

# Working Together, Learning Together: an evaluation of the national training programme for social inclusion partnerships

# **Working Together, Learning Together: an evaluation of the national training programme for social inclusion partnerships**

by

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## Executive summary

### Introduction

The Working Together, Learning Together Programme was an ambitious large-scale national training programme for Social inclusion partnerships (SIPs) and Working for Communities Pathfinders in Scotland. It aimed to bring SIP staff, partner agencies and community representatives to learn together. The programme was commissioned by the Scottish Executive and carried out by a consortium led by the Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC). The Working Together, Learning Together (WTLT) training was delivered regionally in three core modules and a range of optional modules. It began in September 2000 and ran until June 2002. It involved 61 SIPs and Pathfinders and aimed to attract around 900 participants.

### Conclusions

- The programme covered the areas where SIPs acknowledged that there were gaps in the skills and knowledge (social justice policy, learning 'what works', partnership working and working with communities). However, some interviewees felt that the programme needed more emphasis on equalities issues, strategic planning and community empowerment.
- Overall, the programme attracted 757 participants to module one, although this declined to 577 participants by module three. There was a good mix of partners, staff and community representatives. The key factors affecting attendance appear to have been the variation in the enthusiasm of SIP managers for the programme and the turnover of people involved in the partnerships, particularly from partner agencies.
- The feedback questionnaires found good levels of satisfaction with the training. The majority of interviewees made positive comments about the training methods, the trainers, the content and the information packs provided.
- There were some negative comments about the limited consultation prior to the start of the training. There were mixed views on whether a national programme was the most effective way to deliver skills and knowledge. Others felt that the programme started too late and that the time-span between modules was too long. Participants from thematic SIPs (representing groups such as ethnic minorities and young people) were most likely to be critical of the programme.
- Some of the participants felt that the programme was expensive. However, the costs were equivalent to around £16,000 per SIP or around £135 per participant per day. Comparison with similar events suggests that the programme was not high-priced.
- Although different participants learnt different things, the programme fulfilled its learning outcomes. There was evidence that many of the

participants had obtained a better understanding of social inclusion. The emphasis on partnership working appeared to have been particularly valuable and there was considerable enthusiasm about the practical ideas for improving community participation.

- The programme could also demonstrate positive outcomes. The majority of the interviewees felt that the WTLT training had improved their personal effectiveness, and the effectiveness of the group of people who attended.
- The outcomes in the SIPs, as organisations, were more varied. Among the seven case study organisations, participants agreed that there were positive impacts in three SIPs. There were mixed views about the effect of the training in another. There was limited impact in two case studies and no discernible change in one case study. Overall, the programme had most impact on the SIPs where the partnerships, and the partners, were more receptive to change.
- The existence of other factors in the wider context meant that it was difficult to assess whether WTLT had any impact on the culture of partner organisations. Nevertheless, interviewees in three of the case studies felt that WTLT had been important.
- There was support for more training of this nature. Some interviewees felt that the modules could be repeated for new people and other felt that professional groups and other types of partnership could benefit from similar training.
- Overall, the study concluded that the Working Together Learning Programme could be considered to have achieved most of its learning outcomes and improved the skills and knowledge of many participants. It had mixed impact on the SIPs, as organisations, and limited impact on the partner organisations. However, it illustrated the benefits of providing opportunities for every-one involved to learn together.

## **The research**

This evaluation was commissioned by the Scottish Executive to run alongside the programme. The research methods included:

- desk-based research
- feedback questionnaires completed after each event
- interviews with participants in seven case study areas (after module 1 and at the end of the programme)
- observation of committee meetings
- attendance at some training events
- meetings with the trainers.

## **Learning needs**

The research began by examining whether the programme had covered the key learning needs of the SIPs. The interviews suggested the learning needs varied from individual to individual and from SIP to SIP. However, there did

appear to be acknowledged gaps in the skills and knowledge across the three core areas addressed by WTLT (social justice, partnerships and working with communities).

Thematic partnerships had specific training needs relating to greater awareness of the needs of their client groups. However, a number of interviewees felt that all SIPs would benefit from greater understanding of groups who were more likely to be excluded, such as young people and ethnic minorities.

Despite the identification of these needs in the interviews, many SIPs had not begun to address them. Only two out of the seven case studies had organised any training for partners, and other research evidence suggests that this was not unusual. Most SIP staff had attended some training events and conferences, but these tended to be on an ad-hoc basis. Training for community representatives was also very variable and some of the SIPs had provided very little training. In most cases, training for partners, SIP staff and community representatives had taken place separately.

### **Attendance**

All the SIPs and pathfinders were initially offered 15 places at each training event, although three of the SIPs withdrew from the programme, before the last module. There was declining attendance across the modules. In total, 757 people attended module one (87 per cent of the target figure) compared with 577 in module three (73 per cent of the target figure). Attendance at the option events was disappointing: these events attracted less than 250 participants in total.

There was a good mix of participants: partner agencies constituted 39 per cent of attendees, community representatives 29 per cent and SIP staff 26 per cent. Attendance by SIP staff and community representatives dropped slightly over the course of the programme, mainly due to natural turnover. However, attendance from partner agencies declined rapidly and was perceived to be a problem. There were complaints that partner agencies had sent inappropriate people, and that key people had not attended. There were also number of comments about the lack of attendance by councillors.

The case studies found that the reasons for the decline in attendance varied. The key factors appear to have been the variation in the enthusiasm of SIP managers to organise attendance from their SIP and the turnover of people involved in the partnerships, particularly in the partner agencies. However, there were a number of other factors were suggested. These included:

- resistance due to views about lack of consultation about the programme
- ineffective marketing and promotion of the programme
- the perceived 'academic' content of the first module
- lack of support by partner organisations
- the timing of the programme - particularly for pathfinders, which were due to end in March 2002.

Nevertheless, participation in the programme should not be viewed negatively. Given that attendance was voluntary, the attendance levels were substantial.

The interviewees suggested various solutions to prevent declining attendance. These included holding one-day rather than two-day events, allowing more flexibility in when individuals attended, paying community representatives to attend, or providing certificates of attendance and making attendance compulsory. The trainers were not in favour of mandatory training. However, there would be merit in requiring partnerships to take training more seriously.

### **Views on the training**

The feedback questionnaires from the modules found good levels of satisfaction with the WTLT training. There was an overall mean appraisal score of 3.8 (out of a possible 5). There was little variation in satisfaction levels between different modules or from the different groups of SIPs that attended the training. The majority of interviewees in the case studies also indicated that they had benefited from the training.

There were positive comments about the training methods used. Each of the modules used a variety of training methods, with both large-scale plenary sessions involving all the participants and small-scale group work. Some participants felt that the first module had too much emphasis on plenary sessions but, by the end of the programme, most participants felt the balance was about right. Comments about the mixed small groups with other SIPs were variable but the views about the workshops in SIP groups were extremely positive.

There were relatively few negative comments about the content of the modules. The most common complaint was that the programme, particularly the plenary sessions, had too much jargon. Both the trainers and the interviewees felt that there was a major gap in the content of the training in relation to equality issues. Some of the trainers also felt that the module on community participation had not placed sufficient emphasis on community *empowerment*.

There were a large number of trainers involved in the programme and, inevitably, a few participants felt that some trainers were better than others. However, the vast majority of interviewees praised the quality of training.

The majority of the interviewees said that they appreciated the package of material provided and a number said that they used it since the WTLT programme. By the end of the programme, the website contained a good selection of useful information and links. However, some interviewees had been put off by initial technical difficulties and the site was under-utilised.

The negative comments largely focussed on the timing of the training and its national nature. A number of interviewees felt that the training started too late into the life of the SIPs, and that the time-span between the modules was too long. There were a number of strong views about whether there should have been a national programme at all. Some participants felt that the resources should have been given to SIPs to spend on training, others felt that smaller, localised events would have allowed more flexibility to tailor the training to suit the needs of individual groups. In fairness, it should be noted that the SIPs had budgets for staff and community development and that the national programme aimed to complement local training.

Some of the participants felt that the programme was very expensive. However, the costs actually were equivalent to around £16,000 per SIP or around £135 per planned participant per day. Comparison with similar events suggests that the programme was not expensive.

### **Follow-up**

Overall, around half the SIPs took advantage of the follow-up days offered by the programme. Those that did, tended to be the SIPs who were more receptive to the programme. The WTLT trainers felt that only a small number of SIPs (around 10%) had thought strategically about how the training could be used to improve joint working and community empowerment, and had used the follow-up days to maximum effect. A further third had actively engaged with the programme.

The WTLT trainers felt that there were several key factors, which influenced decisions on follow-up work. The stage of development of the SIP was felt to be the most important: new SIPs were thought more likely to be eager to follow-up the training. Second, the role of the SIP manager was crucial: some appeared reluctant to accept external support. Third, there were concerns about the resources required to follow-up the training properly. Finally, a number of the SIPs had internal difficulties, which meant that they were unable to address the WTLT agenda.

### **Learning outcomes**

Almost all of the interviewees said that they gained something from the training, although different people took different things from it. There was evidence that many of the participants had obtained a better understanding of social inclusion and had taken away ideas about implementing regeneration practices. The emphasis on partnership working appeared to have been particularly valuable. Many interviewees had learnt how to make their partnerships more effective, although some interviewees felt that the module on partnership working had not been sufficiently practically orientated. In contrast, there was considerable enthusiasm about the practical ideas for improving community participation.

### **The impact of the programme**

The effectiveness of the programme can be assessed at four levels:

- the individual
- the group
- the SIP
- wider impact on partner agencies.

The majority of the interviewees felt that the WTLT training had improved their personal effectiveness. Community representatives felt that the knowledge and skills gained had increased their confidence. In some cases this had been of personal benefit: giving people the self-assurance to go to college. For others, the training had helped the representatives to challenge decisions and argue for changes in the SIP. A number of staff in partner agencies also felt that their personal effectiveness had improved, by increasing their understanding of partnership working.

There was almost universal agreement that the training had increased group effectiveness amongst the people who attended. This was largely because people got to know one another better, outside the formal setting of business meetings. Many interviewees felt that communication between the partners had improved, as a result of the training.

The outcomes in the SIPs, as organisations, were more varied. Among the seven case study organisations, participants in three SIPs agreed that there were positive impacts. In case study A, there appeared to be increased accountability in decision-making and greater community participation. In case study C, the main outcome of the training was to improve and clarify the shared understanding of roles and responsibilities of partners. This enabled the SIP to develop its longer-term strategy and improve structures for participation by young people. Case study G had used WTLT to pursue an agenda for change and there had been positive outcomes in terms of increased effectiveness in partnership working, improved communications and improved structures for participation.

There were mixed views about the effect of the training in case studies D. The SIP manager thought that WTLT had had little impact, but partner agencies felt that the programme had helped them to plan future strategy and develop a forum for staff involved in community participation.

There was limited impact in case studies B and E. In case study B, the issues and ideas discussed at the WTLT events were not carried home, due to internal difficulties within the organisation. At an organisational level, the effects on case study E were limited to changes in the committee structures and some positive responses to complaints. The only area where there was no discernible change at all was case study F. This is not entirely surprising as the SIP manager changed, there were no follow-up events and attendance at the WTLT declined sharply.

Overall, the programme had most impact on the SIPs where the partnerships, and the partners, were more receptive to change. The WTLT trainers felt that the attitude of the SIP managers towards the programme was crucial: those who were committed to the agenda were more likely to use the programme to initiate change.

WTLT had improved contact between the partnerships. The SIP staff were already networking with other SIPs through various forums, but WTLT provided an opportunity for partner agencies and community representatives to meet people from other organisations. Most of the case study organisations had organised visits to other SIPs but contact outwith the WTLT modules appeared to have tailed off. Nevertheless, the interest in good practice suggested that the exchange of ideas would continue beyond the end of the WTLT programme.

The existence of other factors in the wider context means that it is difficult to assume that WTLT had any impact on the culture of partner organisations, even if there was evidence of change. These factors include restructuring of local authorities, Best Value and the existence of the SIPs themselves. Nevertheless, interviewees in three of the case studies felt that WTLT had been important in advancing wider change. In case study B, there were indications that some partner agencies were beginning to improve their practices on community participation. In case study E, the council

representative felt that WTLT had pointed the way for culture change in the region. Finally, in case study G, the WTLT programme had helped the SIP to secure agreement to improve structures for input by young people into service changes in partner agencies.

The lack of clear impact at a wider level is probably not surprising. Changing the culture of large public sector agencies is a huge task and some of the partner agencies appeared to lack commitment to both the partnership and the training. Second, it is unlikely that a few days training, of mainly operational and front-line staff, would make a large difference. There was more chance of wider attitudinal change occurring where a fairly large number of participants attended, particularly where the programme was well-supported by senior managers. This was the case in case studies E and G.

### **Future education and training needs**

There was support for repeat modules of the WTLT programme so that new people who became involved in SIPs could receive training. Some interviewees also felt that it would be useful if the WTLT training was provided to a wider range of partner agencies, either through professional training to agencies such as the police, or through inter-disciplinary training. Several of the SIPs felt that the follow-up sessions were particularly useful and would like to continue to review their activities on a regular basis.

There were a wide range of suggestions for new training courses, which might follow on from WTLT. These included:

- strategic planning for SIPs
- needs led planning
- sustainability
- exit strategies
- evaluation of projects
- marketing and promotion for voluntary organisations
- conflict management
- funding: sources and access
- policy interpretation.

However, the trainers suggested that there should be wider consultation with SIPs to discuss further training needs.

Some of the interviewees suggested that WTLT, or something like it, should be developed into recognised qualifications. Several people also thought that the training would be suitable for other types of partnerships. However, perhaps the greatest area of potential for a programme such as Working Together Learning Together is in the development of training for community planning partnerships.

## **Lessons for the future**

It is vital that adequate consultation takes place, to ensure that there is widespread support for training, and to ensure that it meets learning needs. Along with this, there is a need for widespread publicity and promotion of training programmes. There is also a need to ensure that programmes are properly resourced

Ideally, learning for partnerships should be supported at national, local authority and partnership level. There is likely to be a need for a very wide range of provision to meet learning needs. This will include local training events, regional and national events and qualification courses. While some training will concentrate on the needs of particular groups, such as partnership staff, partner agencies or community representatives, the WTLT programme illustrates the benefits of providing opportunities for every-one involved to learn together.

# 1 The context of the study

## Introduction

This report provides a summative evaluation of the Working Together, Learning Together programme (WTLT), which aims to assess the overall effectiveness and impact of the programme. This chapter sets the training programme in the wider context. It outlines government policy on social inclusion and social justice, which aims to provide solutions through 'joined up thinking' and partnership approaches. It discusses the purpose of Social inclusion partnerships (SIPs) and Pathfinders and the aims of the training: examining both what the Scottish Executive and the training consortium hoped that it would achieve. It also outlines the research methods used to carry out the evaluation.

## Social justice agenda

Across the UK, the government has placed increasing emphasis on addressing social exclusion, seen as a set of interrelated and mutually reinforcing problems characterised by multiple deprivation and the inability to participate fully in society. SIPs and Working for Communities Pathfinders are part of a raft of policies aimed at promoting social inclusion and social justice in Scotland. Taken together, these policies cover a wide range of issues, including employment, education and training, health, housing, homelessness, drug misuse, active citizenship, discrimination and barriers to inclusion for specific groups of people.

The government's vision for social justice in Scotland is expressed according to goals for each stage of the life cycle; emphasising the need to intervene at stages of life where individuals may become particularly vulnerable to social exclusion. This ambitious vision for children, young people, families, older people and communities is explained in *Social Justice... a Scotland where everyone matters* (Scottish Executive, 1999), which also sets out long-term targets and short-term milestones. Table 1.1 lists the main goals of this vision. Progress toward these targets is measured through a number of indicators and statistics, and is reported annually in the *Social Justice Annual Report* (Scottish Executive, 2000a).

**Table 1.1 Vision for social justice**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Every child, regardless of his or her family background, has the best possible start in life</li><li>• Every young person has the opportunities, skills and support to make a successful transition to working life and active citizenship</li><li>• Every family is able to support itself –with work for those who can and security for those who can't</li><li>• Every person beyond working age has a decent quality of life</li><li>• Every person both contributes to and benefits from the community in which they live</li></ul>
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Source: Scottish Executive, 1999

The principles of the government's approach to social inclusion and social justice are explained in *Social inclusion: opening the door to a better Scotland* (Scottish Office, 1999). These are:

- *integration* of responses and policies from different agencies and organisations; multi-agency responses are seen as crucial to addressing the multi-dimensional problems of social exclusion;
- *prevention* of social exclusion by focusing on its causes and on early intervention in the lives of children and young people;
- *understanding* of good practice from existing programmes, through sound evaluation and dissemination, and support for innovative approaches;
- *inclusiveness* in policy development, involving a wide range of stakeholders including local authorities, other public agencies and voluntary and community organisations; and
- *empowerment* of individuals and communities to enable them to take up new opportunities and gain more control over their lives.

Three key themes of this agenda have been central to the development of SIPs, Pathfinders and the WTLT programme. First, the government has placed a strong emphasis on empowering *communities*, by placing them '*at the heart*' of social inclusion policies and programmes and encouraging active involvement in the decision-making process. Second, 'joined-up' holistic approaches, involving partnership and collaboration of a wide range of agencies, are seen to be essential for combating the interrelated forms of social exclusion faced by individuals and communities. Third, in a break from earlier regeneration programmes which focused heavily on physical regeneration, there has been a move toward targeting policies on *people* as well as *places* – focusing on barriers and opportunities as experienced by individuals and groups and on promoting inclusion in the communities where people live.

### **Social inclusion partnerships**

Social inclusion partnerships were launched in 1999 and were intended to be:

*'the vehicle for co-ordinating the actions of partners at a local level [and are] expected to implement a long-term strategy to which all the relevant local partners, including the local community, are committed'* (Scottish Office, 1999, section 7.24).

At the beginning of the WTLT programme there were 48 SIPs across Scotland. Thirty-four SIPs were geographical, targeting areas with high levels of deprivation. Of these area-based SIPs, 21 converted from existing Priority Partnership Areas or Regeneration Programmes, while 13 areas were newly designated as SIPs. Also, in keeping with the focus on people as well as places, 14 new thematic SIPs were created, targeting particular groups of people experiencing exclusion. These included groups such as ethnic minorities, young people, care leavers, carers and women engaged in prostitution.

A key feature of SIPs was that they were targeted at people and areas experiencing some of the worst levels of social exclusion. In addition, SIPs

were guided by three principles: *prevention* of exclusion particularly through early interventions; *co-ordination* of approaches through collaboration of partners; and *innovation* in developing new approaches to address social exclusion (Scottish Executive Area Regeneration Division, 2000).

The structures, aims and membership of SIPs varied considerably across partnerships. Most included a range of local public sector agencies alongside the local authority, and all were required to involve the community and aim to develop the community's capacity to influence decision-making. SIPs also contributed toward measuring progress toward the social justice targets and milestones, through their monitoring and evaluation process.

### **Working for Communities programme and Pathfinders**

The Working for Communities programme aimed to develop and test new ways of delivering integrated and responsive local services in disadvantaged areas, and to give local communities more influence over how these services are delivered. Also launched in April 1999, the programme provided £10 million over 3 years (1999-2002) to support the 13 Pathfinders across Scotland. The programme was designed to identify lessons which might be replicated across Scotland.

### **Working Together, Learning Together**

The Working Together Learning Together training programme developed out of the Listening to Communities programme. This progressed the government's agenda of empowering communities. It aimed to develop communities' abilities to take an increased role in the decisions which affect them, and to encourage a "*shift in culture in public sector bodies toward working with, listening to and empowering communities*" (Scottish Executive, 2000b). The programme supported people's panels and people's juries in SIPs, as well as a national training programme for community participation skills – WTLT (Scottish Office, 1999).

The Scottish Executive developed the brief for the WTLT training following a training needs analysis carried out by Heriot-Watt University and consultation with the SIPs at a network meeting. The brief outlined a flexible and focused programme. The purpose of the WTLT training was intended to help develop the skills and knowledge needed for everyone in the partnerships: '*from local authorities, to agencies, to community representatives*' to participate effectively in decision-making (Scottish Executive, 2000c). The programme aimed to provide training for 900 people in social justice policy; learning from past regeneration efforts; partnership skills and knowledge; and working effectively with communities. There were a total of 7,200 person days of training in all (Scottish Executive, 2000c).

This brief was put out to tender and won by a consortium led by the Scottish Community Development Centre. The consortium includes the University of Glasgow, Community Learning Scotland and Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations, with contributions from Northern College and the Poverty Alliance.

### **Aims and objectives**

The programme aimed to enhance community participation in SIPs and pathfinders by bringing staff, partners and community representatives from

different SIPs to learn together. The government's expectations for WTLT were outlined in the *Invitation to Tender*:

*"The programme aims to enhance community participation ... by bringing together partners from different SIPs and pathfinders to learn together to ensure:*

- *that agency representatives have the skills to listen effectively and fully value community interests and perspective*
- *that community representatives have the skills, confidence and knowledge to enable them to question agency representatives about the services provided in their communities*
- *that all partners have core knowledge about each other's roles and responsibilities in relation to SIPs and pathfinders and about social inclusion policy and regeneration processes and activities"* (Scottish Executive, 2000b)

The training consortium hoped that WTLT would help partnerships work better by:

- *improving the effectiveness of partnership working*
- *achieving a shared vision of what needs to happen, why and who should be involved*
- *building clarity about why things are being done and what they are designed to achieve, thus making all the partners more accountable to each other*
- *improving communication between communities and agencies* (WTLT, 2000)

The programme, therefore, reflected the policy emphasis on partnership working and empowering communities. One of the government's key expectations was that the programme would help to start '*shifting the culture*' of public agencies toward working with communities and toward enabling communities to have a greater influence in decision-making.

## **Outcomes**

It was intended that the outcomes of the training would include:

- increased effectiveness in partnership working
- shifts in the cultures of participating organisation towards empowering communities
- greater community participation
- greater clarity and accountability
- improved communications between communities and agencies
- increased networking between different partnerships

## **The programme**

The programme was delivered between September 2000 and May 2002. There were 3 two-day core modules and a number of one-day optional events. In order to accommodate all the SIPs, each module was delivered 11 times at regional events attended by between five and seven partnerships (between 75 and 105 people). Option events were delivered twice. In total, therefore, there were 43 events.

