Empowerment Partnership
'Every Voice Counts'

South East Regional Empowerment Partnership (SEREP) Independent Programme Evaluation Report

From Jim Simpson Consultancy February 2011

PREFACE

This report evaluates the work of the SEREP (South East Regional Empowerment Programme). SEREP has delivered a programme of community empowerment projects and support activities across the South East of England as a voluntary partnership of public and voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations between 2007 and 2011.

The report evaluates SEREP's work: the extent to which community empowerment has been improved and extended; and what impact has been made in the South East. Throughout the report case studies, responses from 'practitioners' of community empowerment, theoretical models and reference to some of the literature on community empowerment are used. This is in order to demonstrate the effectiveness of the interventions, processes and outcomes of community empowerment and the work of SEREP.

This is a summative evaluation of the programme of work and the partnership. Other detail about all the work of the SEREP, its projects, community empowerment resources, research papers and briefings can be found on the partnership's website www.serep.org.uk .

Regular monitoring returns were provided for performance management purposes to CDF (Community Development Foundation) as the Government Agency responsible for delivering the programme nationally and setting its objectives. The National Empowerment Programme (NEP) of which SEREP is a part is described on its website at: http://www.cdf.org.uk/web/guest/nep .

SEREP has commissioned a 'legacy report' which will be providing some additional showcasing of SEREPs successes.

CONTENTS:

Current context

This evaluation took place against the backdrop of:

> a) the new government which has said it wants the 'big society' to be its number one priority
> b) three year cuts to local budgets having begun and
> c) a fast pace of change at the policy level overtaking the empowerment, engagement and service user participation agendas

People doing community empowerment work and taking part in this evaluation - in councils, community organisations, health services or elsewhere – are have an acute sense of uncertainly and a belief that recent gains in better community empowerment could be about to be lost.

Overall performance of the SEREP

The Partnership's performance over 2007 to 2011 was impressive. The National Empowerment Partnership set three broad objectives for all its regional partnerships[1]. Set against these the SEREP performed as summarised below:

o "Getting more people involved in local activities and decisions": In excess of 5000 people have been involved in learning events, funded projects, networking and training.

o "Helping people/groups and other organisations become more effective in having a say in how their communities are run": As well as involving large numbers of people in empowerment projects and in networking, SEREP has funded direct projects of 1 year to 18 months in duration. These have been experimental and have innovated ways of putting better empowerment in place. The projects have been diverse in their reach to different communities and broad in their spread across the south east. Some additional and unintended benefits have accrued. For instance some empowerment projects, knowledge and capacity has been cascaded and replicated between practitioners and between localities.

o "Growing the network - providing regional systems and structures to support empowerment work and to share information on all aspects of empowerment": Year on year the networks have grown and flourished. SEREP's own network comprises 109 organisations; additionally many other networks have grown particular to local areas, subjects and service-user or citizen groups. Networks or communities of (empowerment) practice have also been built around some of SEREP's on the ground projects and practice/policy research projects.

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[1] The NEP's objectives are shown on the sheet at Appendix 4

SEREP made a considerable impact on public sector organisations' capacity to be empowering. This is mainly due to the fact that SEREP has involved so many public sector staff in being introduced to empowerment activity or having their knowledge and capability extended such as through its many events. It also funded projects that prompted public agencies to evaluate how they empower communities of place – neighbourhoods, districts, parishes; and communities of interest – for instance young people, migrants or care service users.

Community level empowerment

Here SEREP has funded projects that have had the opportunity to extend their empowerment work with particular communities. These projects have made good progress with topics such as: village planning, BME involvement, advocacy for people with learning disabilities, participatory budgeting, and training in empowerment skills.

Programme management and added value

A committed, consistent and hard-working team of Steering Group members and two staff members insured that the programme was well managed and delivered according to plan. The programme and its constituent projects faced many challenges yet they delivered their projects consistently, openly and in the spirit of empowering people and communities. SEREPs work delivered added value and acted as a catalyst for bringing in additional funds and policy level support to community empowerment.

Maximising future impact

The Partnership has provided opportunities for consultation, learning and knowledge sharing opportunities on many subjects. Case studies of a sample of these are in the body of this report and projects are listed in the appendices. Impact in the present will enable deeper and better quality empowerment support work to be picked up in the region in the future. This is in part dependent on how empowerment work is supported locally and regionally.

Positive impact made by SEREP, and by other empowerment initiatives in localities, has resulted in better practice by local authorities and public agencies as regards how they consult with and engage their many complex communities and "publics". So the impact of community level empowerment has been given a temporary boost.

Co-delivery and collaboration between public services and communities, citizens and services users is still in its infancy. Considerably progress in both the testing and implementing co-delivery and collaboration needs to be made and needs to be supported in order to maximise social and economic returns on public investment. Strategic management of a programme to support this and support and train the many practitioners involved remains a considerable need. As the social return case study shows - featured in the Findings: Maximising Future Impact section and Appendix 5 - there is substantial social return to be had from investing resources into community empowerment.

SEREP

The South East Regional Empowerment Partnership is the South East arm of the National Empowerment Partnership administered through the Community Development Foundation. SEREP brings together a range of statutory agencies, voluntary organisations and community organisations, networks, and people who are running community empowerment activities.

The Partnership collects and shares examples of good practice in empowerment activities from across the region. It uses its collective expertise to support local authorities, statutory agencies and community organisations to work together. This helps to give more power to communities and local people to make decisions about what happens in the areas where they live.

3. SEREP'S ACTIVITIES, IN SUMMARY

SEREP is a Partnership that started in 2007. It has been supporting the ability of public sector agencies and VCS organisations to deliver community empowerment in the South East of England. It has involved these activities and outcomes over its life[2]

SEREP Activities in summary	Outcomes
Grants distribution	• One-off grants for a year to eighteen month long projects. Projects enabled statutory and VCS organisations to innovate and extend empowerment. • Grants benefiting 19 community empowerment projects and organisations • Community Empowerment Awards in 15 of the 19 local authority areas benefiting 76 organisations • Wide coverage across activity (e.g. advocacy, neighbourhood work, training); geography; and beneficiary (e.g. resident of certain areas; people with disabilities; young people; public sector workers)
Information provision	• Regular bulletins to organisations and individuals responsible for or interested in community empowerment • Website resource bank of information and resources for practitioners – 109 member organisations and individuals reached regularly
Research	• Commissioned, produced and dispersed research and learning tools into various community

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[2] The would-be partnership had its first meeting in 2007 and not all activities have been continuous. For instance some activities slowed down or ceased for period in 2008. Numbers here refer mainly to the year April 2010 to March 2011.

	empowerment topics (e.g community led planning; National Indicator 4; community empowerment practice tools)
Networking	• Events, conferences and meeting sponsored and run directly involving 5000+ participants across the South East • Networking events on diverse topics (e.g. on current policy briefings; empowerment practice)
Learning	• 130 training sessions or courses held on diverse topics (e.g. advocacy, participatory budgeting, how to involve diverse communities)

4. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Evidence was gathered through interviews carried out with community empowerment projects across the South East (participants listed at Appendix 2); SEREP staff (part-time Project Manager and part-time Co-ordinator); and SEREP Steering Group members.

Evidence was gathered also through research into current practice and policy from secondary sources and desk top analysis of SEREP partnership and project documentation.

Interviewee-organisations were selected from across the South East and included public and VCS organisations, as well as those who have benefited from SEREP grants. This report is guided by the evaluation questions posed by SEREP and by the National Empowerment Partnerships' guide to evaluation. This report is not a tool for monitoring – SEREP has been monitored on a quarterly basis by CDF where extensive reporting information has been supplied and audited each quarter.

Introduction

SEREPs funded projects, and its core networking support services, research and events programme added value to empowerment work across the south east. Of course the financial resource that SEREP put into empowerment support was very small (in 2010 £155,000) compared to empowerment, community development, consultation, service involvement and democratic services expenditures by public agencies across the South East. For this reason it is not possible to separate out the SEREP funding as being the only causal factor in achieving improved community empowerment. However we can say that SEREP met substantial outputs – such as engaging 5000 people in community empowerment projects, learning, events and networking.

