against early school leaving, drugs and anti-social behaviour among youth. The delivery of many public services is poorer in the area, compared to national and regional performance indicators.

In the mid 1990's there was a community reaction to the worsening drugs problem within Ballyfermot. A Concerned Parents Against Drugs group was formed. These concerns manifested itself in a concerted effort to target local drug pushers and ultimately to force them to leave the area. It was perceived that this campaign, targeted at removing the pushers, was the solution to the drugs problem in the area. The housing authorities even demolished houses that had become known drug haunts for pushers and addicts. However, these approaches had only a short-term effect. Drug pushers either moved house or were replaced by new supply sources. At the same time as these locally-based events, the Government began to take action to tackle the worsening problem. In 2000 the National Advisory Committee on Drugs (NACD) was set up to advise the Government on the most effective ways of handling the drugs problem in Ireland, based on an analysis of the available information and research. The Committee is made up of representatives from Government Departments and community and voluntary groups who work with those affected by drug misuse. In September 2002, the NACD launched a community and voluntary research grants scheme to generate innovative community-based drugs research.

A National Drugs Strategy (2001 - 2008) has been developed with the co-operation and input of various State agencies and voluntary and community groups working in drug affected areas throughout the country. A National Drugs Strategy Team oversees the implementation of the strategy at national and local levels. It reports to an Inter-Departmental Group of senior civil servants that monitor Government policy in relation to drugs. Four areas were pinpointed in the Strategy as being crucial in any attempt to address the problem:

- Reduction in the supply of drugs;
- Prevention of drug use (including education and awareness);
- Drug treatment (including rehabilitation and risk reduction);
- Research into the causes of the drug problem.

Ballyfermot Local Drugs Task Force was one of fourteen established throughout the country. It was hoped that the Task Forces would help the Government to respond more effectively to the drug situation and would also allow members of those affected communities a chance to get involved in the fight against drugs. The Task Forces were asked to prepare Action Plans for their areas, which would co-ordinate the drugs services that already existed and would identify and eventually fill in any gaps in the services. Members of community and voluntary groups

and elected officials were asked to work with Government agencies in coming up with new and more effective programmes of education awareness, prevention and treatment. Ballyfermot Local Drugs Task Force plans, implements and monitors the local drugs strategy.

Plan 1 of the strategy was implemented between 1997 and 2001. There were a number of goals in the strategy at this stage. One of these was to lobby for the more effective delivery of drug and alcohol services by the health authorities. A key goal was to facilitate ownership of the problem by local residents and their active participation in delivering solutions. In the short term a number of specific aims were set. These included expanding peer education relating to the misuse of drugs, aimed at those in the 15-25 age range. Encouraging children to remain longer at school was also seen as a means of reducing the potential demand for drugs. There were programmes which engaged with early school leavers in a fresh attempt to renew their interest in education and life long learning. A trained drugs worker was employed to visit those families at high risk of drug misuse. A needle exchange clinic now operates out of Ballyfermot Health Centre.

Plan 2 of the strategy commenced in 2001 and ran until 2004. The emphasis during this period was to build on the experiences gleaned from the earlier period of strategy implementation.

Frank stressed that tackling the problem of drugs misuse requires a multi-agency solution. Wider issues of social inclusion need to be addressed. Firstly, there must be the political will to address the key issues. This is an essential prerequisite to any improvement in the delivery of public services. Secondly, any Action Plan compiled at local level requires adequate resources. A key issue in community capacity building is that it requires to be driven from within the community. Community engagement is vital to ensure local ownership of what is happening. Frank also highlighted that any intervention programmes must be well planned and of a high quality. Evaluation of programme outputs is an important element of any strategy. The research and evaluation aspect of the drugs strategy was required at this stage.

The problem of drugs misuse in Ballyfermot is an on-going one. There has been no magic solution to the problem. However, the problem is now being tackled in a more strategic approach. Mechanisms of prevention are now in place, as well as programmes of rehabilitation to help those caught in a cycle of drugs misuse. A Drugs Prevention Group promotes an awareness and educational programme, such as visits to local schools. The supply of drugs is still as prevalent as in the mid-1990's, so any improvement strategy must seek to reduce demand. However, there is now a better appreciation of the drugs issue, with a more concerted policy to reduce the scale of the problem. By raising awareness of the dangers of drug misuse and educating people as to its possible effects, there may be a good chance that demand for harmful drugs will be reduced. Resources have been put into the effort to combat the supply and demand for illicit drugs by a range of Government Departments, State agencies, and the community and voluntary sector.

