

# Empowered communities in the 2020s: shaping the future of community development

## Research project outline

Local Trust is delighted to outline plans for a research project to capture the contemporary value and future possibilities of working with communities to enable them to develop to their fullest potential. This exciting opportunity, funded by the Community Development Foundation (CDF) and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF), has already generated substantial interest and we look forward to engaging with people further over the coming months.

The research will be commissioned and managed by Local Trust and led by a steering group of a broad range of people with an interest in working with and supporting communities. The findings from the research will inform further work to improve working with communities including the allocation of the £500k gifted to Local Trust by CDF on its closure in March 2016.

### Research questions

The exact research questions will be decided by the project steering group but they are expected to be similar in purpose to these:

**How can communities become more vibrant and resilient in the next ten years?**

**Who will work with and support communities to be able to identify and articulate issues and to take collective action to address them over the next decade?**

**What can be learnt from community development?**

**What needs to happen in the future?**

For these questions, we envisage that:

- **'communities'** are of geography and interest
- **'vibrant'** relates to the positive aspects of a healthy and well-functioning community
- **'resilient'** means communities capable of confronting and coping with challenges and maintaining community wellbeing in the face of adversity
- those who **'work with'** communities includes those in a paid or voluntary basis who facilitate communities to identify and articulate issues and to take collective action to address them
- those who **'support'** communities include individuals, organisations and institutions who provide money or resources to facilitate communities to identify and articulate issues and to take collective action to address them

- **'issues'** are any matters identified as important by communities, these include overarching, systemic or structural issues and smaller matters that may be symptomatic of bigger issues
- **'community development'** is a set of approaches undertaken by individuals, informal groups and organisations. Addressing issues of power, inequality and social justice, it aims to bring about change that is empowering, fair and inclusive. Community development is both a practice and an occupation. Individuals, informal groups and organisations can all practise community development, whether in paid or unpaid roles.

## Project steering group

The project will be led by a steering group who will meet five times from November 2016 to January 2018 (see appendix for a detailed timeline) to:

- agree research question(s)
- discuss the delivery of the research
- agree a communications strategy and stakeholder involvement
- discuss final products and suggestions for future plans.

To ensure that the steering group includes people with the skills and experience to lead the project and reflects the wide range of interests concerned with this project, Local Trust will invite expressions of interest to be on the steering group. The process for submitting an expression of interest will be announced in October 2016.

## Further details

The scope of the research will need to be proportionate to the budget available and the steering group will assist Local Trust in ensuring this.

The research will be developed collaboratively, in stages, based on what is being learnt and the input of the many stakeholders to this project.

The project will build upon current and previous research and activities including:

- Research commissioned and/or conducted by CDF – including their survey of community development workers and managers and *The Community Development Challenge*.
- TSRC's *Community Work in England* conference and report – this conference was prompted by the announcement of the closure of CDF and created space for looking to the future. [Read more.](#)
- *Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society* – a project co-ordinated by the Baring Foundation that is taking a broad look at the potential for civil society's contribution over the next decade or more. [Read more.](#)

There will be an open tendering process to recruit the researchers/organisation to conduct the research. The planned timeline for the research is January to August 2017. There will be a further phase when the products from the research will be consulted on and decided. A detailed timeline is in the appendix.

Given the importance of this project and the tremendous interest in it, Local Trust and the researchers we commission will allocate time and resource to ensure that a wide range of people and organisations will have input into the project.

## Join the project mailing list

Anyone interested in receiving updates on the project should send their name, organisation (if applicable) and email address to [Lisa-Marie.Giquel@localtrust.org.uk](mailto:Lisa-Marie.Giquel@localtrust.org.uk).

## Appendix: Planned project timeline

Date	Activity
<b>September 2016</b>	Outline remit of project and project plan agreed by funders
<b>October 2016</b>	Steering group recruitment
<b>November 2016</b>	First meeting of steering group - includes agreeing research question(s), communications strategy and stakeholder involvement
<b>December 2016</b>	Tender process for the research
<b>January – August 2017</b>	Research delivery
<b>January 2017</b>	Second meeting of steering group - includes meeting contractors, discussing delivery, and an update on communications
<b>June 2017</b>	Third meeting of steering group – includes sense check of findings and discussing stakeholder involvement
<b>October 2017</b>	Fourth meeting of steering group – includes approval of final products and discussion of future plans and stakeholder involvement
<b>December 2017</b>	Findings/final product(s) published, coinciding with 50 years since CDF was created
<b>January 2018</b>	Fifth and final meeting of steering group – includes making suggestions for future work and future engagement of stakeholders  Former trustees of CDF discuss suggestions for future work  Liaison with JRF on suggestions for future work
<b>Jan-March 2018</b>	Liaison with other potential funders on suggestions for future work
<b>March 2018</b>	Local Trust board agrees future work related to the CDF legacy funding