Module 1 focussed on social inclusion and community regeneration. It aimed to:

- develop understanding of exclusion and inclusion in the communities served by each partnership.
- establish awareness of the key policies that relate to promoting social inclusion
- develop awareness of good practice – both principles and experience

Module 2 covered knowledge and skills for community partnerships. It aimed to develop:

- an understanding of the concepts of stakeholding and partnership and the constraints of different partners
- a shared realistic vision of change
- the skills for achieving the vision

Module 3 stressed the importance of working effectively with communities. It aimed to develop:

- understanding of the benefits and weaknesses of approaches to participation
- skills for effective participation

There were five option events. These were developed following consultation with the participants in the first module. They included:

- Towards healthier communities
- Young people and youth issues
- Equalities and Social Inclusion
- Constructing budgets: sustaining programmes
- Building sustainable communities

## **Research methods**

### **The researchers**

The evaluation was designed and implemented by three researchers from the Department of Urban Studies. Although some staff from the Department were involved in the design and implementation of the programme, the evaluation

team was not involved and maintained an independent role: reporting both to the training team and directly to the Scottish Executive.

### **Desk-based research**

In order to provide background and contextual information for the study, the researchers carried out desk-based research, examining government reports and unpublished data such as the invitation to tender and the WTLT consortium bid. This element of the research also included a review of the literature on education and training for partnerships and regeneration, looking at both Scottish and English reports.

### **Feedback questionnaires**

The researchers assisted the WTLT consortium to devise questionnaires to be completed by participants. Originally, it was intended that there would be an initial baseline questionnaire to capture some basic data about the participants, establish their backgrounds, motives for taking the course and their expectations. However, participants at the pilot module were reluctant to complete this. Instead, questions about the participants were incorporated into the feedback questionnaires issued at every event. Around 50 per cent of the participants returned these questionnaires to the organisers. However, they were felt to provide a reasonably accurate cross-section of the participants.

### **Selection of case studies**

The WTLT training involved 61 SIPs and Pathfinders. It was clearly not practicable to examine the outcomes of training all these partnerships in detail, for the purposes of evaluation. The study therefore initially selected 6 case study organisations (a 10% sample) to allow detailed exploration of the impacts of WTLT on a range of different kinds of partnerships (a seventh was added during the final stage of interviewing – see below). SIPs can be divided into those operating in cities and those operating in towns/ rural areas. They can also be classified as those operating on an area basis and those that aim to meet the needs of particular groups (thematic SIPs). The 13 Pathfinders aimed to improve local services and operated in both city and town/rural settings. The SIPs and Pathfinders were very varied and the sample cannot claim to be fully representative. However, care was taken to select case studies of different types, remits, histories and geographical areas, to illustrate the range of experiences. Table 1.2 shows the basic characteristics of the range of case studies selected.

**Table 1.2 Characteristics of the case studies**

<b>Region for WTLT</b>	<b>Type</b>		<b>Geographical area</b>		<b>Status / history</b>		
North	1						
Central	2	Area based SIP	3	City	3	New	5
West	2	Thematic SIP	3	Town	3	Former PPA	1
Southwest	1	Pathfinder	1	Mixed rural / urban	1	Former RP	1
East	1						

The advantage of selecting case studies at the outset, and following them through the programme, was that we could make a better assessment of the impact of the WTLT programme. The disadvantage was that we would not know whether those selected would represent the range of outcomes from the programme. In the event, it proved very difficult to carry out interviews in one of the case study areas due to changing personnel, and a seventh case study was added towards the end of the programme. This SIP was chosen from the same geographical area as the 'problematic' case study (to ensure that the mix remained balanced). However, the additional SIP selected was also one that the WTLT trainers felt had made greater use of the programme. We felt that this provided a fairer reflection of the range of impacts of the programme.

In order to protect the anonymity of the case study respondents, the case studies have been referred to as case study A, B, C etc. Further background information on the case studies is given in Appendix 2.

There were three elements of research we aimed to carry out for each case study SIP:

- up to six interviews with SIP staff, partner agencies and community representatives
- one group discussion with people who had attended WTLT
- observation at a SIP committee meeting.

As far as possible, the above were carried out both at the initial stage of the research after module one and at the follow-up stage of the research after all three modules. Where practicable, the same individuals were interviewed and/or included in the group discussion at the follow-up stage as had been involved at the initial stage. This was to help to assess the impact that WTLT had on individuals and on the group.

### **Interviews**

As the programme included a feedback questionnaire after each module, which provides a largely quantitative analysis of participant's reactions, the evaluation aimed to take a more qualitative approach. In each case study, we aimed to carry out individual and group interviews with a broad cross-section of participants including staff employed by the SIP or SIP funded projects, partner agency staff (including statutory and voluntary agencies) and community representatives. As noted above, it was intended that participants would be interviewed twice, once after the SIPs had attended the first module of training and again after the full programme had been completed.

The initial interviews took place between February and May 2001, by which time all the case study organisations had attended the first module of the training. Overall, 31 people were interviewed across the six initial case studies. There was a reasonable cross-section of SIP staff, partner agencies and community representatives. The second interviews took place in May and June 2002. In total, 25 people were interviewed across the seven follow-up case studies (the six initial plus one additional). Further details of the interviews are provided in Appendix 1.

To obtain a balance of views, a focus group discussion was held with WTLT consortium members in August 2001 after the first module had been delivered

across Scotland. This was attended by six trainers. One of the researchers also attended a review day for WTLT trainers after all three modules had been delivered in June 2002. This was attended by 11 trainers, the two administrators who co-ordinated the programme and a representative from the Scottish Executive.

### **Group discussions**

The individual interviews outlined above focused on the operation of each SIP, experiences of WTLT, the impact of WTLT, and staff and partnership development needs. In order to focus more strongly on the content of WTLT itself, it was aimed to organise a group discussion in each of the case studies. Since it was up to 18 months since participants had attended module one, it was thought that a group discussion would help participants remember more about each module and any follow-up days that were organised.

In total, five group discussions were held during the initial fieldwork after module one and a further six during the follow-up phase of the research. In total, 34 people attended group discussions during the initial stage and 20 during the follow up stage. Although there was considerable overlap of the individuals interviewed and attending the group discussions, overall 44 people gave their views on the training during the initial stage of the research and 31 people during the follow-up stage. Of the 31 people taking part in the follow-up stage of the research, 19 had also been involved in the initial stage.

### **Observation**

Where possible, the researchers observed a committee meeting in order to assess the group functioning of the partnership. Committee meetings were observed in five out of the six case study areas initially, and in three of the seven case study areas during the follow-up. It was not possible to attend a meeting in some of the case studies because there were no meetings taking place during the period of the fieldwork and in one instance the committee meeting clashed with a pre-arranged group discussion in another case study. Researchers also attended two of the training events (one of the Module 1 events and one of the Module 3 events) to obtain a better understanding of the nature of the training and to feedback an independent assessment of the training to the training team.

## 2 Learning needs

### Introduction

There is general agreement that people involved in partnerships require appropriate skills and knowledge. The Social Exclusion Unit report on Neighbourhood Management (PAT 4, 2000) argued that better training for all involved in neighbourhood renewal and better access to knowledge on what works was an essential component for success. Priority Action Team 16 (2000) was more strongly critical of the skills and knowledge base. The report suggested that many of the people involved in regeneration programmes (both community representatives and professionals) have not received the training and support required to make them effective. More radically, Taylor (2000) argued that public sector agencies needed to build infrastructures for learning and make fundamental changes to their culture. The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (2001) put it bluntly:

*Better skills and knowledge are fundamental. Too often people are expected to deliver ambitious programmes without being given the tools they need to do the job. People need new skills to work in new ways, to provide better public services. (NRU, 2001. p2)*

The Social Exclusion Unit's report on Learning Lessons (Priority Action Team 16, 2000) identified three key groups of people who need skills and knowledge:

- people in communities
- local practitioners and professionals
- national policy makers (such as civil servants)

Henderson and Mayo (1998) produced a similar list of people, but they also identified decision-makers such as local senior managers and elected members. The Priority Action 4 report (PAT 4, 2000) argued that local partnerships need strong support and joined-up thinking from senior officers and councillors while the Scottish Executive strategy (2002) indicated that decision-makers '*the people who have budgets and power*' must be involved, if local partnerships are to be effective.

In order to assess whether WTLT was addressing the learning needs of the SIPs, we asked the interviewees what they saw as the key skills and knowledge needed by people involved in the partnership, and whether they felt that there were gaps. Surprisingly, although the partnerships had diverse backgrounds and were operating different levels, the training needs expressed were very similar. However, most interviewees felt that different players in the partnership had distinct learning needs and identified SIP staff, partner agencies, community representatives and councillors as the key groups. This chapter therefore investigates the training needs of these groups. It goes to examine the training which SIP members had undertaken, prior to the WTLT programme. Finally, the chapter discusses participants' expectations of the WTLT programme, and the extent to which they thought it would meet their learning needs.

## **Learning needs**

### **Partner agencies**

The range of professionals and practitioners who may be involved in regeneration programmes is very wide. Interviewees from partner agencies included a representatives from a number of council services such community development, community education, housing, economic development, education, social work and community safety. Other statutory services included the police and fire service, careers service, Benefits Agency, health boards and trusts. Local enterprise companies and local colleges were often partners and many SIPs also had representation from voluntary organisations such as Women's Aid, British Red Cross, Community Volunteer Services, Race Equality Councils and local housing associations.

Priority Action Team 16 (2000) and the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (2002) suggested a general list of the key skills and knowledge required by professionals and practitioners working in neighbourhood renewal. These included:

- strategic leadership
- consensus-building and communication,
- knowledge of 'what works'
- strategic planning
- risk assessment and management
- project management
- finance and budgeting
- management of people
- appraisal, monitoring and evaluation
- working with the community
- valuing diversity
- working with partners
- entrepreneurial and problem solving behaviours
- IT skills and knowledge.

However, there was some variation in the emphasis on essential skills and knowledge required by professionals. Some reports stressed the importance of partnership working between professional groups. For example, the Priority Action Team 16 report (2000) concluded that many people working in public services were '*over-professionalised and departmentalised*'. It therefore suggested that the key requirement was for training to develop cross-sectoral approaches.

In contrast, Henderson and Mayo (1998) proposed that the key need for this group was awareness of community participation and empowerment. Carley et al (2000) also emphasised this point. They argued that partnerships needed to make a real effort to promote empowerment: communities controlling

resources and making decisions themselves, rather than consultation or representation. Duncan and Thomas (2000) went further and suggested that a wide range of stakeholders, including local authorities and government departments, needed to integrate community participation into their decision-making cultures.

The initial interviews indicated that both the WTLT trainers and the SIP staff were concerned that some of the participants from partner agencies did not have a clear understanding of the purpose of SIPs. In some cases partners even lacked knowledge about the aims and objectives of the SIP that they were involved with. Several of the interviewees from partner agencies admitted their interest in WTLT was because they wanted to find out more about their SIP or SIPs generally:

*“More knowledge about what the Partnership was intending....and obviously more knowledge about the other SIPs and the mere existence of other SIPs. That was important and useful. I think those were my main expectations.” (Case study D, partner agency)*

In at least two of the case studies, SIP staff only became fully aware of the extent of the ignorance about the SIP during the first WTLT event:

*“I can’t understand how somebody who’s come to every partnership meeting, sits on the implementation group, went to Working Together, Learning Together, can sit around and say – ‘I really need to understand what our role and responsibility is’...I’m appalled that somebody – at a very senior level – can make that statement, even though they’re involved.” (Case study D, SIP staff)*

Many of the interviewees (including some from partner agencies) felt that the different professionals involved in the SIPs, though expert in their own fields, often had very little background or training for partnership working. As a result, a number of the interviewees felt that there was a need for some basic discussions about the nature of partnership working. This was expressed as getting to know one another, developing understanding of the cultural differences between different agencies, putting cards on the table, discussing the agendas of the different partners and how these might contribute to the SIP. These comments were typical:

*“I think there’s a lot of talk of partnership working. There’s a lot of good intentions but the difference between talking and actually doing it and actively contributing in an honest and open way - I think there’s a lot of defensiveness there. There are a lot of people coming with their own agendas...but people need to lay their cards on the table and say – why are you here? What are you wanting back out of this partnership?” (Case study B, pathfinder staff)*

*“There are just completely different approaches in the partner organisations, so it’s probably the higher level things that are there.. But it’s how you develop it in a partnership and that’s always hard if you’ve got different allegiances...I suppose it’s awareness of some of these cultural issues and how we work differently.” (Case study D, partner agency)*

Although only a few of the interviewees from partner agencies mentioned working with communities, a number of community representatives

commented that many of the partner agencies did not consult effectively and made little effort to devolve power. This issue was also noted in a study of community participation in social inclusion partnerships: Chapman et al (2001) suggested that all partner agencies, including statutory agencies, should be offered training on how to work with local communities more effectively.

### **Councillors**

Several reports specifically identified local councillors as key players (see Henderson and Mayo, 1998; PAT 4, 2000; NRU, 2002). The NRU draft report on Skills and Knowledge noted:

*'Local councillors also have an important part to play in neighbourhood renewal. Most councillors will also be residents but they have extra learning needs relating to the modernisation of local government and their new role in neighbourhood matters' (NRU, 2002, P 8).*

A few of the WTLT interviewees also mentioned specifically that some councillors needed to learn more about the role of SIPs and to increase their understanding of partnership working. As one of the WTLT interviewees put it:

*"We need to bring elected members up to speed, so that they can fully grasp what this is about and how it operates and the importance of partnership working and letting go bits of their power and all that kind of thing that politicians are reluctant to do." (Case study D, SIP staff)*

### **SIP staff**

A number of the reports distinguished between the learning needs of the wider range of professionals involved in regeneration and the skills and knowledge of staff working for the partnership. Priority Action Team 16 (2000) suggested that neighbourhood renewal initiatives require high calibre managers with high-level generic skills. Both Chapman (1998) and Carley et al (2000) argued that, where possible, regeneration partnerships should employ their own full-time staff and indicated that the skills of partnership manager were critical to the success of the programme. Priority Action 4 (2000) also placed particularly strong emphasis on the skills and knowledge of the partnership manager. The skills and knowledge cited in these reports were very similar to those required of professionals working in partner agencies (see above).

In the WTLT study, the interviewees distinguished between the learning needs of staff in partner agencies who had a strategic role and those who had an operational role: running projects and initiatives in partnership with the SIP. This latter group included SIP staff. Most of the SIP staff in the case study organisations had relevant backgrounds and qualifications for their posts. However, their experience varied widely. Some of the more experienced staff felt that they did not have any training needs but others admitted that they had little knowledge of community development or of partnership working. A number of the SIP staff felt that they needed to develop awareness of the different cultures of different organisations. In the newer SIPs and pathfinders, staff also felt that there was a need to build relationships and networks with partner agencies.

*"I think you have to be aware of the different cultures, the different traditions, the different training expectations and needs of different*

*bodies. For example, Education and Health have different ways of approaching situations.” (Case study C, SIP staff)*

Several of the SIP managers felt that some of the SIP staff and project managers of SIP funded projects lacked the skills and knowledge that they required in areas such as financial management, project development, monitoring and evaluation and community capacity building:

*“We’re aware, through our experience, that some of the co-ordinators of the initiatives are not as skilled as they could be in things like drawing up management plans, action plans or looking after their financial resources.” (Case study D, SIP staff)*

*“We’ve got to work with our staff to get them the experience and qualifications, so that they can go on and run things like this in the future.” (Case study E, SIP staff)*

The thematic partnerships had more specific learning needs. Interviewees felt that both SIP staff and partners agencies would benefit from greater insight and knowledge about the needs of the client groups:

*“If you want to look at actually understanding more of what a young carer needs, then that would of course be very interesting...getting young carers to come and speak to us and give us some training on what it is like to be one of them. That would be very useful.” (Case study C, SIP Staff)*

*“There is a lot of misunderstanding about different cultures. Agencies could get more in depth knowledge, perhaps through a training day – maybe a personal one-to-one meeting with different people from minority groups to talk about some of the issues, then agency officials would feel more comfortable.” (Case study E, Community representative)*

*“Our problem is that we don’t know how to work properly with black groups. It’s the race question and we haven’t addressed it properly.” (Cases study E, partner agency)*

However, a number of interviewees felt that all SIPs would benefit from greater understanding of groups who were more likely to be excluded, such as young people and ethnic minorities.

### **Community representatives**

The Priority Action Team 16 report (2000) suggested that residents need support to become leaders and social entrepreneurs, including training in business and management skills. The NRU report (2002) identified three types of role for residents: community leaders, emerging practitioners and community experts. It suggested that community leaders would play key roles in renewal activity while community ‘experts’ would act as representatives for their communities. Emerging practitioners were people who would like to seek employment in renewal activities. Chapman and Kirk (2001) suggested that training for community leaders might include developing community organisations, developing business plans, equal opportunities, people skills, committee skills and information technology.

However, a number of studies (Chapman, 1998; Taylor, 2000; Chapman and Kirk, 2001) also suggested that broader capacity building is crucial. Henderson and Mayo (1998) argued that many people in communities need basic information and skills to build confidence before they can begin to engage with regeneration processes. They suggested basic training in areas such as administrative processes, public speaking, assertiveness, responsibilities and accountability. Chapman and Kirk (2001) advised that training may be required in individual development, group working, the role and responsibilities of office bearers, effective meetings and interpersonal skills. The Scottish Executive statement on regeneration acknowledged that *'a high percentage of people with low levels of literacy and numeracy live in disadvantaged areas'* and indicated that raising skills in these areas would be an important part of regeneration strategies (Scottish Executive, 2002).

The WTLT study found needs for both basic capacity building for community representatives and for training for leadership and jobs in regeneration. In basic capacity building, interviewees mentioned issues such as committee skills, constitutions, employing people and accessing funding:

*"What we're finding now is that people are looking to develop projects but don't have the skills to do that. They don't know about management committees, don't know about constitutions. If they become a management committee and they begin to employ people, they don't know what their responsibilities are, and that's been a major problem."*  
(Case study A, SIP staff)

Some interviewees also thought that community representatives needed training to give them knowledge of legislation such as the Data Protection Act and the Human Rights Act.

More commonly, interviewees identified the need for community representatives to gain an understanding of the roles, responsibilities and limitations of different agencies and the skills and confidence to approach agencies with issues or problems:

*"I think there is a lack of capacity within community group reps on the partnership board, which I think we need to address, in terms of their confidence within meetings...People are afraid to be vocal, but it's also about the appropriateness of interventions."* (Case study E, SIP staff)

Many reports have stressed that communities are not homogenous and that the needs will be diverse (see, for example, Brownill and Darke, 1998, Chapman and Kirk, 2001). The NRU (2002) report recommended that regeneration partnerships should encourage learning among groups which may have been excluded in the past, such as ethnic minorities, young people, older people and carers. Henderson and Mayo (1998) argued that such groups may also have specific training needs.

In the WTLT study, a number of the interviewees from thematic SIPs felt that groups such as ethnic minorities and young people had specific training needs. One interviewee felt that some ethnic minority communities needed to develop awareness of the way that statutory agencies operate in the UK, and how to work with them:

*"There is sometimes a big knowledge gap: if people have come from Hong Kong, for example, communities have quite a good understanding about provision of public services but people from Pakistan don't because they come from a different culture altogether...those*

*communities that have had experience of working with agencies in the past have often had to be very confrontational – which is not perfect partnership working.” (Case study E, partner agency)*

Another felt that young people were very reluctant to undertake formal training sessions (possibly due to poor experiences in education) and needed to learn in different ways. She cited a children’s conference which had encouraged young people to produce a play as a good example of positive learning.

### **Previous training**

Many of the SIPs had organised training prior to the start of WTLT, which had started to address these needs to some extent. This section assesses the training provided by the SIPs for partner agencies, SIP staff and community representatives.

### **Partner agencies**

Only two of the case studies had begun to tackle the training needs of partners. Case study A had organised a series of seminars for everyone involved in the SIP. These covered the aims and objectives of the SIP and the monitoring and evaluation framework. In case study D, the partnership board had not received any formal training but the SIP had undertaken a review process, with several day-long events over a period of 18 months to look at the broad aims of the project.

The other SIPs did not appear to have organised any training, whether formal or informal, for board members or partner agencies. With the benefit of hindsight, the pathfinder manager in one area felt this had been a big mistake:

*“There was no induction training. It was assumed because people were professionals that they would work well together and I think that’s a huge assumption to make.” (Case study B, pathfinder staff)*

It was apparent from other research that this lack of training for partners was not unusual. Chapman et al (2001), in their study of community participation in social inclusion partnerships, also found that most partnerships had not undertaken any initial training with partners.

Some of the SIP staff suggested that it was difficult to get representatives partner agencies to attend training because the SIP represented a small part of their workload: *‘it’s often an add-on’*. They felt that busy professionals would be reluctant to give up more time to the SIP. This view was substantiated by many of the partner agencies.

### **SIP staff**

Many of the SIP staff mentioned seminars and conferences that they had attended as part of their role and some mentioned training courses. One or two were undertaking qualification courses. However, although training budgets were available, many staff said that they were often too busy to attend.

*“Yeah, there is training built into the budget and we do try – but we’re invariably chasing our tails, we’ve got so much work to do. But there’s no doubt that we’re encouraged to avail ourselves of training if we require it and indeed we do. Sometimes we say we can’t go but I wouldn’t say we’ve been short of going to training events or conferences.” (Case study C, SIP staff)*

### **Community representatives**

Given that the Government has placed a strong emphasis of empowering communities at the heart of social inclusion partnerships, and that there has been funding available for capacity building, it was expected that SIPs would have given priority to training programmes for community representatives. In fact, there was considerable variability among the case studies.

Case studies A, D and E had the most well-developed programmes. In case study A, the SIP had funded a community participation team which had a remit to identify training needs and organise training for community activists. This team had organised training from local voluntary organisations on issues such as roles and responsibilities of office bearers, managing meetings and financial management. Community representatives also had access to training on IT skills, through SIP funded projects. The Tenants Forum in the areas had organised training on issues such as stock transfer and some of the community representatives had attended conferences held by the Tenant Information Service and the Tenant Participation Advisory Service.

Case study D had a community development training programme. Community representatives could also get access to various courses run by a local volunteer development agency. In addition, the SIP funded a worker to develop housing policy and practice training for communities on issues such as allocation policies and estate management policy. This SIP also recognised that some community activists would be interested in seeking a career in community work and had developed a traineeship scheme, which included studying for a part-time BA in Community Education.

In case study E, community representatives had received training from a number of sources. The SIP had organised an intensive 4-day training course for community activists called Engendering Change. Some representatives had attended a course provided by a local voluntary organisation, on Community Management Training. This covered topics such as setting up and developing organisations, running management committees, constitutions and accessing funding. This SIP had also supported some community activists to undertake degrees in Community Education, while employing them as sessional workers.

