



# Welcoming Communities: Working for inclusion



## WELCOMING COMMUNITIES: WORKING FOR INCLUSION

*'What is community work practice? Community work practice is a way of working with communities and groups to achieve positive social change, equality and inclusion. It seeks to enable the active, visible and critical participation of previously excluded people in decision-making structures. This we believe is central to the achievement of long term sustainable change within society.'*

*Mobilising for Social Justice – Migrant Rights Centre Irelands' community work model.*

Feelings of exclusion, of being ignored, are increasingly commonplace in an ever more inter-connected world. People talk of living in 'bubbles' with perceived reality being different depending on peer group, location and income/educational level. Communities of interest are posited against communities of place, albeit that identity is never one-dimensional. How does this play out when refugees or migrants arrive in local areas? This is the question that The Social Change Initiative and Centris discussed with 25 experienced community development practitioners and organisers from the UK, Northern Ireland and Ireland. They were asked to reflect on the current opportunities and challenges of community development, community organising and the inclusion of refugees and migrants.

Held in May 2017, in Newcastle (UK), the location was deliberately selected given that areas with little history of migration are often those most vulnerable to tension and the politics of blame when migration levels rise. Seminar participants represented refugee/migrant focused work, place-based community development and youth and community studies. This is their report.

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Several ideas surfaced repeatedly over the two days:

- **Building Relationships** – crucial to any successful community work, particularly when potentially divisive issues surrounding the inclusion of refugees and migrants are at stake.
- **Values** – clear values ground and guide community action and community work. They also help to frame the expectations of all those involved in the process.
- **Aspiration** – community activists often feel that they are on the defensive; it is important to have the freedom and space to put forward a vision of society based on values rather than settling for less.
- **Language** – care is needed with words since labels can reinforce assumptions, reinforce imbalances of power and stereotype people.
- **Power** – must be recognised and interrogated at all levels. In community work practice the acknowledgement of power relationships is linked to empowerment.
- **Creativity** – a valuable asset that should not be under-estimated. Culture and arts open up fresh ways of engaging with people resulting in cross-sector dialogue with unusual allies.
- **Resources** – always a challenge, but it is important to convince funders of the value of long-term, clearly framed community development work.
- **Feed your souls** – it is important to reaffirm the joy of doing things well in cooperation with other people, and maintaining motivation and commitment.

The contribution of a seminar participant travelling from Glasgow set the context for the gathering:

*“Twenty-four hours before I left for Newcastle an increasing number of children and adults were reported as having lost their lives at the Ariana Grande concert in Manchester. After commenting on the glorious blue-sky weather in Newcastle that morning, it was the first topic of conversation with the taxi driver on the journey to the city. Whilst the Muslim community in Newcastle was long established, he was concerned about the backlash. A second-generation Muslim immigrant he was worried about his younger sister (who wore the hijab) that she might be a target for racists, being more easily identified as a Muslim woman. A short but honest exchange, it established the most pressing context; the ever-present reminder we are engaging in community work and working with communities for change in unprecedented times.”*

Understandably, apologies were received from two practitioners invited from Manchester. For the Glaswegian community educator, as for other participants, there was the reality that community work is often practiced in deeply divided and diverse communities. A challenge exacerbated by simplistic stereotyping of white disadvantaged communities as 'racists', and asserting that incoming immigrant communities need to be 'assimilated' (thinly veiled as integration), rather than identifying and tackling root causes of deprivation and marginalisation.

## **The A, B, C of Community Development**

Neighbourhoods and communities are multi-faceted and heterogeneous in composition. Across Britain and Ireland, they encompass long established white communities; new arrivals; longer established ethnic minorities; people without official documentation and a multiplicity of identities and economic circumstances. People can, and do, come together around shared interests and concerns over and above ethnic, or other, identities. However, for this to happen they need to feel welcome, be encouraged to participate and see a reason to engage in collective action for change.