SEREP had a policy of commissioning one-off research and development; concentration on short-term and immediate programmes of events and learning; and commissioning added value projects from existing providers[3]. This reflected the short timescales for funding (mostly one year or less) and the similarly short timescales for delivering programme objectives set by CDF.

SEREP successfully involved different groups in projects activities and events namely:

- Citizens and community activists
- Front-line workers who are delivering services and activities
- Managers in the public sector, the third sector (voluntary and community organisations) and the private sector
- Policy makers and those who advise them

They share common concerns and aspirations whilst they have different roles and they can have different interests and goals that are essential to bring together. Page 46 in the appendices models and analyses bringing these different groups together.

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[3] This included a one-off £500,000 in one year for Targeted Support. In 2008 to 2011 the Partnership had between £158,000 and £168,000 for its work both 'core' activities and commissioned projects locally

EMPOWERMENT

d do, in some respects, speak for themselves in that innovative community empowerment practice was either introduced, extended, or innovated in many different settings. SEREP's work reached many diverse communities and practitioners.

> "It is amazing how these so called hard-to-reach people have their own networks. I don't think they are hard-to-reach. I can find them and I work across all the localities of the South East!"
>
> A Regional Community Development Worker in the South East

For instance SEREP's work included these completed projects:

- adults with learning disabilities were recruited and trained to become Community Champions
- new partnerships and networks of community organisations were supported to represent local peoples interests and preferences
- young people were involved in participative budgeting
- BME groups were supported and involved in consultation and planning in urban and semi-rural areas
- training, action learning and conferencing was delivered with countless numbers in many of the localities of the south east.

projects that show how empowerment works at a local level.

Case box: The Champions Programme, My Life My Choice, Oxfordshire

The Objective

My Life My Choice covers Oxfordshire and empowers people with learning disabilities through a range of projects delivered by people with learning disabilities. My Life My Choice speaks up for their rights and choices, using a network of local groups, forums, reference groups and consultations.

The objective of the Champions project has been to work with public sector agencies across Oxfordshire training people with learning disabilities to become 'champions'. The Champions project advocates that all engagement with local authorities and other agencies uses easy words and pictures, and that they include people with learning disabilities on their Boards and Reference Groups.

The Content

Thirty Champions have completed the training, three each in the ten areas of the Valuing People Now Strategy[4].

They are actively advocating in their specialist area. The training included what it is to be a Champion; understanding the Valuing People Now strategy; essential techniques needed in advocacy such as listening skills, being professional, participating effectively in meetings, networking, and campaigning and lobbying. The training was done in an accessible way with quizzes to test out the knowledge of the ten topics, and role plays to act out particular situations.

The Champions project has increased the pool of trained and experienced people who can speak up knowledgeably on issues that concern people with disabilities. This can range from consulting others to find out what issues should be raised through the seven local user groups organised across the county; writing letters of complaint; to sitting on reference groups of service departments and on regional groups such as the Social Inclusion Reference Group, formed by Oxfordshire County Council, and the national Valuing People Now Forum.

A Self Advocacy run conference attended by 100 people was held that introduced officers from six local authorities in Oxfordshire to the Champions' programme. They learnt about what is required to make consultations accessible to people with learning disabilities; and

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[4] Health, housing, employment, education, keeping safe, advocacy, personalisation, justice, relationships and transport

s themselves and learn about other networks of people
ed how they might access them directly or through the

The Outcomes

For *people with learning disabilities* the outcomes can be profound, both personally and professionally. Participation in the training helped increase confidence which will affect people in every aspect of their lives: *"The training gets over the shyness. Confidence comes from inside and if you have it you can go on to speak up."* The certificate gained at the end of the course was also a source of pride: *"I felt happy that I received it; it meant everything to me. It made me proud to be one of the Champions for My Life My Choice."*

Participants learned useful skills in campaigning and lobbying which they enjoyed, but they have also extended their skills in more challenging areas such as supporting people and becoming advocates. The Champions are now looking forward to their role: *"The word Champion has a ring to it and I'm really proud to be representing My Life My Choice as a Champion."*

- Two 'health' Champions are also Power Up trainers and have been training GPs, Nurses, social workers and dentists on awareness in learning disability. The training has taken place throughout Oxfordshire, in Nottingham, and in Leicester.

- Five Champions are working on a Hospital Involvement Team which is getting there voices heard at the John Radcliffe Hospital. Sir Jonathan Michael, Chief Executive of the JR Hospital, has shown interest in all of the work of the Champions.

- The South Central Ambulance Service have invited the Champions to be involved in their consultation, and after some Champion direction are now looking to make the process accessible for PWLD.

Thus the Champions' voices are beginning to be heard. Time will tell whether it will make an impact. In the words of one Champion: *"It's hard to say what they [the public agencies] will do differently, but I think they are beginning to recognise us and that will help."*

Reflections

Success factors which make this project work include:

- It is user focused and led
- It employs training techniques appropriate to people with learning disabilities.
- Champions specialise in one of the ten topics in the Valuing People Now Strategy so that they have confidence to speak up about their specialism and are able to make links with officers in the appropriate statutory agencies.
- The Champions are able to tell the agencies how to make their documents and meetings accessible to people with learning disabilities.
- Champions can make links with the seven local groups of people with learning disabilities

out their views. They can then feed back these views to

The SEREP funding has acted as a catalyst to bring more funding in through the Oxfordshire Learning Disabilities Partnership Board which will sustain the project and really help it to make an impact. This is important because the Champions will be able to obtain support through the Champions' Coordinator to make their voices heard.

There have been some early examples of the Champions exerting their voice they have had to demonstrate to the agencies what it means to be genuinely inclusive. It will take time for the Champions get the agencies to make their consultations and engagement strategies accessible first time round.

This project has a regional implication since the Champions and other representatives from My Voice My Choice sit on regional and national advisory boards e.g. National and regional Forum for People with Learning Disabilities, but the model could have a further impact regionally if it were taken up by other excluded groups.

Bryan Mitchell, My Life My Choice

...rs Project, West Sussex (Littlehampton and Horsham)

The Objectives This project in West Sussex was set up to enable children and young people to make decisions about where funding goes from the Children's Fund, and to influence how children's services run in order to include more children's views.
The Content Groups of children were recruited and trained in participatory decision-making. Also local youth organisations, schools and children's workers were involved in establishing and developing the project.
The Outcomes *"Our project is very much an example of what SEREP is all about. Firstly, we were able to publicise and communicate our project to a much wider audience. Secondly, we got some additional funding so that we could extend the project from one part of West Sussex (Horsham) to another (Littlehampton). Thirdly, we were able to use the expertise and guidance of a partner organisation from elsewhere in order to enable us to both create and extend the project. They mentored us and kept us on the right track. Now that really is active, practical and effective community empowerment across boundaries and localities.* *We are really pleased with the results of the project. This is true, participatory budgeting and it has influenced how public services and the voluntary sector engages with and involves children and young people."* Hanna Moore, West Sussex Council for Voluntary Youth Services.

Project monitoring

The projects that SEREP funded on a one-off or experimental basis were appropriately monitored. They generally delivered excellent outputs and outcomes as the two cases above show. Occasionally some projects were hampered due to inexperience. For instance an advocacy project in Kent was slowed down due to the project not checking out the implications of people on incapacity benefit working part-time as community researchers. In fact the project met its goals in the end. This kind outcome is to be expected as a risk with any exploratory, short term project commissioning or development. This was more than balanced by projects that created a considerable momentum for improving empowerment, as well as creating case studies and tools for empowerment to be shared across the South East.

The quote blow from a SEREP project touches on the issue of how public agencies improve the ways that they engage with and involve citizens and services users.

> " *Is the local council really interested in sharing power? We think the answer to this question is yes. There is a classic tension between the need to improve representative democracy and the relatively less well-established approach of participatory democracy. We need to give incentives for people to be involved and we think we can do this by devolving budgets down to parish level.*
> *We expect that, in 5 years time, more people will be doing more things voluntarily, which the Council sees as a priority. This is helped by the fact that we are a more affluent area with a well of potential volunteer time and skill to tap into."*
>
> Michael Beavan, External Funding Officer, Windsor and Maidenhead Council

How do you measure community empowerment and whether it is effective or not? This is an enormous question. For the purposes of this small-scale evaluation participants were asked to comment on how much they felt public agency level empowerment had improved, deteriorated or stayed about the same.