In conclusion, the Ballyfermot case study illustrates how community capacity building came about as a result of a community's desire to tackle a social problem that has blighted their area. The initial reaction of the community was to remove the source of supply of drugs. However, a much wider range of responses was required. Through the experience of tackling a specific social problem, a community capacity building process materialised through the work of the Local Drugs Task Force.

Summary of Conference Discussions - The Lessons for Community Capacity Building

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The conference provided an overview of recent policy developments and current thinking in relation to the community and voluntary sector. The policy context of the sector was examined at both national and local level. Funding of the sector in Northern Ireland is in a process of change, and this issue was raised during workshop sessions. The issue of how the sector may be encouraged to engage in the delivery of some public services was debated. How capacity building relates to this proposed new model of activity was explored. The role of the community and voluntary sector was also reviewed in relation to policies of social inclusion within disadvantaged communities. The recent Government initiative on neighbourhood renewal was debated, which is of relevance to some neighbourhoods in Northern Ireland.

The workshops provided a variety of case studies that reflected the various types of capacity building that can occur. Some of the experiences have been more successful than others.

The following main issues were raised during the conference:

- The conference highlighted the key role of the community and voluntary sector in any strategy of tackling social disadvantage and the promotion of social inclusion in local communities. The sector provides a vital overlapping linkage between the personal world of individuals, Government and business bureaucracies. No other sector fulfils this role to the same extent as the community and voluntary sector. The sector can reach out to those socially excluded groups that fall outside the net of state provision. It can mobilise and empower local people to help address local problems. Therefore, the sector is inherently well positioned to bring about positive change for local communities and clients.

- Capacity building can occur at a number of levels and affects individuals, organisations and the wider community. Capacity building will require differing approaches for the wide range of organisations and groupings that comprise the community and voluntary sector. Each organisation will have to examine where it wants to go and then decide what organisational changes will be required. The case studies reviewed during the workshops highlighted that capacity building is about increasing the role and activities of organisations in the sector. There is a danger that resource allocations are not used to build capacity, but merely used to sustain delivery of existing projects. There is a clear need for the sector to fully understand the nature of capacity building, and ensure that organisations engage effectively in the development process. For some, this may involve a radical change in direction and ethos.

- There is a relationship between social disadvantage, neighbourhood decline and the delivery of public services to these communities. In all cases, there is a poorer level of service delivery and outcomes. For social inclusion to occur and disadvantaged neighbourhoods to be regenerated, there must be an improvement in the provision of public services. Community and voluntary organisations can play a pro-active role in bringing about change. Firstly, they can advocate and lobby the various statutory agencies to ensure levels of service

provision meet the needs of clients in these communities. This may require services to be delivered differently compared to normal mainstream mechanisms. The 'mainstreaming' of public services within disadvantaged communities is a key challenge under the neighbourhood renewal initiative. Secondly, community and voluntary organisations may wish to consider the delivery of public services within their communities. In the past the Government has used the voluntary sector for the delivery of low level services. Concerns were raised during workshop discussions about contracting out of public services. Some participants felt it might compromise the integrity of community and voluntary organisations and undermine their autonomy. This raises fundamental questions about the core purpose of the organisation. However, for those agencies and groups that wish to enter this arena of activity there are obvious capacity building implications.

- The conference discussions highlighted that any intervention programmes aimed at enhancing the quality of life of citizens/clients must represent organisational excellence, both in terms of delivery and outcomes. This has implications for the internal governance, management and accountability of organisations within the sector. It may require a more focused skills strategy for the sector that ensures the necessary competencies are in place. The sector must have the capacity to deliver an excellent level of service, which will require investment in skills training and internal governance systems.

- The relationship between the community and voluntary sector and social enterprise was explored. It was suggested that for the sector to become more sustainable then social enterprise activities may need to be considered by organisations. The social economy delivers services and creates employment and income, in many cases for disadvantaged people and communities. Social enterprises contribute to the increase in Social Capital. They also provide another channel for public funds to be leveraged to disadvantaged areas and communities. Social economy enterprises also draw in volunteers, thereby increasing active citizenship and community involvement. Government can provide appropriate outreach, information and support to those in the sector who see realistic advantage in applying a business-like social economy approach to their activities. Access to a wide range of business advice, guidance and training is as essential for a social economy enterprise as for any business enterprise. This would necessitate the development of enterprise skills within the sector, and a change of mindset away from dependency on grants. Financial and technical support for the social economy needs to be mainstreamed rather than marginalised in Government economic development policy. In Northern Ireland Government policy seeks to actively foster and develop social economy enterprises and strengthen existing ones to enable them to be more competitive and sustainable. However, social enterprise activity may be of relevance only to some organisations within the sector.

