

# Capacity Building Strategy for Bolton East

## About Capacity Building

Capacity Building is a relatively recent approach to regeneration, many of the concepts have been brought in from the USA and, more recently, Europe. It has two dimensions (see reading list Ref.1):

- building up the capacity of community based groups
- building up the mechanisms for capacity building itself

## The task

Capacity building has two main stages:

- enable and allow local people to be part of the regeneration planning process. Local people are in the best position to define the needs and to suggest projects to address these. Techniques here include Participatory Appraisal, Consensus Building and Planning for Real (for physical development).
- community-based groups can then become true partners in regeneration projects. Techniques used here are organisation development and core skills training, including project and financial management.

The second stage may take several years to realise fully. However, the process can begin straight away with small, achievable projects. A key part of the strategy is to provide training and development in support of community-based projects, rather than as stand-alone, disconnected "courses".

## Delivery - Capacity Building of systems and organisations

Because Capacity Building is a new approach, existing methods of delivering regeneration have to be adapted, so that Capacity Building may be delivered effectively. The key elements to consider are:

- the "know-how" - individual and collective skills to enable effective delivery "on the ground" (group facilitation, organisation development, project management, communications skills etc)
- back-up resources - sufficient resources in terms of facilities, staff and money to meet the demand.

## Capacity Building in Bolton East

It is clear that we are still at the early stages of Capacity Building, although some good groundwork has already been done.

The Capacity Building work supported by CommEnt is in accordance with the Community Development Strategy for Bolton (Ref. 2). In continuing this work, we have developed an overall strategy for the next few years.

It is vital at this stage to keep practical, and start from where we are. We are still unsure about "where we are" exactly. The obvious answer is to ask our local community partners what they want to do. That will provide us with more than enough starting points. So the outline strategy looks like this:

- involve local people in needs analysis
- translate needs analysis into possible local projects (defined by communities)
- compare the needs analysis to funded programme goals
- evaluate the capacity of (agency) partners to deliver against local needs
- design a capacity building project - in partnership
- deliver a capacity building project - in partnership
- evaluate the project - as a partnership
- go back to the first stage and do another capacity building project.

Note that Capacity Building, if handled properly, is actually taking place during all the above activities.

The approach is action-oriented. The advantage of this approach is that we don't need to concern ourselves too much with the actual projects that community groups are undertaking - they will be small, there will be successes and failures. (And if they really are "locally-owned" projects there will be a lot of added value and extra motivation for success.)

Rather, we can concentrate on the process of how well the groups are implementing the projects, taking advantage of the resulting demand for training and development.

## Capacity-Building Matrix: Strategic Areas

## Glossary of Terms, References and Reading List

**Capacity Building** - increasing the ability of organisations and individuals to contribute to development programmes. The objectives of capacity building are:  
(1) that local people can participate in action planning for the development of their own neighbourhoods  
(2) that they can access mainstream economic development services directly on a "level playing field". (Ref 1)

**CED - Community Economic Development** - economic development which is community-based. Development which will lead to the involvement of communities in activities which improve and sustain their economic welfare and quality of life (Ref.1). The premise of CED is that local people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods can make their own contribution to quality of life and Regional Economic Development (Ref 1).

**Community** - a self defined group of people who assist each other with matters of common interest. A collection of people rooted in place (e.g. a town or neighbourhood) or identity (cultural, racial, common values) - (Ref. 3,6,8).

**Community Enterprise** - a collective way for giving people the ownership of, and benefits from, economic activity, by participating in the marketplace.

**Community Sector** - a distinct sector of economic activity consisting of risk-taking entities such as community enterprises, community-based businesses, co-operatives etc.

**Project** - a work programme with a specific aim and objectives to achieve, which ends when those objectives are achieved.

**Sustainability** - a condition whereby resources, both human resources and natural resources, can never be exhausted by human activity.

**Sustainable Development** - Development that delivers basic environmental, social and economic services to all residents of a community without threatening the viability of the natural, built and social systems upon which the delivery of those systems depends. (Ref. 3,6).

## References/Further Reading

- (1) Social and Economic Inclusion through Regional Development - Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities (1996) ISBN 92-827-8050-3
- (2) Bolton Community Development Strategy - Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council - (2000)
- (3) Community Economic Development Strategy for Bolton – BMBC EPDU - (1997,1999)
- (4) Sustainable Communities (series of publications) – Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (1998)
- (5) Local Development and Employment Initiatives - Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities (1995) ISBN 92-827-4208-3
- (6) Strategies and Innovation in Community Economic Development - CAG Consultants (1996) ISBN 0 9527884 0 3
- (7) Advocacy and Empowerment, Ross and Black - New York (1989)
- (8) Perspectives in CED – Soutar et al (1999, awaiting publication)
- (9) Economic Development Strategy for Bolton - Bolton Strategic Partnership (1997)
- (10) Regeneration through Work - Centre for Local Economic Strategies
- (11) Community Economic Development – Rhetoric or Reality? – Alan Twelvetrees (Ed) Community Development Foundation Publications ISBN 1 901974 00 6