Public agency empowerment is improving in places

From evaluation carried out with public and third sector organisations, combined with data from the literature, it is fair to say that levels of community empowerment are getting better. Public agency empowerment is getting better in terms of greater transparency and accountability measures having been implemented in public services and more consistency in how public services engage with their people.

However, little power has been put on the table by public services managers and policy makers. So 'co-delivery', and similar combination of service provider's goals with people's interests, is very slow to take off other than at the margins.

The ladder of empowerment - as shown diagrammatically on page 32-34 - was used as a measurement tool with these results:

- o Generally citizens are *more informed* and access to information about public service and decision making is more widely available plus decision-making procedures are more transparent.

- o *Consultation processes are better* than they used to be. All of us have higher expectations of services providers and are less tolerant of unclear consultation processes. Consulting with users/citizens must follow a clear path through to choices and decisions and it needs to make clear what is negotiable and what is not. Public agencies are more consistently competent at this. However there are still

...stent such as the police, education and health services
...more consistent such as adult services and third sector

- o *The involvement of citizens and service-users is not well established.* Here we start to tip into the 'power-sharing' that the council officer above referred to. Many public agencies and authorities are not necessarily convinced that involving users/citizens is a good thing even if they have a 'duty to involve'.

- o *Collaboration or co-delivery is experimental at the margins of services provision.* The knowledge and participative technology is available to build collaborative public services. For instance user-group commissioning; personalisation; participative budgeting; advocacy; participatory appraisal; mutualisation; and deliberative polling and all tried and tested in the UK including in the south east. But they are usually deployed only at the margins and are yet to be mainstreamed in any service area or geographical location

- o *Empowerment or total empowerment* is now firmly on the aspirational agenda of policy makers with the localism, 'big society' and health service changes that are being proposed at the present time. There are a few, very few, examples of 'total empowerment' in the UK. For instance Alt Valley Community Trust[5] in Liverpool has a real balance between services owned and controlled by local people – where it is better for them to control activities – and activities and services run by the local authority. It is no co-incidence that the 'big society' agenda was launched there.

Below is a quote that demonstrates better networking between local areas:

"We have all learnt so much and opportunities have come up, that never would have if we weren't working together. Kent can now phone up Southampton and say, 'we're doing so and so, can we come and have a look at it'. Local authorities have had their eyes opened as to what empowerment really looks like, what is possible, and what works across the region."

Stephenie Linham, Chair of SEREP Steering Group and Regional Co-ordinator of Community Matters

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[5] Alt Valley in Croxteth Liverpool has, over many years, developed local vocational training, education, health services and a neighbourhood services company. It has reached the point where there is an equal balance and partnership between residents wants and aspirations, and the local authority's management of services. See more at http://www.communiversity.co.uk

of people who feel they can influence decisions in their

As reported elsewhere SEREP can only have had a small effect upon improving NI4. Though NI4 is no longer in place as a formal measure of local authority's outcomes its general principle is, arguably, a gold standard for the goals of community empowerment.

> "This was a really useful tool for us. It enabled us to lever in support for our empowerment projects from the District Council. We need there to be some kind of replacement incentive, target or indicator for all public-facing organisations. There needs to be an expectation upon them to involve local people and services users in key decisions that affect them rather than a choice about whether or not to involve people."
>
> Youth Services Manager, West Sussex.

> "It (SEREP) helped local authorities commit resources and people to NI4 and, more importantly, to achieving their objectives"
>
> Government Office of the South East

Below are some results from the South East for NI 4 and other Place Survey data plus some comparison to other related research.

Public opinion data on influence and participation	
Question to the public: 'Do you feel you can influence decisions in your locality?'	28.9% nationally[6] 28.2% south east
Question to the public: 'Generally speaking would you like to be more involved in decisions that affect your area?'	26.6 % nationally[7] 26.7% south east
Percentage of the public who have been involved in decisions that affects their area in the last 12 months	14% nationally[8] 14.2 % south east

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[6] Place Survey 2008/9 as reported by Surrey County Council
[7] Place Survey 2008/9 as reported by the Audit Commission
[8] Ibid 7

g that when it comes to specific concerns, people are more
study[9] found that:

42% were willing to attend a regular meeting with their neighbourhood police team
46% said that they were willing to keep an eye on an elderly neighbour
and 20% were willing to mentor a child.

In the same research interesting also that 90% believe that the state should remain primarily responsible for delivery most key public services.

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[9] "Capable Communities: Towards Citizen-Powered Public Services" IPPR and PWC 2010.

P's work that has fostered community empowerment both at the public agency level and the community level – both sectors working together and benefitting one another.

Case box: Speak Up, Black and Minority Ethnic Communities Consultation Project, East Sussex

The Objectives

Our project is, initially, aimed at involving black and minority communities in both learning about and influencing the provision of public services. In order to do this we know that small groups need to be helped with communication, training, information and capacity building. We know too that public service providers need to find improved ways to consult and involve communities and services users. In the immediate term we needed to put in place a good consultation and information project to get the ball rolling.

The Content

4 events involving 30 local groups scattered across a county were held to both learn from one another and begin to influence local public service provision. In all, about 50 people were involved. Firstly, we ran a focus group with BME community group participants to discover the issues that were important to them. Following this we ran events that looked in detail at community safety and one that focused on older people and adult services. After running these three events, we ran a general event that brought together findings from these consultations. People were able to feedback in a highly qualitative way, how well services were working for them or not, as the case may be. For the first time, small and isolated communities were able to learn about how public services can work *with them* as well as *for them* and what some of *the gaps* are.

The Outcomes

For the first time too we had public services managers and front-line workers involved and they were able to learn about whether or not these services were working in ways that they were supposed to be all working. Small groups and activists, all volunteers, were able to identify their development training and support needs in order that they could get to be in a position to be able to influence and to articulate feedback to services providers.

"This was unique in that the first time in this large and populous county there was a unique and open objective space with BME groups and public agencies to work together and learn from one another. We could not have done this without the relatively small pump priming grant from SEREP. We have found in the past three years at empowerment policy and practice in our area has improved. This was very much helped by the governments "duty to involve" and other legislation such as the personalisation of social care, all of which has pushed local authorities in having to invest in a continued and better dialogue with local people and clients."

Miriam Miklaszewska, Speak Out Co-ordinator, East Sussex.

Case box: Empowerment Conference, Portsmouth

The objectives: the Neighbourhood Training and Resource Centre for the South East organised an event in Portsmouth in March 2009. Its objectives were to give a flavour of what the 'mechanics' of empowerment in the South East, as well as to showcase some successful empowerment projects and methods. The event was designed as an introduction to empowerment.

The content: the agenda was packed with speeches giving the context to empowerment in the region, brief study tours to projects in Portsmouth to look at what happens on the ground and briefings on further projects. About 75 delegates attended, mainly from the public sector.

The outcomes: delegates gave the event an overwhelmingly positive overall rating and felt that their objectives had been met. Most useful aspects were felt to be the opportunity to network and the good practice briefings and study tours. The talk from the Head of Democratic and Community Engagement at Portsmouth City Council went down very well. Delegates commented that the event was *"enjoyable and informative"* and that it was *"good to keep moving"*. The study tours and briefings all gained high evaluations, the briefing from the Sunlight Trust (see separate case study), particularly so, followed by the tour on residents' participation in Portsmouth. These both used presenters from the community. On the down side, some delegates felt that there was not enough time for discussion and as one delegate commented: *"it needs to be more interactive, perhaps some assignments or creative sessions."* There were a couple of comments about *"the incessant use of jargon."*

Case box: Community Development South East workshops
Vision and Strategy for Community Development in Swale, Kent

The objectives: a stakeholder workshop was held in Swale to try to develop a shared vision for community development in Swale in Kent and the elements for a community development strategy.

The content: a morning workshop was held with key players from the public and third sector involved in Swale Borough Council's development to begin to look at how community development can be funded, resourced, deployed, managed and evaluated. The role of community development in meeting the needs of statutory agencies and communities was discussed. A vision and issues specific to Swale were explored before getting together to agree a route map showing how a strategic approach would work on the ground.

The outcomes: participants identified a number of geographic areas where a community development approach would be useful, as well as work with migrant and Gypsy and Traveller communities. The elements of a strategic approach to community development were also identified.

