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# Final Report

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## Report on Research into Evaluating Community-Based and Voluntary Activity in Northern Ireland

Commissioned by

***The Voluntary & Community Unit, DSD***

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**January 2003**

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**Published 10<sup>th</sup> April 2003**

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# 1. Context

Any analysis of indicators for measuring the performance of community and voluntary organisations should pay attention to the context in which they operate. In this case, the most general context is the Northern Ireland region, regarded as one of the poorest of the UK, as measured by GDP per head, average incomes and the proportion of the population falling below poverty thresholds. In 2000, Northern Ireland's GDP per head was 80 per cent of that in the UK. Amongst UK regions, Northern Ireland has the lowest percentage of its working age population with third level and A-level qualifications and also the highest percentage without any qualifications. In terms of long-term unemployment, the percentage of men unemployed for two years or more is almost twice that of the UK and the percentage out of work for five years or more is almost four times the UK equivalent. Households in the region are sharply divided between the work-rich and work-poor. The former enjoys continuous employment, UK determined wage and salary levels and cheaper-than-UK housing. The latter sees unemployment, frequently suffered by several members in one household, with the consequent impact on its deprivation levels.

The region is heavily dependent on public expenditure running at £10 billion per annum (including social security) for a population of 1.7 million. All sources of public revenue generate just over half of this sum, the remainder coming in subsidy, mainly from the British government but also from Europe. Public expenditure per head is about 36% higher than in England (41% of social security is included) and 30 per cent of employees are in the public sector.

The region is slowly emerging from 30 years of violent political conflict via a peace process that still encounters serious obstacles. The primary effect of political violence, other than 3,700 deaths and 40,000 injuries, has been to reinforce the alienation between the two religious communities. The existence of conflict and division has hindered the delivery of mainstream social policies in areas of greatest need, generated diseconomies by having to service two communities separately and inhibited local development. The advent of peace has created the opportunity for a more rational and effective governance system and for innovative approaches, which integrate development with a process of political reconciliation. The long-term requirements for regional development are:

- To substantially improve the competitiveness of its industrial base;
- To upgrade the quality of its labour force;
- To reduce public expenditure dependency;
- To facilitate local development and post-conflict social reconstruction;
- To reduce current levels of inequality and social exclusion;
- To effect a slow but effective reconciliation between two communities divided by religion, history and violence.

The voluntary and community sector in the region has grown substantially over the past 30 years. The fragmentation of political institutions and the retention of power by Direct Rule ministers created the conditions where community and voluntary organisations developed to fill the spaces left vacant by the absence of political representation. The sector positively contributes to the social, environmental and cultural life in Northern Ireland, playing a vital and complementary role alongside Government in

building the foundations of a more economically and socially sustainable society. NIVT (1999) argues that the region has some of the most dynamic and innovative community projects in Europe. Arguably, the sector makes a unique contribution to society through participative democracy, a unified approach to social and economic issues, generating new capacity through active citizenship/volunteering and mobilising the skills and talents of the most disadvantaged communities (NICVA 2000).

The sector in Northern Ireland is relatively larger than elsewhere in the UK and traditionally has received a higher share of its total income from public subsidy. Its development has been influenced by Northern Ireland's turbulent history. Community and voluntary organisations responded to the social casualties of the conflict through the provision of support and services. Under Direct Rule, and with the responsibilities of local government confined to a limited number of functions, community and voluntary organisations were seen to have representative and advocacy functions for both geographical and communities of interest. Moreover, it was assumed that the development of an organisational structure within segregated communities would better enable them to communicate and cross the sectarian divide. Because of its historic role, the sector benefited from EU and other international investment designed to bolster and guarantee the peace process. Thus, while Northern Ireland as a whole has benefited from higher per capita spending than England and Wales, the voluntary and community sector, because of its perceived role of social cohesion in a fragmented society, has also been relatively well funded.

In 1998, NICVA estimated that the annual income (equivalent to turnover) of the community/voluntary sector in 1996/97 was £514 million or around 4% of regional GDP. This made it a very substantial employment sector albeit consisting mainly of small organisations – almost half had income of less than £25,000 annually. An industry in which small-scale organisation prevails usually finds difficulty in achieving either economies of scale or scope. Such industries have low levels of productivity and tend to compete on price rather than quality or innovation. The structure of the community/voluntary sector suggests a diverse industry characterised by a multitude of small organisations whose competitive edge is based on low cost.

It estimated that 48 per cent of this £514 million came directly from government (£248.5 m.), 16 per cent from Europe (£82.6 m.), 19 per cent from earned income (£99.1 m.) and 16 per cent from grants and donations (£84.5 m). Thus 64 per cent of total income came from public sources given EU income is directly generated from the governments of member states. Since the UK is a net contributor to Europe (despite the rebate), in effect almost two thirds of community/voluntary income came from the British Exchequer. Thus, the cost of maintaining the sector in 1996/97 was over £300 million annually.

Like most service industries, around half of all income is spent maintaining staff with a further third devoted to the delivery of goods and services. About a sixth of all expenditure was disbursed in the form of grants and donations.

In terms of employment, in the sector provided 15,000 full-time jobs, 9,600 part-time jobs and just over 7,000 ACE posts (subsequently eliminated by the run down of that programme). About a quarter of all employees were male. Assuming that the various sources of income are directly translated into jobs, then public expenditure accounted for almost 16,000 of the sector's jobs. The NICVA personnel survey also suggested that the sector is characterised by a relatively small proportion of primary labour-market jobs and a larger proportion of secondary labour-market jobs. It has also extreme inequalities in the

terms and conditions enjoyed by its employees – in some cases, the average salaries of directors were more than five times greater than the lowest paid staff.

The NICVA survey reported that 79,000 volunteers freely give of their time to the sector. The average number of hours worked per volunteer was 8.5 about a quarter of a full-time job. It would thus appear that the sector had the equivalent of 20,000 full-time jobs in the form of volunteering. Even allowing for differing productivity levels between workers and volunteers, this is a very substantial contribution to aggregate activity.

In summary, the community/voluntary sector was heavily dependent on public expenditure with around £12,000 per worker per year in public subsidy (£15,151 if a part-time job is taken as half a full-time job). If volunteers are calculated as workers, then the level of subsidy falls to about £7,000. It is impossible to estimate community benefit since no comprehensive set of performance indicators has yet been applied the sector despite substantial research by the Voluntary Activities Unit of the DHSS. There is thus no satisfactory mechanism for undertaking value for money calculations.

The latest NICVA survey (2002) suggests that the number of organisations has remained stable, or even declined since the mid 1990s – ‘4,500 to 5,000 organisations’, a third of which are concentrated in the Belfast district council area. Employment was estimated at 29,168 jobs (16,092 full-time and 13,076 part-time) distributed between 8,088 male and 21,08 female jobs. Income was estimated at £657.1 million, a 9.6 percentage increase from 1996/97. There were 72,908 registers volunteers. NICVA distinguishes the categories of earned income and voluntary income where the former refers to purchases of goods or services to a client and the latter to public subsidy to deliver goods and services freely. In 2000/2001, income derived from central/local government and other statutory organisations amounted to £19 million in earned income and £226.94 voluntary income. European programmes accounted for a further £54.15 million – just over £300 million in total. Thus, from income from all these sources amounted to 45.6 per cent of total income.

In short, the sector remains a substantial component of welfare delivery and development and a significant employer of labour. Income from all public sources amounted to £10,285 per job (£13,256 converting part-time to full time jobs), even ignoring the contribution of volunteers.

However, following the Good Friday Agreement, the development of new political institutions in Northern Ireland has generated challenges for the sector. The political institutions created by the Belfast Agreement represent a new opportunity to experiment with innovative approaches at the regional level. The existence of a 'Civic Forum' to complement the Assembly means that a permanent think tank with strong community representation will be able to influence such developments. Social partnership has been a dominant theme in the creation of many of the new institutions. Blueprints for health, regional planning and economic development increasingly emphasise social inclusion and partnership as the themes that underpin regional policy. The small population of the region permits experimentation in new kinds of institutions and new kinds of programmes with possible significance for the rest of the UK and, indeed, Europe.

Significantly, the funding environment is also changing. New programmes, both mainstream and from Europe, are working with reduced budgets, more tightly focused objectives and have limited life spans. There is a sense that community and voluntary organisations are not good at demonstrating outcomes, may not be value-for-money, lack sustainability and are too dependent on public subsidy. The new

political environment has generated critical opinion, some of which feels that support should be concentrated on the declining incomes of the agricultural sector, others that Belfast has received too large a share of total funding and others still who frown on 'marginal' projects rather than the 'traditional' deserving targets of children and old people. Within a funding environment where the flow of resources is reducing in the long term, mainstream agencies are looking to concentrate resources on those projects that best deliver the statutory mission with quality interventions but remain economic and efficient.

## 2. The Rationale for Public Funding for the Community and Voluntary Sector

While there has been an extensive history of volunteering in the British Isles via religious, charitable, trade union and cultural organisations, the growth of a fully-fledged community and voluntary sector has occurred within the last 30 years. In the previous two decades, despite Beveridge's endorsement of such activity (*Voluntary Action*, 1948), the emphasis lay in developing the welfare state with an almost exclusive responsibility for the social welfare of citizens. Kendall and Knapp (1996) attribute this to the Fabian tradition of balancing the profit-seeking market with altruistic public provision – essentially a two sector social model. This was despite the long tradition of voluntary organisations delivering key services to citizens.

Only when it became clear in the late 1960s that state welfare was incapable of solving key social problems, while simultaneously remaining distant from many of those in need, did attention focus on alternative modes of provision. This was prompted by the 'rediscovery of poverty', the recognition that economic growth and full employment had failed to eliminate regional under-development (particularly in poorer regions like Northern Ireland) and the growing problems of inner cities and peripheral estates. Early examples of alternative provision were the Community Development Projects established to help tackle persistent urban problems. While these had limited long-term impact, they catalysed the community development movement and generated a range of radical theories about tackling social need and fostering social change.

The 1970s saw two different responses to the limitations of the state's exclusive role in the provision of welfare. The first was a growing recognition of the social contribution of the third sector, signaled in the Wolfenden Report (*The Future of Voluntary Organisations*, 1978). This developed the idea of welfare pluralism (the delivery of welfare from multiple sets of institutions) and argued that the activities undertaken by community and voluntary organisations would, if fully costed, add around £6 billion to GDP. Indeed, one commentator suggested that if the state assumed the responsibilities of such organisations, it would have to increase income tax by 12p in the pound to fund them. Besides attempting to scope the activities of the sector, Wolfenden urged government to work out 'a collaborative social plan which will make the optimum and maximum use of resources' warning that, in its absence, 'there will be over the next twenty-five years not only an incomplete realization of the potential contribution of the voluntary organisations but also an inadequate provision of help to our fellow citizens who need it' (p.193). Wolfenden saw the sector as extending and complementing the social welfare functions of the state while piloting new and innovative practices that would ultimately influence public policy. Wolfenden thus formally introduced a three-sector model of the delivery of social welfare. In turn, this implied a need to look at the interactions amongst these sectors within some overall approach to governance.

However, a different influence was the economic crisis of the mid 1970s that led many commentators to attribute the poor performance of the British economy to the size of its public sector, particularly the welfare state. Challenging the Beveridge - Keynesian precepts on which post-war social democracy was constructed, a new set of ideas viewed government management of the economy as a case of the undesirable in the pursuit of the unachievable. The concentration on demand rather than supply

side economics was detrimental to sustainable growth, while the key policy objective to maintain full employment eschewed other economic goals such as the control of inflation.

From this perspective, wealth redistribution had been allocated greater priority than wealth creation. This led to a profligate public sector, borrowing beyond its means in a vain attempt to catch up with the ever more generous definitions of social need and poverty. The 'ratchet' effect of a universalist welfare system had increasingly 'crowded out' the private sector, feather-bedded the work-shy, demeaned the work ethic, and imposed a penal tax burden on the risk-taking entrepreneur. The more impoverished the economy became due to the subsequent profit and investment squeeze, the greater the levels of unemployment and welfare dependence. In turn, this increased burden demanded escalating welfare expenditure, which only further eroded the capacity for wealth generation. It was a pattern that could only portend a grave fiscal crisis for the state. In other words, the relentless drive to egalitarianism not only dissipated enterprise, it also created a demoralising dependency on a state, whose decreasing tax base could not support an increasingly claimant society.

The recommended response was to reduce the scale of the welfare state, both in relative and absolute terms, while devolving responsibilities to other kinds of institutions. This not only widened choice for the consumers of welfare products but also allowed the market test of least cost amongst competing providers. Since community and voluntary organisations were able to mobilise the resources of volunteers who gave of their time freely to create a low cost environment, there was a clear rationale to 'contract out' services to such organisations. Since they were able to operate in situations where profit taking was either impossible or irrelevant (market failure), they could fill the spaces left vacant by downsized institutions of the state and the market place. Powell and Guerin (1997) argue that Margaret Thatcher saw volunteers as 'the heart of all our social welfare provision' (p.23).

However, different economic theories have disparate interpretations of the significance and impact of 'not-for-profit' activities. The role of the community and voluntary sector in the economy is thus dependent on the economic theory adopted. One set of theories stresses the need for agencies to undertake functions that are necessary for the economy as a whole, but not profitable for individual firms (e.g. education & training to maintain the quality of human resources in the economy). Moreover, forms of social support, which have little economic relevance (e.g. health care for the elderly), may still be important for reasons of social stability. Thus, one tradition in economics emphasises both the direct and indirect economic benefits of addressing social need. To the extent that such activity can be carried out more cheaply (or through raising non-government funds) by the community/voluntary sector while maintaining quality standards, the greater the imperative to decentralise to local organisations.

However, other theory stresses the fiscal costs of publicly supporting such activities and points to the 'soft-budget' cultures of organisations that rely primarily on public funds. In other words, because they are not subject to market disciplines, community organisations are inefficient and concentrate more on reproducing their own organisation rather than ameliorating social need.

Thus, the approach by government to the community/voluntary sector in the 1980s and early 1990s contained a core contradiction. On one hand, it made sense to devolve public sector functions to community/voluntary organisations in pursuit of a strategy of small government, but, on the other, there were fears about financial transparency and a lack of efficiency in organisations fully dependent on government for their income.

This led to the 'Efficiency Scrutiny of Government Funding of the Voluntary Sector: Profiting from Partnership' (Home Office 1990), which was based on:

- An examination of the full range of programmes which receive government funding;
- An assessment of the purpose for which financial provision was made;
- The different types of funding employed;
- Arrangements for the identification and selection of suitable voluntary organisations for particular tasks, the setting of objectives and the monitoring of performance;
- Arrangements for the administration of such programmes.

An issue of key concern was the lack of clarity of funders:

*Departments know generally what sort of work and what sort of bodies they want to support, but they do not have enough clear strategies for support. Money goes on a hotch potch of grants. Departments tend to respond to ideas from voluntary bodies in an ad hoc way, rather than seeing the extent to which those ideas fit in with their key policy objectives. (p.iii)*

When the report was launched the Home Secretary made clear that future funding would be based on the achievement of practical effect, harmony with departmental policy and appropriate monitoring and review. Thus, by the middle 1990s, there was a clear rationale for funding the community and voluntary sector. It was made up of five principles:

- The need to reduce the scale of public sector provision;
- The condition of market failure where it did not make sense for private sector organisations to provide the relevant service;
- A test of least cost;
- Correspondence with departmental policies;
- Full monitoring and review.

The bottom line of this rationale was sub-contracting activities that the public sector felt should be undertaken, but for which it did not wish to assume direct responsibility – 'The Efficiency Scrutiny of government funding of the sector carried out by the Home Office in 1990...laid down the principle that clear benefit for official policies must result from such finding.' (National Council for Voluntary Organisations, 1996, p.3) Importantly, the key consideration was least cost. With the important exception of market failure conditions, community and voluntary organisations were expected to tender for contracts some of which would also involve private sector bids. The process was competitive and was therefore congruent with the overall direction of public policy. Even where market failure was recognised, it was frequently assumed that community and voluntary organisations would be best placed to undertake these activities until market conditions could be restored. To survive in an environment of greater market discipline, community organisations had to become more like small businesses. Some welcomed the transition to a more business-like environment since these organisations were held to be inherently efficient. Others, however, argued that these kind of organisations made a significantly greater impact than just the delivery of social welfare contracts, were crucial in sustaining marginalised communities generally and operated with a set of values that did not sit easily with those generated in the market place. The requirement that community and voluntary

organisations become more efficient (more sector market-based organisations) to realise contracts from the public sector undermines the idea of a three sector model since the full participation of one sector (community and voluntary) is dependent on its capacity to fully emulate another (the private sector).

The election of New Labour once more reshaped the policy environment. Traditionally organised services and traditional methods of operation were achieving decreasing returns in a complex and more interdependent world:

- Problems did not come neatly packaged - they overlapped and interacted. They were spatially and socially concentrated. Accordingly, the distinctions between, for example, tackling deprivation and achieving competitiveness became increasingly blurred;
- The debate on social exclusion focused on those so marginalised economically, socially and personally that they fall through the safety nets of independently targeted services. The minimum criterion of success in tackling social exclusion was a co-ordinated, multi-strand approach;
- Moreover, simply delivering services to those in need assumes the absolute authenticity of 'professional knowledge' and encourages dependency. In turn, generated dependency has been castigated as moral deficit, which is why critics of traditional welfare refer to both its care and control dimensions. Modernising welfare means ensuring that intended beneficiaries participate in the design and implementation of welfare programmes, to have a stake in, and a responsibility for, their success;
- Lessons from the private sector point to competitive gains that can be achieved through clustering and co-operation. The public sector and the community and voluntary sector also has to make a similar transition;

One implication of this new approach is that people can no longer be the passive beneficiaries of jobs provided by business or services provided by government. Development has become everyone's responsibility. People, as stakeholders, are expected to participate in the design and implementation of new strategies as well as benefit from their outcomes. This not only liberates new energies for development but taps into under-utilised fonts of creativity. A further implication is that the barriers between government, business and civil society have to break down. New institutions involving inter-sectoral relationships through the mechanism of partnership are more capable of flexibly adapting to a rapidly changing world. Moreover, the development process cannot succeed if exclusively directed from the 'top-down'. Only a combination of top-down and bottom-up processes can generate the synergies necessary to increase the development gradient. As Blair argues (Renewal Vol.10, No.2, 2002, p.12):

*The state cannot do everything. After five years in government I know only too well that passing legislation, or making a speech, will not solve vandalism on estates, raise standards in secondary schools, look after the elderly at risk. The job of government is to provide investment, support and infrastructure for those trying to solve those problems at the local level.*

In effect, current government strategy is once more based on a three-sector model of society.

Such changes also require a shift in political culture. Government has to reinvent itself as an 'enabling state' in which the pursuit of equality of opportunity and social justice is no longer counter posed to an environment favouring competition and excellence. The new paradigm is characterised by slimmed

*down bureaucracy, with devolution of power to regions and revitalised local government and much 'governance' taking place through networks that include civil society.*<sup>1</sup> Business has to rethink its relationships within the market sector, including the valuing of employees as the most single significant production asset in economies that are increasingly knowledge, rather than resource, driven. The community has to see itself as being responsible not just for the care of its weaker members, but also for its own development.

The stated Blairite project of renewing the economy and building greater social inclusion has been linked inextricably to that of reshaping the government system (Bentley, 2000):

*Alongside a modernised enterprise economy, Britain's political leadership is committed to social renewal, institutional modernisation, and the creation of a society, which is open and innovative, as well as strong and inclusive (p.12)*

The basis for this renewal of governance has been characterised as a shift from providing to enabling; from representation to participation; from producer to client focus; from exclusive technocratic expertise to incorporation of local knowledge; and from departmental silos to integrated co-operation (Healey, 1999). Hirst (2000) suggests that the new governance is characterised by:

- Improvements in the transparency and accountability of public sector agencies;
- Decentralising authority and responsibility to the smallest feasible unit;
- Ensuring that markets are embedded in plural institutional networks;
- The inclusion of the socially weak in governance networks
- The development of social capital

Following attempts in the 1980s to marketise many public services, the more recent period may be seeing the shift from the colonisation of the public realm by private sector values to a greater inter-sectoral cross-fertilisation of ideas. The jury is out as to the motivation behind this pluralism, whether it is attributable to the downsizing of the state under fiscal stress, or whether it augurs a genuine redefinition of governance, enfranchising active citizenship and civic leadership. Much of this apparent shift could still prove ephemeral, leaving us with government by soundbite ('it's the economy stupid' / 'education, education, education'), driven by pollsters, spinners, and policy tankers. In this scenario, all that is solid about the Third Way melts into air, as government searches vainly for a foothold in the undulating topography of contemporary politics.

Assuming a more positive potential, the diverse partnerships emerging in the new landscape of governance offer a more inclusive scope for a wide set of stakeholders to collaborate for mutual added value. Entailing a protracted process of building capacities and relationships, this inter-disciplinary and multi-agency approach allows for the development of shared strategic visions, behind which structured collaboration can evolve. Of course, even in this favourable scenario for renewed democracy, tensions remain, for instance between the fragmentation that derives from the decomposition into slimmer administrative units and the compelling case for more 'joined up' government.

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<sup>1</sup> Democratic Dialogue (1998), *Hard Choices: policy autonomy and priority-setting in public expenditure*, Belfast, p.5.

The emergence of new forms of governance along such principles places a renewed emphasis on the role of civil society institutions and their relationship with government. If active citizenship and social partnership are to become real, particularly for those on the margins of society, then time and resources will have to be invested in developing the capacity to participate. The long-term gain of confident sustainable communities will reduce the costs of maintaining dependency. Participation in governance also implies accepting greater responsibility for tackling local problems rather than expecting unending welfare handouts. Shifting social intervention towards prevention rather than cure might just moderate the fiscal pressures on mainstream welfare provision. With this vision, New Labour hopes to eliminate the contradiction between efficiency and equity – a competitive, sustainable and inclusive society. There are many reservations whether the vision is sufficiently coherent to be translated in practice and whether it will be blown off course by bureaucratic inertia and economic uncertainty. Nevertheless, if taken seriously, it transforms the rationale for funding the voluntary and community sector from that established by Efficiency Scrutiny.

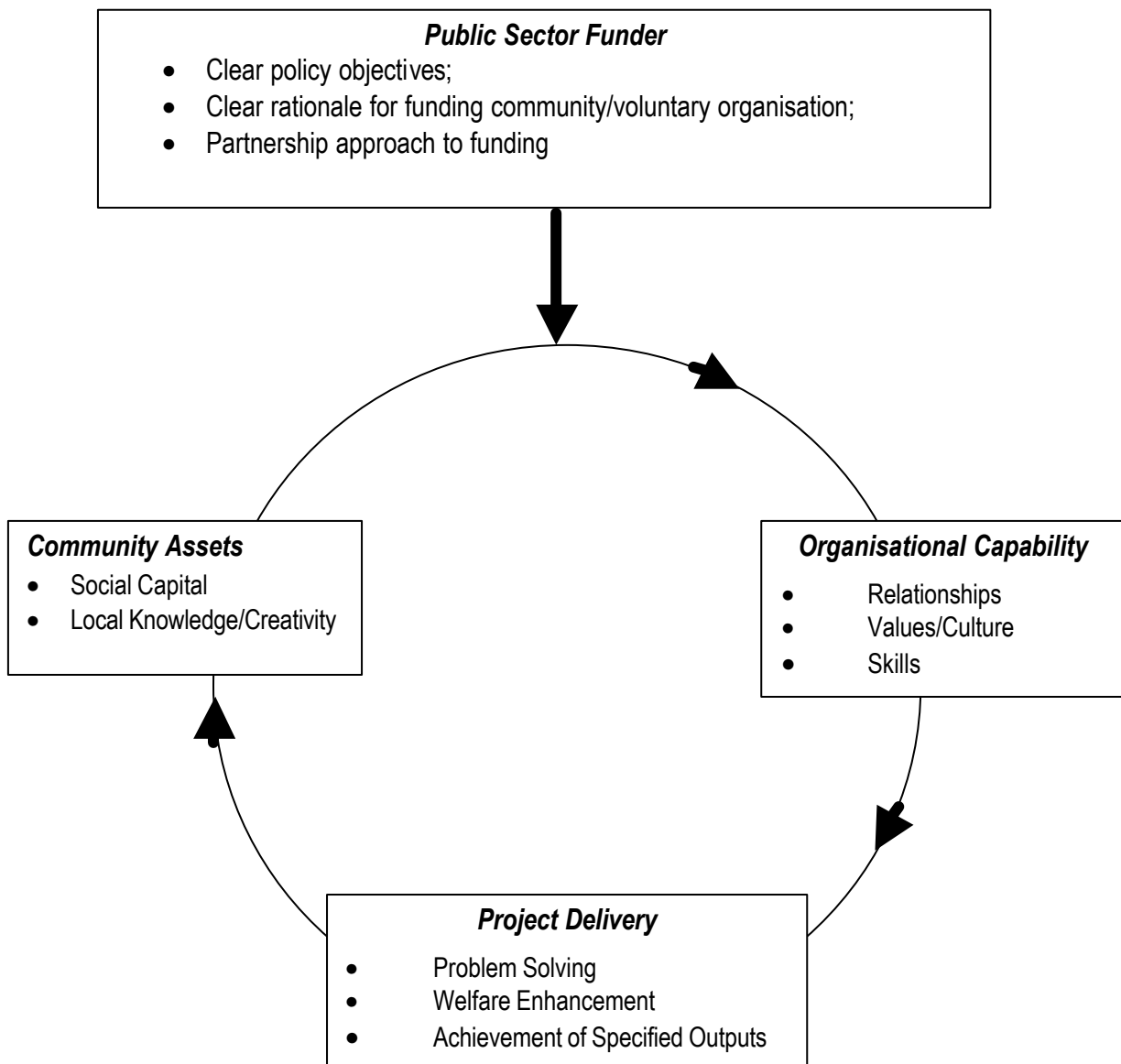
Such new relationships were strongly signalled in the Northern Ireland Programme for Government with its emphasis on working with the community and in partnership. Moreover, Northern Ireland has already embarked on an experiment in governance unlike that in the other devolved administrations of the UK – the incorporation of opposing parties in government, the existence of the Civic Forum and even the existence of parties like the Women's Coalition. Northern Ireland cannot be insulated from the debate about reshaping governance because the over-riding imperative is to find the means to resolve its long-term political conflict. Peace is merely a necessary, not a sufficient, condition for regional regeneration. The opportunity exists to test innovation in government's relationship with civil society and in healing the divisions of a fragmented civil society via new forms of partnership. Given the scale of the problems facing the region, it has become increasingly recognised that only innovative approaches will create the possibility for change. The continuity of existing approaches has been described as 'steady as she sinks'. New initiatives have tended to emphasise three dimensions: the necessity to integrate existing effort; the need for 'vertical governance' mechanisms (mainly partnerships between the private, public and community sectors); and the desirability of creating stakeholding, whereby the intended beneficiaries participate in the development and implementation of policy. Sustaining all three dimensions simultaneously has seen the emergence of new programme approaches, i.e., focusing on a total set of problems, developing integrated strategies, managed by partnerships, to tackle them and seeking the involvement of those affected in their solution. Partnership in Northern Ireland has been one of the rare 'dialogic spaces' where cross-community collaboration can be nurtured and the challenges of reconciliation and regeneration linked.

