Power and Empowerment in area-based regeneration practice: case studies from Crimea, Ukraine and Wales, United Kingdom.

WORK IN PROGRESS
Introduction\(^1,2\)

The collapse of the Soviet Union in the eighties created an ideological vacuum for the Newly Independent States, which has been rapidly filled up with ‘democracy building’ assistance of the Western countries. One of the major elements of democracy building was creation of the civil society as an arena for public deliberation and un-coerced community action. The support for this process took the form of capacity building for non-governmental organisations, and community-based groups through funding and training. At the time when democracy is being exported to the East, the vitality of its principles in the Western societies is also being scrutinised, as the relationship between the state and the people it serves undergoes dramatic transformation. Declining participation in electoral procedures, increasing area-based inequality and widespread social ills pose the threat to its actual existence and require urgent measures. Various policy responses targeted at those problems use the concepts of ‘civic renewal’ and ‘community development’ as the basis of its ideological frameworks.

Area-based regeneration as a method for economic and social development of disadvantaged areas as well empowering local population has a long history within the welfare state tradition, as well as in development policy. However, in the mainstream practice it used a top-down, expert-driven and physical outcomes oriented approach. In the recent years the notion of community development has received renewed attention of the policy makers both in advanced and transitioning/developing countries as a solution to the problems related to democratic governance, continuing poverty and inequality, reform of the welfare system; and the mandate for voluntary and community sector in this process has expanded. Policies resulting from these developments declare the focus on reclaiming the ‘civicness’ of the communities, with growing recognition of grass-roots collective action, local solidarity and inclusion of the marginalized voices, but the degree to which these declarations are translated into practice is not very clear. Moreover, there has been an on-going debate questioning the very notion that communities can be empowered through the policy intervention, and arguing that the mainstream adaptation of the approach undermines its transformational capacity.

For the empirical analysis I will draw the case studies from two contrasting contexts: an advanced liberal democracy (United Kingdom) and a country in transition from centralised authoritarian socialism to market economy and democratic governance (Ukraine). The similarity of the policy approaches in combination with dramatic differences in the contexts will offer an opportunity to view the emerging findings in perspective. Two countries’ contexts are different on a number of parameters, including economic situation, institutional developments, cultural and historical background, social and political environment. Yet, both countries have had highly interventionist and centralised welfare regimes and over the last decade have been looking at the ways of decentralising certain areas of welfare provision particularly through increased participation of voluntary and community sectors. In both countries, there have been growing numbers of various poverty reduction policies using community-based participatory approaches. The comparison is further justified by the fact that over the last decade policy-making in Eastern Europe was very much influenced by the “Western thinking”, originating in Western Europe and the USA; and UK has been one of the donor countries, providing financial and technical assistance for this kind of policy initiatives in Ukraine. Yet my comparison suggests that issues related to strengthening direct democracy are similar in both case studies, and there are possibilities of learning in both directions.

\(^1\) This paper based on a combination of secondary and primary research. The fieldwork in Crimea, Ukraine, was carried out in August-September 2005; however, it was very much complimented by the author’s experience working as a Social Projects Officer for CIDP in 1998-2001, and informal research and observation of the projects’ development in the subsequent years. In Cardiff, a number of interviews was conducted in the end of March-beginning of April 2006, following a review of the Programme documents available on-line. This explains the fact that the Crimean case study is much more detailed than the one from Wales.

\(^2\) The author would like to thank Barry Doughty and Martin Hoban from UWIC, Cardiff for their generous support and valuable advice for the research in Wales.
Policy initiatives identified for the analysis are united by the common characteristics of the area-based approach and the emphasis made on community participation, linking it to wider debate on civil renewal/democratisation. As the discussion about the shortcomings of the “representative democracy” continues and various political solutions produced by the Left and the Right of political spectrum are being debated, there is a body of empirical evidence offering practical solutions to those shortcomings. Fung and Wright (2003) define empowered participatory governance as a family of reforms that are “participatory because they rely upon the commitment and capacities of ordinary people to make sensible decisions through reasoned deliberation and empowered because they attempt to tie action to discussion” (p.5, Fung and Wright, 2003). Such reforms provide practical examples for strengthening civil society, decentralisation of local government and devolution of power. In this vein, policy initiatives using bottom-up participatory approach for area-based regeneration and community development can be seen as real-life laboratories for developing the “new” instruments of empowered participatory governance. This is the prism, which I will use to look at UNDP Crimea Integration and Development Programme, and projects under Communities First Initiative of the Welsh Assembly Government.

Part I ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORKS

Participation

The concept of participation is often seen as a key to the process of community development. Within the context of development it is defined as “people’s involvement in decision–making processes and implementation, sharing in the benefits of development programmes, and involvement in efforts to evaluate such programmes” (Cohen and Uphof, 1977, quoted in UNDP). It is often seen both as the means to achieve better development outcomes, as well as an end by itself, implying people’s active role in the community processes. Powell and Geoghegan (2004) argue that the concentration on participatory policy making is: “a fusion of both instrumental and value rationality, in that it is held by activists to be both more instrumentally effective (when people are included in decisions they are more likely to ‘take ownership’ and be more productive in the common goal sought) and also valued in its own right as a morally rigorous way of making decisions”. (Powell & Geoghegan, 2004; p.178) The definitions of participation reflect a range of interpretations along a continuum on which participation moves from being merely nominal and representing little meaningful or direct involvement in development; to a transformative participation which results in people’s empowerment. One of the most cited typologies of participation is ‘participation ladder’ developed in the context of the United States Federal Government programs by Arnstein (1969; quoted in WB 2003), offering the range from manipulation to citizens’ control (Figure 1). The notion of the ladder, or a continuum emphasises the need to look beyond the rhetoric of participation in order to be able to identify which participatory mechanisms are utilized, who takes part in participatory exercises, who defines the rules of engagement and what are the outcomes of participation.

Figure 1. Arnstein’s Model (1969)
Externally initiated structured participatory process in development first gained prominence in the early sixties, in response to the frustration over the ineffectiveness of dominant externally imposed and expert oriented forms of research and planning. It was satisfying the need for alternatives and was based on ideas of social transformation and ‘giving voice to the voiceless’ and social transformation (Freire, 1972, Rahman, 1984). Pioneering initiatives were followed by participation boom of experimenting with the new research and planning techniques focusing on respecting and understanding insider/local knowledge, balancing the dominance of outsider/western science. The early 1990s witnessed a frenzied level of global interest in participatory methodologies, the new synonym for ‘good’ or ‘sustainable; and ‘participatory process’ became a condition for funding. Ironically, nowadays, ‘participation imperative’ led to bureaucratisation and the standardization of approaches, which contradicts the original aims to move away from the limitations of blueprint planning and implementation towards more flexible and context-specific methodologies (Gujit, 1996). As Robert Chambers, one of the key figures in development and promotion of participatory methodology alerts: ‘the greatest danger with participation is that the words will be used without the reality of changed behaviour, approaches and methods. The key remains behaviour. Unless the behaviour of most outsiders changes, participation will not be more than partial’ (Chambers, R. 1995; p.41).

Brock et al. (2001) distinguish between ‘invited’, created from above by powerful institutions, and ‘autonomous’ participation, generated through the collective action on poverty issues on the grass-roots level. They suggest that the mainstream poverty narratives offer “three principal mechanisms through which ‘poor people’ and ‘other stakeholders’ are to be involved in policy deliberation: occasional or one-off consultative processes such as the majority of PPAs and PRSPs; new institutions such as Social Funds, and the organs of decentralised governance. In each, a different relationship with the state is envisaged: each too carries with it different conceptions of citizenship and participation” (Brock, Cornwall, Gaventa, 2001: p. 23) The process of introducing new participatory initiatives carries a potential for creating “‘policy spaces’ (Grindle and Thomas, 1991) - the moments in which interventions or events offer new opportunities, reconfiguring relationships between actors within these spaces or bringing in new actors and opening up the possibilities of a shift in direction (Brock, Cornwall, Gaventa, 2001: p.22), yet it also possess the threats of co-optation. At the same time the process of participation can be empowering on its own. Fran Bennett (2004) argues that using participatory process in the research on poverty can produce the sense of empowerment among those being researched from “being recognised and respected as equal citizens and human beings with a contribution to make” (Karl, 1995, quoted in Bennett, 2004), as well as among the researchers and policy makers themselves, resulting from “the personal experience of meeting and engaging with people living in poverty is also crucial in changing the perspectives and behaviour of policy makers (Bennett, 2004, p.11).

Power

The discussion of participation is inherently linked to the discourse about power. The extent to which community development policies involve the communities in actual decision-making, types of resources available to the community and the transparency of the processes related to resources allocation indicate the contestations of power on the level of community. From first theoretic conceptualisation of power by elite theory, which maintained that “government is always government by the few, whether in the name of the few, the one or the many” (Lasswell and Lerner, 1952; p.7) to the pluralist view of power, epitomised by Dahl (1961) and Polsby (1963), arguing that while only a small group had direct influence (either to initiate or to veto proposals) many, including voters, had an indirect influence on community decisions; to the emphasis on the second dimension of power – non-decision-making, occurring as a result of tight control over the agenda of politics (Bachrach and Baraz, 1962), and finally Lukes’s (1974) third face of power, not attributable to a particular individual’s behaviour, and not confined to decision-making within institutions, but
distributed in the society through relations of gender, race and class, imbued with ideology; the debate about power is inseparable from the policy process. Lukes’ analysis was aimed at power of shaping the meaning of the discourse, which causes the latent conflict of contradiction between the interests of those exercising power and the real interests of those they exclude, even though the latter may not express or even be conscious of their interests (Lukes, 1974; p.25). These considerations are extremely relevant to the analysis of participatory policies, which are being introduced from the top, even with the bottom-up intentions. Seen within the broader picture of structural inequalities, participatory policies shaped within the mainstream political agenda can contribute to perpetuation of inequalities: “whilst processes of partnership creation and empowerment may be a way of ensuring that (some of) the benefits of regeneration reach the disadvantaged, they may also have the effect of reinforcing existing relations of domination and control, of legitimating a particular re-presentation of reality which defines what is ‘reasonable’ and the language in which demands can be made” (Atkinson, 1999; p.70). Moreover, the meanings of the alternative discourse can be hijacked by the mainstream: “a closer look at the emergence of discourses on poverty reduction and development reveals a process of hybridisation, through which the versions of poverty that have captured mainstream attention at different points in time have selectively incorporated concepts generated by alternative development discourse…. quite how the lexicon of alternative development, with its emphasis on ‘participatory’, ‘bottom-up’ and ‘people-centred’ processes, has been interpreted and used within the mainstream, however, require further attention. For, as these terms have been redeployed within entirely different frames of reference, they have come to acquire new meanings.” (Brock, Cornwall, Gaventa, 2001: pp. 8-9).