Case box: The Place of Community in Adur and Worthing, West Sussex

The objectives: A two day course was held in Adur and Worthing to explore the place and shape of community and its link to NI4; to share learning on the concepts of community development, empowerment, engagement and involvement; and to provide the foundation for future dialogue, action planning and working together across the area. The course was targeted at council officers and voluntary sector workers.

The content: Over 30 participants attended the two days which included discussions on techniques, theories and values of empowerment and engagement, together with a consideration of case studies to illustrate the points. Some background presentations were given on the LSPs in the two areas, and on joint working across the two councils. Groups worked up proposals for a new partnership to tackle issues such as health inequalities, responding to intolerance between communities, responding to the impact of the recession etc.

The outcomes: participants' objectives included a desire to learn more about community development principles and to stimulate discussion and networking, and believed these had been achieved. They appreciated the mix of information, tools and interactive learning and found the presentations very useful as a piece of action learning. One mentioned that they hoped that the Adur Community Development Forum would now include more people from Worthing. The day has acted as a catalyst for future training days and the councils have offered match funding for this. Topics that might be covered in future include a process for a community development service review, the role of councillors in community development, meeting to influence the LSP outside of the formal LSP process.

...owerment and community participation. It also led to more public agencies and VCS organisations having some of the tools to make empowerment happen. It remains to be seen whether or not this will lead to more citizens feeling able to influence local decisions or not. There is every reason to conclude that it will lead to an improved sense of influencing.

If empowerment is to improve and move beyond what is mostly about public agencies consulting with and, at times, engaging local communities then there still needs to be measures to make sure that they are moving towards better empowerment and, ergo, more unified and relevant public service goals. Those with the brief to lobby on behalf of communities such as CDF need to make sure these two things happen at the very least

a) measures that keep up the pressure on all public agencies to involve the public and their many publics in decisions (many publics such as patients, residents of one neighbourhood, parents, particular service-user populations etc.)
b) accountability measures through a simple system that makes sure strategic planning for citizen involvement and empowerment happens, as well as making sure it is reported on and resourced.

The Cuts in public spending:

The last phase of the SEREP programme has been affected in several ways by public services cuts. Early cuts and planned cuts in council services, health and police have resulted in managers immediately pulling back from consultation and engagement with the public for fear of creating any sense of expectation. As a result of this reduced public engagement relationships between people and public services are fast deteriorating.

This evaluation found public and voluntary organisations all pre-occupied with defending their activities and, as a result, engaging with their communities and clients less. Confidence in or enthusiasm for the 'big society' is low amongst the public as borne out by recent polls. It is similarly viewed unfavourably by public and third sector workers and managers.

The affect of this, right now at least, is that the Localism Bill proposals – such as new rights to bid to take over public services and new rights to trigger local referendums - in general are not seen as improvements by communities and the VCS even though many have long campaigned for such rights. Front-loaded cuts in local services are the main agenda for local services providers. This is to the detriment of the consideration of any other change-planning. Also funding for empowerment specific activity is being cut one way or another in most areas of the South East (described in the next section).

capacity and staff

... been a recent reduction in the capacity of public and voluntary sector services to put in place community empowerment because empowerment workers and staff and teams have, overall, been reduced[10].

Areas such as Portsmouth and Southampton have reduced their empowerment/community development teams. Community empowerment staff capacity in health services have been reduced in most areas. Areas such as Brighton and Hove and West Sussex have maintained their capacity (though these will undoubtedly be reduced in 2011 to 2013 cuts programmes). Alongside this many areas where community empowerment is historically underdeveloped - such as Folkestone, Medway, and many rural districts – will remain underdeveloped as far as community empowerment capacity, skill and capabilities concerned.

> *"In these difficult times financially, the process of engaging with and talking to communities, and even potential collaboration with them seems to be so much more important. However, who will communities be able to talk to? In our case we are facing a 25% cut in council staff and bigger cuts in "non-essential" services. Who will be left to communicate with or facilitate community engagement? It seems that now is the time to put in place co-delivery but there are no signs of this yet"*
>
> Services Manager, Isle of Wight

CO-ORDINATING EMPOWERMENT PRACTICE

Developing the Networks:

Community empowerment is about change and facilitating change. It is less about continual and predictable services provision. It takes a lot of time to put change in place – and this partnership has really only had 2 years since the last round of changes in objectives were put in place from the national level. As the Partnership Chair said "we have made a start we now need time to develop".

SEREP has made very good progress in facilitating networks in at least 25 separate localities of the South East where it has run events or funded others to run events. Practitioners valued the opportunity to learn from others beyond their area and participate in events, learning and information exchange provided by SEREP.

Practitioners want to be able to learn from one another and the means to do this is very poor in the community empowerment field. Furthermore the quality of practically applicable knowledge and information in the field is poor. For instance SEREP

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[10] Evidence from Community Development South East events programmes and from evaluation respondents

a tool for 'putting the business case for community ...available of any practical merit.

There has been no facility for sharing information, learning or project commissioning between the 9 different REPs across the country.

Learning across boundaries:

SEREP has made progress in facilitating and extending community empowerment learning between different areas as this feedback shows:

> "It's such an important thing to pull this kind of community development and community empowerment skill and practise together. It's really noticeable that community development skills are very patchy and thin on the ground as well as not necessarily better located in one particular sector. It is really useful that SEREP enables you to break out of the detachment or isolation of your particular locality/service area. We can see how things are being done in one area, and how this might be repeated in different shapes and forms in another area"
>
> Hanna Moore, West Sussex Council for Voluntary Youth Services

SEREP Website:

In the second half of the programme the partnership surmounted problems with web based storage and retrieval of information and produced a website with a broad content. This includes case studies; resources; presentations made by experts in empowerment related topics; research resources and links. With further time and resources the website could be developed into more of a practice exchange platform and knowledge 'market-place' with the facility for uploading plus content development. Web-driven content in the community empowerment field is hard to find, generally not practical or reflective and distant from practitioners learning needs. Naturally this would be better achieved in partnership with other regions and organisations and with good content produced.

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

SEREP partners voluntarily came together to run a joint programme of community empowerment development in the region. CDF had overall responsibility for this regional programme as well as for the other regions.

Day to day the programme was managed and delivered through a succession of accountable bodies appointed by CDF.   In its first year CDSE (Community Development South East) was the accountable body; in 2008 CDF took over running the program directly; and in 2009 to 2011 SERCC (South East Rural Community Councils) was the Accountable Body.

s the objectives and emphasis of the programme was mission and objectives of the programme were also, to e, local partnerships were asked to positively affect the NI 4 local authority performance target. This is an example of several programme objectives that were either uncontrollable by delivery partners, or the objective was immeasurable as regards what was supposed to be achieved by way of outcomes.

Under these circumstances SEREP did very well in terms of both putting in place a broadly representative, transparent and participative partnership: and in insuring consistently that this partnership delivered a programme of work.

Grant Distribution and Management:

SEREP was very effective and competent at grant distribution and management. Grant distribution and monitoring took over as the principal activity of the partnership once it had entered its third stage of development under the accountability of SERCC. (appendix 3 lists grant recipients). The partnership managed the distribution of funds for the Regional Empowerment Programme; Targeted Support; Regional Empowerment Awards; and a small amount of money for the combating extremism agenda.

> "In this task the partnership was very effective. It puts a lot of productive effort into ensuring that community empowerment resources were spread geographically; into different kinds of activity; projects in rural areas; projects in county, unitary and district areas; as well as across different themes (such as BME, disability and young people). It used funding to put in place a set of contextual experiments in community empowerment. Pilots and short-term projects were what was required to be delivered."
>
> Robert Hardy, previously a Kent County Council Director and past Chair of the SEREP

Participation in the Partnership

Approximately 25 people and organisations were involved with the Partnership Steering Group over the 4 years with a core Steering Group of 8 at the last phase of the programme. The Steering Group was serviced by one part-time co-ordinator with an additional part-time worker employed to monitor one funding stream (Targeted Support). This small team managed the whole SEREP work programme.

Membership of the wider partnership was 109 by the end of the programme – many more participated in events and projects. Regular Partnership meeting/event participation rose from 15-23 participants per meeting in the first 2 years to 45 in the final year and 73 participants in the Partnership community empowerment conference

The Partnership had wide representation from across the region and across the public and third sectors. One or two people criticised the partnership for not being 'representative'. However it was bound to include people who have the job of creating and increasing

...ound not to include community groups with localised ...ces.

