Knowledge is Power

equalising power relationships through
community-led action research

Contents

1. Introduction

In Scotland, we speak the language of 'community empowerment'. In recent times, the benefits of independent community-led action have increasingly been recognised - community organisations and groups coming together to help change things for the better, in their local areas, or for the people they relate to and work to support. New legislation means that communities can take ownership of land and buildings. They can get involved in how the decisions that affect them are made, and how public money is spent.

Over the last few years many communities across Scotland have had the opportunity to be involved in action research programmes designed to support them to conduct their own inquiries into the issues they feel most important, help them garner local support, widen their networks, and experiment with innovative ideas. The results have been remarkable.

Spanning issues such as fuel poverty, isolation and mental health, heritage, the environment and access to good community facilities, community organisations have been able to develop new projects, lever in funds and provide essential local services.

But where do ideas start? How do communities equip themselves with the knowledge they need to make sure their efforts make the most valuable differences? And how can they get the information they need to help public agencies and funders make the best use of their investments? We wanted to find out.

This paper sets out the findings of a series of conversations held with and between community organisations who have been involved in action research processes as part of the work they do. Here they explain how action research has helped them make the changes they want, and what support for a continuation of this work would mean for them. Through a process of collaborative inquiry, the community organisations identified what the key features of a practical support resource should include.

Finally, they set out their case for why this work is so important, and why investment should be made available to support them, and organisations like them, across the length and breadth of Scotland, to help deliver the best possible outcomes for citizens and communities.

2. Exploring the potential for supporting community-led action research in Scotland – with practitioners

Ambitions for the empowerment of all Scotland's communities will not be realised with hope and words alone. Practical actions and methods which place power and knowledge in the hands and hearts of communities must be created.

Community-led action research is not research for the sake of it, to prove a theory or to satisfy the curious. It is about people asking their own questions about the issues they experience, getting the information and evidence they need, and testing actions for change.

Between October 2016 and June 2017, SCDC and the Poverty Alliance engaged with people from ten community-led organisations. We reflected together about how practitioners of community-led action research, working or volunteering at a local level, can be supported to develop the skills and confidence they need to play a strong role in supporting the autonomous and authentic voice of communities in determining their own futures.

As we began this work, we felt it was important to get to the nub of what community organisations thought about action research, and how they felt the process would be of benefit to them in the future. We wanted to know what might make action research processes work well, have relevance and be useful. We also wanted to know what would be unhelpful, and where challenges might lie.

In short, we wanted to begin designing a project, process and resource from the ground up.

3. Participating organisations

The community organisations who shaped this paper cover a wide geographical spread: Fife Gingerbread, Inverclyde Community Development Trust, Active Communities in Renfrewshire, FUSE Youth Café in Glasgow, and the Citadel Youth Centre in Leith.

They are diverse in nature: Development Trusts such as Cranhill and Inverclyde, which operate in specific localities and places; the thematic and identity focus of Glasgow Women's Library and West of Scotland Regional Equality Council; the media activities of Plantation Productions; the supported employability work of GalGael.

They also all have different levels of experience of community-led action research. Some are very experienced having worked over several projects, others are relatively new to the approach but have found it helpful, even transformational, in their projects and communities. (See appendix 1).

Citadel Youth Centre

Cranhill Development Trust (Cranhill DT)

Fife Gingerbread

FUSE Youth Café

Glasgow Women's Library (GWL)

GalGael

Plantation Productions

West of Scotland Regional Equality Council (WSREC)

Inverclyde Community Development Trust (ICDT)

Active Communities Renfrewshire

4. Our inquiry

Our inquiry started with two facilitated discussion days which involved a range of people from policy backgrounds, funders, academia, and the community sector. However, we realised that many community organisations – the very ones we hope to reach through such a resource – those so vital to the empowerment agenda itself – were unable to attend due to time and budget constraints. Therefore, supported by a funding contribution from Scottish Government, we designed a process to shape the programme which focused on the full participation of ten community organisations.

With the help of this funding contribution we carried out our own action research by working alongside community-led projects and covering their costs of participation. These were projects that had worked with SCDC and the Poverty Alliance before. They were keen to take part because they had already been involved in community-led action research processes and they maintain an ongoing interest in research activities. They are also sector leading in their respective fields.

