

## **Thriving, Not Just Surviving: Understanding how a Community Learning and Development approach is delivering change for a community in Dundee.**

Findings report of a small-scale research project to explore how a community is coming together, enabled by a community development approach, to make a positive difference in people's lives.

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## **Introduction**

Tackling poverty and inequality is fundamental to achieving healthy, flourishing and equal societies. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (United Nations, 2024) include goals of ‘zero hunger’ and ‘no poverty’. However, in the UK over recent years, we have seen poverty rise to unacceptable levels with over 800,000 children using foodbanks to eat and the number of children living in poverty rising by around 700,000 since 2010 (UK Government, 2024). The way in which poverty and disadvantage within communities is tackled has been the focus for successive Scottish and UK Governments over recent years (Scottish Government, 2024).

Furthermore, the extent to which community participation and engagement approaches have been utilised as effective practice in delivering the change required to enable sustained reductions in poverty is varied throughout the UK, depending on practices in each local area. CLD Standards Council Scotland (2023) identified that 12 of Scotland’s 32 local authorities decreased spend on CLD activities in 2023-24. Effective community engagement and participation can be enabled by community learning and development (CLD) approaches – with professionally qualified practitioners working alongside communities to harness community power, influence and achieve change (Scottish Government, 2024).

This research intends to bring together and synthesise key literature, policy and the theoretical underpinnings of community development in the context of participation and engagement approaches. This is enhanced using key themes identified from a small-scale qualitative research study within a community experiencing the effects of poverty and disadvantage in Dundee. The research adds to knowledge about how tackling poverty through a community development approach benefits communities and public services.

## **Literature review**

Participation and engagement are terms used widely within the CLD sector – and indeed in various other sectors – to describe community engagement and working

alongside local people to affect change in some way, either individually or collectively (CLD Standards Council Scotland, n.d.). It is important to acknowledge the extent to which participation and engagement is effective varies based on local area and the understanding and value placed on it by actors in the space (Horwath, Kalyva and Spyru, 2012). Across the world, there has been a rise in the use of participatory approaches to resolve challenges – for example, Hickey and Mohan (2004) suggest that the World Bank’s Participatory Poverty Assessments represent a significant increase in participatory action to resolve challenges experienced by people living in poverty from around 2002. It is also the case that since 2002, “empowering people living in poverty and their organizations” has been included in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation developed in 2002 by the UN and partners as part of commitments to the SDGs (United Nations, 2023).

Despite this global focus, it is important to highlight that regardless of the inclusion of participation and engagement as key watchwords within the policy spheres soon after the Millennium; we still have real challenges in achieving maximum effectiveness and impact as a result of engagement and participation within local communities (The Poverty Alliance, 2021). Delivering meaningful change through participation is difficult - difficulties caused by and within the structures of enablement. For example, our public governance may demand too much from ordinary people, where people lack the skills, motivation or confidence to provide the required knowledge (Fung, 2004). Fung (2004) goes on to suggest that some may pay too much credit to ordinary people living in communities, forgetting about the importance of holding certain technical, political or organisational knowledge. Kahn (2010) emphasises that in order for the capacity of the ordinary person to be realised, we need to be able to recognise the importance of their stories and enable them to strengthen their stories in order to hold the fabric of communities together. We know from data that people affected by poverty are less likely to experience good outcomes when compared to their more affluent counterparts (Scottish Government, 2024). Community development, therefore, requires both top-down and bottom-up practice which enables the transformation of power and culture; this is required to move beyond alleviating poverty (Shaw & Mayo, 2016).