Collective power

If in the previous section the discussion was concentrating primarily on the “power over”, in this one we would talk about what could be defined as “power with” (Nelson and Wright, 1995). Hannah Arendt’s (1970) account of power, which she derives from the Greek antiquity tradition of respublica, defines ‘communicative power’, which “corresponds to the human ability not just to act but to act in concert. Power is never the property of an individual; it belongs to a group and remains in existence only so long as the group keeps together” (Arendt, 1970; p.41). In her conceptualisation, she juxtaposes power to violence, arguing that power emerges not from the control, but from the agreement between the members of the society: “It is the people’s support that lends power to the institutions of a country, and this support is but the continuations of the consent that brought the laws into existence to begin with. Under conditions of representative government the people are supposed to rule those who govern them. All political institutions are manifestations and materializations of power; they petrify and decay as soon as the living power of the people ceases to uphold them” (pp.40-41). Based on the analysis of totalitarian regimes, Arendt vigorously criticises the privatism built into modern societies and alerts that the increased bureaucratisation is antithetical to democracy: “Mediating the population through highly bureaucratised administrations, parties, and organizations just supplements and fortifies those privatistic forms of life which provide the psychological base for mobilizing the apolitical, that is, for establishing totalitarian rule”. (Habermas, 1985; p.81)

These concerns about the provisions for direct democracy have always existed in the democratic theory thinking. Thomas Jefferson, the radical democrat among the fathers of the American constitution, already had concerns about: “how dangerous it might be to allow the people a share in public power without providing them at the same time with more public space than the ballot box and with more opportunities to make their voices heard in public than election day”(Arendt, 1963, quoted in Habermas, 1986, p.81). The debate about this necessity of establishing the spaces for implementing the civic powers of the citizenry not individually and privately, but collectively, is as topical now, as it was more then two centuries ago. For example, David Milliband, New Labour’s Government Minister for Local Government and Communities, is talking about giving the “power
to the people” and the need for “double devolution”\(^3\). He argues that devolution is a deal, which is: “conditional on local government taking on new powers from central government, but then sharing power with citizens, neighbourhoods and the third sector, not hoarding it”\(^4\) and emphasises the centrality of the Community and Voluntary Sector in this process. Such rhetoric identifies the sector as an arena for civic power and thus justifies policy interventions for strengthening this arena, yet these efforts create a theoretical paradox, which will be discussed in the final section. It is also important to remember that this rhetoric is far from being new. Similar approaches and ideas were used in the Community Development Programme launched in the 1960ies. However, as Smith et al. (1977) emphasise such rhetoric could be easily corrupted: “where these policies are apparently benevolent in intent, there is far less likely to be open conflict over their effects” (p.248), and warm about what they call a “gentrification” – a process where more affluent are being better able to take the advantage of the benefits of the programme.

**Empowerment**

Closely related to the debate of redistribution of power, is the notion of empowerment. As Marylyn Taylor suggests: ‘understanding power means not only understanding how power elites hang on to their own power: it also means that communities need to recognise and realise the potential power that they have’ (Taylor, 2003b, p. 225). Within the mainstream community development policies, there are spaces and possibilities for taking over the instrumental power over some decision making: “both individuals and communities have the potential to develop ways of governing themselves that, whilst meeting the requirements of central government, can better meet their own needs” (Atkinson, 2003, quoted in Taylor, 2003b). However, more radical approaches of empowerment view participation as an end by itself and focus on transforming individuals and group dynamics, rather than delivering some material outcomes and make an emphasis on community learning. Highly influential work of Paolo Freire inspired a lot of research and practice in community education. He was critical of mainstream community development approaches and argued that the problem was in the fact that the powerless are prevented from either self-determined action or reflection upon their actions: “the oppressed, having internalised the image of the oppressor and adopted his guidelines are fearful of freedom” (Freire, 1972, pp.23-24). He was challenging the view of the outside expertise required for (th)’em’-powering communities, and was advocating the dialogue with the people themselves, viewing community work as a process of awakening, raising of levels of consciousness, a process of self-transformation through which people grow and mature as human beings. His idea of *conscientisation* – an educative process that allows people to reflect on their experience and their situation through *praxis* (ongoing critical reflection and action) (Taylor, 2003a), placed at the heart of the genuine participatory process.

Empowerment is an intrinsic process, and the best the government policies can ever do for it is creating enabling circumstances. Education, special skills trainings and opening up of opportunities are the keys to success of this process, because people can not be empowered politically before they are empowered as individuals (Warren, 1996, quoted in Taylor, 2003b). At the same time, unless the structural factors of inequality are addressed, the obstacles for participation would not be fully removed and these opportunities will not be seized. Teaching people how to participate is insufficient, as Warburton (1998, quoted in Taylor, 2003) asserts that: “any programmes of capacity building must recognise that what is needed is not a redressing of the inequalities of abilities, but a redressing of the inequalities of resources and opportunities to practice and develop those abilities in ways which others in society take for granted”.

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\(^3\) Big thinker looks to life beyond Blair, Interview with David Miliband, by Jackie Ashley, The Guardian, Monday, February 20, 2006, page 12

\(^4\) David Miliband, Ministerial Speech at the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, Tue, 21 Feb 06
The paradox

Here I would like to discuss the paradox resulting from the fact that the very approach of assistance by an outside party undermines the notion of development as an autonomous empowering process. Coming from a post-totalitarian society, I am highly suspicious of the idea of state-orchestrated grass-roots collective action and any other forms of social engineering. At the same time I am acutely aware of the continuous need for the solution of the pressing problems of marginalized groups both in the South and the North. In the context of development studies, some authors argue that ‘the paradox of aid agencies’ consists in the fact that “they exert influence while desiring to build up local self-capacity and participation”. (Eyben and Ladbury, 1995; p.195). The same concern is voiced in the social policy domain of developed countries. For example, Marxian writers argue that the attempts at community participation are invariably subverted and neutralized by the state, therefore state sponsorship of community participation as a contradiction in terms (Midgley et all, 1986).

Ellerman (2001) attempts to tackle this paradox of development assistance by a theory of self-help. He suggests that the outside party could indeed contribute to ‘helping people help themselves’, but only if the following conditions are satisfied:

- help must start from the present situation of the doers – not from “blank state”,
- helpers must see the situation through the eyes of the doers – not just through their own eyes,
- help cannot be imposed upon the doers – as that directly violates their autonomy,
- nor can doers receive help as a benevolent gift – as that creates dependency, and
- doers must be “in the driver’s seat” – which is the basic idea of autonomous self-direction.

The main thesis of his paper is that the helper can use indirect and autonomy compatible enabling approaches to bring the doers to the threshold; but the doers have to do the rest on their own and that what makes it their own development.

However, the reality of community development policies’ implementation is very often drastically divorced from the declarations and assumptions of the policy documents, turning the latter into merely a fashionable rhetoric. As Curtis (1995) puts it: “in practice community development activity is often confined to a support programme for those communities that have been persuaded that they will get a new classroom, a clinic or whatever, if they make the bricks and carry the sand”. With references to Schafer (1969) and Chambers (1974), he identifies the four major criticisms of community development approach:

- Administrative ineffectiveness - incompatibility of the activities that take place in the name of self-help with the need for rational planning of public expenditure and resource commitment.
- Social inequality – when it comes to contributing to village development activities, the poor do the work while the rich reap many of the benefits (for example road building).
- Cooptation potential – self-help groups are ideal organizations for political capture.
- Ignoring power relationship – until the people are empowered to act on their own behalf, there will be no lasting change.

Those implementing community development policies very often naively assume that community is a homogenous and united entity that already exists within administratively defined geographical boundaries. In reality on the contrary, as the evidence from UK community development efforts suggest: “there is very little sense of a shared identity, rather a noticeable sense of division and tension between the community representatives involved in NDC” (Dargan, 2002, p.19) In the developing countries’ context community development efforts are often hijacked by the local elites (Ellerman, 2001).
2.1 CRIMEA

Background on Ukraine and civil society scene

During the last decade Ukraine has been undergoing a challenging process of transformation in economic, political and social spheres. Between 1990 and 2000 the GDP fell by 40% and only since 2000 there was a slow recovery trend. Severe social consequences of the transition could be illustrated by a dramatic decline in the population of the country – from 51.7 million in 1990 to 47.4 million in the year 2003, which is due to dropping birth rates, rising mortality rates among youth and adults, as well as economic emigration. (UN Ukraine, 2004). Although since 2001, due to the growing private sector and increased competition, Ukraine’s economy has been finally showing some positive trends, it continues to suffer from high uncertainty, unequal economic conditions and selectivity in the application of laws and regulations. The poorer sectors of the population, especially those living in rural areas, continue to shoulder most of the burden of economic transition. This situation is resulting from the low level of wages, pensions and social benefits, ineffective social security system, as well as high unemployment. The most vulnerable groups in this situation are single-parent families with young children, rural women, and pensioners. (UNDP Ukraine, 2003b) The events of November 2004, described as the Orange Revolution, related to the fraud of presidential elections and leading to electing Victor Ushchenko, showed the growth of capacity of public civic action by the population. Yet it also caused continued instability and economic decline.