Seminar participants emphasised the centrality of relationship building as crucial to any successful community work. Positive relations imply respect for local people in all their diversity; listening to people and building trust. This does not happen from behind a desk. One practitioner argued the importance of at least six months of initial relationship building within communities, with sensitivity being shown to local anxieties and community history. In bringing people together (invariably a starting point in community action) assumptions cannot be made about how communities organise themselves or interact internally and externally. It is essential to take the time to find out.

*'Community development practitioners work alongside people in communities to help build relationships with key people and organisations and to identify common concerns. They create opportunities for the community to learn new skills and, by enabling people to act together, community development practitioners help to foster social inclusion and equality.'*

*Community Development Exchange*

Community work is happening in multicultural, and increasingly multi-ethnic, communities across the UK and Ireland (Northern Ireland and the Republic). In situations of internal community fragmentation and increasing levels of poverty and austerity, it often has to deal with the tendency to scapegoat and blame 'others' for community-level frustrations and anxieties. In previous years this blame culture might have targeted lone parents, young people, and/or those in receipt of welfare benefits, now it can focus on immigrants and refugees. The challenge for practitioners is to help people look beyond stereotypes by creating the conditions for positive relationship building.

*"We organised a mini-festival in a village near Glasgow bringing migrants and the community to share food/music/stories and talk with each other."*

Arts, sporting events, festivals, social gatherings are all mechanisms for people to meet and to break down barriers. It is important for organisers to take account of language differences, timing, what types of drink and food is served. The achievement of small steps can lead to bigger steps over time, but this requires continuity.

*"The most important first step is to listen compassionately to peoples' experiences, hopes and dreams and to share our own. Unless we spend time building up trusting relationships it will be really difficult to bring about inclusion. We may need to help people to tell their own story and to listen to others. Then we need to find ways to help them to help themselves and be part of the community."*

Neighbourhood relationship building in the increasingly diverse area of the Lower Ormeau, in Belfast, developed into an agreed strategic community development approach that focused on the three priorities of (i) Early engagement and intervention with children, young people and their families; (ii) Housing and accommodation; and (iii) Anti-racism and community security. The Creating Cohesive Communities Strategy was co-designed and implemented with new community residents.

## Practice Note 1 –

Taking the time for relationship building and trust is essential. This must be grounded in awareness of community composition, existing organisations and differing interests. Being creative about ways of getting people together is a good beginning, but initial contacts need to be built on and deepened. Minority and/or marginalised groups and individuals in the community must be invited to participate, not expected to respond to a leaflet (in English) passed through the letter-box. Relationship building takes time and deliberate outreach.

## The Contribution of Community Development and Organising

There is a need to reaffirm the value of good community work in circumstances where austerity cuts have stripped away much of the community development infrastructure, particularly in England and Wales.



Grassroots organising is the process of supporting local communities to identify issues, opportunities and problems; to analyse them and to suggest solutions that reflect their vision of a better and more just society. However, to achieve this people must be supported to understand and address structural and systemic roots of problems. Issues should be named and challenged, such as the need to assert that racism and hate speech is unacceptable. This needs to be balanced with supportive space to discuss people's perceptions and concerns. Clarity of values is essential to guide expectations.

*“Community action as a means of community inclusion can facilitate direct dialogue with community participants to engage their voices and build trust and mutuality when planning inclusive strategies. Such early dialogue and inclusive participation are key to recognising the skill sets and priorities of refugee and immigrant groups who must be recognised as equal stakeholders in a community action process.”*

Community-based groups, organisations and associations can be seen to occupy a ‘middle layer’ between informal person-to-person help and formal service provision. They connect various strands of community and social networks through shared interests and proximity - Cordaid/SDP offer an infographic representation of the process of community organising –



*Providing information, alongside drawing on local insights, to counter misunderstanding and stereotypes held by individuals.*

*Greater self-confidence, focus and creativity by individuals can identify new community leadership and activism.*

*Individuals coming together can identify common issues and interests around which to prioritise action. It is important that participation is inclusive.*

*Collective action is needed to deliver on long term strategic needs while celebrating short-term ‘wins’ to build confidence and participation.*

*Communities are mobilised to influence, decision-making, as well as seeking participation in decision-making. Local capabilities and assets are maximised alongside working with others to seek policy changes at a macro-level.*

Community work practitioners need to garner local support to challenge any attempts to exclude specific groups or individuals. It is essential to continually pose the question 'who is not in the room – and why?'