The other four case studies appeared to have done much less training. Case study B had organised a two-week intensive induction course for community agents at the outset of the pathfinder but few of the representatives had attended any seminars and conferences. In case study F, the only events mentioned were two conferences in the previous year to develop structures and a remit for a community forum. However the community representatives in this area appeared to be very experienced (and cynical). Case studies C and G were both new thematic SIPs dealing with young people. Only a small number of young people were actively involved in the partnerships. There did not appear to have been any specific training for meetings but young people had been encouraged to attend relevant conferences.

Again, Chapman et al's (2001) study indicated that this varied picture was not unusual. They found that many SIPs had not fully assessed the training needs of the community or provided funding for training from SIP budgets.

## Expectations of WTLT

The interviewees were asked what they had expected the WTLT training to be about, before they attended. The SIPs managers, perhaps unsurprisingly, had the clearest and most accurate view of what the training was intended to cover:

*“I think it can operate on a number of different levels. People as individuals can get to know each other better and perhaps develop working relationships, maybe develop a bit more trust. I think people should also, at another level, have a better understanding of the other agencies and how they operate. But it also gives people the chance to define what they have in common, and what it is that separates them, and then perhaps to find mechanisms to overcome barriers to partnership working.” (Case study C, SIP staff)*

However, there were also concerns that the training had a covert agenda of assessing and evaluating the SIPs. Several SIP staff noted that the Scottish Executive had observers attending the training and wondered why they were there. Others were concerned because the SIPs have a limited life-span and they did not know whether funding would be renewed:

*“I felt as though the partnership was being assessed at the training and I thought who is this for? Is this for the Scottish Executive, through Working Together Learning Together, to determine how effective a partnership it is?” (Case study A, SIP staff).*

Some wanted to find out more about their SIP or SIPs generally:

*“I didn’t know very much about it but...I thought, well I needed to learn....I thought I had grasped what Pathfinder was about and that was why I’d got involved but I wanted more information about how I could be more involved in a beneficial way, not just sitting on a committee. About how I could help empower the people of (the area). I really wanted to hear that other folk were thinking the same as me.” (Case study B, partner agency)*

Other participants had a wide range of expectations and it was obvious that a number felt that the objectives of the event were unclear. This comment was typical:

*“I didn’t know what to expect. Was impressed.” (Case study E, community representative)*

Finally, a number of interviewees admitted that they were fairly sceptical before the event about what it could achieve:

*“I was fairly cynical about it because I felt that it was taking too many steps back, to go right back to what this partnership is this all about, what is social inclusion and all of that. Just before I went, I felt – do we really want to go back?...I didn’t know what a two-day, quite formal, event could possibly achieve for a thematic SIP in the middle of all these geographic SIPs. So, before I went, I had more negative than positive expectations.” (Case study C, partner agency).*

These findings were echoed in the views of the WTLT trainers. They felt that the community representatives were generally enthusiastic and that SIP staff welcomed and partners welcomed the opportunity to reflect. However, they agreed that, initially, many participants were very sceptical about the potential benefits of the programme and suspicious about the ulterior motives of the Scottish Executive.

## **Summary**

The comments from participants indicated that there were gaps in the skills and knowledge of those involved in SIPs in the three core areas addressed by WTLT (social inclusion, partnerships and community participation). The learning needs varied from individual to individual. However, interviewees were able to make broad distinctions between the learning needs of partner agencies, SIP staff, community representatives and councillors.

The most common gaps related to partnership working. Many interviewees felt that almost everyone involved in the partnership would benefit from increased understanding of the roles and cultures of the various agencies. Some participants, particularly partner agencies, were felt to lack knowledge about the purpose, aims and objectives of SIPs. Understanding of community participation was mentioned less often as a training need. However, there were widespread comments, particularly from community representatives, that agencies did not practice effective participation.

Other learning needs highlighted included training for staff co-ordinating SIP-funded projects, in the management of community projects. This included skills such as financial management, monitoring and evaluation and community involvement. Community representatives involved in the management committees of such projects were felt to need training on committee meetings and employing staff.

Thematic partnerships had specific training needs relating to greater awareness of the needs of their client groups. However, a number of interviewees felt that all SIPs would benefit from greater understanding of groups who were more likely to be excluded, such as young people and ethnic minorities.

Despite the identification of these needs in the interviews, many SIPs had not begun to address them. Only two out of the seven case studies had organised any training for partners, and other research evidence suggests that this was a widespread problem. Most SIP staff had attended some training events and conferences, but these tended to be on an ad-hoc basis, when time allowed. Training for community representatives was also very variable. Several of the SIPs had organised training on basic issues for community groups, such as committee meetings, constitutions, accessing funding and financial management. Two were also helping some activists to obtain relevant qualifications. However, some of the SIPs had provided very little training. In most cases, training for partners, SIP staff and community representatives had taken place separately. Only case study A had organised events for everyone involved in the SIP.

Expectations about whether WTLT would meet learning needs were varied. SIP managers tended to be more aware of what the programme planned to cover whilst many of the partners and community representatives often did not know what to expect. A number of interviewees admitted that they were fairly sceptical, before the first event, about what it could achieve.

## 3 Attendance at WTLT training

### Introduction

The chapter discusses attendance on the programme. It begins by assessing the overall attendance on the programme and then looks in more depth at participation by the case study SIPs. Attendance declined over the course of the programme and the chapter discusses the reasons for this and examines the attendance by different groups of participant. The chapter concludes by discussing the changes that interviewees suggested to improve attendance levels.

### Overall attendance

All the SIPs and pathfinders were initially offered 15 places at each training event. Potentially, therefore, there were over 900 places available. The Scottish Executive target for attendance was set at around 80 per cent of maximum numbers. This target changed from module to module as three SIPs withdrew from the programme after the first or second module, but one new SIP (Glasgow Smaller Areas SIP) was added to the programme. Overall attendance at the core modules is shown below in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1 Overall attendance at WTLT modules**

Module	Executive Target	Actual	Percentage of target
1	870	757	87
2	855	676	79
3	795	577	73
Overall attendance	2520	2010	80

Source: WTLT data

In total, 757 people attended module one, representing 87 per cent of the target of 870 set by the Scottish Executive. Attendance at module two 676 people (79 per cent of the Executive's target) and by module three it had fallen to 577 participants (73 per cent of the Executive's target). Although falling as WTLT progressed, attendance overall achieved over 2000 participants (80 per cent of the overall target).

In practice, attendance varied across the different areas. As an example, the attendance figures for the 11 events that comprised Module 1 are shown in Table 3.2. In one (Highlands and Islands) the numbers attending were well above the Scottish Executive requirements while in two areas (East 1 and West 3) the attendance was less than two-thirds of the target.

The WTLT trainers ascribed the differences in numbers attending to two main factors. First, although all the SIPs were offered the same number of places, in practice some of the smaller partnerships struggled to find 15 people who were actively involved while some of the larger SIPs could easily have filled 40 or 50 places. Second, the WTLT trainers were reliant on the SIP managers to organise attendance because it had been agreed, at the outset of the programme, that they would be the main point of contact with each SIP.

**Table 3.2 Attendance at Module 1 by area – indicated and actual**

WTLT event	Executive target attendance	Indicated attendance	Actual attendance	Actual as a percentage of target
West 5	75	67	55	73.3
East 2	75	64	46	61.3
South-west	75	67	63	84.0
West 1	75	85	69	92.0
West 3	75	73	48	64.0
North—east	105	105	97	92.3
Central	90	108	89	98.9
Highlands and Islands	45	69	63	140.0
West 4	90	81	69	76.7
West 2	75	90	73	97.3
East 1	90	107	85	94.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>870</b>	<b>916</b>	<b>757</b>	<b>87.0</b>

Source: WTLT database

### Attendance at option events

Disappointingly, the options programme was poorly attended. Table 3.3 below shows the level of attendance at the option events on specialist themes.

**Table 3.3 Options events attendance**

Name of event	First event	Second event
Towards Healthier Communities	Cancelled	54
Young People and Youth Issues	34	35
Equalities	34	No record
Constructing Budgets	30	14
Building Sustainable Communities	17	No record

Source: WTLT database

Few of the interviewees had attended any of the options but those who did attend were positive about the courses. This comment was typical:

*“We went through to Edinburgh, and that was an options day on the community we were working with, young people, issues relating to young people. We took young people along to that and that was quite good.” (Case study C, group interview, follow-up)*

However, several of the interviewees felt that the options had not been well publicised.

*“I think that one of the issues about that particular side of the programme was that it was not publicised well enough to all the SIPs and the Pathfinders. I got the stuff in, I took the initiative and went on it. But I think that...there is a dual role here, both in terms of the training organisers to get that out to people...they should be linking with the local SIP partnerships to say, ‘look this stuff is coming up? Let’s get folk along to that’ because I would like to see us take a mini-bus of folk to some of these things.” (Case study D, partner agency, follow-up interview)*

*“They ran the theme days, didn’t they? Working with young people.... I think they spread them right across the country.. So it was a bit of a hit or a miss whether you got notification through, whether it was something*

*you were interested in. We certainly didn't prioritise them here. The young people's one, I think we actually did have people on that, actually, when I think of it." (Case study G, SIP staff, follow-up interview)*

One person, who had planned to attend, did not go because she felt that it was too far to go:

*"They certainly did offer another day's training and I was booked to go to that. It was about sustainable communities...but I didnae get. It was in Glasgow an' that's just that wee bit further again. Celtic Park for half past nine in the morning – I thought, I'm getting too old for this...I couldnae have got there by public transport at that time in the morning, so it would have meant driving to Glasgow. An' I thought, I cannae be bothered." (Case study B, partner agency, follow-up interviews)*

Although notifications were sent out to SIP managers and announced at the 'core' modules, it was clear that this information had not registered very strongly with the interviewees. Some appeared to have no knowledge of these events at all. It is possible that some SIP managers did not pass on the information, and there may have been a case for publicising these events more widely and providing more information on the content. In addition, it may be that labelling these events as 'options' made people feel that they were not essential. Possibly, a title such as 'specialist courses' or 'themed events' might have been more attractive.

As the comment from interviewee in case study B illustrates, the fact that many participants had to travel further to attend may also have been off-putting. A later start time, or the option of an overnight stay might have persuaded some people to attend.

### **Case study attendance**

To explore the pattern of attendance in more detail, the issue was discussed with the interviewees in the case studies. All of the seven case study SIPs sent a number of representatives along to the training. In most cases, the SIP manager organised the attendance, some times in conjunction with the SIP board. There were wide variations in how this was done.

#### **Case study A**

In case study A, the SIP manager contacted all the organisations involved in the SIP and invited them to nominate someone. Once the nominations were received, the SIP board selected individuals, aiming to ensure a balance of representation. In total, case study A sent 15 community and partner representatives and two SIP staff to the first module.

The interviewees in case study A felt that there had been a very positive response to the training generally. Only one partner agency declined to nominate, as the key contact with the SIP did not feel that he would benefit from it. The SIP manager felt that this reaction missed the point of the programme:

*"The team leader felt that it would be like teaching his granny to suck eggs. It was almost like – 'I know it all already'. But that wasn't the point of the programme and I felt that it was an opportunity missed." (Case Study A, SIP staff)*

Every-one who was selected attended the first module, although one person had to miss part of the second day due to a previously arranged appointment. Attendance at the second modules declined slightly as three of the original participants (including the original SIP manager) moved on to other posts. There was a further decline in attendance in module three, when several people who had been expected to attend failed to show. There did not seem to have been any attempt to fill these places with other participants, even though there were people who had indicated an interest in attending. The group interviewees felt that it would have been difficult to ask people to join the training if they had missed the first module:

*“M. said that she would have liked to have done it, and I contacted (the SIP manager)...but (he) just said that he had his 15 or whatever and he couldn't, but that if somebody did drop out at the last minute he would maybe ask her. But...they had all turned up for the first one, and dropped it after that. It wasn't the same to ask somebody back in.”*  
(Case study A, group follow-up interview)

### **Case study B**

In case study B, the pathfinder manager wrote to 30 people who were involved with the partnership and received 15 responses. These people were therefore selected to attend. This included the pathfinder manager, five community representatives and people from partner agencies including voluntary groups, the police, housing and the health board. The interviewees felt that they had sent a good cross-section of the people and organisations involved in the pathfinder to the training but that, in some cases, *‘it was not all the right people who attended’*. In one case a substitute was sent because the nominated officer was ill. One attendee, although nominally on the steering group, had never actually attended a meeting and one agency sent an administrative assistant who did not know anything about the SIP. The chair of the SIP also chose not to attend – and this was felt to have caused problems in following up the training.

Attendance at subsequent modules was slightly lower due to staff turnover in some of the partner agencies and training dates clashing with holidays or other commitments. However, the interviewees said that around 12 people had attended all three modules.

*“I suppose there was a nucleus of about six or seven agency staff. I went to them all and we had three or four of the community representatives that came to them all.”* (Case study B, pathfinder staff, follow-up interview).

### **Case study C**

Case study C had 16 participants at the first module. This included two SIP staff, a number of representatives from partner agencies and three community representatives. As this partnership was a thematic SIP serving young people, the community representatives were young people aged 11-16. As in case study B, one participant was some one who never attended partnership meetings. One agency had been unable to send some one because the key person was sick. Not all the participants were able to stay for the whole two days and at least one had felt that they had been coerced into attending.

At the follow-up stage of the research, one member of SIP staff commented that the same individual from a key local authority department was a member of more than one SIP, therefore had to choose between SIPs at WTLT. Unfortunately for SIP C, the individual's choice did not go in their favour. In addition, some of the representatives from partner agencies were prevented from attending, or recalled by their managers:

*“Some of the professionals did have a problem because in their jobs, they did have to prioritise work. The woman from education had a real struggle, not only was she on all the SIPs but obviously has the kind of job where it was difficult for her to do that. There were council employees that had been dragged out to go and see the director or somebody, so I think we lost a few.” (Case study C, group follow-up interview)*

### **Case study D**

Case study D had also sent its quota of 15 people to the first module. The SIP manager was unable to attend due to illness, but two other SIP staff attended. There were two community representatives and the remainder of the places were filled by partner agencies. It transpired that the SIP manager was unsure of exactly who had attended the session from the partner agencies because several had sent substitutes, instead of the original person invited. In addition, a number of the participants had only attended one day of the training.

Numbers attending fell significantly for modules two and three, with only seven or eight people attending who were representing the SIP. Interviewees in the follow-up study expressed some unhappiness about the attendance. They said that few senior managers (including the SIP manager) had attended and that agency partners had delegated attendance ‘down the food chain’. There were also complaints that most of the community representatives had been sent as delegates of the neighbouring pathfinder. This meant that the staff and community representatives did not take part in the workshop sessions together.

### **Case study E**

Case study E was one of a number of SIPs and pathfinders in a particular local authority. This authority had wanted to use the training in a more integrated way to help feed into the strategy for their Community Plan. This was negotiated with SCDC and the Executive and, instead of sending separate delegations from each SIP or pathfinder, the council as a whole was permitted around 60 people to attend the training. The Council then divided these up into six or seven small groups for the training. The council tried to get a balance of participants by targeting four groups of people who might benefit: community representatives; practitioners (e.g. community development, health visitors); strategic policy staff and decision-makers. Case study E had eight places and community representatives took three of these. There were some complaints from interviewees that some of the important partners had not attended the event.

*“I think that comes back to the problem with the partners not being there. The people who were raising the issues were the people who knew – who experienced them already and the people who should have been listening to them weren't there.” (Case study E – group interview)*

Most of the participants attended the first two modules, but a smaller number attended module three. After module two, the SIP staff decided that they would not attend the final module, due both to time constraints and because they did not feel that the SIP was benefiting from the programme. However, some community representatives and agency staff attended as individuals.

### **Case study F**

Case study F sent 15 participants to the first module and interviewees felt that there was considerable enthusiasm for the training:

*“It was very good, the first one we had a great turnout from our SIP ..It was made up of community and voluntary sector representatives...the community support team and...other partners, like the health board, social work, and police.” (Case study F, community representative, follow-up interview).*

However, the interviewees criticised councillors and senior council staff for not attending the event. Attendance at subsequent events was much lower. This appeared to be largely due to staff changes (including a change in the SIP manager) and turnover in community representatives.

### **Case study G**

The manager of case study G was initially slightly sceptical about the merits of WTLT, but sent the full 15 representatives to module one. After deciding that there was merit in WTLT, additional places were secured, with up to 20 people attending both modules two and three. Although attendance from one key partner agency was disappointing, this increased number of places allowed all the SIP staff to attend modules two and three. The community representatives for this thematic SIP included three or four young people.

The SIP manager from case study G stressed the importance of two factors in achieving high attendance. First, he mailed information about WTLT directly to everybody on the board and on every working group, not just one individual in each organisation. Second, he ensured he gave as much notice as possible to people, as he appreciated that many people’s diaries were full.

### **Declining attendance**

The pattern of attendance in the case studies mirrored the national picture in that the numbers of participants attending from each of the case study organisations, except one, declined across the modules. However, it is apparent that the reasons for this varied. As noted previously, the WTLT trainers relied on the SIP managers to organise attendance from their SIP. It is clear from the case studies that the initial enthusiasm for this task varied and that some had spent more time ensuring that people understood what was required in terms of commitment to the programme and thinking about the balance and appropriateness of representation. As one of the WTLT trainers commented:

*“The SIPs selected participants in different ways. Some of them really thought about who they should send. Others just put a letter round the mailing list and exercised limited control.” (WTLT trainers focus group)*

In three of the case studies (A, E and F) the SIP manager changed during the course of the WTLT programme. The new managers appeared to be less committed to the programme: two did not attend any events. Numbers also fell significantly in case study C, where the SIP manager did not attend the training. The WTLT trainers suggested that this reliance on SIP managers was problematic in some cases. They felt that some of the managers acted as 'gatekeepers' and were very reluctant to allow external trainers onto their 'territory'. However, it was not clear whether there would have been a better outcome had recruitment of participants been organised differently. It would also have been far more resource intensive and onerous for the WTLT consortium to have directly administered recruitment.

There was a suggestion, from some participants, that enthusiasm for the programme may have been affected by the way that it was introduced. Some of the interviewees felt that the programme had been introduced without any consultation about what was required. They resented this 'top-down' approach, which they felt was at odds with the participatory 'bottom-up' ethos of the SIPs.

*"There was no prior consultation of any meaning. I've been involved in lots of other programmes that SCDC have done down south...but where they've worked is where they've come into an organisation with a pot of money and said-'blank sheet of paper, tell us what you want'. Then it's worked as opposed to 'let's do something for the East Midlands or for Yorkshire and get all regeneration partnerships in them'. That never works, and people were very resentful. The lessons have to be learned now, because otherwise, if something like this comes across again, people just won't get involved with it because they'll think, Working Together, Learning Together, it will hold such mantle for people now."*  
(Case study E, SIP staff, follow-up interview)

Some of the WTLT trainers also expressed concern about the perception that the learning agenda was imposed. However, they noted that the Scottish Executive had given them a very specific brief. The Scottish Executive acknowledged that there was limited consultation about the programme and that decisions had been made centrally, before the brief was issued, about the design and broad content. In fairness, it might be argued that there was limited time for wide consultation. If training was to take place, then it had to be delivered during the life of the SIPs. The initial programme ran from April 1999 to March 2002. The training needs analysis took place in 1999 and the consultation was carried out in November 1999. The brief was issued in spring 2000 and, following development work, the training commenced in September 2000, ending in May 2002.

The programme was launched by the Minister for Social Justice at a national conference, to which all SIPs and Pathfinders were invited. However, there were some suggestions that that the programme had not been marketed as well it might have been. One interviewee said that the events were a lot more interesting than the information had led her to believe: *'marketing of it could be better – it sounds really boring, but in reality is quite interesting. (Case study F, partner agency, follow-up interview)*. The Scottish Executive had tried to encourage attendance by writing to each of the SIPs. The trainers felt that this had improved attendance in some cases, but in others it may have been counter productive.

A few interviewees suggested that people might have been put off by the content of the first module, which introduced the concept of social inclusion. However, the WTLT trainers said that this was not reflected in the comments that they received about the programme.

A further contributory factor for declining attendance was the timing of the programme. The Pathfinders set up to run for only three years and were reaching the end of their life by the time that the last events of module three were run. Other SIPs, which had converted from earlier programmes, were also due to change again.

*“The last one was too late any-way. It was only four months before the pathfinder was due to wind up.” (Case study B, partner agency, follow-up interview)*

Finally, there were problems with continuity of attendance. In module 2, the feedback questionnaires indicated that up to 30 per cent of the participants had not attended Module 1. Although, in the initial interviews, all the case study SIPs said that they would try to ensure that the same people attended Modules 2 and 3, in practice, a number of the interviewees said that this would be difficult. This response was typical:

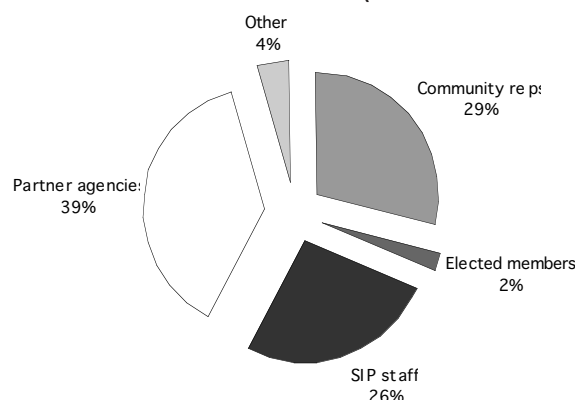
*“Having the same representatives over 18 months is a huge challenge locally, although we’ll do our best to ensure that that happens. People will be there at the start that won’t be at the end and vice versa. We’ve got people out there at the end that weren’t there at the start.” (Case Study A – SIP staff)*

The case studies show that a number of the participants to module 1 did not attend subsequent modules because they had changed jobs and were no longer involved in the SIPs.

### Types of participant

Information on the types of participant attending the training was collected on the feedback questionnaires. As not all the participants returned these, the information was incomplete. However, the WTLT trainers felt that the pattern of attendance which emerged mirrored that of the actual attendance. Figure 3.1 shows the composition of the attendance at WTLT by type of attendee, broken down by community representatives, elected members, SIP staff, partner agency staff, and others. Partner agencies constituted 39 per cent of attendees, community representatives 29 per cent and SIP staff 26 per cent. These three key groups constitute a total of 94 per cent of the attendance at WTLT between them.