In this new environment, the logic for funding voluntary and community organisations changes. The Scrutiny Efficiency approach was to take a view on the nature of the organisation funded, the extent to which it could deliver departmental policy and how adequately it could be monitored. If the partnership ethos of government is more than mere rhetoric, what is required is a strategic engagement between funder and project about how programmes can be developed, about what the targets and outcomes should be and about what forms of monitoring are appropriate. Funding still has to be about delivering measurable programme imperatives, but funded projects should be within the umbrella of partnership rather than the status of sub-contractor – 'In short, the time has come for government to treat charities as partners in social improvement, and not as untrustworthy commercial contractors' (Burge, 1999, p.50).

This also suggests that funding is thus not just about financing an organisation to deliver specified targets, but is also an investment in its capability. In this sense, capability is about positive relationships with the relevant community, about flexible and adaptable problem solving and long-term sustainability. Funding shifts away from meeting the recurrent needs of an organisation to an investment in its long-term (and therefore less public-expenditure dependent) future. In this model, the rationale for funding becomes:

- Partnership and negotiation in deciding targets;
- Investment in community capability;
- The delivery of and demonstration of both.

This new funding rationale can be represented as follows:



### **3. Funding and Evaluation Policy**

The last decade has seen evaluation within the voluntary sector move from being a rarefied mysterious entity, seen as the preserve of academics and management consultants to becoming more and more part of the everyday experience and knowledge of people working in it. It is still much misunderstood and unloved, but there is certainly more awareness and understanding of its purpose and even potential value.

The Efficiency Scrutiny Review had a number of wider implications for the voluntary sector including the following.

- Providing opportunity to develop specific government strategy on support for the voluntary sector.
- Developing overall strategy as well as one for each discrete area of business.
- Partnership, not only in sense of funding, but also in terms of the involvement of the voluntary sector in the policy making process
- An explicit commitment to the principle of community development.

In Northern Ireland the first '*Strategy for Support for the Voluntary Sector and for community development in Northern Ireland*' was published in 1993. This document -

- Outlined strategic aims of NI departments in supporting voluntary sector
- Contained a statement of principle on governments support for the process of community development
- Recognised the potential role of the voluntary sector in the policy formation process
- Committed all departments to establish arrangements for the monitoring and evaluation of financial support provided to voluntary organisations

Following on from the publication of the Strategy a Voluntary Activity Unit (VAU) was established within the DHSS. The role of the VAU included:

- Coordination and review of policy
- Liaison between departments
- Promoting interests of the voluntary sector
- Monitoring the impact of the voluntary sector
- Increasing the effectiveness of the sector through encouraging effective practice, e.g. developing methods for monitoring and evaluation
- Acting as a channel of communication between government and voluntary sector

In 1996 the VAU published its '*Guidance for Government Departments on Commissioning and Conduct of Evaluations of Voluntary Organisations*'. This was the first attempt to establish arrangements for consistent monitoring and evaluation of financial support to voluntary organisations as recommended by Efficiency Scrutiny. This set out a rationale for evaluation in the voluntary sector with aims and guiding principles. It outlined general evaluation arrangements and procedures for the commissioning of

evaluations, including model terms of reference and suggested key areas to be addressed in the evaluation of a voluntary organisation.

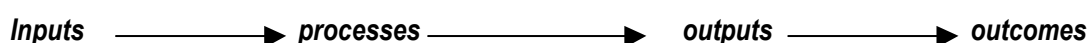
The Guidelines demonstrated that while accountability remained a priority, there was a recognition that the evaluation process should also be supportive and enabling to the project. The Guidelines recommended that projects should be consulted and involved in the commissioning, conduct and report of any evaluation. They also go into some detail as to how projects should be more involved in the process, particularly in the pre-evaluation preparation in terms of adequate prior notification, contributing to the terms of reference, the selection of the evaluator and agreeing the overall process. The Guidelines also recommend greater use of qualitative measures and ways of gaining feedback from users.

Also in 1996 The Social Services Inspectorate produced 'A Pilot Quality Standards Framework for the Evaluation of Voluntary Organisations'. This document set out to define quality standards for the running of a voluntary organisation including structures, systems, internal procedures and external networks, which would inform a consistent and comprehensive approach to their evaluation. The standards were primarily designed to provide guidance to the Social Services Inspectorate's own inspectors in the conduct of evaluations, but were also seen as providing a reference guide to voluntary agencies seeking to evaluate aspects of their own organisational activities.

The VAU guidance document outlined procedures for the commissioning and conduct of external evaluations and the SSI provided criteria to evaluate how well organisations were being managed and run, however there was still a need for a wider framework for evaluation which looked at the broader outcomes and changes resulting from the activities of voluntary and community organisations. Which lead to the focus on developing indicators to measure the outputs and outcomes of voluntary and community activity.

The VAU commissioned two pieces of work in the late 1990s, first by the Scottish Community Development Centre and second by Knapp & Kendall of the London School of Economics.

In their monograph on monitoring and evaluating community development in Northern Ireland, Barr et al take as their starting point the nature of community development itself. They acknowledge the multi-level character of the process itself, the different interests of communities, sponsors and agencies and the impact of sectarianism on Northern Ireland communities. Moreover, they suggest that the focus of the evaluation should be tailored to fit the scale of the operation (an evaluation of community development policy, a particular programme or and individual project) and propose an overall framework of



while agreeing that this formulation may under-represent the significance of positive unanticipated outcomes.

From these series of propositions a model of community development is constructed which has three dimensions:

- The first concerns resources (inputs) and identifies both community resources and those obtained elsewhere (particularly public agencies);
- The second focuses on community development and community empowerment (processes);
- The last outlines some of the gains resulting from the process (outcomes) – quality of life, sustainable communities etc.

Out of this model, a matrix of indicators is derived. The matrix consists of a set of core dimensions organised under the headings of **community empowerment** (personal empowerment, positive action, development of community organisation and power relationships and participation) and **quality of life** (economic development, social development, environmental development, community safety, community satisfaction and the long-term viability of the community). Each dimension is elaborated into a number of core elements, measures/indicators for these elements and the data relevant to the indicators.

In short, Barr et al, beginning with a definition of community development, disaggregate the process into a set of elements for which indicators can be identified. Central features of the definition of community development are capacity for empowerment and effecting social change together with an affirmation of core values (democratic accountability) and an assertion that community organisations are not reducible to vehicles for implementing public policy. There is thus a recognition that the evaluation of community development should focus on process as well as product, that community organisations operate in complex environments and that they serve many stakeholders. Finally, any evaluation of community development should acknowledge its distinctive values. The indicators' matrix attempts to represent all of that complexity.

In a theory-dense monograph on Measuring the Outcomes of Voluntary Organisation Activities, Kendall and Knapp take market failure as their starting point – i.e. circumstances where market forces cannot ensure the efficient allocation of resources. A significant area of market failure concerns public goods (where consumption cannot be exclusive to those who pay). In such circumstances, even Adam Smith advocated a role for public provision. Where it is inappropriate for government to intervene in the provision of such goods, it makes sense for voluntary organisations to do so. Indeed, since such organisations may be more cost-effective (through the contribution of volunteers in offering services) and may have dedicated consumers in terms of the communities in which they are located, their case for providing certain kinds of services is strengthened.

In turn, this case is reinforced by two other considerations:

1. where there is unequal access to information between seller and consumer, the latter may fear that their ignorance is being exploited to augment profit – the ongoing suspicions about the profit levels of drug companies makes the point. In these circumstances, non-profit organisations may be more trusted and therefore more capable of delivering the service;

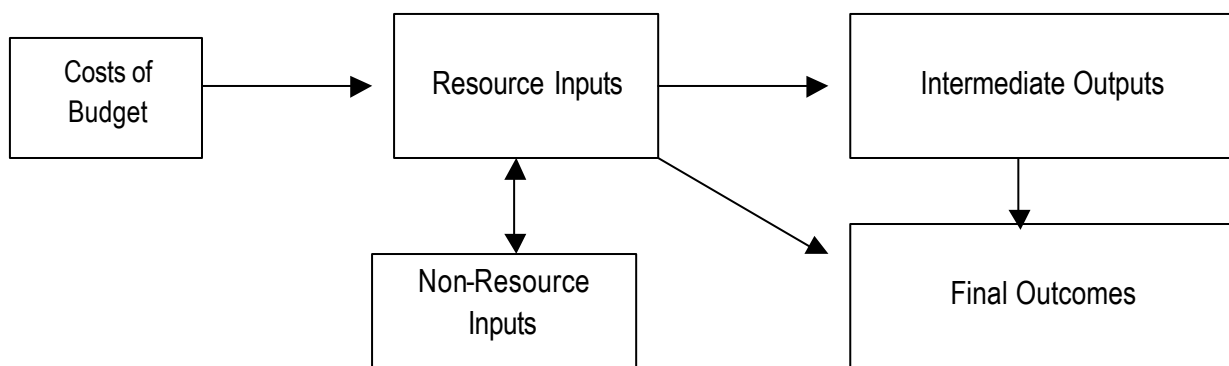
2. as indicated in the previous section, there is increasing discussion about the role of social capital in economic development.<sup>2</sup> Social capital consists of the networks of trust that facilitate collaborative and flexible working, regarded as essential to the new knowledge economies. Voluntary organisations arise and develop through collaboration and trust. They are thus an important source of social capital

Kendall and Knapp agree that voluntary organisations are ‘multiple stakeholder entities’ whose performance may be judged differently by different stakeholders. It is thus difficult to identify any overarching measure of organisational performance. Nevertheless, they provide a rationale for voluntary sector activity (market failure) and for subsidy by government. Further, government may see its role as helping to shape the development of such activity, for example, by introducing professional standards.

At the same time, this theoretical framework raises key issues for performance assessment:

- competition cannot be used as a ‘yardstick’ because there is no functioning market;
- the real costs of voluntary sector provision are unlikely to be reflected in expenditure accounts, if only because the opportunity costs of volunteering are ignored;
- in certain situations, key voluntary organisations may act as monopolies;
- the impacts are widely distributed (sometimes over long periods of time) and thus may be difficult to measure;
- the impacts occur at different levels – how does one convert the measurement of service delivery, empowerment or advocacy into a common metric?
- the individuals in receipt of services may not be best placed to judge their quality;
- there may be contests between the different stakeholders.

Acknowledging these difficulties, Kendall and Knapp propose a ‘production of welfare’ model for evaluating voluntary organisation activity. This employs an input/output/outcome formula but proposes additional criteria in terms of non-resource inputs (individual expectations and predispositions), intermediate outputs and final outcomes. Thus:



<sup>2</sup> Leadbeater, C. (1999), *Living on Thin Air: the new economy*, Viking, London

They argue that this framework permits both 'value for money' or 'best value' investigations and assessment from the standpoints of a variety of stakeholders. The evaluation criteria employed are the traditional four 'Es', although defined broadly supplemented by others suggested by their theoretical framework (participation, choice, specialisation, advocacy, campaigning, flexibility, innovation). In turn, this model is located both within the macro (societal) and meso (formation of networks) contexts.

The indicators are then structured into a typology

<p><b>Economy</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Resource inputs</li> <li>2. Expenditures</li> <li>3. Average Costs</li> </ol>	<p><b>Equity</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. Redistributive Policy Efficiency</li> <li>13. Service Targeting</li> <li>14. Benefitburden Ratios</li> <li>15. Access</li> <li>16. Procedural Equity</li> </ol>
<p><b>Effectiveness</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Final Outcomes</li> <li>5. Recipient Satisfaction</li> <li>6. Output Volume</li> <li>7. Output Quality</li> </ol>	<p><b>Social Capital/Participation</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>17. Membership/Volunteers</li> <li>18. Attitudes</li> </ol>
<p><b>Choice/Pluralism</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Concentration</li> <li>9. Diversity</li> </ol>	<p><b>Advocacy</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>19. Advocacy Resource Inputs</li> <li>20. Advocacy Intermediate Outputs</li> </ol>
<p><b>Efficiency</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Intermediate Output Efficiency</li> <li>11. Final Outcome Efficiency</li> </ol>	<p><b>Innovation</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>21. Reporting Innovations</li> <li>22. Barriers and Opportunities</li> </ol>

While Kendall and Knapp provide a robust analytical framework to the measurement problem, they can be criticised about the 'user friendliness' of the model. It generates 22 indicators of which they state in their conclusion – 'Most are comparatively easy to construct and collect: others are certainly not. Most are clearly and closely linked to theoretical perspectives; others less so'. (p.61) In a project designed to explore the operationalisation of this model. Price, Waterhouse Coopers (PWC) tested the indicators with a number of community-based organisations.<sup>3</sup> These raised issues about: the complexity of the terminology; the bias towards economic theory; their practicality; difficulties in measurement; and, ambiguities in the status of volunteers. There are thus question marks over the comprehensibility and ease of use of the Kendall and Knapp indicator set.

Moreover, it may be significant that some of the indicators are not closely linked to the theoretical perspectives. If not, where do they come from? The elaboration of a dense theoretical framework is only valid if the complete set of indicators can be derived from that. If not, the entire exercise may be deemed arbitrary.

<sup>3</sup> Price Waterhouse Coopers (Jan 2000), *Measuring the Outcomes of Voluntary Sector Activity: The Development and Testing of the Knapp and Kendall indicators – Detailed Case Study Findings*, Belfast.

There is also an issue about the use of concepts like social capital. In the economic literature, social capital is a factor of production. It represents a milieu favourable to rapid development. However, many community activists resent this reductionist approach to what they are trying to achieve – networking and collaboration are valuable in themselves, not because they assist the production of something else. Again, the Northern Ireland environment complicates the notion of social capital. The Troubles has reinforced in-group solidarities and out-group hostilities to the point where the community landscape is more like ethnic, rather than civic, society. Community networks are frequently configured along lines of sectarian division. Is this ethnic solidarity reflective of social capital or, indeed, is it a barrier to real community development. The failure to adequately 'ground' their analysis in the realities of the Northern Ireland context, introduce ambiguities into the model that are difficult to resolve.

Both reports sponsored by the VAU make important contributions to the debate about evaluating community-based organisations. Their different starting points reminds us that the work of such organisations is located on two interfaces: the first is between the market and non-market allocation of goods and resources raising issues about the retreat of welfare, competitiveness, social capital and the social economy; the second is between the state (broadly defined) and civil society raising issues about the effectiveness of traditional forms of representative democracy, the remoteness of public agencies and the development of new forms of governance, particularly in the shape of partnership.

Despite starting at different points, both suggest evaluation models that are elaborated from the inputs/outputs/outcomes triad but with different emphases. However, the development of indicators in a similar form cannot conceal the real difference in approach between the two. The idea of the double interface is important. Funding organisations need to be clear about the rationale on which resources are made available for functions carried out within the community. If the rationale is market failure, evaluation has to be about demonstrating that, in certain circumstances, not-for-profit organisations can deliver better gains than for-profit ones. If the rationale is about investing in capacity and structures in civil society, a different set of returns is suggested.

However, both approaches generate complex sets of indicators that, in some cases, are less than easy to understand and, in others, are hardly easy to use. For example, in the evaluation handbook that emerged from the Scottish Community Development Unit, 202 questions are derived from the indicator set to ask of community organisations.

## 4. Funding and Evaluation Practice

In this section of the report, we present the findings of the consultation with the four government agencies or departments nominated by the Voluntary Activity Unit<sup>4</sup>. The purpose of the consultation was to clarify the existing practice in relation to monitoring and evaluation and ensure that the approach to indicators evolved to meet the needs of different parts of government. The four agencies were:

- The Voluntary Activity Unit (VAU);
- The Belfast Regeneration Office (BRO);
- The Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety (DHSS&PS)
- The Training & Employment Agency (T&EA).

We have structured out commentary on the case studies by using the following headings:

- Sector's role in relation to agency;
- Perspectives on outcomes indicators; and
- Current practice in relation to monitoring and evaluation.

### ***Voluntary Activity Unit***

The role of the Unit is central to the development of partnership relationships between the sector and Government. In the broadest possible terms its work seeks to move towards a holistic integration of sector and Government actions where both share similar goals and a movement away from the view of either that the other is an inconvenience which needs to be 'bolted-on to the plan'. The Unit recognises that the development of outcomes' indicators is complicated by the different:

- Funding sources which the sector access;
- Types of funding accessed (core, project and contract);
- Needs of particular departments with any one organisation being required to meet the needs of all those whose funding it accesses;
- Foci and methodologies adopted by organisations in the sector; and
- Functions of monitoring outcomes for policy, programme and project accountability within Government.

### ***Comment on Indicators***

The Unit funds organisations whose principal, or ancillary, roles involve advocacy on behalf of disadvantaged citizens. With regard to policy advocacy, it will be necessary for organisations to identify:

- The specific contribution they make to the policy-making process;
- The particular insights they provide for the policy and the relevance of these; and
- The changes their input has brought about in policy.

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<sup>4</sup> The Voluntary Activity Unit was renamed the Voluntary & Community Unit in early 2002. We use the original title that was in use when we consulted the Unit's staff.

With regard to service delivery organisations, indicators are required of:

- Changes in economic, social and community well-being brought about by the sector;
- Community participation especially by those currently underrepresented in volunteering activities through for example,
  - Demonstration of greater numbers of active community groups - although VAU recognises that this could indicate an undesirable state of fragmentation; and
  - Greater numbers of active volunteers.

In the most general terms, there is a desire for indicators that measure the generation and distribution of social capital indicated by

- Numbers of members of voluntary and community organisations,
- Feedback from people living in these communities,
- The creation of new organisations in these communities,
- The active involvement of citizens (in their communities' affairs) and self-reliance of citizens and their communities indicated by
  - Voluntary & community organisations developing greater capacity to generate income,
  - Voluntary & community organisations developing greater capacity to generate resources-in-kind from their and other communities, and
  - Voluntary & community organisations sustaining their existence.

There is interest in the potential application of a counterfactual approach with funded organisations identifying what would have happened without the intervention.

### ***Current Practice***

#### ***Monitoring***

Regular annual monitoring of financial income and, especially, expenditure is carried out. In addition, data is sought on the changing patterns of membership among those organisations where it is relevant.

#### ***Evaluation***

The external six-yearly evaluations which flow from the 'Efficiency Scrutiny' generate macro-level analyses of particular organisations but tend towards the commentary on the appropriateness of internal processes and organisation / user interactions, outputs generated by the organisation for users, satisfaction of users with these, with limited systematic evidence-based analysis of immediate results and ultimate outcomes.

### ***Other Considerations***

History has left the VAU with a fair degree of diversity in its funding responsibilities including NICVA, NIACAB, Law Centre, IAC, CENI, VDA, ACOVO and NWCN. It is easier to conceptualise the nature of the outcomes desired for the Community Volunteering Scheme - even if operationalising these is less straightforward. Our early consultation with the Unit suggested that indicators focussed on the enhanced depth and increased level of volunteering from disadvantaged communities would be relevant. The quantum of volunteering is particularly attractive as it lends itself to the calculation of the equivalent monetary value of the hours volunteered through calculating the approximate labour costs were this input to 'bought'.

The different contexts within which client organisations are working make comparison difficult, in some cases invidious, and there is a desire to avoid unfair comparisons.

There is a difficulty in distinguishing activities, outputs and outcomes. Thus for example a 'target / output' figure might be specified that 'x people make use of community centres throughout the region each week' (the Unit administers the District Councils' Community Services Programme). If monitoring data were available that this is the case how should it be interpreted? What is being measured is (presumably) numbers of people attending community centres. It is not a measure of an outcome as this term is used here. It does measure the volume of people who make use of a facility but really nothing else. It could be used as a surrogate for the volume of people taking part in activities although the activities they may be taking part in may not be commensurable.

The Unit acknowledges the limitations of the typically administrative, financial and, user-satisfaction survey data that many voluntary and community organisations are able to provide. Rarely do these provide data that actually addresses outcomes. The problems facing the voluntary & community sector in this respect are similar to those that the public sector faces.

The Unit also acknowledges that the measurement of outcomes will sometimes require the collection of public attitudes survey data. We suggest in this report that the public attitudes data from the Northern Ireland Life & Times Survey could provide indicative baseline estimates of social capital's regional distribution.

### ***Belfast Regeneration Office***

The funding provided by the BRO and its predecessors (Making Belfast Work and Belfast Action Teams) has been critical to the voluntary and community sector operating in the city that can demonstrate an ability to contribute to the agency's regeneration responsibilities. BRO's new strategy includes:

- Recognition of the need to build capacity of communities to participate in Government planning and the need to engage citizens in regeneration initiatives;
- More 'joined up' 'thematic' projects in area-based interventions through partnership relationships with local government and other funding agencies to tackle the multi-dimensionality of anti-social behaviour or unemployment; and
- A finer area-based focus on estate or neighbourhoods' needs assessments.

### ***Comment on Indicators***

BRO measurement of its own performance pays particular attention to indicators of the extent to which the areas in which it is working are moving towards citywide and regional norms. BRO has identified a set of count-based "output measures" to guide funded organisations' returns to it on their performance. These output measures include for example, 'number of people trained who obtain permanent jobs' or 'number of people who participate in community safety initiatives'.

### ***Current Practice***

#### ***Monitoring***

Service level agreements are entered into with partners in the regeneration process. These will typically specify target levels of outputs against which performance may be measured. The existing performance database allows for the analysis of the funded organisations to be broken down by thematic area.

Six-monthly monitoring returns provide data on target groups and usage by beneficiaries in terms of age, gender and community background. Textual commentary is usually provided. Forward targets are set down for the coming period.

#### ***Evaluation***

An extensive programme of external evaluations is commissioned. There is a desire within the BRO to achieve more depth in the external evaluation work with terms of reference customized to fit more fully with project specifics. The agency encourages funded organisation to develop their internal evaluation capability. The scheduling of evaluations is receiving attention in line with the interest in more formative evaluation approaches. There is increasing interest in the measurement of impact to meet the accountability needs of the organisation.

## ***Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety***

The old 'DHSS' was for many parts of the voluntary and community sector their natural 'host' department. This was in part due to the historical focus of longer established voluntary organisations on social care services, especially to meet health needs, and in part due to the location of VAU within the Department prior to the establishment of the NI Executive. While the VAU is now located within DSD, the department will continue to be key for many in the sector. The Department has paid sustained attention to expanding and intensifying the role of community development approaches to its work.

The sector is considered to complement statutory provision, deliver services to people who would not otherwise access equivalent services from elsewhere. The role of the sector is particularly important in the primary prevention field. The Department purchases substantial service provision from the sector. Its regular analysis of costs suggests that unit costs provide value-for-money although it acknowledges the actual costs may be under-estimated due to the treatment of overheads. A value is placed on such factors as empowerment. This is considered an attribute of individual users and volunteers rather than of collectives such as a 'community'. There is an acknowledgement of the contribution the sector makes to policy development. Volunteering is important for the Department as it provides an expression of social solidarity and participation by citizens in public affairs.

### ***Comment on Indicators***

The Department wishes to move towards greater quantification of the outcomes delivered (whether for users of services or for volunteers). The Department, along with some in the sector, are interested in the monetisation of outcomes. This would require a contingent valuation methodology. There is interest in the Department developing the capacity to carry out cost-benefit analyses of its public investment in the sector in line with HMT's 'Green Book'. The Scottish work is considered to be a useful tool for community groups but although its uptake has been disappointing, perhaps due to its strength of heterogeneity. There is interest in applying some of the indicators to the development of an integrated database of funding and outcomes data. There is concern that the department is facing a 'silting-up' with funding for existing supplier organisations not allowing for new more 'TSN-relevant' projects to secure funding. The Department is developing its own performance measurement system through the application of the 'balanced scorecard' approach.

### ***Current Practice***

#### Monitoring

Current monitoring involves annual mapping of trends in levels of activities carried out by funded organisations. For example, the monitoring of one funded organisation involves receiving and analysing data on volumes of contacts using a help line service, the volume of training delivered to members, and (textual commentary) on inter-agency work. For another it involves summary details on contacts with clients, volumes of hours spent in one-to-one support, details of fees charged and the breakdown of the ages of users. Annual reports are scrutinised. Financial analyses are carried out to determine the solvency of organisations as indicated by audited accounts.

#### Evaluation

This conforms to the approach required by the Efficiency Scrutiny and is similar to that of VAU described above. The Department is able to call on the specialist services of the Social Services Inspectorate to carry out external evaluations. There is interest in the development of the 'quality standards framework' developed by SSI to incorporate outcomes material envisaged by this project.

Within the Department there is interest in the development of a more rigorous approach to the funding of the sector with appropriate baseline studies to be carried out which would allow for the actual extent to which needs were met to be gauged and, more readily, related to policy and programme goals. There is a desire to move towards greater clarity on the real policy purposes that the funding of organisations in the sector is intended to serve.

## ***Training & Employment Agency***

While broadly the Agency wishes to see voluntary & community organisations to be included among its lists of suppliers for the various programmes, especially those concerned with New Deal, any prospective provider in the sector will have to fulfil exactly the same requirements as alternative private sector suppliers. There is a recognition that voluntary & community organisations may provide a particular added value but this is not one that is recognised, in itself, as part of the required specification. Thus, successful bidders from the sector will have to win the tender on the basis of competition with private sector firms. It may be the case that in attempting to build a sector-specific

added value to the bid, voluntary & community organisations may make their bids uncompetitive in comparison to suppliers not offering to deliver this added value. The Agency does not set out to support the sector; parts of the sector do win contracts to deliver skills programmes and the Agency encourages them to do so.

The Agency has developed its own Quality Management Framework including definitions of required quality standards and target outputs in terms of qualifications or progression into employment or other training for different types of contracts. The Framework is broadly similar in structure (and to a lesser degree content) to that used by SSI in its evaluations of voluntary organisations funded by Government. Quality standards are specified for the planning, management and delivery of particular programmes, for example, Jobskills. Typically, contracts are offered for three years, renewable annually. Community groups are particularly important to the Agency as they provide access to 'difficult-to-reach' parts of its target groups. Apart from those specified in contracts no specific outcomes are expected of the voluntary and community sector.

### ***Current Practice***

#### Monitoring

A sophisticated management information system is maintained. Agency staff visits contractors regularly and payment is linked to the return of performance data, every four weeks, in line with the particular contract the provider has entered into.

#### Evaluation

Programme evaluations are carried out regularly. In line with the contracting philosophy, these evaluations will tend not to deal with issues particular to the sector.

### ***Conclusion***

Broadly, the consultation demonstrates, firstly, the very limited degree to which funders have access to information on the outcomes that flow from the activities in the sector they fund. Secondly, there is a heavy reliance on external evaluations although these are also unlikely to have access to the information on outcomes although their commentaries on process and outputs are important for funders. Thirdly, each of the departments or agencies have developed their own and largely independent systems for monitoring and evaluation. While this is appropriate given the business specifics of each, there is little potential for these independent systems to generate comparable data. The adoption by the agencies of the approach we propose will ameliorate the worst consequences of the three features. It will generate outcomes data, that will be available for the external evaluations and reduce the reliance on the principal limitation of this (limited internal learning by organisation), and it will create some basic facility for comparison.