The All Ireland Standards for Community Work (Community Work Ireland) advocates five core community development values to guide work –

- ✓ Collectivity (collective analysis, action and outcomes in pursuit of a just and equal society).
- ✓ Community empowerment (empowerment of communities by increasing their knowledge, skills, consciousness and confidence to become critical, creative and active participants).
- ✓ Social Justice and sustainable development (requiring an analysis of policy and legal change).
- ✓ Human rights, equality and anti-discrimination (recognising the multiple forms of discrimination experienced by many groups).
- ✓ Participation (the self-identification of needs and interests, as well as influence on policy-making).

*“Increasingly our interventions need to be influenced by a questioning of the sort of change happening and who is benefiting from it. The fight against racism must remain central to our collective efforts, and in this, the importance of not side-stepping issues that sees minority communities being pitied or condescended. Without power analysis and clear values our practice can deny people agency and ‘make them vulnerable’.”*

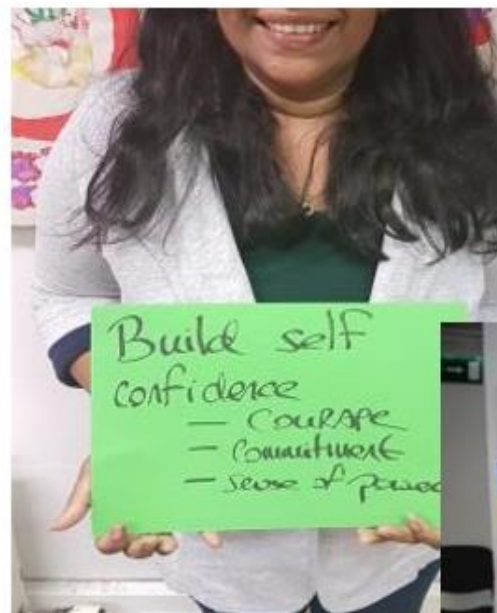
The practical application of these standards needs good local leadership, resilient community action groups and self-reflective community practitioners. Broad-based community action is where people themselves identify their most pressing needs, on an inclusive basis, and then are supported to take action to bring about the necessary change.

Community organising offers another framing for practice. Hope not Hate ([hopenothate.org](http://hopenothate.org)) work to move people from negative to positive positions within a spectrum of support that ranges from active opposition, through passive opposition, to neutral, to passive allies, and then into the active allies' category.



This approach differs somewhat from traditional community work practice in that it is clearly mission driven, seeking to identify and work with local activists that share a value-base and are potential allies. Employing local organisers, it assesses how relationships can be built with existing networks and community leaders, and what activities can deliver 'quick wins' to build confidence and participation. As trust grows, the range of activities that respond to local needs and opportunities can be expanded. Organisers emphasize the importance of being prepared to engage in difficult conversations about potentially divisive issues. One such conversation was a 'One Day without Us' event, which looked at a Britain without migrants.

The Migrant Rights Centre Ireland ([mrci.ie](http://mrci.ie)) also engages in community organising, where collective actions focus on critical issues affecting migrant workers and their families. This rights-based approach identifies campaigns as the 'output' from earlier stages of community work practice, participation and empowerment. For MRCI 'The Story of Me'; 'The Story of Us'; and 'The Story of Now' is an important starting point. Based on a model pioneered by US based United We Dream ([unitedwedream.org](http://unitedwedream.org)), this methodology raises visibility of refugees and migrants, alongside building their confidence and participation. It is an approach that can be adapted to local communities, more broadly, to build a sense of belonging.



Community organising strategies can supplement established community work practice.