Fung (2004) reminds us that it is important to recognise the participation gaps between educated and non-educated groups, as well as groups based on gender, social class, disability, and so on. If participation and engagement are to be used as methods to enable communities to overcome thorny issues, it is vital that facilitators of such processes involve and engage the people who furthest away from all forms of power – those who experience the impacts of such issues, like poverty, most acutely (Bradshaw, 2007). It is often community workers who facilitate the spaces and places relating to engagement with communities in the context of community development – and the concept of space in relation to power is important to consider. It is suggested by Powell et al., that if facilitated well, participation can become ‘spaces of possibility’ for people previously excluded to “assert their rights and enhance their influence” (2020:1266).

Effective engagement has a place in tackling inequalities and literature points to the effectiveness of a community development approach to tackling health inequalities. Bhattacharyya (2004, cited in Opačić and Springerlink, 2021) argue that a community development approach should be focused on relationships, the strengthening of those relationships, and that actors in a community have the requirement to take forward methods which respond to identified needs. The centrality of relationships is core to the values and principles of CLD practice (CLD Standards Council, n.d.). In addition, Mabetha et al., (2023) suggests that although participation and engagement is vital, in developing the correct responses to health issues faced by communities the disparate nature of engagement activities makes it difficult for policymakers to connect various processes together to make good policy. The Scottish Government has placed increased emphasis on community development approaches to tackle poverty and inequality (Scottish Government, 2024). Critically, it would seem there is renewed ambition to go even further than short-term funding pots and standalone projects. The second phase of the Local Governance Review has concluded, and the next steps are being considered by Ministers and The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA).

It is important to acknowledge the role of community workers in enabling more and better participation within public structures and systems.

*“Genuine participation espouses empowering people to speak—have a voice about matters of critical concern to them. It equally emboldens communities to have agency and thus represent themselves as a matter of right to ensure that the requisite actions are taken for common good. Agency is a critical goal of community development as it is the basis for self-organization around the genuine needs as well as rights of a community. Further, agency is in essence “the force behind social action” (Newman & Dale, 2005:482, cited in Muia and Phillips, 2023:41).*

Community development practitioners intend to facilitate this participation when working alongside communities. A report by the Poverty Alliance (2021) suggests that more participation opportunities are required to tackle poverty. They called for more support for community groups. This call is matched in another report which suggests that community-led approaches including conversations and involvement in decision-making processes are key to improving health outcomes and tackling poverty (New Local, 2021). The paper cites an example from North and South Ayrshire where “an asset-based community development programme helped people connect to one another and set up new activities and initiatives like a bereavement club. People’s social connections improved as did their self-reported health and quality of life.” (New Local, 2021).

It is vital we recognise the barriers to involvement facing some groups. Crisp et al. acknowledge that “community-led activities achieve valuable outcomes around poverty but sometimes only for relatively small numbers of people.” (2016:5). Further, Brennan and Barnett (2009, cited in Goodwin and Young, 2013:4) remind us that within community development processes, children and young people can often be excluded, but that they provide an “untapped resource for contributing to immediate and long-term community development efforts.” Progressing social change towards Scotland’s National Outcomes requires us to include and involve children and young people (Scottish Government, 2019). In contrast, we know through listening to children and young people that they do not feel as engaged or valued as they should. Critically, Together (Scottish Alliance for Children’s Rights) (2024) state that children and young people have told them in their recent report that they are worried about funding cuts to local youth clubs and they feel judged by

adults because of their age – and they recognise that poverty and discrimination are making life difficult for some children and young people. We need to involve children and young people in supporting everyone to make better decisions about local areas.

There is a continued need for engagement and participation to be able to respond in the right ways to the challenges we face, such as poverty and disadvantage. In support of this, Locality (2024) describes the new UK Government's approach of 'mission-driven government' as an opportunity to seed more power to local communities – as “community organisations, who are deeply embedded in their places and work side by side with residents to build thriving neighbourhoods together.” In addition, the Scottish Government's Institutionalising Participatory and Deliberative Democracy Working Group reported recently on their key recommendations (Scottish Government, 2023). The report stated that Scotland should move towards having a National Participation Strategy and a learning academy focused on building knowledge and skills around effective participation.

