

Key learning from the first pilot of the 'Understanding Community Regeneration' Course.

The 'Understanding Community Regeneration' course aims to support people from the community in:

- working together to share knowledge, learning and views on regeneration, and their aspirations for their community;
- building a 'model' or 'picture' of the group's aspirations (hopes) for the community;
- in thinking through the context of regeneration in their community and other communities in Scotland/UK – historical context of regeneration, and present social, economic and political context;
- in understanding different approaches to, and ideas behind, regeneration – 'market-led' and 'community-led';
- thinking through the related ideas of community regeneration, community degeneration and community sustainability;
- having discussion (dialogue) about regeneration and policy with local decision-makers and representatives.

The pilot course:

- was run during March 2006 over 5 sessions;
- and involved 15 participants, on average 9-11 people per session - and 3 trainers (including the researcher), plus an additional trainer for one session.

The sessions involved:

- Session 1 – introductions and history of regeneration in Craigmillar;
- Session 2 – aspirations for your community - building a model/picture of what the community should be like;
- Session 3 – preparation for, and panel discussion with, local decision-makers/representatives re. 'ideas behind regeneration', 'market-led' and 'community-led';
- Session 4 – visit to Paisley to meet with Dr Chik Collins to learn about regeneration/degeneration at Ferguslie Park, and regeneration policy;
- Session 5 – reviewing visit, and thinking through the learning from the course.

Main contributions to this learning report:

- Feedback from participants through feedback forms from each session;
- Discussions between the trainers/researcher during the course;
- Discussions with the Advisory Group.

Feedback on Session 1: A History of Regeneration

The session included:

- asking people to say what the words *community regeneration* made them think about;
- a film and speaker Andrew Crummy from Craigmillar Communiversity on the work of the Craigmillar Festival Society and the 'Arts: the catalyst model' of community regeneration;
- a talk from Paul Nolan, Craigmillar community activist, on the history of the community, in particular recognising the strength of the community from 40's – 60's up until the 'de-industrialisation' and unemployment of 70's and 80's;
- small group to large group discussion of the issues and responses to the film and talk.

14 participants (11 forms returned), 3 trainer/researchers

Participant's feedback:

Gave an overall score out of 5: average - 4.36; range 4-5.

Strong support for both the film (5 people) and the speaker (4 people). Likewise people enjoyed the group discussions including the work in smaller groups (9 people).

The group felt they learnt plenty about the history of regeneration in the area (8) and about the views of each other (4). One person specifically mentioned *community spirit* and the importance of valuing it (1).

The main area of difficulty was the poor picture quality on the TV for the film.

Other feedback: more time needed (4), better room set-up (2), more visuals/less time for the talk (1), and sense of community politics being brought in (1).

Trainer's feedback:

- good energy in the discussions;
- minor changes need to the room – as highlighted in participants feedback;
- need to take people beyond local issues around regeneration to wider, national, policy issues – working with Dr Chik Collins should do this;
- Paul Nolan's talk makes the strong contrast between full employment (40s – 60s) and the present (70s onwards) ongoing poverty/deprivation; again links with Dr Chik Collins, and talk could be turned into a video.

Communiversality speaker's feedback:

- More time needed to talk about the film – give the broader picture;
- Start with a more positive outlook, looking at healthy communities, and work visit successful projects, come and see the work at the 'Goth', also Notting Hill carnival and Edinburgh Festival;
- Newstart magazine – very good; also Senscot and Scottish Communities Foundation website;
- Check out New Lanark – still a living community.

Summary: Very positive responses from the participants to the film, talk and discussions. Trainers again positive and seeing need/opportunities to widen the discussions to outside of Craigmillar. Communiversality speaker also seeing need/opportunity to widen discussion beyond Craigmillar and suggesting successful regeneration projects.

Feedback on Session 2: Imagining a better Craigmillar

Main activity: Planning work using 'artistic' materials to build plans/ models of what people would like a future Craigmillar to be like; 'warm-up' activity involved interpretation of picture-work.