## 5. A Transactional Model for Funding and Evaluation

Earlier, we suggested that the rationale for funding the community and voluntary sector has shifted from the unidimensional, economic approach of the Scrutiny Efficiency exercise. In an environment of partnership, the short-term requirement is meeting targets, with economy and efficiency remaining important. However, it should also be complemented by a longer-term concern to invest in community capability, which we defined as the capacity to develop positive relationships within the constituency community and with others, a core set of values and a range of organisational and development skills. Investing in community capability creates the conditions for long-term sustainability and, ultimately, less dependency on public funding. The sustainable community is described as a triad: a fundamental element is a set of community social assets (confidence, communication, a willingness to participate and collaborate) that establishes the context for collective action; second there is the level of community capability that determines the effectiveness of community action; finally there is the process of problem solving and welfare enhancement. Each element of the triad feeds the other – solving community problems and enhancing welfare develops the social assets of the community and contributes to its capability. While the efficacy of funding has to be measured in terms of the delivery of practical outputs, it should also be assessed with respect to its contribution to the capability triad.

This suggests that performance indicators for the community and voluntary sector should be organised in two domains, the first focusing on what is to be delivered as the result of a specific allocation, the second capturing these broader, longer-term, process achievements of voluntary and community organisations. Indicators derived from the Efficiency Scrutiny approach can be readily applied to measure achievement in the first domain or service delivery outputs, but a different set of indicators is required to measure the second. Here, we suggest that the concept of social capital can best capture this second domain and so inform the development of a unified evaluation framework.

### ***The concept of Social Capital***

Social capital has become an important concept in development theory where it is argued that societies characterised by high levels of social capital have higher quality of life, and, indeed, are more economically competitive. It has been used extensively in research into education and health. When this project began, there was a substantial debate about the meaning of social capital and its explanatory power in understanding the relationship between social dialogue/social cohesion and economic growth. A seminal influence was Putnam's (1993) study of the role of the civic community ('civic involvement and social solidarity') in modern Italy in modernization, institutional performance and economic development. His contrast between the development benefits of the civic community of the north and the development barriers constituted by the familial/ethnic community of the south made a powerful point to researchers living and working in the divided, and largely residentially segregated, society of Northern Ireland. The Whitehall Performance and Innovation Unit (2002, p.18) summarises the findings as:

*Helliwell and Putnam (2000) have modelled the growth rates of the Italian regions before and after the reform of Italian regional government in the 1970's. Before the reforms, the higher social capital regions of the North were much wealthier and more productive than the low social capital regions of the South. But the Southern regions were gradually catching up.*

*However, following the reforms, which involved creating a powerful new regional tier of government across Italy's twenty regions, the growth rates of the high social capital Northern regions again surged ahead. It would seem that the high social capital of the Northern regions in some way facilitated these regions' ability to utilise the new government to achieve higher growth.*

Putnam's later work (2000) focused the analysis on the United States, the global icon of modernity, and even here he argued that the decline of civic involvement was having drastic consequences for overall development. Hutton (2002, p.33) echoes this critique of civic decay, describing the US as 'a land of individual strangers questing for their inner happiness because the public realm is so corrupted and depleted'. In this analysis, the economic gains of aggressive individualism have been much exaggerated and the social costs concealed. Putnam contends that social capital consists of: <sup>5</sup>

*features of social organization, such as networks, norms, and trust, that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit.*

In other words, societies where people trust each other, engage in informal networking and work cooperatively with each other are more socially healthy and economically competitive.

The fact that community and voluntary organisations are based within civil society, depend for their very existence on community commitment and solidarity and claim to operate by enhancing these suggested that social capital might be crucial in capturing such dimensions of their work. Moreover, given that many such organisations complained this key dimension was invisible to the evaluation frameworks employed by their funders, social capital promises two important innovations in evaluation:

- It provided a framework for capturing (and therefore evaluating) aspects of community-based activity that had previously been neglected. It thus afforded community and voluntary organisations the opportunity to demonstrate (and be funded for) added value beyond the delivery of specific social welfare outputs;
- Equally, social capital put the responsibility on such organisations to transparently demonstrate what they had achieved within this domain - the literature claimed that social capital was measurable.

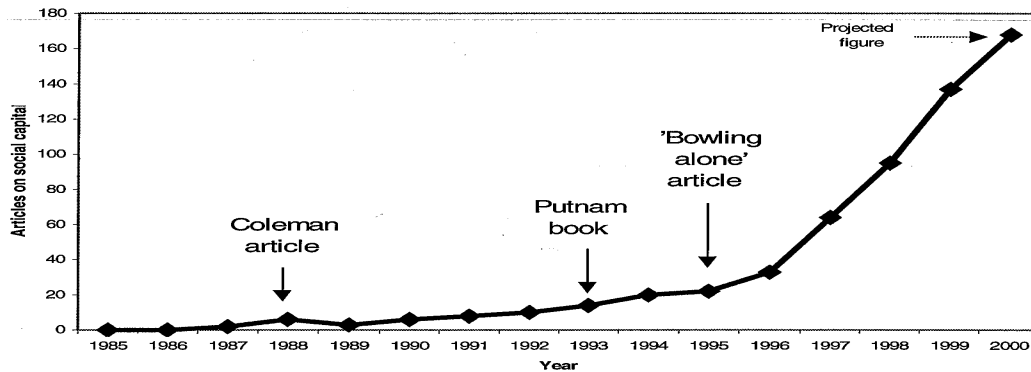
In short, introducing social capital into the debate about performance indicators for community and voluntary organisations challenges funders to recognise that community involvement and solidarity are important, but also challenges funded organisations to demonstrate their contribution to such civic involvement and solidarity.

There has been an explosion of interest in the concept. Halpern indicates this in the diagram over:

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<sup>5</sup> Robert D. Putnam. 1993. "The Prosperous Community — Social Capital and Public Life". American Prospect (13): p. 36

### **The Exponential Growth in References to Social Capital in the Academic Literature, 1985-2000**



**Source :** Halpern (2001)

The exponential growth in references to the concept occurred essentially in the late 1990s. Government more than matches the academic interest in the concept. The Economic and Social Research Council (2002) has funded a series of seminars to bring together key policy makers and academics to discuss the concept. The Office of National Statistics (2001) has undertaken an exercise to explore whether variables contained in regularly undertaken national surveys might provide a means of measuring social capital and has generated a matrix involving 21 surveys. The Northern Ireland Audit Office in reviewing grants to the community and voluntary sector commented (p.6):

*Some of the outputs and outcomes of the social economy (as of many voluntary sector activities) are best measured in terms of human and social capital.*

The jury is still out on whether the concept is sufficiently robust to merit this attention.

One of the problems is that the concept has emerged from different disciplines and is explained in different ways. The OECD (2001) provides a useful summary:

- From anthropology comes the idea that humans are naturally associative – social capital has thus a biological basis (Fukuyama, 1999);
- The sociological literature focuses on social norms as the source for human motivation – social capital is thus seen as a component of social organisation - “...features of social life - networks, norms, and trust - that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives... Social capital, in short, refers to social connections and the attendant norms and trust” (Putnam, 1995);
- Economics emphasises humans, as producers and consumers, choosing to interact with others to maximise personal utility – indeed Fine and Green (2001) are dismissive of the concept since the unit of analysis of conventional economics is the utility maximising individual whereas social capital, by definition, is relational;
- Political science explores the influence of institutions in shaping human behaviour particularly via networks - “... the institutions, relationships and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society’s social interactions” (World Bank, 2000).

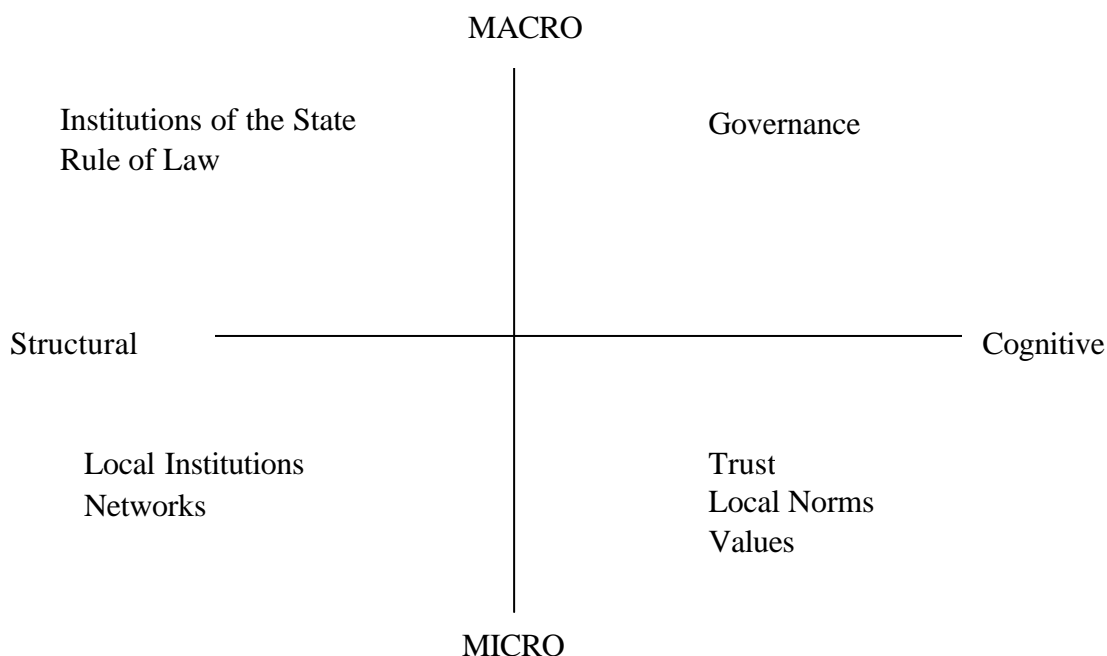
Another problem is that it was developed simultaneously within divergent theoretical discourses: Bourdieu came from a traditional critical of capitalism and was looking at how unequal relationships in

the distribution of power and resources could be reproduced – the term ‘capital’ carries with it the Marxist heritage of exploitation; Coleman and Putnam, however, came from the traditions of conventional sociology and economics in the US. The fact that both found a common phrase might indicate a concept so general as to be devoid of operational meaning. As Schuller et al (2000, p.24) comment:

*There is a set of terms that are commonly used in the literature’s definition of social capital but these are operationalised in such very different ways as to bring into question the notion of social capital as a single conceptual entity.*

They also comment on its ‘over-versatility’ (the enormous range of issues on which it has been deployed), a range of issues associated with its measurement, the problem of causal circularity (is social capital the cause or the result of a successful society?) and the fact that the discussion of social capital blurs the distinction between ‘analysis and prescription’. They summarise these problems with the concept by suggesting it has ‘several adolescent characteristics’ (p.35). Nevertheless, for four reasons, they contend that it has ‘much promise’:

- By definition, it refocuses analysis away from individual behaviour to the matrix of relations amongst ‘agents, social units and institutions’ – social capital focuses on relationships and their influence on human behaviour;
- It represents a conceptual framework that links the micro, meso and macro dimensions of society. The World Bank (2001) essay on social capital distinguishes, on one hand, between its structural and cognitive manifestations and, on the other between the micro and macro levels at which it operates to generate the following explanatory diagram:



In this formulation, the basic building blocks of social capital are the individual's values and relationships that translate into sets of local institutions. In turn, these act as the basis of the political order in terms of specific macro institutions and the overall framework of governance. While this might be an example of 'over-versatility', part of the excitement of the social capital debate lies in the ways it spans these different dimensions.

- It enforces a multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary focus on social phenomena thereby acknowledging that the perspectives of a single social science discipline are frequently unidimensional. This also allows for the co-production of knowledge by both professionals and local people in the quest for a fuller understanding of social processes;
- Finally, it asserts the notion that collective values are important challenging the individualist assumptions of both economics and key areas of public policy.

Together, they make a persuasive case for the utility of social capital. Central to many definitions of social capital is the idea that co-operation requires trust in others – this varies between, and within, different societies.

**Percentage of People Saying that Most People can be Trusted, Selected Countries, 1995-96**

<b>OECD Members</b>	65.3	Italy*	35.3
Norway	59.7	Belgium*	33.2
Sweden	57.7	Austria*	31.8
Denmark*	55.8	United Kingdom	31.0
Netherlands*	52.4	Korea	30.3
Canada*	47.6	Czech Republic*	30.3
Finland	47.4	Spain	29.8
Ireland*	46.0	Mexico	28.1
Japan	43.6	Hungary*	24.6
Iceland*	41.8	France*	22.8
Germany	41.0	Portugal*	21.4
Switzerland	39.9	Turkey	6.5
Australia	35.6		
United States			
<b>Non-OECD Members</b>	37.9	South Africa	18.2
India	21.9	Argentina	17.5
Chile	19.2	Brazil	2.8
Nigeria			

\* 1990-91 data

**Note** : The question posed in the survey was: "Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?"

**Source**: World Values Study and Knack & Keefer (1997).

The contrasts are interesting. Scandanavian countries with high levels of social solidarity recorded the highest levels of trust. These have been economically and politically stable with extensive forms of social provision. Less developed, less stable countries recorded dramatically lower levels of trust, with the UK somewhere in the middle. However, it is not clear whether trust contributes to political and economic stability or whether it is an outcome. The Performance and Innovation Unit in Whitehall suggested that the trend of social capital in Britain was downward (2002):

- *social trust, a key indicator, has declined from around 50-60 percent in the 1950s down to around 30 percent in 1997 (see table 11 below);*
- *the number of people living in single person households has risen dramatically across age groups, a useful structural network measure;*
- *the General Election in 2001 showed a marked fall in turnout, arguably bringing the UK back into line with the more general cross-national trend of falling voting levels, with disengagement being particularly strong in the youngest age groups; and*
- *closer analysis of the membership figures suggest that the overall figures conceal a movement from full involvement in multi-faceted communities (such as the church) to low effort, single issue, “cheque-book” membership.*

The Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (2001) contained sets of questions about community relations and social networks. Together these represent a regional baseline on how people relate to family and friends, who they trust, what they think of the other religion and their degree of involvement in social institutions. From these data, it would be possible to construct an aggregate measure of trust and involvement taking into account sectarian social division. Some of the results for individual questions are interesting: 74 per cent either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement ‘There are only a few people I can trust completely’; 64 per cent agreed or strongly agreed with the statement ‘If you are not careful other people will take advantage of you; 75 per cent of respondents did not belong to a trade union or professional association; almost 50 per cent did not belong to a church or religious organisation; 83 per cent never participated in a neighbourhood association; almost 60 per cent did not belong to a sports, hobby or leisure group; and finally, 70 per cent did not belong to any kind of charitable organisation. Despite Northern Ireland’s frequent, violent expressions of ethnic solidarity, here is evidence of a society of ‘individual strangers’. The social capital module of the Continuous Household Survey provides another, important source for base lining social capital in Northern Ireland. Applying the same questions to samples within specific communities would offer comparison with the regional norm.

A recent report on the social economy in Northern Ireland<sup>6</sup> also promotes the importance of developing social capital and advocates using social economy delivery mechanisms to do so. In the evaluation of the Communities in Action Programme of the International Fund for Ireland, the authors point to the ‘glue’ and ‘bridges’ dimensions of social capital: ‘Social glue’ ... refers to the degree to which people take part in group life; the level of trust people feel when participating in such groups; while group participation itself can help to build mutual trust... Social bridges... are the link or connections between groups and which give access to wider groups of players outside of their area / specific interest group’<sup>7</sup>.

It is therefore not hard to see how this concept of social capital could resonate very closely with the core aims and values of the community and voluntary sector. In particular what Putnam refers to as the bonding and bridging dimensions of social capital could be especially relevant when referring to single

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<sup>6</sup> Stutt C. Murtagh B, Campbell M. April 2001, The Social Economy in Northern Ireland, A Policy Review, Colin Stutt Consulting.

<sup>7</sup> LRDP Ltd, 1999, Evaluation of the International Fund for Ireland Communities in Action Programme, IFI.

identity and cross community work in Northern Ireland. The notion of linking social capital encompasses cross-sectoral relationships that are the key to a partnership mode of governance.

Until recently, the phrase social capital did not appear amongst the discourse of community and voluntary organisations. Rather, terms like empowerment and capacity building were used to describe the 'softer' social outcomes of community-based activity. Some see it as a diversion to disguise the complex social divisions and increasing inequalities that afflict weaker communities. McClenaghan (2000, p.580) dismisses the concept of social capital as 'profoundly functionalist and socially conservative'.

Salmon (2002) argues that community development activists are often wary of the term fearing that social capital might be seen as an alternative to the investment of physical and economic capital in disadvantaged communities. While sceptical about such aspects of social capital, Salmon argues that: neighbourhoods are less than homogeneous with both residential mobility and internal conflicting interests; social exclusion is not necessarily a unifying factor and will generate manifestations of anti-social behaviour, e.g. drug related crime; community cohesion has developed around ethnicity, culture and religion but has generated potential points of conflict between white deprived neighbourhoods and even more deprived minority ethnic neighbourhoods (p.53). While it is clear that the participation of local people is a key ingredient in any process of social inclusion, such divisions inhibit opportunity for participation. There is thus a need for bonding within communities and bridging across communities particularly in a world in which consciousness of common class location has faded.

Kilpatrick et al (2001) challenge Mc Clenaghan's dismissal of social capital arguing that 'the practice of community development has long emphasised an inclusive approach...that involves all sectors. These approaches include personal development and strengthening of internal (bonding) and external (bridging & linking) relationships and networks as well as attitude change toward, for example, inclusion of women and racial minorities' (p.8). They argue that the value of using the concept of social capital in community development is that it acknowledges the assets already existing in the community that form the basis for collective action, it is a 'public good goal' in its own right and can contribute towards sustained autonomous development. This argument parallels and complements the 'capability model' of public funding for the community and voluntary sector presented earlier in this document.

In Northern Ireland, a core strength of the voluntary & community sector is its diversity. The sector engages in work across many issues and areas. This was evidenced in the four cases studies of public funders conducted for this research. These funders provided financial support for organisations concerned with urban regeneration, training for the unemployed, supporting other voluntary organisations, advice for social welfare recipients, people experiencing marital breakdown and women and children who are the victims of physical (and other) abuse. The list is potentially endless as new groups and organisations form, each with particular ways of addressing problems experienced by specific groups of people. The relative ease with which this form of community-based collective action can be initiated and resourced contributes hugely to the region's welfare.

The converse of the strength of diversity is the real fragmentation of the sector. Despite the very substantial investment in intermediary infrastructure, principally regional organisations that seek to integrate different groups' endeavours, the issue of duplication remains a concern for some funders. Perhaps more fundamentally, 'on the ground' communication between groups continues to be

jeopardised by competitive forces and, in practice, limited by the time available for participation in networking processes. At root, the difficulty arises from the particular nature of the outcomes that each organisation is seeking to achieve. Their particularity derives from the different contexts within which each organisation is working. The concept of social capital offers a way of identifying the commonality underlying the diversity. Equally importantly, it challenges community and voluntary organisations to adopt inclusive strategies to resolve social problems and to address the divisions that are either a cause of such problems or a barrier to their solution.

The elements of social capital (principally trust, norms and networks) can be used to organise indicators that capture the different contexts within which voluntary and community activity takes place. Community organisations have frequently complained that statutory funders under-value the process outcomes that are specific to the sector. Conversely, some funders worry that an exclusive focus on a 'non-measurable' process cannot represent value for money and carries high opportunity cost. We suggest that social capital captures many of the process outcomes of community-based activity without denying that outputs and results should be monitored as well.

### ***Indicators of Social Capital***

The World Bank's Social Capital Initiative has analysed systematically the literature on social capital. The Initiative identified common indicators of social capital in empirical research on development in both developed and less developed countries.

Individual and Household Level	Organisational Level	Neighbourhood and Community Level	Regional and National Level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Interpersonal trust;</li> <li>▪ Number of group memberships;</li> <li>▪ Engagement in volunteering;</li> <li>▪ Trust in statutory service deliverers (eg teachers);</li> <li>▪ Membership of networks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Development (longevity, sustainability)</li> <li>▪ Quality of membership (inclusivity)</li> <li>▪ Institutional capacity and capability</li> <li>▪ Institutional linkage – partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Participation in different social organisations</li> <li>▪ 'Collective efficacy'</li> <li>▪ Female participation in and quality of leadership of voluntary organisations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Associational density</li> <li>▪ Newspaper readership</li> <li>▪ Membership of voluntary organisations</li> <li>▪ Volunteering</li> <li>▪ Sociability</li> <li>▪ Political efficacy</li> <li>▪ Trust in government</li> <li>▪ Optimism</li> </ul>

The four columns represent the four levels at which Social Capital exists, ranging from individual to national level. Each level contains a number of criteria, which can indicate if social capital is being achieved at that level, thus:

- For individuals, the indicators of social capital are construed in terms of individuals trust in other people and statutory providers, their involvement in local groups and networks and participation in volunteering.

- In relation to organisations, social capital indicators can include the period of the organisation's existence, its ability to sustain its work, its openness to new members, its capacity in terms of tangible assets, capability in terms of skills and knowledge, and its partnerships with other groups, organisations and agencies.
- With regard to the neighbourhood level social capital indicators include the participation of those living in neighbourhoods and communities in a variety of community-based organisations and the collective 'efficacy' (efficiency, effectiveness) of the neighbourhood or community in accessing resources. The participation of women in voluntary organisations associated with the neighbourhood or community and the quality of the leadership exercised by these organisations have also been advanced as indicators at the neighbourhood and community level.
- At the regional and national levels, indicators of social capital include total memberships of voluntary organisations and the density of overlapping participation by each individual (or household) in voluntary organisations. Other indicators include the readership of newspapers, volunteering, participation in 'social' activities, self-perception of how effective one is in the political system, generalised trust in governmental processes and optimism in the future.

There is an extensive and growing body of knowledge on social capital indicators. Issue may be taken with the appropriateness of any particular indicator; for example, trust in government is a problem in a region with ethnic-political conflict. Also defining what is 'good' social capital at a community level in Northern Ireland, for instance, could be problematic in the context of our ethnically divided society.

Here, we set out a set of indicators drawn from the World Bank literature, which reflect the four levels of social capital and appear to be most relevant for the Northern Ireland voluntary and community sector. In the concluding section, these will be inserted in a model also building on the indicators generated by the Scottish Community Development Unit and Kendall and Knapp. Simply put, the social capital that the voluntary and community sector is trying to produce could be defined in terms of the contribution made towards trust, norms and networking i.e. facilitating trust within and between people, organisations and communities; encouraging collaborative or partnership working arrangements and; participating in and contributing to the development of local and regional networks.

The table overleaf identifies nineteen possible indicators across the four levels of social capital

**Table of Social Capital Indicators**

	Social Capital Indicators
<p><b>Individual Capital</b></p> <p><i>(the development of skills, capacity and confidence: both of individuals within organisations and of individual beneficiaries)</i></p>	<p>1. Involvement in volunteering;</p> <p>2. Interpersonal trust among participants;</p> <p>3. Knowledge of community affairs;</p> <p>4. Number of active group memberships;</p> <p>5. Depth of active participation in groups;</p> <p>6. Trust in own community's groups or organisations;</p>
<p><b>Organisational Capital</b></p> <p><i>(the development of such organisations themselves to the point where they can fully participate within a modern system of governance, particularly partnership structures)</i></p>	<p>7. Number of active network memberships;</p> <p>8. Depth of active participation in networks;</p> <p>9. Sustainability of group or organisation's effects;</p> <p>10. Inclusivity of group or organisation's membership;</p> <p>11. Group or organisational capacity;</p> <p>12. Formal participation in Inter-sectoral linkage through partnerships;</p> <p>13. Depth of participation in partnerships;</p>
<p><b>Community Capital – social capital for 'bonding'</b></p> <p><i>(the fostering of networks of trust and collaboration within the communities in which the organisations are located)</i></p>	<p>14. Depth of collective action undertaken by communities;</p> <p>15. Range of collective action undertaken by communities;</p> <p>16. Integration within 'their' collective action of communities' marginalised groups eg stigmatised young people;</p>
<p><b>Civic Capital - social capital for 'bridging'</b></p> <p><i>(developing networks of trust and collaboration beyond the limits of the religio-ethnic spaces of Northern Ireland's divided society, i.e. developing relationships based on common citizenship rather than ethnic identity).</i></p>	<p>17. Trust in 'other' community;</p> <p>18. Trust in sub-regional partnerships across ethnic communities;</p> <p>19. Trust in regional partnerships across ethnic communities;</p>

This table redefines the last two levels as 'community' and 'civic' capital (as opposed to community, neighbourhood, regional and national) to produce a version with specific relevance to a divided society like Northern Ireland. The first two (individual and organisational) refer to individual and organisational

development in terms of a capacity to form relationships, collaborate with others, help form networks and engage in partnership activity. Essentially, we argue that individuals/organisations with such capacity are better able to carry out their core activities and to contribute to sustainability. The third, community capital, points to the development of trust, involvement and collaboration within the broader community served by the organisation, producing what Putnam referred to as bonding capital. The fourth relates to civic capital, this is relevant because of the bridging dimension. 30 years of violent conflict has led to the physical separation of communities and a great deal of fear, suspicion and hatred between them. In our view, community and voluntary organisations have played a crucial role in engaging with the legacy of conflict. This has been called building civic capital or social capital for bridging.

Suggesting that many of the 'intangible' benefits of voluntary and community activity may be captured by social capital has two advantages:

- It offers a single, though multi-dimensional, construct to describe the outcomes of a diverse range of activities, thereby pointing to the coherence of the sector;
- It employs a construct that is used in economic development and social policy discourse. It therefore moves away from the notion that the economy is primary and that social provision is a burden that the private economy has to support – social capital is a factor of production and contributes to economic growth.

### ***Constructing an Evaluation Template***

Our core argument has been that the rationale for funding the community and voluntary sector shifts in an environment in which partnership represents a key component of the system of governance. Allocations are more than just contracts but negotiated, long-term investments in community capability. Accordingly, the protocols and models for evaluating that allocation have to be transformed.

The evaluation template proposed takes as its starting point the funding interaction between statutory organisations and the community and voluntary sector. Given the diversity and environment of constant change within which the sector operates, this represents the most constant feature of the situation – i.e. the funder providing an allocation to the funded organisation. Our suggestion is that this interaction should always be considered as a transaction, whether in the form of a contract or a grant allocation or core funding. The concept of contract has too narrow a definition to cover all of the dimensions of this transaction. There is a different problem with the use of the term 'grant'. Grants are considered free goods and this produces both infinite demand and insufficient attention to the obligations of the grant recipient. Since grants appear to be free, grant-aided organisations rarely consider whether they can 'afford' the deliverables of the grant within its cost framework. In contrast, the term transaction denotes an exchange of mutual benefit to both parties. It is important to identify all the elements of the exchange and to ensure that mutual benefit is maximised.

The transaction will only be of mutual benefit if a number of conditions are realised:

- The funder needs to have clarity of mission. The imperatives of evidence-driven public policy and the Comprehensive Spending Review require everyone in the public sector to be clear about the assumptions that underpin their activities, to know what has been achieved and to

indicate what will be achieved in the future. Where part of the statutory mission is being grant-aided/contracted out, then best value considerations require that there is clarity about the rationale, about what share of the mission will be delivered in this way and about what are the precise linkages between the statutory objectives and the contracted out activities. All of these should inform the statutory approach to funding the community and voluntary sector. In Northern Ireland, the Programme for Government provides the clearest statement of the goals of public policy. However, there should also be recognition that the statutory sector does not have a monopoly of knowledge about local conditions or about what will work in the complex dynamics of locality. Accordingly, the funding mechanism is not just a process of delegating community and voluntary organisations to carry out specified tasks, there should also be an exchange of knowledge and a negotiation about how benefit can be maximised.