Participation from health and the police in the partnership and its projects was low whilst participation from the third sector and most local authorities was high.

The value of a regional Partnership

Given that community empowerment is mostly carried out either very locally, or it is geographically boundless through electronic social networking, there needs to be a reason for supporting empowerment on a regional basis. The most compelling reason for this is in order to deliver information, knowledge, learning and, as a result, capability. Practitioners value what they learn from beyond the confines of their locality or their service area. Community empowerment skills are thin on the ground and exemplar projects or empowerment 'technologies' are thinly spread also.

It will be necessary to re-create a 'super network' that enables organisations and practitioners to connect up to one another and facilitate practice exchange. Again this is especially due to two circumstances: a) the relatively isolated position of people doing empowerment work and b) the challenging task of change, participation, organisational and democratic development. Knowledge and capability for facilitating change needs to be well crafted and disseminated.

Governance of the Partnership

The Steering group functioned effectively as an executive at the later stages of the programme's operation. The Co-ordinator and the Steering Group kept appropriate records of meetings, business and project activity. All members of the Partnership's Steering Group expressed some discontent at what was seen as a 'disempowering approach' to the Partnership's development from CDF which affected its ability to deliver. As one senior government officer put it:

'we were left with a damaged partnership due to the lack of clarity about governance and the role of the accountable body...this was left to drift by CDF'.

SERCC (South East Rural Community Council), as the Accountable Body for the third stage of the Programme, provided a productive vehicle for the programme. It had the advantage of a regional presence and experience of community support. It had the disadvantage of no training and development package or networking infrastructure.

The monitoring system for the partnership administered from the national HQ appeared onerous and unfocussed.

Co-ordination with other empowerment related programmes:

This was done very effectively either at the Partnership level or at the local level, whichever was more appropriate to the task of facilitating and improving empowerment. For instance

e Part and on Participative Budgeting as well as with the
EREP made every effort to work in co-ordination with
ency Partnership (RIEP) however the RIEP in the South
East chose to de-prioritise empowerment work. This disappointed SEREP especially in view
of both the opportunity for creating productive links between efficiency, effectiveness and
community involvement; and in view of the £25 million budget available across the region
for the RIEP.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MAXIMISING FUTURE IMPACT

SEREPs funding ceases in March 2011 as does the funding for its projects. There is no
identified resource for covering SEREPs work and Regional Government is about to cease.

However there are many other organisations that could be developing at least part of what
SEREP has started. First and foremost local authorities, public agencies in general, emerging
health bodies and the VCS or third sector will need to work together if they want to
improve their capacity and capability to empower citizens and services users. They need to
be helped by national and regionally based partners with a brief to support empowerment
such as CDF, RAISE, Local Government Improvement and Development, Community
Matters and NAVCA.

It needs these organisations to act in order to help keep empowerment on the policy
agenda. Right now there is a very real opportunity for putting community empowerment in
place in view of new rights and powers likely to be extended to local areas. In order to
minimise the risk and maximise the return community empowerment needs to be
strategically supported and developed. This includes supporting learning and development
capacity for the people doing empowerment (frontline staff in the public and third sectors,
community empowerment workers and services managers). Below are other observations
on and recommendations for maximising future impact.

Supporting that the task of community empowerment practice

Practice exchange, a learning and resource bank, peer learning, benchmarking, networking
groups and networked learning are all under-developed in the community empowerment
area generally and very much under-developed in the southeast. Practitioners are atomised
and unfamiliar with one another's work. Some have community empowerment as their
main job such as community development worker. Many others do not – for instance a
worker setting up neighbourhood watch scheme or a health manager setting up client-led
commissioning of services.

Who does community empowerment work?

Community empowerment activity, and the skills and knowledge that goes with it, is vital
across all kinds of public service and community activity. In communities all manner of
voluntary groups, charities clubs and societies are keeping communities together and
flourishing. With a 'new deal for empowerment' they could be delivering *with* the public
sector.

e public and VCS that are delivering some kind of

Neighbourhood community development workers; service specific involvement and engagement workers or advocates (e.g. parenting, childrens services, health promotion; health training/trainers, schools, mental health, learning disability) police/community safety staff; democratic service and policy staff (e.g. local government staff working on scrutiny or measuring local opinion); service commissioners and managers; volunteer co-ordinators; third sector workers; partnership developers, social enterprise workers and social entrepreneurs. This is to name but some of the staff who need to put in place different level of community empowerment activity and therefore require the skills and knowledge to be able to do it.

Community empowerment is value for money: this needs to be understood at all levels

Spending on community empowerment workers and on quality support to them has a big pay off. A recent and very extensive study (see appendix 5) found that was a £15 return on every £1 spent of community development work capacity.

olicy agendas where empowerment activity and

Improving neighbourhoods; patient participation; adult services advocacy; personalisation; behaviour change; community-led planning; deliberative polling and deliberative forums; proposed new rights for communities to take over local services; intelligent commissioning; and 'localism'. Again this is but some of the agendas that require empowerment skills to advance them.

It is essential that public agencies that have any brief to improve empowerment put in place work that addresses what appears to be diverse agendas. The common ground between these agendas is the skills, knowledge and capacity to put in place empowerment. Public agencies need to build their capacity as does the third sector in its voluntary organisation of different community and social interests.

Better practice knowledge and resources:

At the very least a good quality practice exchange and practice learning-resource portal or platform needs to be available.

This evaluation found practitioners in want of simple tips, guidelines and tools plus well produced examples and templates that they can practically learn from and apply to their service or project.

Making the new 'localism' agenda work:

At the present time it is difficult to say who is responsible for delivering the empowerment, 'big society' and localism agendas and objectives. To some extent this has always been difficult to pin down. However those with a brief to deliver empowerment and better service effectiveness need to keep the benefits of an empowering approach alive.

> "potentially it's going to be the less well understood pieces of work in empowerment and engagement that may well fall off the agenda. There needs to be somebody, like SEREP, speaking up for empowerment. Empowerment work, and funding it, makes connections into new policy areas. Empowerment can offer some of the answers to make localism and decentralisation work for local authorities and other partners. It is a huge opportunity, potentially"
>
> Vicky Westhorpe, Head of Communities and Culture, Government Office of the South East

...o be 'Direct Representatives'

...re action – these are common views from community empowerment workers:

> "There are three things that would make a real difference to advancing true localism and community empowerment and they are:
>
> a) recruiting and training "Direct Representatives" to participate in the formal partnerships and management structures as well as represent the interests of their group of people/neighbourhood/service-user community
> b) secondly, paying expenses and stipends to Direct Representatives.
> c) make sure that any future funding of community empowerment projects is over a three-year period and that it has a medium-term plan."
> SEREP has had less impact than it otherwise might of as it's only been able to fund small-scale, one year or 18 months, long projects".

Miriam Miklaszewska, Speak Up East Sussex.

6. REPORT CONCLUSION

The South East Regional Empowerment Partnership delivered an effective programme of grants and awards support, information provision, network building, research and learning in the South East. The work was delivered well despite many challenges. SEREP leaves behind a legacy of extended empowerment work in most localities in the South East and in many different areas of work including local authority empowerment; group advocacy; BME inclusion; community-led planning; and community development.

The Partnership and its projects have given added value to existing empowerment work and enabled some much needed innovation and experimentation to take place. This small partnership has managed to make a big impact across a large and diverse field of work.

In the South East empowerment is improved at the public agency level especially in how public agencies inform and consult with their many publics, and in reaching out to diverse communities. Most public sector agencies do not involve service-users and citizens in collaborative improvement to service levels or co-delivery of activities and outcomes. Also most are not putting 'power on the table' in any consistent or mainstreamed way.

Resources for the SEREP have cease in March 2011. It now falls to others with the brief to deliver empowerment work to do as much as they can to develop and build on the work of the many community empowerment practitioners and projects who are putting effort into improving the public sector and civil society.