A worker/artist from Craigmillar Community Arts supported the participants and trainers in this activity

Feedback forms from 8 out of the 12 participants

Participant's feedback:

Scores out of 5: average: 4.375; range: 4-5

Main range of comments:

Enjoyment of working together as a team (5 people).
Valued using artistic materials and imagination (2).
Enjoyed creating community (4)
Learning about other people's views (5)

Other issues raised:

Community not getting what its wants (1)
More time needed (2).

Researcher's summary: Using artistic materials was generally an effective way of getting people to work together to talk about their hopes/ aspirations (and fears) for their community – although not all the participants were at ease with the process. The model produced was very much one of aspirations rather than a 'practical' plan, but this can be developed further. The worker/artist from Community Arts has turned this planning work into 'artist's impressions' of what the group would like to see *regeneration* create in the area – a contrast to the existing plans within the Craigmillar Urban Design Framework.

Feedback on Session 3: Getting at the ideas behind regeneration

Main activity: preparation for, and then panel discussion with presentations on 'market-led' and/versus 'community-led' approaches – involving representatives from PARC (Urban Regeneration Company) and Craigmillar Community Council.

Feedback forms from 9 of the 13 participants present.

Participants feedback:

Score out of 5: Average: 4, Range: 2 -5

Key themes from comments:

Valued presentations, discussions and 'heated' debate (7 people)
Would have liked more time (4)
Learning re. regeneration - who profits, market v's community (6)
Learning re. community council and community politics (2)

Also:

More activities, less talk (1)
People having their say (1)
Group coming together (1)
Seems like a done deal (the regeneration plan) (1)
How to spin (1)

Advisory Group feedback:

The session was well chaired and worked much better than a previous debate in the first pilot on Understanding Community Regeneration. Both speakers spoke well and honestly. However still a sense of imbalance between the two sides of the argument; the 'Market-side' was out numbered by 'Community-side' with the PARC speaker versus Com Council rep and the 3 trainers/researcher who support community-led approaches.

Researcher's summary:

The debate worked well for most of the group although 2 people were less happy with it; one because they prefer activity to discussion, the other because 'the decisions' are already made (was a talking shop in effect). The style of the debate with presentations followed by lengthy, chaired discussion worked well although some wanted even more time for more discussion! From the project's Advisory Group – 4 of whom were present at the session – the key area of difficulty was a sense of imbalance between those representing the 2 different approaches (market versus community).

Feedback on session 4: Visit to Dr Chik Collins at Paisley University and to Ferguslie Park estate, Paisley.

Main activity: Talk from Dr Chik Collins with visit to Ferguslie Park

(feedback from 8 of 10 participants)

Participant feedback:

Scores out of 5: average 4.625; range 4-5.

Key themes from comments:

Valued talk from Chik Collins (6 people)

Valued tour of Ferguslie Park (7)

Talk with Chik too long (4)

Learning about social context, history and politics of regeneration – what is the real impact of regeneration? (7)

Enjoyed lunch (7)

Travel arrangements (7)

Other themes:

Would have liked a tea break (1)

More time (1)

Bring Chik's talk into the visit (1)

Having this session before the debate (1)

Another session with Chik (1)

Travelling too long (1)

Researcher's summary: Definitely enjoyed by the participants, and supported their knowledge of history and politics of regeneration. Classroom talk probably too long on this occasion for most, but could be split and part delivered in Ferguslie Park; giving more time spent in Ferguslie Park, looking around and perhaps meeting a local group or activists.

One person found the travelling too long so may be a visit like this isn't for everyone, and an alternative could be considered for them; tea-break sounds good as well!

Interesting that one person felt this should come before the debate, as this was the original plan but due to practical difficulties had to be the other way around. Definitely would bring a stronger sense of both history and national policy to the debate.

Session 5: Bringing the learning together.

Main activities: review of visit using video, and considering as a group what was learnt from the session.

Feedback from 9 out of 13 participants.

Participant's feedback:

Score out of 5: average – 4.3; range 3-5

Main themes from comments:

Seeing video and sharing views about visit and learning from whole course (7)

Learning more about the politics of regeneration (2)

Learning more about different types of regeneration, and their characteristics (2)

Sketches of models from session 2 (2)

More needed time (2)

Other themes raised:

Positive and 'realistic' optimism (1)

Consolidating ideas (1)

Video – boring (1)

Community has to keep on top of people who may be disruptive (1)

A little unfocused (1)

Researcher's summary: Generally positive, seen as a chance to share views and opinions. There's a sense that people were thinking carefully about regeneration and its limitations. Trainers and researcher felt there was room for a stronger finish here.