- The importance of engaging local people and volunteers was highlighted in much of the discussions. This is of particular relevance to voluntary organisations, but is equally important to the community sector. Community involvement is a key factor in successfully tackling many of the problems of social disadvantage and exclusion. Communities must be *informed* and *involved* in key decision making processes on priorities and funding relating to physical, economic and social regeneration. There is a need to discern between capacity building programmes based 'in' communities and those that are 'community based'. Community participation is the foundation of active citizenship and empowerment, which is a key aim of Government policy on neighbourhood renewal. It is noted that in England at least 51% of the members of Neighbourhood Renewal Boards must be from the local community. Community involvement was central to the setting up of the Local Drugs Task Force in

Ballyfermot, and the management of some of the programmes initiated by the Task Force. As well as engaging local communities and volunteers, this commitment needs to be maintained over time. Holding on to the initial enthusiasm has been a difficulty for many community groups. Inclusiveness and a 'bottom up' approach will help to ensure that engagement of local people and volunteers is maintained.

- While funding is of vital importance to the sector, it was highlighted by conference participants that the 'volunteering' ethos is still an important input to the workings of community and voluntary organisations. 'Volunteering' is a key facet in building a sustainable community sector. The contribution of volunteers cannot be underestimated, for without them many programmes and projects would not be possible. People's willingness to give their time freely to regenerate their neighbourhood or help others is a crucial resource for the sector. There are some concerns within the sector that this voluntary ethos may be lost due to increased emphasis on funded public service delivery. There is research evidence to indicate that an increasing reliance on financial support from public sources can be correlated to a marginalisation of volunteers. The empowerment model of capacity building accepts the existing role of community and voluntary organisations, and from this base the sector can enhance its role of lobbying on behalf of local communities and clients. Although Government policy towards the sector tends to be based more on the deficit model approach, there is also a need to view the sector on its own merits and existing roles.

- For capacity building to be meaningfully engaged and sustained, there are core funding issues that require to be addressed. The current regime of short-term project funding allows little scope for organisational development, and thus for enhanced delivery of service. There is a general consensus of opinion that a longer-term strategic approach to funding is required. This provides challenges to the community and voluntary sector and funding bodies. The 'Investing Together' report on Resourcing the Voluntary and Community Sector in Northern Ireland has outlined a 'social investment' approach, which seeks to develop the assets of organisations and communities. The report suggests that rather than focusing on grants, the sector should expand its capabilities of wider income generation. It was highlighted by conference speakers that funders will require to move to a longer-term framework, probably with a planning horizon of up to ten years. A more strategic approach to funding, with increased focus on the quality of outputs and their relevance to agreed outcomes, could lead to a new working relationship between Government and the sector. Many in the community and voluntary sector would argue that funders need to be prepared to take risks and be more forward thinking in their appraisal of funding applications. There would be a need for greater flexibility in the setting of funding criteria, which may allow more groups to become involved in addressing local problems. There would also be a need for funding regimes to be less complicated and bureaucratic. Small voluntary organisations are at a disadvantage with the administration of more complicated funding and monitoring requirements. The scale of financial monitoring should be appropriate to the level of funding. The issues of encouraging a reserves policy and full cost recovery in funding and tender applications need to be addressed in the immediate future if the sector is to become engaged in the delivery of public services. For the community and voluntary sector there will be a requirement to move from the current short-term approach to a longer-term focus on programme funding. The sector will need to demonstrate 'added value' in its activities to justify the longer-term commitment of funders. The internal governance of the sector will require development to ensure efficiency in operational activities and effectiveness in outcomes. As highlighted in the 'Investing Together' report, high standards of

governance across the sector are critical to ensure the confidence of the general public and other key stakeholders. This would necessitate an internal governance strategy for the whole sector, with appropriate investment by Government to ensure implementation across the sector.

- The issue of sustainability will be critical for the long-term development of the sector. Many organisations are currently reliant on a small number of funding streams and competition for such support is fierce. European funding after 2006 remains uncertain and consequently groups will have to consider their future options. Core funding in the future will be more investment driven. There will be an increased focus on ensuring that funding invested in local communities is not squandered due to a lack of sustainability. Issues such as a reserves policy, social enterprises and contracting out of public services offer opportunities for organisations to create a firmer financial base for future growth and development. There will be a need for the sector and Government to explore wider embracing strategies and programmes, possibly based on a more thematic approach to social exclusion. Also, there may be scope for greater collaboration between groups in the development of initiatives and funding bids. In the past, community and voluntary organisations have often competed with each other for funding.