1. Evaluation Research Questions; Ladder of Empowerment
2. Evaluation Interviewees and Researched Organisations
3. Listings of SEREPs projects in 2009 – 2011
4. CDF's introduction to the NEP (National Empowerment Programme for community empowerment)
5. Social Return Case Study on the social return on community development spending
6. Community Empowerment Who is Involved – Diagram and think-piece
7. Contact Details

ONS; LADDER OF EMPOWERMENT

1. Evaluation Questions

The over-riding questions we want you to feedback on are:

a) What has the impact been of SEREP – its projects and core services?

- on community level empowerment

- on public agency level empowerment

- on co-ordinating empowerment practice

- inclusion and equality

b) What lessons have been learnt?

c) What might be done in the future to maximise impact?

d) Where would you rate community empowerment in your area now and how does this compare to 4 years age? (please refer to the diagram on page 3)

In addition we want you to provide any feedback about the SEREP and about putting in place better community empowerment in your area of work and location. So additional questions we would like to focus on in an interview would include:

Questions about SEREP and your SEREP sponsored project:

a) How are you involved with SEREP?

b) What is/was your reason for being involved with SEREP?

c) How has your SEREP sponsored project made an impact on community empowerment? Do you have any quantitative evidence of community empowerment activity?

d) How well has the programme been managed and governed?

Questions about local community empowerment:

a) What does your organisation do that enables people (citizens/service users) to have control over what service is provided and what happens to them?

b) How does your organisation put empowerment in place? How does it manage empowerment and how is empowerment resourced?

c) How would you rate the quality of empowerment methods and processes and the overall extent to which citizens are involved with running public activities in: your area; service; your specific organisation? (Please refer to the diagram on page 3 below)

The Evaluator is Jim Simpson on 01273 299639 or jimsimpsonconsultancy@ntlworld.com

SEREP's Programme Manager, Claire Hilder.
Claire Hilder is on 01483 459292 ext. 229 or pm@sercc.org.uk

SEREP Legacy Project (case study writers and event managers) Claire Carter on 01694
731759 jigsawconsultancy@btinternet.com

The South East Regional Empowerment Partnership Action Plan 2010-11, the 2009-10
action plan and associated information is available at:
http://www.serep.org.uk/documents.php and additional more brief information is on pages 5
and 6 here.

…uiding you on planning how to engage with communities and

The diagram below[11] shows the journey of empowering local citizens from the point of view of the relationship between public services and citizens (whether provided by the state, the third sector or the private sector) and citizens. It starts with the basic yet essential level of information giving, through involving local citizens, and on to the ultimate goal of real empowerment – if you like 'total empowerment' where people are in control of what happens.

Levels of Empowerment
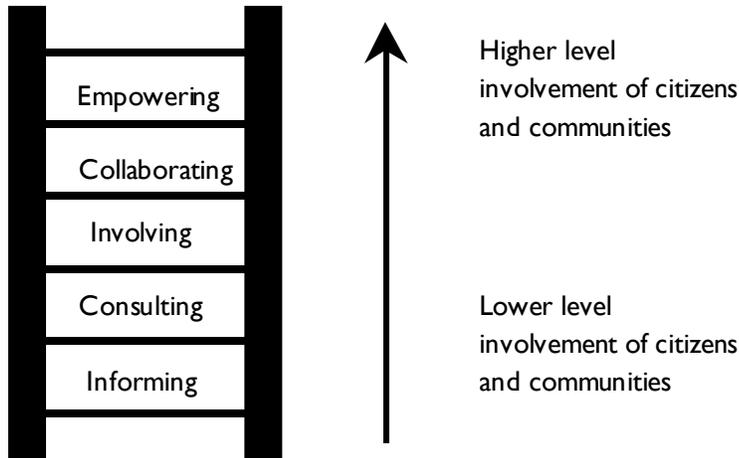
Community empowerment is a stepped process because the natural, organic process of power sharing requires the organisation – public body, voluntary organisation, community group or company – to do a number of things in a dependent order to enable influence and power to be shared. For instance to *consult* with communities or with partners *informing and engaging* them needs to have taken place. Similarly in order to *involve* people and bring them to the table *consultation* needs to have taken place. Empowerment research tells us also that the players – citizens, services workers, managers and policy makers – need to work through one stage in order to get to another.

There are no short cuts to real empowerment. It involves building trust, working structures, relationships and capability over long time frames and using empowerment methods, processes and forums appropriate to the stage of community empowerment that the organisation is at.

Stage one - *informing and engaging*

People start to feel a sense of becoming empowered when they have easy access to regularly available, consistent, good quality information. Organisations can not hope to consult or involve citizens and service users without people who are participating having good knowledge. Similarly professionals can not hope to provide a good service without good quality experiential knowledge from their communities and service users.

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[11] Adapted and re-written by Jim Simpson from the International Association of Public Participation's 'Spectrum of Public Participation' tool 2000

formed" [12]

Community engagement is a more active way of informing people and is often confused with community involvement and collaboration. In practice, it is the process of taking out a service or a facility to the people who might use it. Many service providers use community engagement techniques to extend and promote their services to 'under-represented groups' or in order to reach the 'hard-to-reach'. Community engagement is valuable and informative for both sides of the services delivery transaction. However it is not necessarily concerned with any shift in influence and power from service provider to service user. Typically it gives the service provider broader and deeper intelligence and feedback.

Stage two – *consulting*

This is about asking people what they think and feeding back to them the results of their contribution. Our research particularly emphasised the need for people to be heard and really listened to and to receive feedback and updates.

The public promise is:

"we will listen and acknowledge your preferences, needs, satisfaction/dissatisfaction, aspirations and hopes"[13]

Stage three – *involving*

Involving people is where power begins to be shared. It involves processes that recruit views, experience and expertise from citizens or service users. This is reflected in future plans, designs, options, choices, resource deployment and decisions.

The public promise here is:
"We will make sure your views and preferences influence the outcome"[14]

Stage four - *collaborating*

As the name suggests collaboration involves all parties in 'co-evolving' or 'co-creating' activities. It involves the public and the specific beneficiaries of a service or facility becoming a co-opted partner with real influence and power over what happens.

The public promise here is:
"We will invite you to participate in formulating solutions and incorporate your preferences into the outcome"[15]

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[12] The IAP (International Association of Participation) tabulates a 'spectrum of participation' modes and attaches to each mode the idea of the 'public promise' that each mode would require services providers to commit to.
[13] *Ibid 1*
[14] *Ibid 1*
[15] *Ibid 1*

erment is taking place and citizens are deciding what is done for them, with them and to them. This is where empowerment is the goal and either professionals put into place the choices, preferences, aspirations and goals of citizens or citizens do it for themselves.

Empowerment is variously known as 'delegation' (internally within organisations whether public, voluntary or private sector), 'decentralisation' (within large organisations and government bodies) and devolution or subsidiarity (within and between nation states and their government organisation). This is part of the broad 'new democracy' policy area that is gaining ground and interest across sectors as well as nationally and internationally.

The public promise here is:
"we will implement what you decide"[16]

Along the way informing, consulting, involving and collaborating with people are all empowering processes in and of themselves.

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[16] Ibid 1

EP and the SEREP evaluation

About the South East Regional Empowerment Partnership

The South East regional Empowerment Partnership is a cross-sector partnership established with funding from the Department for Communities and Local Government to improve the quality, co-ordination and evidence of empowerment across the region. It is one of nine regional partnerships which work alongside a national consortium and together make up the National Empowerment Partnership (NEP).

The Partnership is convened and facilitated by SERCC. Its aim is to help establish a forum for critical debate in the region about the nature of engagement and empowerment, and encourage the sharing and development of good practice across sectors. The National Empowerment Partnership aim has been to support and inform the government to help implement its vision of a truly participative society and promote the fundamental role of empowerment in achieving a more equal, cohesive and democratic society. These ambitions apply as much to the Coalition Government's Big Society and Localism objectives as they did to the previous government's empowerment and public sector reform objectives.

The South East Regional Empowerment Partnership programme began in the summer of 2007. It now requires an evaluation and assessment which should measure the impact of the Partnership across its lifetime.

In addition to the NEP priorities SEREP has responsibility for supporting and delivering the Targeted Support for Empowerment and Participation Improvement (TSEPI) within the South East. The TSEPI project commenced in December 2009 and runs until March 2011.