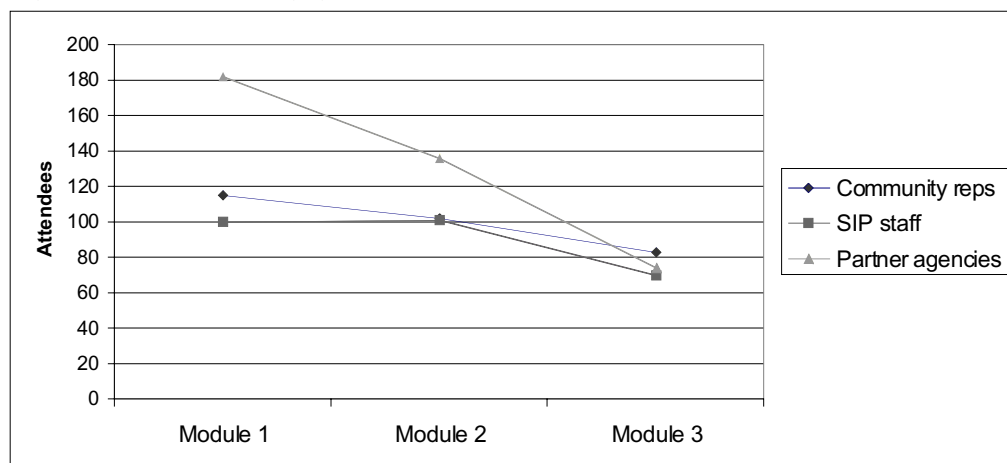
**Figure 3.1 Composition of attendance at WTLT (all modules combined)**



Source: WTLT evaluation forms (n=1029)

It has already been shown that attendance declined over the course of WTLT as the modules progressed. Figure 3.2 shows how the level of attendance changed over the course of the three modules for the three main types of attendee – community representatives, SIP staff and partner agencies. Attendance by community representatives and SIP staff dropped slightly throughout the course of the three modules, but attendance by partner agencies, although starting high, dropped substantially to a level similar to community representatives and SIP staff.

Figure 3.2 Attendance by type of attendee across the three modules



Declining attendance by professionals from statutory partner agencies was cited as a particular problem. There appeared to be a number of reasons for this. First, many professionals thought that they would not benefit from WTLT because they already had sufficient knowledge and experience of working in partnerships. For example, in the words of one (albeit acting) SIP manager who had not attended any of the modules:

*“My own feeling about working together, learning together was that... there were some professionals more in need of that type of training... Now I’m not saying I’m the best at it, but I’ve been around urban regeneration for a long time... and the development of projects in partnership with others is not a concept that’s new to me.”*

Second, the time commitment required for WTLT was too much for some professionals. This relates also to the level of commitment to WTLT and the SIP in general of partner agencies. Even if the individual involved was enthusiastic, if their manager was less committed, then it could be difficult for the individual concerned to secure the required number of days to attend all of WTLT. There was a view that some agencies, as a whole, were less committed to the training than others.

The third reason that it was thought statutory agencies did not attend as well as they might was the fact that staff frequently move on to new posts, and any commitment that may have been developed to WTLT (and the SIP as a whole) is then lost. For example:

*“One area where you do tend to get a lot of turnover is the police, but because of the nature of that organisation, you do tend to move people around quite a bit. It’s bit like the civil service idea, people experiencing different areas and specialisms.” (Case Study D, SIP staff).*

Several of the case studies complained that partner agencies had sent inappropriate people, that key people had not attended or that people did not attend all modules or did not attend both days of some or all modules (case study B, D, F and G). The WTLT trainers confirmed that inappropriate attendance was a common problem and that a number of partner agencies had delegated attendance to relatively junior members of staff who had no direct involvement in SIPs. This was backed up by some of the SIP interviewees, for example:

*“It was very obvious that the names who were put down were not the names that turned up. Whether that’s indicative of people’s priorities – the importance that they attach to it or not, I don’t know. But I can tell you, there was at least one major agency in this area that sent along an admin assistant.” (Case study D, partner agency)*

There were also number of comments about the lack of attendance by councillors. Although there is usually at least one councillor on every SIP board, only 3 or 4 of the potential 60+ elected members attended any of the WTLT events. One interviewee said that it was pointless to invite councillors because ‘they would never dream of going to something like this’. Many of the interviewees expressed concern because they felt that it demonstrated a lack of commitment by partner agencies and councillors. The comments below show the views expressed:

*“Some of the partners feel, and in particular the Councillors, that their time is precious. I mean, everybody’s time is precious but we felt that training on a local basis was really needed and that everybody on the board should participate...That hasn’t really happened and we haven’t had a commitment from that.” (Case study F – group interview)*

The WTLT trainers noted that the role of the SIPs, and their relationship with partner agencies, was very varied and that some were more likely to be able to get senior people to attend than others:

*“In some cases the SIP manager has come back and said that the local authority won’t release people to attend. That reflects the significance of the SIPs to the different areas. Some are clearly seen as major players in regeneration. Others are quite small-scale projects. The role that the manager and the board play is quite different.” (WTLT trainers focus group)*

Finally, some community representatives experienced difficulty in attending WTLT. This was not aided by the fact that in six of the seven case study SIPs community representatives were unpaid, although this issue was raised more frequently by SIP staff and partner agencies than community representatives themselves. Difficulties in attending training events such as WTLT sometimes related to the amount of time that was required, particularly if the community representative has childcare commitments, as was often the case.

## **Suggested changes**

### **One-day or two-day events?**

There was a view, both at the initial and follow-up stages of the research, that the 2-day events required a greater commitment than some people were able to make and that a series of one-day events may have been more productive.

*"I think we probably have to acknowledge that two days is quite a substantial commitment...I just wonder whether they could have usefully...had one day's training in December and the other one in February...It might have kept up the momentum." (Case study F, group interview)*

In response, the WTLT trainers said that they had considered other ways of running the training but there were pros and cons to each of the alternatives. They felt that the format of 3 two-day modules was the best compromise.

### **More flexible structure?**

The comments from interviewees, and the experience in the case studies, indicate the difficulties with a rigid format of events. A number of participants were unable to attend all the events, even when they were enthusiastic. The reasons for non-attendance included illness, holidays and pressure of work. In some cases, participants created their own solutions to this. For example, some individuals, who were involved with more than one SIP, attended a later event. In one case study, the entire SIP changed the event that they were due to attend because the original event was scheduled for the school holidays, and the SIP manager felt that attendance would have been substantially reduced. The advantage of providing greater flexibility for individuals to choose the event that they wanted to attend would be that overall attendance might be increased. However, this would have reduced the focus on the partnership groups working together.

### **Paying community representatives?**

Community representatives were entitled to claim expenses for attendance at WTLT, to cover travel and child-care costs. However, a few interviewees felt that community representatives were slightly resentful they had invested the same amount of time and energy to the training as staff who were paid for their time, as attendance was considered to be part of their job. One noted that some community representatives worked, and would have to take a days holiday or lose a days pay to attend.

*"They just paid expenses, but there was no loss of earnings payments in there as far as I was aware. If there was we should have known about that because that was one of the main reasons a lot of our representatives didn't go along." (Case study E, SIP staff, follow-up interview)*

Another interviewee felt that people from small voluntary agencies, who were SIP partners, would be unable to spare staff to attend. Only one of the case studies paid community representatives to attend. In this area, the representatives were employed by the SIP, on a part-time basis, to provide information and obtain feedback from the local community. However, while this encouraged attendance, some of the interviewees felt that it would have been better if the training had been voluntary rather than paid.

*"Some of the girls only went for the wages, so they got nothing out of it. A handful of people had been prepared to go voluntarily, taking just travelling expenses. They were more committed to the training." (Case study B, partner agency, follow-up interview)*

As a solution to this problem, one interviewee suggested that participants could be issued with a certificate of attendance or paying representatives with a book token. Another suggested that a more effective model would be to pay the community group for each person attending, rather than the individual.

### **Compulsory training?**

A number of the interviewees expressed the view that the training should have been made compulsory:

*"I don't know how you force people to come. It's difficult. I know this is a Scottish Executive programme and that might carry some authority but..."(Case study D, group interview)*

The WTLT trainers considered this possibility at the review day. It was noted that some programmes of training (for example tenant management organisations in England and registered social landlords in Scotland) are compulsory. In addition, these groups must demonstrate a certain level of competence before they will be allowed to manage housing stock. However, this type of training took place before the groups became operational. It was not considered practical to require compulsory training, or training tied to funding. Overall, the trainers thought that mandatory training was not a desirable option.

However, while forcing people to attend particular training courses would be counter-productive, there would be merit in requiring partnerships to take training more seriously. The guidance on Effective Partnership Working (Chapman, 1998) recommended that partnership boards should develop learning strategies at the outset and Chapman et al (2001) suggested that SIPs should carry out a training needs analysis, involving everyone connected with the partnership. In England, the Social Exclusion Unit action plan (SEU, 2001) stressed the importance of developing the skills and knowledge of people involved in neighbourhood renewal. The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit now requires New Deal for Communities partnerships and Neighbourhood Management pathfinders to draw up local learning plans (NRU, 2002). There would be merit in this approach for SIPs.

### **Summary**

There was declining attendance across the modules and attendance at the option events was disappointing. There was a good mix of representatives from partner agencies, community representatives and SIP staff. Attendance by SIP staff and community representatives dropped slightly over the course of the programme, mainly due to natural turnover. However, attendance from partner agencies declined rapidly.

The case studies found that the reasons for the decline in attendance varied. The key factors appear to have been the variation in the enthusiasm of SIP managers to organise attendance from their SIP and the turnover of people involved in the partnerships, particularly in the partner agencies. However, there were a number of other factors were suggested. These included:

- resistance due to views about lack of consultation about the programme
- ineffective marketing and promotion of the programme

- the perceived 'academic' content of the first module
- lack of support by partner organisations
- the timing of the programme - particularly for pathfinders, which were due to end in March 2002.

Nevertheless, participation in the programme should not be viewed negatively. The WTLT trainers felt that overall, attendance had been better than other organisations achieved for paying conferences with similar groups:

*“Overall, I think that the attendance has been very good, in comparison to similar events. Often you get a lot of people who do not turn up on the day.”  
(WTLT trainers focus group)*

Members of the consortium of training organisations confirmed that drop-out rates of 10-20 per cent were very common, even where organisations were paying for places at training events. At longer events, a high proportion of delegates will not attend the whole event. Given that the WTLT training was spread over a 21-month period, the programme did well to maintain attendance levels.

The interviewees suggested various solutions to prevent declining attendance. These included holding one-day rather than two-day events, allowing more flexibility in when individuals attended, paying community representatives to attend, or providing certificates of attendance and making attendance compulsory. The trainers were not in favour of mandatory training. However, while forcing people to attend particular training courses would be counter-productive, there would be merit in requiring partnerships to take training more seriously and to ensure that every-one has the skills and knowledge that they require.



## 4 Views of WTLT training

### Introduction

This section discusses the participants' views of the WTLT training. After looking at the overall satisfaction reported in the feedback questionnaires, the chapter goes on to discuss some of the issues raised by participants. These include the location and timing of the training, the design of the programme, the support provided by the trainers, the package of materials and the website.

### Satisfaction with the training

#### Overall impressions

After each module, participants were asked to complete an appraisal questionnaire. As part of this, they were asked to rate each module overall on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being very dissatisfied and 5 being very satisfied. The mid-point of the scale, three, can be considered to be a neutral rating, while scores of 1 or 2 represent dissatisfaction and scores of 4 or 5 represent satisfaction. Thus, mean scores of over 3 reflect overall satisfaction.

The overall mean appraisal score was 3.8, reflecting a good level of satisfaction with WTLT as a whole. There was no variation at all between the three modules, with each module also achieving a mean score of 3.8.

There was only a small amount of variation between different regional clusters of events. The mean level of satisfaction (across all three modules combined) ranged from 3.6 to 4.1, as shown in figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 Mean overall satisfaction scores by cluster (all modules combined)

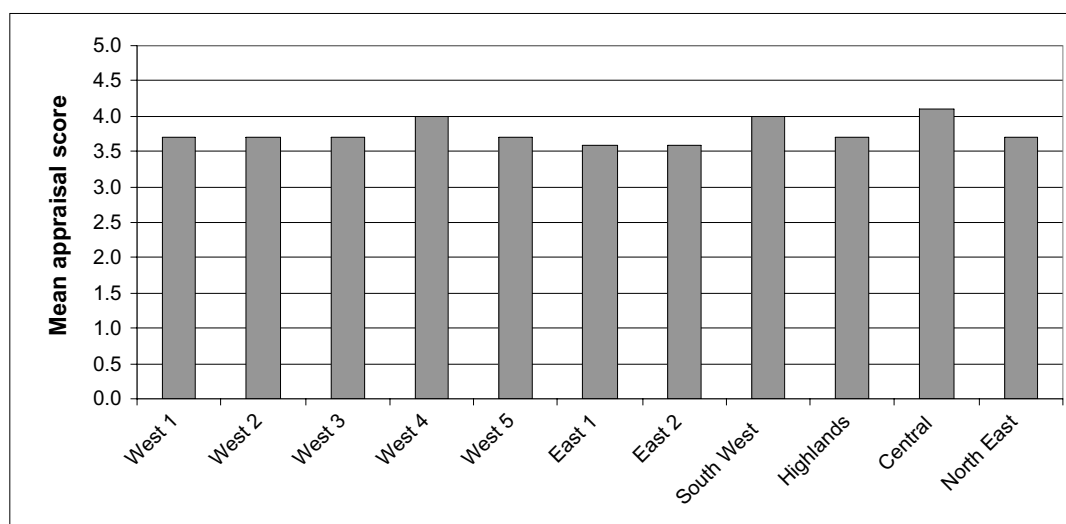
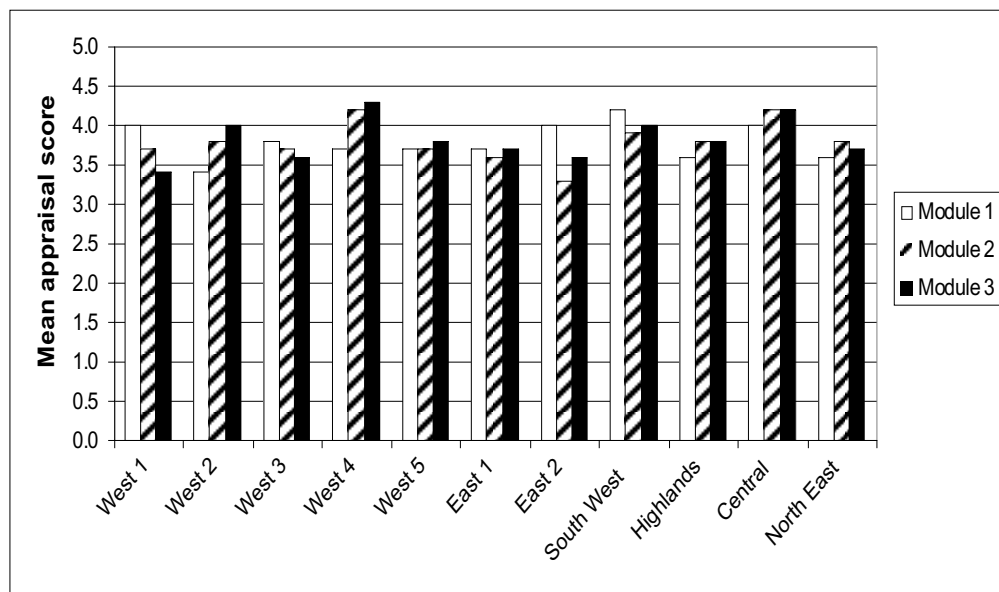


Figure 4.2 shows the breakdown of mean appraisal scores by module and by cluster. Reflecting the fact that all three modules achieved identical mean scores across all the clusters, variation between modules is small and the pattern different in different events. For example, in West 1, module one was rated higher than module three, but the opposite was true in West 2. Across all modules and all clusters, mean appraisal scores ranged from 3.3 (Module 2 in East 2) to 4.3 (Module 3 in West 4). However, this range is relatively small in comparison to the size of the scale and the number of modules and clusters.

**Figure 4.2 Mean overall satisfaction scores by module and cluster**



### Overall views of the training

The section below presents comments from the case study participants on WTLT. It is perhaps inevitable in this type of evaluation that participants will dwell on the problems rather than the positives. It is therefore important to state, at the outset, that the balance of opinion on the training was overwhelmingly positive and that the only a small number of interviewees had a negative view about the event overall. These comments provide a flavour of the overall views:

*“I think we’re focused – as a group, we’re focused on the negative aspects but the overall impression is definitely a very positive experience.” (Case study A – group discussion)*

*“Informally, people have been speaking about it...I think, overall, everybody enjoyed it. I don’t think anybody really found it a waste of time.” (Case study F, partner agency)*

Interviewees also acknowledged the difficulties in presenting a national training event, for large numbers of people of widely differing backgrounds: *I think it’s quite difficult to plonk 80-90 people who may not know each other at all.* (Case study A). It would be difficult, if not impossible, to please all of the people, all of the time. However, interviewees did have comments, both positive and negative, to make about each of the components of the training and these are explored below.

## Design of the modules

Each of the modules used a variety of training methods. There were some 'set-piece' inputs provided in plenary sessions, using papers presented by expert contributors. Each event also concluded with a feedback summary for all participants. However, the majority of the time was spent in small workshop groups, supported by facilitators. In order to provide opportunities for networking between participants, there were various types of groups. Some workshops were focussed on partnership groups, others on 'interest groups' (SIP staff, agencies, community representatives) and some were randomly mixed groups. There were a variety of methods used to facilitate discussion including brainstorming; case studies presented by the SIPs themselves, exercises and tasks.

## Plenary sessions

There were both positive and negative comments about plenary sessions. Almost all the interviewees in the initial interviews were concerned about the level that the plenary sessions had been pitched at. Many of the community representatives admitted that they had been unable to understand the language of the plenary sessions and had 'switched off':

*"I felt that the smaller point discussions were more informative, whereas in the bigger groups...your mind started to wander. Some of the other community representatives were saying too, the use of language – some of us didn't understand it. We were trying to understand what they were talking about. But there was a big problem with the language – we are not used to 'big business' talk or whatever. (Case study B, community representative)*

The WTLT trainers acknowledged that some of the participants had struggled with the formal presentations. However, they felt that Module 1 was about ensuring that participants had a common basis of understanding and knowledge, and that formal presentations were the most appropriate way to deliver this:

*"There is problem with how you deliver the knowledge. For some people the policy and concepts are familiar. There are others who have not been in any kind of further education, so inevitably you will get people saying that this was over our heads. For others it is so simple that they were bored. Finding a balance is impossible. You just have to say that it is important that people have a common starting base. If you don't give people something substantial, there is not going to be enough for them to work with." (WTLT trainers focus group)*

However, by the end of the programme, only a small minority of the interviewees made negative comments about the balance of the programme between large-scale lecture-based plenary sessions and smaller group discussions. Most thought that, on the whole, the balance was good:

*"The speakers have been extremely good and...There have been a lot of group based exercises...I've been through a lot of these things myself sitting watching people participating. I think apart from the first day of module three, I have not seen anybody bored or fed up. That is actually quite an achievement, given the groups that have attended, because there are people who switch off really easily, while others are looking for a huge amount of content. I felt the balance was very good." (Case study E, partner agency, follow-up interview)*

To some extent, the change in views may be because participants became used to the format of the programme (although it is also possible that people who were put off by the formal plenary sessions in Module 1 did not return). However, it was clear from our observations of Module 1 and Module 3 that there was far less emphasis on the plenary sessions in the later module. The WTLT trainers agreed that they had taken the early negative comments on board when designing modules 2 and 3 and made the plenary sessions more participative.

### **Interest groups**

There were mixed views about the smaller discussions in interest groups (SIPs staff, community representatives etc.). A number of the participants enjoyed meeting people from other organisations and found these sessions the most interesting parts of the event. Many participants clearly enjoyed hearing about other groups' experiences and there were a number of positive comments:

*"The really good thing was meeting with other people from other areas and sharing good practices...I thought the two days were different in that sense that it was good for building up relationships, looking at issues and looking at other practices and seeing other groups, how they work, from other areas." (Case study F, community representative)*

The presentations by SIPs themselves were particularly well received. A number of participants commented on how much they had enjoyed presenting things that their SIP had done and it was clear that people had put a lot of effort into their presentations.

On the negative side, other participants felt that there were a number of problems which prevented some interest groups from working properly. First, some interviewees found it difficult to assign themselves to different groups, because they had at least two different roles in the SIPs in their area. Some participants, particularly those from voluntary organisations, did not feel that they had a natural home in any of the groups. Second, some participants from the Pathfinders and thematic SIPs found it difficult to establish common interests with the geographic SIPs who dominated the groups. Third, a number of the SIP staff felt that their discussions had degenerated into moaning sessions, which were unproductive. Fourth, some community representatives were suspicious that staff would be talking about them behind their back. Finally, some interviewees felt that the sessions were too rushed.

### **Workshops with own SIP**

The comments about these sessions were overwhelmingly positive. Participants appreciated both the opportunities to meet and discuss issues with other people involved in their partnership (some of whom only met for the first time at the training) and to step back and consider wider issues:

*"The thing that I found most useful about it was just having time to spend talking to people, hearing the issues, being made more aware of why this is a problem, why that would help. And also just – working together, learning together. Just getting to know people makes a big difference and we don't have time to do that necessarily as we hurtle around." (Case study E, partner agency)*

*"I think it was quite good to get together. That alone was worthwhile having an opportunity to speak as a group outwith the general and usual meetings that you would have. I think it was quite an informal way to get people together to look at issues and get to know people a wee bit better as well."* (Case study C, SIP Staff, follow-up interview)

There were many appreciative comments about the exercises that were carried out in the workshop sessions. Interviewees commented that these were well thought out and imaginative. It was clear that these were the parts of the events that people particularly enjoyed and remembered best.

## Content

There were relatively few negative comments about the content of the modules. The most common complaint was that the programme, particularly the plenary sessions, had too much jargon. This was particularly noticeable in the initial interviews, where participants had recently attended module one. The trainers were conscious of the need for plain language. However, they argued that it was difficult to discuss the concepts of issues without using the terminology.

Several of the representatives from case study E made the point very strongly, that they felt there was a major gap in the content of the training in relation to equalities issues.

*"We now know that...we must also look at equality in everything we do. If we were something like that again, we would have to have a strong equality module at the very beginning. To talk about social inclusion in general terms is not good enough."* (Case study E, partner agency, follow-up interviews)

Equality issues were dealt with by the programme in one of the option events, and were mentioned in the community participation module. However, with the benefit of hindsight, the trainers agreed that equality issues should have been woven in to the programme throughout, in the same manner as principles of social inclusion and social justice. They also felt that all the issues covered by the options programme themes could have been integrated more into the main modules.