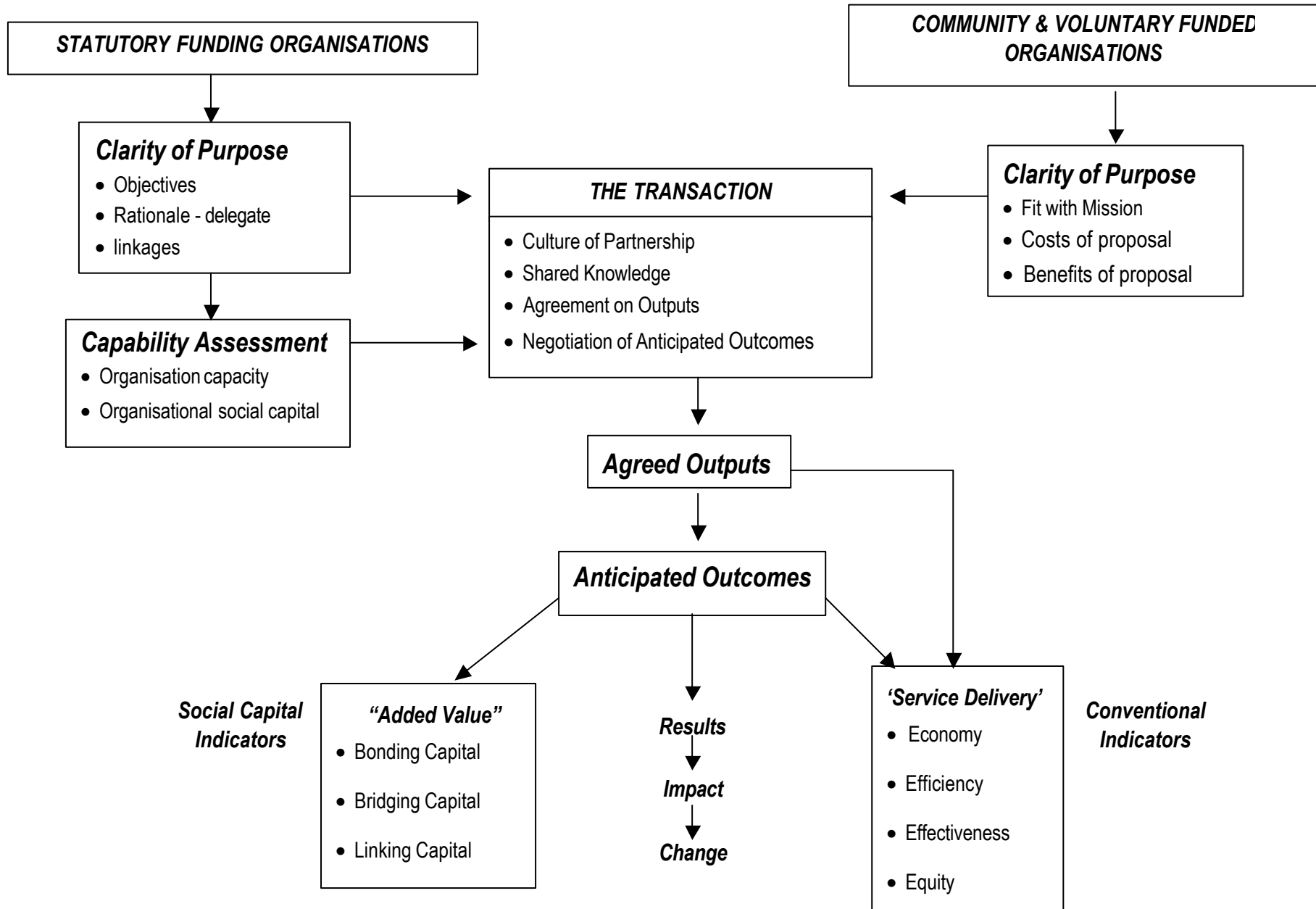
- The funder should also be prepared to look at the capability of the organisations it wishes to fund. Earlier, we argued that funding should be seen as an investment in community capability to deliver welfare, solve problems and enhance sustainability. Capability was seen as the possession of organisational skills and competencies and the attributes of organisational capital (as described in the World Bank matrix). Each funding decision should involve a judgement about the capability of the organisation to be funded. While it may be appropriate to seek ways to enhance that capability, an assessment is required about the minimum capability required to generate the multiple intended outcomes of the transaction.
- Funds should be allocated through a negotiated transaction. Transactions involve a specification of mutual responsibilities, of what should be done at what costs and, as far as possible, of the benefits to both parties. This requires a sharing of the different kinds of knowledge held by each side, agreement about the outputs required and negotiation about their anticipated outcomes. If agreement is made in advance about the nature and quantity of outputs required by the transaction, the achievement of this offers an automatic set of indicators to measure one dimension of community/voluntary activity. Belfast Regeneration Office (BRO), for example, has developed such an indicator set based on what it requires as the appropriate outputs of its funding efforts. All outcomes cannot be specified in advance, since any intervention has unanticipated effects. Nevertheless, there is an obligation to indicate anticipated outcomes as the baseline against which the transaction can be evaluated. The indication of anticipated outcomes requires a synthesis of the different kinds of knowledge held by funder and funded organisation. Accordingly, they cannot be dictated by either side, but should be the result of negotiation. Again, using the BRO example, such negotiations are undertaken with area partnerships representing the aggregation of different kinds of local knowledge and expertise. For a transaction to work, the funder has to be satisfied that it will lead to a set of benefits connected to its mission, that the costs are appropriate and that the added value of funding community and voluntary organisations will be realised. The funded organisation also has to be satisfied that the outputs specified and the anticipated outcomes indicated could be delivered within agreed costs and fit with its mission.
- There should also be specification of the 'added-value' associated with funding community and voluntary organisations. The last dimension is a crucial area for measurement. It cannot be assumed that community and voluntary organisations, by their very nature, will automatically deliver such added value. Accordingly, it has to be demonstrated. Social Capital indicators

can capture this that in describing the enhancement of social assets and community capability. Each or all of these can be seen as the potential added value of funding community and voluntary organisations, but such organisations have to bring to the negotiation how these levels of added value will be achieved. The capacity to deliver these represents a premium that legitimates the funding arrangement over and above the market cost of its deliverables. However, within the community and voluntary sector, there is an extraordinary range of development and underdevelopment. With underdeveloped organisations, the expectations of what can be achieved should be proportionately modest. This raises a further issue of concern within the community and voluntary sector – the disproportionate power between funder and funded organisation. While it is certainly true that such organisations need the funding for their existence, there are also imperatives for the statutory sector to have a productive and harmonious relationship. Primary among these is the need for modernisation of government and administration “*Government at all levels is mistrusted because it is cumbersome and ineffective...The restructuring of government should follow the ecological principle of ‘getting more from less’ understood not as downsizing but as improving delivered value*”<sup>8</sup>. This implies delivering with rather than to constituents, maximising the synergies of participation and partnership and tapping into the added value that can be generated by community and voluntary organisations. Almost all of this is signalled in the Programme for Government.

Together, these conditions (mutual clarity of purpose and a negotiated transaction involving the specification of added value) form the template within which indicators should be located. This can be seen in the diagram next.

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<sup>8</sup> Giddens, A. (1998), *The Third Way*, Polity Press, Cambridge, p. 74.



Within the diagram, the outputs/outcomes framework has been expanded. Here there is a distinction between the outputs and the outcomes that represent the potential added value of funding the community and voluntary sector. Organisations within the sector should be able to specify up front what they expect to achieve within this domain and thus offer a premium that could be worthy of additional resources.

Outcomes occur at three levels: results that are the short-term effects of the outputs, impact which is medium-term and which is fed by both results, process, and finally change, the longer-term goal. Levels of effect, which correspond to the components of social capital, can also distinguish these: results occur at the micro level of the individual/organisation, impact should be at the broader level (meso) of the community; change should be appreciable at regional level.

The transaction process should identify agreed outputs (for which conventional indicators could be used) and form the basis for the negotiation of anticipated outcomes. It is important to recognise that a social capital framework does not eliminate the necessity to measure performance via indicators of economy, efficiency, equity and effectiveness. Public accountability and the Comprehensive Spending Review will ensure that public money will only be allocated to organisations capable of delivering what has been agreed within cost. Rather social capital indicators provide a complementary framework to capture what is missed by a narrow, economic approach. This produces a binary model with two indicator domains. As with most binary models, the possibility exists of asymmetry in the application of the domains. Some community and voluntary organisations may fear that the social capital domain will be no more than a genuflection to a partnership culture and that conventional indicators will predominate. However, others may feel that a social capital domain undervalues their capacity to deliver contracts with high levels of efficiency. The relative status of the two domains will thus be important in the implementation of the model.

This exercise was not designed to replace the indicators which have already been developed for the community and voluntary sector with yet another new set. Rather, we have produced a template that enables existing indicators to be deployed with greater clarity and focus. It does so by suggesting that the logic of a transaction points to a range of outputs and anticipated outcomes that can be measured by conventional means. While we have not specified the actual indicators that are relevant to such domains, we believe these can be readily imported from the work of either Knapp and Kendall or the Scottish Community Development Unit. Indeed, we argue that the different contexts and functions of community-based organisations require indicators appropriate to what they do. However, since the community and voluntary sector has long suggested that it delivers more than just specified outputs, we have used the concept of social capital to capture the notion of community processes, i.e. social assets and community capability.

There are three advantages in doing so:

1. it is a theoretically robust concept that is reflected in a substantial literature;
2. it has empirically derived indicators that have been applied in a wide variety of contexts;
3. it enables measurement of what are sometimes vaguely defined processes that are the additional benefits of funding community and voluntary organisations.

The social capital indicators proposed may be considered more normative than operative at this stage. Part of the value of the approach is that it will encourage the sector to, in one sense, rediscover its core mission and avoid becoming 'simply' mechanisms for the delivery of services to 'difficult-to-reach' groups. The delivery of these services greatly enhances the quality of life for many people in disadvantaged communities. However, if this is the only claim that the sector can evidentially support, it will remain vulnerable to competitors from the private sector and its substantial core-funding will in years to come be increasingly difficult to justify. It achieves much more than the delivery of such services; it plays a critical role in the creation of the social capital that has allowed the region's society to manage over thirty years of violent ethnic conflict.

***How does a social capital approach to indicators correspond to key Government policy statements on the sector?***

The Compact (*'Building Real Partnership' - Compact between Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector in Northern Ireland*) acknowledges that a primary purpose of the sector is that of advocacy and campaigning. Our operationalisation of the 'linking' dimension of social capital will facilitate organisations to demonstrate their achievements in relation the organisation's challenging of policies' appropriateness for stated purposes and their contribution to enriching the knowledge base available to Government about policy appropriateness and effectiveness.

Monitoring changes in policy is complex. One approach would involve voluntary organisations and departments agreeing (during the transaction) one or more 'tracer priorities' within the policy debate, alongside points of entry into the policy review process, methods of engagement in that process, key milestones expected alongside target completion dates and indicative statements of the way in which policy is expected to change.

The approach to the measurement of outcomes based on the social capital construct is closely aligned with the analysis of DSD's *Consultation Document on Funding for the Voluntary Sector* (the 'Harbison Report'). The Report focuses on the issue of sustainability and identifies social capital as the third of three interdependent elements necessary for the sector to sustain its contribution to the public welfare. Harbison describes in terms of

*"[public] investment largely through small grants, which generates social capital, through individual and group capacity building and which releases latent potential in the community sector, in particular amongst the most disadvantaged communities and marginalised individuals."* (Para 45)

The Report refers to the role of small grants in creating social capital. Implicitly our approach postulates that the larger grants associated with the core-funding of the voluntary & community sector also generate social capital.

With regard to monitoring and evaluation, Harbison makes clear that Government wishes, in partnership with the sector

*"to establish a common database for funding of the voluntary and community sector based on uniform procedures. This would contain fields relating to the amount and type of support, objectives, outputs*

*and outcomes (Para 56)... The sector should focus on measuring outcomes to demonstrate what has been achieved from exiting resources when seeking further funds.” (Para 59)*

Our approach will overtime enable descriptive textual and quantitative data on outcomes to be recorded and for the sector to demonstrate its achievements in terms of these outcomes.

The Report notes that

*“... The overall value for money of support to the voluntary and community sector remains difficult to substantiate. There is considerable variability in the quality of monitoring data collected by Departments across different programmes. There tends, in general, to be an emphasis on inputs (finance) and activities (eg number of participants) rather than on the outcomes of the programmes (ie evidence of achievement of stated objectives). The initiative taken by the Voluntary Activity unit to develop core indicators to measure the outcome of voluntary activity will, however, significantly strengthen the ability of the sector to demonstrate value for money.” (Para 15)*

The consultation we carried out certainly confirms the focus of monitoring (and in large measure evaluation as well) on inputs and activity levels. Our prior practice in the field of evaluation suggests that all too often the 'stated objectives' are formulated as process, means or activity statements and insufficiently specify what is the intended outcome, that is the effect on welfare, change in condition, benefit in life-circumstance of individuals, communities or organisations (in the case of infrastructural investment).

*Partners for Change - Government's Strategy for Support of the Voluntary and Community Sector 2001—04*, sets out four core aims and three common, cross-cutting themes to underpin all departments' support for the sector. These are:

- 'Shaping policy development' through sharing learning on 'what works',
- 'Building communities' through regeneration based on high levels of involvement by local people,
- 'Promoting active citizenship' through volunteering,
- 'Tackling disadvantage', aligning funding with TSN and 'equality' outcomes,
- 'Capacity building', through investing in the community infrastructure that facilitates local people's involvement,
- 'Working together', between public and voluntary & community sectors on policy development, sharing good practice and in the delivery of services, and
- 'Resourcing the sector', with finances, specialist advice and resources-in-kind.

Our use of the social capital construct facilitates the demonstration of the way in which the sector 'links' to and influences policy, 'bonds' local people with each other and to local community organisations, promotes active volunteering, enhances accessibility to local services, builds capacity for participation, and creates 'bridges' between sectors through networks and partnerships.

The NI Audit Office's *Investing in Partnership- Government Grants to Voluntary and Community Bodies* emphasises the need for better inter-departmental coordination of the performance measurement used by government in the evaluation of grant-aid to the sector. The report notes that

*“some of the outputs and outcomes of the social economy (as of many voluntary sector activities) are best measured in terms of human and social capital, and it will important to establish common performance measurement arrangements to capture these across government”. (Para 3.6)*

The transactional approach to the negotiation of the funding is in line with the analysis of the Audit Office. The report suggests that

*“Ideally, all funders will negotiate and agree an evaluation and monitoring framework with projects (or with the bodies in which they are rooted) as a condition of funding”. (Para 7.6)*

The way in which we propose social capital indicators be related to PfG priorities should contribute to the ease with which departmental funding may be demonstrated

*“to flow from and support the high level priorities set out in the Executives’ Programme for Government and the objectives and targets in the PSAs of relevant departments. In this context, we have reiterated the need for clear high-level objectives (and related performance measures) as part of a coherent approach, across government, to funding of the voluntary and community sector. We recognise the importance of capturing and assessing not only quantitative, but also qualitative information.” (Para 7.1.3)*

The social capital approach to indicators is closely aligned with the analyses of these recent statements of policy in relation to evaluation. The approach offers considerable potential to contribute to the realisation of the better forms of interactions between government and sector envisaged by the policy statements.

By adopting a framework unified by the social capital construct the approach will facilitate greater coherence across organisations and funders. The negotiated transactions will enhance the quality of the partnership between funder and organisation. The methodology will enable the funding relationship to become more transparent to all stakeholders. It will assist funders and organisations to fulfil their accountability to each other and to others. Overall, the approach will encourage the mutual learning envisaged, in different ways, by all of the policies.

## **6. Consultation on the Transactional Model**

Politically and methodologically it was vital the ideas contained in this evaluation model should be disseminated more widely within the voluntary and community sector, academia, policy makers and evaluation practitioners. The aim was more than just to disseminate but to animate debate through engaging directly with relevant interest groups. We wanted to listen, learn and take on board a wide range of critical commentary before moving to the next stage of testing or grounding the approach and indicator set with a sample of organisations.

### ***Who was consulted?***

The report was widely circulated across all sectors. Formal written feedback was received from a number of sources including Government Dept's, academics, voluntary bodies and individuals.

Formal presentations were made to a range of audiences including

- Presentation to the Joint Government/Voluntary Sector Forum
- Seminar with the four funders involved in the initial phase of the research
- Individual presentations to NISRA and DEL
- A general seminar to voluntary and community sector with over 60 attendees
- Presentation to CVAS seminar at QUB on Social Capital
- Presentation to the UK Evaluation Society annual conference

The comments and feedback from all these sessions were recorded and a summary of these are presented here. The response to the interim report was positive and supportive in the main, however much useful criticism did emerge. Views of those consulted are reported under three main headings, (1) comments on the overall approach to evaluation being proposed, (2) views on the idea of social capital being employed to represent voluntary sector activity and (3) the potential usability of the draft indicator framework being proposed

### **1. *The proposed approach to Evaluation***

- The model or approach as presented in the report is still very complex and takes a lot of explaining, however once explained it does make sense. It is important that this properly 'sold' especially within government. All stakeholders will have to understand and feel ownership of it before it will be accepted
- The idea that added value is recognised and approach attempts to capture this is important – recognises importance of but moves beyond the 4 Es
- This is an idealistic approach (another example of potential over-promising) it is aspirational rather than pragmatic. The system imposes limits on the types of relationships which can be developed. We need to be explicit about the nature of these relationships.

- Welcome for conceptualisation of evaluation that encourages organisations to focus on their founding principles and core values – important in the context of contract culture and high levels of dependence on public funding
- The notion of transaction was considered as a potentially very positive and useful way to conceive of the relationship between funders and projects, particularly given the rhetoric of new governance and partnerships. However the feeling is that the reality is somewhat different from rhetoric – it is not a partnership of equals, the relationship will always be one sided. Given the prioritisation of funder's needs there is likely to be little scope for real negotiation.
- Over the next 5 years funding will get tighter and the drive towards evaluation for accountability and decision-making will increase thus potentially threatening the space for partnership and negotiation.
- Cultural shift is required to re-conceptualise evaluation in the way proposed. Recognition that engaging in partnership requires a greater intellectual effort from both parties – therefore cultural shift will of necessity be slow and gradual.
- Evaluation is not a homogenous activity- it is complex with different purposes (accountability, learning, decision making) operating at several levels (policy, programme, project) and over different timescales (ex-anti, ongoing, ex-post).
- Transaction is not simply between funding administrators and recipient projects but should operate at number of levels and at different stages– between policy makers, programme administrators and funded organisations and projects. Funding decisions alone should not be focus of transaction, this needs to encompass input to debate on prioritising needs and influencing policy making

## **2. Social Capital as a way of representing and measuring voluntary and community activity**

- There was a recognition of the potential importance of social capital as a unifying concept to represent the diversity and fragmentation of voluntary sector activity
- Whilst there was agreement that Social Capital offered a valuable common currency, it should be remembered that it can be negative (e.g. paramilitaries and exclusive organisations have high levels of 'bonding' social capital) and that it not a panacea for the sector, nor does it apply solely to the sector.
- Caution was expressed over embracing concept of social capital wholesale – it is still ill-defined and subject of much academic criticism – what is its shelf life?
- There is a problem in trying to pin down exactly what the notion of social capital means – an analogy with perfume was made – it can't be seen or touched but we know its there by our sense – our smell etc. This process is trying to bottle the social capital 'perfume'. (*Question: Is it an Eau de Toilette or an Eau de Parfum ? – beware of cheap imitations*)
- The idea of having two domains of indicators i.e. conventional and social capital – suggests that equal weight is given to both; however, in many situations, greater weighting will be given towards the conventional or 4 Es indicators

- There was some concern about separating the domains. It was suggested that Social Capital should be fully integrated into the existing 4 Es (esp relating to effectiveness) if not there would be a danger that it was seen as a secondary domain, relating more to soft or process outcomes and not part of the 'product' of the project/activity. On the other hand it was felt that until the concept was fully accepted it needed to be highlighted separately to avoid being lost as a sub-set of existing (harder) indicators.

### **3. *Usability of the Social Capital Indicator framework***

- While accepting that further testing of a template based on social capital is necessary this would also need to more accurately represent and reference previous work i.e. the SCDC produced indicators of community development, which are currently in use.
- The main concern was over the costs of implementing such a framework – it would require much more time to carry out effectively and would therefore be more expensive. A “results only” approach is more affordable and realistic – the key question is whether commissioners of evaluation expect all of this extra for the same resources.
- The potential complexity of the proposed set needs to be addressed. It was considered useful to distinguish between levels (individual, group, community, civic) but not to represent them as different forms of capital as this could make the picture over-complicated. Can you imagine trying to explain what individual capital is (not personal savings nor 'human' capital).
- The point was raised that by including civic capital within evaluation of the vol/community sector might be too much of a burden, as this is so much determined by externalities (political stability, forms of governance, etc)
- There is a need to ensure there is a holistic approach that places social capital alongside human, physical, and financial, as a factor of production that can contribute to effecting change.
- There were questions as to how this approach could be implemented by funded groups –support would be needed for groups to identify those indicators, which were most applicable to their specific context. The process was more exhortative than prescriptive.
- There was some concern about using the model to compare one project against another. Depends on the local context. For example Project A may deliver twice as much outcome in relation to social capital than Project B but the starting point and circumstances in which B is located might mean that it represents better value for money.
- A key issue for implementation is how to go about base lining social capital. Establishing baselines within local areas – examining target population is difficult and time consuming – much of this information is not currently built into social and economic surveys. It would be useful to collaborate with other orgs in the local area to access data. The cost of acquiring base line data for local areas needs to be borne in mind

## **7. Case Studies with Four Organisations**

The case studies were chosen following discussions with the VAU with the aim of capturing some of the diversity in the sector. Two were voluntary organisations delivering a range of services to specific at-risk groups, mainly via contractual arrangements with the public sector. Two were community-based organisations engaged in a development remit through still almost entirely dependent on public funding (the implications of this difference for developing indicators are explored in the final section). Different methodologies were employed in engaging with each set of organisations. The first examined the functions and activities of the organisation and discussed with staff how these might be understood within a social capital framework. The second approach started with the transactional model, testing whether it was of use to the organisation. Both used the social capital typology found in the literature, i.e. bonding, bridging and linking. The intention was to see if these different approaches made sense given the differences between the two sets of organisations.

### **Case Study 1: The Cedar Foundation**

The Cedar Foundation is a long-established voluntary organisation with its origins dating back to the 1940s when it began its work as NICOD – the Northern Ireland Council for Orthopaedic Development. Its mission states that

*“The Cedar Foundation works in partnership with people with a physical disability throughout Northern Ireland. We develop and deliver services that promote choice, opportunity, independence and equality.”*

Cedar enthusiastically adopts modern approaches to management, for example, it is the first major voluntary organisation to use the EFQM ‘business excellence model’ and ‘balanced scorecard’ in the region and an early adopter of it throughout the UK. While committing itself to the development of a high performance work system, it maintains traditional sector values on volunteering and the involvement of people with disabilities in its work.

During the workshops<sup>9</sup> with Cedar we explored their experience of the funding transaction and evaluation in the past and the potential of social capital to inform outcome measurement for the future.

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<sup>9</sup> The participants were Barbara Dunn (Quality Manager), Eileen Thomson (Deputy Director), Elaine Armstrong (Brain Injuries), Peter McNamee (Training Services), Robert Wilson (Training Services), Stephen Mathews (Director), and Tanya McCormac (Children’s Services). There were three workshops. Following the first two that took place on the same day, Barbara Dunn (Performance Systems), developed an early draft of the matrix of social capital indicators presented in the appendix, and following discussion with CENI, these were presented and further refined, during a third meeting.

## Experience of Funding Transaction

The receipt of core funding is critical for the organisation although the amount relative to total revenue is modest. Its 'cocktail of funding' includes grant-aid from Health & Social Services Boards, contracts with Health & Social Services Trusts, resources from two departments (Health & Employment), EU support (both ESF and trans-national programmes) as well as support from independent trusts and other sources.

The transaction envisaged in the CENI model<sup>10</sup> is an ideal, which the organisation shares, but the historical experience of the organisation suggest we have a considerable distance to travel before this becomes a reality. The organisation emphasises the importance of the channels of communication between itself and its funders. Its experience of the funding transactions has been mixed, sometime good, sometimes less so, and depends, to some extent, on the different orientation of staff in departments.

Cedar works to develop innovative services through piloting partnership arrangements with statutory funders and providers. From the organisation's perspective, these partnership arrangements have achieved a fair degree of success. However, the response of the statutory partners varies widely with some willing to pursue the arrangement after the pilot but others disengaging from the partnership leaving Cedar 'high and dry'. For example, in one case, a health & social services board preferred to terminate the relationship after pilot funding despite acceptance of the value of the initiative. Relationships of partnership need to be made real, actual and authentic. Partnership implies that commissioning moves beyond a purchasing model if there is to be the mutual learning that is after all a primary purpose for the partnership's existence. The CENI model implies clarity on the part of the funder about what it is commissioning and this is not present in all cases in Cedar's view. Cedar may be an alternative delivery agent for government but it is also practically committed to empowering individuals with disabilities to plan and take control of their own lives. Contracting with Cedar requires government agencies to buy (pay for) the 'empowering' and not just the 'service'.

Cedar adopts a positive and robust perspective on future funding for the sector at large. For the agency, the issue is not only a matter of how appropriate is the 'Barnet formula' and the size of the 'slice of the cake' the sector may call on. Other, ultimately more important questions arise here. For example, which slices of the cake should the sector be involved in, and by implication, which should the statutory sector disengage from as service providers. This implies that in the analysis of the costs and benefits of alternative approaches to delivery there should be full accounting of the costs of statutory provision.

Cedar's work brings under the purview of both Health and Employment. The reality 'joined up government' with departments working across their boundaries remains an aspiration that requires substantial further work. Departments require social capital for cooperative action along with the rest of us. The experience of

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<sup>10</sup> During the workshops, one of the participants drew attention to the parallel between the CENI model and that envisaged by the transactional analysis approach to mental well-being. The latter postulates that 'adult to adult' relations are the hallmark of mature mental health, whereas 'child to adult' relations lead to dysfunctional interactions between adults. Some management analysts use the transactional analysis for the assessment of organisational maturity. CENI's model does require funders and funded to develop mature forms of interaction, which, among other things, requires both parties to move away from the relations of dependency implicit in 'adult to child' exchanges.

Cedar in linking during the funding transaction to both its target departments has on occasion proved difficult as the organisation has sought to communicate to them the nature of the 'added value' the organisation delivers. Partnership implies a form of equality (plainly not of command over resources) and the practical methodology of partnership is underdeveloped.