The process of transition had a dramatic effect on the social fabric of the society. It can be described as ‘the sudden disappearance of government from many social and economic functions’. (Rose, 1999). Such society can be defined as ‘antimodern’, because it has numerous and important formal organisations, but they fail to operate impartially, predictably and accordance with the rule of law. In the situation when people do not expect public institutions to provide them with services they are used to provide, they develop coping strategies, which include substituting production by non-monetary informal networks and shade economy, establishing personal relationships with public officials and withdrawal from politics. The factors that contribute to mutual distrust and anxiety include ‘incredible uncertainty that citizens face in the adoption phase of the new democratic system, the inefficiency of monitoring institutions to guarantee law and order, the image of the new political elite as self-interested, and finally, the high expectations that have been raised in the transition years’ (Marsh 2000). State structures are perceived to be ‘against the ordinary people’ and people take pride in bending the rules. Ledeneva (1998) observes that in these conditions, “if people need to skirt the law to make do, then flouting standards of moral behaviour is not a sign of an intention to exploit others’. Aberg (2003) describes ‘non-communitarian’ or ‘negative’ social capital, which promotes clientelism and non-legal practices at all levels of society as a conspicuous feature of the transitioning countries.

In terms of associational life post-soviet countries still experience the heavy influence of the soviet legacy. The experience of the oppression against any form of dissent combined with forced participation in the ritualised public life make it difficult nowadays to inspire organised collective action. Gibson (2000) observes, that one of the primary objectives of Stalinism was precisely the demise of civil society so that potential threats to monolithic rule exterminated. From oppressive dictatorship of Stalin to the ‘milder’ years of stagnation during the rule of Khuschev and Brejnev, the regime has aimed and to large degree succeeded in creating un-civil society, characterised by social atomisation on the one hand and strong personal closed networks on the other. The soviet

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5 Every month about 3,500 live Ukraine to work elsewhere; cumulatively, as many as 3 million people are working abroad. (UNDP, 2005)
state intentional attack on unsanctioned forms of social association resulted in the socio-psychological consequences, which undermine the formation of social capital nowadays: ‘during past 70 years, a new man has been created who is obedient and easily frightened’ (Bulat Okudjava, quoted in Paldman, 2000). Some of the literature, as well as popular wisdom, call this social type ‘homo soveticus’. ‘Homo soveticus’ does not have an active political position and is characterised by ‘stoic acceptance of what the government does rather than self-confident influence over it’ (Marsh 2000). General lack of confidence, suspicion to enrichment, ‘generalized envy’, and the culture of complain are among socio-psychological characteristics of this behavioural model. This legacy explains the difficulties in fostering the institutionalised civil society – non-governmental organizations of different kinds. In the Soviet times, the sphere of the voluntary associations was dominated by communist ideology. Only the organisations that were created and controlled by the party were allowed to operate. There were a number of the organs of the Party, such as Komsomol and Young Pioneers Organisation, as well as various cultural and sport associations that were financially supported and monitored by the state. Participation in many of those was mandatory and ritualistic. Because of that, a lot of people are still suspicious of ‘forced volunteerism’ and are reluctant to participate in collective activities.

Since the early nineties international technical assistance with focus on the economic and political reform, as well as ‘fostering civil society’ has flooded the post-soviet space. In the Ukraine, international organisations like UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNHCR, IOM, World Bank etc., were actively present in the country since 1991. In many instances they identified or created local NGOs to implement their projects. Bilateral agencies, such as British DFID, USAID, Canadian CIDA, Swiss SDC, Dutch Matra, Turkish TICA etc., have been administering various grant programmes for local NGOs under the general banner of ‘civil society development’, alongside the technical assistance aimed at economic reforms. Private initiatives included Open Society Institute, sponsored by George Soros, who have contributed more the 100 millions of US dollars to creating open society in Ukraine during the last decade through International Renaissance Foundation; Charles Mott Foundation and others, also primarily focused on building capacity of NGOs.

As a result of the new legislation and donor activity in the region, the numbers of NGOs in Ukraine have increased from 200 in the early 1990s to 25,000-28,000 by the end of the decade (Kuzio, 2002, quoted in Narozhna, 2004). In the beginning of 2000 there were approximately 28,000 NGOs operating on different levels - from rural and regional to nationwide and international, which included 23,065 civic organizations and 4,878 charity foundations; 15 679 of them registered between 1995 and 2000. However, local experts indicated that only 4000 of those organisations are actually active. (Palyvoda, 2004). Development of vibrant civil society was seen as a major contribution to democracy building and widely supported by international community, with international donor’s grants making around 80-85% of income of registered NGOs. A survey carried out in 1999 shows that 28% of the NGOs polled do not have any funds, and 32% have annual budgets less than 2,000 dollars; as a rule, organizations have only one or two financial sources (more than 51%) and these sources are usually grants. (Vinnikov, 2000). The organisational capacity of NGOs is also often geared towards the façade that is presented to donors at the time of funding application, rather then actual accountability to members and beneficiaries. For example majority of 630 NGOs that participated in the 2003 survey have a declared mission statement (89%) and a formulated strategic plan (68%), yet only 14% of them actually implement those plans. Moreover, only 37% publish their annual reports and even fewer (25%) undergo auditing. (Counterpar, 2004) Also, the general public often views NGO stuff as self-interested profit-oriented individuals, as the support of the foreign donors allows maintaining higher remuneration level than in the state sector. A survey by the Razumkov Centre conducted in July 2004, showed that NGOs have only a marginal influence on public life - only 3% those polled believe that it to be substantial, while the majority (over 40%) of those polled do not even know what NGOs are, which reflects weak connection between the NGO sector and general public. Only 5% of those polled indicated
that they are engaged in NGO activities, and more than 30% stated that they do not believe it is necessary for them. (Lytvynenko, 2004) Dependency on donor funding priorities separates the NGOs from the local community, thus undermining the founding democratic principles of civil society. Such essential democratic functions as advocacy, campaigning, promotion of legislative initiatives are frequently neglected. The managers often have no proper understanding of the needs of their members and do not involve their target groups in priority setting and planning. Lack of understanding of the concepts underlying the NGO activity by the general public and state authorities on local and national level results in low participation and lack of support. There are even cases when state social services refuse to provide support to individuals who receive some support from NGOs. Another problem of the sector development as a whole is lack of cooperation among the organisations working in the same area. Quite often rather then acknowledging common objectives, NGOs view their colleagues as competitors for donor funding.

The activity of the international actors was based on an assumption that the civil society could and should be created from the scratch using the models developed in the West. As a result, ‘instead of assisting in reforming post-socialist societies, Western donors have primarily been concerned with remaking them’ (Narozhna, 2004). The understanding of the Western civil society model was very simplistic, essentially based on a ‘binary opposition between pluralism and central control’ (Narozhna, 2004). More instrumentally, in terms of policy formulation, ‘civil society was understood as a set of diverse NGOs, which counterbalance the state and prevent it from dominating and atomising society’ (Henderson 3003, quoted in Narozhna, 2004). The growth of the numbers of non-governmental organisations was taken as an indicator of civil society growth. However, civil society is not only a set of formal institutions; rather those institutions are a result of a certain culture of norms and behaviour, and it requires significantly more time for changes to take place. The example of the recent legal reform in the post-communist countries illustrates this notion. Impressive new civil and commercial codes were introduced, often drafted based on the input provided by international consultants, importing western legal models, however the effectiveness of the legal enforcement system is very low - the standards are perceived as alien and are not complied with. Transitioning countries require time to allow for the endogenous development of political and economic system in such a way, as ‘to exploit pre-existent social norms rather than copying existing western capitalist institutions’. (Maslichenko, 2003) Disregard to this subtle and complex social process have also resulted in ‘political entrepreneurs’ abusing the situation and ‘shaking the donor funding tree’ by getting easy access to resources for personal rather then societal benefit.

Background on Crimea and return of formerly deported people

Crimean peninsula on the Black Sea was once a prime vacation spot for Soviet citizens. It is now an area of Ukraine that struggles with the highest unemployment rates in the country, political upheaval and brewing ethnic tension. It has a population of nearly 2.5 million, which is ethnically diverse: ethnic Russians comprise 60% of the population, 22% are Ukrainians, 10% Crimean Tatar, 8% Armenian, Belorussian, Greek, German, Jews and others. This ethnic mix is complicated by the fact that almost 300 thousand people are ‘formerly deported people’ – those returning from exile in Central Asia. They were deported by Stalin in 1944 based on alleged accusation of collaboration with Nazi Army during the occupation of the peninsula. The entire population of Crimean Tatars as well as more then 100, 000 Germans, Armenians, Greeks, Bulgarians were deported from Crimea, with the large number perishing during deportation and first years of resettlement. Only following the collapse of the Soviet Union these people were allowed to return to their homeland. The process of resettlement, coupled with extreme economic crisis, the drop in living standards and high unemployment throughout the post-soviet space, has led to the situation of humanitarian catastrophe. In the Crimea, inter-ethnic tension is amplified by the fact the peninsula was a Russian territory until 1954, and the Russian majority residing here nowadays faces a complicated
predicament being governed by the Ukrainian state. The nationalist policies of Ukrainian central government add to the tension.