*“When people meet and understand their own stories and those of others in the wider structural context they see how they share commonalities and can be directed to collective action.”*

### *Practice Note 2 –*

*It is hard to blame someone for a problem when they are sitting across the table from you at a community meeting and you hear their story. Practice shows that it is important to engage with people on the basis of their knowledge, skills and assets, as well as their needs and interests. It is important to find innovative and creative ways to encourage the sharing of stories, as well as portraying and discussing issues, so that knowledge of the bigger picture can break down local divisions as well as maximising solidarity and empathy.*

## **The Art of Difficult Conversations**

**‘Smoke signals are very loud compared to us’**

**From *Whatever You Say, Say Nothing* by Seamus Heaney**

The question was posed: ‘How do you talk to people in a way that they can hear?’ The issue of immigration often elicits loudly voiced opinions, with limited challenge. It is important to create conditions for meaningful conversations; preferably encouraged rather than engineered. There is a problem when people feel that discussion and debate is shut down. However, potentially controversial issues require safe space for people to feel comfortable to share their views in an open and honest manner. The approaches taken will vary from place to place given different local circumstances. Whatever the specific approach taken, racism and prejudice can be challenged by presenting alternative views in a manner that is neither personal nor judgemental. Understanding both what people think and feel, and why, is important for successful engagement in conversation. Evidence shows that simply bombarding people with ‘the facts’ is rarely effective. It is more important to engage their emotions/ feelings/ values.

The use of language is also critical. Care is needed with words used since labels can reinforce assumptions and stereotype people.

*"I work with asylum seekers and refugees and we experience some negativity, or at least a lack of enthusiasm, towards our work, especially from the media and the general public. We are trying to operate in what is becoming a very hostile environment."*

When confronted with negative tabloid press headlines, the key objective is to get individuals and groups with deeply entrenched views about each other into a process and to keep them there. The overall objective is how to use conversation to turn a scenario of 'us' and 'them' into 'we'. There must be sensitivity shown to the nature of silences, both of specific groups (such as women) and the gap between what is being said and what is being heard. Encouraging people to link beyond their own ethnic/identity community is essential.

Examples shared included conversational circles (based on the Scottish model for addressing sectarianism) which facilitated dialogue on difficult issues after initial levels of trust had been established between the participants. The use of community-based internet radio to raise issues which allowed people to ask questions of each other. Community photo booths for people to share their stories through words and photos. The offer of 'Dine at Mine', from Leicester, where members of the Muslim community invited neighbours and work colleagues to their homes. Community quizzes about who is who within the community and what are their stories. Inviting external speakers to raise issues can provide a safe base on which to develop deeper local conversations (an approach used between single-identity communities in Northern Ireland).

*"What art and culture offers to the field of community work practice is the capacity to amplify (when appropriate) often silent or unheard 'voices' and perspectives. It also brings to the table a flexibility of expression and storytelling."*

The creation of safe space for people to share stories and make connections was a common theme. Conversations need to be conducted at a pace, and over time, that the participants feel comfortable with rather than being dictated by artificial project

timescales. Facilitating difficult and sensitive conversations is not always easy, and requires training, support and encouragement.

The importance of supporting young people to navigate their own identity in peer group contexts was also raised. Community and youth work needs space for conversations about what belonging, and identity means for different individuals, drawing on the coming of age conversations that occur within peer groups. Young people must be encouraged to take a leadership role in this process.

### *Practice Note 3 –*

*It is not always comfortable or easy to engage in difficult or 'tricky' conversations. Invariably community leadership and confidence (on behalf of community members); self-awareness and sensitivity (on the part of the practitioner) is necessary as a basis for an honest and open two-way conversation that builds critical participation. Local people need the space to tell their own story – even if this is initially divisive. It is essential to keep people in a process that involves listening to one another and avoids stereotyping or blame. Training in how to facilitate difficult conversations helps. Working from a basis of trust and relationship building is essential.*

### **Avoiding Pity, Prejudice and Patronizing . . .**

One community practitioner felt that the idea of multicultural communities seems to have been delegitimised by the Brexit vote, with increasing divisions between migrant and white working-class residents apparent in the neighbourhoods where she works. She called for a renewed emphasis on inclusive community development as well as the need to see inclusion as a two-way process.