Effective engagement and participation are possible when it is empowering and affirming. Horwath, Kalyva and Spyru, (2012) argue that we need to challenge the status quo to ensure the systems and relationships which exist between those who hold traditional power and those who do not are reimagined. Dundee City Council launched their Engage Dundee Survey in 2023 providing a way for residents to 'talk' to the local authority about the things that were important to them (Dundee City Council, 2024). The report on the analysis of responses highlights there were a range of areas where respondents hope for improvement: household costs, transportation, leisure and social activities, relationships, health and wellbeing. The report highlights that most of respondents are struggling with the cost of living. The council explains that next steps will include focused discussions with Strategic Planning Groups and other forums to support local community planning. This is important, as evidence suggests that taking results from this survey and only channelling them through traditional governance will not bring about the transformative social change required as advocated for by Horwath, Kalyva and Spyru, (2012). Although it is vital to survey and understand local people's views, traditional and siloed models within public governance do not create opportunities to

fully understand complexity within the social systems at play within neighbourhoods. Policy makers are not able engage in reciprocal dialogue and exploration with communities, an activity which can build towards more inclusive and participatory democracies (Wagenaar, 2007).

A community development approach is about working with people who have experienced social injustice towards meeting their needs and aspirations (Gilchrist, 2004). Key literature exists exploring community development, engagement and participation, highlighting the benefits of such approaches. These have been highlighted and summarised in this review. The researcher sought to further understand the notion of collaboration with and within communities. This research report summarises the reflections and experiences from one community in Dundee. Here, local people, the third sector and the local authority have been enabled to work alongside each other within a complex system. This research aims to bring light this key area to support future practice across the city and beyond.

## **Methodology**

This research set out to understand the experiences of service leaders (people working within local services such as education, housing and further education) and community members (people who live in the local community who have been involved in a range of activities co-ordinated through the community empowerment team). The programme they were engaged with was based on community development values and principles and shaped through the meaningful engagement and participation of local people. The objectives of this research were to:

- Develop a better understanding about how a CLD approach can drive positive social change at the heart of a community-led response to social issues.
- Learn more about the impact of a CLD approach in shaping decision-making within formal, governance, mechanisms to respond to local need.
- Understand why local people chose to get involved with the project and its process.



- Understand the extent to which local people feel valued and if their hope for the future has grown.

The ontological approach taken to inform the design of the research was social constructivism. Community work values and principles are rooted in a constructivist view that knowledge and meaning are “historically and culturally contracted through social processes and actions” (Berger & Luckmann, 1991 and Gergen, 1985, cited in Zhao, 2020). The researcher employed interpretivist epistemology, recognising that to answer the research question posed, it was necessary to understand the project from the various points of view of the people participating in it (Henn, Weinstein and Foard, 2009). A qualitative research method of focus groups was chosen to generate insight to understand the social processes (lived realities and reflections) of participants (Arber, 1993, cited in Henn, Weinstein and Foard, 2009).

Two focus groups were conducted, one with community members (five participants) and one with service leaders (seven participants). Due to the nature of the project, it was important to create the conditions for dialogue and for participants to be able to build on and share in each other’s reflections to get a true sense of the progress made. Focus groups can provide information about the values and attitude changes of group members and their relationships with each other and their community (Sarantakos, 2005). This is why focus groups were chosen over other qualitative research methods – allowing for meaningful understanding to answer the research question.