- David Simmonds highlighted that capacity building is not an end in itself, but a means to sustainable improvement in the quality of life of communities. The sector must be fit for the various roles in which it seeks to operate. There is a need to define what capacity building means to organisations, the services they provide, and the communities with which they engage. Capacity building must ultimately have a positive impact on the organisation and the wider community. There is a need for the sector to modernise and change. There are opportunities and threats in any change process, but the sector will need to operate with creativity and innovation to meet local needs and take advantage of those opportunities that may arise. Organisations will require the capacity to take those opportunities. Initially, the focus will be on improving the capacity of community and voluntary organisations.

There are a number of critical challenges facing the community and voluntary sector in the future. These include internal and external issues that are impacting on organisations and groups delivering services within the sector. This conference has highlighted some of these key issues: resourcing and governance, future roles and sustainability of the sector, social investment funding, and the changing environment regarding delivery of public services and disadvantaged communities. These issues require further discussion across the sector itself, and by those statutory agencies that work with the sector. Weaknesses in community infrastructure are recognised as problematic for some of the most disadvantaged communities and these issues were highlighted in the conference. Contributors to the conference acknowledged that scope exists for further development of the community infrastructure and capacity building by organisations and community groups. These and other issues need to be taken forward in a planned and constructive format, within the emerging public policy context, by the relevant organisations.

In conclusion, the issues are of such fundamental importance to the community and voluntary sector that there is an urgent requirement that the debate be taken forward in a meaningful and constructive manner. That debate needs to be engaged in now for the sector to respond positively to future demands on its infrastructure and resources, and to ensure that communities have sufficient capacity to meet their needs.

Profiles of Conference Speakers 6

Joe Montgomery

Joe Montgomery holds the post of Director General of the Tackling Disadvantage Group within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. The Group's primary purpose is to take a leading role in reviving the most deprived neighbourhoods, reducing social exclusion, supporting society's most vulnerable groups, and tackling homelessness.

Joe's previous position was as Executive Director of Regeneration for the London Borough of Lewisham. He has extensive experience of funding issues and urban renewal from his work as Assistant Secretary to the Cadbury Trust, as leader of the Government's Inner City Task Force in Deptford, and as Chief Executive of one of the 'Pathfinder' City Challenge urban regeneration companies.

David Simmonds

David Simmonds is Director of the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion in London. He has been involved in social exclusion issues, labour markets, and regeneration policy for the past twenty years. He was a Beacon Council Specialist panel member in 2003 for 'Removing Barriers to Work', and a Special Advisor to the House of Commons Select Committee on Work and Pensions.

David has been involved with a wide range of task groups and advisory panels. He has advised the Government on the development of welfare to work policy, particularly StepUp, Employment Zones and Action Teams. He was involved in establishing innovative new networks and organisations, such as the Training and Employment Network, Urban Forum, and the Black Training and Enterprise Group.

Dave Wall

Dave Wall is currently Director of the Voluntary and Community Unit within the Department for Social Development, a post he has held since December 2000. He has extensive experience in the voluntary sector. Between 1983 and 1987 he held a number of senior positions within the Citizens Advice Bureaux in England. In 1987 he returned to Northern Ireland to take up the post as Chief Executive of NIACRO.

Dave has been Chairman of the Advice Services Alliance, Chairman of Community Evaluation Northern Ireland, and Vice Chairman of NICVA.

Frank Gilligan

Frank Gilligan has worked in the Dublin area for a number of years in the drugs field. He has a broad experience of all aspects of drugs intervention and now works in policy formation within the sector. Ballyfermot Local Drugs Task Force was formed in 1997 as a response to the worsening heroin problem in the area. In 2000 the Task Force began the process of developing a local drugs strategy for Ballyfermot, and the National Drugs Strategy Team approved this in 2002.

Hans Schlappa

Hans Schlappa is currently Research Manager of the Centre for Voluntary Action Research at Aston Business School. He has over twenty years work experience in voluntary organisations and local government, managing urban regeneration and community development programmes. Hans has in depth practical experience in addressing problems that arise in regeneration partnerships between voluntary and governmental organisations. He now manages a range of research projects concerned with the issues of organisation and management in voluntary organisations.

Margaret Daly

Margaret Daly is currently Partnership Manager with Greater Pollok Social Inclusion Partnership, a post she has held since April 1999. Located in the south west of Glasgow, the area has been blighted by many symptoms of poverty and social disadvantage. The Partnership has worked closely with the local community and funded a number of initiatives to support young people to achieve their full potential, remove barriers to work and training, raise awareness of healthier lifestyles, and support people out of poverty.

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The PowerPoint Presentations used by all six speakers during the conference can be accessed via the North Belfast Partnership website.
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Additional Reading Sources

8

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