In 1995 the Government of Ukraine has addressed the international community with a call to assist in resolving the problems of resettlement and integration of formerly deported peoples. Three international donor conferences were conducted to mobilize financial resources (in 1995 in Geneva, and in 1997 and 2001 in Kiev). One of the biggest targeted projects was Crimea Integration and Development Programme (CIDP) launched by UNDP in 1996 and still ongoing, which is described in greater details later in the paper. From 1996 to 2001 UNHCR field office was operational in Crimea with major focus on citizenship campaign. It has brokered the agreement between the Government of Uzbekistan and Ukraine on eased procedures for exiting the citizenship of Uzbekistan, and conducted massive public awareness and education campaign on citizenship and legal issues. In collaboration with the Danish Refugee Council programme for hostels rehabilitation, income-generation activities and tolerance education were conducted. The Turkish Agency of International Cooperation (TIKA) works in Crimea since 1996 and has provided over 2 million USD for housing and support to the vulnerable groups of population. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) implemented projects for NGO capacity building, credit unions development and primary healthcare. International Committee for the Red Cross carried out projects targeted at most vulnerable social groups, offering free medications and basic healthcare services. In addition to national programme of International Renaissance Foundation, starting from 1997 a targeted programme “Integration of the Crimean Deportees – Crimean Tatar people, Armenians, Bulgarians, Germans, Greeks - into Ukrainian Society” was implemented. Priority areas for the support of the programme were the promotion of primary and secondary education for the deportees, support to mass media development, support for the development of the infrastructure of the non-governmental organization and the popularisation of ethnic culture of the peoples of Crimea. During 1997-1999 a total of 195 projects amounting to the budget of 1.034,860 USD was supported.

The activity of international organizations had an important effect on stabilization of the situation in Crimea. Substantial support was provided to the solution of the most pressing issues, such as housing and basic infrastructure, citizenship, and income generation. International intervention played an important role on the level of policy dialogue and strategy elaboration, both on Crimean, national and international levels. An emphasis was made on strengthening civil society, and lot of NGOs working in the areas of national language and culture revival, tolerance education, provision of social services were supported. Capacity building was ensured through numerous trainings, technical assistance and pilot grants. However, if in general the international community should be applauded for its efforts to employ a holistic approach to the problem of integration in Crimea, it should be noted that at times the activities of international organisations and their narrow focus on the deported groups were perceived by other ethnic groups as discriminatory in the situation of the overall socio-economic crisis (Baumgartl, Kolybashkina, 2004).

The history of CIDP

**Phase I: 1995-1999**

Crimea Integration and Development Programme was initiated by UNDP in response to the request for assistance by the Ukrainian Government, to address the socio-economic difficulties of the reintegration of formerly deported people. First assessment mission took place in 1994 and the original project document with a modest budget of US $ 387,000, was signed in July 1995 by the representatives of UNDP and the Government. From the very beginning CIDP was utilizing an

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6 Annual Report, UNHCR Field Office in Crimea, Simferopol 2001
integrated area development approach, aiming at building consensus among all sectors and groups in the communities where it was operating, addressing the danger of emerging social conflict between returnees and local populations. This approach reflected the methodology of PRODERE programme successfully implemented by UNDP and UNOPS in Central America. UNOPS was sub-contracted for the implementation of the programme with the portfolio manager based in Geneva having worked previously with PRODERE.

Improvement of basic living-conditions and creation of income generation activities were seen as the major issues, while the operational objectives were geared towards coordination of stakeholders’ efforts in establishing the development strategy and capacity building at the local level. Due to successful resource mobilisation the total budget of the Phase 1 amounted to US $ 1 875 809, which allowed for the implementation of various activities in the two pilot communities – greater Kamenka area of Kievskiy rayon (district) of Simferopol and Yany-Maale and Alchak settlements in Sudak region. Most of the funding went to infrastructure projects such as construction of primary school, community out-patient clinic and water distribution system in Kamenka, and flood control system in Yany-Mahalle; other projects included establishing local credit unions in Simferopol and Sudak, establishing home-based-schools and youth clubs in Kamenka and Sudak.

Although formally the methodology and the strategy of the project was established by consensus between national and local authorities, at the initial stage the support from local authorities was unsatisfactory. For example, the premises for the project office were provided only five months after the project commencement, the choice of the target regions was altered several times due to the lack of consensus among the parties, implementation of the projects was often delayed by local authorities’ demands of compliance with unrealistic sanitary norms and regulations. Also, while the definition of priorities for the project was carried out with community participation, this did not result in community ownership of the project outcomes.

**Phase II: 1999 –2001**

The second phase of the project was launched shortly after the arrival of the new project coordinator, who had previously worked in UNDP Regional Office in Bratislava, which was also followed by major staff rotation, with the number of staff members increasing by 1/3. More clear

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**BOX1 Health NGO “Medis”**

Kamenka community is a large newly-build suburb of Simferopol, populated mostly by formerly deported people. Lack of basic social infrastructure was identified as a major priority and such projects as installation of the water-supply system and water plumbing stating, construction of primary school and outpatient clinic were implemented. Upon completion, the school and water supply were handed over to corresponding statutory authorities, but the outpatient clinic was to become community-managed. NGO “Medis” was established with the support of separate grant from the Government of Canada, with the equipment provided by UNICEF. The founding members of the NGO were three local medical professionals, who shared the responsibility of running the NGO, at the same time being part-time employed in the hospital in Simferopol. The original idea was to introduce a system of membership fees for all the residents of the community (de facto - a health insurance), which will guarantee them free access to some services. However this was not popular with the residents, especially because most popular services of paediatrician, GP and the gynaecologists were provided under the agreement with the Health Department free of charge. Also, the provision of free healthcare is still part of the Ukrainian constitution and very much an expectation of the people, who are not ready to pay for health services. At the same time the legislation on the health care management is very rigid and prohibitive to innovative practices. While the Canadian grant covered the maintenance and utilities costs, the NGO was functioning, however the sustainability after the project life span was not achieved. The main projects staff got full-time jobs in the city and left the project, and currently the negotiations are under way to handover the building and the equipment to the local Health Department. The Department, however, is reluctant to take it over, arguing that there are no resources available to maintain the clinic under the state budget. This project proved to be too big for an inexperienced NGO, especially in the situation where the possibilities for fundraising were very limited.

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8 UKR/95/006/A/01/31 CIDP Phase I project document, starting date June 1, 1995
9 UNOPS charged 10% of the project budget as an administrative fee.
institutional framework, developed by the staff from UNDP Bratislava, was introduced, dividing the work in four departments including community capacity building, social development, development of communal infrastructure and economic development. The overall objective of the programme was defined as Conflict Prevention through Sustainable Human Development. The programme was extended to two new regions- Belogorsk and Bakchisarai, with two targeted communities in each of them. Participatory mechanisms on the levels of communities, local authorities and republican structures were further formalised and legal framework developed for each of them. In the targeted neighbourhoods Local Participatory Planning Councils (LPPC) were registered as non-governmental organisations, legal and financial assistance for the registration provided by CIDP. On the regional level, following the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Municipal Authorities, Technical Working Committees (TWC) were establish to bring together the representatives of various statutory structure within municipalities and the leaders of community organisations. On the level of the Republican Government, Crimean Consultative Forum was established, which brings all stakeholders together for policy formulation. Participants are the representatives of the international community, the Regional Authorities, the Cabinet of Ministers and the Parliament of ARC, major NGOs, Higher Education Institutions. The creation of platforms for dialogue and cooperation between different stakeholders at national, the republican, as well as regional and community levels was considered the major success of this phase of CIDP. The work of the economic component was implemented through a network of Business Centres, set up in Bakchisarai, Belogorsk, Simferopol and Sudak, and conducting regional training activities. Large infrastructure projects, such as flood control systems, riverbank protection and water supply for Microrayon 7 in Bakchisarai were carried out by sub-contractors, and the role of community members in this process was very limited. ‘Community’ was basically represented by several active members of LPPC, who participated in various trainings and set in at the meetings with local authorities. Main obstacle delaying implementation of various components of the projects was inability of the local authorities to timely deliver the cost-sharing contributions pledged in the signed project documents, which were usually limited to providing premises for project offices or ordering the technical drawing for the infrastructure projects. Under Community Capacity Building programme a number of formal trainings for the members of the LPPCs and TWC, as well as study tours abroad for the higher-level republic and national government figures. The new regions – Belogorsk and Bakchisaray showed significantly more active participation in the programme, while the projects in Kamenka and Sudak have gradually halted. The total budget of CIDP for 1996-2001 was 6,476,945 USD\textsuperscript{10}. The social development component was more targeted at community involvement; therefore we will offer a more detailed account of the work of its three main sub-projects in the next section:

Youth Development Programme
The programme was aiming to involve youth from the targeted communities in identifying the priority needs and solving them together. The programme has commenced by conducting open youth meetings in the communities and electing the youth councils, which were responsible for the implementation of the activities on the ground. Six youth centres in the FDP settlements and two in Simferopol were established, with premises renovation or in some cases construction, as well as purchasing of the equipment financed under the programme and young people themselves being actively involved in renovation and planning. Most of the youth councils were registered as NGOs. The centres offered informal education courses in computer literacy, English language, dancing, and sports, as well as organised various cultural activities. Minor fees charged for participation were supposed to cover the maintenance costs of the centres. The culmination of the projects was establishing the Association of the Youth Centres, which received a grant of $25 000,00 USD to set up subsidiary enterprise to fund the activities of the youth centres. However, three years after the end of the project the subsidiary enterprise in not profitable and the only functional youth centre is

\textsuperscript{10} UNDP Tripartite Review of Crimean Integration and Development Program. UNDP, Sudak. 2000
the NGO “Arslan” in Bakchisarai Microregion 6. The Association of the Youth Centres is run by the same people as NGO ‘Arslan’, who were successful in securing several grants from USAID and the Council of Europe. However this is hardly a community undertaking, as the active membership is limited to ten people, who have developed professional project delivery expertise, and according to their own evaluation they ‘are better known in Kiev and abroad then in Bakchisaray’11, thorough active participation in international youth networks. ‘We have good contacts with European Youth Networks, and as a result, Ismail, Sevilya, Lilya and I go to trainings and workshops abroad every few months’12.