Several of the interviewees felt that the programme needed more emphasis on strategic planning in partnerships. One felt that that coverage of this issue in the WTLT training was *'very academic and very much concepts'* but that there was a need for discussion of the practical aspects.

Some of the trainers also felt that the module on community participation had not been sufficiently radical. They suggested that there was not enough emphasis on community *empowerment*, rather than *participation*. However, other trainers felt that in practice, most SIPs had some way to go before communities were equal partners in the partnership. They felt that the gentler introduction of discussion of effective structures and methods of participation was more appropriate to the culture in which the majority of the SIPs operated. Although none of the participants raised this specifically, the issue was implicit in some of the comments from participants. A number of community representatives and partner agencies from the voluntary sector felt that the statutory agencies still held on to too much power and were unwilling to give control to communities.

## **WTLT trainers**

This large-scale programme involved a number of different agencies in the provision of the training. Overall, there were 22 trainers involved in the programme and between 10 and 14 trainers at each event. The trainers felt that one of the strengths of the WTLT programme was that there was a large body of training expertise in the consortium members. Each SIP was assigned a 'link' trainer, whose role was to lead the partnership sessions and carry out any follow-up work required. In each of the workshop sessions there were two trainers - usually the link trainer and a co-trainer. The co-trainers role was intended to be supportive - ensuring that the workshops ran smoothly and writing up points on the flip-chart where required.

In practice, however, there were sometimes difficulties. A number of the trainers felt that the roles were not clear and that some of the link trainers had been better than others at briefing the co-trainers. In addition, there were a number of changes in personnel amongst the training team, due to staff turnover in the agencies in the consortium. Some of the partners in the consortium also admitted that providing personnel for WTLT had not been a high priority - resulting in different trainers attending each session. There were occasions when the WTLT co-ordinators were not sure which trainers would be supporting a particular session. The participants sometimes noted these problems, as this comment illustrates:

*"Some were better prepared than others, to put it bluntly... I thought (X) was very good at doing a very difficult job but I can't remember who the chap was - I just didn't know why he was there to be honest. But they did very well given the circumstances." (Case study A, SIP worker)*

More positively, the vast majority of the participants spoke very highly about the quality of the trainers who worked on the programme. A number of the link trainers were particularly praised. There were a number of comments which were as enthusiastic as the one below:

*"Some of the facilitators were absolutely excellent...Those who really had all the training tools at their fingertips were really good, the ones that could see that a session wasn't going very well and adjust it to make it fit, and could really read what the audience wanted. Our facilitator was able to do that, after the first time...she really knows us well, and that was invaluable, having somebody that really got to grips with what we were all about. She is obviously a very skilled facilitator, so I think she made a big difference. She made the exercises come alive and mean something." (Case study C, partner agency, follow-up interview)*

## **Materials and website**

In order to provide the participants with information for reference and background material, the papers for each of the WTLT modules were given to participants, along with a ring-binder to hold them. In addition, each SIP was also given several copies of a *Handbook of Policy and Practice on Involving Communities* (Taylor, 2001). This provided a wide range of examples of practices drawn from the SIPs and Pathfinders.

The majority of the interviewees said that they appreciated this information and a number said that they used it since the WTLT programme. Some said

that copies had been circulated around the SIP board and SIP staff. People who were involved in training others, including a number of agency staff and WTLT trainers, felt that the pack contained much useful material which they had been able to use in their own training events. The only negative comments concerned the size of the folder: one said that it contained too much information (which she would never read) and another said that it was cumbersome to carry about during the events.

The handbook on involving communities appeared to be particularly well-used by those that had seen it. Several of the interviewees mentioned it specifically and said that they had used it to see what other SIPs had done on particular issues. However, it should be noted that a number of the interviewees were not aware that the handbook existed. This may be because they missed the final event, or because the copies that were given to each SIP were not widely circulated.

At the initial interviews, only a few of the interviewees had tried to use the WTLT website to follow up training, but those that had were not impressed. Some had difficulty logging on and others felt that there was nothing on the site of interest. Participants generally liked the idea of the website and some were thinking of using it, but there was a general view that it needed to be improved.

By the time of the follow-up interviews, a year later, a number of the interviewees said that they had used the WTLT site to obtain information and some had logged onto the discussion forums, but it was clear that others had not tried again since their early unsuccessful attempts. In addition, some of the interviewees had only recently obtained internet access or learnt how to use it. The WTLT trainers agreed that the website had been slow to develop and had had technical difficulties at the outset. However, several felt that it had become an effective resource.

We examined the site and felt that it did contain a lot of useful information which would be of use for people involved in SIPs. However, it did appear to be under-utilised. Use of the site could be expanded if there were links to it from other sites (for example, Communities Scotland and Scottish Urban Regeneration Forum). There was a link from the Scottish Executive's social justice web page but, unlike the other entries, the link did not include any explanation about the content of the site.

## **Venues**

Although it may seem unimportant, most trainers know that the venue can play an important part in the success of an event. This was also acknowledged by many of the participants:

*"A good venue and good food are important, as people will network under these conditions." (Case study A, partner agency, follow-up interview)*

The events were held in hotels and, in the case of Glasgow, conference areas at Celtic Park Football Stadium. On the whole, venues were viewed very positively. However, some interviewees expressed unease with the corporate feel of the accommodation. Interviewees in one case study said that they found the country house, in which the events were held, was intimidating at first. Another said using nice hotels and catering 'can stick in the throat of

voluntary sector organisations with very limited resources of their own' (Case study C, partner agency follow-up interview). Another interviewee echoed this:

*"There is something about, and it's not the freebiness of it, but do you know what I mean, in a hotel, having lunch, it's out of sync with the lives of the people we deal with here. They didn't go overboard with it though. It wasn't anything that was out of sync with what you might get in other forums."* (Case study G, SIP staff, follow-up interview)

However, some venues used for Module 1 had problems with heating or other physical conditions. For example:

*"We did ours in Parkhead. The first module was murder because you were either sitting in the freezing cold or you had the heating on that meant you couldn't hear a word that was being said, so that was poor...But the other twice we were at Celtic Park it was absolutely fine."* (Case study G, SIP staff, follow-up interview)

A number of people said that the rooms in which group discussions were held were too small. At one event, some workshops were held in hotel bedrooms. In contrast, some interviewees said that the rooms used for plenary sessions were too big. This contributed to some speakers being difficult to hear. As a result of the feedback on module 1, the WTLT trainers changed a number of the rooms in which events were held for modules 2 and 3. This resulted in increased levels of satisfaction for the remainder of the programme.

## **Timing**

The timescale of the programme was chosen because it provided regional events that most SIPs could travel to easily, a mix of SIPs (five or six attending each event), a manageable size (75-90 at each event) and completion before the pathfinders were due to end. A number of interviewees felt that the skills and knowledge covered by the training was needed at the outset of the partnership and that training started too late into the life of the SIPs. For most SIPs, the training began 18 months after the establishment of the partnership. Several interviewees said that, by this time, many decisions had been made and relationships formed, which were difficult to change. In addition, many felt that the gap between the modules was too long. Although acknowledging the demands on people's time that decreased spacing between modules would entail, this interviewee summed up the problem of timing:

*"One of the other things that was identified...was the timing and the gap between the various modules. I know that there could well have been discussions about how close together can you put six or seven days of training when you're talking about people who are volunteers.. but there certainly was a fair time span between them."* (Case study D, follow-up group discussion).

The trainers themselves recognised the potential benefit to the programme of it being organised with each cohort going through the programme over a much shorter period. However, bearing in mind the constraints of a national programme for 900 participants, the main alternatives would have been:

- Shortening the whole timescale of the programme – but this would have meant fewer larger events. Some SIPs would have had to travel much further to attend.

- Planning the modules so that each group of SIPs went through the programme in a shorter timescale – but this would have meant that some SIPs would have had to wait a long time to start the programme.

The trainers felt that there were advantages and disadvantages to each of the alternatives. On balance, it was felt that chosen programme was the most effective model. However, the trainers thought that more time was needed at the outset for link trainers to contact each SIP, discuss their specific needs and promote the programme. Both trainers and participants suggested a local day between each event.

### **National or local?**

Some of the interviewees expressed very strong views about the nature of a nationally developed package of training. The comment below was one of several that expressed similar views:

*“The thing about the package is there probably should have been more in- depth training needs analysis done, based on the local areas, so that you could have a package that was actually tailored to each local authority area. There were just the three in this area, but they were all at different stages of development, so to have a generic package across the three, potentially it wasn’t really relevant.” (Case study D, partner agency, follow-up interviews)*

There was widespread feeling that the training needed to be tailored more to the needs of individual partnerships, either through more flexibility of what was on offer or (again) through more local events between each of the main events. A number of the interviewees felt that one of the key advantages of national events was the opportunity to meet people from other SIPs:

*“I think that the money that was used for the separate training would be perhaps better invested to bring together ...your individual SIP group, in between times, formally, rather than it being left to the SIPs. That would have been quite useful. It’s difficult when you think about how you can improve, because all these things are quite different. There were benefits of meeting up with people from other SIPs as well, and there was benefits of being together in your own SIP group.” (Case study A, partner agency, follow-up interview).*

However, a minority of the interviewees felt that meeting other SIPs was neither important nor useful.

The brief for Working Together Learning Together specified the development of a national programme and reasons for this were not explicitly stated. The trainers acknowledged the pros and cons of national versus local programmes. The key advantage of a national programme, from the participants’ point of view, was that it promoted networking between the SIPs. From the government’s point of view, ministers wanted WTLT to be about making partnerships more effective and changing the culture of partner agencies. A national programme ensured that all the SIPs had the same package of skills and knowledge. Conversely, developing materials for a series of very local programmes would have enabled trainers to be more flexible and tailor material much more specifically to the needs of each partnership. However, it would probably have been much more expensive.

Among the trainers, a minority felt that local training programmes would have been better, because it was felt to be difficult to tailor a large national programme to local needs. However, the majority of the trainers at the WTLT review day felt that, taking into account the pros and cons of national and local programmes, on balance, a single national programme was a more appropriate way to deliver the skills and knowledge required.

### **Area versus thematic**

Overall, participants from the thematic SIPs were more critical of the programme than those from area-based SIPs and were more likely to feel that a training programme that was tailored to their specific needs would have been more appropriate than a national programme. There was criticism of the content, design and delivery. In terms of content, several of the interviewees from the thematic SIPs felt that the programme was heavily geared towards the needs of the geographic groups. For example, some interviewees felt that the module on social inclusion focussed too heavily on area regeneration rather than on the needs of specific groups. One interviewee commented that:

*“I know that other SIPs...anti-racist ones, some of the young person SIPs... they’ve had a similar sort of problem. It’s like, ‘we’re here to talk about young people not housing regeneration’ so I think that wasn’t fully thought through, but that’s the problem with SIPs full stop. The thematic ones are just like bolt on to the geographic ones, they’re the ones that matter really to the Executive.” (Case study E, group follow-up interview)*

Others felt that the module on working with communities assumed that the community would be area-based. One interviewee from a SIP working with young people felt that *‘the stuff on community empowerment is not 100 per cent relevant, especially given that the ‘community’ in question is young people’* (Case study D, partner agency follow-up interview). However, this interviewee did concede that the SIP had opportunities within the partnership group sessions to create their definitions of ‘community’ and ‘empowerment’ which fitted their situation and to consider how they might improve participation in the SIP.

A number of the interviewees from the two thematic groups focussed on young people felt that the design of the programme was not attractive to young people: *they weren’t prepared for young people and the tasks were not geared towards young people either* (Case study C, SIP staff, follow-up interview). However, this view was not supported by everyone in these groups.

*“I was critical of it to begin with about its lack of content for young people, and probably would say they didn’t change the programme at all. But that didn’t seem to matter to our young people, so maybe I got it wrong.” (Case study G, SIP staff, follow-up interview)*

One interviewee felt that the young people had benefited from their attendance because it had provided an opportunity for them to be heard. Another felt that it had been successful because it provided an *‘opportunity for our young people to mix in a more equal basis with people who they see as professional staff’* (Case study G, SIP staff, follow-up interview). In addition, the interviews with some of the young people who attended indicated that they had enjoyed the sessions and took them seriously. As one young person put it:

*“What I always remember doing was getting dressed up in a suit and going along, so I was putting in a better effort there than what I would going to the Job Centre. I was up out my bed at eight o’clock to go there because it didn’t start till nine, but if I was going to an appointment with the Job Centre I probably wouldn’t go till half an hour later.” (Case study G, community representative, follow-up interview)*

More critically, interviewees in case study E, who were a thematic group dealing with people from black and ethnic minority groups, felt that their experience of the programme had been marred by undercurrents of racism. They said that there had been a number of racist comments by participants from other SIPs, which were not challenged by the WTLT trainers. The WTLT trainers had used black trainers to work with this group, but the interviewees from this SIP felt that there was a need for all the facilitators to have training on how to address racism.

*“A lot of those facilitators need to revisit their skills around facilitating groups where you’ve got black people. It’s not just about cultural awareness; it’s about understanding the dynamics of how racism can display itself in that sort of group setting.” (Case study E, SIP Staff)*

In fairness, the council partner of this SIP felt that she would not have dealt with the issues any differently from the way that the WTLT trainers handled such comments.

A number of the interviewees from thematic SIPs felt that they had had little in common with the geographic SIPs, and that they therefore learnt little from the sessions meeting with other SIPs.

*“There wasn’t enough in common to really get anything out of them and so the sharing was interesting but not particularly useful to the partnership.... Whereas, in the sessions when we were together as a partnership, we could then actually start planning how we were going to address the issues rather than just raising them and talking about them. So I didn’t find the joint sessions particularly helpful.” (Case study C, group follow-up interview)*

However, other interviewees felt that the interaction between thematic SIPs and area-based SIPs had been useful, because it provided the thematic SIPs with an opportunity to make a wide range of agencies and communities aware of the problems faced by particular groups. It was also clear, from the interviews, that area-based SIPs had appreciated the input from the thematic partnerships on issues such as involving young people and ethnic minorities.

The WTLT trainers were aware that some of the thematic SIPs were less satisfied with the programme, although they noted that this was not true of all thematic SIPs. Among the case studies, there were variations in opinion between the three thematic SIPs, and between different participants within each SIP. For example, interviewees from case study G made a few negative comments, but overall, participants from this SIP felt that the programme had been very helpful. The trainers agreed that some of the thematic SIPs had specific learning needs, but they felt that the link trainers had tried to address these in the smaller group sessions. There were also opportunities for needs to be addressed in the follow-up sessions. Overall, they felt that the national training programme had allowed the thematic partnerships to build links with area-based partnerships and the pathfinders in a way that was beneficial to both.

## **Cost**

The overall cost of the programme, of around £1 million, had been publicised by the Scottish Executive and was known by many of the participants. Many of the interviewees commented on how expensive this seemed. However, this global sum includes the development of the materials, the trainers and administrative support, the venue hire, lunches, the package of materials, development of the website and the evaluation.

Participants in at least two of the case study SIPs indicated that they would have preferred the Scottish Executive to give the money to the SIPs themselves.

*"I don't think it is sensible or indeed practical to develop national training programmes. I shudder to think how much it has cost... I think it could be done much better at local level." (Case study C, partner agency, follow-up interview)*

*"I would have much preferred to have twenty grand from working together learning together... and do it that way. They could have said 'right here's your pot of money locally, you decide, we'll evaluate it. You've got to feedback to us and tell us what you've done and we want to see outputs'." (Case Study E, SIP staff, follow-up interview)*

Conversely, the WTLT trainers felt that they had been under pressure to deliver the programme in a very tight timescale with limited resources. They also considered that the administrative resources, to co-ordinate a large number of large-scale events were particularly tight.

Each of the 61 SIPs and pathfinders was entitled to send 15 participants for seven days of training, plus follow-up time of one day. Therefore, the actual costs were around £16,000 per SIP or approximately £135 per participant per day. Typically events of this sort of scale, aimed at statutory agencies, charge around £200 per participant per day (some-times much more). The cost-comparison therefore suggests that the programme was not expensive.

In practice, some SIPs sent more people and had more follow-up time while others sent fewer and did not take use the follow-up time. This suggests that those SIPs that took maximum advantage of the programme undoubtedly received good value for their 'share' of the total.

It should also be noted that the SIPs had budgets for staff and community development and that the national programme aimed to complement local training. As chapter 2 indicated, the research found that many of the SIPs had organised some local training but there was considerable variability between the case studies and only one of the case studies had organised any events for every-one involved in the SIP to learn together. On this evidence, it appears unlikely that simply giving the money to SIPs would have resulted in the programme that the Scottish Executive wanted.

## **Summary**

The feedback questionnaires from the modules show reasonable levels of satisfaction with the WTLT training. There was little variation in satisfaction levels between different modules or from the different groups of SIPs that attended the training.

Each of the modules used a variety of training methods, with both large-scale plenary sessions involving all the participants and small-scale group work. Initially, participants felt that the first module had too much emphasis on plenary sessions. The WTLT trainers altered the balance for the remaining modules and, by the end of the programme, most participants felt the balance was about right. Comments about the mixed small groups with other SIPs were mixed but the views about the workshops in SIP groups were very positive.

There were relatively few negative comments about the content of the modules. The most common complaint was that the programme, particularly the plenary sessions, had too much jargon. Some interviewees felt that there was a major gap in the content of the training in relation to equalities issues and several felt that the programme needed more emphasis on strategic planning in partnerships. Some of the trainers also felt that the module on community participation had not placed sufficient emphasis on community *empowerment*.

There were a large number of trainers involved in the programme and, inevitably, a few participants felt that some trainers were better than others. However, the vast majority of interviewees praised the quality of training.

The majority of the interviewees said that they appreciated the package of material provided and a number said that they used it since the WTLT programme. By the end of the programme, the web-site contained a good selection of useful information and links. However, some interviewees had been put off by initial technical difficulties and the site was under-utilised.

Although a few participants felt that the hotels used for the training were too nice, most felt that the quality of venue was about right. Some of the venues used for the first module clearly had some problems, but these were overcome for later events. Given the level of complaint about these initial problems, it is certain that cheaper, poorer quality venues would have attracted a high volume of complaint.

A number of interviewees felt that the training started too late into the life of the SIPs, and that the time-span between the modules was too long. While there were advantages and disadvantages in alternative models, on balance, it was felt that chosen programme was the most effective model. However, the trainers thought that more time was needed, between events, for local training.

There were a number of strong views about whether there should have been a national programme at all. Some participants felt that the resources should have been given to SIPs to spend on training, others felt that smaller, localised events would have allowed more flexibility to adapt the training to suit the needs of individual groups. Interviewees from the thematic SIPs were more likely to feel that tailored local training would have been more suited to their needs. However, the majority of the trainers felt that the national programme was the most appropriate way to deliver the skills and knowledge.

Some of the participants felt that the programme was very expensive. However, the costs actually were equivalent to around £16,000 per SIP or around £135 per planned participant per day. Comparison with similar events suggests that the programme was not expensive.



## 5 Follow-up sessions

### Introduction

It has been noted previously that there were long gaps between each of the modules that the SIPs attended. The programme allowed two days of a facilitators' time to support follow-up work between modules, which the partnerships could use in any way that they wished. This chapter examines the use of the follow-up days, across all the SIPs and pathfinders and assesses the ways in which in the case study organisations had chosen to follow-up the WTLT training.

### Overall use of follow-up sessions

Overall, around half the SIPs took advantage of the follow-up days. The WTLT trainers felt that those that did, tended to be the SIPs who were more receptive to the programme. The WTLT trainers felt that on-going links depended on several key factors. First, the stage of development was thought to be particularly important: newer SIPs seemed to be most enthusiastic about follow-up work because they saw it as a way to focus on their aims and objectives. Some of the 'older' SIPs that had converted from other programmes also found it useful to have follow-up work where they were undertaking a systematic programme of review, or preparing for further change.

Second, the WTLT trainers felt that the role of the SIP manager was crucial. Around half a dozen (10 per cent) were thought to have done *'some real strategic thinking about how WTLT can fit in'* (WTLT trainers) and had taken advantage of the resource offered to help them to make changes. A further third (around 20 SIPs) was felt to be actively engaged with the process. However, some SIP managers were perceived to be very reluctant to allow external trainers onto their patch and attempts to follow-up the WTLT events sometimes failed, even where other participants wanted to use this support.

Third, a number of SIP managers expressed concerns about the resources required to follow-up the training properly. They felt that SIP staff would have to devote substantial time and resources to follow through all the issues raised and suggested that the programme should have provided more resources to assist work at a local level:

*"We've got one day of our trainer's time. We could use a lot more than that, but that's an example of the kind of thing that might be provided... I think that a lot of things that the Executive does – they start something off and you put a lot of resources into getting it kicked off and then you have to keep putting resources into back up what you're doing so that you maintain the benefit from it."* (Case study D, SIP staff)

Some of the SIPs who had taken up the opportunity for follow-up work had decided to 'buy' additional time. In some cases, the council had funded the additional support and in others the SIPs had used their own community support budgets.

Finally, a number of the SIPs had internal difficulties. The WTLT trainers were aware that some of the SIPs were unable deal with the issues and ideas raised by the training because it was clear, from the WTLT sessions, that they were not addressing some fundamental problems. Several of the trainers expressed frustration that the programme did not allow scope to address local issues that were raised during the events. In practice, they did follow up concerns by raising them with the SIP managers. However, they could not assist further unless they were invited to do so. In two of the case studies, several of the participants indicated that at least some of the problems arose due to the attitude and approach of the SIP manager. In such cases, the manager may well have been reluctant to allow the WTLT trainers to attempt to mediate or resolve the situation.

### **Case study approaches to follow-up**

There was a general recognition from interviewees that, in order for the training to have sustained impact, they would have to arrange follow up sessions for the SIP in between modules. However, the case studies had chosen to follow-up the WTLT training in very different ways, some more successfully than others. These approaches are described below.

#### **Case study A**

Case study A began with a very systematic approach to following up the WTLT training. Before the WTLT training began, the SIP manager had decided to use the modules as a 'hook' for integrated training.

*"We were very conscious as a partnership before module 1 even, of what the impact of that would be locally, how were we going to ensure that Module 1 was meaningful locally and what happened in between Module 1 and Module 2. So the SIP management board established a Working Together Learning Together group." (Case study A, SIP staff)*

Following Module 1, the SIP staff circulated the notes written up by the facilitator to board members, team leaders and community representatives. This was followed up by an internally organised event, in which people who had attended the first module shared their views with others. There was general agreement from other interviewees in this case study that the WTLT programme had spurred a wide ranging discussion about the policy of the SIP, relating to the sense of community in the area, the pace of change and involvement of partners and the community.