SEREP Evaluation Interviewees and Researched Organisations	
NAME	**ORGANISATION**
Alison Angell	Hampshire County Council Community Support Team
Bryan Michell	My Life, My Choice, Oxfordshire
Claire Hilder	SEREP Project Manager
Colin Maclean	RAISE, Regional Action and Involvement South East
Hanna Moore	WSCVYS, West Sussex Council for Voluntary Youth Services
John Stevens	Community Development South East
Michael Beaven	Windsor and Maidenhead Council
Miriam Miklaszweska	Speak Up Network, East Sussex
Moira Foster	SEREP Project Coordinator
Pearl Ryall	WEA South East
Phillipa Daly	Isle of Wight Rural Community Council
Robert Hardy	Kent County Council (previously of)
Roger King	Surrey County Council
Sally Hiscock	Urban Forum; Brighton and Hove Community and Voluntary Sector Forum
Stephenie Lynham*	Community Matters, Steering Group Chair
Vicky Westhorpe**	Government Office South East
Desk research sources	New Economics Foundation; Local Government Improvement and Development; Community Development Foundation; Big Society Network; Cabinet Office; Department for Communities and Local Government; Financial Times; Guardian; Regional Action and Involvement South East
* interviewed for both regional and national evaluation; ** interviewed for national evaluation	
12 further organisations and individuals were approached but were unable to participate due to a mixture of reasons such as the time-frame; staff redundancy; preparing for the cuts; unavailability etc.	

rgeted Support) projects

Listed below are project summaries from the recent grant recipients for the SEREP Grants Programme 09-10. Updates, resources, events and case studies from the funded projects will be published on the Serep website (www.serep.org.uk)

Lead Organisation	Project Description	Area
Community Action Hampshire	The project aims to improve the participation of young people in all forms of community-led planning. Events for councillors to recognise how they can support and help young people to influence decision making and for young people on developing skills to facilitate collective working and effective engagement with statutory bodies.	Hants /E Hants/ Winchester
Workers Educational Association-Southern Region	This Project is aimed at members of marginalised minority and ethnic communities in Brighton & Hove and Hastings. It aims to increase their knowledge and skills of active citizenship to enable them to be more informed about local services and to engage in local democratic structures/processes as citizens, volunteers or community activists.	Brighton & Hove/Hastings
Community Development South East	This project will support a training programme of 2 initial days then follow up sessions across Local Authorities for council officers and community development practitioners on the policy and community development contribution to empowerment.	Reading/Surrey/Windsor and Maidenhead, Medway Towns/West Berkshire
Community First for Portsmouth	The project aims to increase voluntary/community sectors role in service design and delivery when developing new or existing services. Events for Participatory Budgeting and increasing the understanding of the empowerment agenda.	Portsmouth Southampton
Isle Of Wight Rural Community Council	The project will co-ordinate a review of existing customer services approaches, consultation mechanisms, partnership/network initiatives, community development work and empowerment projects. This review will identify a range of community engagement initiatives and review their effectiveness from the community's perspective.	Isle of Wight
My Life, My Choice	The project will train people with learning disabilities to become 'champions' in the key areas of their lives as indicated in Valuing People Now. The Power Up team, (people with learning disabilities who are	Oxford City/Oxfordshire

	iners) will empower the "champions" across Oxfordshire by accessible, interactive and fun training workshops. The 'champions' project will provide a clear methodology for local authorities to begin all consultation, service design and empowerment practice	
West Sussex Council for Voluntary Youth Services	This project will support a training programme across two Local Authorities for identified partners including VCS local projects, council officers and Community Development practitioners, on how Children as Commissioners can support children, young people and their families actively engage with and influence decisions about their communities.	Horsham /Arun
South Downs Council For Voluntary Services	The project will facilitate themed workshops for BME organisations providing discussions with the public and the VCS partners on important issues. Identified issues will then be discussed with Strategic Partnerships at subsequent events.	Eastbourne/ Hastings/Rother
Action in Rural Sussex	The project will develop mechanisms which allow young people to develop a strong voice and participate in local democracy. The project aims to develop a young people's local democracy toolkit embedding empowerment strategies and support a training programme across four Parish Councils.	Rother & Wealden
Oxfordshire Rural Community Council	The project consists of events across six Local Authorities for community members, council officers, PCT staff and Community Development practitioners to promote Community Led Planning (CLP) and provide training on using the a new CLP web-based resource	All Oxfordshire districts
Buckinghamshire Community Action	This project will facilitate community planning events across Buckinghamshire. The events will look to develop and build upon the skills needed by community led planning steering groups to deliver a successful plan for their community.	North/South Buckinghamshire

SUPPORT

LA/Org	Name	Job title	Address	Mobile number	tel number	email address	Q1 Grant
Community Council for Berkshire	Tim Parry	Head of Operations	27 Eldon Square Reading RG1 4 DP	07738 887611	0118 961 2000	tim.parry@ccberks.org.uk	7,059.00
Isle of Wight Council, on behalf of the Island Strategic Partnership	Astrid Davies	Strategic Manager - Partnership	Island Strategic Partnership, C/O County Hall, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 1UD	07976 009322	01983 823804	astrid.davies@iow.gov.uk	12,029.00
Medway Council	Clem Smith	Head of Economic Development and Social Regeneration	Gun Wharf, Level 3, Dock Road, Chatham, Kent ME4 4TR	07740 590030	01634 338119	clem.smith@medway.gov.uk; marianne.harstad@medway.gov.uk	21,750.00
Chichester District Council	Amy Loaring	Corporate Policy Officer			01243 534726	aloaring@chichester.gov.uk	40,000.00
Reading Borough Council	Grant Thornton	Head of Community Planning	Civic Centre, Reading RG1 7AE		0118 937 2416	grant.thornton@reading.gov.uk;	16,431.00
Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead	Michael Beaven	External Funding Officer	Town Hall, St Ives Road, Maidenhead SL6 1RF	07775 824103	01628 682941	michael.beaven@rbwm.gov.uk	16,250.00
SERCC Management							11,230.00
SEREP	Claire Hilder	Project Manager	SERCC, Astolat, Coniers Way, New Inn Lane, Guildford GU4 7HL	07947 923783	01483 459292 x 229	pm@sercc.org.uk	0.00

Surrey County Council	Roger King	Lead Manager, Safer & Stronger Communities	County Hall, Penrhyn Road, Kingston on Thames KT1 2DN	07933 712798	0208 541 9504	roger.king@surreycc.gov.uk	46,500.00

"The National Empowerment Partnership (NEP) is committed to supporting and improving empowerment activities across England. We gather evidence of effective community empowerment and promote the powerful benefits of involving communities in decisions that affect them. Our focus is to lead the empowerment agenda by providing a regional infrastructure for empowerment. This helps to bring together the work of local authorities, government departments, statutory agencies and community organisations in empowering local people. We do this by:

Growing the demand – getting more people involved in local activities and decisions.

Growing the supply – helping people, community groups, parish councils and other organisations become more effective in having a say in how their communities are run.

Growing the network– providing regional systems and structures to support empowerment work and to share information on all aspects of empowerment."

From CDF's website January 2011

munity Empowerment: Social Return Case Study on the social return on community development spending
- Community Project Beneficiaries Model
- Model of Community Empowerment Who is Involved?

Case box: Value for money and community empowerment:

Empowerment has wide benefits and social returns:

Empowering communities and individuals to take part in community activities, public services, influencing and decision-making creates all sorts of benefits for the participants and social returns for all such as:

- o *For the individual:* confidence, new skills, and a wider social outlook

- o *For the public service:* appropriately and accurately tasked services, facilities and activities driven by what people want and need; plus new and improved services and community activities. This means including peoples resources and energy in providing good outcomes *with* services providers rather than only being *provided for*.

- o *For the wider public*: again more clearly tasked public services and community activities -   better services that maximise effectiveness and minimise resource-waste on things that do not provide comparatively good social and economic outcomes

For the process of community empowerment to be effective communities *benefit from community development input and support in* order that they can effectively speak out, participate and develop the high skills needed to be empowering. So community development is, to an extent, a pre-requisite of community empowerment, even more so where communities and individuals are less confident about and familiar with participating in groups and forums.

Investing in community development produces £15 in benefit for each £1 spent

At last we can now say with confidence and authority that community development has big pay-offs for wider society and the general public, as well as for the communities and individuals involved as the section below shows.