‘Community-based Education Models’

In the newly-build settlements of formerly deported people no facilities for children’s basic education was available, which resulted in serious disadvantage for these children, when they entered elementary school. First ‘home-based’ kindergarten was set up in 1997 in Kamenka settlement, and was the first of a kind in the Ukraine, where traditionally childcare provision mixed with pre-school education for 3 to 6 year-olds was highly centralised and offered through the major employers and local authorities. By 2000, a total of 14 of such centres were established in the premises provided by the community residents in their own houses, with renovation, equipment and maintenance costs for the first year covered by CIDP. Currently, only one of the centres still runs pre-school education, as the local authorities were able to cover the salary of the teacher. For the rest of the centres childcare and basic education proved to be the most costly activity, and nine centres closed down, while five provide some other services for children and teenagers. As the centres were seen as ‘one-woman shows’, the support from the parents and other community members was insufficient for sustainability: ‘We cannot afford the children’s group anymore, because the parents don’t pay enough and my husband keeps contributing our own money to cover the expenses. We also have problems with some of the neighbors and the local Medjlis, who are hostile to our activities, without any reasons’13.

Preventive Health Care Programme in Bakchisaray

The idea was to combine professional medical services with the community participation. The project included a humanitarian assistance component, covering a medical screening of the population in the remote communities, as well as increasing access to primary healthcare, through establishing two outpatient clinics and six outpatient health units in the remote settlements with the remote settlements without access to basic healthcare. For the local management of the project an

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11 Head of local NGO, personal interview, August 2005
12 Ibid.
13 Head of local NGO, personal interview, August 2005
NGO “Health” was established in 2000, with the Head Doctor of the Region, Deputy Head of the Regional Administration and a local project staff member, as the founders. This was a political arrangement, which secured the support of the otherwise uncooperative local health authorities. An Information Centre was also established to carry out health awareness campaigns in schools, among the pregnant women and in the targeted communities. Upon the project completion this proved the most successful component, as the manager of centre, who is experienced in NGO activity, had been able to raise another grant to carry on the educational work. As that project came to an end this year, she has used the equipment and facilities to set up a fitness centre and physical rehabilitation services and trainings. The outpatient clinic in Victorovka was closed, and the building handed over to the local authorities to house an elementary school, while the clinic in Microregion 6, which is very close to Bakchisarai town centre, is working well, particularly due to high quality dentist equipment purchased by the project. The outpatient units have not survived, as the personalities conflicts and the fact that the units were located on the private property prevented wide access from community members: ‘She (the doctor in whose house the unit established) says, “I am ready to receive patients”, but nobody goes to her’.

**Phase III – 2002 - 2005**

The third phase of the project was implemented directly under UNDP Kiev supervision, without UNOPS participation. At this stage community mobilisation approach was adopted, and the most emphasis was made on introducing innovative forms of community participation, make the programme ‘more people centred and focused on creating an environment that encourages communities to participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives’ (Subba, Leshchenko, 2005). At the same time the geographical coverage of the programme has expanded significantly to include ten regions, and the targeted villages included both FDP and non-FDP settlements. This was a significant conceptual shift as the process of reintegration was finally targeting the entire population. While the projects in the area of infrastructure and economic development also continuing, the main focus in them has also shifted to community mobilisation. Regional Forums for Integration and Development created the platforms for the dialogue community organisations, NGOs and local authorities. Also on the level of the regions, business promotion centres lobby for and defend the interests of the business communities and provide various services to entrepreneurs. The mechanism for scaling up the grass-roots level achievements is the Human Security and Development Council, which brings together main policy makers from Republican and National levels establish with an objective to promote the concepts of human security and sustainable development as a policy priority in Crimea (Leschenko, Subba, 2005).

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14 Community Officer, CIDP Integration and Development Centre in B., personal interview, September 2005
**Social Mobilisation**

Each region has an Integration and Development Centre with two (male and female) Community Mobilisation Assistants, who with support from CIDP main office specialists conduct community outreach work. After a few introductory meetings in each village, a community organisation (or several of them dividing the village in smaller manageable sectors) is established. It is not legally registered, but has a statute, an elected board and audit commission and collects membership fees. Once the organisation is functional, it defines the priority problem to be addressed and develops a project document. The costs related to technical appraisal and other preparatory activities are covered from the membership fees. The residents also make a financial and in-kind labour contribution to the implementation of the project. In 2001 - 2004 54 small-scale drinking and irrigation water supply systems, 20 health centres, 7 community, child-care, youth and sports facilities, 4 village road improvement and 4 gas supply projects were implemented. In these projects only 55% of funding was provided by UNDP. Community organisations contributed 29% and 15% came from the Local and Republican Government. By summer 2005 a total number of 355 community organisations were established in 158 villages. (Subba, Leschenko, 2005) Community organisations are area-based, and therefore bring together members and neighbours of different ethnic backgrounds. Working together to solve shared pressing problems contributed to increased inter-ethnic cohesion.

**Tolerance Education**

This component of the project uses schools as the platforms of civil society, establishing cooperation between the parents, student and the school administration. Every school in the targeted region was invited to cooperation, however in some cases the school authorities were not very interested in the programme. Ten thousand parents meetings were conducted to date\(^\text{15}\), and as a result 85 functional school parents’ committees established, which is 70% of the schools in the targeted regions, and 30% of the rural schools in Crimea. The parents committees implemented fifty projects. Many of those project targeted physical renovation of the premises and setting up science and computer labs, as well as providing equipment for the gyms. In addition, a project aimed at inter-ethnic tolerance and involving students and parents was implemented at each location. These included joint ethnic holidays celebrations, theatrical performances, newspaper publishing, regional sports competitions etc. Although the programme has been active for three years, an agreement with the Ministry of Education of Crimea has only been signed recently. This illustrates the general position of authorities – they wait for the project to prove the results before they get involved.

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**Parents-Schools Committees**

Parents committees have always existed in Ukrainian schools, however their role was limited to a ‘ritual dance’, where parents listened to teachers reports on students’ progress and contributed some money for special activities. CIDP has revolutionised the concept, by helping the parents realised their power and letting the schools to see the benefits of active parents involvement. Many parents have for the first time in the lives felt that their voices really mattered. Inspired by their own capacities, Parents Committee in Litvinenko village of Belogorsk region has built a two stories building with a space for 4 classrooms where the laboratories for science and computer literacy have been set up. The total cost of the project was approximately 300 000.00 UAH. The parents through money and voluntary labour contributed half of this amount. Village Council provided 30 000.00 UAH, and CIDP has covered 120 000.00 UAH of materials costs. CIDP resources were not transffered to the schools account, but to a private account of the parent who chaired the committee. This was unprecedented act of trust in the community, which was greatly appreciated. Close scrutiny by committee members ensured the fund were spent correctly. ‘It felt really strange that CIDP had trusted us with the money, not the school authorities. And we felt really proud of what we were doing for our children.’

*(Interview with a parent, Litvinenko village)*

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\(^{15}\) UNDP/CIDP Project Officer, personal interview, August 2005
Analysis

The evolution of the policies and approaches used by the UNDP Crimea Integration and Development offers a vivid illustration of the processes and problems related to the building of civil society by international donors. It also reflects the changes and developments, which were taking place in the Ukrainian society in the last ten years. When the programme first started in 1995, the situation in Ukraine was characterized by an economic crisis and instability. In Crimea, the process of the return and resettlement of the formerly deported peoples had the scale of humanitarian emergency, and there was a significant potential of inter-ethnic conflict. The political structures within Crimea were very unstable, authorities perceived as highly corrupted and the private sector was nascent. In this situation, organizations like UNHCR, IOM and TIIA have concentrated on reaching out to the most vulnerable; while CIDP has from the very beginning focused on the issues of integration and implementing area-based approach. Delivering large-scale infrastructure projects, such as the school, outpatient clinic and the water supply allowed to address urgent needs of the population, and at the same time establish the visibility of the programme. At this stage small groups of active local residents were the main implementing partners, however community participation could not be secured after the projects completion, due to the emphasis on the quick physical outcomes. The second stage of the programme was more focused institutions building. By that time the situation in the country has started to stabilize, with the growing business sector and more settled political landscape. The most pressing problems in the areas of compact settlements of formerly deported peoples have been partially resolved, and most relief organizations have withdrew from the area. CIDP attempts to involve local communities have resulted in establishing a number of NGOs, which ended up acting as the providers of services e.g. Business Centres, Youth Centres, Women NGOs, and in many cases were not able to sustain their activities beyond the project period. During the third stage CIDP has focused on the community level to ensure community participation. Instead of establishing NGO structures, residents of the rural villages were encouraged to get together in self-help organizations and show active local contribution, before any projects were funded by UNDP, which has resulted in increased ownership of the projects by the communities. Scaling up and partnership with Republican Authorities was happening from the bottom up. The programme was able to bring the attention of the authorities to the problems as well as capacities and opportunities on the community level by demonstrating successful projects implemented by local communities. This has brought the issues of community development into the policy agenda.

Participation

While the overall objective of CIDP was ‘integration’, until the third phase the project was primarily concentrating in settlements predominantly populated by the formerly deported people. In 2003 the programme adopted more inclusive approach, where by it was opened to cooperation with any communities in targeted impoverished rural areas. It was using flexible approach by offering partnership to many communities, and implementing actual joint projects only with those, which were ready to provide active contribution. Community organisations covered only parts of larger villages, which allowed for more personal contact between the members and better manageability. It turned out that the communities targeted during phase 1 and 2 were the most difficult to mobilize in the 3rd phase, which supports the argument that “bad participation is worse then no participation” Also, close proximity to larger towns has complicated participation, while in rural areas it was easier to mobilize people and they were more enthusiastic about participation. Personal factors seem to play an important role, as CIDP policy changed significantly with the arrival of each new international project coordinator.