*“Currently there is increasing levels of fear around ‘the other’. This fear, and the related disconnection between communities, is experienced by British working class communities as well as newly arrived communities. This provides an opportunity to build relationships based on common experience of marginalisation”.*

The challenges remain – (i) how to connect/re-connect with people who perceive themselves as being ‘left behind’; (ii) in what way can community organising and community development encourage inclusive community reflection and collective

action; and (iii) how can community development proactively include incoming groups in a manner that enhances their positive contribution?

A practitioner currently supporting Syrian refugees complained that they are fed up being lectured about their difficulties. They want practical information: how to get jobs; how to access services. Many of them do not need one size fits all integration programmes. They already have skills; they want to know how they can apply them. People need to be agents of their own change rather than always presented as vulnerable. Dependency can result in people being further marginalised.

Supporting migrants and refugees to become activists themselves is effective. A seminar participant from Northern Ireland described how experience could be shared by taking 'diversity' into communities in a managed way (speaking at lunch clubs, schools, faith groups, etc.), with people who are migrants helping local communities to 'encounter difference in a different way'. Another practitioner pointed out that preparatory work can be important.

*"It is much more difficult and far more painstaking to take community action with refugee and immigrant communities – mainly because most do not speak English as their first language and also because their experiences and expectations are so different and because they cannot settle (during the asylum process) in one place for a very long time. However, I know that small steps are possible and these lead to bigger steps over time. In listening to the people, we identified some of their more pressing issues, e.g. to do with their accommodation. We encouraged them to tell their own story and a few of them ended up giving evidence in the Houses of Parliament".*

Concern was expressed that people from refugee and migrant backgrounds are lumped together in the popular mind, which can ignore differences in experience, as well as possible tensions within, and between, incoming communities. Packaging groups together in unwarranted general categories can do more harm than good.

*"We established a network of community organisations with the objective of facilitating genuine inclusion through mentoring and targeted supports. Working in partnership with a local youth service, a young Syrian woman was invited on to the Board of management and also supported to be a keynote speaker at a model UN conference. Through partnership work, four Syrian mothers were mentored into volunteering in the local youth service, i.e. summer camp and homework club."*

Where skills development is offered it needs to be purposeful, creating an 'ecology of togetherness' rather than being an imposition. One participant shared the simple test that she uses when approached by organisations offering courses to the refugee community that she works with – if they want to run a course, or give a talk or whatever, they have to explain what the benefit to the group will be. It is up to the group members to say yay or nay. This steers clear of potential 'parasitism': researchers who are more interested in their project; media who are only interested in the story; and the police who come under the rubric of community cohesion, but then stay and observe, even when not invited.

#### *Practice Note 4 –*

*Community activists need to understand incoming migrants as individuals who bring with them their own stories and skills, rather than grouping them as an amorphous category. Working with individuals enables opportunities to be identified for their participation in the full range of community services and provision. Equally, however, it is important that the onus of integration is not placed solely on refugee or immigrants themselves, but where services, such as language training, is required, they are available and accessible.*

### **Shifting the Lens of Integration**

The transformational potential of community practice was identified as unapologetically creating conditions for people to think beyond their current horizons. As an essential part of this process there is a need to create a counter-narrative to the prevailing one of fear and suspicion of 'the other'. The challenge at community level (as well as at other levels in society) is to facilitate people living comfortably together rather than apart. Community action needs to be aspirational; all too often it is defensive, limiting itself to mitigating the worst effects of the current system.

*"There is a lack of overall awareness amongst the public sector, and also many in the Voluntary Community sector, of the need to increase political literacy, and to develop 'empowerment' approaches. All work seems to be around delivering basic services which do not address conflict between groups, and marginalised communities understanding the systems impacting on their lives."*

Concerns were expressed about the self-censorship of the community and voluntary sectors in England and Wales in the light of competitive tendering procedures, the Charity Commission and the, sometimes, controversial implementation of the government Prevent programme.

Basic information is required to provide the context for local action. Robinson & Walshaw (<http://bit.ly/2iTErAw>) suggest three key questions –

- (i) In what ways, and to what extent, are the effects and consequences of new migration (for new migrants and longer-term residents) playing out in different ways in different local settings?
- (ii) What community challenges are emerging in different places as a result of new migration?
- (iii) What lessons have been learnt regarding the management of the changes wrought by new migration, including how community-based initiatives can limit tensions and resolve conflict between different communities and groups?