However, the SIP manager left soon afterwards, and there was no formal follow-up to Module 2. Nevertheless, several of the interviewees said that the issues discussed at training had been raised at the partnership board and had resulted in changes:

*"That was the one as well when (the SIP manager) had not long left...and the community representatives were saying they weren't getting information...passed down...the council was keeping everything to themselves and the communication had broken down. There was a lot that was brought to the surface (during the WTLT training)...which was quite good because I think that it did definitely feed back up to the council...It was a good opportunity for the community representatives to say how they felt about how things were going at that point...It's actually changed for the better since then." (Case study A, group follow-up interview).*

A formal follow-up session, with WTLT facilitators took place after Module 3. This discussed issues that had been identified by the SIP, including improving communications between SIP partner agencies and promoting awareness of the SIP:

*“A key one was about communication and about improving it across the SIP and between different partners...One of the other ones was about promoting SIP and raising awareness, which I think you have to keep doing. It’s not just a one-off thing, so it really was generating ideas about how best to do that.” (Case study A, partner agency, follow-up interview)*

### **Case study B**

Case study B had been less successful in taking the training forward. They had put feedback from module one of the WTLT training on the agenda of the steering group but did not get round to discussing it:

*“We came out with a number of points. We did actually put it on the agenda for the steering group but we never got to it... Perhaps it is something that we should return to – but it’s time – we have only got one meeting every three months of the full steering group and the time gets eaten up.” (Case study B, pathfinder staff)*

Although, this pathfinder had planned to set up a training day with their WTLT facilitator after Module 2, which would aim to ‘pull bits from the first training and this training...and perhaps bring people that weren’t at the training on board’, this did not happen. A final follow-up day was offered but was not taken up because ‘they (the board) didn’t see the point and the pathfinder was finishing’ (pathfinder staff). What appears to have happened is that the pathfinder became bogged down with a number of internal difficulties, and was unable to address the WTLT agenda. The case study did engage an independent consultant to facilitate board meetings and did have a final review day at the end of the pathfinder. However, these sessions did not specifically relate to the WTLT agenda.

### **Case study C**

Initially, case study C was unsure about how they would use the WTLT training. However, the first module raised concerns about the roles and responsibilities of the SIP and its partner agencies. The SIP then decided to use the follow-up sessions offered and this resulted in three half-day sessions, one after each module. The first session, involving both SIP staff and partner agencies, aimed to clarify the roles. The second brought together the partner agencies and aimed to clarify the objectives and the third session was for the SIP staff to discuss the way forward. Following these sessions, the SIP engaged a new facilitator, for a half-day session, to help them map out a future strategy and action plan for the SIP. A further session was planned to complete this work. Interviewees said that the follow-up sessions had been very useful:

*“These were very good because: it is a chance to say what you think without being judged; gets the SIP together away from the day-to-day grind; a chance to reflect on achievements and future priorities.” (Case study C, SIP staff, follow-up interview)*

### **Case study D**

In Case study D, the WTLT facilitator had a meeting with the SIP manager and a number of people who had attended the training, to discuss the issues which arose during module one.

*“The first session was very much about clearing the air; about people getting a lot of stuff off their chest. I don’t really think that we would have as good an opportunity to do that without Working Together Learning Together.” (Case study D, SIP staff)*

A final day with the WTLT facilitator had been offered, and some of the interviewees were keen to take this up. However, others indicated that the SIP was already taking issues forward, as part of their wider strategy review. The SIP had established a sub-group to examine ways of changing the focus of the partnership to community planning. Interviewees indicated that they had used feedback from an evaluation of the SIP, along with the discussions which had taken place in the WTLT modules to carry out this review:

*“There’s been a bit of development work in between most of the modules. We’re now reviewing the actions from last year and then drawing up the programme for this year... So you had the Working Together Learning Together stuff going on and you had the evaluation going on. The stuff that came out of the Working Together Learning Together was really a mirror to what was coming out this other evaluation, so it was like a twin track. It just reinforced what had come out of the training modules.” (Case study C, partner agency, follow-up interview)*

However, separately from the main SIP board, some of the WTLT participants in this area had used the WTLT trainers to follow up the training. Following the second module, staff working in a local community centre decided to set up a Workers Forum, to help the various professionals to communicate more effectively with each other and with the community. The forum had held a number of meetings, facilitated by a WTLT trainer. One commented that this had ‘helped new people who were maybe coming into the area after the Working Together Learning Together process had started’ (Case study D, group follow-up interview).

### **Case study E**

In the initial interviews, the interviewees from case study E were very keen to have follow-up training, involving every-one in their partnership. Several of the interviewees said that they would like to repeat the group exercises with the whole group and examine some of the issues in more depth. However, the SIP did not have any specific follow-up events just for them. Instead, the local authority had organised council-wide follow-up events, between each module, involving all the SIPs in the area. These were facilitated by the WTLT trainers and were aimed at people who had not been able to attend the national modules. The council were also planning to take the WTLT training forward and had developed a package with the WTLT organisers:

*“We decided that module four should be helping (this area) and should... take over learning points from the WTLT and put them together as a package for delivery to (this area). Some of the best that we’ve got actually has been the experience of learning exchange where we’ve looked at recipes that have worked between different organisations.” (Case study E, partner agency, follow-up interview)*

However, in practice, the council-wide modules did not appear to have been well-attended by the case study SIP. The SIP staff indicated that they felt that neither the WTLT training, nor the council-run events, met their needs. Instead they had developed a programme of themed partnership board meetings, involving partner agencies and community representatives. The SIP staff felt that these were the most effective way of training people:

*“Communities grab onto issues and themes, better than they do onto financial reports, development working reports or...formal committees. We found that a themed presentation and any discussion around the theme works very well.” (Case study E, SIP staff, follow-up interview)*

Recent presentations had included talks from the police on their role in racial harassment, a discussion on community safety involving a wide range of agencies and education. The SIP staff felt that these had helped both agencies and community representatives to understand the roles of different agencies and the need for joined up thinking.

### **Case study F**

Case study F did not arrange any formal follow-up sessions involving the WTLT facilitators. Initially, they organised a sub-group of WTLT participants to discuss some of the issues that were raised. However, this had difficulty in maintaining momentum:

*“We should have maybe met more often in between. Again it comes down to time but I think there’s too much time in between... We’ve only had one meeting and this is supposed to be our second one and not everybody’s here. It’s really is hard to keep that momentum up.” (Case study F – SIP staff)*

By the time the follow-up interviews took place, many of the original participants, including the original SIP manager, had left. Although some individuals had continued to attend WTLT training, there did not appear to be much feedback to the SIP.

### **Case study G**

The SIP manager in case study G had decided to use the WTLT training to improve joint working with partner agencies and to pursue greater participation by young people in services provide for them. He readily admitted that this *‘was not Working Together Learning Together’s agenda. That was our agenda’*. However, he felt that WTLT had provided an appropriate vehicle for change. Case study G held two follow-up meetings in between the modules, with the WTLT facilitators. Both of these were joint meetings between SIP staff and the local authority staff, to progress specific issues.

*“One was about trying to progress an agenda about raising the average age at which youngsters leave care, which wasn’t so successful. And then we held one last week, which was how you involve young people in the decision-making process...That seemed to go okay.” (Case study G, SIP staff, follow-up interview)*

## **Summary**

Overall, around half the SIPs took advantage of the follow-up days. Those that did, tended to be the SIPs who were more receptive to the programme. The WTLT trainers felt that only a small number of SIPs (around 10 per cent) had thought strategically about how the training could be used to improve joint working and community empowerment, and had used the follow-up days to maximum effect. A further third had actively engaged with the programme.

There was varied follow-up among the seven case study organisations. Two of the case studies (B and F) did not have any of the offered follow-up sessions with WTLT trainers. In contrast, case studies C and G had had a number of follow-up sessions. Case study E had not had any follow-up sessions specifically for their SIP, but had instead organised their own training for their own agenda. In case study A, the participants followed up the training themselves between modules, but used the WTLT facilitator for a final session at the end of the training. In case study D, there was one follow-up session after the first module, but the main SIP board had then progressed strategy development separately from the WTLT training. However, some of the partner agencies had used the WTLT trainers to follow up the WTLT training.

The WTLT trainers felt that there were several key factors which influenced decisions on follow-up work. The stage of development of the SIP was felt to be the most important and new SIPs were thought more likely to be enthusiastic about follow-up work. Second, the role of the SIP manager was crucial. In some organisations, (such as case study D) the SIP manager did not attend the training and was therefore unlikely to see the value of follow-up work.

Third, there were concerns about the resources required to follow-up the training properly and a number of the case study SIPs had used their own resources for follow-up training. Finally, a number of the SIPs had internal difficulties. In some cases, (such as case study C), the SIP had used the follow-up sessions to work through the barriers. In others (such as case study B) the problems meant that they were unable to address the WTLT agenda.

## 6 Learning outcomes of the training

### Introduction

This section discusses what participants' felt that they learnt from the training and discusses the outcomes of the training. As noted in chapter 2, the original aims of the programme were to ensure that:

- all partners have core knowledge about social inclusion policy and regeneration processes and activities
- all partners have the core knowledge about each others' roles and responsibilities in relation to SIPs and pathfinders
- agencies developed the skills to listen effectively and value community interests
- community representatives have the skills, confidence and knowledge to question agencies.

### Social inclusion

Module one was specifically focussed on social inclusion policies and the role of partnerships in promoting this. There was clear evidence that many of the interviewees had obtained a better understanding of the wider picture about social inclusion and the government policies on this from the training. For some people, the training had brought a new perspective and in others it had reinforced their views:

*"I think it's made folk like myself who are working on projects more aware of the issues in the areas, more knowledgeable about it, and what's happening." (Case study A, partner agency, follow-up interview)*

*"I think it was the first time that people got a glimpse of what's involved in all the initiatives because various people see little pieces of the picture. I got the general perception that people received that quite well and for the first time there was a sense of what might be happening in terms of social inclusion." (Case study D – group discussion)*

*"I think people did get a lot out of that very first day in social inclusion, when they started to see where (the thematic SIP) fitted in...I don't think they were aware there was such a thing as area regeneration." (Case study E, partner agency, follow-up interviews)*

Throughout the modules, there was evidence that many participants' awareness of area regeneration processes and activities increased. Chapter 4 noted criticism of the sessions which involved discussions with members of other SIPs, with some respondents suggesting that these had not been useful. However, when people were asked what they had learnt from the training, many respondents had said that they had learnt that other groups faced similar problems to those in their own area – and seemed to have developed some solutions. Some participants noted that there was a tendency for Social Inclusion Partnerships to 're-invent the wheel', instead of looking to see whether initiatives had been successful in other areas. Several interviewees

said that the Working Together, Learning Together training had assisted them to identify good practice:

*“A lot of the issues that we were identifying were shared with the SIPs in other areas. So that we’re not alone feeling maybe makes us better able to argue a case rather than just say – well it’s an idea we’ve got. If it’s something that we think should happen, we can turn to the experience of others.” (Case study A, SIP staff)*

*“We have a nasty habit of not learning lessons across different areas of work... In fact, we have got some good recipes...and we must make a way of sharing those and developing them into practice.” (Case study E, partner agency, follow-up interview)*

One participant also noted that she had realised, as a result of WTLT, that the SIP was duplicating services rather than finding ways to increase access to mainstream provision. She felt that was because the SIP was sometimes seen as a financial resource rather than as a means to facilitate co-ordination.

### **Partnership working**

Module two focused on skills and knowledge for partnerships. However, there was an emphasis on partnership working throughout the modules. There were a number of sessions in each module where the participants in each partnership met to work through issues together. Several of the interviewees commented that the nature of the discussions within the partnership groups developed over the course of the programme. For example, one said:

*“Module 1 was really about bonding and actually realising that we’re human beings. Module two was where we really got to the issues about, what are you actually doing? Why did you do it like this? And start to address some of the critical things. I suppose module three allowed us to review the work a wee bit more and reflect from the things that we were doing that we thought were wonderful until we actually challenged to say, ‘well why do you think they are wonderful?’ “ (Case study C, partner agency, follow-up interview)*

Different interviewees drew different lessons from these sessions. For some, there was particular interest in the theories about partnerships:

*“It was fairly germane to what I’m doing and all the linking together with partnerships, because of the way I tackle my own particular job... I do read a lot from research...primarily on developing partnerships and making them work. They all seem to circle round the idea that you need somebody driving it who knows what they’re doing. You need to have a precept beforehand and you need to have a fairly high level of knowledge and awareness which needs to be brought in.” (Case study B, partner agency, follow up interview)*

A few participants felt that the discussions about partnership working were too abstract. One interviewee, whilst acknowledging that a number of the exercises had raised interesting and important issues, felt that she was still lacking *“more practical things that could have been used as tools to develop consensus.”*(Case study B, pathfinder staff, follow-up interview)

However, more commonly, the most important lesson was improved understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the various agencies involved. These comments were typical:

*"I enjoyed the sessions, but it only highlighted for me how difficult it is for the voluntary sector to work with statutory agencies. What came out of it, for me, was how adaptable the voluntary sector is - while the statutory agencies can be very rigid and bureaucratic. They have more processes to go through." (Case study B, partner agency, follow-up interview)*

*"I think it's useful for community organisations to come along and find out the constraints on which other organisations operate. I think that's a major thing, because I think that they don't realise the bureaucracy of rules that govern how enterprise companies might have to operate or how councils might have to work. So I think it's good for that to happen and for them to realise that as well." (Case study C, group follow-up interview)*

*"There was a lot of discussion on the level of support that's given to community representatives and it was stressed that the partners also need a lot of support...They're not given the actual time to fully commit themselves to whatever initiative that they're working on. That at the end of a meeting, they're just going back to their desk and doing the rest of their normal 9 to 5 job." (Case study D, group interview)*

Several interviewees, from different SIPs, commented that the workshop sessions within SIP groups were *"extremely enlightening about the partnership and where other people were coming from."* (Case study C, SIP staff, follow up interview)

One of the main messages that many of the participants took away was that information and communication were very important, as these comments illustrate:

*"I think probably the main one was the lack of information. Not, again, not a blame thing but the fact that some of us wanted more information and wanted to be kept up to date as to the different resources and things and where things were happening." (Case study C, partner agency)*

*"If you're wanting community involvement, you have to make sure they get all relevant information whether it's good bad or indifferent. That was highlighted again under the WTLT, and one of the points that everyone took away with them out of those two days, was to strengthen up on information and communication." (Case study D – community representative)*

Interestingly, very few people commented on the role of evaluation. Those that did noted that the WTLT training emphasised the importance of evaluation. The participants who picked up this point tended to come from agencies such as the police and the health service, where evaluation perhaps plays a larger role:

*"There is big thing now about evidence-based practice. Folk tend to go for the 'common sense' solution but very often, the common sense way is not always the best way to do things. Sometimes you can do things that actually make things worse. The WTLT training emphasised that evaluation is very important." (Case study B, partner agency, follow-up interview)*

## **Working with communities**

The theme of community involvement also ran through all the modules and was the particular focus of Module 3. Many of the interviewees said that module 3 had assisted them to reflect on the barriers to effective community participation. It had also made them consider the distinction between providing information, seeking opinions and community empowerment. A number of the participants said that the event had made them think about the structures and working practices in their SIP – and conclude that there was room for improvement.

There were a wide range of comments about the ideas and practical examples to improve community participation and make it more effective. Many of these were the result of presentations by other SIPs and clearly generated considerable enthusiasm. A sample of the comments are noted below:

*“The other SIP came and did a presentation to us about real planning, and how they had done it... and how they had involved their local people and what was happening in their area... They made sure everybody went because they got community representatives to go out and knock on their doors and get them to come in and place cards on this three-dimension plan of the area. I thought it was really quite good and hands-on thing that folk could get involved in.” (Case study A, group, follow-up interview)*

*“They talked about how they developed youth work...so that was quite interesting because they talked about the whole thing, how we are thinking of developing that project, how do we involve young people. That is one thing we are looking for because you’re learning...to see how the other people do it.” (Case study F, group, follow-up interview)*

*“One of the ones there, was about newsletters, and that was actually, it was something that we had flagged up particularly in (one area)... That certainly gave a lot of the ones who were involved and thinking about newsletters an opportunity to consider all the pros and cons and how to go forward in terms of producing a sustainable newsletter in the community.” (Case study D, group, follow-up interview)*

## **Summary**

The WTLT programme aimed to ensure that the participants had core knowledge about social inclusion, partnership working and community participation. Almost all of the interviewees said that they gained something from the training, although different people took different things from it.

The comments by the interviewees indicate that the programme did fulfil the learning outcomes. There was evidence that many of the participants had obtained a better understanding of social inclusion and had taken away ideas about implementing regeneration practices.

The emphasis on partnership working appeared to have been particularly valuable. The vast majority of the interviewees felt that they had learnt more about their partners. Many had also learnt how to make their partnerships more effective through improved communication, although some interviewees felt that the module on partnership working had not been sufficiently practical.

In contrast, there was considerable enthusiasm about the practical ideas for improving community participation.

## 7 The impact of WTLT

### Introduction

The Scottish Executive hoped that the programme would have a number of powerful benefits for the Social Inclusion partnerships. They hoped that the outcomes would include:

- increased effectiveness in partnership working
- greater community participation
- greater clarity and accountability
- improved communications between communities and agencies
- increased networking between different partnerships
- shifts in the cultures of participating organisations towards empowering communities.

It is important to stress that it was beyond the scope of the research to independently examine whether these outcomes had been achieved. Instead, we asked the interviewees for their perceptions of the impact of the programme. As we were interviewing several participants from each SIP, we were able to assess whether perceptions differed between different viewpoints.

The impact of training may be assessed on four levels:

- the individual - increased personal effectiveness
- the group – improved partnership working
- the organisation – improved community participation and networking
- partner organisations – culture change.

These are discussed in turn below.

### Impact on individuals

Almost all of the interviewees said that they gained something from the training, although different people took different things from it. For some the emphasis was on understanding the concepts, for others it was on working in the SIP groups or meeting with people from others SIPs. Many of the interviewees also commented on the benefit they saw to others. The Scottish Executive hoped that the programme would result in agency representatives having the skills to listen to, and appreciate the value to community interests. There was evidence that at least some of the agency staff had taken this on board.

However, far more commonly, the programme was felt to have been of particular benefit to community representatives. This was emphasised by both the community representatives themselves, and by the staff that they worked with. Many of the interviewees said that the community representatives had gained confidence from the WTLT process:

*“They’ve tuned into the fact that, in any organisation, things work in a particular way. If you can become familiar with how they work then you can actually intervene early to make sure you get what you want...To begin with they felt like they were just nodding in agreement because basically they didn’t feel confident in expressing their views, and didn’t want to be seen as ignorant...Now they’re much more sophisticated and confident about challenging decisions.” (Case study A, partner agency, follow-up interview)*

The community representatives in this case study area agreed that they had gained both the knowledge and confidence to challenge decisions. They gave the example (confirmed by other interviewees) of the community representatives forcing the SIP board to over-turn a decision about funding an initiative that the community felt strongly about.

In case study B, several interviewees felt that the programme had had differing effects on community representatives. Some had taken the opportunity to earn some money (paid by the pathfinder to undertake specific tasks) but had not taken this further once the pathfinder came to an end. Others had a genuine interest in the community and had been encouraged to take up a range of volunteering opportunities. A final group had seen it as an opportunity for advancement and personal change. Three had become so confident, due to their experience in the pathfinder and at WTLT, that they were planning to attend college to obtain qualifications:

*“I think it made a difference to me personally. I could put what we were going in a wider context. I could see what we were doing right and wrong. The training, and the work for the Pathfinder, helped me to decide to go back to college. I want to train to do community development.” (Case study B, Community representative, follow-up interview)*

Several of the partner agency interviewees, in different case studies, said that WTLT had helped them to work more effectively with other agencies because they had a better understanding of the constraints faced by other organisations.

### **Impact on the group**

The main outcome for the group of participants from each SIP who attended the training was that participants had the opportunity to get to know one another better, outside the constraints of business meetings. These comments were typical of those made by interviewees in almost all the case studies:

*“It helped people in the pathfinder to get to know one another – and helped them to trust one another – so that they could say what they felt honestly.” (Case study B, pathfinder staff)*

*“I heard generally positive comments about it, mainly from community representatives. One rep in particular said that she felt that attendance there had allowed her to see the officials that she deal with on a day-to-day basis in a different light. She felt she got to know them...she saw them as more rounded people rather than just seeing them as unhelpful bureaucrats.” (Case study D, SIP staff, follow-up interview)*

Many interviewees also suggested that group coherence had improved and that the participants had become more focused on the goals of the organisation:

*“It established the group as an effective vehicle for the SIP to deliver all the stuff that we were looking to take forward anyway.... It has established that group as a force to be reckoned with. So that’s the biggest advantage I would say out of the Working Together Learning Together experience.” (Case study A, SIP staff)*

*“For those who attended all of these events, we’ve just got to know each other better, and so have become increasingly comfortable about speaking to each other and raising issues, debating problems.” (Case study E, partner agency, follow-up interview)*

There was also a very strong sense in the interviews that the training had allowed people to recognise and reflect on their achievements for the first time. Some interviewees said that they spent most of their time in the SIP looking forward to the tasks that still needed to be done and little time looking back to see how far they had come. Many of the respondents discussed how positive and affirming this was:

*“There was evidence that big changes were beginning to happen, in ways that had never really presented previously. There was a really positive sense of – ‘well, something’s working, we’re on the right track, we’ve got a long way to go but we’re making a difference’. And that was the thing that just generally came over really forcibly for me.” (Case study A, SIP staff)*

*“It was not until I talked to people from other groups that I realised how much we have done. They were all saying how lucky we are – and how much we have done. If I had not been to the training and heard that with my own ears I would not have believed it.” (Case study B, Community representative)*

## **Impact on the organisation**

It was very clear that there were different impacts in each SIP. In order to evaluate the impact of WTLT, we have considered each case study separately.

### **Case study A**

There were differing views about the impact of WTLT in case study A. Some interviewees did not think that there had been much change to the ‘usual ways of working’ - although they acknowledged potential for further change. However, one of the SIP staff said that she had changed the way that her project was managed and the consultation process, as a result of feedback from community representatives at WTLT.

### **Case study B**

In case study B, all the interviewees agreed that the Working Together Learning training had very little impact on the SIP. One said that:

*“The community representatives...had different ideas o’ how things could be provided an’ it seemed to be fine while we were there...We came back fired wi’ enthusiasm... until it came to it actually happening. Then it kind of fizzled away because the person that was trying to make it happen, wasn’t the person that thought about it in the first place an’ therefore it wasnae their baby, so they werenae taking it on.” (Case study B, partner agency, follow-up interview)*

As previously noted, this SIP did not discuss the issues raised at the WTLT training at board meetings and did not have any follow-up sessions. However, interestingly, all the interviewees in this case study said that they had learnt things that they were using, or passing on, to other agencies or partnerships that they were involved in.