The competitive tendering of the nineties has deepened the forms of competition that make partnership within the sector more difficult. This competition is in the current context 'a given'. A partnership-based transaction model is not only a matter of relations between one funded organisation and one department. Relations between funded organisations and between funding departments are of equal, perhaps greater, importance if the approach is deliver the promised benefits. One possibility that may ameliorate the negative effects of the competitive trends is to shift the level at which the transaction takes place. This would involve the negotiation of the funding relationship, specification of benefits, and so on, taking place at a sectoral rather than organisational level. For example, all parties involved in the funding of work with disabled people (both departmental funders and voluntary organisations) would negotiate the funding relationship to be applied in that part of the sector. The inevitable and, arguably, desirable competition between alternative bids would then take place. However, none would be able to undercut any other in terms of the 'added value' that was to be delivered as this would have been agreed at the earlier stage.

### **Experience of Evaluation**

Cedar makes extensive use of external evaluation to validate its own internal assessments of performance. The use it makes suggests the organisation is self-critical, reflective and open to learning. It has

- developed its own abilities for the setting of the terms of reference and for the use of evaluation techniques,
- secured inputs from QUB on its quality of service surveying and participated in an action research project in the University on quality issues in the voluntary sector,
- with a view to rolling out services, applied the relevant SSI Quality Standards to its work with the Western Health & Social Services Board,
- learnt what partners should be involved in evaluation to facilitate subsequent implementation of recommendations relating to them,
- sought to develop relationships with other voluntary organisations with a view to bench-marking performance levels, and
- applied statistical indicators of need to establish the difference between the NI and UK levels of integration with a view to informing baseline analyses of barriers to integration in the region.

The organisation's experience of departmental evaluations is variable. The organisation considers that neither its application of the EFQM nor its work on the Investors In People approach was given due recognition by one recent evaluation. Cedar had no opportunity to assess how appropriate the evaluation was for the work. In Cedar's view little attention was paid to its proposals for the evaluation, including one

relating to the evaluation informing future practice on alternatives to day care, while judgements were made without full understanding of the nature of Cedar's business. The value of the evaluation to inform decision-making on funding levels was limited, as the quality of the transaction on funding did not meet Cedar's needs.

## **Social Capital**

In general terms Cedar found much that was relevant in the discussion of the social capital construct. Building relationships of trust with disabled people is core to its practice as it develops the trust of users in Cedar to maintain its relationship with them in the future. Their action on the employment people with disabilities requires it to develop parallel relationships with employers and volunteer placement organisations. Its work with the statutory sector is predicated on building capacity between sectors to work cooperatively. Its policy work will increasingly involve creating 'bridges' to NI Assembly committees. The social capital construct is not appropriate for all work-areas, for example, its Living Options Programme has its own particular contractual specification with the relevant funder. It is not practical for Cedar to take on major additional data collection but it is fully prepared to adjust current procedures to capture the data on the social capital indicators.

## **Indicators**

Cedar is an 'information rich' organisation. Cedar

- carries out regular surveys of employers, users and staff with quality assurance inputs from QUB,
- expects that all aspects of staff, projects and the organisation's performance will be evaluated,
- has 'moved beyond ticking boxes', and
- in its own view, demonstrates with evidence how it is more appropriate to meet users' needs in its areas of competence than statutory providers are.

The amendment of existing data collection procedures will enable Cedar to measure its social capital outcomes through the following indicators that it considers appropriate to its own organisational context:

### ***Bonding – at an individual level***

- Involvement in User Forum ( & Advisory Panel )
- Involvement in local networks or partnerships
- Interpersonal Trust among Forum & Panel participants
- Active participation in decision making and feed back at individual support level
- Trust in service provision to meet user need.
- Trust in management to develop and support staff in their work.
- Organisational values applied

- Impact of core activity on removing barriers to social inclusion for target population.
- Movement of people with disabilities from separated / specialist provision to integration with mainstream provision
- Volunteering activity – users becoming actively involved as volunteers with voluntary organisations (including Cedar)
- Users' perceptions of their confidence, skills & capacity to contribute to development of themselves, Cedar, other organisations, and wider society through their involvement in Cedar.

***Bridging – at an organisational level***

- Active participation of user forum in decision-making and feedback at organisation level.
- Organisational capacity / capability to meet customer's needs
- Service development and sustainability
- Number of networks & partnerships
- Depth of participation in networks & partnerships
- Sustainability of networks & partnerships
- Impact of core activity on removing barriers to social inclusion for target population.
- Organisational values applied
- Awareness of disability issues raised among employers, training providers and voluntary organisations raised by users

***Bridging – at a community level***

- Collective efficacy / joined up working with partners to remove barriers to social inclusion.
- Formal links with social / statutory and private organisations.
- Scope of service provision to include all community backgrounds.
- Scope of service provision to include rural as well as urban dwellers and other disadvantaged groups.
- Impact on & ability to influence strategic / policy decisions shaping the policy to enable people with disabilities to become more fully integrated with the community.
- Staff / user membership of strategic / policy influencing bodies.
- Trust in sub-regional partnerships to develop services across diverse communities.

***Linking – at a civic level***

- Involvement with local and national legislators / public representatives.

- Number of cross border, European, and international partnerships developed.
- Impact of cross border, European, and international partnerships on reducing barriers to social inclusion.
- Trust in regional partnerships to develop services across diverse communities.
- Participation in partnership structures by users from both faith communities demonstrating people users of different religions can work collectively on disability issues.

## **Conclusion**

From a social capital perspective, the removal of the barriers to the inclusion of people with disabilities and their integration into mainstream society (and their access to mainstream public and private services) involves creating bonding relationships among people with disabilities, building bridging relationships between disabled and able-bodied people and linking people with disabilities to agencies controlling resources. Cedar readily grasped the social capital construct and its relevance to his work. The ease with which the organisation was able to relate available sources of data to indicators of social capital suggests the approach is feasible. The indicators proposed by Cedar could guide both internal assessment and an external evaluation of performance in relation to social capital outcomes.

## Indicators – The Cedar Foundation

<b>Social Capital Dimension</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Strategic Theme / Policy Framework</b>
<b>Bonding – Individual level</b> <i>(the development of individual skills, capacity and confidence both within organisation and their intended beneficiaries)</i>	Involvement in User Forum ( & Advisory Panel )	No's of users in Forum (& Panel)	PfC – DSD Aim 3, theme 1 PfG (2.10 sub priority 8) From Dependence to Independence – SS– standard 6. IfH (16.27)
	Involvement in local networks or partnerships	No's of users in local networks & partnerships	As previous
	Interpersonal Trust among Forum & Panel participants	Forum participants feedback	PfC – DSD Aim 3, theme 1 PfG (2.10 sub priority 8) From Dependence to Independence – SS– standard 6. IfH (16.27)
	Active participation in decision making and feed back at individual support level	User feedback re satisfaction surveys Forum participants feedback	PfC – DSD Aim 3, theme 1 PfG (2.10 sub priority 8) From Dependence to Independence SS– standard 6. IfH (16.27)
	Trust in service provision to meet user need.	Minutes of( six monthly) user, trainee & (where appropriate) employer reviews User Surveys Purchaser surveys / feedback	New TSN (3.8.4) IfH (2.7) PfG (2.7, sub priority 5)
	Trust in management to develop and support staff in their work.	Staff survey feedback EFQM People results IIP Testing	Labour Market Bulletin (15 – chapter 26) PfG. (5.9, sub priority 7) (5.6, sub priority 4) IfH (16.30)
	Organisational values applied	Staff survey feedback	From Dependence to Independence(standard 6) Programme for Govt.(5.6 sub. p .4)

<b>Social Capital Dimension</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Strategic Theme / Policy Framework</b>
	Impact of core activity on removing barriers to social inclusion for target population.	Positive outcomes for end users ie employment choice of housing choice of support establishing social networks improved selfesteem	New TSN (3.10.10) IfH (2.7) (2.12) PfC (Aim 4) PfG (2.7 sub priority 5)
	Movement of people with disabilities from separated / specialist provision to integration with mainstream provision	Minutes of six monthly user Progress Reviews	PfG.(2.3 s.p.1) DITTO (4.7 S.P.1) Inv. for Health ( 2.7)
	Volunteering activity – users becoming actively involved as volunteers with voluntary organisations (including Cedar)	No's volunteers internal & external Minutes of user / staff Action Planning sessions	PfC – Theme 3
	Users' perceptions of their confidence, skills & capacity to contribute to development of themselves, Cedar, other organisations, and wider society through their involvement in Cedar.	additional questions in Serve Qual	UN Rights of the Child Boards' Strategic Children's Plans PfG. ( 2.6 s.p. 4 )

<b>Social Capital Dimension</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Strategic Theme / Policy Framework</b>
<b>Bridging –</b>	Active participation of user forum in decision-making and feedback at organisation level.	No of decisions directly influenced by forum. No of actions arising from forum activity.	PfC – DSD Aim 3, Theme 1. Programme of Govt, (2.10 sub priority 8) From Dependence to Independence SS- standard 6.
	Organisational capacity / capability to meet customer's needs	Service growth. Efficacy / KPI activity. EFQM activity & scoring.	PfG. (7.6 sub priority 4) (7.4 sub priority 2) (4.7 sub priority 5) Partner for Change – Theme 1 (1.10 / 11)
	Service development and sustainability	EFQM – key innovations etc performance results Customer satisfaction	PfG (7.7 sub priority 5) 2.6 sub priority 4) PfC – Theme 1 (1.10 / 11 )
	Number of networks & partnerships Depth of participation in networks & partnerships Sustainability of networks & partnerships	No's networks / partnerships Networking / partnership results. Durability (longevity) of networks & partnerships	IfH (2.12) (16.28) PfC – DSD (Theme 2) PfG (2.10 sub priority 8)
	Impact of core activity on removing barriers to social inclusion for target population.	Positive outcomes for end users. Eg employment choice of housing choice of support establishing social networks- improved selfesteem	New TSN (3.10.10) IfH (2.7) (2.12) PfC (Aim 4) PfG (2.7 sub priority 5)
	Organisational values applied	Staff survey feedback	From Dep. to Ind.(standard 6) PfG.(5.6 s.p. 4)
	Awareness of disability issues raised among employers, training providers and voluntary organisations raised by users	Minutes of six monthly training provider, voluntary organisation, employer reviews	PfG. (2.3 s.p. 1, 5, 6) Inv. for Health 2.7, 2.12, 16.27 Partners for change Theme 2

<b>Social Capital Dimension</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Strategic Theme / Policy Framework</b>
<b>Bridging –</b>	Collective efficacy / joined up working with partners to remove barriers to social inclusion.	No's partnerships Partnership results	PfG (7.8 sub priority 6) (2.7 sub priority 5) (2.3 sub priority 1) (2.4 sub priority 2) New TSN(3.10.10)
	Formal links with social / statutory and private organisations.	No's links Linkage results	PfC – DSD (Aim 1) PfG (7.8 sub priority 6)
	Scope of service provision to include all community backgrounds.	Equality measures	Section 75 (NI Act 1998) New TSN(3.8.1) PfC (Aim 2) (Aim 4) PfG (2.3 sub priority 1), (2.4 2)
	Scope of service provision to include rural as well as urban dwellers and other disadvantaged groups.	Equality measures Impact on rural proofing (as appropriate)	New TSN PfC (Aim 4) PfG (2.3 sub priority 1) (2.4 sub priority 2) (2.10 sub priority 8)
	Impact on & ability to influence strategic / policy decisions shaping the policy to enable people with disabilities to become more fully integrated with the community.	Membership of decision-making / influencing bodies Service innovation & dissemination results eg adoption by statutory agencies of alternative to day care centres, influencing statutory policy through continuous improvement of Cedar's practice * demonstration of how statutory agencies might to address emerging needs, eg traumatic brain injuries.	PfC (Aim 1) PfG (7.8 sub priority 6)
	Staff / user membership of strategic / policy influencing bodies.	Membership of decision-making bodies	PfC (Aim 1,2,3)
	Trust in sub-regional partnerships to develop services across diverse communities.	Equality measures Customer feedback Geographical scope of services	New TSN(3.8.1) Programme of Govt (7.8 sub priority 6) PfC (Aim 4)

<b>Social Capital Dimension</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Strategic Theme / Policy Framework</b>
<b>Linking –</b>	Involvement with local and national legislators / public representatives.	Liaison with local and national public representatives Responses to consultation	IfH (17.1) PfG (7.8 sub priority 6) PfC (DSD) Aim 1 and Theme 2.
	Number of cross border, European, and international partnerships developed.	No's EU partnerships No's of cross border partnerships	PfG (6.1) IfH (18.2)
	Impact of cross border, European, and international partnerships on reducing barriers to social inclusion.	Results of, including learning from, EU partnerships for Cedar & partners Results of, including learning from, cross border partnerships for Cedar & partners source is consultation with partners and Serve Qual in the case of users involved in exchanges	PfG (6.1) (2.7 sub priority 5) New TSN IfH (18.2)
	Trust in regional partnerships to develop services across diverse communities.	Equality measures Customer feedback Geographical scope of services. Measures taken to ensure accessibility of Cedar facilities to both faith traditions	IfH (17.11) (16.27 / 28) PfG (2.3 sub priority 1) (2.4 sub priority 2) (2.10 sub priority 8) PfC Theme 2.
	Participation in partnership structures by users from both faith communities demonstrating people users of different religions can work collectively on disability issues.	Nos partnerships that include cross community and interface areas. equality data	PfG.(2.4 s.p.2) (2.10.8) (4.7 5)

Abbreviations for policy documents:

- **PfG – Programme for Government**
- **PfC – Partners for Change**
- **IfH – Investing for Health**

## Case Study 2: NIACRO

The Northern Ireland Association for the Care & Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO) is a long-established voluntary organisation, founded in 1970, which works on issues that connect offenders, victims, communities and statutory agencies. While the organisation's management and staff contracted in the late nineties, NIACRO is still one of the largest voluntaries in the region, employing seventy-five staff at three main locations in 2000/01. There has been some reduction in linkages between the organisation and the voluntary sector in more recent years, due in part to staff contraction. Its reputation in the sector still combines both professionalism in practice and commitment to social change. Historically the organisation has fulfilled influential roles within the sector. Offending is a key influencer on the quality of life of people living in the disadvantaged communities in which most crime takes place. As peace deepens, however shallow it seems likely to remain in many places, the effectiveness of the criminal justice system in reducing 'ordinary' offending will become an increasingly important issue. Its mission states that

*"NIACRO works to achieve a just, humane and effective criminal justice system and an inclusive and peaceful society. NIACRO is an independent non profit making voluntary organisation, seeking to act as an agent of social change."*

At the centre of the NIACRO theory of how its work achieves change is a socio-psychological explanation of crime. In a 'think-piece' on the role of the organisation in the emerging voluntary sector environment, the agency locates its work thus:

*"We enter the debate with a concern to reduce crime and thereby victimization but actually offer intervention with individual offenders to provide them with services which may help them to make more positive choices about how they relate to the communities in which they live... We know that the majority of offenders offend less frequently as they get older; get a stake in society; a job; a home; a relationship and that when that happens they feel better about themselves. So offending harms the offender as well as the victims and society at large... So what works and what can we offer? Tony Bottoms<sup>11</sup> identifies three elements: Pro-social Modelling - good role models in the community or in institutions. Family / Community Ties - a welcoming social network; training and job opportunities; family commitment and support, a role in family community life. Cognitive Behavioral Skills - Recognizing some of the antecedents to crime; drugs; alcohol; anger etc and working through processes that provide enhanced coping strategies."<sup>12</sup>*

The agency emphasises pragmatic, effective interventions that echo many elements of the social capital construct. The 'pro-social modelling' implies the offender places some degree of trust in the role model, while 'family / community ties' parallel the core construct elements of 'relationships and networks' and the

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<sup>11</sup> Tony Bottoms Professor of Criminology University of Cambridge commenting on What works for Offenders

<sup>12</sup> Rethinking Organisational Strategy in the New Voluntary Sector Environment, Page 3.

learning of cognitive and behavioural skills requires the formation of some of those bonds that analysts refer to as the basis of social capital.

The restoration of the just relationships between offender, victim and their communities that underlies NIACRO's work fits readily with social capital's emphasis on the value of bonds between people within communities. The avoidance of re-offending requires the re-bonding of offender to her / his community. Re-establishing the bonds implies the offender accepts the obligation not to re-offend while the 'community', or its representatives, acknowledges the rights of the offender to participate in normal community life. For NIACRO the disassociated status of many offenders requires change if re-offending is to be avoided. Much of its work involves creating links between offenders and their communities that have not been there before or have degraded through offending. However, the matter is not simply one of the absence of connectedness between offender and community but also the nature, form and quantum of social capital within the community. The perception held by communities' members of the offenders' connections to their shared communities is central to the offender's re-integration.

NIACRO places a high value on internal communication and there is a policy in place to guide it. The Joint Negotiating Committee provides for additional communication between staff and management. Reporting lines of the management structures are designed (in part) to facilitate good communication. NIACRO has achieved the Investors in People standard and established numerous policies for sound staff and volunteer recruitment and retention. One issue that has been discussed is the extent of engagement between the Executive Committee and staff and the current business plan identifies a number of actions to pursue this. There are regional fora within the organisation as a whole and a regular series of team meetings. There has been a recent staff survey and this could be a benchmark of staff satisfaction levels for future years. The organisation would consider the amendment of the staff survey questionnaire to assess the changing levels of organisational capital. However, in general terms there is little potential for the social capital construct to contribute much more to the learning within the agency at the organisational level.

Practice, research and policy are the primary streams of the work. Ultimately, the monitoring of outcomes depends on evidencing the contribution of each to stakeholders. The organisation strives to strike the balance between practice, research and policy work as it seeks to inform the policy debate through the knowledge it builds from its services, reflected through its research and presented to policy audiences. The organisation is interested in using service work to demonstrate to policy makers what works and why. It is currently developing an integrated menu approach that will enable it to offer a variety of inputs, which are known from other work to be effective and through bringing these together, to demonstrate the cumulative impact each makes on the life trajectory of the offender. The innovation lies in bringing these diverse inputs together in one menu. The organisation is developing a monitoring system to evidence and track these subsequent life histories. The organisation requires technical assistance to realise this project.

During the workshops with NIACRO, we explored its experience of the funding transaction and evaluation in the past and the potential of social capital to inform the measurement of outcomes flowing from core-funding in the future.

## **Experience of Funding Transaction**

NIACRO receives core-funding from the Northern Ireland Office (NIO). Of our four case studies, NIACRO is the only organisation whose funding remains outside of devolved regional government. With the anticipated devolution of (some) NIO responsibilities in the medium term, NIACRO believe there will be greater potential for the relationship between funder and funded to move toward the ideal 'transaction' we described earlier in the report. The transaction envisaged in the CENI model is an ideal to which the organisation aspires.

However, agreement between the funder and the funded on clarity of outputs, still less outcomes, has yet to be achieved. The relationship anticipated in Partners for Change requires realisation through closer and more intensive working between NIACRO and all the relevant branches of the NIO. Nevertheless, the NIO has demonstrated a willingness to respond to the exceptional needs of NIACRO for funding in the past. For example, it provided additional resources to facilitate recent management restructuring and additional support for the modernisation of IT systems.

## **Experience of Evaluation**

NIACRO's research staff provides the organisation with an in-house capacity for evaluation with staff responsible for the collection and analysis of evaluation data on particular projects. This capacity allows the organisation to exercise greater control over the evaluation of its own work, with less reliance on external evaluators, while generating greater awareness within it of what evaluation implies for its work, and to influence more effectively the assessments of its projects carried out elsewhere.

NIACRO's experience of recent external evaluations commissioned by Government departments are mixed; some good, some less so. In one instance, the exercise helped management to become more externally orientated and alerted the organisation to key issues for the future. One pivotal evaluation alerted the organisation to the need for the review of the size of senior management, planning and communication processes and the range of services on offer. In the case of another evaluation commissioned by Government departments, there was less opportunity for learning by the organisation due to the absence of the type of negotiation we discussed elsewhere.

## **Social Capital**

NIACRO acknowledged the potential value of the social capital construct for evidencing 'difficult-to-measure' outcomes but found the background papers and presentation to be inaccessible in practice. The staff shared the view of many of the construct's critics in querying its own 'added value' – one view was that 'social capital' was a misnomer, that the focus of the construct was really social investment. For NIACRO's social capital was best viewed as the resources invested to build relations for the offender in the community that, in turn, will reduce offending and victimization.

The organisation's willingness to invest staff time in the implementation of the systems associated with the rollout of this approach to outcome measurement will depend on the relevance of the social capital construct to the organisation and the government decisions that will flow from it. For NIACRO the measurement of the outcomes flowing from its direct contact work with offenders was already sufficiently clear in the relevant

funding proposals and plans. More problematic for the organisation was the appropriate measurement of the outcomes flowing from its core-funding.

The discussion of social capital with the organisation focussed on the construct's 'bridging' to the Prison Service and Probation Board and 'linking' to the NIO and other policy generators. The institutional changes of recent years with the establishment of the Human Rights Commission, the Equality Commission and the Police Ombudsman's Office has led to the growth of NIACRO's policy audiences. NIACRO as a voluntary organisation has greater potential to develop a wide range of connections with different policy audiences and more space to innovate than a comparably resourced governmental agency. The organisation seeks to influence policy through established consultation mechanisms and regular participation in conferences and seminars. Policy commentary can lead to doors being opened, with, for example, invites to contribute to conferences following comments on policy. Policy commentary on issues outside of the immediate criminal justice arena presents opportunities for the organisation to advance the legitimate interests of offenders, victims and their communities. For example, responding to the consultation invited on the 'equality agenda' has allowed the organisation to draw attention to the desirability of equality proofing in relation to the recruitment of offenders although offenders per se are not one of the Section 75 'nine categories'. Such work also helps to raise the public and institutional profile of the organisation. While measuring outcomes in relation to changes in policies adopted by government is difficult, this is core to NIACRO's work.

With the important exception of the adoption by government of NIACRO's researched model on the early release scheme for politically motivated prisoners, it is not easy for the organisation to demonstrate the impact of its policy commentary. In other cases, it has proved difficult to demonstrate the actual changes in the adopted policies that are associated with NIACRO's commentary and lobbying.

NIACRO previously purchased software to facilitate the recording of its interactions with policy audiences. However, the time required for data entry into the programme (LOBBY CONTACT) and lack of accessibility to hardware led to under use of the software. Some staff make use of Microsoft Outlook but not all. NIACRO acknowledge the potential to use OUTLOOK as a contact management programme for basic data collection on interactions with policy 'customers'. A more systematic approach to data recording than has been possible to date would assist. The organisation is moving towards a funding database to ensure that management is fully aware of the applications and proposals submitted to funders from different parts of the organisation. NIACRO's existing recording system does enable it to list the contacts staff have with policy audiences. Lack of direct feedback from a diverse range of departmental agencies makes the tracing of the impact of its extensive comments on government policy statements difficult to do in practice. NIACRO is willing to survey relevance audiences on the impact the organisation's inputs has had on their formulation of policy.

Next, we identify indicators of the social capital outcomes appropriate for NIACRO's organisational context.

## **Indicators**

### ***Bonding Capital***

- No additional or alternative social capital indicators are appropriate. NIACRO considers it has identified indicators in the current business plan that provides sufficient guidance for the assessment of performance in relation to individual users and the communities with which it works.

### ***Organisational Capital***

- Discussion within the Executive Committee includes a full range of policy positions in relation to offending with a reasonable depth for those positions;
- Composition of the Executive Committee represents a wide range of organisational stakeholders;
- Composition of the Executive Committee and staff is representative of the diversity of the region's population;
- 'Distance' between staff and Executive is perceived by both as constructive and in line with their separate roles;
- Staff and volunteers have and use structured opportunities to reflect on issues of NIACRO's policy and practice from which they obtain meaningful learning;
- Staff and volunteers have and use structured opportunities to challenge the appropriateness of NIACRO's policy and practice;
- NIACRO demonstrates innovation in policy and practice; and
- NIACRO demonstrates flexibility in its approach to issues of policy and practice.

### ***Bridging Capital***

- Assessment by stakeholders in criminal justice system (Probation Board, Police Service, Prison Service, NIO, other funding departments, Victim Support, Nexus, relevant community-based organisations including crime prevention, community safety and restorative justice groups) of the importance and relevance of NIACRO's policy and practice work;
- Evidence from these stakeholders of their support of NIACRO perspectives on policy and practice;
- Assessment by these stakeholders of the openness of NIACRO to learning on policy and practice from these stakeholders;
- Assessment by partners of the durability and longevity of the relationships between NIACRO and its partners;
- Assessment by NIACRO of the learning obtained by NIACRO from trans-national partnerships on policy and practice;
- Authoritative monetary data on the leverage of additional, including EU, resources by NIACRO through regionally sourced funding;
- Assessment by other organisations of learning obtained from NIACRO on whose boards, committees, etc NIACRO staff serve; and

- The creation by NIACRO of local community safety partnerships between community and statutory agencies.

### ***Linking Capital***

- Assessment by governmental audiences of the relevance and importance of the contribution NIACRO made on policy debates;
- Assessment by wider policy community of the relevance and importance of the contribution NIACRO made on policy debates;
- Identifiable changes in public policy positions adopted by governmental organisations that, in the opinion of governmental personnel, were significantly influenced by NIACRO's input<sup>13</sup>.

In the matrix below NIACRO identify the rationale for each indicator, the public policy statement to which the indicator relates, and the evidence that demonstrates performance in relation to the indicator.

### **Conclusion**

While NIACRO was not overly familiar with the social capital construct the organisation has evidenced application of the model and it offers one way of placing the partnership and policy outcomes of the organisation's work in a common framework using the bridging and linking dimensions. In addition, it was possible to use the construct to identify organisational capital outcomes. Whether all units will adopt this framework and its constituent indicators in equal measure has yet to be debated and agreed. The successful rollout of the project will require that staff throughout the organisation learn about the relevance of the social capital construct to their work. This point is relevant for the funding department as well as the voluntary organisation. If implementation of this approach is to proceed, it is appropriate that departments and related bodies explore the relevance of social capital for their policy goals and the funding decisions that flow from these - just as this exercise has facilitated NIACRO to explore the construct's relevance for its work<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> In the recent past changes in community safety and policing board strategies were the type of 'tracer' policy priorities on which this indicator might focus.

<sup>14</sup> Ideally, the learning process would be an interactive one that brought together both senior and middle management levels of the department and voluntary organisation. It is important that middle management departmental staff participate as in many cases voluntary organisations' interactions with their public funders will involve middle as well as senior management levels.



## Indicators – NIACRO

<b>Social Capital Dimension</b>	<b>Rationale</b>	<b>Strategic Theme / Policy Framework<sup>15</sup></b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
<b>Organisational Capital</b>	Explicit criminal justice focus for NIACRO	Influencing Publics	Discussion within the Executive Committee includes a full range of policy positions in relation to offending with a reasonable depth for those positions;	Annual survey of Committee members;
	Good Governance – breadth of input	Influencing Publics	Composition of the Executive Committee represents a wide range of organisational stakeholders;	Background list annually updated.
	Equal Opportunities	Influencing Publics	Composition of the Executive Committee and staff is representative of the diversity of the region's population;	Background list annually updated.
	Training improves our quality	Human Resources Management	Staff and volunteers have and use structured opportunities to reflect on issues of NIACRO's policy and practice from which they obtain meaningful learning;	Training Report – annual appraisals.
	Open for full staff participation	Human Resources Management	Staff and volunteers have and use structured opportunities to challenge the appropriateness of NIACRO's policy and practice;	Management meetings; fora; consultation groups. Supervision and appraisal.
	Voluntary sector creativity, piloting	Quality Assurance	NIACRO demonstrates innovation in policy and practice; and	List new proposals both delivered and not.
	Flexibility in voluntary sector or specialism	Influencing Publics	NIACRO demonstrates flexibility in its approach to issues of policy and practice.	JSO rewrite.

<sup>15</sup> NIACRO Corporate and Business Plans 2000 - 2003

<b>Social Capital Dimension</b>	<b>Rationale</b>	<b>Strategic Theme / Policy Framework<sup>15</sup></b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
<b>Bridging Capital</b>	Seek continuous independent feedback re: relevance of our work	Influencing Publics	Assessment by stakeholders in criminal justice system of the importance and relevance of NIACRO's policy and practice work;	Survey of Probation Board, Police Service, Prison Service, NIO, other funding departments, Victim Support, Nexus, relevant community-based organisations including crime prevention, community safety and restorative justice groups; Evaluation by SSI, liP.
	Feedback re: value of our (policy comment) work	Influencing Publics	Evidence from these stakeholders of their support of NIACRO perspectives on policy and practice;	Specific research to consultation commissioned.
	NIACRO: a learning community. Continuous learning/feedback loop	Influencing Publics	Assessment by these stakeholders of the openness of NIACRO to learning on policy and practice from these stakeholders;	Specific research to consultation commissioners.
	Emphasise NIACRO's standing	Reintegration	Assessment by partners of the durability and longevity of the relationships between NIACRO and its partners;	List departments, organisations, trusts etc. Funding durations; feedback from these.
	Show our added (practice/policy) value within NI criminal justice system	Reintegration	Assessment by NIACRO of the learning obtained by NIACRO from trans-national partnerships on policy and practice;	EQUAL report.
	Show our added (Financial) value within NI criminal justice system	Resourcing	Authoritative monetary data on the leverage of additional, including EU, resources by NIACRO through regionally sourced funding;	BSP, EQUAL match-funding reports.
	Show our unique contribution/perspective	Influencing Publics	Assessment by other organisations of learning obtained from NIACRO on whose boards, committees, etc NIACRO staff serve; and	Seek feedback through audit of these engagements.
	Strengthen local communities	Safe and Fair Communities	The creation by NIACRO of local community safety partnerships between community and statutory agencies.	Community Safety report re: Galliagh etc.

<b>Social Capital Dimension</b>	<b>Rationale</b>	<b>Strategic Theme / Policy Framework<sup>15</sup></b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
<b>Linking Capital</b>	Community participation in criminal justice system	Influencing Publics	Assessment by governmental audiences of the relevance and importance of the contribution NIACRO made on policy debates;	Annual survey of governmental personnel with whom NIACRO has been in contact.
	Value of resources dedicated to this activity	Influencing Publics	Assessment by wider policy community of the relevance and importance of the contribution NIACRO made on policy debates;	One off survey.
	Value of NIACRO's policy inputs	Influencing Publics	Identifiable changes in public policy positions adopted by governmental organisations that, in the opinion of governmental personnel, were significantly influenced by NIACRO's input.	One off survey.

## **Case Study 3: The Star Neighbourhood Centre**

The Star centre is a community centre located in the New Lodge area of North Belfast. The New Lodge is one of the most deprived wards in the most deprived area of Belfast. Like many communities in North Belfast it also suffers from the continuous threat of political violence. The centre itself is situated on the edge of the New Lodge and backs on to Duncairn Gardens, which acts as an interface between the New Lodge and the loyalist Tigers Bay area. The Centre has been operating for over 10 years and provides a range of services and facilities to the local community. These include, crèche facilities, a homework club, IT training and resources, pensioners club, boxing and football club. The Centre also runs a variety of projects including a young women's project, the SOAR Interface project and LEAP environmental project aimed at developing capacity and sustaining the community. As well as provision of services the STAR acts as a development catalyst for the area advocating and campaigning on behalf of the community to attract resources and drawing the attention of resource providers and policy makers to the needs of the area.

### ***Experience of Funding Transaction***

The Star does not receive central core funding for salaries and overheads, but operates on a cocktail funding from up to 20 different sources to run a variety of different projects. Until March of 2001 the centre employed a coordinator, but after five years and a sequence of funders from the Probation Board to MBW and finally NIVT the money dried up and its voluntary committee now manages the centre. It does receive an annual grant from the Belfast City Council for the general maintenance and upkeep of the building. Making Belfast Work, Peace 1 & II, the National Lotteries Charities Board coupled with a range of independent trusts make up the sources of project funding. Uncertainty and cutbacks in funding mean that the centre is in a survival mode. The group believes that this context hinders development, forward planning and the ability to think on 'an outward basis and a strategic basis'.

Given the numbers and wide range of funders that Star deals with, their experience has been inevitably mixed. While they would welcome a more sustainable source of long-term or core funding from statutory agencies, they have found that working with independent trusts to be more akin to the notion of transaction as outlined in the Ceni model. As a locally based community organisation operating in a specific geographic area Star feel that the main statutory agencies and government departments are too far removed and that civil servants often do not understand the local context and issues. Therefore the group feel that local needs do not always fit with the perceptions and needs of the statutory agencies funding bureaucracy.

For instance, they feel that the criteria and procedures for accessing Peace II funding do not specifically relate to the immediate needs and pressures facing interface communities like the New Lodge. The group find that they have had to adapt funding applications to fit the Peace II criteria rather than honestly reflect what they believe to be the real needs and uses to which they want funding to be put. For instance the criteria as set for Measure 2.2 is, in the view of the group, more suitable for dealing with marginalized youth in more stable or affluent areas. Whereas the Star as a baseline has to engage and interact with young people who are chronically demoralised as opposed to being purely marginalized as specified in the funding criteria.

The idea of a transaction as a negotiated process is negated when policy makers and administrators with no prior consultation with potential local recipients as to their needs and concerns have set the funding criteria in advance. Inevitably the project has to adapt to the needs of the bureaucracy. The Star finds this aspect of the relationship with state funders to be the most frustrating – The group wants to be honest – ‘not just jump through funders hoops telling them what they want to hear’

The Star believes this needs to be addressed at both operational and policy levels. At an operational level funding administrators need to have much more visibility and contact with projects they fund on the ground in order to see at first hand issues they face and context within which they are working. One way to overcome this is to have more assessment visits with groups/projects as part of application process. In this way administrators can build up a relationship of understanding and trust with projects. Independent trusts seem to adopt this approach and have more direct communication with their funded projects than statutory agencies. As a result the Star feel trusts display a better understanding of the culture and processes of community development and are able to emphasise more with the group in what they are trying to achieve.

Also at an operational level more development work is required to assist projects with funding applications. BRO (previously MBW) had been very good at this in the past but this has since declined. The Star suggest that the BRO should have a liaison person in North Belfast who knows the area the issues and the people and could therefore help broker more effective transactions. They emphasise that personal credibility is important for a transactional relationship to work, the right attitude and approach on both sides is essential to build trust.

At a policy level there needs to be more inclusive and transparent mechanisms to involve local communities in the policy/decision making processes that affect their lives. The question needs to be asked – whose needs are being served when funding criteria are being set and how can local community representatives have more input to or influence on the decision making process.

Mechanisms such as the joint Government Voluntary sector Forum is seen as a positive step forward but it were felt that this still under represents the interests of the community sector compared to that of the voluntary sector. The Star sees this as part of a broader issue as to how government relates to the different voluntary and community sectors. The perception is that most engagement with government at higher level is with larger ‘professional’ voluntary organisations such as NICVA, NIVT etc. Larger voluntaries they believe are perceived as being ‘safe’ in that they speak the same language and are considered to be more professional. There is a sense of a culture gap existing not just between community groups and statutory agencies but also between large voluntary and local community organisations

If transaction at policy level is to be fully inclusive then it is also incumbent on the larger voluntary organisations with better resources capacities to ensure they have good links with the community level. It is important that their differences are recognised and better connections are formed. The consultation process around the launch of the ‘Compact’ document was cited as an example of poor communication and dissemination at the local community level.

Another major issue for community groups is having the knowledge and confidence to communicate with policy makers and funding administrators. The Star feel that they constantly have to prove their value to funders and that there is an inherent lack of trust on behalf of some civil servants toward them. They feel that because some funders/civil servants do not understand or share the culture and values of the group then they do not trust their capability and so therefore question the viability of their project. 'When do you get to the stage when you can be trusted as being capable and viable'. A further point made by the group is that because the many different funders they deal with do not share information on projects they fund then they do not have the ability to corroborate the value of projects.

Ultimately the Star would like to see a more coordinated effort between funders involving local groups to develop an integrated long-term strategy for North Belfast. Currently there exists a range of short-term reactive palliatives to ever-growing crises. Unfortunately the recently published report of the North Belfast Task Force is perceived in this vein.

In conclusion the idea of transaction needs to be at both operational and policy level. The issues for a group like the Star are about (1) access, i.e. how local community groups gain equal access as voluntary organisations to the influencers and decision makers and (2) capability, how community groups can better communicate their capability and viability to statutory funders.

### ***Experience of Evaluation***

The Star has had no formal experience of external evaluation. Funding for any single project has not been sufficient enough to warrant an external evaluation from the funder. The Star however, is committed to the idea of evaluation and has established its own self-evaluation systems to review and inform its own progress against objectives. In 1999 the Star was one of a series of community and voluntary organisations selected to test pilot the indicators of voluntary activity developed by Knapp & Kendall. The exercise commissioned by the VAU and carried out by Price Waterhouse Coopers proved to be an illuminating one for the project and they felt they learnt much from the experience.

Evidence of the Stars awareness and acceptance of evaluation is their belief that they not only have to satisfy funders and government agencies of their worth but also the ultimate critics, the local community they serve. This, the group feels, is the main difference between organic community groups and what they term larger more peripheral organisations as they perhaps do not have this additional but very necessary scrutiny.

### ***Star on Social Capital***

The staff and volunteers within the centre generally warmed to the concept of social capital and saw it as a valid way to represent a lot of what their development work was about. They particularly saw its relevance when explained in the context of other forms of capital i.e. physical, economic and human capital. Social capital was understood as an integral part of the development picture interlinking with and dependent on all the other types of capital.

The group agreed with the contention that Social capital was a necessary component for community development processes to work<sup>16</sup>. The existence of family, neighbourhood and community networks; the need for people to trust in each other; and existence of reciprocal relationships and so on were all essential for community development to operate. Likewise the operation of successful community development can also generate social capital, which can then be used in other community development processes.

When applied to the New Lodge they felt that the stock of social capital was in fact being depleted, especially since the ceasefires. The post ceasefire period and the last few years in particular has produced a change in the dynamic of the area. In the 1980s the New Lodge was more stable internally despite the external political threat. The post ceasefires period was followed by high expectations, which have not been realised. As the paramilitaries political profile increased their capacity to enforce order locally has actually declined. The rise in anti-social behaviour among young people within the area now threatens internal trust and security. The internal cohesion has decreased while the external political threat has increased

There is still a core of collective capacity within the community as evidenced when reacting to external attacks, but this is reactive and is not being sufficiently translated into collective action on broader community issues. The community is in transition and feels isolated and powerless within the broader societal changes taking place as part of the peace process. Morale is low; there is disillusionment and the feeling that life has gotten worse not better. These pressures on the community are placing greater demands on community organisations like Star, which do not have the capacity to cater for this level of need. Short-term funding programmes like Peace II & I while helpful do not address the core issues. Constantly having to apply for renewed short term funding projects drains the energy and capacity of local activists.

In terms of Social Capital the following would be seen as important to the Star

- More bonding capital to help create better community cohesion and sense of direction
- More linking capital to create better relationships with policy makers and resource providers to understand each others needs and so plan negotiate clearer long-term strategy for the area
- More bridging social capital to help the community locate itself in a wider societal context and not just have exclusive isolated view of itself

## Indicators

Arising from the above discussions an attempt was made to construct a set of social capital indicators that would represent the outcomes of the Star Neighbourhood Centre's work. To facilitate this the researchers utilised the existing Scottish Community Development Centre's and Knapp & Kendall sets. We allocated indicators derived from these sets into the categories of bonding, bridging and linking as were considered appropriate. The group then went through a process of clarifying, refining or rejecting the existing indicators as well as adding some of their own. Through this process we arrived at a grid of prospective social capital indicators.

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<sup>16</sup> 1999 Paul Bullen with Jenny Onyx Neighbourhood and Community Centres in NSW and Family Support Services in NSW



<b>Social Capital Dimension</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Aspect</b>	<b>STAR Evidence</b>
<b>Bonded community</b>	<i>An Empowered Community</i> It has confidence, capacity, leadership and sense of direction	The needs of socially excluded individuals & groups within the community have been identified & assessed Learning and development opportunities have been developed and targeted The skills, competencies and knowledge of individuals are being developed and applied Leadership is evident and potential local leaders are being identified and developed	Provision of range of services inc. Kids Homework Club, Crèche, Young Women's project, IT training, Senior Citizens Thursday Club, Boxing & Football Numbers, types attending participating in activities Numbers of new activists created sustained Surveys and feedback from residents & users
	<i>An Organised Community</i> It has an infrastructure of institutions that are representative and inclusive of all sections within the community	Number and nature of community based organisations Nature and extent of Community development structures Organisational structures that are open to and represent all sections of community – women, minorities etc Levels of participation in community based activity - involvement of socially excluded individuals and groups	Development of community restorative justice initiatives and responses to anti-social behaviour Evidence of acceptance and approval of community for work of Star
	<i>A Connected Community</i> People and institutions are well connected with each other - trusting, sharing and working together	Existence of formal/informal Networks Between people in the community Existence of formal/informal Networks Between organisations in the community Levels of Trust and adherence to norms of inclusiveness and reciprocity	Participation creates connections e.g. Parents involvement in homework club creates support Sharing of resources and referrals between groups Participation in New Lodge forum, Ashton Centre Improving collaboration reducing competition
	<i>An Influential Community</i> It has representation and contacts in public fora to influence decisions and attract resources	Extent to which community has shared visions for its future Existence of recognised, supported Leadership within community Representation/Visibility of community based organisations Influence of the community in Informing local services and activities Evidence that local peoples views are reflected in public debate	Production dissemination of development plans Evidence of reduced dependency on same individuals build capacity spread responsibility Representation on N Belfast partnership Evidence of Influence e.g. traffic calming scheme Number of projects funded by outside agencies

<b>Social Capital Dimension</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Aspect</b>	<b>STAR Evidence</b>
<b>Bridging Community</b>	<i>Connected to other Communities</i> It has access to, contacts in and actively engages with other communities outside its own geographic or sectoral base	Evidence that group/ community actively seeks to engage with communities/ sectors external to its own <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geographic communities</li> <li>• Sectors (ethnic/religion, age, gender, rural/urban, disability, etc)</li> </ul> Nature and extent of advice support given to other communities/sectors Nature and extent of advice support received from other communities/sectors Presence and diversity of brokers who are able to facilitate exchanges between the community and other communities/sectors Perceived effectiveness of brokers/ facilitators in facilitating exchanges, improved understanding etc	Participation in IFI and Peace II initiatives  Number, frequency, nature of informal contacts with Protestant community representatives  Number, frequency, nature of informal contacts with representatives of travellers and ethnic minorities
	<i>An Accessible Community</i> There exists norms, structures and processes within the group/community which make it accessible to outside communities and sectors	Recognition and acceptance by group/ community of cultural diversity  Accessibility, openness of this group/ community to other cultures communities  Development of structures/ processes to help conflict resolution within community	Invite and facilitate visits from protestant groups – e.g. Mt Vernon children’s & women’s projects  Participation of travellers children in nursery despite reaction of other parents
	<i>An Innovative Community</i> There is an acceptance of diversity – willingness to entertain new ideas and accept change	Evidence of norms that include inclusiveness, tolerance and appreciation of diversity, which can foster innovation and responsiveness to change	Incorporate anti-sectarian policy and practice into training and support services – e.g. actively challenge children’s sectarian comments

<b>Social Capital Dimension</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Aspect</b>	<b>STAR Evidence</b>
<b>Linking Community</b>	<p><i>Connected to Power &amp; Resources</i></p> <p>Community has contacts and access to those people and institutions outside the community with power and resources</p>	<p>Evidence of contact with Resource/development agencies outside the community</p> <p>Nature and extent of advice support received from outside agencies</p> <p>Nature and extent of advice support given to outside agencies</p> <p>Presence and diversity of brokers who are able to facilitate exchanges between the community and outside agencies</p> <p>Evidence of collaborative alliances with outside agencies at regional, national, international levels</p> <p>Perceptions of those living in the community of the effectiveness of such links</p>	<p>Contacts with range of agencies inc. N&amp;WSST, Probation Service, BRO,</p> <p>Membership of N Belfast Partnership Board</p> <p>Act as broker between Social Services and local community</p> <p>Advocate and enhance community access to Social Services</p> <p>Enhance Social Services understanding of community need</p>
	<p><i>Influence Beyond its Boundaries</i></p> <p>Community has representation and influence on public policy, practice and political process at local and regional level</p>	<p>Community has representation on decision making bodies</p> <p>Representation/inclusion in Partnerships with public/ private/ voluntary agencies</p> <p>Evidence of the perception and attitudes of public agencies representatives to the group/communities participation and contribution</p> <p>Perception, attitudes of community representatives of their role and influence</p> <p>Contribution of community to meeting Govt objectives on Equal/Equity – TSN, Section 75</p>	<p>Membership of N Belfast Partnership Board, Belfast Community Arts Initiative,</p> <p>Input to OFMDFM North Belfast Community Action Project</p>

## **Case Study 4: 'Rural Women's Programme'**

### ***Community Change & The Women's Resource Development Agency***

#### ***Background***

The Women's Resource and Development Agency (WRDA) and Community Change (CC) have a regional remit for the delivery of their respective services. CC provides training facilitation, and development support for community organisations, and the WRDA plays a strategic role in supporting women's grass roots activism through education and development activity.

The two organisations came together in 1999 to jointly run the Rural Women's Programme funded by the National Lotteries Charities Board. The programme rationale was that women were under represented in rurally based community activity, both at local and regional level and that there existed a lack of capacity among rural support agencies to provide them with the support needed to develop the ability to become influential at higher and more public levels of community activity. The objectives of the Rural Women's Programme at its outset were as follows:

- to enskill a pool of 90 women from 6 rural agency areas of Northern Ireland to become community facilitators within their own areas
- to train women in personal development and community development skills
- to facilitate women to assess, respond to and contribute to local community needs
- to achieve more effective rural development projects that are more inclusive and reflective of the needs of women
- to create a network of information exchange between rural agencies committed to improving access for women in local development programmes
- to facilitate rural agencies [the Rural Support Networks] to utilise emerging community development skills among women and provide long term support to ensure sustainability of the resource within the local community

The WRDA and CC sought to work with the existing rural support networks to identify and recruit potential facilitators. Some five Rural Support Networks are participating in the Rural Women's Programme. CC & WRDA carry out development work in the Rural Support Network area prior to recruitment of women for the facilitator's training programme. This initial activity acts as a platform from which women can be recruited for the Facilitators programme. 15 women from each area are then trained in facilitation skills. Accreditation is on offer for 7 Units of the NVQ in Training and Development at Level 3.

Upon completion of the training, the Rural Support Network is equipped with a resource to support their work with women in particular but with community groups in general. The Programme includes substantial liaison by WRDA and Community Change with the Rural Support Networks with the aim of ensuring that the RSN's are in a position to provide practice opportunities and long term support to the newly trained Facilitators.

## ***Experience of Transactions***

Both organisations are in receipt of core funding from statutory agencies. In addition they receive various project funding from a variety of sources including EU and charitable trusts. For this project they receive funding from the Community Fund (formerly the National Lottery Charities Board). This funds two project workers. One worker was placed with and managed by each of the organisations. The WRDA as lead agency managed the finances. A project advisory group was established to guide the project and included representatives of the rural support networks.

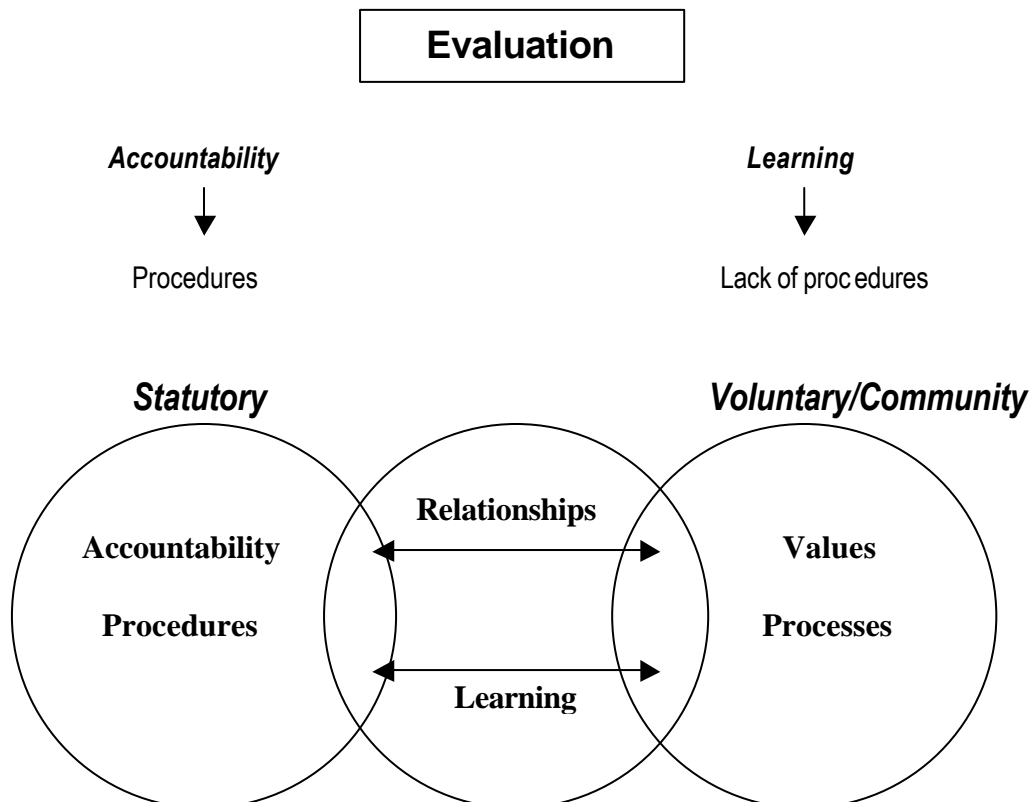
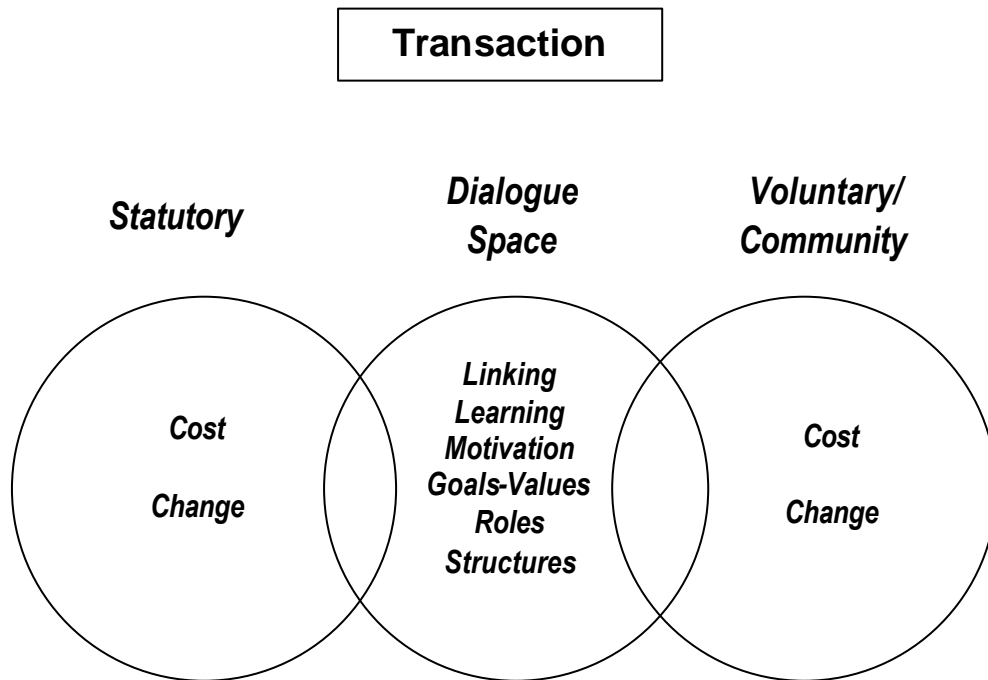
Both organisations are highly experienced in dealing with statutory and other funders and recognise and appreciate the idea of transaction as outlined within the Ceni model. However, they would view the notion as described in the Ceni model as an ideal type more aspirational than reality. It may be what we would want and like from a relationship with funders but the reality is very different and we are some way off from realising this.

The problem is that the partners to this transaction are starting from different places with different perspectives, cultures and value bases. This can create a certain amount of tension and mutual misunderstanding between government and voluntary community organisations. For instance, voluntary sector organisations sometimes feel that government agencies don't fully appreciate their ethos, structures and processes. Likewise community groups often don't understand government structures, remits, planning and funding cycles. Successful transaction is dependent on the existence of common understanding between the partners and with some shared sense of culture, values and aspirations. Perhaps the most crucial dynamic in any relationship is the balance of power. The fact that funders hold the resources means that the balance is inevitably weighted in their favour so making the partnership less than equal.

While there is acceptance that the power balance may be weighted in favour of the statutory funding partner, there is also acknowledgement that many voluntary and community organisations can face challenges in focussing beyond their immediate concerns when dealing with funders. This stems from the belief that the work of voluntary and community sector is very much process driven and there can be a tendency to view this 'process' as being important, an end in itself, and something which statutory funders just don't understand. While this process issue is undoubtedly important it is equally important that changes and outcomes arising from these processes are subject to evaluation and assessment by their funders.

Evaluation models utilised by statutory funders focus on accountability or the measurable deliverables produced by voluntary/community groups but miss out on the process/development/learning outcomes. On the one hand there are statutory funders with their accountability demands and formal procedures for inspection and evaluation and on the other is the voluntary and community sector who feel somehow removed from a process which does not adequately represent their interests and values. What is needed is some middle ground, which has accountability and procedures but also recognises and accommodates process and learning. This middle ground has to be established through building on relations leading to better understanding of each other's needs and the development of mechanisms and techniques to measure and capture the learning and development outcomes.

The diagrams attempt to represent this need for dialogue space in the transaction process. This then needs to be further translated into an approach to evaluation which can accommodate both accountability and learning needs.



The transaction approach is crucial if a broader approach to evaluation is to happen. However, this should not just be a resource driven model of transaction. Transaction at different levels is needed to create the space for dialogue, understanding and negotiation to take place between partners

While new spaces for political dialogue have been created, these tend to be at the highest levels and are not particularly neutral or democratic. The issue is how to expand the loop and make policy process more accessible. The problem is also one of the sheer density of voluntary and community organisations in Northern Ireland which makes this more difficult. The establishment of the Joint Voluntary Sector/Government Forum is a positive step and has helped to create a more formal space for dialogue and for relationships to develop. The view is that this has taken quite a while to settle down and for relations to become established but it is improving. Despite this the major issue is one of dissemination and ensuring all levels of voluntary and community activity are connected and within the loop. A number of alternatives are being explored such as having alternates accompanying members to get some access and experience of the process. More is needed and new tools such as future search should be more widely explored and adapted.