These questions need to be contextualised and considered against the broader national debates on immigration and socio-economic policies. Equally, the dynamics in rural communities will differ from large urban neighbourhoods, or indeed, from smaller towns. The characteristics of ‘community connectors’ (local people who are known to their neighbours) also differ in various circumstances. Knowledge needs to embrace both the local specificities as well as broader policy. The Scottish Community Development Centre (2015) argues the importance of fostering critical debates around democracy, citizenship and social justice as an extension of the context-specific in determining new ways of engaging with the state.

*“Social justice is crucial and this means that there is a necessity to work towards understanding different needs. . .Development workers can support this process by recognising that people are experts in their own lived experience and can identify needs, but also the solutions: they can move from passive recipients to active participants – and that sense of ownership in decision-making and power-shifting, can facilitate much of this work. It is in this area that development workers can generate conditions for social transformation.”*

Seminar participants recognised the importance of a practice that goes beyond fire-fighting local tensions, to explore how the commonality of experience across communities might contribute to shaping a fairer society. This requires personal and

organisational collaboration, which can be time-consuming, but brings the benefit of scale and the sharing of ideas and approaches that can fuel policy advocacy.

*“Starting community-led projects and working with the community is the most effective method to understand one another. Working with Maryhill Integration Network, we organise and create projects led by the interest of the community. Through this way, projects for asylum seekers, refugees and migrants are shared with the local community as well.”*

Collaboration can help organisations surmount the challenges of slender resources, scale and transferring a good idea from one context to another. Key considerations were who and how to partner with. One precondition agreed was that it is important to be clear about organisational identity and mission, as this helps to identify a ‘good fit’ amongst would-be collaborators.

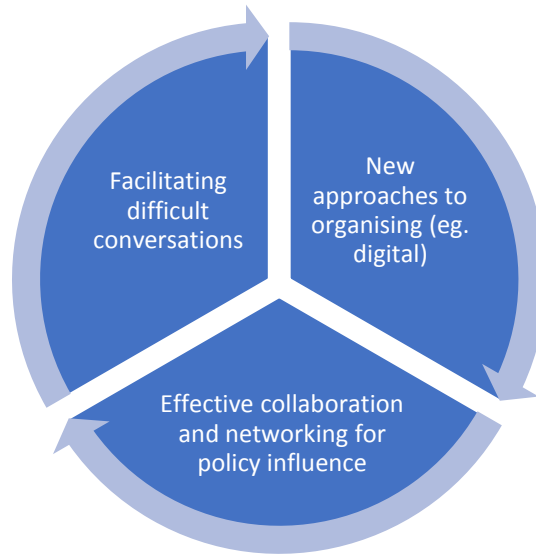
#### *Practice Note 5 –*

*The local community context is essential for people to reflect on their own lived experience and to exercise collective action, but it needs to be expanded through networking and collaboration to allow space for thinking differently and more expansively about broader policy issues, related to social justice, citizenship and democracy.*

### **Support for Community Practitioners**

The question as to how community development practitioners might be supported to play a more powerful role was considered. Concerns were expressed about the implications of the reduction in Youth & Community courses across Higher Education institutions in England (a reduction of 33 – one-third of previous courses). It was agreed that there is a need for both formal, and informal, youth and community development courses. The Activate programme, developed in the University of Glasgow, was cited as a tested informal community education approach.





New opportunities were identified in both organisational development practice, community organising strategies and use of social media. On a broader basis it is important to link into localised opinion research, and to be flexible in identifying and relating to non-traditional allies, such as faith-based groups, trade unions, etc. Community participation can also benefit from awareness of innovative approaches (including the arts); albeit different approaches are necessary to engage with diverse groups within local communities, particularly young people. Community practitioners need to be proactive in navigating the space between grievance and positive action. Pathways to change need to replace ‘whinge community action’.