*“There are things that you carry with you. I was telling one of the other girls from the voluntary agency about all the stuff that we learnt from the training. The things that other SIPs were doing was especially useful. I’ve been passing a lot of ideas on. So you see those ideas actually starting to take shape here. They will come eventually, ok, not through the pathfinder, but they will happen.” (Case study B, partner agency, follow-up interview)*

### **Case study C**

The initial interviews in this case study indicated that both the SIP staff and partner agencies were very concerned about the problems that the first WTLT module had raised. One of the key issues was that the participants had rapidly realised that the partners involved did not have shared objectives and that there was a lack of clarity about the roles and responsibilities. They used the WTLT modules, and follow-up sessions to address these problems. In the follow-up interviews, all the interviewees felt that these problems had been addressed. Prior to the training, the SIP staff said that they felt insecure and unsure of what they were doing. However, they felt that there had been real progress on clarifying roles and responsibilities. Partner agencies felt that the SIP was beginning to improve communication between the different agencies. The SIP had recently developed a strategic plan, involving a range of services and at least one of the partner agencies felt that there were signs of a change in culture, particularly among the representatives of statutory services such as education and social work.

*“I think WTLT had a fundamental impact on how we worked together. I think it helped us think ‘out of the box’. It did really help us think outside the normal working relationships. If we hadn’t had Working Together Learning Together, we would have still been trundling along trying to make something completely different fit into what we have already. WTLT, I think, helped us think differently and see that this is not how we’ve worked together before so we can’t just carry on thinking that we can get by.” (Case study C, partner agency, follow-up interview)*

The WTLT training had also had a direct impact on the involvement of young people, when the partners realised that the structure of the SIP might not be meeting the needs of the young people it served:

*“I think it (the WTLT training) made us realise that...maybe weren’t listening enough and we didn’t actually take on board what the young people were saying.” (Case study C, SIP staff, follow-up interview)*

The WTLT follow-up days identified that the young people found board meetings ‘a chore and a bit boring’. The SIP was planning to establish a Youth Forum, which would act as the voice of the young people on the SIP board. The interviewees said that they hoped that this would allow young people to talk about any issues that concerned them and:

*“It’s hopefully going to grow so that they will have a political impetus to try and change the way services and structures that have developed now or in the future.” (Case study C, partner agency, follow-up interview)*

### Case Study D

In case study D the SIP manager, who did not attend the WTLT training, did not think that Working Together Learning Together had any particular impact on the SIP. However, interviewees who had attended WTLT felt that participants had discussions in the partnership sessions that had filtered into the decisions about how the partnership should be re-structured and the long-term action plan:

*“The big benefit was to get a chance to sit down with the partners from the areas, talk to them, doing some really solid bits of work, identifying actions that you can actually take back. That’s where a lot of the benefits came out with what’s happened with the re-vamp of the partnership.” (Case study D, partner agency, follow-up interview)*

There were mixed views on whether community participation had improved as a result of WTLT. The SIP manager felt that the WTLT training had little influence on community participation. In his view, greater community empowerment in the area was due to three factors. First, some of the areas had a long history of community participation and a number of community activists. Second, the SIP had provided resources in the form of a community development team to support participation and third, the SIP had supported community activists to attend a degree course in community work. However, other partner agencies felt that the Working Together programme had provided valuable support to the staff who aiming to develop participation in the area.

### Case study E

The interviewees in Case study E felt that Working Together Learning Together had not met the needs of the SIP and had little effect. However, one of the partner agencies said that the WTLT training had given the community representatives the confidence to say that they did not like the formal nature of the Board meetings. They also indicated that they found the meetings intimidating because they were outnumbered by the statutory agencies. As a result of a debate at Working Together Learning Together, and subsequent discussions, the SIP had changed the way the partnership board meetings in case study E were run. All the community organisations were now represented on the board and formed the majority of the board. In addition, meetings were less formal. The interviewee felt that this had had an empowering effect:

*“I think that has allowed them to feel that these meetings are their meetings and not ours.” (Case study E, partner agency, follow-up interview)*

### Case Study F

WTLT appeared to have had a very limited impact in case study F. In the initial interviews, participants anticipated that they might have an uphill struggle to making changes, particularly if key partners did not attend the training:

*“I think the Working Together Learning Together training was good for the people that attended because I think there was recognition – for example, around needing to join it up, that efficient structures are useful in helping that forward and the need to prioritise because we can’t do everything well...So it was worthwhile but... it comes back to the problem of – if all the partners do not buy into that and do not understand that, then that’s difficult.” (Case study F, SIP staff)*

These concerns appear to have been realised. Many of the participants, including the SIP manager, changed during the course of the programme and,

although some people continued to attend, little information seemed to have been passed back to the SIP or the SIP board. In the final interviews, one of the community representatives said that she felt that *“people are now willing to buy into things and there is more of a commitment...from the other partners.”* However, there were no examples to support this. The representative went on to say that she would have liked more board members to have participated.

### **Case study G**

The SIP manager had used the WTLT training to sort out some problems between the SIP and its partner agencies. He felt that this had been successful. Both the interviewees from the partner agencies agreed the training had been useful in working through some of the obstacles, such as ‘boundary disputes’ and had made progress. The young people interviewed had enjoyed taking part and had felt that they were listened to, and taken seriously.

### **Networking**

The initial interviews indicated that, perhaps unsurprisingly, the SIP staff were most likely to have had previous knowledge about what other SIPs were doing. Several of the SIP staff interviewees indicated that they were already involved in a range of networking activities. Formal events included forums and conferences for SIPs organised by the Scottish Executive, SCVO and the Scottish Urban Regeneration Forum. Informally, most staff also spoke to colleagues in neighbouring SIPs. Only case study B felt that they were unable to network effectively, due to their remote location.

In some cases, partners were also involved in other SIPs, and were also likely to know colleagues who were involved.

*“I’m on a body called (x) and I am fairly certain that a couple of people...will be involved in some of the other SIPs so I do have some links but not in a structured way.” (Case study C, partner agency)*

Community activists in the longer established SIPs were also aware of other groups, through wider contacts in their own area and attendance at conferences. Community representatives in some of the newer SIPs were less aware, prior to the training, of what others were doing.

Despite this network of wider contacts, it was clear that many of the participants had made new contacts as a direct result of the WTLT training. Most of the case study SIPs had arranged visits to other SIPs that they had met at the WTLT programme. Case study A appeared to have made the greatest use of new contacts to arrange visits to other areas (although some of the interviewees suggested that this might have happened without the training).

*“On the back of that, as a development locally anyway – we’ve organised the visits to SIPs...six or seven visits to partnerships in other areas.” (Case study A, SIP staff)*

The follow-up interviews suggested that the SIP staff (and the managers in particular) were most likely to maintain regular contact with people from other SIPs both within in their own local authority area and nationally. Much of this contact was made via Scottish Urban Regeneration Forum events. Partner agencies and community representatives were less likely to maintain contacts outside the WTLT events, although a number of the community representatives indicated that they would like to follow-up some of the early visits and to look at particular issues.

## Wider impacts

It was difficult to untangle the impact of the Working Together, Learning Together programme from the wider context. At an organisational level, some of the interviewees acknowledged that the training had been useful. However, they felt that some of the issues were already under discussion in their organisation. At best, therefore, the WTLT programme provided a catalyst for change or re-affirmed a course that the organisation was already taking:

*“As a SIP, we were discussing a lot of the issues that were discussed during module 1 anyway... From that point of view, it was useful to take 2 days out, look at them in isolation without being bombarded with other stuff during your day to day work...but it was picking up on a lot of things that we were talking about anyway as a partnership.” (Case study A, SIP staff)*

*“I don’t think it’s possible to take six days and look at working together learning together and solve all the issues that are around in terms of this. Obviously it builds towards it and I think that’s part of it.” (Case study C, group, follow-up interview)*

It was also clear that some of the statutory agencies, particularly local councils, were already committed to wider ranging cultural change. For example, in case study B, one of the partner agencies commented that:

*It’s difficult to know because there are a whole range of different strands happening anyway...There are big changes happening with the local authority...There is a real commitment at the top, right through, to look for ways to make change. Instead of funding silos in departments, there is a move to policy-led or strategy-led funding. There are going to be multi-departmental approaches.” (Case study B, partner agency, follow-up interview)*

Other interviewees pointed to evaluation frameworks such as Best Value and the Balanced Scorecard as drivers towards greater accountability, increased participation and more effective partnership working:

*“I think there is a move towards more not necessarily that the professionals know best and that they can learn a lot by asking questions on what people think. But a lot of that’s been forced upon them by best value.” (Case study B, pathfinder staff, follow-up interview)*

As a result, although interviewees provided many examples of evidence of wider cultural change in agencies, which they felt were achieved as a result of the social inclusion partnerships, there was no real indication that the WTLT training had played a significant role in these. Unless the interviewees felt that WTLT had been important, we assumed that these changes were likely to have happened anyway.

Most of the changes that the participants perceived to have resulted from WTLT were shifts in attitudes or modifications of ways of working, rather than large-scale changes. However, many felt that these indicated at least the beginnings of cultural change.

In case study B, the interviewees noted that, prior to the pathfinder, there had been very little community activism in the area, and that local people were rarely consulted on issues in the area. However, they felt that attitudes were beginning to change among the partner agencies that had attended the WTLT training. They give examples of improved efforts to consult the community by

the local authority, the police and the health board. However, there was agreement that the statutory agencies still had a long way to go:

*“It will take time for the agencies to change, because they have thought like this for 50 years. It is harder to turn them around than voluntary agencies.” (Case study B, community representative, follow-up interview)*

In case studies D and E, the partner agencies were working towards the implementation of community planning. Some interviewees in these case studies indicated that the WTLT programme had been useful. In case study D, some interviewees felt that their agencies were slowly becoming “a bit more community friendly”(Case study D, partner agency, follow-up interview). In area E, the WTLT programme, along with a series of follow-up events, was used to build the council strategy on community planning. One interviewee in case study E also suggested that the WTLT training had assisted the council to recognise that it needed to change its approach to partnership working. Previously there had been partnership working at strategic level and at front-line level but “the middle somewhere in their organisations it gets stuck” due to departmentalism. The WTLT training had identified the frustrations of both senior and front-line staff and had led to a “more bottom-up in the way that we approach things.” (Case study E, partner agency, follow-up interview)

The SIP manager in Case study G felt that the WTLT programme had begun to change some attitudes amongst partner agencies because it had allowed the young people who attended to speak to senior staff in partner agencies about issues that concerned them. As a result, he felt that the programme had made some of the participants from partner agencies consider what they might do to give young people more involvement in services:

*“When we were talking about involvement of young people, it was them actually being strategically involved in the development of services...so there’s some mechanism for that...voice of young people, to be able to actually influence whether it goes to the left or the right or straight ahead.” (Case study G, SIP manager, follow-up interview)*

As a result of the training, the manager felt that SIP had made an effective contribution to the children’s service plan and gained agreement to set up an open forum for young people, that would act as a vehicle for them to communicate their concerns to service providers. However, although the SIP had made some progress in promoting greater participation by young people in services, he had not (so far) been able to persuade partners to introduce all the changes that he wanted to see:

*“What I wanted out of that was for them to involve young people in interview for the appointment of staff, but that was a no-no. We didn’t pull that off, but that’s okay. We’ll live to fight another day on that one.” (Case study G, SIP manager, follow-up interview)*

### **Limitations of impact**

The WTLT trainers felt that it was necessary to be realistic about what the training programme could achieve. They noted that there were limits to what could be covered in six days and that change could only occur where the SIPs took the issues raised forward at a local level. Motivation of partnerships to engage with WTLT varied substantially and impacted on learning potential. SIPs that saw themselves as learning organisations made best use of the opportunity.

*“WTLT is not going to change the cultures of councils or agencies overnight. The actual outcomes will be much more limited than that. There may be more developments in partnerships that are already more receptive to change. I suspect that for the ones that are very resistant to any change in culture, that it will not have much impact.” (WTLT trainers focus group).*

Again, the WTLT trainers perceived the attitude of the SIP managers to be very important. Those who were committed to the agenda were more likely to use the programme to initiate change. However, they noted that in a number of cases, the views of the managers changed over the course of the programme. In some cases, such as case study C, the initial sceptical views were replaced by far more positive opinions. In others (for example, case study A), the original SIP manager was very positive - but his replacement was far less enthusiastic. In addition, it clear that some of the partner agencies may have been less committed to both the partnership and the training. Finally, changing the culture of large public sector agencies is a huge task (DETR, 2000; Craig & Taylor, 2002) and it is unlikely that a few days training of mainly operational and front-line will make a large difference.

Wider changes among partner agencies were more likely where a fairly large number of participants attended, particularly where the programme was well-supported by senior managers, and where at least some of these senior staff were keen to see change. This was the case in area E, where the council itself wanted to use the programme to promote change and in case study G, where the SIP manager wished to promote greater involvement by young people.

The lack of clear impact at a wider level is probably not surprising. Hudson and Hardy (2002) argued that partnerships often operate on the periphery of organisations. This means that learning, and good practice, may not be fed back into the core of the organisation. This point was also made by some of the interviewees, as this comment illustrates:

*“For example, the social inclusion partnership would pilot a specific way of working, for a specific period of time and it’s seen to be extremely successful ... But instead of that agency saying – OK, we’ve delivered this in a specific way...and it worked really well...now...we’re going to alter the norm to reflect the pilot. That doesn’t apply in the partnerships basically...I don’t find any sense in which people fully understand that when you run a pilot, you’re supposed to then go back and influence the mainstream of your provision to reflect the pilot if it worked better. Instead it’s either tagged on and nothing really changes in the mainstream or it just finishes.” (Case study D, partner agency)*

## Summary

The majority of the interviewees felt that the WTLT training had improved their personal effectiveness. Community representatives felt that the knowledge and skills gained had increased their confidence. In some cases this has been of personal benefit – giving people the confidence to go to college. In others, the training had helped the representatives to challenge decisions and argue for change in the SIP. A number of staff in partner agencies also felt that their personal effectiveness had improved by increasing their understanding of partnership working.

There was almost universal agreement that the training had increased group effectiveness among the people who attended. This was largely because people got to know one another better outside the formal setting of business meetings. Many of the interviewees used words such as ‘trust’ and ‘honesty’ to

describe improved relationships. Many also felt, as a result of the training, that communication between the partners had improved.

The outcomes in the SIPs overall were more varied. Among the seven case study organisations, participants agreed that there were positive impacts in three SIPs. In case study A, there appeared to be increased accountability in decision-making and greater community participation. The professionals felt that they listened to the community more and the community representatives were able to challenge decisions. In case study C, the main impact of the training was to improve and clarify the shared understanding of roles and responsibilities of partners. This enabled the SIP to develop its longer-term strategy and improve structures for participation by young people. Case study G had used WTLT to pursue an agenda for change and there had been positive outcomes in terms of increased effectiveness in partnership working and improved communications.

There were mixed views about the effect of the training in case study D. The SIP manager thought that WTLT had had little impact, but partner agencies that attended felt that the discussions had helped them to plan future strategy and develop a forum for staff involved in community participation.

There was limited impact in case studies B and E. In case study B, there was little impact on the SIP because issues and ideas discussed at the WTLT events were not taken back to the partnership board and there were no specific WTLT follow-up sessions. At an organisational level, the effects on case study E were limited to a few changes in committee structures and some positive responses to complaints. The only area where there was no discernible change was case study F. This is not entirely surprising as the SIP manager changed, there were no follow-up events and attendance at the WTLT declined sharply.

The SIP staff were already networking with other SIPs through various forums, but the WTLT provided an opportunity for partner agencies and community representatives to meet people from other organisations. Most of the case study organisations had organised visits to other SIPs, particularly after the first module. However, contact outwith the WTLT modules appeared to have tailed off. Nevertheless, the interest in good practice displayed by many of the interviewees suggested that contacts and exchange of ideas would continue beyond the end of the WTLT programme.

At a wider level, there were some indications of change in three of the areas. In case study B, the training had improved communications between the representatives of the agencies that attended and there was some evidence that good practice ideas might be put into operation outwith the pathfinder. There were also indications that partner agencies were beginning to improve their practices on community participation. In case study E, the council representative felt that WTLT had had an impact at council level, particularly through the council-wide follow-up sessions. This person also felt that the training had pointed the way for culture change in the region. Finally, in case study G, the WTLT programme had helped the SIP to secure agreement to improve structures for participation by young people in service changes in partner agencies.

However, a number of interviewees noted the existence of other factors in the wider context. These included restructuring of local authorities, the impact of Best Value and other performance regimes and the existence of the SIPs themselves. This means that it is difficult to assume the WTLT has had a wider impact on the culture of partner organisations, even if there is evidence of change.

## 8 Future education and training needs for regeneration partnerships

### Introduction

Responsibility for regeneration and social inclusion in Scotland has now been passed to Communities Scotland. This new executive agency replaced Scottish Homes in November 2001. The Scottish Executive has also published a statement on Community Regeneration. This sets out a plan to 'break the cycle of deprivation, raise personal and community ambitions and lift children out of poverty' (Scottish Executive, 2002). The strategy's main aims are to improve core public services and 'ensure that communities have the social capital to take advantage of opportunities open to them'. The strategy stresses the importance of skills and knowledge for both staff and communities and places the responsibility for improving these with Communities Scotland.

This chapter considers the future education and training needs of people involved in regeneration partnerships, drawing on the literature and on the interviews with participants in WTLT.

### Continuation of WTLT

In the final part of the interviews, participants were asked whether they had further training needs and whether a programme such as WTLT could assist in meeting those needs. Several of the interviewees suggested that WTLT should continue because the turnover in people in the SIPs meant that there was a continuing need to train new people.

*"You're bringing in new people constantly all the time. Although partners know what's happening and some of the other community representatives and the voluntary reps know, these other new people don't know... It's like a loop, a training loop that's going to be all going round things again." (Case study F, community representative, follow-up interview)*

A number of the participants felt that their experience of follow-up sessions had established that it was very useful to involve external facilitators in reviews of partnership activity. It was suggested that these took place on a regular basis, either half-yearly or annually to provide an opportunity to reflect on priorities and achievements.

*"For a SIP like us, who are relatively young, then there is an ongoing process really of the partnership developing... So I think there'll always be a need for some kind of capacity for us to have access to externally-facilitated development that looks at different aspects of our partnership activity." (Case study G, SIP staff)*

*"It should be a regular yearly type thing where you can all sit down and identify what the issues are that are needed to be looked at or it might not be working so perfectly." (Case study A, partner agency)*

Finally, a few interviewees also suggested that it would be useful if the funds were provided local training and visits to other partnerships. Some SIPs were already using their own funding to carry out this type of activity. However,

interviewees may have been aware that, in England, the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit has a £10m 'community chest' to give grants of up to £5000 to fund local learning. This can include bursaries for training schemes, on-site training and visits to other partnerships (NRU, 2001).

### **Professional education and training**

There have been a number of reports which have examined education and training for professionals involved in urban regeneration. Henderson and Mayo (1998) noted that while there were many good training programmes and educational courses, provision was patchy and lacked coherence. They recommended the establishment of a national framework for education and training in urban regeneration. Following on from this, Priority Action team 16 (2000) examined the qualification courses for a number of professional groups involved in urban regeneration and concluded that there was scope for significant improvement. The NRU report (2002) took up this theme and stressed that initial training for a wide range of professionals should include elements '*that assist people to work in deprived neighbourhoods*'. All the reports emphasised the need for further opportunities for qualified professionals to develop their skills and knowledge. They also argued that such training should take place on an inter-professional basis.

The Scottish Executive strategy document also stresses the need to '*build the cultures, skills and abilities needed to make partnership work in practice*' and mentions skills and knowledge for '*the people planning and delivering services*' (Scottish Executive, 2002). However, the report does not detail how this might be achieved. In contrast, in England, the Urban White Paper (DTLR, 2000) accepted that there was a need for more cross-disciplinary training and announced the intention to set up regional centres of excellence, to offer short courses, events and seminars.

Some of the interviewees in the WTLT evaluation felt that it would be useful if the WTLT training was provided to a wider audience, either through professional training to agencies such as the police, or through inter-disciplinary training.

*"I think if that training was made available to a much wider audience... if it was part of a standard package for agency staff ...It would almost need to be part of all Health Trusts and all Council departments... And then everybody would be on a level playing field and they would all have that same knowledge ... I think that would be really, really useful." (Case study B, pathfinder staff)*

The Working Together Learning Together package had already begun to develop in this way. The Scottish Community Development Centre had provided a variant of the programme to civil servants and is planning to run a one-day module on Community Development for managers in the public and voluntary sectors.

Some of the interviewees suggested that WTLT, or something like it, should be developed into a recognised qualification. In fact, some of the modules already run on University programmes cover similar ground to that covered by WTLT (albeit from a more academic perspective). Glasgow University's MPhil in Urban Policy and Practice, for example, is aimed at people working in regeneration partnerships and has modules on Neighbourhood Renewal, Strategic Management, Partnership Working and Community Participation.

## Training for community representatives

The Scottish Executive regeneration strategy document (Scottish Executive, 2002) stresses the need for communities to have the skills, confidence, support networks and resources that they need to get involved in decision-making. The strategy suggests that this should be developed through informal learning programmes. The responsibility for community learning will lie with Communities Scotland, which has established a new development centre. This has responsibilities for adult literacy and numeracy, and community learning and development.

Many of the interviewees felt that it was important build capacity and, as chapter two indicated, some SIPs were already taking developing a local learning strategy and providing local learning opportunities for communities. However, this was very variable and indicates that Communities Scotland will have considerable work to do to promote such opportunities in all areas. Although we did not have the opportunity to explore this in depth, there was little evidence that learning strategies were encouraging learning among excluded groups (other than in case study E, which focused on ethnic minorities).

A number of the interviewees felt that there was a need to provide steps to qualifications for community representatives who wished to become practitioners. There are already several universities in Scotland which offer qualifications that are aimed at community activists. Two of the case study organisations had supported community activists to undertake degrees in community education on a day-release basis. These courses allowed for accreditation of work-based learning. However, it was clear that a number of the interviewees in other areas were unaware that such opportunities existed.

There is a need for partnership-working between universities and colleges and Communities Scotland to ensure that there are a network of courses across Scotland which will provide qualifications for community activists and ensure that information on these is available to local partnerships.