The researcher was mindful of the fact that participants of the focus groups may not feel able to speak freely about their experiences due to other participants being present. It was important in the context of ethical considerations within research, therefore, that a safe space was created right from the very start. The researcher made it clear that there was no requirement to take part, and there would be no negative consequences for not doing so. The researcher used open questions and facilitated a dialogic approach, enabling each of the participants to contribute in the way that was appropriate for them. A topic guide of broad, open and reflective questions enabled participants to provide their views whilst situating themselves within the research from the perspective of their own contexts and realities (see

Appendix 1). Moreover, it was important to be mindful of social justice within the research process itself, so that the researcher did not legitimise stigma or misrepresent participants' stories (McGarry, Bradley and Kirwan, 2024). The researcher was mindful of the effects of poverty within the local area and the experiences of harm and oppression which many in the community may have experienced, thus ensuring that the research did not cause further harm. When conducting social research, community workers bring an added layer of protection to ensure ethical standards are maintained for participants. Alongside building trust and rapport with participants and remaining cognisant of the wider social justice goals, adopting a reflexive stance by ensuring the researcher remains aware of their own beliefs, bias and having empathy with participants' reflections ensures the qualitative approach is founded in ethical research standards (Silverman and Patterson, 2022).

Focus groups were conducted in two community venues within the locality. Both locations were chosen by the community worker who was engaged with to enable the research fieldwork as they were known locations for people, ensuring that they felt safe and able to participate. Participants were recruited by invitation, issued through the local community worker. Focus groups lasted for around one hour each, both taking place during weekday afternoons as this time was best suited to participants' needs. After being warmly welcomed into the venue, participants were invited to review information provided in an accessible way within an information sheet. They then had the opportunity to ask any questions before the researcher began the research. Further, the researcher took time to ensure the information sheet was read out for the community member focus group to maximise understanding and opportunities for questioning. Participants then completed a consent form confirming they were happy to take part. The focus groups were audio recorded using the researcher's laptop for the purposes of transcription and data analysis, with participants being informed of this during the information and consent process. No participant names or any other details were attributed to them to ensure anonymity. Therefore, no names have been used in this report. Audio recordings were deleted after being transcribed.

Transcripts and field notes were then carefully analysed to produce the themes identified in this research report. The researcher employed Braun and Clark's six-

step process for thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006, cited in Bradshaw, 2007). This involves selection of quotations, identifying keywords, reviewing keywords to formulate codes, identifying broad themes from these codes, conceptualising the main ideas identified through the themes and then presenting the key findings guided by existing theory whilst seeking to answer the research question.

## **Findings and discussion**

Data analysis identified that there were two broad themes which emerged during the focus group discussions. I have contextualised each theme from the perspective of participants' role, either as a service leader or a community member. Within each board theme are two sub-themes, and these are explored below.

### **Theme 1**

#### **'Working together builds hope'**

Analysis made it clear that both service leaders and community members were working together in new ways, and this was making a difference. Participants reflected on the positive impact this had made in the community.

*"For me I got to meet everyone in the community, working together and some people we didn't know about before this work kicked off. Since then, we have really developed a strengthened partnership through the school."*

Participant, service leader focus group.

*"I think because some of the things that you guys are doing, we're connected. It's that connection within the community that gets things moving."*

Participant, community member focus group.

### **Growing hope and opportunity**

Community members reflected that their hope was strengthened for the future because of being more engaged and involved in their community. This is highlighted

in previous research where it is acknowledged that to build hope and aspiration within communities, enabling people to share their story is important (Kahn, 2010). It was clear in the focus group with community members that hope for positive change had been realised through their involvement.

*“Well, you know, the ongoing issue with the housing and stuff, but at least we can be conduit to people and say, look, it's coming. Okay? So just, you know, let's just calm down, it will happen.”*

Participant, community member focus group.

There was a similar belief shared among service leaders. Participants in this group were able to understand the needs of communities on a deeper level, through stronger relationships and trust because of the project.

*“So I would say it's been transformational, I say that from a community perspective, but also from a professional perspective, what's been done and how this initiative has changed the way we work is based on the feedback we've had from people in the community.”*

Participant, service leader focus group.

In addition, when asked if they thought the impact of the project would lessen over time, service leaders were clear that their initial expectations about what would be possible had been exceeded. One participant stated that they and others were hopeful for the future as a result of the project.