*“Being part of a network of fellow practitioners who can (a) help maintain the confidence that is vital to this area of work and with whom one can (b) find creative solutions to sustainability, and who can (c) inspire and challenge one another.”*

It was also felt necessary to provide space for critical reflection within community activism. A Scottish practitioner demanded the right to reclaim the concept of being ‘radical’, because ‘being radical is no longer the norm’. Another seminar participant called for the creation of conditions to enable people to think outside the box.

Access to information, on an on-going basis, remains important. This relates to current public opinion on priority issues, such as immigration. It was noted that a Hope Not Hate survey (2016) found that only 17% of those surveyed believed that community organisations that work to bring people together from different

backgrounds (contact approaches) can play the biggest role in defeating extremism in communities. This compared with 20% who believed the answer was to control and limit immigration. Information is critical in informing the difficult conversations that are so necessary at a local level. Attention was also drawn to the framing that UN and EU Directives can provide for community-level rights-based approaches.

## The Contribution of Funders

Access to appropriate resources and funding, as ever, ran as a common thread through discussion of community approaches to inclusion. Funder timelines can be restrictive and their priorities set disproportionality within a metropolitan framing. There is a need to listen to the sound waves of alienation coming from disadvantaged communities in various parts of the UK and Ireland. Frustration can rapidly translate into anger, which itself can be misdirected against 'the other' that are increasingly visible in local areas. While there are limits on sources of statutory funding (notwithstanding the important role of local government) independent philanthropy was identified as having the power to open up a dialogue with, and between, people working at neighbourhood and community level in order to understand (and respond to) current pressures.

*"Where community action has been resourced, it has supported individuals as representatives of their communities to meaningfully participate in local decision-making spaces. Where it is resourced, and supported from a values perspective, it has helped to define the terms and conditions of a participative, social inclusion practice in local areas."*

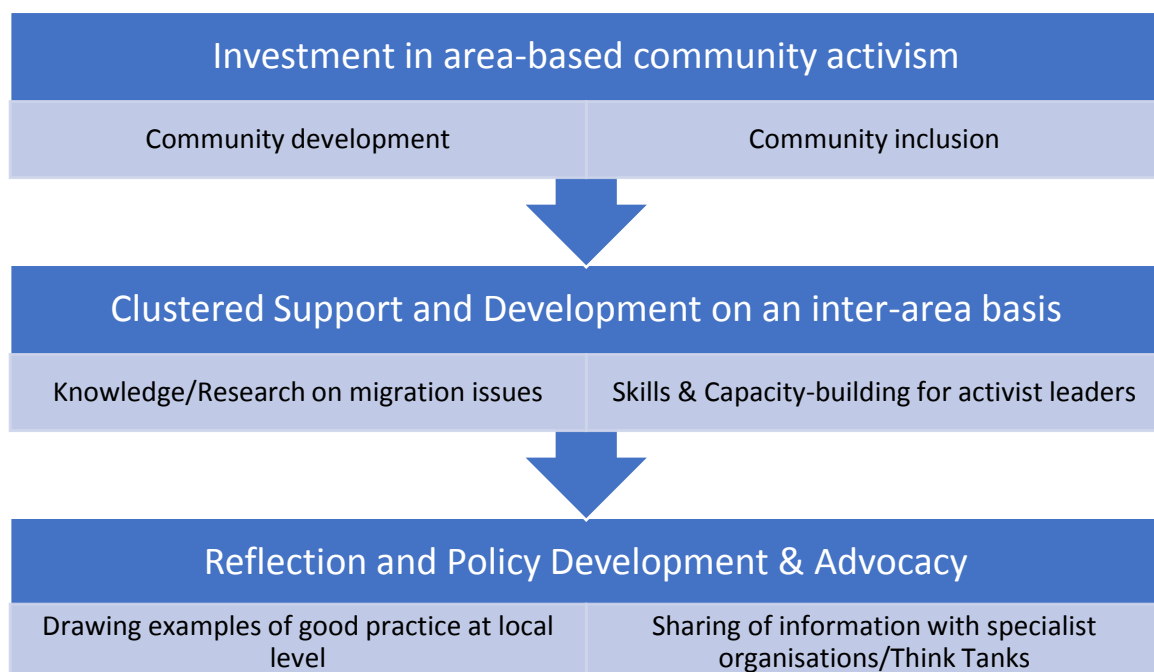
The Big Lottery Fund has identified the top 10 principles for effective community engagement –