From the very beginning of the programme local residents were involved in the definition of the priorities at least on the level of consultation, which is not customary for the soviet welfare model, where all the services are delivered centrally. During the second phase, the policy of
institutionalising participation through registering NGOs did not prove particularly successful. In many cases a ‘stamp capture’ has occurred, whereby those people in charge of the NGO perceived it as a private enterprise used to pursue a personal vision of development needs of the village with an eye on serving personal interests. The organizations were not transparent in the procedures and power balancing mechanisms, such as Board of Trustees, were not in place. Even in those cases when the leaders were genuinely devoted to the social causes (e.g. Melevshe), other residents perceived their activities as exclusive. Also, NGO-sation positioned those organisations as providers of services and competitors for limited resources. Parents committees and community organizations of the third phase on the contrary were themselves the beneficiaries of the activities, and therefore have shown more interested and support. For example, a water supply project was implemented during the second phase in Microregion 7 of Bakchisarai with active participation of the LPPC, registered as an NGO and in reality represented by a few active residents. Once the construction was completed, CIDP has attempted to hand it over to the community, but that did not work. People were suspicious of the membership fees and did not trust the leaders of the NGO. They also believed that the project entirely is a responsibility of CIDP and local authorities. Local project staff comments have the residents were uncooperative even on minor tasks: ‘we brought them the water meters, but they refused to install them, saying if we need to, we can install them ourselves’. Currently the water supply is handed over to local water department, and multiple arrears in utilities payment are reported. Comparison with the much less costly project in Bryanskoe described earlier, and many other villages targeted in the 3rd phase of CIDP, shows that the ownership of the project by the local residents significantly increased when they had to contribute their own resources into project formulation and implementation from the start.

Many of those projects that did not sustain local funding were service-providing initiatives. The community did not perceive them as ‘community owned’ and a sense of alienation was created, where the leaders of such initiatives were looking outside of the community for support. In contrast to that, when substantial amount of people have contributed their time and financial resources to the implementation of the project from the very beginning, being at the same time the implementers and beneficiaries, they attained a greater degree of ownership and continuity. Only those issues that satisfy genuine needs of the population could be sustained in such a manner. However, social services do require support from the statutory sector. When the Local Authorities see successes of grass-roots initiatives they are more eager to include them in their procedures. This process of bottom-up scaling-up mainstreamed to republican and central level could lead to gradual policy change. For example, regional authorities in Bakchisarai are currently using the expertise and methodology of the project to conduct public consultations in the rural areas throughout the region.

**Power**

Delivery of ‘community development’ or ‘civil society building’ by the international organisations is a very sensitive issue in terms of power balance. A saying often used by the local residents and authorities in relation to the international projects ‘he who pays the piper sets the tune’ is a good way to illustrate it. It is not only the obvious power of financial resources, which international organisations use a leverage to deliver the projects according to their vision of development, but also more subtle forms of the undisputed expert knowledge about the correct institutions of the ‘good society’ imported from the West. Even the language that is used in this process, with the vocabulary of development translated or sometimes even transliterated from English, results in the terms bearing no historical ties or cultural connotations for the country of operation. For example the terms ‘soobshestvo’ (community) and ‘grajdansko obshchestvo’ (civil society) do not really have a substantial meaning for the majority of the population, but are being actively used by the

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16 UNDP/CIDP Project Officer, personal interview, August 2005
17 Community Officer, CIDP Integration and Development Centre in B., personal interview, September 2005
recipients of aid: ‘In order to receive a grant from IRF we had to establish an NGO, and then UNDP came, and said they only worked with communities, so we created a community’\textsuperscript{18}.

\textit{Empowerment}

Establishing local NGOs has resulted at the best-case scenario in individual empowerment, providing access to the opportunities to exploit the rhetoric of civil society for personal gains. However, the grass roots self-help initiatives had a greater transformative potential. They place the local residents on the equal power balance with the donor agencies: ‘After they put so much effort into preparing the project, I have asked them what would happen if CIDP would not find the funding for it. The answer was surprising: ‘No problem, they replied, people are so anxious to do it now, we will raise the fund ourselves, nothing will stop us’\textsuperscript{19}. They also provide the basis for gradual accumulation of positive experience of autonomous collective action for common good that will eventually give birth to the authentic culture of civil society. As one of CIDP regional staff concludes: ‘most important is that people got excited and saw that they can solve their problems themselves’\textsuperscript{20}.

\textsuperscript{18} Community Activist, personal interview, September 2004
\textsuperscript{19} Community Officer, CIDP Integration and Development Centre in B., personal interview, September 2005
\textsuperscript{20} Community Officer, CIDP Integration and Development Centre in B., personal interview, September 2005
Area-based regeneration policies are not new in the UK, on the contrary there is a long history of regeneration initiatives dating back to the sixties, when the Urban Programme and regional Community Development Projects were launched to address persistent poverty and growing inequality between different areas within regions. The rationale of these programme interpreted the problems of urban deprivation as a result of personal, social and familial failure of the poor people themselves, and therefore the emphasis was made on regenerating the people, rather than the local environment, via mobilisation of self-help and mutual aid in the community (CDP, 1974; Dargan, 2002). However, in the course of implementation they have been significantly transformed, and more complex understanding of the causes of deprivation relating it to the restructuring of the UK economic system, was adopted. In the eighties the Conservative government placed the emphasis on economic development, and saw the private sector as the main actor in regeneration. (Fouley, P., Martin, S., 2000b) Urban Development Corporations, which evolved from the Urban Programme, were refocused on stimulating investment and developing property in the communities. (Dargan, 2002). Later regeneration initiatives, such as City Challenge, Rural Challenge and Single Regeneration Budget Challenge funds in the mid-1990s, were stressing the need for tripartite partnership between the public, private and community sectors, favoured community-based schemes, yet the resources were distributed according to the competitive bidding process, rather then indices of socio-economic deprivation, and overall emphasis was on competition and ‘value for money’. (Fouley, P., Martin, S., 2000b) These policies were criticised for the instrumentalist approach to community participation, overpowering influence of the central government. None of them have succeeded in achieving sustainable regeneration.

When New Labour returned to power in 1997, social exclusion and civic renewal came to the forefront of policymaking, with the renewed focus on area-based programmes targeted to the most deprived areas. The Government’s National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, first outlined in Bringing Britain Together report (SEU, 1998), is based on the critique of the previous regeneration approaches. The report draws attention to the increasing economic differences within the regions and cities and highlights the shortcomings of the regeneration policies to date, including the lack of coordination between various existing initiatives, lack of local cooperation, excessive numbers of rules and regulations burdening implementation. The mainstream services are not targeted to the most deprived, and there is not enough attention to the involvement of people themselves and the policies, which will improve their prospects. To address these shortcomings the new policies are based on the following approaches:
- investing in people, not just buildings;
- involving communities, not parachuting in solutions;
- developing integrated approaches with clear leadership;
- ensuring mainstream policies really work for the poorest neighbourhoods;
- making a long-term commitment with sustained political priority. (SEU, 1998, p.5)

Community participation has become the cornerstone of this strategy: ‘too much has been imposed from above, when experience shows that success depends on communities themselves having the power and taking the responsibility to make things better’. (SEU, 1998, foreword) Community approach is important because while participation in tradition institutions of representative democracy is falling, people are willing to take part in improvement of local services and resolution of specific, local and practical issues, however new mechanisms to engage communities at the local level have to be introduced to facilitate this process. Later policy document urges that ‘all councils, in partnership with other service providers, should provide opportunities and support for neighbourhood engagement through appropriate arrangements so that they can respond to the needs and priorities of neighbourhood communities’. (p.14) In these arrangement the emphasis should be
made on making real difference to people’ lives, making them appropriate for the circumstances and flexible, reflecting diversity and consistent with local representative democracy. (ODPM, 2005a)

However it is unclear whether these policies mark a dramatic departure from the earlier Conservative Government policies. Powell (1999), describing the debate about the significance and the pace of change in the British welfare state in the last twenty years, concludes that while some authors argue that the recent changes signify ‘the end of the welfare state’, others rather see it as evidence of the welfare state resilience. Government’s 1998 Green Paper, *A new contract for welfare: New ambitions for our country* attempts to redefine the contract between the citizen and the State, combining the ethics of community with the dynamics of a market economy. The range of the new policies emphasises the centrality of work and combining public and private provision in a new partnership, thus breaking out of the ‘welfare equals State’ mentality. Field (1997, quoted in Powell, 1999) argues that: “The re-drawing of the boundaries between state and individual responsibility is not simply an exercise in downsizing state responsibility (but) crucial to the recreating of a civil society based on a partnership between individual, organisations and Government”.

**Background on community development in Wales**

In Wales there is a rich cultural heritage of community involvement with most civic, social and economic activities. As Clarke *et al.* (2003) suggest in many ways Wales followed the trends set by the wider British context in statutory and voluntary sectors, yet it had its own distinctive features. One of such distinctive features was the self-help in the Valleys communities, which grew around the rise of the Miner’s Welfare Societies, and the Trade Union movement. Using the organisational form of “friendly societies” these organisations provided direct services, on self-help basis, to those in most need and provided a working model of the power of communities to pull themselves out of dire circumstances. South Wales Common Ownership Development Agency founded in 1973 and later emergence of the search for ‘socialist’ economic solutions through the Wales TUC Cooperative Development Unit are examples of later initiatives. In 1987, and England and Wales initiative by the rural community councils began an ambitious scheme of Rural Appraisals, and in Wales an environmentally aware agency Jigso was established.

The latest economic regeneration initiative, Objective One, forms part of the European Regional Development Fund. This programme promotes ‘structural development’ for certain regions of the EU undergoing decline. Crowley (1992) has argued that following the enactment of the Single European Act in 1987; structural funding was used to ensure a convergence of the member states. The introduction of structural funding from Europe was a result of fears among the poorer countries in the Union that the single market would result in increased wealth for the richer economies. The projects implemented under Objective One initiative focus the institutions of government on the difficult processes involved in linking the people on the ground to the national economic and social renewal strategies. (Clarke *et al.*, 2003)

A major political development for Wales in the last decade has been the setting up by the enactment of the Government of Wales Act 1998 of the National Assembly for Wales. Under the Act, most of the responsibilities of the Secretary of State for Wales have been devolved to the National Assembly. The work of Assembly has major implications for new policies that seek to address issues of poverty and exclusion. For the first time in the history of Wales, an elected body of 60 members has taken control over the Welsh Office budget of £7 billion, covering responsibilities for policy and implementation in areas such as health, local government, economic development, social services, transport, the environment, arts and culture, agriculture and fisheries, sport and recreation, planning, tourism and the Welsh language. Other areas of policymaking such as social security,
criminal justice, immigration, defence, foreign affairs, and broadcasting and taxation still remain under UK government control (Bryant, 1998). Recently, the National Assembly for Wales signed a Compact with the voluntary sector.