*“I was wrong to think it might, it's been brilliant so far, because it's got more to go, I'm quite sure, and other people feel hopeful as well.”*

Participant, service leader focus group.

### **Listening to and learning from each other to achieve change**

It is now commonplace within community development contexts that achieving change is rooted in equality, tolerance and mutual learning (Ledwith, 2016).

Therefore, community work contributes to a more just world through enabling people

to come together across divides such as prejudice and ignorance and in acknowledging “equality must be actively constructed, tackling power differentials, disagreements and downright hostility even when this confuses loyalties” (Phillips, 1987 and Modood, 1992, cited in Gilchrist, 2004:18). This was reflected in the service leader focus groups, where participants commented that due to their enhanced relationships with communities, they were able to understand issues local people were facing and were then able to change the way that services were delivered.

*“I was embarrassed that actually people struggled with putting up with so much more than was necessary just because they didn't know who to contact, or the person who they had contacted wasn't providing them with an appropriate response or because they're embarrassed about a situation. So we've changed how we work and we've redesigned a particular service area within the department to be more available.”*

Participant, service leader focus group.

Similar sentiment came through dialogue within the community member focus group.

*“It's not been like that for a long, long time, ay. That's like but why bother with that, nobody cares. But now we can see that local people are willing to come together. Coming together. Council listening to them. It's not them vs. us. We listen to them too.”*

Participant, community member focus group.

As community workers, we must recognise poverty and disadvantage and the complex paradigms within which they show up in people's lives and in our communities (Ledwith, 2016). It is, therefore, the role of the community worker to not just alleviate the symptoms of poverty, but to actively work towards transformative and emancipatory social change which deals with the root causes of inequality and social injustice. “Social justice should be understood and applied in terms of the equalisation of life chances” (Walker, Sinfield and Walker, 2011:276, cited in Ledwith, 2016:107). Part of tackling social injustice is about equipping and enabling communities with the tools and knowledge that they require to advocate for

themselves to challenge the status quo. Community members within this project reflected that it has been a key enabler for change whilst also reflecting positively on the role of the community worker within the formation and building of the project to achieve this transformative change. It was clear that they felt hopeful about the next steps and their individual and collective roles within these, reflecting that what they had been involved in so far was just the start.

*“It will be up to us to keep this going now. I mean, this is just a start, isn't it? It's the catalyst for what we need to do. But that's in other areas, people can form up something. I'd encourage them to go and find the people like the [COMMUNITY WORKER]'s of the world.”*

Participant, community member focus group.

The role of a community development approach and of the community worker in bringing about positive change within a local area cannot be understated. The process of learning and challenging the status quo, enabling people who hold traditional power to share in that power to achieve change has been highlighted here (Horwath, Kalyva and Spyru, 2012). Furthermore, it is recognised that without the range of learning experiences that participation within communities can bring, individual and group capacity building will be limited (Packham, 2008).

It was clear from the discussion within each of the focus groups that these wider benefits of participation have been realised. In addition, service leaders were also able to reflect on the new way of approaching their 'business as usual' within the local area is much more open and collaborative with each other as service providers and with local people.

*“I've got a young person who's not really engaging. Is there any opportunities for them maybe to come and get some work experience here, like, so it just you're working with that young person, and you're trying to get effectively the best for them. Whereas before, I think my options might be a wee bit limited, but now, I think more avenues have kind of opened up from as well as, like, the work with college too.”*

Participant, service leader focus group.

## **Theme 2**

### **‘Collaborative leadership – the way we do things around here’**

This research highlighted a theme of collective leadership in the sense of working together to change the normal processes and practices of how things get done – how services are delivered. Viewing and reviewing the norms and expectations about how public services are delivered; embedding a relational approach to demonstrate need and impact.

*“It's been the first time that she's [manager] ever got awarded funding for just one area, one specific thing with no real hard outcome at the end of it either, just about breaking down barriers, finding opportunities and changing perceptions of what education is really or can be.”*

Participant, service leader focus group.

### **Being enabled to work differently**

Participants among the service leader group felt that they have been enabled to work differently within their own contexts. This was highlighted as being one of the enablers within making the initiative possible.

We know that creating change within systems is often about speaking the language of the system in and of itself when explaining the benefits of new ideas and ways of working. This, as described by Meyerson (2008) can support small wins to gain traction which can lead to culture shifts from the norm. In this research, for example, participants related the work of this project as an enabler to break free from the usual bureaucratic processes that can curtail positive impact. However, there was still reference to reporting on progress, but in a different way.

*“Not focused on hard outcomes, what are the statistics? But I think what I've learned as a professional is that, you know what? Sometimes the software is just not as good, it's how we feel and how we capture the stories.”*

Participant, service leader focus group.

In addition, the coming together of system leaders within a leadership programme as part of the project facilitated by Columba 1400<sup>1</sup> enabled people to question each other's deeply engrained work practices and norms through the lens of the improved outcomes they all wished for the community. Leadership academics argue that this is one of the most "crucial and difficult aspects of real leadership" (Meyerson, 2008:169).

Participants suggested that through working in this more connected way with others throughout the local system and seeing the direct tangible benefits was what brought enthusiasm for the work of the project.

*"I love this stuff, yes, because sometimes see the rest of my job, I'm like, this is exhausting, the impact and the difference of your efforts, whereas this is and also, what's the word I'm looking for? A valuable impact. It's really, yeah, tangible and meaningful in terms of, yeah, the difference that you're making."*

Participant, service leader focus group.

Similarly, community member focus group participants spoke about the positive impact taking part in the Columba 1400 leadership programme had for them. It is vital that everyone living within a community feels connected to decision making in a way that is democratic and inclusive. When this is the case, individuals can connect and contribute as equal citizens and "learn through their involvement in such processes" (Gilchrist, 2004: 25).

*"Well, it really got us all together and to go away from your norm, take you you're your comfort zone, definitely, definitely, yeah. It gave you your voice. Helped you understand things – so that you can pass it on to others as well."*

Participant, community member focus group.

The focus on collaborative leadership learning is important to reference within this project as participants within both focus groups reflected that it made a positive

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<sup>1</sup> Columba 1400 - <https://columba1400.com/what-we-do/family-and-community-leadership-academy/>



difference. Beck and Purcell (2020) highlight that the reason most community initiatives fail is due to lack of leadership. Good leadership outwith silos, spanning across usual boundaries with and within community was key to the success of this initiative.

### **Relationships as core business in building trust and making progress**

The centrality of relationships in building trust and enabling progress were highlighted within the focus groups. Service leaders and community members all spoke about the value of newly formed relationships with each other and the importance of these.

*“We've just been able to, like, kind of support it and enhance all the relationships [...] having a shared kind of understanding and then shared values over that, so that that's where we've been able to get the colleagues and like other parts to come and say, Look, yeah, we'll just come and target our resources here, because we know why we understand why we need to do it.”*

Participant, service leader focus group.

For community members, the fact that relationships were growing stronger between each other within the community, between neighbours and across generations was raised.

*“Especially the young guys that we see over the road sometimes, like, you know, they're a difficult bunch, but you know now, every time I see them they come over and give me a hug, where they avoid you to like the plague when in front of other people, but, yeah, it's good to see.”*

Participant, community member focus group.

This is especially important in the context of community development, where we know that relationships within communities can create opportunities for role models and active citizenship within social change (Beck and Purcell, 2020). Importantly, it is vital that models of engagement and participation are as inclusive as possible to

afford the opportunity of taking part to everyone within a community. Community workers are required to consider barriers to participation and often act as the 'go-between' in these environments to ensure that everyone is connected to the processes at play (Henderson and Thomas, 2013).