At the end of the interview process, 14 people from the participating organisations came together at a workshop at the Glasgow Youth Theatre to deepen these conversations towards giving the idea of a support resource shape, form and direction.

5. Community-led action research and the differences it makes

To help illuminate the nature of action research as an approach and a process, the participating organisations started by 'painting a picture' of how they are using – or have used – action research in their work to date.

They described how community-led action research activities have created:

5.1 Evidence of lived experience

Community-led action research connects the abstract, the technical and the bureaucratic with the real, the lived and the meaningful. Inverclyde Community Development Trust carried out a piece of action research with those befriending people with autism. The aim was to explore, understand and improve the service provided - and ultimately enhance the experience of all parties. They used photography as an accessible and empowering methodology. The outcome was a clearer understanding and deeper appreciation of the challenges faced in the community by those with autism:

"It seemed to be more obvious to the referrer that that person needed paid social support – not that they needed to be back on the waiting list… the client became more like a person and less like a 'body'".

5.2 Evidence that builds capacity

Community-led action research leads to direct and positive changes within communities. After being involved in community-led action research supported by Active Communities (Renfrewshire), local people increased their participation and involvement in community life through participation in public forums; helped the transfer of a local asset to the community; and contributed to improvements in road safety. Beyond these impressive achievements, one member of the community described how they had personally *"grown six inches"*.

5.3 Evidence that delivers meaningful change

GalGael works with those experiencing multiple and overlapping social disadvantage. Working alongside Scottish Natural Heritage and SCDC, GalGael undertook action research into the enablers and barriers that people from socially disadvantaged backgrounds face when engaging with their natural and cultural heritage. Beyond the challenges they expected to find, their community researchers explored how they felt a lack of belonging to their community, and a feeling that they were 'out of place' in local woodlands and parks.

"You don't know what you are looking at in your own community. If someone explained it to you, you could connect with it more."

Working with the community, these issues were addressed – GalGael organised structured trips, with more explanation and story-telling involved. Participants were then encouraged to do the same for their friends and family. The process increased the community's sense of ownership, belonging and attachment to *their* culture and heritage – a history which before had seemed to belong to *someone else*. Some of these methods and ways of working are now being taken forward in GalGael's work with 'Thriving Places'.

6. Looking ahead

The core purpose of our inquiry was to find out how community-led action research could continue to be supported at a local and national level, working on the basis that any support system, network or processes *must* be designed with and by the users.

From the conversations and group work the community organisations started to sketch out the principles and practice of a support resource to help embed action research as a tool to facilitate change.

"The most valuable thing would be research that we know would make a difference to parents, and evidence that unpacks that to a wider audience, particularly funders. Evidence of impact; evidence of the valuable work we do to assist other services not needing to intervene – the prevention agenda."
(Fife Gingerbread)

If we are to realise the potential of community-led action research as described above, the community sector requires a fairly resourced support process guided by anchoring principles. The participating community projects identified the following first principles which must be in place to ensure that any support resource would be relevant and useful:

- Self-determined

- People and communities as assets

- Properly resourced

- Collaborative

- Embedded in organisational learning

- Of the highest quality

- Accepted as valid

6.1 Self-determined

Communities, and their representative organisations, must set the agenda. The field must be open for communities to choose to investigate the topics, issues and matters which *they* define as important and worthy of action. It is important that community-led action research places community organisations on the 'front-foot' in terms of developing their work, informing policy or helping to shape their communities.

"There are issues in this area about the high-street, licencing, betting shops, off-licences, pay-day loans and lack of healthy food. Nobody takes responsibility for this. But it's important to us." (Fuse Youth Café)

"I'd like to look further at the concept of wellbeing and what this means to people in a variety of contexts. Ideas of wellbeing as described through policies do not always mirror what is most relevant to diverse communities." (WSREC)

6.2 People and communities as assets

Every community has its own set of skilled, knowledgeable individuals who are experts in their own lives, experiences, and communities. These assets are the foundations of community-led action research practice and the bedrock of community empowerment.

"It's important for participants, peer researchers, to have the opportunity "to speak their world" – to tell others when they have found their voice." (GalGael and Plantation Productions)

"As a result of her participation in the action research work, our community activist now knows how to productively influence, not just highlight a problem or complain." (Active Communities Renfrewshire)

6.3 Properly resourced

Community organisations can often demonstrate an impressive array of research knowledge, expertise and engagement – as well as a deep appreciation of their communities. However, training and support to design and deliver a robust action research process is essential.

"Volunteers as peer researchers should be resourced through training and support; and [this should be] accessible to a range of women" (GWL)

"I think we would need help scoping and planning some work before applying – we would also need help designing some research that would be impactful." (Cranhill DT)

6.4 Collaborative

The experience of collaborative inquiry between and across projects is fundamentally important. This method goes beyond 'simply' sharing learning. It aims to deepen learning and ask different – and often bigger – questions.

SCDC used this process extensively during 'Supporting Communities to Tackle Sectarianism' (2012-2017). Participants welcomed the opportunity to explore topics in a sustained, detailed and structured manner. Of notable importance was the space created: work focused but welcoming and friendly; supportive but challenging; exploratory and experimental, but action focused and practical.

"What the co-inquiry became was really core, a supportive learning network that I had in the work I was doing. Every time I went along to a session the relationships that were built were taken to a different level. I think that people really put their vulnerabilities about what they were doing on the table." (GWL)

"We've found 'offline' support like the co-inquiries really useful – often more so than online-only resources." (ICDT)

6.5 Embedded in organisational learning

Much action and research-type activity is already carried out by community organisations – for example, through monitoring and evaluation processes. Action Research approaches should be worked into existing community-led work to help deepen the learning, in turn leading to further project development. This would increase impact, build confidence and help community organisations and practitioners take pride and ownership of the term 'community-led action research'.

"We need support to claim the term action research. A structure to help us frame our projects as action research and guide us in gathering and collating the evidence that we need. A template that helps us plot the journey of our work; that demonstrates what influences what we do next." (GWL)

"How do we measure, for example, someone having reduced suicidal thoughts?" Do we need a new set of parameters, another way to measure that action research can help us with?" (Plantation Productions)

6.6 Of the highest quality

Quality control and assurance is essential; it helps to prove the legitimacy and community-led credentials of the organisation carrying out the research activity and it provides satisfaction that any research presented is reliable.

"An external view – a 3rd party, or a proper process – is important to provide quality assurance." (ICDT)

6.7 Accepted as valid

Chief amongst the challenges for communities is the question of *'how to influence'.* Of course, this goes beyond the issue of community-led action research itself and extends into wider questions of hierarchies, power and ultimately *whose evidence counts, when, where and why?* In short, the systemic and structural factors which can either impede or facilitate community empowerment.

Through a resource to support communities to conduct their own research and develop their own evidence, new spaces, forums and networks should be created which might address some of these questions. Through these forums, community, public, third sector organisations and academic experts can reflect upon the current systems, structures, process and mechanisms which allow community voices and perspectives to flourish and advance public service reform.
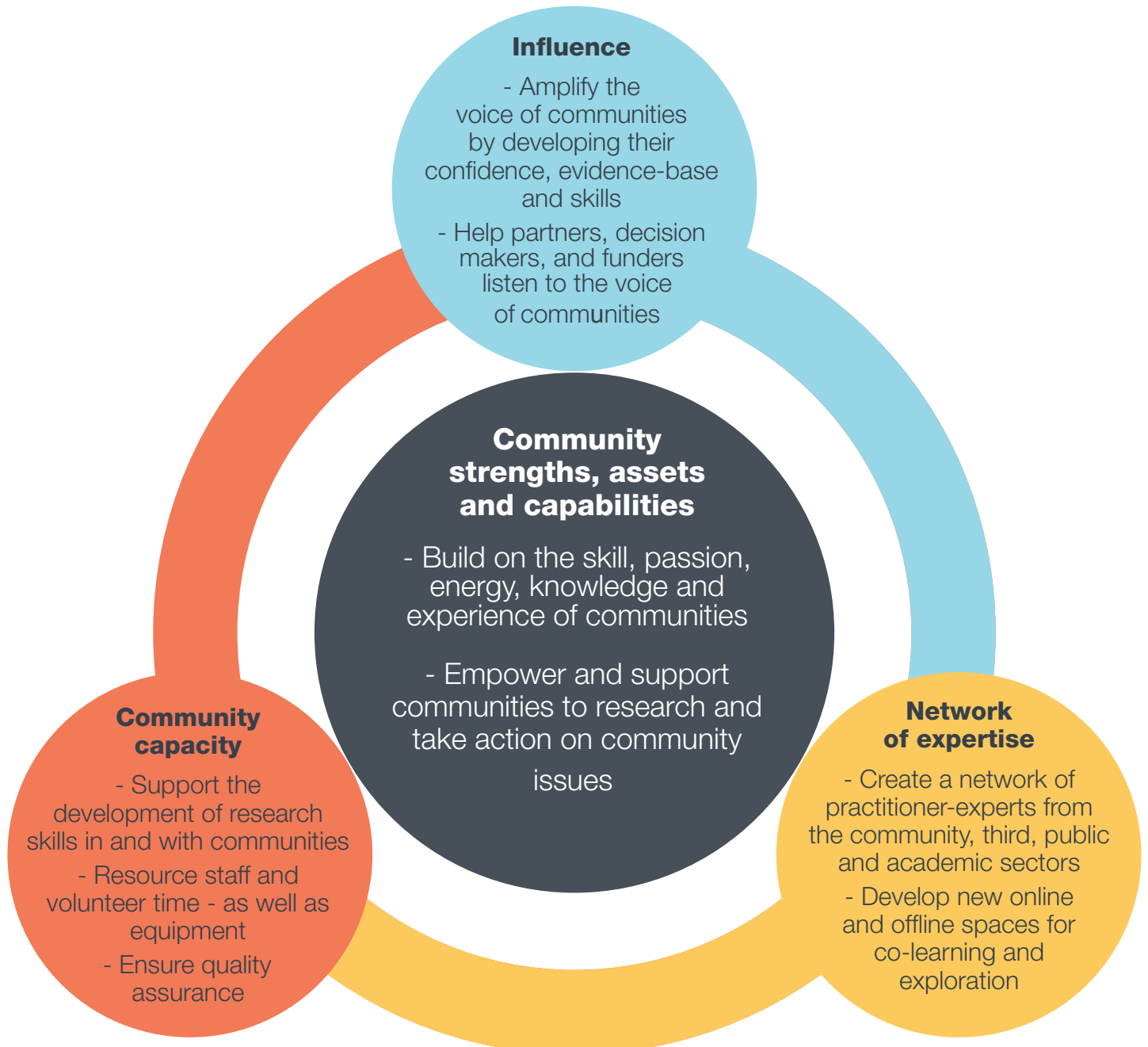
"We had some people come from a foundation a while back. Some of the young people told their stories, and you could see the impact it made on them – but does it stick?" (Citadel Youth Centre)

"A network of organisations would be a good thing – power in numbers to influence. To help shift the mind-set of the receivers of this information and evidence." (GalGael)

7. What would a practical support resource look like?

Beyond the principles which might underpin a resource, the participating community organisations outlined the following practical design:

Influence

- Amplify the voice of communities by developing their confidence, evidence-base and skills

- Help partners, decision makers, and funders listen to the voice of communities

Community strengths, assets and capabilities

- Build on the skill, passion, energy, knowledge and experience of communities

- Empower and support communities to research and take action on community issues

Community capacity

- Support the development of research skills in and with communities
- Resource staff and volunteer time - as well as equipment
- Ensure quality assurance

Network of expertise

- Create a network of practitioner-experts from the community, third, public and academic sectors
- Develop new online and offline spaces for co-learning and exploration

8. Naming the outstanding challenges…

8.1 Recognising community strengths, assets and capacities

The essence of community-led action research is the recognition and acknowledgement of the energies, skills, knowledge and experiences of communities themselves.

"We now know how to do it, now, how do we use it to influence?"
(Active Communities Renfrewshire)

We know from our conversations that communities have an interest in community-led action research. If effective support is provided we know that communities will take it up and undertake meaningful inquiries. But, the extent to which communities are *really heard* varies.

In the wake of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act, the ways in which community voices are heard *must* be addressed – for the benefit of those communities *and* for the improvement of public services.

This is not just a resource for communities, it is a resource for everyone with a stake in empowering Scotland's communities.

8.2 Developing community capacity, knowledge and skills

Whilst there is strong capacity and appetite for community-led action research there remain significant challenges. These are challenges which any support resource must address.

"I go back to it again, what we need is time and resources."
(Citadel Youth Centre)

"We've got people who have experience of carrying out research. Support in specific action research skills might be helpful as would external academic advice and support." (WSREC)

Community sector organisations have their own skills and capabilities – and can tap into a wealth of community assets (physical and embodied). However, there are limits to resources: especially in terms of time and money. Any resource must fully and fairly support the activities of communities if 'best value' use of community assets is to be achieved.

8.3 Developing an organic network of expertise, practice and action

As our conversations highlighted, individual action research processes can lead to many and varied positive outcomes for people and communities. But, how do we bring those individual processes together to create a new platform for practitioners to enable them to share experiences, identify common issues and new solutions? And to build a credible national evidence base of what we need to do to improve outcomes, directly informed by citizens?

8.4 Developing influence with decision makers

"It would be good to widen the evidence base and to re-think what we value as knowledge. […] there is little point in just having numbers without an in-depth understanding to back that up. Community organisations are on the front line: we are gathering the data; we need to give that data a platform. What we need is a truer, more inclusive national picture." (WSREC)

Community organisations' potential to contribute to policy making is still curtailed by an outmoded assumption that their evidence is 'anecdote'. A number of projects described interactions with civil servants, officers and officials of various types when they came to visit their activities. They told us how enthused, inspired and impressed those decision makers were. But, despite being exposed to the positive impact of this work, little changed. Funding was still constrained and precarious, and the real value and potential of community-led activity was still, ultimately, under-recognised and under-resourced - in some cases funding was withdrawn altogether.

9. What now?

It is clear that action research is an approach which supports communities and community organisations to develop knowledge, insights and skills which can help them to take an informed and evidence based approach to their work in their own communities, and in their relationships with other agencies. It can help them:

- Examine the feasibility and viability of taking ownership of land, buildings or other assets
- Assist in mobilising and motivating community members to participate and potentially lead in local democratic processes where they may have previously faced barriers; and,
- Bring together community resources to work with outside interests to co-design or co-deliver responses to opportunities or issues.

Community empowerment does not happen by accident. Nor is it a text-based exercise. Instead it is a process of practical activity. Community-led action research's ethos of building community capacity through practical action offers a way to 'do' community empowerment which, as we have shown, resonates deeply with communities.

Our inquiry evidenced that, with the right supports and resources, community organisations can use action research to make change happen. To help this work to continue, participants called for the following actions to be taken forward:

- The establishment of a new cross sector alliance to co-ordinate and manage a community-led action research resource
- The creation of a locus for access to practical resources, and for centralising research evidence
- The development of a cohort of skilled practitioners and trainers in action research, drawn from community organisations across Scotland
- The establishment of a fund for communities to pay for participation costs associated with their inquiries
- The development of a peer-led learning network
- The creation of spaces and opportunities for communities and decision makers to share and deliberate research findings as a way of informing local actions and national priorities

10. Conclusion

The conversations with and between the community organisations twinned an energy and enthusiasm with deep insights and clear ambitions for community-led action research. The conversations also acknowledged the reality in which communities and community organisations work - short of time and resources, with restricted and unpredictable funding patterns set against high levels of demand.

Each organisation could demonstrate many and varied positive outcomes in their own communities through their involvement in action research processes - outcomes which can only be improved with further support and further investment.

Everyone involved in the conversations was clear that a breadth of organisations from the community, public, philanthropic and academic sectors should support this work. Rather than static relationships of funder and funded, of grant manager or grant managed, there is a need for something different.

"More like a community – a living resource of expert community practitioners, scholars, activists, influencers and change makers - committed to developing the influence, capacity and impact of community organisations and changing how we do empowerment in Scotland. "…Power in numbers…" (Galgael)

Changing demographics and the reductions in funds for public services, coupled with the community empowerment agenda, has led to increased expectations and demands about what communities can offer. With this comes new opportunities for thinking differently about the role of communities and community organisations in helping to achieve positive outcomes in respect of health, regeneration, tackling inequality, and so much more.

Ours is a watershed moment for communities across Scotland. The new demands placed on communities must be matched by investment and support which helps communities realise their potential and their ambitions. In this spirit, we collectively call for investment in a national programme to support action research led by communities, to help to continue to build and strengthen a more equal, skilled, confident and vibrant community sector in Scotland.
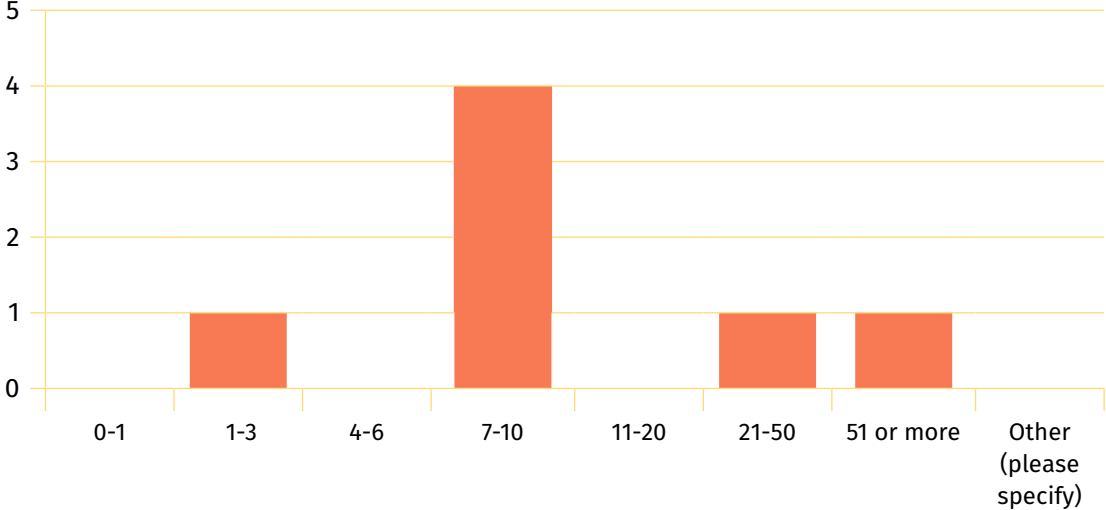
Appendix

Appendix 1:

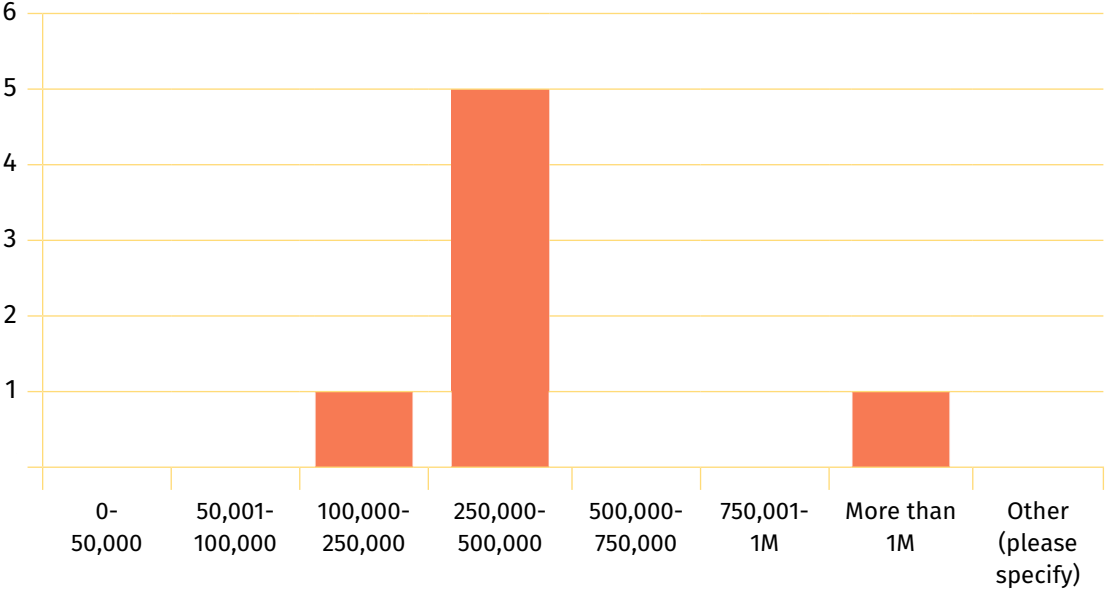### Table and background of participating projects

Name of project	Type of project, main groups, aims and objectives	How have we (SCDC and Poverty Alliance) worked with them?	Previous and current engagement with research and community-led action research
Citadel Youth Centre	Youth project and general social inclusion	Staff member involved through previous part 'Supporting Communities to Tackle Sectarianism' (SCoTTS) project	Involved and interested in ongoing pieces of evaluative and academic research.
Cranhill Development Trust	Area based development trust – social inclusion and employability activities	Recommended to us by Faith in Communities Scotland	Have recently carried out a large piece of community consultation, demonstrating impact and what makes their activities work.
Fife Gingerbread	Support for lone and vulnerable parents	Undertook research with Poverty Alliance	Fife Gingerbread have carried out their own action research with Poverty Alliance. It examined the experiences of single parents.
FUSE Youth Café, Glasgow East End	Youth actives, adult training, social inclusion	Involved in research with Poverty Alliance	Have hired research consultants. Whilst helpful, they note the need for creating ongoing and community-led evidence and research

Glasgow Women's Library	Rights and equality, heritage, history, arts, and culture, 3rd party reporting, awareness raising, education	Involved in the SCoTTS programme with SCDC from 2014-2017	Research built into ongoing work (e.g. women's history tours), use and participation in research activities. Involved in SCoTTS ongoing action research programme
GalGael	Employability, community building-furniture making/ community-arts and media	GalGael Involved in Learning Through Doing Action Research programme with SNH and SCDC	GalGael carried out community-led research through the Learning through Doing Programme into the enablers and barriers to people engaging and volunteering in the outdoors programme.
Plantation Productions	Arts and media charity; social inclusion and participation	Recommended by GalGael	Use research methods in creation of content
West of Scotland Regional Equality Council	Social inclusion, community building, equalities, 3rd party reporting, education	Involved in the SCoTTS programme 2016-17	Use of creative methodologies to empower and explore issues; independent research; contribution to evidence gathering
Inverclyde Community Development Trust	Community Development Trust offering training and volunteering opportunities, cultural, social and arts activities, community building activity, social inclusion, befriending	Involved in the SCoTTS programme 2014-17, participated in other projects and workstreams with SCDC	Participated in SCoTTS programme, carried out community-led research into carers' experiences, co-creators of peer reviewed academic research and practice.
Active Communities Renfrewshire	Community organisation focusing on health and wellbeing that delivers physical activity, community sport and health and wellbeing classes and programmes.	Involved in a 4 day community led action research training and mentoring programme delivered in Renfrewshire and funded by HSCP.	Active Communities have used their learning to train local volunteers to undertake neighbourhood research into community needs. As well as other actions such as the installation of traffic lights as a community safety measure.

Approximately how many 'full time equivalent' staff does your organisation employ?

Category	Count
0-1	0
1-3	1
4-6	0
7-10	4
11-20	0
21-50	1
51 or more	1
Other (please specify)	0

What is your organisation's approximate turnover?

Category	Count
0-50,000	0
50,001-100,000	0
100,000-250,000	1
250,000-500,000	5
500,000-750,000	0
750,001-1M	0
More than 1M	1
Other (please specify)	0

Appendix 2:

What do we mean when we say 'Community-led Action Research?

"Community-led action research is not research for the sake of it, to prove a theory or to satisfy the curious. It is about people asking their own questions about the issues they experience, getting the information and evidence they need and testing actions for change."

By Community-led we mean research defined, undertaken, analysed and evidenced by members of the community themselves. It is therefore research OF and BY the community and not, as is traditional, ON and TO the community.

By Action Research we mean a range of research practices that focus on knowledge creation involving local people and/or practitioners trying out, developing and learning from different ways of doing things. It thus explicitly sets out to bring about change.

By community-led action-research we mean the process by which people living in communities (of place and interest) decide what matters, how to gather evidence about it, what action to take together to make things better – and then commit to keep learning by tracking whether this action resulted in the outcomes that were intended.

In this way, community-led action research can build an evidence base towards influencing policy and decision making. It should not be confused with being a particular method. However, it is a process of learning towards achieving better outcomes for people – such as social justice, citizen control, empowerment and positive social change. It is a way to describe effective community development practice.

Appendix 3:

How can community-led action research contribute to the principles of community empowerment?

Examples of delivered and prototype-community-led action research projects suggested by projects	Principles of community empowerment and public service reform
Organisations' close links with their communities, and intimate understanding of their situations make them well placed to co-produce responses to both acute and general issues: Citadel Youth Centre recognise the importance of involving current and former service users in designing services. The centre has become a 'one-stop-shop' for many – even after they have left the service. Involving current and former service users will ensure that the priorities for the medium to long term are responsive to community need and interest. Inverclyde Community Development Trust note the value of their befriending service. However, they identify challenges to volunteering generally, and the possibility of new and innovative approaches to service design. This is timely as the integration of Health and Social Care continues. They propose working with current befrienders and service users to co-design new approaches and ways of developing the 'social side' of social care.	Effective services must be designed with and for people and communities – not delivered 'top down' for administrative convenience. Partner agencies need to support these processes. The skills, talents and capabilities and capacities of the public, third, academic, community and private, should be drawn upon to deliver better outcomes.
Increasing participation in planning and decision-making structures is easier said than done. However, community organisations actively support their members to do just that: Active Communities Renfrewshire recognise the importance of community-led action research across a range of areas. Impacts have included improving road safety and more responsive childcare. Citizens have increased in their ability to act and participate in planning activity (e.g. decision-making forums) and have influenced change in their communities. Moreover, individuals within communities have become more confident as a result of undertaking action research.	Public bodies work with and support communities (of place and interest) to understand their needs and aspirations. Because of this shared understanding, communities can participate effectively in decision making structures.
The community and third sector contribute immensely towards preventative spend – through community health and wellbeing; employment and training; social inclusion and connections; empowerment, participation and activism; building confidence and capacity: Fife Gingerbread and Cranhill Community Development Trust describe the need for investment in impact and monitoring activity – to demonstrate immediate impact and the true value of their preventative work. This is often costly work – empowering community organisations to do this work in a robust, quality controlled manner would allow organisations to demonstrate their impact and value even more effectively.	Prevention of social and health issues and inequalities is increasingly important.

It has been recognised in various quarters and for various reasons that 'what we've tried hasn't worked', or what we've tried is no longer sustainable. Leaving aside the politics and economics of these arguments – the search for new solutions which will unpick structural injustice is current. Traditionally, these 'big questions' have been left to 'experts' of various types: communities and their representatives have been recipients or field-testers of others' 'big ideas'. In the expansive spirit of our empowerment environment, we highlight the possible contribution of our community organisations: • GalGael and Plantation Productions wish to explore the contemporary nature, meaning and value of 'community', and the ways in which it might be grown and developed in the context of public service reform. • Citadel Youth Centre and GalGael highlighted a need to understand contemporary community experience of poverty and social exclusion, the changing nature of work and the impact this has across a wide range of policy domains, working with those affected to devise solutions and actions.	The causes of poverty, exclusion, disadvantage – and their reproduction - must be identified, understood and tackled.
Previous rounds of public service reform and improvement have bequeathed a considerable data-gathering and monitoring infrastructure – coupled with various monitoring, control and bench-marking regimes. However, community-derived knowledge and expertise offers complementary ways of gathering data and planning for outcomes: Glasgow Women's Library and West of Scotland Regional Equality Council note the challenges associated with reporting and recording hate-crime statistics. These manifest themselves as a lack of understanding around both *extent* and *impact of* these issues. They propose additional and community derived mechanisms for reporting prejudice and hate-crime that can work in tandem with, and fill in the gaps missed by, official statistics. Thereby enhancing knowledge and directing resources and action more efficiently.	Data-gathering, performance monitoring and oversight should be improved to support delivery of outcomes. Communities should be involved in the development of local outcomes, and agencies must know and understand the needs of communities.
Community organisations often have an interest in local planning activity – but can struggle to make an impact as a result of inbuilt power imbalances. The Community Empowerment Act should counteract these iniquities, and community-led action research should be an important method of supporting community participation: FUSE Youth Café (in Glasgow's East End) highlighted the need for community led action into the proliferation of betting shops, anti-social behaviour and problematic licencing in their locality. In this example, the community is being damaged by poor licencing and planning decisions. Gathering evidence could help reverse the trend for low-value and problematic economic and social activity.	The Community Empowerment Scotland Act (2015) requires public bodies to involve communities in planning activities, and has specific guidance around supporting communities to do this. The forthcoming Planning Bill is likely to deepen communities' rights to participation in planning.