### ***How they have experienced and view the evaluation process***

Both organisations have experience of external evaluations from their Government funders and are committed to internal evaluation processes. In terms of this project both quantitative and qualitative indicators were specified coupled with monitoring and evaluation arrangements. This included a mid-term review of the programme which has been completed. The main recommendation arising from this report focussed on the need for increased involvement of the rural support network in the planning process as a means of 'building the programme in a collaborative way'

### ***Social Capital***

The concept of Social is integral to the programmes rationale and objectives. The interim evaluation report of the programme stated

*' While personal development, subsequent participation and effective representation are fundamental to strong development approaches, the way people, and women in this case, work together to support each other as they move forward is a vital part of the process.....a more complete assessment of this situation is offered by the concept of social capital'*

*'Looked at from a social capital perspective training or development measures to improve participation should be targeted at building networks and information flows **between** individuals as at improving the personal competence **of** individuals'.*

### ***Bonding Social Capital***

The programme helps to build bonding capital by developing the individual women's' competencies and skills via the training programme. They in turn re-engage with their local networks to provide an additional resource asset as local leaders and mentors within the community. The community facilitators have ongoing access to Community Change and WRDA staff and regular support meetings with other Community Facilitators. The aim is that the Community Facilitators are then well placed to work with women's groups or community groups to facilitate consultation, discussion and reflection across a range

of areas. A crucial role for the programme therefore is one of facilitating the relationships between trained facilitators, the networks and their own communities.

Very often in rural areas physical and human capital may exist, but social capital is lacking. For instance a local hall or other physical resource may exist but remains under utilised. Local elites may prevail and act as gatekeepers excluding others from joining or participating in community activities. The role of the programme worker is one of 'communication conduit' i.e. as outsiders they can sometimes help to break down barriers between locals and facilitate interaction thus helping lay the ground for the local facilitators to operate. After facilitators are trained the programme worker still needs to re-engage these connections between the facilitators and their local rural support network base. As highlighted by the mid-term evaluation, there is a sense of the local networks have perhaps not fully bought into the process and under appreciate the asset they now have. Therefore, once a development opportunity is identified the programme worker will step in with more training or support as required to ensure the facilitators role is integrated with the work of the network and needs of local community.

Bonding is also at a regional level as locally based community facilitators meet up with colleagues from other regions to have structured sessions facilitated by the programme.

### ***Bridging Capital***

Bridging social capital takes place between individuals participating in the programme from different communities. An informal network of regional community facilitators has been established with contacts and reciprocation between each other. The key to bridging is to get people out of their local communities and to begin working sub-regionally within their own network and regionally by linking up with other networks. One of the networks commented that one unforeseen benefits for them was the encouragement that the programme has given for women to 'think regionally rather than just locally'. Built into to the programme is the idea that community facilitators will spend time working on projects outside of their own community. This can be cross-sectoral as well as geographic. For instance, where a community facilitator is working on a health project then they have to connect with a whole new sector and set of professionals.

While the programme does facilitate cross-community bridging, the issue of community relations or sectarianism is addressed only in an indirect way. Facilitators will arrange exchange visits to each other's areas for instance and it is anticipated that community facilitators will have to deal these issues anyway. However, community bridging in the sense of community relations is not an explicit objective or activity within the programme. The CC WRDA group discussed the issue at some length and felt that as part of the learning from this programme, which is still a pilot, that anti-sectarian training could be incorporated into the programme but as part of a broader session on anti-discriminatory practice. This is a sensitive issue, but it needs to be acknowledged and addressed within a programme like this. The issue for the workers is whether it should be forced or allowed to emerge organically as part of the programme design.

### ***Linking Capital***

The programme organisers see linking capital being created by the fact of individual community facilitators becoming more aware of power and resource structures which effect their communities. Through this they better able to analyse and understand how and what is happening within their own

communities and ultimately become better equipped to engage with these structures. From the mid-term evaluation one network spoke of the urgent need for women's groups to build understanding of the new funding arrangements so that women are kept in touch on the resources front.

However, it was emphasised by the CC WRDA group that linking should not just be resource driven, but that it should prioritise policy influence as well. The priority should be to have the links with policy rather than finance as the focus for transaction. This allows the focus to be on the purpose and role of the voluntary sector as a mechanism for change rather than 'just give us the money and let us get on with it' approach. It is important to move away from a resource driven model of evaluation, which is what we have now, and move toward the transactional model.

## ***Indicators***

Arising from the above discussions an attempt was made to construct a set of social capital indicators that would represent the outcomes of the Rural Women's Programme. To facilitate this the researchers utilised the existing Scottish Community Development Centre's and Knapp & Kendall sets. We allocated indicators derived from these sets into the categories of bonding, bridging and linking as were considered appropriate. The group then went through a process of clarifying, refining or rejecting the existing indicators as well as adding some of their own. Through this process we arrived at a grid of prospective social capital indicators

### Definition of Community

The community the Rural Women's Programme is addressing consists of both individuals and local communities. In the first instance there is the community of individual women who are recruited and trained as community facilitators, and secondly the community of women's groups/projects they attempt to animate, develop within their local communities



<b>Social Capital Dimension</b>	<b>Core Element</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Rural Women's Programme Evidence</b>
<b>Bonded community</b>	<i>An Empowered Community</i> It has confidence, capacity, leadership and sense of direction	The needs of socially excluded individuals & groups within the community have been identified & assessed Learning and development opportunities have been developed and targeted The skills, competencies and knowledge of individuals are being developed and applied Leadership is evident and potential local leaders are being identified and developed	Liaisons, development work with RSNs to identify recruit community facilitators No.s of women recruited and trained, No. and level of NVQs attained Increased confidence and competence of individuals Increased involvement within their local community
	<i>An Organised Community</i> It has an infrastructure of institutions that are representative and inclusive of all sections within the community	Number and nature of community based organisations Nature and extent of Community development structures Organisational structures that are open to and represent all sections of community – number/proportion of women, minorities etc Levels of participation in community based activity – numbers of volunteers, involvement of socially excluded individuals and groups	Number, type of projects developed by facilitators Increased awareness of women's issues within RSNs and local communities Increased participation of women in community activities e.g. setting up women's groups Increased representation of women in community organisations
	<i>A Connected Community</i> People and institutions are well connected with each other - trusting, sharing and working together	Existence of formal/informal Networks Between people in the community Existence of formal/informal Networks Between organisations in the community Levels of Trust and adherence to norms of inclusiveness and reciprocity	Increased contact between individual women and between women's groups within the community Increased contact between women's groups, RSN and other organisations in the community
	<i>An Influential Community</i> It has representation and contacts in public fora to influence decisions and attract resources	Extent to which community has shared visions for its future Existence of recognised, supported Leadership within community Representation/Visibility of community based organisations Influence of the community in Informing local services and activities Evidence that local peoples views are reflected in public debate Evidence that all sections of the community are represented in public debate	Evidence of women's issues being incorporated into local development plans Increased representation of local women on community platforms



<b>Social Capital Dimension</b>	<b>Core Element</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Rural Women's Programme Evidence</b>
<b>Bridging Community</b>	<i>Connected to other Communities</i> It has access to, contacts in and actively engages with other communities outside its own geographic or sectoral base	Evidence that group/ community actively seeks to engage with communities/ sectors external to its own <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geographic communities</li> <li>• Sectors (ethnic/religion, age, gender, rural/urban, disability, etc)</li> </ul> Nature and extent of advice support given to other communities/sectors Nature and extent of advice support received from other communities/ sectors Presence and diversity of brokers who are able to facilitate exchanges between the community and other communities/sectors Perceived effectiveness of brokers/ facilitators in facilitating exchanges, improved understanding etc	No. and nature of contacts between individual facilitators in different regions  Contacts facilitated by facilitators with groups from outside the community  Contacts facilitated by facilitators between women's groups and other sectors within and without the community
	<i>An Accessible Community</i> There exists norms, structures and processes within the group/community which make it accessible to outside communities and sectors	Recognition and acceptance by group/ community of cultural diversity  Accessibility, openness of this group/ community to other cultures communities  Development of structures/ processes to help conflict resolution within community	Evidence of Facilitators awareness of and competence to deal with community relations cultural diversity issues  Evidence of existence of discussion, debate addressing community relations issues within women's groups  Evidence of proactive cross community and anti-sectarian initiatives being developed by women's groups
	<i>An Innovative Community</i> There is an acceptance of diversity – willingness to entertain new ideas and accept change	Evidence of norms that include inclusiveness, tolerance and appreciation of diversity, which can foster innovation and responsiveness to change	Evidence of new people becoming involved in group from different social cultural backgrounds.  Evidence of new ideas being developed and accepted

<b>Social Capital Dimension</b>	<b>Core Element</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Rural Women's Programme Evidence</b>
<b>Linking Community</b>	<i>Connected to Power &amp; Resources</i> Community has contacts and access to those people and institutions outside the community with power and resources	<p>Evidence of contact with Resource/development agencies outside the community</p> <p>Nature and extent of advice support received from outside agencies</p> <p>Nature and extent of advice support given to outside agencies</p> <p>Presence and diversity of brokers who are able to facilitate exchanges between the community and outside agencies</p> <p>Evidence of collaborative alliances with outside agencies at regional, national, international levels</p> <p>Perceptions of those living in the community of the effectiveness of such links</p>	<p>Awareness and competence of facilitator to engage with resource/development agencies outside the community</p> <p>Contacts facilitated by facilitators between local groups and outside resource/development agencies</p> <p>Evidence of links partnerships established between local women's groups and outside agencies</p>
	<i>Influence Beyond its Boundaries</i> Community has representation and influence on public policy, practice and political process at local and regional level	<p>Community has representation on decision making bodies</p> <p>Representation/inclusion in Partnerships with public/ private/ voluntary agencies</p> <p>Evidence of the perception and attitudes of public agencies representatives to the group/communities participation and contribution</p> <p>Perception, attitudes of community representatives of their role and influence</p> <p>Contribution of community to meeting Govt objectives on Equal/Equity – TSN, Section 75</p>	<p>Representation of women/women's groups on local partnership bodies</p> <p>Evidence of women and women's issues being addressed at policy level</p>

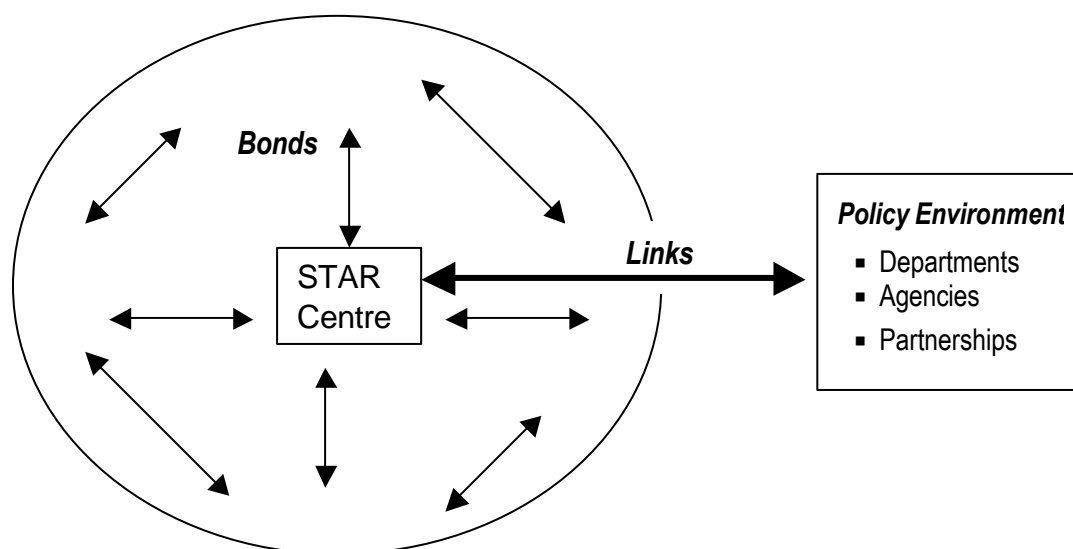
## Case Study Summary

At each stage of the case study exercise, a set of social capital indicators was explored. We emphasise that these have been designed to fit within the proposed transactional model of funding/evaluation and that they complement, rather than replace, conventional indicators for capturing how well community and voluntary organisations deliver agreed social welfare outputs. With respect to these, there is a well-established evaluation literature, a range of evaluation techniques and an archive of evaluation reports. (See Appendix 1 Belfast Regeneration Office Output Measures as an example)

Accordingly, **the emphasis here has been on the utility of social capital as a concept in describing other dimensions of community-based activity and in outlining sets of indicators that might be employed for the purpose.** The most extensive piece of work was the case studies designed to test whether social capital made sense to community and voluntary organisations and if social capital indicators could be generated to measure this aspect of their activity.

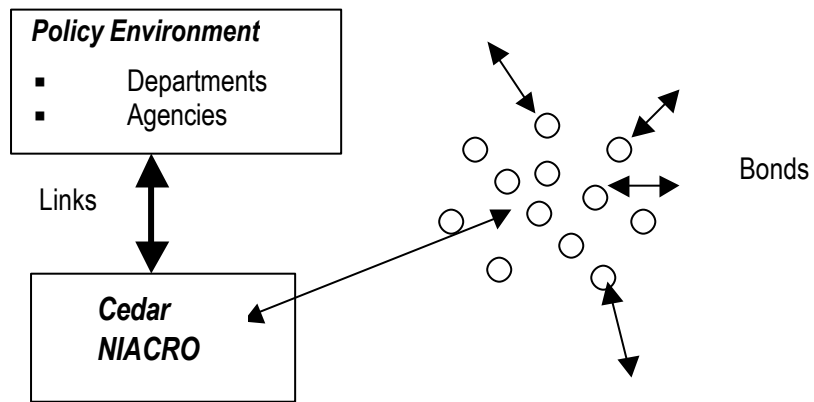
The case studies revealed very different kinds of organisations with remarkably different functions. The differences can be depicted as follows:

- The Star Centre is a classic, area-based community development organisation whose primary concern was the decline and fracturing of intra-community relationships in the political uncertainties of post-Agreement North Belfast. It saw its core mission as rebuilding relations of community solidarity and thus community involvement. Its core focus was thus on bonding social capital.



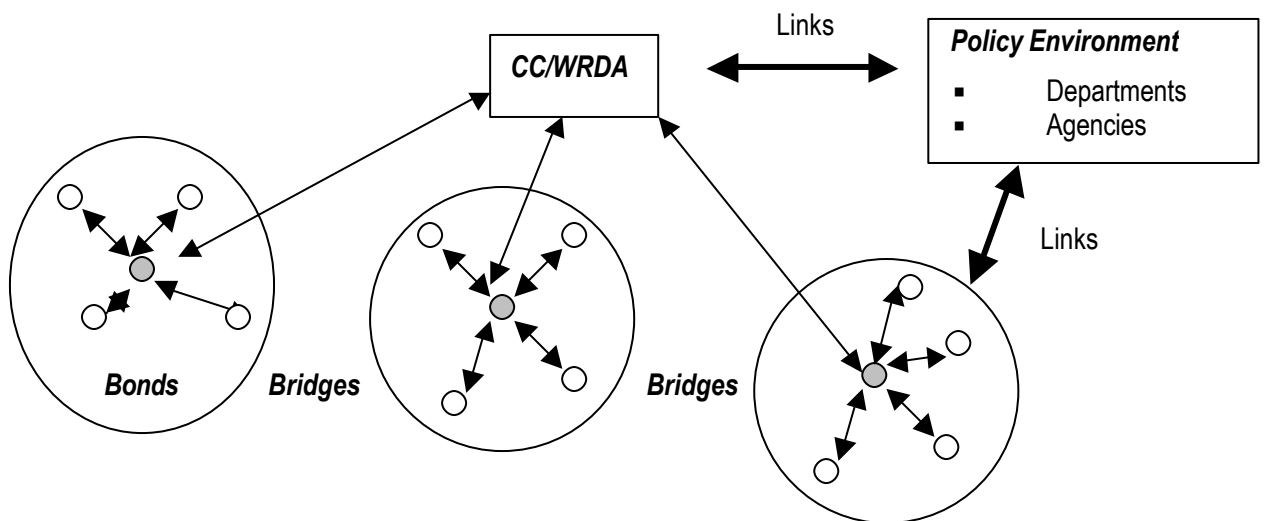
It seeks to build relationships between itself as an organisation and its community and between different sections of the community. In the contested, segregated social space of North Belfast, bridging social capital is perhaps a bridge too far (in the short term). It nevertheless seeks to engage with policy makers in order both to secure funding and to influence a range of other interventions. It has heavily invested in partnership activity and seeks dialogue with those who make policy.

- The two voluntary organisations, NIACRO and Cedar were engaged in the delivery of a range of programmes to their client groups that were spread across the region rather than concentrated in a single locality.

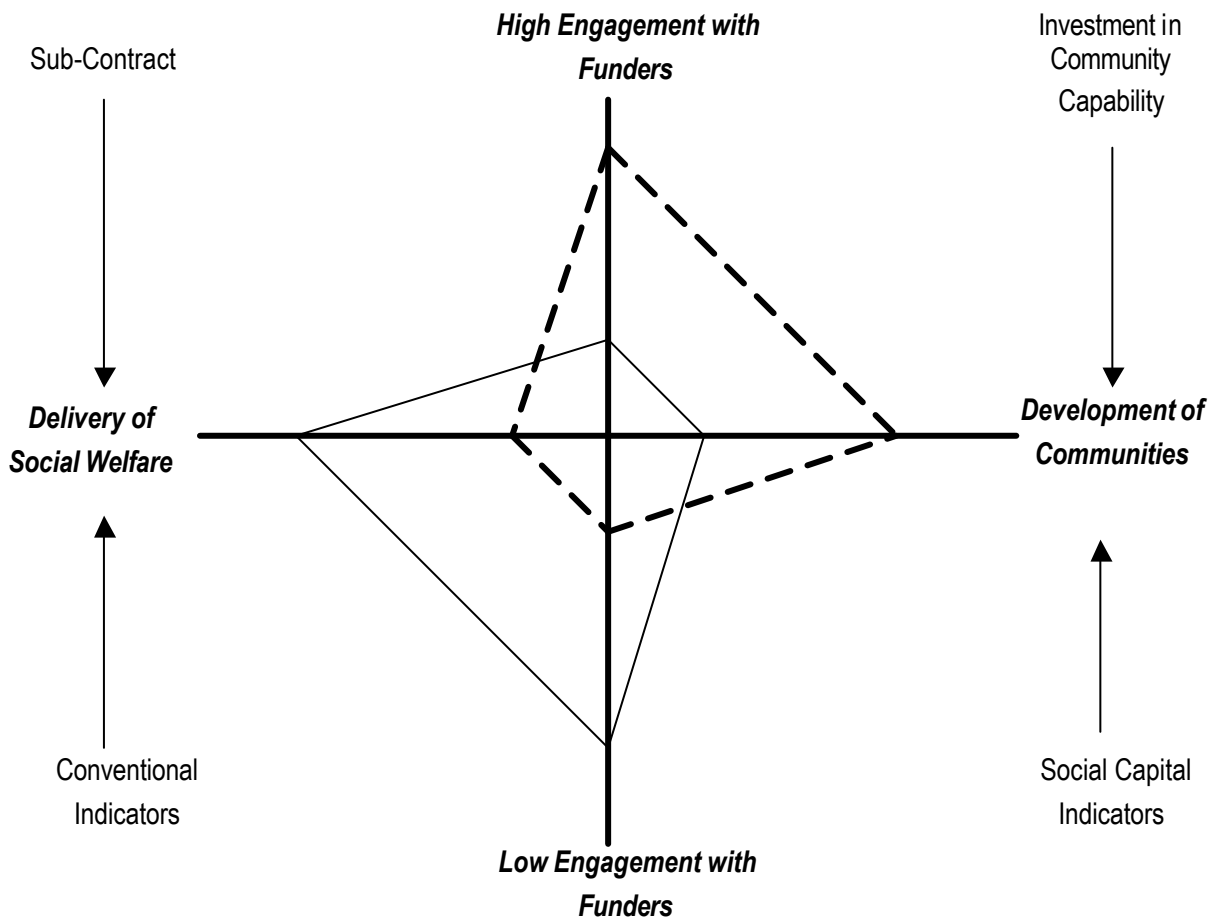


However, both saw the integration of their clients into 'normal' social relationships and institutions as core strategies. The isolation of ex-offenders from family, community and employment increased the probability of re-offending. The isolation of people with disabilities increased both stigma and dependency. Thus the programmes delivered had integration at their centre. But, integration is a two-way process and thus the focus cannot be exclusively on the client groups. This can be described as a process of bonding. Simultaneously, both seriously engaged policy makers through dialogue, research and demonstration of effectiveness – a process of linking.

- The WRDP appeared to be a hybrid of these two models. Its function was to build bonds amongst isolated women (a virtual community?), who, in turn, would attempt to open their own geographical communities to gender issues. In this case the bonding is developed amongst women who attempt to construct a further set of inclusive bonds within geographical communities. Again, it sees itself as trying to reshape the local policy environment to make it more gender sensitive.



The different organisational types appearing in the case studies suggested a typology within which community and voluntary organisations could be located. One axis of difference was whether an organisation was more involved in delivery (of social welfare contracts) or in development (of communities). Another axis was whether such organisations had high, or low, levels of engagement with funders/policy makers.



In practice, no organisation is exclusively one thing or the other. The upper right polygon describes an organisation mostly involved in development with a high level of engagement with funders/policy makers. In this instance, public funding represents an investment in community capability and evaluation deploys social capital indicators. In contrast, the lower left polygon describes an organisation mostly committed to the delivery of social welfare contracts with a low level of engagement. In this case, evaluation would be conducted mainly via conventional indicators. Of course, it is also possible to have high engagement/delivery-based organisations and low engagement/development focused organisations. In essence, the model is a guide to how conventional and social capital indicators would be applied in the evaluation of different types of organisation.

There is a likelihood that the organisations located on the right of the diagram will work with geographical communities (collectives) and those on the left with client groups (individuals). As evidenced in the case studies, the users or stakeholders of community and voluntary organisations can be individuals and/or collectives depending on the remit of the organisation. A locally based community group will have as its focus the collective social capital of its neighbourhood, whereas an issue based

organisation may work with particular groups of individuals such as people with disabilities or ex-offenders. For an organisation working with a group of individuals, bonding and bridging capital can still be developed through its intervention. Socially excluded individuals can become better bonded or integrated within society through personal development and the acquisition of skills to enhance their capacity to make connections and develop relationships with others and so ultimately participate in, and contribute to, collective activities. Bridging capital is particularly important for groups such as ex-offenders where it is essential that they do not just 'bond' with their former colleagues, but can be assisted to make connections and develop relationships beyond their immediate peer group. Similarly for disabled or women's groups it is essential that peer bonding does not simply create 'ghettos' made up of similarly disadvantaged or like-minded people.

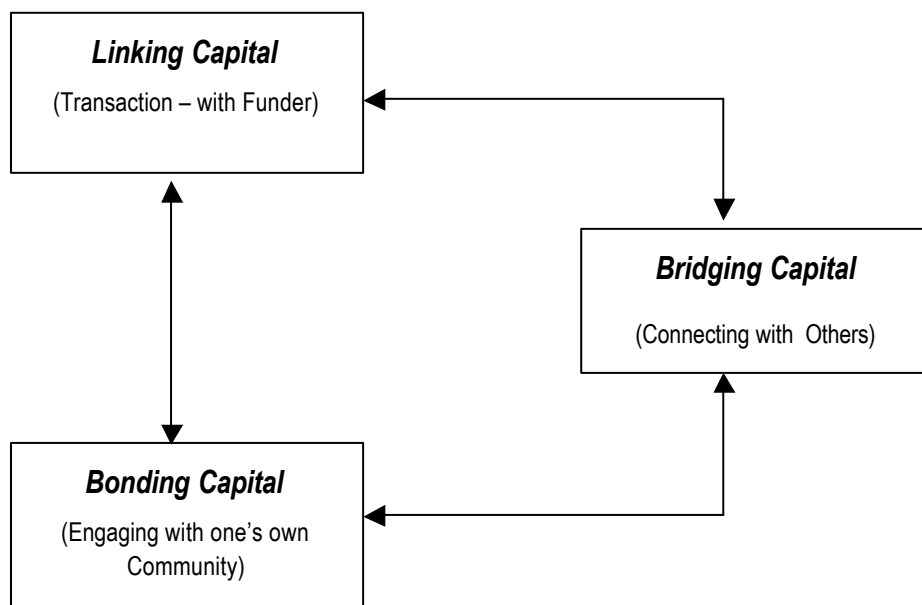
A community or voluntary group would likewise wish to address the needs of socially excluded individuals, but also to build up the infrastructure and capacity of the area. Bonding capital would focus on developing appropriate structures for community development to engage with, and involve, local people to attract resources to the area. Facilitating contact and developing relations with other communities outside the locality assist Bridging. In this sense, it is as important that the community is accessible and open to others in that it has a capacity to be tolerant and accepting of difference.

## 8. Building Social Capital Indicators

The original social capital indicators framework presented in Section 5 were derived from the World Bank research and were organised under four headings; Individual, Organisation, Community and Civic capital. Following consultations with various representatives of voluntary and statutory sectors and a review of the contemporary literature on Social Capital it was decided to simplify and restructure the original framework. The re-construction of the framework went through a three-stage process.

Firstly, the indicators were reorganised into three domains, Bonding, Bridging and Linking – a typology more commonly employed in the general literature.

- **Bonding** social capital is taken to refer to the internal cohesion or connectedness within a community.
- **Bridging** refers to the levels and nature of contact and engagement between different communities
- **Linking** represents the engagement and relations between community and voluntary organisations and resource agencies and policy makers. Linking capital also corresponds very well with the transactional funding model described in Section 5.



The second stage was to identify and locate indicators under each domain. Referring to the original framework of 19 indicators as derived from the World Bank (in Section 5), the Community level indicators could be readily translated into Bonding and the Civic level into Bridging. Elements of the Individual and Organisational levels could also be reallocated across these. The idea of linking capital recognises for the first time the importance of the engagement between an organisation and its funder as an explicit outcome and indicators need to be drawn up for this.

At this stage it was also decided to complement the original framework of indicators by incorporating the previous research on indicators commissioned by VCU. As stated earlier this research project was not

designed to generate yet another set of indicators but to simplify the use of existing ones. Therefore, in developing our indicator framework we have attempted to ground it in the work previously produced by Scottish Community Development Centre and Kendall and Knapp and to build upon these. Both of these sets contained numerous elements of social capital in their composition. The researchers reviewed both sets in detail and, where appropriate, attempted to reallocate specific indicators from these two research exercises into the categories of bonding, bridging and linking.

Furthermore, we also drew on the emerging literature on what constitutes an effective community, in particular the Community Development Foundation study on Measures of Community<sup>17</sup> and the Scottish Community Development Centre report on Learning Evaluation and Planning (LEAP)<sup>18</sup>. This was used to help identify a number of core elements within each of the social capital domains of bonding, bridging and linking.

- A **Bonded Community** is one in which its constituents are empowered, organised, internally cohesive and connected.
- A **Bridging Community** is connected to other communities and is itself accessible to outsiders.
- A **Linking Community** has connections to attract resources and influence policy and decision-making.

This revised framework focuses on the anticipated social capital outcomes achieved by funded organisations for their intended beneficiaries. For each domain we have identified a number of core elements for which a range of standardised indicators can be developed/located, see matrix over.

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<sup>17</sup> Community Development Foundation, 2002, 'Measures of Community' A study for the Active Community Unit and Research, Development and Statistics Unit of the Home Office.

<sup>18</sup> Scottish Community Development Centre, 2000, Learning Evaluation And Planning (LEAP)

**Table 1. Framework of Social Capital Outcomes**

<b>Social Capital Dimension</b>	<b>Core Element</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
<b>Bonding</b>	<i>Empowerment</i>	Intended beneficiaries have confidence, skills and leadership capacity
	<i>Infrastructure</i>	Intended beneficiaries participate in organisations and projects, which are representative and inclusive.
	<i>Connectedness</i>	Intended beneficiaries are well connected with community - trusting, sharing and working toward shared goals
<b>Bridging</b>	<i>Engagement</i>	Intended beneficiaries engage with other communities and sectors by participating in relationships and networks
	<i>Accessibility</i>	Intended beneficiaries have values and participate in structures and processes that make their community accessible to outside communities and sectors
	<i>Innovation</i>	Intended beneficiaries are open to new ideas and solutions facilitating their community to adapt to change
<b>Linking</b>	<i>Resources</i>	Intended beneficiaries have access to people and institutions outside the community with power and resources
	<i>Influence</i>	Intended beneficiaries have representation on local and regional public fora at which their interests are articulated.  Intended beneficiaries recognise the interdependence between their needs and needs of others

Intended beneficiary refers to the recipients of services or participants in activities organised by the community or voluntary sector organisation. Community and voluntary organisations will operate with different constituencies e.g. geographic communities or communities of interest. We therefore need to define the constituency or community within which the organisation is operating in order to specify social capital outcomes.

From the case studies we identified the following typologies of 'communities'

- Neighbourhood or geographic community
- Community of interest e.g. women, people with disabilities, ex-offenders etc.
- Community of groups or organisations who receive services from other voluntary organisations e.g. members of NICVA or clients of Ceni.
- Community as a whole i.e. society in general within the Northern Ireland region

Clarity on the community within which an organisation operates and who are the intended beneficiaries of its services will be part of the transaction discussed earlier. The STAR Centre works within a specific geographic community, the New Lodge, and the intended beneficiaries are the residents of that community. NIACRO and Cedar work across the region of Northern Ireland and the intended beneficiaries are its client groups. The Rural Women's Programme works within different geographic

communities its intended beneficiaries are isolated women within these communities. Ceni works across Northern Ireland and the intended beneficiaries are its client organisations.

Taking the framework of Social Capital outcomes a set of indicators has been developed for each of the core elements. This is outlined in the table over. These indicators represent a standardised set that have been reduced and refined from the case studies and previous literature on indicators. The first column represents the desired social capital outcomes, the second column lists the proposed indicators of that outcome and the third column contains suggested measures or evidence for that indicator.

**Table of Social Capital Outcome Indicators - Bonding**

Bonding Outcome	Indicator	Evidence (suggested)
<p><b>Empowerment</b> Intended beneficiaries have confidence, skills and leadership capacity</p>	1. Intended beneficiaries have increased confidence to participate in community activity	Numbers participating in personal development courses. Survey of beneficiaries to assess changes in attitudes and behaviour
	2. Intended beneficiaries have skills to contribute to community activity.	Numbers participating in training courses, Qualifications attained Survey of beneficiaries to assess levels and relevance of new skills
	3. Intended beneficiaries exercise leadership within the community	Evidence of participation in organising, running projects. Survey of beneficiaries
<p><b>Infrastructure</b> Intended beneficiaries participate in organisations and projects, which are representative and inclusive</p>	4. Intended beneficiaries participate in organisations, projects within the community	Numbers participating and level of engagement in organisations, projects
	5. Intended beneficiaries connect and network with other people and organisations within the community	Increased contact between intended beneficiaries and groups within the community (baseline & survey)
	6. Marginalized people are represented in organisation/project structures	Numbers represented relative to Section 75 Categories
<p><b>Connectedness</b> Intended beneficiaries are well connected with community - trusting, sharing and working toward shared goals</p>	7. Levels of trust between people and organisations in the community	Increased levels of trust within community (baseline & survey)
	8. Sharing of information and resources between people and organisations in the community	Survey of organisations and projects within community
	9. People and organisations in the community working together to achieve shared goals	Survey of organisations and projects within community

**Table of Social Capital Outcome Indicators - Bridging**

<b>Bridging Outcome</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Evidence (suggested)</b>
<p><b>Engagement</b></p> <p>Intended beneficiaries engage with other communities and sectors by participating in relationships and networks</p>	10. Level of engagement by intended beneficiaries with other communities/sectors outside their own	<p>Number of contacts established with other communities/sectors</p> <p>Frequency, duration and description of contacts established with other communities/sectors</p>
	11. Quality of structures to facilitate engagement between the intended beneficiaries and other communities/sectors	<p>Presence of recognised 'brokers' or facilitators within the community</p> <p>Number and type of contacts facilitated with groups from outside the community</p>
	12. Greater understanding by intended beneficiaries of the interdependence between theirs and other communities	Evidence from Intended beneficiaries of their enhanced understanding (baseline & survey with intended beneficiaries)
<p><b>Accessibility</b></p> <p>Intended beneficiaries have values and participate in structures and processes that make their community accessible to outside communities and sectors</p>	13. Intended beneficiaries willingness to engage with communities outside their own	List of measures taken by intended beneficiaries to make their community attractive to 'others';
	14. Intended beneficiaries awareness and competence to deal with issues of separation between communities and sectors	Existence of discussion, debate addressing issues of separation (self-audit)
	15. Intended beneficiaries participate in structures and processes aimed reducing issues of separation	Evidence of intended beneficiaries engaging in proactive cross community and cross sector initiatives
<p><b>Innovation</b></p> <p>Intended beneficiaries are open to new ideas and solutions facilitating their community to adapt to change.</p>	16. Intended beneficiaries explore new ideas to meet community needs	Evidence of ideas developed
	17. Intended beneficiaries adopt new solutions to meet community needs	Evidence of solutions adopted
	18. Appropriateness of new solutions to changing needs of the community	Survey of intended beneficiaries

**Table of Social Capital Outcome Indicators - Linking**

Linking Outcome	Indicator	Evidence (suggested)
<p><b>Resources:</b> Intended beneficiaries have access to people and institutions outside the community with power and resources</p>	19. Formal contacts with resource/development agencies outside the community	Contacts between community and outside resource/development agencies
	20. Value of additional resources leveraged for intended beneficiaries	Letters of offer from funders. Perceived value of non-financial inputs
<p><b>Influence</b> Intended beneficiaries have representation on local and regional public fora at which their interests are articulated.  Intended beneficiaries recognise the interdependence between their needs and needs of others</p>	21. Participation of Intended beneficiaries in public fora at local and regional levels	Number of intended beneficiaries represented on public fora
	22. Formation of alliances between intended beneficiaries and others participating in public fora	Evidence of contacts, engagement between intended beneficiaries and representatives from other sectors
	23. Changes in public policy that better meet the needs of intended beneficiaries	Identifiable changes in public policy positions adopted by governmental organisations that, in the opinion of governmental personnel, were significantly influenced by intended beneficiaries input
	24. Perception and attitudes of public agency representatives to the participation and contribution of the organisation/project.	<p>Feedback from statutory agencies on effectiveness of group/organisation.</p> <p>Nature of discussion in public fora on community's interests</p> <p>Evidence of community's issues being addressed at local policy level (interviews)</p>

## Conclusions

We formulated the bonding, bridging and linking outcomes and their associated indicators following detailed discussion with the staff in four community and voluntary organisations with different missions, methodologies and levels of resources. In our view the indicators:

- ? will facilitate those involved in the transaction to judge what has been done and to what effect – insofar as objectives relate to the social capital outcomes;
- ? are readily understandable to those active in the voluntary & community sector;
- ? are ‘user-friendly’ for those involved.

This is not a ‘one size fits all’ approach – it is more a ‘framework’ than ‘definitive list’. Using the framework will involve funder and funded agreeing:

- ? which of the twenty-four indicators for which of the eight outcomes they wish to apply in the evaluation of performance in the future – the logic of this approach is that the funder invests on the basis of the funded organisation’s commitments;
- ? the weighting that should be applied to the agreed indicators – the simple listing in the table suggests that each of the indicators has equivalent weight, but this will not be the case in many transactions depending on the importance of different outcomes for the funder and funded;
- ? the evidence collected and analysed to demonstrate performance in relation to the agreed indicators – what evidence should be collected, what should ‘count’ as evidence, will be for funded and funder to agree – the table is indicative of possible evidence, and;
- ? the ‘who will do what and when’ – the plan of the evaluation – and how the implementation of this plan is to be paid for.

Here we comment on three related issues that government and sector should consider as they take forward the exercise. These concern scale, diversity and timeframe, each of which ‘qualify’ the use of the indicators.

The resources committed to the evaluation will depend on the scale of the investment each party is making. In the case studies we contextualised the indicators in relation to the specific circumstances of each organisation and how its work related to social capital. In contrast, the indicators in the table above are generic. How much learning funder and funded obtain from the evaluation will depend on how well each contextualises the relevant data. For smaller investments, the completion of a pro-forma report might be appropriate – in some cases returned by the funded organisation, in others completed by a ‘site visit’ undertaken by the funder or their representative. For larger investments, greater depth of analysis would be appropriate, as the costs associated with making the ‘wrong’ decision are higher. The depth of the exercise will depend on possible benefits in terms of knowledge; better decision-making and better-managed risks. The logic of the framework is that regardless of the depth, the focus remains on the same social capital outcomes and indicators although the evidence collected and analysed will vary.

We have constructed the bonding, bridging and linking outcomes and their indicators to fit the different contexts in which the sector works while, at the same time, identifying the value added across the sector. To our mind, the outcomes and the indicators have a general applicability and offer the potential

for the sector to demonstrate the outcomes it generates and so bolster its case for continuing public support.

The measurement of outcome implies prior knowledge of the situation. An intervention is assessed against change it effects. Here, it is proposed that the investment of public funds should depend on the addition to social capital among a group of intended beneficiaries and between these and others (in the case of linking social capital). We consider that this should be assessed via a baseline analysis before setting targets for the future. As social capital is a relatively new concept the issue of base-lining is still somewhat problematic. Here we outline the various potential sources currently being developed at regional and national levels.

Within the UK, the Office of National Statistics has been looking at the use of regularly undertaken surveys to explore indicators of social capital. This has led to the development of the "survey matrix" concept, which basically categorises social capital into five themes, each theme illustrates a particular facet of social capital and contains between eight and twelve types of question. The five themes are:

1. Participation, social engagement, commitment- involvement in local groups, voluntary organisations, clubs, taking action about a local issue
2. Control, self-efficacy - perceptions of control and influence of community affairs, health, satisfaction with life
3. Perception of community level structures or characteristics - satisfaction with local area, perceptions of local services and local problems
4. Social interaction, social networks, social support - contact with friends, family, neighbours; depth of socialisation networks; perceptions of social support
5. Trust, reciprocity, social cohesion - trust in other people, confidence in institutions, confidence in public services; perceptions of shared values; length of residence in area.

Twenty-one surveys (the majority commissioned by the UK government) containing questions relating to different aspects of social capital were identified and combined with the typology outlined above. Most of these surveys were not explicitly trying to measure social capital but a handful had a specific framework for the measurement and analysis of social capital.

Within Northern Ireland, a number of regularly undertaken surveys offer a similar opportunity to explore levels of social capital. Given the two political/religious traditions in Northern Ireland, it is vital that questions also refer to opinions about 'the other side'. There are three obvious survey candidates. The Omnibus Survey permits the buying in of specific questions that could be explicitly focused on social capital indicators. The Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey already contains questions on trust, participations in social organisations and the relative position of Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland. Finally, NISRA has been looking at the Continuous Household Survey as a key source for social capital variables.

Moreover, as indicators of social capital are increasingly employed in the evaluation of voluntary and community organisations, it might be possible to 'scale up' the results to explore changes in social capital. Some caution should be exercised here however, given the diversity of such organisations.

It will be important that due recognition is taken of different contexts. As outlined above, there are regional surveys that will help in this base-lining, however, it is likely that contextual differences will make reliable and valid indicators of the baseline situation contingent on the collection of data on the specific intended beneficiaries' lives.

In our discussions with the statutory funders, it became clear that the personnel responsible for the management of the transactions inside government required the system to facilitate the identification of future targets for the accumulation of social capital as a result of public investment in the sector. In other words the focus for evaluation should be about setting targets for the future growth of social capital as well as the assessment of achievements in the past. This would help move the analysis of 'added value' after the event, (*ex-post evaluation*), to centre-stage of the negotiation between funder and funded (*ex-ante evaluation*). In our view, this is to be welcomed.

This approach could be readily incorporated into existing procedures. Traditionally, the methodology outlined in the Green Book has informed the overall approach to the appraisal of public investment including grant-aid for community and voluntary projects. In short, this approach assesses the investment in terms of monetary and non-monetary costs and benefits. We suggest that it is appropriate and practical to incorporate explicit attention to social capital in this appraisal process. The resulting 'social and economic appraisal' will provide a sounder and more rounded basis for deciding on whether investments should be made or not. The social capital construct will add rigour to the assessment of the non-monetary costs and benefits. .

We should be mindful that 'what gets measured, gets done' and part of the motivation for measurement is often to encourage management to focus its efforts on particular aspects of performance. On occasion this has the consequence that resources are devoted to the indicator rather than whatever is indicated by the measure. Media coverage of hospital waiting lists suggests this. Government and sector will wish to avoid the adoption of a system that could divert resources to indicators and away from outcomes so that targets are met but little substantive difference is made to the actual level of social capital.

Our conclusion is that the proposed indicators may be readily applied to setting targets for the future accumulation of social capital but with due care. The indicators 'fit' in general terms with the diversity of contexts in which the sector works but the baseline against which performance is to be assessed will likely require the specific context to be analysed. Finally, the depth of the evaluation (and base-lining) will depend of the scale of the proposed investment and the potential for learning from the intervention.

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# APPENDICES

# Appendix 1

## Belfast Regeneration Office Output Measures<sup>19</sup>

### Definitions

This document seeks to provide definitions of all BRO Output Measures. Where applicants are not explicitly clear of what the Output Measure entails, or under which Output Measure a certain activity should be counted, advice should be sought from the BRO Office to which the application is being made.

#### EMPLOYMENT

- A1**     *Number of FTE permanent jobs created*
- A2**     *Number of FTE permanent jobs safeguarded*
- A3**     *Number of FTE construction jobs*

1. A full time job is defined as one that involves working a standard 30 hour week or longer (excluding breaks) and is filled. Part time jobs must be converted into full time equivalent (FTE) jobs. In calculating FTE jobs, the following table should be used:

<i>Hours worked</i>	<i>Full time equivalent</i>
3 or more but less than 6	0.1
6 or more but less than 9	0.2
9 or more but less than 12	0.3
12 or more but less than 15	0.4
15 or more but less than 18	0.5
18 or more but less than 21	0.6
21 or more but less than 24	0.7
24 or more but less than 27	0.8
27 or more but less than 30	0.9
30 or over	1.0

2. A permanent job is one that is expected to last for at least six months and excludes construction jobs.
3. Jobs are normally created when positions have been filled.
4. A safeguarded job is one that would have been lost were it not for BRO-assisted activities. An employee attending a BRO-assisted training course would not normally count as a safeguarded job.
5. Partnerships must differentiate between jobs created, jobs safeguarded and the number of construction jobs claimed.
6. Jobs created by a project should be counted once only ie. not for each year of a project. Equally, jobs created cannot be counted as jobs safeguarded in subsequent years, unless they are further assisted through another project.
7. Construction jobs should be expressed as person weeks (not jobs). Measure 1A(iii) cannot therefore be aggregated with measures 1A(i) and 1A(ii). Partnerships could include demolition work prior to construction within this output.

- A4**     *Number of people who live in area who get jobs as a consequence of training, advice or other specifically targeted assistance*

1. Projects must demonstrate that there is a link between residents accessing employment and them having been given advice/training under a BRO-assisted project.

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<sup>19</sup> These measures have been recently developed by BRO and will be subject to further review

2. See Output A1 for the definition of jobs created.

**A5** *Number of people trained who obtain permanent jobs*

**A6** *Number of people trained who obtain permanent jobs who were formerly unemployed*

1. A permanent job is one that is expected to last at least six months. OM A6 specifically covers people who were unemployed during the period of the training.
2. See Output A1 for the definition of jobs created.

**A7** *Number of businesses advised / assisted*

1. Advice may take a variety of forms, but examples should be advice or counselling on a one-to-one basis and may include advice on marketing, exporting, financial and personnel matters. Businesses receiving advice under more than one project can be counted under each project.
2. Advice to potential new businesses may also be included.
3. It is for projects to decide what constitutes the provision of 'advice' and where this is in doubt to agree a definition with BRO. There should normally be some involvement of project staff in each piece of activity that generates a score against the measure. The distribution of leaflets on its own would not usually be sufficient to score.

**A8** *Number of new business starts*

1. Include new businesses starting up as a result of any BRO supported activities. An established business relocating into the area as a direct result of the project should be counted under this measure.

**A9** *Number of training places sustained / created*

2. Number of training places sustained / created as a result of the project.

**A10** *Number of volunteers sustained / created*

1. Number of residents within a target area who have become involved in voluntary work.
2. Voluntary work is defined as work that is carried out otherwise than for profit, and includes involvement in community groups.

## **EDUCATION**

**B1** *Number of pupils whose attainment is measurably enhanced/improved.*

1. Count each pupil once, even where there may be repeated involvement in the project.
2. Every project appraisal should specify the educational attainment, which will result from the pupils' participation in the project.
3. Improvements in attainment should be measurable, eg in terms of the National Curriculum and its assessment, GCSEs, or other measures appropriate to the particular project.
4. In relation to developing bilingual pupils, improvements in attainment should be measured in terms of the National Curriculum and teachers' ongoing assessment of pupils' progress.

**B2** *Number of pupils remaining in post-compulsory education*

1. Count the number of pupils who remain, or go onto, post-compulsory education as a direct result of a BRO assisted project.

**B3** *Number of residents in area who obtain a qualification on completion of formal training*

1. 'Qualifications' mean accredited courses of training.
2. Count the number of people trained not the number of qualifications obtained. The project appraisal should define the qualification(s) to be obtained.

**B4** *Number of training weeks (expressed as person weeks)*

- a) Training weeks for any course are calculated using the same basis as FTE jobs (see definition (a) to output A1 above). Therefore the number of people to be trained multiplied by the full time equivalent multiplied by the number of weeks duration = the total of training weeks. For example a ten week training course with thirty people who each attend for 24 hours per week (FTE = 0.8) results in  $30 \times 0.8 \times 10 = 240$  weeks.

**B5** *Number of child-care / nursery school places created / safeguarded*

1. The places may be full-time or part-time (eg. after school play schemes, and holiday play schemes, as well as registered child-minding and nursery schemes).

**B6** *Number of pupils directly benefiting from project*

1. To forecast outputs it may be necessary to count the number of pupils involved in the project. If the pupil is exposed more than once to the project, this still only counts as one involvement.
2. To report actual outputs it will not be sufficient to count, simply, the number of pupils involved in the project. Wherever possible measures should be devised to provide evidence of benefit from the project. Such projects must have an educational basis; projects that are solely environmental or physical, for example the improvement of a playground, should not be included.

**B7** *Number of pupils whose attendance is measurably enhanced / improved*

1. Count each pupil once, even where there may be repeated involvement in the project.
2. Every project appraisal should specify the educational attainment, which will result from the pupils' participation in the project.
3. Improvements in attainment should be measurable, eg in terms of the National Curriculum and its assessment, GCSEs, or other measures appropriate to the particular project.
4. In relation to developing bilingual pupils, improvements in attainment should be measured in terms of the National Curriculum and teachers' ongoing assessment of pupils' progress.

**B8** *Number of people engaged in parenting skills / development programmes*

1. Count each person once, even where they have repeated involvement in the project.
2. This Output Measure is to collect numbers of people involved in activities specific to parenting.

**HEALTH OUTPUT MEASURES**

**C1** *Number participating in Health education / awareness initiatives*

1. Count each person once, even where they have repeated involvement in the project.

**C2** *Number of people accessing advice or treatment for the misuse of non-prescribed drugs*

Count each person once, even where they have repeated involvement in the project.

**C3** *Number of people accessing new / improved health facilities*

1. Count each person once, even where they have repeated involvement in the project.
2. To use this Output Measure the new or improved health facility must have been BRO assisted. Please note that any new or improved facilities will have targets under the Environment section below.

**C4 Number of people accessing intervention / treatment service**

1. Count each person once, even where they have repeated involvement in the project.

**CRIME**

**D1 Number of community safety initiatives implemented**

1. Number of community safety initiatives implemented.
2. Count each person once, even where they have repeated involvement in the project.

**D2 Number of people who participate in community safety initiatives**

1. The number of people living in the target area who benefit from community safety initiatives
2. Count each person once, even where they have repeated involvement in the project.

**D4 Number of crime initiatives implemented**

1. Number of youth crime prevention initiatives implemented.

**D5 Number of people attending crime prevention initiatives**

1. Total numbers attending crime prevention initiatives.

**D6 Number of victims of crime supported**

1. Count each person once, even where they have repeated involvement in the project.
2. A victim of crime is a person directly effected by crime or the number of people in an area who are affected by crime.

**PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

**E1 Area (m2) of new business / commercial floor space**

1. Area (m2) of new business / commercial floor space
2. Floorspace defined as 'net internal area' (sometimes referred to as 'effective floor area') should be quoted in square metres.

**E2 Area (m2) of improved business / commercial floor space**

1. Area (m2) of improved business/commercial floorspace (ie. floorspace whose actual or potential market value has been increased by some physical improvement).
2. Floorspace defined as 'net internal area' (sometimes referred to as 'effective floor area') should be quoted in square metres.

**E3 Area (m2) of new community floor space**

1. Area (m2) of new community floorspace

2. Floorspace defined as 'net internal area' (sometimes referred to as 'effective floor area') should be quoted in square metres.

**E4 Area (m2) of improved community floor space**

1. Area (m2) of improved community floorspace (ie. floorspace whose actual or potential market value has been increased by some physical improvement).
2. Floorspace defined as 'net internal area' (sometimes referred to as 'effective floor area') should be quoted in square metres.

**E5 Area of land (ha) improved or landscaped for amenity use**

1. Area of land that has been improved or landscaped for use by the general public e.g. parks, gardens etc and measured in hectares.
2. Land has been improved, reclaimed or serviced when it has undergone some physical improvement that increases its potential or actual market value.

**E6 Area of land (ha) improved / reclaimed / serviced and made ready for development**

1. Area of land, in hectares, that has been improved/reclaimed/serviced and is now ready for commercial or residential development.
2. Land has been improved, reclaimed or serviced when it has undergone some physical improvement that increases its potential or actual market value.

**E7 Number of buildings improved or brought back into commercial use**

1. The number of buildings improved, or bought back into commercial use, and whose market value (potential or actual) has been increased.

**E8 Number of traffic schemes**

1. Traffic calming schemes include schemes designed to reduce either the volume of traffic or the average speed of vehicles in an area.

**E9 Kms of roads built / improved**

1. A road has been improved when it has undergone some physical improvement that increases its usage and / or safety.

**E10 Kms of walkways built / improved**

1. A walkway has been improved when it has undergone some physical improvement that increases its usage and / or safety.

**OTHER OUTPUT MEASURES**

**O1 Number of people given access to new cultural opportunities / facilities**

1. People given access to new cultural opportunities are people who participate in activities such as drama, theatre, festivals, gallery showings etc.

**O2 Number of private / public dwellings built / improved**

1. An improved dwelling is one whose market value (actual or potential) has been increased by some physical improvement. However, minor improvements eg. A new front door would not meet this requirement.

2. A dwelling should normally be self-contained. Hostel-type accommodation should be counted as one dwelling, irrespective of the number of bedrooms.

**O3      *Number of people benefiting from projects to promote personal and social development***

1. Number of people gaining measurable benefit from projects to promote personal and social development.

**O4      *Number of feasibility / research projects carried out***

1. Number of feasibility studies or research projects carried out with BRO assistance.

**O5      *Number of strategic development plans carried out***

Strategic development plans include Corporate Business Plans for Community or Voluntary groups and strategic plans for future developments in line with BRO strategies.

## Annex 1

### Output Measures

#### **EMPLOYMENT**

A1	Number of FTE permanent jobs created
A2	Number of FTE permanent jobs safeguarded
A3	Number of FTE construction jobs (expressed as person weeks)
A4	<i>Number of people who live in area who get jobs as a consequence of training, advice or other specifically targeted assistance</i>
A5	Number of people trained who obtain permanent jobs
A6	<i>Number of people trained who obtain permanent jobs who were formerly unemployed</i>
A7	Number of businesses advised/assisted
A8	Number of new business starts
A9	Number of training places sustained/created
A10	Number of volunteers sustained/created

#### **EDUCATION**

B1	Number of pupils whose attainment is measurably enhanced/improved
B2	Number of pupils remaining in post-compulsory education
B3	<i>Number of residents in area who obtain a qualification on completion of formal training</i>
B4	Number of training weeks (expressed as person weeks)
B5	Number of childcare/ nursery school places created/safeguarded
B6	Number of pupils directly benefiting from project
B7	Number of pupils whose attendance is measurably enhanced/improved
B8	Number of people engaged in parenting skills/development programmes

#### **HEALTH**

C1	Numbers participating in Health education/awareness initiatives
C2	<i>Number of people accessing advice or treatment for the misuse of non-prescribed drugs</i>
C3	Number of people accessing new/improved health facilities
C4	Number of people accessing intervention/treatment service

#### **CRIME**

D1	Number of community safety initiatives implemented
D2	Number of people who participate in community safety initiatives
D4	Number of crime initiatives implemented
D5	Number of people attending crime prevention initiatives
D6	Number of victims of crime supported

#### **PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

E1	Area (m2) of new business/commercial floor space
E2	Area (m2) of improved business/commercial floor space
E3	Area (m2) of new community floor space
E4	Area (m2) of improved community floor space
E5	Area of land (ha) improved or landscaped for amenity use
E6	Area of land (ha) improved/reclaimed/serviced and made ready for development
E7	Number of buildings improved or brought back into commercial use
E8	Number of traffic schemes
E9	Kms of roads built/improved
E10	Kms of walkways built/improved

#### **OTHER**

O1	Number of people given access to new cultural opportunities/facilities
O2	Number of private/public dwellings built/improved
O3	<i>Number of people benefiting from projects to promote personal and social development</i>
O4	Number of feasibility/ research projects carried out
O5	Number of strategic development plans carried out