Community members reflected on the value of active citizenship and reflected on the skills they had learned in the process. One participant reflected that it had grown their confidence.

*"It's made me more confident, yeah, because I was a shell before, and I wouldn't say I'm the life and soul now, but."*

Participant, community member focus group.

Another participant spoke about the skills they had learned from volunteering. They highlighted that it was the relationship with the community worker that grew their confidence in being able to participate in volunteering. They did not have a job due to health issues and had experienced the stigma that comes with this. However, due to this project, they were grateful that they were able to contribute to society and recognised the huge value they bring.

*"See, when you take a step back or look at all the skills I've learned from doing this, you know, I mean, like, you couldn't get that from a job, you couldn't get that from any other experience."*

Participant, community member focus group.

These points are related to the theoretical concept of 'galvanisation', whereby the community worker or community development approach supports a process of critical thinking of and with communities about the range of issues and opportunities in a particular area, and through doing so they become enlightened to their own skills, abilities and competence (Henderson and Thomas, 2013).

Furthermore, service leaders highlighted that there is a new level of appreciation of relationships and the value that stronger relationships within a community brings.

One participant suggested this process of appreciation started during a school inspection.

*“We were going to be the shining light from the middle of the area, [...] we were going to radiate out and fix everything that's going on. And always remember when an Inspector looked at us and said you can't do that on your own as a school, you must reach out.”*

Participant, service leader focus group.

The participant highlighted that through taking part in this initiative, they now fully understand why it is vital to reach beyond usual boundaries, looking to other services and to people who live in the community. This reciprocal relationship has brought positive benefits to the whole community, with the local primary school acting as one of many networking hubs (Gilchrist, 2004).

## **Conclusion and next steps**

This research report has summarised key literature surrounding the value of meaningful engagement and participation using a community development approach. The small-scale research within a community in Dundee has surfaced two broad themes and core areas of importance highlighted through focus groups with community members and service leaders. The importance of being empowered to work differently, grow relationships, take leadership whilst being supported by community development values and principles has enabled key successes through this initiative. Working in this way has grown hope and opportunities to make things better.

This research report will be shared with Dundee City Council's Community Learning and Development service to support wider evaluation of the initiative. It highlights the return on investment within CLD services locally, therefore it will support wider asks of Scottish Government, highlighting the benefit of CLD in communities across Scotland.

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## Appendix 1

### Topic guide – service leader focus group

1. What is your understanding about the work that's been taking place in [REDACTED] recently around the initiative – and how have you been involved?
2. What are your key reflections about how this work has been delivering change for local communities?
3. What would you say is 'special' or unique about the way this work is being delivered?
4. What do you already know about community learning and development?
5. Has this knowledge improved as a result of the initiative?
6. Might there be opportunities for delivering this kind of community development work in more communities around Dundee in the future, do you think?
7. Are there any challenges or things which might 'get in the way?'
8. Do you think things like the investment of resources, including time, to work in this sort of way with local communities will be a challenge?
9. What, if anything, have you or your teams learnt about the local community as a result of this process?
10. Tell me about your mindset going into this project and where you're at now – are you more hopeful about your work and improving things for people, or less so?

### Topic guide – community members focus group

1. Can you tell me a bit about what you are involved locally whether it is volunteering, going along to local groups or if you have been able to get advice from support services in the area?
2. What do you know about the initiative and the work that's going on to improve the community and people's lives?
3. Tell me more about getting involved – How did you first get involved?

4. What is it like working together with other members of your community to make good things happen?
5. Has going along to groups or being involved in volunteering in your community made anything different in your own life? Is there anything that has happened or that you have achieved that you feel proud of?
6. Do you think what has happened through the initiative, has been different to anything else that has happened here before? For what reasons do you think that is?
7. What have you learnt through this process – about yourself, your community or something else?
8. Is there anything that you might say to other people who want to make a difference in their local area through taking part in Community Learning and Development?