**Communities First Programme**

The Communities First is a Welsh Assembly Government flagship programme aimed at improving the living conditions and prospects for people in the most disadvantaged communities in Wales. There are 142 areas included in the programme, 100 of them are the most deprived electoral divisions according to the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (2000 edition), 32 are pockets of deprivation below the ward level (or sub-wards) and 10 are communities of interest or imaginative proposals. The programme has a budget of GBP 34 million per year, which amounts to approximately 240 thousand per community. The programme has a long-term commitment from the Assembly Government for a minimum of ten years. Communities First Vision Framework identifies the required outcomes under the following headings: “jobs; skills; education and lifelong learning; recreation, sport and involvement in the arts; physical improvements and access to amenities; the reduction of health inequalities; measures that meet the needs of children and young people (Section 2.1). The strategy for the programme was informed by the lessons drawn from the implementation of a forerunner programme called People in Communities (NAW, 2001), as well as international review of best practice (Adamson et. al, 2001). The programme philosophy is based around the ideas of citizen engagement, with the emphasis on “empowering local people so that they themselves decide what is needed to regenerate the areas in which they live and work” 21.

Because of the innovative nature of the programme, trying to address the shortcomings of the previous policies, there is a commitment to slow organic approach to capacity building on community and organisational level, and the policy provisions are made to encourage creativity and risk-taking in the way the programme is implemented. The funding is provided in three stages, giving the local actors sufficient time and resources to bring communities together. These include preparatory funding for background research and information dissemination; Capacity Building Plans funding for training, preparatory activities, community run projects and development of facilities; and Community Action Plan funding to implement actual community regeneration activities. Communities Directorate in the Welsh Assembly Government, and the Communities First Support Network, a consortium eight national third sector, including Amcan, Black Voluntary Support Network Wales, Community Development Cymru, Development Trusts Association Wales, Groundwork Wales, Menter a Busnes, Wales Co-operative Centre and Wales Council for Voluntary Action, provide overall capacity building and specialist support, such as marketing, conferences and networking for Communities First implementation. The Wales Council for Voluntary Action is also responsible for managing CF Trust Fund, which provides small grants for community led organisations in the CF targeted areas.

On the ground, it is the local partnership, bringing together the community and voluntary organisations, as well as the public and private sectors, is responsible for Communities First implementation. The Partnerships are devised based on the two-thirds principle, ensuring that the statutory sector does not have more then one third of the seats on the Partnership Board. The Partnership then decides on the Grant Recipient Body, which administers projects implementation. Although the concept of the grant recipient bodies was introduced in order to vest more powers to community and voluntary sector, in majority of the cases grant recipient bodies actually are the Local Authorities.

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21 Communities First Support Network website: http://www.communitiesfirst.info
**Analysis of programme implementation**22:

**Participation**

Although community participation is the most important element of the programme approach, there is a great divergence in its actual implementation on the ground. As one of CF policy officers observes: “The level of participation is very different. It depends on the history of organisation… A lot of partnerships have struggled with how to actually get people involved. There was not much training for the CF coordinators.”23

The history of prior regeneration activity in the area had an important influence on the CF implementation. In some areas it was an important bonus, as was the case with Penrhys Partnership or Clydach Vale Partnership, where strong and active community organisation existed long before Communities First. In some communities with little prior community development the process of mobilising community took longer time, but not necessarily failed. On the contrary, for example in Tudno Ward in Llandudno, which has not been targeted by regeneration initiatives before, as a result of the active work of the local coordinator aimed both at pulling the partnership together, as well as stimulating community activity, a Partnership Panel was established, with about 50 members, which anyone can join on application. Vast majority of the members are the residents, although the police and statutory services are also represented. However prior history of unsuccessful regeneration interventions can leave the state of apathy and disappointment, which are difficult to overcome. For example in Chester Avenue Estate in Kinmel Bay, which is one of the most deprived wards in Wales, it took the community coordinator almost two years of purely community development work, which he was literally carried out “on the street”, to gain the respect and trust of the local residents. As a result of that effort the Tenants and Residents Association was formed and it had an active say in all the decision made about development in the area. Two years later significant visual improvements to the estate can be seen, and a number of community social services are in operation. The Ystradgynlais CF Partnership the decision was made to register the partnership as a company limited by Guarantee. The incorporated status will enable the partnership to source its own project funds, to be a recipient of grant-funding and undertake other major fundraising activities. It will also allow the Partnership to do joint projects with larger voluntary organizations.

In many cases, the “community” is represented on the partnership through Tenants and Residents Association or other active community organisations. In other cases – it is the “community representatives”, who sit on the Partnership Board. The definition of a “community representative” is very ambiguous, and raises issues about representation and legitimacy. In many cases these people are self-selected - as one of CF community coordinators explains: “community representatives were self nominated. They had to fill in a little questionnaire and provide three endorsements from other residents.”24 This in some cases leads to the problem of “usual suspects” – the people who get involved in all the forms of representation and participation, while marginalized community voices are left unheard.

Depending on the prior capacity of the community, various types of community participation were employed, but it was mostly various forms of community consultation. Some of the models were quite restrictive in terms of the input. For example in Ystradgynlais the CF Partnership held a “Planning for our community” consultation event involving 1000 people of all age groups, using a 3D model of the village, and colour coded pins to highlight the areas of improvement. Others, like

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22 This section is based on the materials from CFSN collection of case studies, available on their web site, as well as personal interviews with some project officers.
23 CF Policy Maker, private interview, April 2006
24 CF Community Coordinator, personal interview, April 2006
Cardiff CF used the caravan technique to actually spend time in the communities and talk to the residents more informally and openly. In some communities house-to-house surveys were administered to collect the accurate data about the residents’ situation and views, and newsletters, describing the on-going work, distributed to every house.

In some of the areas, community coordinators tried more imaginative ways of resident involvement. For example in Barmouth, a professional band from Bangor was invited to a local music festival, and as a result a number of people expressed an interest in starting a local Samba band. With the support of small grant funding, Samba Bermo Band was established, and it currently enlists between 20 and 30 members, covering the age range between 17 and 50 years and a mix of social and ethnic backgrounds. While learning to run the Band, in addition to the musical excellence, the members had to learn management committee skills, financial management, fundraising skills, business planning etc. Moreover, the band became the centre of social life of the community. The leader of the band also is a manager of the Barmouth Oasis Childcare Centre, which provides a full day-care facility for children aged 3 months to 8 years.

Power

Unsurprisingly, Local Authorities appear to be the main power holders in the Communities First implementation. As one of Community Officers in the interview emphasised, it is the “(LA) officer-led initiative”, alluding to the community-led rhetoric of the programme. Although the programme is attempting to reverse the power balance of previous regeneration approaches and download more powers to the communities themselves, in the reality of implementation local authorities still play the key role. It starts with the simple fact that the majority of Grant Recipient Bodies are Local Authorities. This could be explained by the fact that the targeted areas do not have enough strong and established organisations to take on the role of the grant recipient body, but could also be viewed as the attempts of the local authority to retain control. For example, in some areas the Assembly did not approve the bids in the first reading, because they were too much Council –led. As one of the CF community coordinators comment on the reluctance of the LA officers to involved people in consultations and decision-making: “They always have the excuses: not enough time, it is too early to involve community, we don’t want to see the “usual suspects”, and so on.” 25 The lack of understanding of the philosophy and the methodology of the programme by the LA officers appears to be another major obstacle, thus creating a need for capacity building not only for residents, but mostly for the civil service professionals: “Training for LA is necessary. We spend most of the time teaching them about the approaches of this programme”26. This problem is recognised on the higher levels of policy-making, and policies are put in place to support “cultural change” in local authorities and facilitate programme bending. Problems of communication within the Local Authorities and lack of cross-departmental cooperation, as well as the lack of communication with the local residents and lack of understanding of their problems leads to estrangement of communities and LAs: “LA officers fear that community is some kind of alien”27.

Also the Community Coordinators interviewed made comments, that the personality conflicts and one-on-one relationship with the officers in the LA are detrimental to success or failure of the programme.

Although intentionally the guidance for implementation was non-prescriptive and a lot of decision-making was left to the local level, in some cases Communities Directorate had to intervene and be very prescriptive, when the conflict between the local actors could not be resolved otherwise. In some case it resulted in changing the grant recipient bodies. The intervention from the top also had to take place in the areas, where local initiative was lacking: “some communities actually want

25 CF Community Coordinator, personal interview, April 2006
26 CF Community Coordinator, personal interview, April 2006
27 CF Community Coordinator, personal interview, March 2006
more direction, more steering. People want to have autonomy, but not responsibility. In some areas they don’t want any responsibility”\textsuperscript{28}.

The next most powerful role in the implementation process is that of Community Coordinator. This was the view shared by the interviewees on all the levels of CF implementation. Although not necessarily holding much political authority, it was often down to the personality of the Coordinator and the methodology used by the person, for community participation to flourish or fail. The position itself was highly ambiguous – it had to combine the traditional role of community animator with the managerial responsibilities and the need to mediate between the local residents and higher levels of decision-making\textsuperscript{29}. Such multi-skilled professionals fit for these roles of “neighbourhood managers” were hard to come by in Wales. The situation was further complicated by the double allegiance – being employed by the Local Authorities (usually the Directorate of Regeneration), while trying to serve the community. Many of coordinators appointed did not know what they were supposed to do and had to be “learning their job on the job”\textsuperscript{30}, which resulted in a lot of frustration and a high turnover of people. Several interviewees have also commented on the divide between project’ employed community workers and genuine community leaders, and concluded that in those areas where the coordinators have community development background and do their job with passion, the achievements are much higher.