1. Knowing the local context
2. Successful engagement meets people where they are.
3. Effective communication relies upon using the right language.
4. Trust is essential for people to take part.
5. Credibility is required to develop trust.
6. Patience and persistence can help to establish credibility.
7. Power is an important aspect of participation and engagement.
8. Being open and honest is important for getting, and keeping, people involved.
9. There are many different dimensions to being 'accessible'.
10. Meeting need depends upon being responsive, and working flexibly.

Arguably, these principles are as relevant and applicable to funders as they are to project promoters. However, funders have another card to play – they can ask grant assessment questions that raise issues of community inclusion and minority group participation in any place-based funding initiatives. They can also ask how racism and hate speech might be addressed in community development strategies. The posing of these questions serves to increase consciousness of this imperative.

*“Funders should think outside the box and beyond the major players; take risks on grassroots organisations and innovative projects. Re-fund successful work rather than chasing the next big thing – it forces organisations to abandon work that has been successful and this let’s down communities. This, in turn, makes it harder to re-engage people because they become disillusioned and feel that nothing ever changes. Accept that not everything works so being flexible means that things can change mid project to respond to need and not waste money sticking to targets that are not realistic.”*

One possible funder approach that could encompass support for local work, together with the sharing of information, critical reflection and networking that was discussed could adopt a variation of the following model –



Where independent funders are currently active in place-based grant-making, this model could offer additional elements that could provide an important added value dimension in relation to community inclusion of refugee and migrant groups. Where funders are not currently engaged in place-based grant-making, a Demonstration Programme could be designed to support a specific number of place-based initiatives, that could then be clustered for the added value dimensions. The benefits of this integrated strategy would be to:

#### **Local Level -**

- (i) Provide a set of area-based initiatives where community activism would be supported through community development, community organising and youth development.
- (ii) Ensure the centrality of community inclusion of potentially marginalised groups (specifically, but not solely, refugees and migrants) within these local communities.
- (iii) Explore, through structured community conversations, the hopes, fears, aspirations and concerns, of residents within a range of deprived local communities.
- (iv) Design, implement and evaluate effective methodologies for more inclusive and welcoming communities; and
- (v) Support community resilience, participation and leadership.

#### **Clustered Support Level –**

- (i) Provide networking and regular gatherings to enable area-based community activists to share learning and reflect on current issues.
- (ii) Offer specific training, skills development and support to underpin community leadership and resilience.
- (iii) Share research information and knowledge from organisations such as British Future, Hope Not Hate and issue-focused refugee and migrant sector organisations.
- (iv) Provide training in the art of facilitating sensitive conversations and in communications more generally; and
- (v) Generate a menu of exemplar strategies and approaches that could, in turn, be shared with the broader community, Local Authority and NGO sectors.

### **Policy Advocacy Level –**

- (i) Link work at policy development, Think Tank and special initiative level with the grounded experience from a number of disadvantaged areas.
- (ii) Monitor and assess the impact of current government policies, such as the Prevent Programme, Welfare reforms, Housing policies, and related issues on local communities, and groups of people within those communities.
- (iii) Provide insights into issues of racism, prejudice and hate speech as they manifest in local communities, and the relationship to media, political and other contexts; and
- (iv) Gather evidence to seek to influence policy development at Local Authority, institutional and Government (including devolved government) levels.

Seminar participants recommended collaborative funding programmes around areas of shared funder interest that might bring scale to such programmes. The possibility of independent philanthropy using its resources to broker community-level funding by partnering Local Authority programmes might also be an area of interest.

Finally, there was a thirst for dialogue with funders with a view to re-iterating the importance of process within, and between, local communities. New approaches may encapsulate innovative ideas, but the core baseline of relationship building remains central to community cohesion. The grassroots and grass-tops work needs to be informed by strategic communications data and framing; but the latter, in turn, need to be translated into the conversations that make sense within local communities.

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