## New training needs

The study indicated demand for a wide range of learning needs for staff, partner agencies and community representatives. Many of the suggestions for further training covered skills and knowledge in the area that might be loosely termed as strategic management. A wide range of the interviewees suggested that there was a need for more training on strategic planning for people involved in partnerships:

*“One issue that has come out for me recently, that’s related to all of the things we’ve done, is the whole business of working strategically. So I’d like to see WTLT talk about working strategically and working in partnership.... I think there is still ... the need for some kind of session where we would sit down and say, ‘well what does that actually mean in practice?’” (Case study C, group interview, follow-up)*

Linked to this, some interviewees suggested that there was a need for more training on the longer-term objectives, including exit strategies for SIPs.

*“We shouldn’t just be in it for five years or three years. It should really be much longer-term, looking at some of the longer- term objectives that*

*you need to address and not just the short-term targets that are being pushed by the centre for instant results... I think most of us recognise that it's getting into 10, 20 years, not three to seven." (Case study D, partner agency, follow-up)*

*"What happens after the SIP? Funding and sustainability are big issues people are starting to worry about." (Case study G, partner agency)*

A few people felt that there was a need for more training on evaluation of projects and initiatives:

*"I think the one area where things could be improved is that around the issue of evaluation. Clearly, it's right that any projects that have been funded should be evaluated properly. I think the difficulty around that is that if you actually want to evaluate things properly that costs money. What tends to happen is people evaluate on a very ad hoc basis, and at the end of the project, rather than seeing that as being built in from the start." (Case study A, partner agency, follow-up interview)*

One person mentioned marketing and promotion:

*"Most folk who are involved in these things ...are not in the kind of job where we're used to kind of promoting ourselves. I don't have the knowledge and skills to go about doing that, so I think there's a need to make folk more aware about simple ways that you can actually do that. With a local authority you've got too much work to do. You're not trying to actively encourage more people to use your services, but in a SIP it's different, where you're trying to get folk more involved. I think we need some help around that." (Case study A, partner agency)*

The WTLT trainers had also identified some training needs for partnerships that might be considered in future packages: These included:

- conflict management
- need led planning
- sustainability
- funding – sources, remits for access
- policy interpretation and understanding of implications

However, given the concerns that were raised about the limited consultation prior to WTLT, the trainers suggested that there should be a round of discussions with SIPs to discuss further training needs, and how these should be met. There are already a wide range of organisations in Scotland that provide such courses. However, the Scottish Urban Regeneration Forum suggested that there was a need for information to assist people to identify what is available, and to advise them on what may be appropriate for their requirements (Bailey, 2002).

## Community planning

A number of people noted that partnership working was increasingly common and suggested that training provided to a range of types of partnerships:

*"I think everybody could benefit from more of the kind of stuff... everybody needs time out to reflect on what they're doing, get their heads round the partnership thing. None of us have really got to grips with what that means..." (Case study D, partner agency, follow-up interviews)*

A number of trainers involved in the consortium had adopted some of the exercises and components of the programme for use with other groups. However, this evaluation suggests that there is considerable scope for further expansion.

Perhaps the greatest area of potential for a programme such as Working Together Learning Together is in the development of training for community planning partnerships. Government ministers have already indicated that social inclusion partnerships are seen as the foundation for community planning:

*"We will build on the firm foundations that are already in place. Scotland's network of Social Inclusion Partnerships, working closely with community leaders, local authorities, and other public agencies, has already made a significant difference... However, more needs to be done and we believe that community planning is the best way to make sure all agencies work together with deprived communities – and with each other – to deliver better and more responsive services. We also need to make sure people have the skills and confidence they need to take advantage of the many opportunities that modern Scotland offers." (Margaret Curran – Social Justice Minister – June 2002)*

The Scottish Executive statement on Community Regeneration (Scottish Executive, 2002) identifies community planning as the key delivery mechanism to achieve change. In due course, the strategy envisages that the social inclusion partnership programme will be controlled by community planning partnerships. Some of the case study SIPs were already moving in this direction. One SIP manager noted that:

*"Community planning is the framework within everything that public sector organisations do on a local area basis and will operate in the future, so it's the umbrella for everything else.... In our area anyway, we've all agreed strategic community planning and we're in the process of setting up a framework to deliver that." (Case study C, SIP staff)*

However, there were mixed views about whether a national programme was the best way to provide support and training for community planning:

*"We've just re-structured to take us more into line what we're calling partnership support for community planning and it's about building capacities in partnerships to deliver, and a lot of that is about people being able to work together, so that will be more positive. But I wouldn't recommend going back on a national programme; we've been there." (Case study E, partner agency, follow-up interview)*

## **Summary and conclusions**

The Working Together Learning Together programme was a very ambitious large-scale training programme, which uniquely aimed to bring together SIP staff, partner agencies and community representatives to learn together. This programme, therefore, aimed to provide training for up to 900 people, from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities. Its objective was to provide participants with skills and knowledge in social justice policy, regeneration processes, partnership-working and community participation. The Scottish Executive hoped that the programme would have a number of outcomes including more effective partnership working, greater community participation, increased networking and sharing of ideas between different partnerships and shifts in the culture of participating organisations. This was all intended to be achieved through three two-day core modules, a series of optional events and a day of follow-up time for each SIP.

The evaluation suggests that, although the programme has achieved most of its aims, there are lessons that can be learned for the future.

First, there was considerable discontent about the perceived lack of consultation about the programme. A number of participants, particularly SIP managers, were concerned about what they felt to be 'top-down' imposed nature of the training, rather than the 'bottom-up' participative approach which the SIPs are intended to promote. Although the Scottish Executive had the best of intentions, in ensuring that training was provided to equip everyone involved in the partnerships with the skills and knowledge that they needed, the limited consultation undoubtedly caused resentment and reduced support for the programme. This demonstrates that it is vital that adequate consultation takes place, to ensure that there is widespread support for such training.

Second, many of the interviewees had limited knowledge of what to expect from the programme. Although the WTLT trainers had produced fairly detailed information about the core modules, which was sent out to SIP managers, this did always not seem to have been passed to participants. Even where people were aware of the programme, a number suspected a covert agenda of evaluation by the Scottish Executive and others were very sceptical about what the programme could achieve. Many of the interviewees appeared to be unaware of the options events. This indicates a need for better publicity and promotion of such programmes.

Third, although the programme covered a number of the major areas in which participants needed skills and knowledge, the trainers acknowledged that more emphasis should have been placed on equality issues. It was evident that many of the geographic partnerships had not previously considered the needs of groups such as ethnic minorities and young people. In addition, it was clear that a few participants had racist views. This suggests that equalities should be prominent in any training for partnerships.

Fourth, although some interviewees felt that programme was expensive, the costs per participant were fairly low for training events of this type. Conversely, the trainers felt that the administrative resources that they had to co-ordinate the programme were very stretched and that more time was needed for follow-up work.

Finally, there were mixed views about the national nature of the programme and the timing of the events. Essentially, these complaints reflect the fact that

many of the participants felt that the programme needed to be tailored to meet the needs of individual groups. Some favoured an entirely local programme, while others wanted more follow-up sessions between the regional events. Participants from thematic SIPs were more likely to feel that the programme did not meet their needs. The trainers felt that the national programme was the best way to deliver such training, but also felt that more local events in between modules would have been useful.

Ideally, learning for partnerships should be supported at national, local authority and partnership level. At a national level, Communities Scotland has responsibility for setting the framework for learning needs. At a council level, the partner agencies should ensure that they provide support for learning and work to 'shift the culture' of their organisations towards participative governance. This will require the active involvement of senior managers and councillors. Local partnerships should assess their learning needs and consider how these should be met.

As the discussion of future education and training needs suggests, there is likely to be a need for a very wide range of provision to meet learning needs. This will include local training, regional and national events and qualification courses. While some training will concentrate on the needs of particular groups, such as partnership staff, partner agencies or community representatives, the WTLT programme illustrates the benefits of providing opportunities for every-one involved to learn together.



## Appendix 1 Schedule of interviews

### Initial interviews

Table A1 Initial individual interviews (Jan-March 2001)

Case study	Type of interviewee			
	SIP staff	Partner agency	Community Reps	Total
A	4	1	2	7
B	1	2	3	6
C	3	3	0	6
D	2	2	1	5
E	1	2	1	4
F		2	1	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>31</b>

Table A2 Initial group interviews (Jan -March 2001)

Case study	Type of interviewee			
	SIP staff	Partner agency	Community Reps	Total
A	2	6	5	13
B	1	1	3	5
C	-	-	-	-
D	2	2	1	5
E	1	2	1	4
F	1	4	2	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>34</b>

Table A3 Follow-up individual interviews (May-June 2002)

Case study	Type of interviewee			Total
	SIP staff	Partner agency	Community Reps	
A	1	4	1	6
B	1	2	1	4
C	3	3	0	6
D	1	3	0	4
E	2	2	0	4
F	0	1	1	2
G	1	2	0	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>25</b>

Table A4 Follow-up group interviews (May-June 2002)

Case study	Type of interviewee			Total
	SIP staff	Partner agency	Community Reps	
A	1	1	1	3
B	0	2	1	3
C	3	1	0	4
D	0	2	0	2
E	4	1	1	6
F	-	-	-	-
G	0	0	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>20</b>

## Appendix 2 Case studies

This appendix outlines the backgrounds of each of the case studies to provide context for the foregoing analysis. It discusses the history of the organisations, their aims and objectives, structures and organisation, as well as issues such as partnership working and community empowerment. Some observations on the evolution of each case study SIP are also made.

### Case study A

#### Aims

Case study A was a new, area-based SIP. It covered an urban area and aimed to provide support and enhance quality of life for vulnerable people within the SIP area through education, training, employment, better health and improved community capacity and cohesion. The granting of SIP status brought new resources to the area, enabling the partners to put in place a wide range of new projects and community development activities which, some respondents stressed, would not have been possible prior to SIP funding.

#### Structures and staffing

The partners represented on SIP A included a range of public sector bodies, including local government, enterprise and development agencies, health authorities and the police, along with representation from the voluntary sector and from the community. While the SIP's strategic direction was overseen by a wider strategic alliance of key local stakeholders, the SIP board was responsible for delivery and day-to-day management.

This case study was unusual in the size of its staff team: there was only one staff member providing dedicated support to the partnership board. However, the SIP had recruited a number of project leaders for its projects, and some respondents also regarded these project leaders as SIP staff. Half-way through the life of the SIP, the SIP manager left his post which remained empty for some time. This significantly affected the effectiveness and level of communication within the SIP, particularly communication with community representatives.

#### Community empowerment

The council in this area was already committed to community participation and community representatives had been involved in the bid for SIP funding. Community participation was managed through a federation of local community groups. Representatives for the themed subgroups, SIP board and any other activities were drawn from this umbrella group. The SIP provided ongoing resources to develop the group's capacity. Community empowerment had grown throughout the life of the SIP, and community representatives were able to effectively challenge and shape the thinking of the SIP board.

### **Partnership-working**

Respondents suggested that the area had a strong history of partnership working and a high level of real collaboration among agencies and individuals. The case study was characterised by a reported lack of conflict and by frequently expressed feelings of respect and goodwill for other individuals in the partnership, particularly the original partnership manager. Nonetheless, some respondents also acknowledged that different partners may have different and competing agendas, and one expressed concerns about the amount of time that agency representatives were able to devote to the SIP's agenda within their own workloads.

### **Case study B**

#### **Aims**

Case study B was a pathfinder operating in small town with no previous initiative status and was focussed on a low demand council estate. Its function was to meet community needs from a bottom up approach, to look at the services that need to be delivered and if necessary change the way that services were delivered to meet those needs. The pathfinder had a three-year life, and ended in March 2002.

#### **Structures and staffing**

The pathfinder had a wide range of partners, including the council (community resources, housing and environmental health), the local resource centre, Women's Aid, the police, adult education, health promotion and a drugs project. The full steering group met every 3 months for a full day. There were 3 sub-groups that met more regularly. The Pathfinder had 3 staff – the manager, a community co-ordinator and a community worker. However, a number of community activists were employed on a part-time basis to promote the work of the pathfinder.

#### **Community empowerment**

Prior to the establishment of the pathfinder there was little community participation. The pathfinder aimed to broaden participation both by going out to residents and providing a wider range of activities in the local community centre. The pathfinder encouraged the formation of a number of community groups to support a wide range of community needs (from mother and toddler groups through to senior citizens) and funded a number of projects aimed at improving employment prospects.

#### **Partnership**

There were a number of difficulties in the partnership. First, many of the local participants wore a number of hats – which led to conflicts of interest. Respondents reported considerable tensions between some of the stakeholders in the partnership. Second, many of the agencies were based in the administrative centre many miles away. The pathfinder did not, therefore, have the day-to-day contact with key agencies and lacked political and executive support. Third, the pathfinder did not solve the problem of competing agendas. Partners made little attempt to bend mainstream services and, in practice, the pathfinder became involved in the delivery of services.

## Case study C

### Aims

Case study C was a new, thematic SIP targeting a particularly excluded group of young people. It aimed to raise awareness within service providers of the particular needs of these young people and worked to co-ordinate improved support services and involvement of young people in service planning. The SIP's work plan was rolled out over 4-5 years. Among other areas of work, it had developed a training resource on the issues affecting these young people.

### Structures and staffing

This partnership had a narrower range of partner agencies than the other case studies. The board membership included representatives from the local authority, health authority and the voluntary sector, along with young people and staff and management representation. However, local authority representation differed from that in other partnerships, as representatives were drawn from key service and policy departments (social work, education, and neighbourhood services), rather than from elected members.

Operationally this SIP had a relatively flat partnership structure. The partnership comprised a management board responsible for planning and co-ordinating the partnership's activities with relevant service providers and stakeholders, as well as a smaller management subgroup which met more frequently. A forum of voluntary organisations also provided a representative to the board. The small staff team consisted of the manager, a development worker and a part-time administrative assistant.

### Community empowerment

The nature of the target group created particular problems for community involvement. Initially, representatives to the board were drawn from a youth club with ties to the partnership, but this was limited to a small number of key individuals. Respondents felt that most young people were not interested in formal meetings, and that there was a problem with sustaining long-term participation as the young people grew older. They felt that the SIP needed to find new ways to involve its community. The development worker had a remit to develop a youth forum and work with young people to increase their voice and influence.

### Partnership working

The SIP experienced delays at the beginning in recruiting staff and establishing partners. Some respondents expressed a feeling of dissatisfaction with the level of commitment from agency partners: fewer partners had participated than originally expressed interest in the SIP, and respondents felt that some of the official partners were not contributing what was needed to enable the work to progress.

The follow-up interviews highlighted that the aims of the SIP had been diverted: the SIP was increasingly involved with direct service provision rather than raising awareness and encouraging partners to 'bend the mainstream'. Allied to this, the roles, remits and responsibilities of different members of SIP staff and partner agencies had become confused. However, WTLT follow-up days and the SIP's own development day (which followed on from WTLT follow-up days) had successfully addressed these issues.

## **Case study D**

Case study D converted from a Regeneration Programme (RP) into a SIP in 1999. Based in a town, it was an area-based SIP which covers a dispersed geographical area, or archipelago. Like other former RPs, the SIP was originally set to end in 2002, following a final evaluation of the RP programme by the Scottish Executive. However, as a result of the evaluation the SIP was extended to March 2004. The SIP will then become part of the community planning structure.

### **Aims**

Conversion to a SIP required some refocusing of the partnership's aims and objectives to accommodate the compulsory monitoring indicators of the new social inclusion policy. Broadly, the partnership aimed to improve quality of life through building community infrastructure, helping people overcome barriers to employment and education and improving health and safety for those in the community. Like other area-based partnerships, the SIP's activity was delivered primarily through funded projects linked to the partnership's objectives.

### **Structures and staffing**

The basic structures were similar to those in other area-based SIPs. Strategic level management was carried out by the partnership board (chaired as in other SIPs by a local councillor), while an implementation group managed delivery of the programme, linking to several themed subgroups which oversaw the work of funded projects within the main strategic themes. On conversion to a SIP, the partnership was broadened to include a wider range of agencies. A team of support staff was established but the SIP manager had other responsibilities within the council. The structure was reviewed again in 2001, in preparation for community planning. The new framework will involve a wider range of partner agencies, accountable to a partnership executive.

### **Community empowerment**

The partnership had developed its levels of community participation. Initially, the community was not directly represented on the partnership board, although community members were involved in some of the themed subgroups. Three places on the SIP board were subsequently given to community representatives but some interviewees felt that the formal nature of the board meetings was intimidating. Community involvement was strongest in the largest SIP area, aided by an umbrella organisation, but the SIP had also been working to develop participation in the smaller areas. The SIP had paid for a community development team to sustain participation and supported community activists to undertake a degree course in community work.

### **Partnership working**

This partnership had always been largely council-led, managed by a working group within the council's policy committee. While the council was still the dominant partner, this working group had been replaced by an enlarged partnership (board) with broader involvement from other public, voluntary and private sector agencies.

## **Case study E**

### **Aims**

A new thematic SIP, case study E focused its work on addressing the social exclusion of ethnic minority communities. This partnership aimed to build the capacity and infrastructure of the ethnic minority communities in its area, to influence mainstream services in the public, private and voluntary sectors to become more responsive to the needs of ethnic minorities and to increase the involvement of ethnic minorities in strategic decision making processes. The SIP had a duration of four years from 1999.

### **Structures and staffing**

The partnership was one of several initiatives in the area which fed into the community planning process, overseen by a broad strategic alliance. The local authority and local Racial Equality Council were lead partners in developing the SIP. The partnership also included representation from health, housing, enterprise, and training and employment agencies, the police, community organisations from the largest ethnic minority groups and voluntary organisations working with ethnic minorities. The partnership board was responsible for developing the SIP's programme and for encouraging collaboration and commitment of partner resources. A smaller subgroup met more frequently for day-to-day management of the staff's work.

Implementation differed significantly from that in area-based SIPs. While the SIP had a small amount of funding and resources for community groups, the bulk of the SIP's work was taken forward by the staff team through outreach work, alongside research and training activities. The staff complement included a co-ordinator and administrative staff, along with development staff and sessional assistants fluent in languages of the largest ethnic minority groups. The SIP had suffered high staff turnover, but this appeared to be stabilising.

### **Community empowerment**

Community empowerment and capacity building were central to the aims of the partnership. Originally, the SIP board had 2 or 3 representatives from ethnic minorities, but these were unelected community leaders who did not represent community organisations. Interestingly, and in contrast to the area-based SIPs, the chairperson of the partnership was a community representative. The SIP had changed the focus to working with democratic groups which organised community activities and expanded the number of places on the SIP board for community organisations to 15 places – equalling the number from partner agencies. The partnership had piloted training programmes for community involvement. In addition, community representatives had become employees of the SIP on a paid sessional basis and the SIP had encouraged and supported them undertake a community education degree.

### **Partnership working**

This SIP was notable in the level of representation from voluntary and community organisations: 6 out of the 15 official partner organisations were voluntary sector, including 3 ethnic minority community organisations along with voluntary organisations offering services and advocacy for ethnic minorities. The different roles and commitments of each type of partner –

public sector agencies, community organisations and private sector organisations – were explicitly set out in the initial strategy and the implementation plan. The interviewees felt that some of the partners were very dedicated and shared a common aim. However, some of the statutory agencies were committed in name only – and had been of only limited real assistance.

## **Case study F**

### **Aims**

Partnership F converted from a priority partnership area (PPA) to a SIP in 1999, and covered an urban area with a long history of regeneration activity. The SIP had a broad vision for regeneration of the area, incorporating social as well as physical and environmental goals. It aimed to improve social conditions by addressing residents' training needs, access to employment, community facilities, and problems with drug misuse and community safety, and to improve the physical environment through strategy for land use, housing, transport and neighbourhood planning.

The strategic aims were implemented primarily through funding to projects, often run by community groups. Like other former PPAs and RPs, it has carried forward some projects funded under the previous initiative.

### **Structures and staffing**

The partnership structure was similar to other area-based SIPs. The SIP board oversaw the partnership's direction, and comprised representatives from the voluntary and community sectors, local government and the main public sector agencies, including economic development, further education, health and housing. An implementation group formed the executive arm of the partnership, reporting to the board and co-ordinating the work of five themed subgroups. Other operational subgroups addressed marketing, funding and monitoring. The partnership had a dedicated support team comprising a manager, development officer, administrative and clerical staff and development workers tied to specific local initiatives. However, there had been high staff turnover.

### **Community empowerment**

The community and voluntary sectors were represented on most groups within the partnership's structures. Involvement from these sectors was facilitated through an independent support organisation for voluntary and community organisations. The SIP board and most subgroups required 25 per cent of the members to be community representatives, and the partnership aimed to achieve that minimum level of representation in all groups. A voluntary sector representative was nominated to most groups.

The SIP had provided funding for an independent support organisation, comprising a project manager, two community participation workers, an information officer and administrative support. This organisation supported the community forum, which held regular public meetings throughout the area. The community representatives felt that the SIP had improved participation in decision-making. However, other interviewees felt that there was little real empowerment.

### **Partnership working**

Respondents reported some tensions between different stakeholders on the partnership, and particularly between the local councillors and the community and voluntary sector representatives. This SIP was only one of a number of SIPs in the authority and several of the interviewees expressed frustration that key partners, particularly senior staff, did not attend meetings regularly.

### **Case study G**

#### **Aims**

This was a new, thematic SIP established to address the needs of a particular group of young people. The SIP aimed to identify gaps in service provision and to promote a multi-agency approach to service delivery. The partnership's work was focussed around four main themes: research and information; education, employment and training; independent living; and health and well-being.

#### **Structures and staffing**

The SIP had 10 staff, including the SIP manager, an administrator and staff with responsibilities matching closely the four themes listed above. The SIP Board had 16 places, including representation from young people, the local health board, social work services, housing services, the Employment Service, the Benefits Agency and others. The SIP had the following four working groups: accommodation; health; mentoring; and employment. Each of these had representation from between four and eight organisations from the public and voluntary sectors.

#### **Community empowerment**

A small number of young people were actively involved with the running of the SIP. There were four places on the board, which were rotated among eight young people. Interviewees confirmed that these community representatives had influenced decisions and policy. Interviewees said that it had been difficult to persuade other young people to become involved. However, the SIP was planning to establish an open forum, which would provide a sounding board for service changes.

#### **Partnership working**

Initially, there was a problem of demarcation between the local authority's service provision for care leavers, with local authority staff treating the SIP as a supporting staff resource. However, this problem was relatively quickly sorted out, partly as a result of WTLT. Partnership working was good at a strategic level, for example, with the SIP having a strong input to the local authority's Children's Services Plan. At an operational level, it had been difficult to get local authority departments to 'bend the mainstream' to any significant extent. However, interviewees were optimistic that, in time, changes would occur.



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