The Report[17] found that:

- Return on investment was £15 worth of value for each £1 spent

- Substantial value was created through community development work in terms of : time (volunteering) invested by the community in running various groups and activities; improvement in the positive relationships enjoyed by volunteers, participants in community activities, and the wider community; and improvement to the feelings of trust and belonging experienced by volunteers, participants in community activities, and the wider community

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[17] "Catalysts for Community Action and Investment" New Economic Foundation (NEF) 2010

stment of £233,655 in community development activity
eturn was ultimately £3.5 million. Put another way, for
5 of value is created. The study took place in St Giles (Lincoln), Brighton, Dewsbury and Cleobury Mortimer (Shropshire).

Financially measured values were obtained from data derived from three different groups: volunteers delivering projects; community group participants; and the wider local community beneficiaries. In each case, there were four measures of community development outcome. These were: resilience and self-esteem; positive functioning; supportive relationships; trust and belonging.

So put at its most simple and powerful, community development expenditure yields a 15 fold return on investment.

The diagram below shows how communities and community activity has such wide social and economic benefits.

Community Projects Beneficiaries Model

When people are involved in community projects and services it is not just they who benefit. Benefits accrue to the volunteers involved in organising and delivering community activities plus the people who are receiving any kind of service or help. Also wider society receives a benefit. For instance this would occur if neighbourhood watch is keeping communities safer or if expert patients are helping people eat better and improve their well-being.
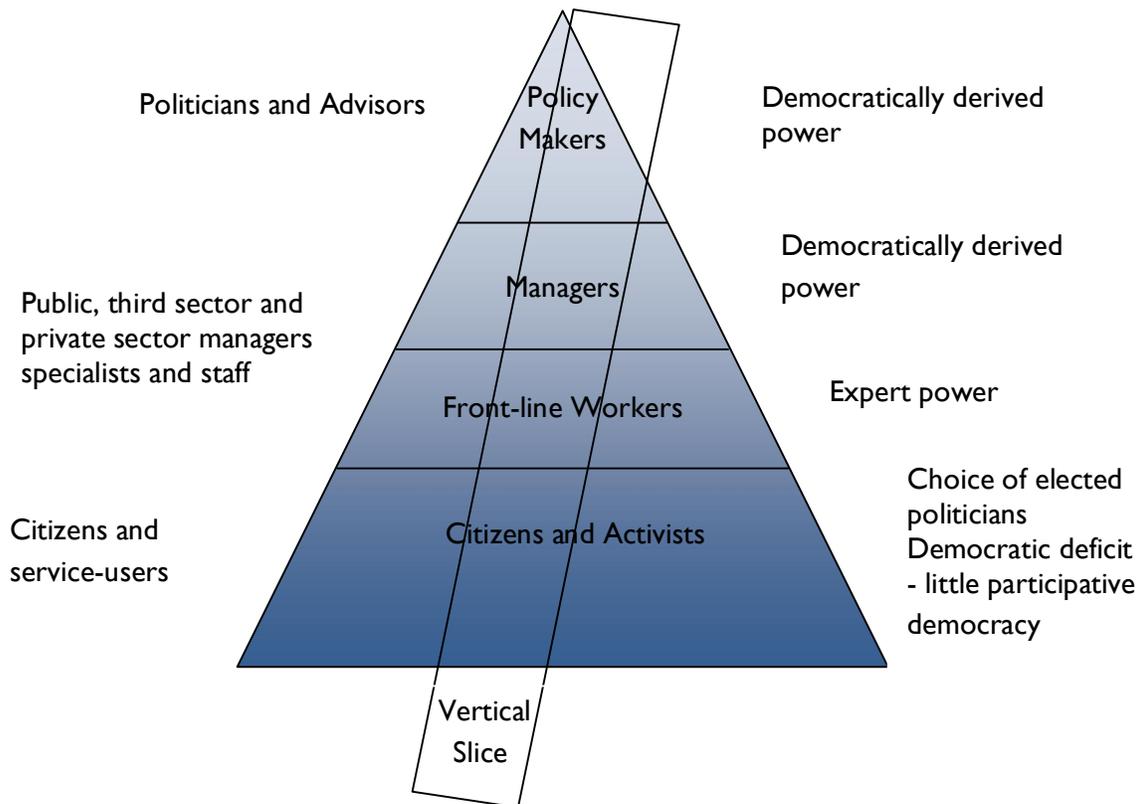
Beneficiaries in community-embedded projects – it's not just the volunteers involved who gain

Public
benefit
more
widely

Project
participants
or clients/
service-
users

Project Volunteers
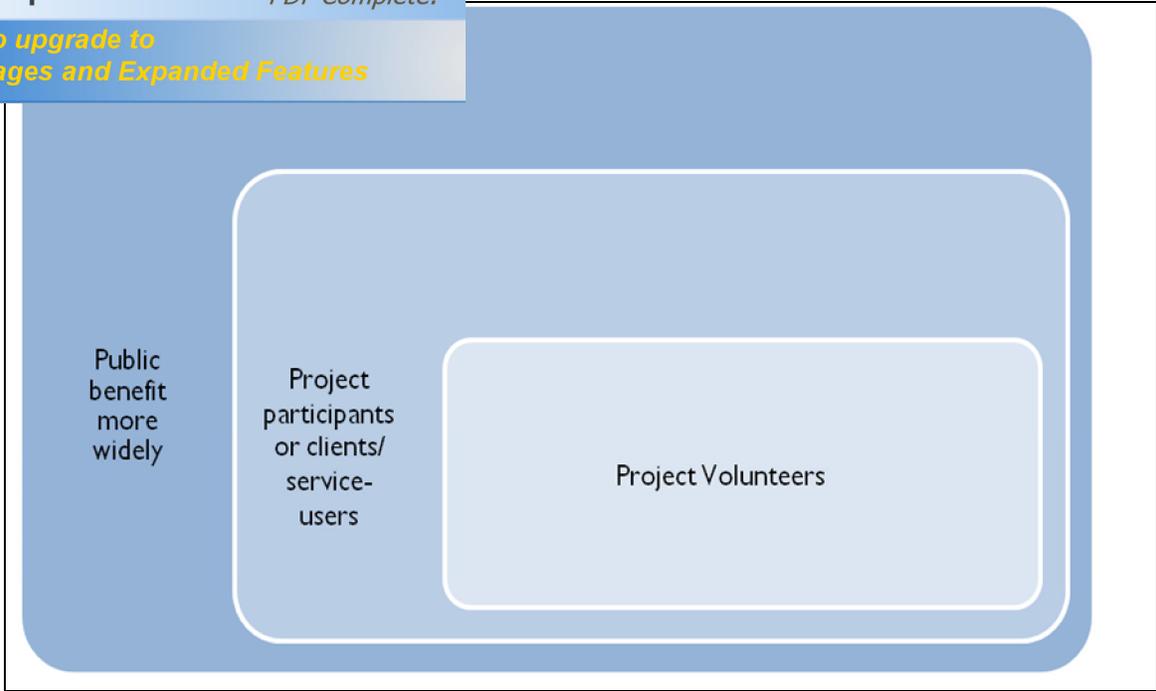
WHO IS INVOLVED?

...e players are in community empowerment and where their power is derived from. It also tells us who are the people delivering public and voluntary services and benefits. Change to power relationships tends to grow from real issues on the ground rather than from institutional structures such as local council committees or health bodies. For instance issues such as how safe your community is; or what kind of care you can get if you need; or how good the local school is are the kind of concerns that motivate people. Real aspirations and issues are, similarly, what should be tasking and focussing public agencies. This is where the 'vertical slice' comes in. It enables people who share the *same concerns* and desires but have a *different role and stake* to come together, learn from one another, understand each other and create common goals and actions. It enables groups of key people involved in, say, community safety or social care to work together for improvement.

Politicians and Advisors — Policy Makers — Democratically derived power

Public, third sector and private sector managers specialists and staff — Managers — Democratically derived power

Front-line Workers — Expert power

Citizens and service-users — Citizens and Activists — Choice of elected politicians Democratic deficit - little participative democracy

Vertical Slice

SEREP's empowerment programme has involved these different groups of people and different players in empowerment work at the community level and the public agency level. It has been and remains necessary to involve all these participants if real improvements in empowerment are to be achieved.

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