Whole Course: *Participant's feedback*

(10 out of 15 who started course):

Score for course as a whole out of 5: average 4.78; range 4-5.

Generally enjoyed:

Speakers (4 people)

Visit (2)

Learning about Regeneration – nationally and locally (1)

Discussions (1)

Needs improvement:

Bit lost – couldn't find my way sometimes (1)

Would like to have seen the Urban Design Framework plans (1)

One sided information, nobody from other community organisations (1)

Feedback (this from) too long (1)

Social activity:

3 people went to St. Patrick's night and enjoyed it. 5 other people said they were busy that night. People suggested going to a quiz night (2), more visits, going for a drink.

Other comments:

Found trainers supportive and helpful (9)

More reading materials/ handouts useful (1)

More speakers, visits, trips (1)

Attend public meetings on regeneration plans and give input (1)

Take ideas to somewhere will get listened to (1)

Get to know one another better (1)

Strong interest in an exit guidance session (8)

Researcher's summary: The overall score and the main themes demonstrate that people enjoyed and valued this 5 session course. The 2 other strong themes, that they found the trainers supportive, and that many people found were interested in an exit guidance session.

Whilst the range of other comments are not strong themes across the group they do provide valuable food for thought in revising the course.

Whole Course: Trainer's feedback

Restructured Understanding Community Regeneration course		
Session	Main focus/ activity	Rationale and comments
1	History of regeneration and degerenation in Cragimillar. Use of speaker and/or Arts the catalyst film.	Introducing the idea of ' <i>balanced sustainable community</i> ' and link to 'full employment' in 40s – 60s and sustainable working class communities.
2	What does this community aspire to be like? ('imagining' exercise using listening or poster format) What are the actual plans? (Urban Design Framework)	Contrasting people's hopes with actual regeneration plans. Use holistic framework for considering regeneration: housing, social/ community, economic, environmental, health
3	Visit – Chik Collins and Ferguslie Park, and potentially meet with community activists/group there	Learning about national policy and history of regeneration, and hearing about another community's experiences – positives and negatives. In the process introduce the ' <i>regeneration or degeneration</i> ' debate.
4	Panel discussion about 1.5 hours: 'market-led' versus 'community-led'.	Supporting people in recognising the ideas behind regeneration policy including <i>private v's community-led</i> . Does this discussion need more time? Or is this enough given there is always more to say, and that a some people are less keen on this type of activity?
5	Turning the learning into plans. Model/ mapping exercise for Craigmillar to see how people would now plan for regeneration.	To give a stronger, more focused finish to the course. Gives people the chance to apply knowledge and thinking developed during the course to 'planning' a regeneration of their own community.

Other ideas:

- Investigate how to develop the 'model building exercise' into a stronger planning exercise – used in session 2, and now proposed for use in session 5;
- Look into producing a video for use in the course on 'the history of regeneration/degeneration in Craigmillar'; working with Paul Nolan and others.

Need to run a second pilot to check out this reworked structure.

Advisory group feedback on revised structure for the course.

- Speakers were both good in session 1
- Discussing actual plans in session 2 is good, to give realistic sense of plans
- Visit – could it have some positives as well as the problems/difficulties of regeneration/ degeneration?
- More time needed for panel discussion
- 'Private' versus 'community led' – a good theme.

Researcher's conclusions and recommendations:

The feedback indicates that for the participants and trainers that this was a successful pilot course, one that allowed:

- people to connect as a group with their aspirations, fears and concerns around regeneration;
- and *to begin* to explore the history and politics of regeneration and so understand at the level of policy and ideas, the connections between their aspirations and fears and two broadly different approaches to regeneration – market-led and community-led.

The researcher makes the following recommendations:

1.Revised structure of the course: the revisions made by the trainers to the course structure (see page 9 of this report), in particular sessions 2 and 5 generally made sense to the Advisory Group. Although not major they do entail a 'new' activity in session 2 (listening type exercise) and the repositioning and development of the model/map building used in session 2 in the first pilot. A second pilot would be valuable in working these through so that we are confident in making them 'work'.

2.Imbalance in the panel discussion? The advisory group felt there was an imbalance in favour of those representing 'the community-led' perspective to those representing 'the market-led' perspective within the panel discussion; this could fit with another comment from one person at the end of the course that community organisations with different ideas on regeneration were not represented.

*In one sense the course is **purposefully 'imbalanced'** towards the idea of 'community-led' approaches – an explanation of the reasons for this is laid out in appendix one of this report.* However, the Advisory Group's concern is based on making sure that the 'market-led' representative within the panel discussion feels able to put their case strongly and confidently.

The researcher recommends that:

- speakers for *both approaches* need to be competent and confident;
- speakers can bring 1 or 2 other relevant people with them to help them in feeling confident and developing their case.

The Advisory Group felt that condition 1 was met this time round, but may be not condition 2 – and this can be worked upon.

Much was learnt from the panel discussion in the 'Understanding Your Community' first pilot, and has already been used within this pilot for 'Understanding Community Regeneration.' However the recommendations from the pilot of 'Understanding Your Community' on running panel discussions (recommendation 3 in that Learning Report) that include chairing,

briefing and informal style are still worth considering further, and should be used for future development of panel discussions within this course - see appendix 2 to this report for further information on these recommendations.

More generally within the panel discussion, it is important that learners get the chance to understand more about both 'community-led' and 'market-led' approaches including:

- the differences between the two, as well as the common ground;
- that within both approaches there are different varieties or versions;
- that in any community there will be a diversity of opinion – not everyone will agree, and it is likely that different groups will offer different leadership.

And these were issues that came up in the panel discussion in the first pilot – and can be developed further in future work.

3. Recommendations 4) and 5) on 'Diversity' of those attending the course and 'Follow-up' once the course has finished from the 'Understanding Your Community' course learning report are relevant to this course too – see appendix 2 in this report. This course did attract a more diverse group of participants than the former, and more work is being done on following-up the course.

4. Consider the development of a 'follow-on' course on Regeneration:

There is potential here for a second, again short, follow-up course of 3-5 sessions, that participants could do 3-6 months later which would allow them to look in more detail at different versions of community-led regeneration, as well market-led regeneration. The focus could again be experiential with visits, speakers and use of film. It would aim to support people in thinking further (deepening their knowledge) about the key ideas (concepts) from this pilot course:

- sustainable community – in contrast to 'gentrification' and/or degeneration;
- community-led regeneration – What are the options? What are the costs and benefits of these?
- market-led regeneration – Other examples, and more on costs and benefits?
- History, politics and policy of regeneration/ degeneration.

This would need further thinking to develop – with trainers, partner organisations and an advisory group.

Appendix one: An 'imbalance' towards Community-led regeneration in this course?

In one sense, this 'imbalance' is a necessary tension within the whole course, because in aiming to support local people to think in more depth about the regeneration of their community, the course asks them to consider that:

- firstly, there are very likely to be significant tensions between a community's aspirations, and Public/Private sector partnerships and their plans to regenerate it;
- secondly, in considering the history and politics of regeneration over the last 30-35 years in Scotland and further afield in the Industrialised World, where degeneration is an ongoing reality for many low income/working class communities, then a crucial question for **any** such community to ask itself is, in what ways will the proposed regeneration make a real, positive difference to the existing community, and in what ways will it contribute community degeneration?

So we are looking for people in any community to ask very serious questions about any proposals for regenerating **their** community, and to consider in what ways these proposals are likely to be in their interests, and in what ways likely to be not in their interests.

In effect, the course prioritises, that is *starts from*, community concerns rather than business, market or local government concerns. And poses questions that support people in valuing and thinking about their concerns. This is surely a very reasonable starting place for people who live there, and for thinking about regeneration that is to be *community-led*.

Appendix 2: Full detail of relevant recommendations (numbers 3-5) from 'Understanding Your Community' pilot course.

3a. Panel discussion – in general (Session 4): having one issue rather than five will mean less panel members will be needed, and more time for discussion and closer dialogue on the issue; people should get to the answers they are looking for. If the session starts with the participants presenting their findings so far to the panel members, this should focus the discussions on 'their issues'. Careful chairing should keep the panel and participants in dialogue.

3b. Chairing of the panel discussion: the Advisory Group have recommended either that a group member (**option 1**) or a worker/activist from outside the area (**option 2**) be the chair for such discussions – so that there is independence from community politics. The trainers/researcher feel that one of the trainers (**option 3**) would be well-placed to chair the session because they've been working with the group, and understand its dynamics, and so can support the discussion – and that they can remain neutral within the discussion relative to the community politics within the (or any) area.

The researcher recommends therefore trying out all 3 options in future courses, and monitoring these. The most likely outcome is that different options will be needed for different circumstances such as: different groups of participants; work on different issues of different sensitivity; different types of panel members being invited.

Researcher agreed with the Advisory group that this is an issue still to be fully resolved – further piloting of this and other courses on the learning programme should help with this.

3c. Briefing panel members: the Advisory Group was concerned about giving panel members any information in advance about the issues that concern people so that panel members were able to prepare their answers – they were looking for a more spontaneous discussion.

The researcher thinks that it is important for panel members to have some information on the issues and concerns, so that panel members know what sort of discussion they are getting involved in and can do some thinking in advance; although there is no need for this to be the full detail of the group's research, simply a sketch of where they have started from. The researcher recommends then that the group and trainers agree what information is passed to the panel members in advance of the panel discussion. This would also apply to the Chair if option 2 is chosen – see option 2 in 3b above.

Researcher agreed with the Advisory group that this is an issue still to be fully resolved; further piloting of this and other courses on the learning programme should help with this.

4. Reaching a greater diversity of people: One person felt that the course had not reached people on the 'outside' of existing networks; another comment was the lack of minority ethnic involvement in the course. The researcher's own perception is that there was a reasonable mix of people on the course including:

- people with considerable experience of community participation
- people with growing experience, and already with significant contacts with the CBP and/or other local organisations
- people beginning to develop their community involvement

However, having established the introductory course, there is challenge for the CBP and the Advisory Group to take it further afield and increase the diversity of people getting involved, through:

- work with other local organisations and community groups to run the course (or parts of it) in people's 'own' spaces – centres, churches, schools, and support them in working on the issues that matter to them;
- increase the diversity of people involved particularly those with little experience of community involvement, people with disabilities, people from minority ethnic groups, young people, and older people

The proposed 2nd pilot in partnership with the Thistle Foundation, who have strong links with disabled people in the area, is one of example of how this can happen. The CBP and the Advisory Group should work together to plan future use across the community of these courses.

5. Follow-up work:

The course has 'started things' that need completing:

- *More work on the issues raised;* Community Safety remains an outstanding issue; Regeneration is being taken up by some of the group who undertook the Understanding Community Regeneration course; other issues – local decision-making, youth and inter-generational work, community knowledge, need to be returned to in some form or other. The CBP and the Advisory Group should consider how to take these issues forward.
- *Involving participants as co-trainers:* two participants on this first pilot have mention interest in working with a lead trainer on a future course; two others were more ambivalent. This would be a great opportunity for people to develop individually and for the course to benefit from their local knowledge and contacts. The CBP and the Advisory Group should consider running a 'training for trainers' course aimed at those who've been on any of the pilot courses and who would like to think more about being co-trainers on future courses.

- *Accessing more training:* the worker from Adult Learning Link who gave a short presentation in session 4 suggested an 'exit guidance' session for those who had been on this or other of the pilot courses, to support them in considering other options. The CBP and the Advisory Group should consider developing such a session with other relevant local organisations such as Adult Learning Link, Worktrack, Child Care Services, and potentially a City-wide body such as Volunteer Centre Edinburgh.
- *Individual learning as well as group learning:* one member of the advisory group suggested that the course presently is focused on group learning and that some people might value an individual learning approach. This is definitely an issue for further consideration and potential further work, by the Capacity Building Project and the Advisory Group.