Finally, in some areas the communities did manage to reclaim their powers. This was easier to do in those areas, where strong community organisations existed prior to the programme: “we were here before the CF, we want to be here after. And we want to see how does their strategy complements our strategy,” stated a CF manager of the partnership led by a community organisation. As another CF community coordinator emphasised: “real community will not stop to work because the project funding ends”. For example, in the Clydach Vale, the residents have started their own Community Lottery in 1988, years before the National Lottery was introduced. Charging 50p per number per week, the Lottery generates up to 24 000 GBP annually, giving 12 000 back to the community in weekly prizes, and investing 12 000 in community development activities. With this funding back in 1994 they opened the first community building. When the CF programme came in the area, they were able to use its opportunities to advance their agenda with the great involvement of local residents.

**Empowerment**

One of the main problems in the CF targeted communities is the feeling of disempowerment. Disappointment with the local authorities also leads to shifting of responsibility: “every problem in the communities has been the council’s fault”\textsuperscript{31}. Empowerment of the local residents is part of responsibilities of the community coordinator: “The objective of capacity building is to develop communities to the point when they can see the problems for themselves. My role is to get them to that point.”\textsuperscript{32} This objective cannot be easily achieved simply through awareness building or training events. Taking part in the actual work that brings about change has more potential. For example in Ystradgynlais, where the new skateboarding park project was initiated and led by the young people themselves, from the initial stages and through the challenges of planning and fundraising, and resulted in the ownership of the project as well as improved community cohesion. Kit4Kenya Project in Swansea, funded by the Communities First Trust Fund, and led by Graigfelen Resident in Action, is a good example of empowerment gained through helping others and focusing on community’s strengths and resources, rather than problems. Out-grown football kits were

\textsuperscript{28} CF Community Coordinator, personal interview, April 2006  
\textsuperscript{29} For a more detailed discussion of this tension, see Hoban, M. (2002)  
\textsuperscript{30} CF Community Coordinator, personal interview, March 2006  
\textsuperscript{31} CF Community Coordinator, personal interview, March 2006  
\textsuperscript{32} CF Community Coordinator, personal interview, April 2006
collection from several CF areas to be sent to the children in Samburu region of Kenya. The events associated with the campaign, and supported by the local businesses, have raised the awareness about global development problems and the sense of global responsibility, as well as allowed community to come together in a joint action. Another example is Penrhys Partnership, which main objective is “to create a community to which people want to belong”. When another of local houses was identified to be demolished without consultation with the tenants, the anger against decision makers was channelled into a constructive exercise. Inspired by the community coordinator, local people organised a march to the Council Offices, located at a considerable distance. This has showed the Council the power of the people and made them to withdraw the decision, but more importantly in strengthened community solidarity.

Support for area-partnerships strengthens the feeling of shared power: “getting the communities to realise they are not an island, you can not be parochial, making them look outside of the community”\textsuperscript{33} Building positive personal relationship with the officers from the Local Authority and the Welsh Assembly Government, has helped to build confidence. Long-term commitment of the programme has an empowering effect as well, as it provides some guarantee of stability and signifies an advance of trust: “it is new because normally with community development you have to prove something on the shoestring”\textsuperscript{34}.

\textsuperscript{33} CF Community Coordinator, personal interview, March 2006
\textsuperscript{34} CF Community Coordinator, personal interview, April 2006
Comparative analysis:

**Participation**

We can see that the forms of participation used by the policy initiatives analysed, vary depending on the capacity of the targeted communities. There is a trend for the forms of participation to ascend from tokenistic forms to more empowering ones with experience and history of participation. More intense forms of participation require preparedness, which previous less empowering participatory exercises can create. Yet, direct efforts to facilitate civic activism for political purposes or community regeneration activities could be perceived as instrumental and alien. More indirect forms of community mobilisation, for example forming local music band, are more successful in allowing for community participation to grow from within in organic fashion, with room for experimenting, acknowledgement of the risks and possibilities to learn by making mistakes and correcting them. In this way participation becomes an important source of individual and community power. Ownership of the projects was significantly greater in those cases, when substantial private resources, both in kind through work and financial, were contributed. It was striking to see the similarities in the forms of community activity, across individual communities in each programme, and between the programs in two countries. On one hand it could signify the likeness of the problems in deprived communities, however it can also indicate the limits imposed by the programme design on the forms of community action encouraged. We can see that behind all the rhetoric of participation and empowerment, people are only allowed to participate within strictly defined boundaries.

In comparison, the experiments in Ukraine were bolder, with greater involvement by the residents; the residents were given more power, at the same time more responsibilities were shifted to the residents. And even in the poor deprived communities people turned out to be able to manage those responsibilities successfully. This was partially due to the role of the United Nations, which was an independent player with financial resources outside of the state system, working within the paradigm of international technical assistance targeted at fostering civil society as a counterbalance to the centralised state, and as a result had used a truly bottom-up approach. Although CIDP had formal partnerships with the Republican and Local Authorities, in it’s operations it was working with community groups directly. Local Authorities were joining in the process as partners, with the view of the benefits of such cooperation. In Wales, implementation of Communities First programme was a much more controlled process, with local and regional authorities strongly clinging to their powers. Communities First as a programme of the Welsh Assembly Government was confined to more top-down approaches in implementation, as it had to use the Local Authorities, as gateways to local communities. Also, in CF formal voluntary sector on the local level played important role as it had long established tradition in some communities, while in Crimea attempts to establish Non-Governmental Organisation were in many cases corrupted by “stamp-capture” and leaders capture. Community organisations on a more local level with looser structure were more democratic in operations.

Finally the gap between the rhetoric and policy becomes apparent: While the rhetoric of participation approaches raises the issues of democratic deficit, which are prevalent throughout the socio-economic classes, the instrumental methodology of participation is used to promote the ends of community regeneration in targeted deprived areas.

**Power**

The power of funding institutions and “grant recipient bodies” was dominant in the implementation of both programmes. While in CIDP implementation more powers were delegated to the community level, due to the position of the project outside of the state system; CIDP experts and international
personnel played important role in defining “the rules of engagement”. The personality of the CIDP international coordinator was detrimental to the way to project was implemented in each period. The change of the approach between different phases of implementation shows that the institutional learning mechanisms were in place and brought positive outcomes. The model that evolved towards the third phase was flexible enough to engage only with the communities interested in participation, and the involvement of Local Authorities was voluntary based on the political willingness to participate. By demonstrating the achievements of the ground, CIDP was slowly gaining the support of the Republican Authorities. In Communities First programme too much power was concentrated on the level of Local Authorities, with local authorities in many cases taking the control of the programme.

In CIDP the role of Coordinators was important, but not as powerful as in CF. They were located on the regional level, and although they did act as gate-keepers for the programme on the management level, but the communities had own leaders, which were not employed but elected. While in CF the programme implementation revolved around the role of Community Coordinator, who had to combine managerial responsibilities, with the role of representing community voice, while being employed by the Local Authorities. Such tension of responsibilities and accountabilities resulted in high frustration with the job and high burn out, leading to constant rotation of personnel. Community power was significantly increased through devising ways to generate their own resources, from membership fees to setting up a Lottery, or contributions of local businessmen. Having some assets gave community representatives the power to talk and negotiate with other stakeholders as partners, not beggars.

In both cases, the sustainability of the projects and further expansion of the usage of participatory approach depends on the involvement of Local Authorities. Capacity building for civil servants and “cultural change” awareness work for local authorities are essential for changing the perception of power from control mentality of power over, to the constructive paradigm of power with. While participatory initiatives could be criticised for overlooking second and third dimensions of power, growing capacity of local communities and making local authorities more responsive to the local people opens up opportunity spaces for “hijacking the mainstream” - using the policies already available to revolutionise local governance from below.

**Empowerment**

Important part of the capacity building work is the change of dependency mentality; shifting the conscience of the people to unable them to take responsibility for change in their own hands. This process is not unproblematic, as responsibility is not always desired. But confidence can be build by providing motivation and creating a safe environment for experimenting with taking actions and learning by doing. Taking over some basic responsibilities and carrying out joint activities to help themselves becomes a source of community power. New positive community narratives are created through joint community events celebrating achievement and hope, and this becomes a foundation of a brighter future. Activities to help others, who are more destitute, create a feeling of belonging to greater global community and opens up horizons. Creatively identifying and recognising the resources existing within communities also has a great empowering effect.

However, all of these will not be enough without addressing the inequality of opportunities. More inclusive policy on the level of local authorities has to be enforced to ensure that community voices are heard in policy related decision-making. More political spaces for power sharing should be created and the recognition of the equal status of the communities in a partnership working should be respected. An advance of trust to community level, made for example through developing some financial responsibilities to the community organisation or even the residents, can have tremendous
impact of community empowerment. Long-term commitment to participatory community development also creates more stable environment for community initiatives to flourish.

Unfortunately, we can also see the capacity building aimed at individual empowerment often result in the outcomes not beneficial for the communities. Such examples include the leaders of local NGOs, who use their positions for personal advantages, or upward mobility of main community workers, finding jobs in the cities, following the training received as part of capacity building efforts.

The Paradox resolved

Policy initiatives described in this paper fall under the definition «empowered participatory governance» (EPG) reform family, described by Fung and Wright (2003). Using community participation as a corner stone, they succeed in solving practical problems of particular communities and allow for bringing in additional resources. Self-help and collective action for common good aids in overcoming dependency patterns and contributes to equalising the power relations between the donors and the recipients. But more importantly such policies introduce new governance practices on a larger scale by setting the examples of success stories, thus contributing to the process of coordinated decentralisation.

Dual focus on increasing the abilities of the communities to participation and opening up policy spaces for meaningful participation allows to resolve the paradox of top-down assistance and facilitate the process of local governance reform from below. If the existing policy declarations will be realised in practice to the full potential, and the achievements of this process institutionalised at the level of local government, the mainstream policies could be «hijacked» to the benefit of the marginalized.
References:


