View metadata, citation and similar papers at core.ac.uk
brought to you by CORE
provided by Research Papers in Economics

LSE Evaluation of the Trafford Hall *Making Things Happen* Capacity Building Programme 1999-2003

Helen Beck
Liz Richardson

ESRC Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion
London School of Economics

Report prepared for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

CASEreport 26

August 2004

Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion

The ESRC Research Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE) was established in October 1997 with funding from the Economic and Social Research Council. It is located within the Suntory and Toyota International Centres for Economics and Related Disciplines (STICERD) at the London School of Economics and Political Science, and benefits from support from STICERD. It is directed by Howard Glennerster, John Hills, Kathleen Kiernan, Julian Le Grand, Anne Power and Carol Propper.

Our Discussion Paper series is available free of charge. We also produce summaries of our research in CASEbriefs, and reports from various conferences and activities in CASEreports. To subscribe to the CASEpaper series, or for further information on the work of the Centre and our seminar series, please contact the Centre Administrator, Jane Dickson, on:

Telephone:	UK+20 7955 6679
Fax:	UK+20 7955 6951
Email:	j.dickson@lse.ac.uk
Web site:	http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/case

© Helen Beck
Liz Richardson

All rights reserved. Short sections of text, not to exceed two paragraphs, may be quoted without explicit permission provided that full credit, including © notice, is given to the source.

LSE evaluation of the Trafford Hall *Making Things Happen*
Capacity Building Programme 1999 - 2003

Contents **Page**

Executive Summary ……....2

1. Introduction…….……..3

2. Policy context for the *Making Things Happen* Programme…….….7

3. *Making Things Happen* Programme groups and people……..…12

4. *Making Things Happen* training courses…….…….19

5. *Making Things Happen* Programme quality……26

6. Programme added value and value for money…….32

7. Training course skills, knowledge and motivational outcomes……...44

8. Action outcomes from training ……...47

9. *Making Things Happen* small grants……60

9. Conclusions ……...…….…….75

Appendices……...……80

Summary of the LSE Evaluation of the Trafford Hall *Making Things Happen* Capacity Building Programme 1999 - 2003

Executive Summary

The Trafford Hall *Making Things Happen* Programme is an innovative and practical 'capacity building' programme of residential training, linked to follow-up small grants, for social housing tenants in England and Wales. It aims to support community volunteers to be involved in improving neighbourhoods and neighbourhood services. The Programme is organised by Trafford Hall, home of the National Tenants' Resource Centre. It is funded by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, with input from the Housing Corporation and Welsh Assembly Government. LSE Housing has monitored and evaluated the Programme since its start in 1999. The Programme is currently funded to run until 2005. This is a summary of findings from our research over four years, 1999-2003.

Key findings

- The Programme has delivered on its aims and objectives and provides a model of good practice for other organisations on how to organise residential learning events for adults. It was administered in a cost effective manner and delivered added value.
- The Programme was successful in targeting active grassroots tenants' and residents' organisations from social housing areas and low income neighbourhoods. Over 1,700 volunteers from over 1,000 groups attended training.
- The tenants' and residents' groups undertook follow up activity stimulated by the training. The management of social housing and the condition of the neighbourhood environment are starting points for the groups' activities.
- Activities include working in partnership with mainstream services to regenerate estates, working with other tenants on the changing ownership and management of social housing, and small scale community activity such as running community facilities and working with young people. The Programme resulted in new facilities, activities and skills for the groups involved and their wider communities.
- The Programme uses an innovative 'Training First' model. This combines residential action-focused training with small grant awards aimed at helping people put ideas into practice.
- Take-up of the grant fund was slower than training take-up, because groups had adequate funding, or were involved in activities that did not require small grant funding, or because the groups lacked the capacity to apply. This reinforces the appropriateness of the 'Training First' model for tenants' and residents' groups.
- New tenant *Making Things Happen* Capacity Building training courses were able to be developed at high risk because of the existence of Trafford Hall as a central co-ordinating organisation. ODPM underwrote the frontloaded development costs. Cross department working by national governmental organisations was an added value feature of the Programme.
- There are few other intensive residential training opportunities for social housing tenants. The national tenant Programme brings people together from across England and Wales, galvanises activity, and raises the quality of tenants' work.

1. Introduction

Background

The UK has growing prosperity, a buoyant economy, emerging urban renaissance in the core northern cities and large amounts of new development planned for the growth areas in the south east. Conditions for the majority continue to improve. But the gaps between the better off and struggling neighbourhoods have endured. There are estimated to be at least 3,000 neighbourhoods with concentrated problems of run down housing or vandalism and graffiti. Areas of serious low demand for housing have been identified in the north and midlands. There is still much to do to improve public service delivery, and increase social inclusion. Regeneration efforts, whether publicly funded, private sector led, or facilitated by charitable funders, continue in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods. There is a strong focus on active citizenship and community involvement running through all attempts to bring up standards and improve quality of life for low income neighbourhoods.

The extent and causes of area decline have been well documented, as have attempts to renew neighbourhoods[1]. It is in this context that we present our findings from an evaluation of a Programme designed to stimulate and facilitate the involvement of social housing residents in decisions that affect their neighbourhoods and lives. The Programme aims to develop people's skills to carry out local community projects that will make a difference to neighbourhoods.

About this report

This report is about the operation, outcomes and impacts of the *Making Things Happen* Capacity Building Training and Small Grants Programme, organised by Trafford Hall, home of the National Tenants' Resource Centre. LSE Housing, a research unit in the Centre for the Analysis of Social Exclusion at the London School of Economics, has been researching the Programme since the start in 1999.

We provide detailed information about tenant involvement in social housing areas, about community activity, and how these activities have been supported by the Programme. We name groups and people when we are talking about positive outcomes but for more critical reflections on local situations, neighbourhoods and local authorities we have anonymised the groups. We also examine the Programme's value for money and the role of the Programme in the current policy context of neighbourhood renewal and community involvement.

The conclusions and recommendations of this report are relevant for Government, funding bodies, practitioners, voluntary organisations, tenants and residents of social housing areas, councils, housing associations, other registered social landlords and for all other training centres seeking to provide training for community based organisations.

[1] For more evidence and assessment of area disadvantage, spatial polarisation, neighbourhood dynamics, and neighbourhood renewal strategies and work, see Lupton, R. (2003) *Poverty Street*: *the dynamics of neighbourhood decline and renewal*, Bristol: Policy Press.

About the Making Things Happen Programme

The *Making Things Happen* Capacity Building Programme is delivered by Trafford Hall and is funded by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) with input from the Housing Corporation and Welsh Assembly Government.

Trafford Hall is a residential training and conference centre, near Chester. It is the home of the National Tenants' Resource Centre, a charity offering training and support to all those living and working in low income communities around the UK to develop their skills, confidence and capacity to tackle neighbourhood problems and reverse poor conditions. Trafford Hall opened in 1995, with support from ODPM, Laing North West, many local authorities, housing associations, and charities, and tenants from across the country who helped to fundraise and advise on its development.

The *Making Things Happen* Training and Small Grants Programme began as a pilot in November 1999, and has been running for four years between 1999 and 2003. It is funded until 2005. This innovative and practical 'self help' Programme links residential training courses to small pots of money, aimed at people living and working in some of Britain's most deprived neighbourhoods. The aims of the Programme are:

- to run training courses targeted primarily at tenants from low income areas;
- to award small grants to help groups deliver small projects in neighbourhoods.

This is in order to generate ideas, develop skills and increase people's capacity to take local action and work as partners with local authorities and other local agencies. It was hoped that this capacity building would help people to:

- get involved locally to influence local decision making processes, especially around housing management;
- effect positive social change in their local areas by tackling local problems;
- develop community projects on the ground and encourage community activities;
- encourage others to participate;
- contribute to the Government's goals of promoting community involvement and neighbourhood renewal.

Since the beginning of the Programme over 1,700 volunteers from over 1,000 different tenants' and residents' groups and voluntary community groups in Britain have attended over 100 training courses at Trafford Hall. Most are from social housing estates.

Training courses are residential and run over 2-3 days. Each event involves around 20 people from around 7 different community organisations from social housing areas across the country. The training is participatory and action focused. Training is organised by Trafford Hall and delivered by outside training organisations. There are bursaries available for unfunded tenants and community volunteers to cover the costs of accommodation and training.

There have been around 2 courses per month over the four years of operation. Courses cover a wide range of topics and are spread across four main themes:

- *'Organisation, Development and Management'* courses that enable groups to review, progress and consolidate their work locally, for example fundraising, managing volunteers, committee skills.

- *'Community Action'* courses that focus on a particular project or area of local activity and ways and techniques to achieve results in this area, such as working with young people, running community buildings, organising social events.
- *'Representing your Neighbourhood'* courses that look at the ways in which community groups can represent the needs of their local areas and influence local decision makers, for example presentation skills, innovative ways to consult, working in partnership.
- *'Estate/Housing issues'* courses which provide a grounding in specific government initiatives and policies such as Best Value for housing, housing stock transfer and neighbourhood management, and relating these issues to the group's local work and concerns.

Every group that attends a training course has the chance to apply for a small grant, of a maximum of £3,000, to put their ideas into action and kick start a new community project. Projects should focus on enabling communities to be better informed about local issues and/or to build their capacity to take part in decision making processes, especially around the management of their homes.

Between the start of the small grant fund in February 2001 and September 2003, there were 63 applications for small grants for community projects. 12 applications were rejected. 51 grants were awarded to 46 groups to a total of £121,189.

Around one fifth of these projects have been set up to provide information to other residents in a group's area or estate, for example, by publicising their work, projects and plans for the future as a way of boosting local involvement and awareness. A further one fifth of projects have focused around a permanent estate based community facility. Other projects include:

- Local advice and information work.
- Social events to boost local involvement, morale and awareness.
- The provision of facilities or activities for young people.
- Community consultation to find out the needs of a diverse, multi-ethnic community.
- The establishment of a community garden.
- Multi-cultural theatre project.
- Estate based crime project in conjunction with the Police.
- Energy conservation pilot project.
- Parenting project to develop positive parenting.
- Arts project involving young people.
- Fundraising training to enable a group to keep going and expand on their success.

The role of LSE Housing and research methods

LSE Housing is a research unit within the Centre for the Analysis of Social Exclusion, at the London School of Economics. LSE Housing is contracted by ODPM as the external evaluators and researchers for the *Making Things Happen* Training and Small Grant Programme. Our research brief is to monitor and evaluate the delivery of the Programme to ensure that it is achieving its aims. This includes giving developmental feedback and suggesting adaptations as the Programme develops. We collect evidence of outputs and outcomes of the Programme, and disseminate good practice in community involvement.

LSE Housing has monitored and evaluated this Programme since the beginning. A LSE researcher has worked full time on the project since October 2001. We now have a wealth of

information about the role of training and small grants in promoting skills, knowledge and confidence of tenants and residents which contributes to their capacity to build cohesive, confident local communities.

We used the following methods to collect information about the Programme and its outcomes:

- course attendance information supplied by Trafford Hall;
- observation of selected training courses, including informal interviews with training participants;
- written feedback from training participants completed at the end of training events;
- written feedback from training participants a few weeks after training;
- telephone interviews with training participants a few weeks after training;
- visits and interviews to grant funded projects 9 months after grants were awarded.

See appendix for copies of the training feedback questionnaire given to participants immediately after training and the follow up feedback questionnaire sent out three weeks after training.

2. Policy context for the *Making Things Happen* Programme

- Current Government policy is very strongly focused on community involvement.
- Tenant involvement in housing has high priority. Council tenants have rights in law to be consulted on housing management issues. Housing associations and other registered social landlords are expected to respond to Housing Corporation policy and promote a full range of tenant involvement options.
- The *Making Things Happen* Programme is recognition of the value of capacity building to enable tenants and residents to get involved in their neighbourhoods and the decisions that affect their homes.
- The Programme links to other Government policy by increasing active citizenship, encouraging customer influence over public service delivery, improving liveability and contributing to neighbourhood renewal and social inclusion.

Why tenants? Why tenant participation?

It is acknowledged that council housing has a history of poor management of housing services, and hostile relationships between tenants and social landlords. There is also a long history of tenants getting together to improve conditions where they lived, sometimes in a confrontational way. Social housing tenants have shown for many years their desire to have more influence over the way their homes and neighbourhoods are looked after. Tenants have long been active in trying to improve the physical environment, the maintenance of their homes, and customer care. Most social landlords now recognise the need to involve tenants and residents in decisions about their housing and the added value that this brings.

Successive Governments have given high priority to tenant involvement in housing in order to get:

- better housing management services;
- better value for money;
- more community involvement and ownership;
- more stable communities.

Social landlords and tenants' representatives across the UK now work much more closely together, as we can see from the many examples in this report. Their shared aims are to improve service standards and quality of life for people who live in some of the most disadvantaged areas. There are still many areas where services could be improved, and where tenants identify failures in provision. Local authorities and housing associations do not always listen or respond. Tenants and residents do not always appreciate the constraints on landlords. But involvement structures are in place for constructive dialogue between service providers and users, within which healthy debate about ways forward for social housing is taking place. Tenants, like the people involved in the *Making Things Happen* Programme, show their willingness to 'do their bit' alongside landlords, police, health care services, education providers and others in order to regenerate neighbourhoods.

Current housing policy initiatives

The Sustainable Communities Plan outlines the major issues facing the social housing sector. There is still a need for additional affordable housing provision for people on low to modest incomes, particularly in London and the South East where an overheated housing market and ongoing housing supply shortages (as identified in HM Treasury's Barker Review[2]) are causing ongoing affordability problems for people even on moderate incomes.

In areas of low demand for housing, action is needed to restructure housing markets and revive demand for neighbourhoods where possible, bringing in new people to urban areas that have been in decline. Housing market renewal plans have big potential implications for tenants and residents, and therefore need dialogue between local authorities, social landlords and tenants.

Given the twin problems of housing shortage in the South and low demand in the North and Midlands, it is vital that existing social housing assets are brought up to standard, are used well and are attractive to people on a range of incomes. Otherwise the danger is that social housing will become further marginalised as 'the tenure of the last resort', and will move further away from better off neighbourhoods. Some affordable housing stock is unlettable not because it is of intrinsically poor quality, but because if it is social renting, it is seen as second class – the housing equivalent of a black and white TV in a world of digital television. Housing associations are discussing re-branding of affordable housing to increase its appeal and marketability. Mixed communities, improved conditions and new housing supply must not be developed without taking into account current residents.

Underlying work to improve social housing is the Government's agenda to increase local democracy and modernise local government. The aim is to modernise local government through increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of public services. The key mechanism for public service delivery improvements is the introduction of Best Value which places a heavy emphasis on the provision of information to increase accountability to residents, and consultation about service changes with local people. Tenants and residents are critical stakeholders in any part of a strategy, as all plans must be delivered locally.

Decent Homes Standard

There are investment gaps in many local authorities' plans to bring social housing to minimum physical standards (Decent Homes Standard) by 2010, and therefore tenants and housing authorities are looking together at a range of options for investment in stock. Some of those options will involve the transfer of housing stock to new social landlords to improve performance and to bring in extra investment. In order for this to happen it needs the support of tenants.

Many attempts are being made to strengthen disadvantaged communities by creating more of a mix of incomes and tenures. Tenants are critical to plans to diversify tenure and improve the attractiveness of estates to people on a range of incomes. Increasing tenure mix may involve building new homes for sale and rent in existing council estates. Building new homes in existing residential areas, for example on 'infill' sites, increases the housing supply.

[2] Barker, J. (2004) *Delivering Stability: Securing our Future Housing Needs*, London: HM Treasury.

This can also generate capital receipts that can be invested into existing council housing to meet the Decent Homes Standard.

Other options for meeting the Decent Homes Standard and improving management include Arms Length Management Organisations. Local housing authorities are keen to win tenant backing for Arms Length Management Organisations and for improvements to performance levels in order to be eligible for this.

Liveability, housing environments and neighbourhood management

The Decent Homes Standard is a minimum standard focused on improvements in housing stock condition. Tenant concerns about their estates focus on things that happen outside their front doors – the wider neighbourhood environment of security, cleanliness, vandalism and crime, green spaces. Tenant satisfaction is more likely to be raised if the Decent Homes Standard is linked to liveability, which is another key Government policy aim. Talking to tenants makes these links clear, for example tackling anti-social behaviour. Landlords are also concerned about the condition of communal environments on estates, as this affects their management, and the value of the assets. Without tackling the external appearance and "atmosphere" of a place, the Decent Homes Standard itself will not deliver more equal conditions between areas and tenures which the standard strives for. A high quality neighbourhood environment is also essential for mixed communities to work. Landlords and tenants currently share a common set of priorities on both Decent Homes Standard and improving liveability, and therefore tenant involvement can add to work on both these policy aims. Neighbourhood management experiments are underway to tackle liveability issues, as are landlord pilots of changed caretaking services e.g. 'super' caretakers and neighbourhood wardens.

National policy on tenant participation

Council tenants have rights in law to be consulted on housing management issues. They have the right to take over management of their homes from the local authority. Central Government also supports mutually agreed involvement structures between landlords and tenants through policy as well as advice and funding programmes. Tenant Participation Compacts, developed in 1999 by the ODPM, set down that local authorities and tenants have a written agreement about how landlords would consult tenants, on what issues, and how tenants could be supported to be involved in decisions. They emphasise open and honest relationships between tenants and landlords, increased accountability to clients, efficiency and performance improvements and more responsive services. All local authorities were required to draw up Compacts. These agreements have bedded in over time, and are due to be further developed from 2004.

Housing associations and other registered social landlords are also expected to respond to similar challenges from Housing Corporation policy to encourage tenant participation.

Why capacity building?

Capacity building involves enabling residents to be active partners in the Government's participation agenda. It is about learning to link up local problems with bigger agendas. Capacity building means learning by doing, including tackling local problems, not just talking. It helps tenants to secure:

- an increase in access to information and support networks;
- proper training, confidence and competence;
- a greater input into and control over social landlord consultation and involvement processes;
- a better deal for their own local communities;
- the development of small scale local initiatives and ideas;
- maximum value from special programmes.

The *Making Things Happen* Programme is recognition of the value of capacity building for tenants and residents to get involved in their neighbourhoods and the decisions that affect them. It is based on a 5 year pilot Programme supported by the Gatsby Charitable Foundation. The Gatsby Programme used training and small grants to encourage participation and tenant empowerment. The ODPM asked the National Tenants Resource Centre to draw on this experience to create a capacity building programme specifically for tenants. It is based on tenants learning by doing. It uses a unique and innovative 'Training First' model. Action focused training helps people to develop ideas about how to tackle problems. A small grant fund is then available to help people put ideas into practice.

Levels of Government support for tenant capacity building

1. Government:

There is currently a review underway by the Home Office of community capacity building, asking what should be provided for community groups and community capacity building, how and by whom.

The ODPM runs a Tenant Empowerment Grant Programme intended to promote and raise the quality of tenant involvement. The Programme can pay for tenants to look at different ways of gaining control over the management of their homes with independent advice and training.

2. Non-profit landlords

The Housing Corporation resources tenant participation through the Community Training and Enabling Fund (part of its Innovation and Good Practice Grant Programme). This gives grants for projects that aim to increase the involvement of tenants in decisions that affect their housing, particularly ideas that improve the performance of housing association landlords.

3. Local Authorities

Local housing authorities are required to identify an annual budget for supporting tenant participation (it will depend on the likely costs, the council's resources, and expected long-term savings because of the tenant compact).

4. Professional bodies

The Chartered Institute of Housing is funded by the ODPM, to run the Innovation into Action Programme. Grants under this Programme are to provide support to groups that may have a new idea or a different way of involving tenants in the management of their homes.

5. Voluntary sector

The National Tenant Training Programme, supported by the ODPM, aims to enable tenants to participate more effectively in local authority housing management. It supports the Trafford Hall *Making Things Happen* Programme, as well as other national tenant training events delivered by national charities that work with tenants and residents.

How does the Making Things Happen Programme link to other Government policy?

Current Government policy is very strongly focused on community involvement across Government departments. The *Making Things Happen* Programme links to other Government policy on community involvement and neighbourhood renewal by:

- increasing civic participation and active citizenship by helping tenants and residents get more involved as local volunteers running small projects and working with agencies;
- encouraging customer influence over public service delivery in housing;
- facilitating tenant and resident involvement in crime reduction work with police and other agencies;
- helping tenants and residents to deliver small local projects to improve neighbourhood conditions and provide additional services and facilities for residents, thereby adding to neighbourhood renewal and social inclusion;
- backing tenants and residents to improve green spaces, derelict open space and run down buildings to improve liveability;
- supporting tenants and residents to help people into education and training;
- funding projects that work with young people, and help parenting skills,

3. *Making Things Happen* Programme Groups and People

- The *Making Things Happen* Programme was successful in attracting social housing tenants from active tenants' and residents' groups. Over 1,700 volunteers from over 1,000 different tenants' and residents' groups and community groups attended over 100 training courses.
- The residents involved were from neighbourhoods that face many problems and they are active in responding to these.
- Over half of the tenant and resident volunteers involved in the Programme were aged under 50 years old. 22% were aged under 35 years old.
- 9% of participants were from a black and minority ethnic (BME) group. After a concentrated 6 month period of promotion to minority groups, BME attendance rose to 15%.
- The Programme attracted both very new and more experienced community representatives.

Since the beginning of the *Making Things Happen* Training and Small Grants Programme, a total of 1,750 participants from 1,061 groups have attended training on 101 courses between November 1999 and September 2003. There was an average of 17 training participants per course representing 10 different tenants' groups.

The following section looks at the types of people and groups that have been involved in the training and small grant programmes as part of the *Making Things Happen* Programme. We examine in detail people's motivations for getting involved locally, the types of neighbourhoods and specific problems faced and the roles these groups play in their local communities.

The people

The *Making Things Happen* Programme is aimed at tenants and residents from low income neighbourhoods and social housing areas, and it has been extremely successful in targeting this group. 86% of training participants were social housing tenants. Nationally only 23% live in social housing.

Table 1. Attendance by tenure

Landlord	**% of attendance**
Local Authority	61%
Housing association	25%
Owner occupier/Right to Buy*	9%
Private rented sector**	5%
Total	100%

Table based on data from 101 training courses

* includes leaseholders living on council estates

** includes residents in disadvantaged mixed tenure neighbourhoods

The majority of course participants were female (63%).

There is a strong perception by many in the housing and regeneration field that tenant representation is dominated by older white residents, and this is still true in some areas. The contributions of committed tenant volunteers – regardless of age or ethnicity – are to be welcomed. Older tenants who have lived in council housing for many years are important mainstays for tenants' and residents' associations, bringing experience and skills to groups. Those tenants themselves argue that there is a need to increase involvement from the next generation of representatives, and to have community organisations that better reflect the diversity of their neighbourhoods.

So the current emphasis in the tenant participation field on attempts to increase participation by younger tenants, and by people from minority backgrounds, is a shared concern by landlords, professionals and tenant representatives alike.

The Programme has had a relatively youthful profile of attendance. Over half of the course participants were aged under 50 years old. The breakdown of attendance by age is:

- 2% aged under 20;
- 20% aged between 21 and 35 years old;
- 34% aged between 36 and 50 years old;
- 44% aged over 51 years old.
-

Across the whole Programme the breakdown of attendance by ethnicity stands at:

- 85% of participants from a white ethnic origin;
- 9% of participants from a black or minority ethnic group;
- 6% of participants did not answer this question.

Over a six month period (between March 2003 and August 2003) of concentrated marketing and promotion to minority groups, attendance by black and minority ethnic participants rose to an average of 15%. LSE and Trafford Hall worked together on proactive attempts to engage people from BME groups. This involved making new contacts, negotiating with potential new users, increased awareness on the part of the Programme organisers and changes to what was provided, e.g. festival dates in the calendar, offering appropriate food or single sex events. Trafford Hall funded 'Away days' as tasters for the training courses for groups.

We looked at attendance by how long people had been involved with community activity. We were curious to know if only the newest recruits to volunteering attended training, or if more experienced volunteers also attended. We found that one third of attendees (33%) were indeed very new to volunteering and had been involved for less than a year. But, at the other end, another third (32%) of attendees were much more experienced tenants' representatives and had been involved for over 4 years in community activity.

Groups used training courses for both new and older members. They used this training in different ways. New members may attend training as a way of providing an introduction to a given subject in a supportive environment. 'Older' members frequently said that they went on a training course to refresh their memory and to consolidate their existing experience and knowledge. It was not uncommon for an older group member to go on the same course as a very new member, reflecting the ability of *Making Things Happen* training courses to cater for different levels of experience within a training event.

Types of groups

Roughly 90% of the 1,061 groups that attended training were estate based tenants' and residents' associations and small, voluntary community groups. The remainder of people on courses came from charities, community businesses, youth projects and playgroups, or were paid workers from landlord or regeneration organisations. Most paid workers attended courses together with residents' groups as a form of support and to develop joint working.

The majority of the groups were small (between 3 and 11 members), unincorporated associations (i.e. informal groups not legally registered), with average annual turnovers of less than £5,000. These micro-organisations are working at the very smallest level. These sorts of small informal groups of people are often the most difficult for national support organisations to reach, and are the sorts of groups the Programme was designed to attract.

Just over half of the groups had been set up for over 4 years. 11% of groups overall had been in existence for 11 or more years. Just under half of the groups that sent people to Trafford Hall were younger organisations that had been going for under 4 years. From this we can see that the Programme appealed to newly created community organisations, as well as organisations with a longer track record. It suggests that more mature organisations still value learning, particularly where they are looking at expanding activity into new areas.

Geographical spread

The *Making Things Happen* Programme is based in Chester and as a result attendance from places around the North West is higher than for any other single region, with nearly one third of all participants coming from here. However, this means that the majority of participants (70%) were from outside the North West, spread across the other regions. There were low levels of attendance from the South West and East Midlands, but the Programme covers quite a good geographical spread.

For example, despite the distance, 17% travelled to Trafford Hall from London and the South East reflecting the willingness, and ability, of community volunteers to travel long distances if they believe it is worth it. In the last year, attendance from London has increased from an average of 7% of participants to 10%.

The geographical coverage of the Programme is important because as a national programme there should be take up of these support and funding opportunities from across all areas. There have been many debates in the Programme about what would be a 'good' regional distribution of places. For example, given the heavy concentration of social housing in deprived wards in the North West then a skew to that region might be a positive thing, as would be a London focus. A different way to approach it is to look at places where there are lower levels of tenant participation activity, e.g. the East region, and assess attendance based on whether it attracted people from those areas.

Trafford Hall has used a twin-pronged strategy of focusing marketing efforts on cities with lots of concentrated deprivation in social housing, and promotion in areas where tenant involvement and/or attendance in the Programme is lower, e.g. South West.

Table 2. Regional spread of participants

Region (Government's regional boundaries)	**% of attendance**
North West & Merseyside	30%
West Midlands	11%
London	10%
North East	10%
Wales	9%
Yorks & Humber	9%
South East	7%
Eastern	6%
East Midlands	4%
South West	4%
Total	**100%**

Types of neighbourhoods

We wanted to look more closely at the sorts of neighbourhoods from which people came to Trafford Hall.

We used as our sample the neighbourhoods of groups that received a *Making Things Happen* grant. We describe the neighbourhood types with the aid of 'ACORN' profiles (ACORN = A Classification Of Residential Neighbourhoods). ACORN profiles are based on a combination of 1991 census data and information from market research and lifestyle databases. This gives a simple and easy to access guide to area type for any neighbourhood in England, and is accessible over the internet.

The ACORN classification identifies a total of 4,000 neighbourhoods with postcodes in the four poorest categories – 'council estate residents, better off homes', 'council estate residents, high unemployment', 'council estate residents, greatest hardship' and multi-ethnic low income areas'. We focus here on 35 neighbourhoods but they typify some of the problems found in some of the poorest neighbourhoods in the country. The table below demonstrates that the *Making Things Happen* Programme has been successful in meeting its aims in attracting tenants and residents from low income neighbourhoods and social housing estates.

Table 3. Grants awarded by type of neighbourhood

ACORN classification	**No. of groups**
Council estate residents, high unemployment	6
People in multi-ethnic, low income areas	5
Older people, less prosperous areas	5
Council estate residents, greatest hardship	2
Council estate residents, better off homes	8
New home owners, mature communities	5
Skilled workers, home owning areas	3
Better-off executives, inner city areas	1
Total	35

Overall, three quarters of these groups are either from council estates or low income, less prosperous areas. One fifth of the groups are from mature communities, reflecting the efforts of established, older residents to maintain their areas and encourage a sense of community. One sixth of groups were classified as 'council estate residents, better off homes'. This includes the categories:

- Council areas, residents with health problems.
- Council areas, young families, some new home owners.
- Council areas, young families, many lone parents.

The 'new home owners, mature communities' category includes:

- Council areas, some new owners.
- Low rise estates, older workers, new home owners.

One community project is based in a multi cultural area of inner city Leeds with a transient student population, but patches of gentrification, and so falls under the general category of "better off executives, inner city areas".

Examples of issues for neighbourhoods

We asked groups about the range of problems they face in their local areas, issues mentioned include:

- **High levels of unemployment and poverty**
  The 'Walsall' Tenants' & Residents' Association told us: *"there used to be a lot of factories – this town was a travel to work area, a 'nuts and bolts' area – the estate used to be called nuts and bolts! After the closure of the factories the place hit rock bottom"*.
- **Crime and drug abuse**
  The Drug Action Team was established by a group of mothers after they became more and more concerned about the level of drug abuse on their estate. *"We're living in it, you see these kids from babies, you see them grow up."*
- **Poor quality housing that does not meet Decent Homes Standards**
  The 'Midlands West' Tenant Management Organisation is based on an estate which was last modernised over 25 years ago, *"it's the last estate in the borough to be modernised, the kitchens are still bare brick walls."*
- **Racial tension**
  After local violence towards newly resettled asylum seekers, the 'Stockton' Action Group decided to take control by working with the Local Authority to welcome new arrivals and inform local residents to combat fear caused by ignorance.
- **Youth nuisance and stigma**
  The 'North West' Community Association covers two areas with a history of rivalry and competition between the estate's youth gangs. After being labelled 'The Bronx' by local press in 2001 the group has worked hard to combat this negative reputation.
- **Badly designed neighbourhoods**
  The 'West London' Estate is surrounded by three extremely busy roads with limited crossing points leading to a sense of isolation on the estate. Residents are forced to use a badly lit underpass to gain access to local transport links which are unsafe after dark.

- **Poor standards of cleanliness**
  Piles of rubbish on the 'North East' Estate are common as the Council refuses to empty bins that are too full, leading to problems of overflow and mess as bags are left behind.
- **Poor repairs service**
  Problems with repairs and maintenance were the driving force behind the creation of the 'Middlesex' Community Association after residents became disillusioned with slow response rates and poor service quality.
- **Anti social behaviour**
  The 'Durham' Residents Association was established in response to increasing levels of vandalism and prostitution on their estate.

What do the groups do?

Tenants' and residents' groups and community groups play varied roles in their local communities and areas. During training we informally interviewed a total of 10% of the 1061 groups (around 100 groups) and asked them about their general work and activities. Although these are often small, piecemeal activities they have an important impact on the quality of life for local people and local neighbourhood conditions. We give some examples below in table 4. We discuss which activities were specifically generated by *Making Things Happen* training and small grants later in this report.

Table 4. Examples of existing work by groups in the Programme			
Community Action	Communic 8 is a small advice and information shop in Blackpool which runs on a shoe string budget. This acts as a point of contact between local residents and the local authority providing housing information, counselling (e.g. drug dependency), employment and debt advice.	Mount Community Association, in Pembrokeshire, with the local authority, organises regular D.I.Y classes at their local community centre for unemployed residents. Participants practice their new skills on void properties on the estate. These courses are now so popular that they are self sustaining. Several people have now been taken on as apprentices by the local authority.	Beacon Hill Residents Association surveyed local people about a piece of vacant land on their estate in Cleethorpes after a Council-led project to turn it into woodland failed after the site was vandalised. The group have collected responses and are planning a community garden project which they believe is more feasible for the local area.
Representing your Neighbourhood	Brunswick Tenants' Group in Manchester established a Youth Forum as a way of giving young people a voice after a survey revealed that there were no activities for local young people and no specific way for them to express their opinion about this.	Bath Place Community Venture celebrated its 30th anniversary by putting together a community archive of sound recordings, photos and videos of important events.	Representatives from Basford and Riber Tenants' and Residents' Association sit on Metropolitan Housing Trust's National Residents' Group. This board influences and shapes MHT's regional policies, including the organisation's equal opportunities policy.
Estate issues	Victoria Estate Action Group, in Stockton, approached their housing office with an idea to tackle the growing numbers of empty homes on their estate. They took down the metal security shutters and hung up net curtains instead as a way of making the estate look more welcome and less intimidating for new residents. Alongside other work, this has helped to reduce the number of empty houses.	Local residents became involved with the 'Cumbrian' Partnership because of the poor standards of the repairs service. They now employ a community warden and handyman and have found that their workers are so efficient that they've been able to substantially undercut the prices of their Local Authority's sub contractors whilst resident satisfaction rates have rocketed.	Meriden Residents Association regularly meet with their local Council to feed back the views and requests of local residents. The Council established a toddlers group after the residents association interviewed 120 local one parent families about what services they needed on the estate.

4. *Making Things Happen* training courses

- *Making Things Happen* training courses are residential and last for two or three days. Each event involves around 20 people from around 7 different community organisations from social housing areas across the country.
- The groups that attended training told us that they face many barriers. The *Making Things Happen* Programme deals with these barriers by: linking groups with other groups; providing small pots of money; providing a source of skills and practical expertise and giving people time to plan and consolidate ideas.
- Groups learn from expert trainers, guest speakers, study visits and from the experiences of other participants.
- The training is participatory and action focused. The focus is on practical ways to tackle problems and all training courses have action planning sessions.
- Training courses cover four main themes or topics: '*Organisation, Development and Management', 'Community Action', 'Representing your Neighbourhood'* and *'Estate and Housing Issues.'*

The *Making Things Happen* Programme does not work in isolation from the daily realities of working and volunteering in low income neighbourhoods and social housing estates. It is designed to help people tackle issues locally and overcome obstacles to their work. This section on the Programme's training courses examines the barriers to community activity that the groups attending training at Trafford Hall told us they experienced locally. We consider how the *Making Things Happen* Training and Small Grants Programme challenges these barriers.

Barriers to community activity

Volunteering locally can be difficult, time consuming and demanding work. The groups we spoke to were often operating in stressful and busy circumstances. As a way of identifying in more detail the types of barriers that stop groups putting plans into action we collected feedback about barriers to community activity from 202 people, across 34 training courses;

Table 5. Barriers to community activity

Type of Barrier	Rank	% of Response
Lack of Support – *"we find apathy from residents plus the young residents think we will do it for them"*	1	34%
Lack of Resources/Funding – *"the only barrier to fulfil our community centre dream is money"*	2	22%
Lack of time – *"not to have the time to do the things correctly or how you wanted"*	3	15%
Personal Obstacles – *"my physical disability causes me to lose concentration and slow progress"*	4	14%
Obstructive Officials – *"the local Council isn't very helpful"*	5	11%
Group Factors – *"we are a new group and need time to adjust"*	6	4%
Total		100%

Ranked first was a general lack of support from local community development staff and other local residents - often in the form of a general apathy, cynicism or fear of change. Many groups felt that they were going it alone, often with one or two key people taking on the bulk of the work. The Chair of one group commented; "*last year I got that much involved that I didn't know where to stop, I got burnt out, there's no time to relax or for a social life."*

Local apathy has a big impact on the morale of the groups we spoke to and one of the biggest downsides mentioned during interviews and visits to groups is how disheartening it is when groups feel that other local people have not realised the amount of effort groups' members were putting in on behalf of others. As a committee member from 'West London' Tenants' and Residents' Association commented; *"someone said I don't know why we bother having that committee I don't know what they do. They never turned up and they criticise. We don't need people like that. I reeled off a list of things we do. There are times when I feel, why do we bother?"*

Similarly people spoke of how difficult it can be to find other people to help them, as one person commented; "*there's no interest – well unless they have a specific problem then they'll knock on your door!"*

The lack of resources was ranked by participants as the second largest barrier and, when asked specifically, 71% of groups felt that they have a problem with resources. In particular:

- 18% of participants weren't sure where to go for funding;
- 16% needed large amounts of money (£30,000 and over);
- 14% were put off by complicated grant forms;
- 10% felt that funders don't want to fund what they need;
- 6% didn't have enough time to apply for funding;

This has an impact on the day to day running of groups and the opportunity for other people to get involved. As one volunteer commented; *"we are unable to pay for crèche/childcare/babysitting expenses to enable everyone to participate."*

How the Making Things Happen Programme challenges barriers

The *Making Things Happen* Programme, as a project aimed at enhancing the ability of these groups to effect positive social change, has to challenge at least some of these barriers if it is to succeed. The barriers are lack of support, lack of funding, lack of skills and confidence, dealing with landlords and systems, and lack of time and planning. The Programme tries to deal with these barriers by:

- linking groups up with other groups and thus reducing the sense of 'going it alone';
- providing small pots of money for new projects or new developments to existing projects;
- overcoming personal obstacles by providing a source of skills, knowledge and practical expertise;
- outlining ideas and methods of overcoming obstructive officialdom and red tape;
- giving people time out in a residential setting to plan and consolidate ideas with other members of their group.

This is reflected in the reasons why groups chose to travel from home and stay away from family and friends at Trafford Hall. We asked people why they went on courses. They told us it was:

- In response to a **specific problem** in a particular area, for example high levels of crime, anti social behaviour or drug abuse or because there is nothing for young people to do in the locality.
- To find out how to **manage and organise their work or how to carry out an existing activity or project better**. Groups may book a training course on committee skills or fundraising or ways to organise a social event on their estate or managing a community building.
- In **response to changes, or to proposed changes, in the way local services are managed and delivered** or because they want to know how to get better services in their neighbourhood so they can use this knowledge to influence future decisions made at a local level – so a group may decide to come on a course on Neighbourhood wardens, Super caretakers, Best Value, ways to become a Tenant Management Organisation or on an information course on housing stock transfer options.

These reasons are closely reflected in the training course themes and topics:

- *'Organisation, Development and Management'* courses that enable groups to review, progress and consolidate their work locally, for example fundraising, managing volunteers, committee skills.
- *'Community Action'* courses that focus on a particular project or area of local activity and ways and techniques to achieve results in this area, such as working with young people, running community buildings, organising social events.
- *'Representing your Neighbourhood'* courses that look at the ways in which community groups can represent the needs of their local areas and influence local decision makers, for example presentation skills, innovative ways to consult, working in partnership.
- *'Estate/Housing issues'* courses which provide a grounding in specific government initiatives and policies such as Best Value for housing, housing stock transfer and neighbourhood management, relating these issues to the group's local work and concerns.

It indicates that Trafford Hall are providing training courses that meet people's own perception of their training needs.

Table 6. *Making Things Happen* Training Courses by theme

Theme	Types of course topic		Total no. of courses (Nov 99 – Sept 03
Organisation, Development and Management	• Committee skills • Fundraising • Employing staff • Recruiting & managing volunteers • Constitutions • Teambuilding • Monitoring & evaluating • The legal side of community activity	• Organising group work • Ways for paid workers to make things happen locally • Getting started as a TRA • Working with the media • How to get things for free • Setting up community projects Equal opportunities	46
Community Action	• Running Community Buildings • Working with Young People • Barefoot Basic Skills Workers • Running Social Events • Credit Unions	• Cultural Diversity on Estates • Small environmental improvements • Ways for groups to be environmentally friendly • Solutions to Crime • Setting up drug support helplines	28
Representing your Neighbourhood	• Presentation skills • Getting the Best from Consultants • Making Partnerships work for You • Consulting Communities • Building Relationships with others	• How to act as a representative • Tenant Participation Compacts • Ways to reach out to others • Innovative methods of getting things done • Involving the community using theatre	19
Estate/Housing issues	• Best Value • Super Caretakers • Government Initiatives • Tenant Management Organisations and Transfer	• Better Services • Neighbourhood Wardens • Government regeneration initiatives Becoming a Tenant Management Organisation	14
Total			**101**

At what stage do groups go on training?

New activities of any sort take time to set up. There are some generally applicable stages to go through between having a bright idea to do something, and doing it. Each new project or idea can be seen as following a 'ladder' of development. Broadly speaking, the lowest rung of the ladder is the initial, very early stages of a project where ideas begin to take shape. This then progresses onto stage two of development where groups start to test these ideas and theories by consulting with local residents and the community, gaining feedback, seeking out potential partners and carrying out preliminary assessments of feasibility.

The third stage of development is when the group sets up and starts to run the project, e.g. by securing resources and premises, more people to get involved and so on. This progresses to 'keeping going' as the group looks for continued funding, publicises their work, seeks people to sustain the project and works to achieve their aims and objectives.

Planning for the future as the last stage of this ladder applies to those groups who decide to keep on going rather than to finish their work. Doing a one off, target specific project might be the most appropriate option. For those who want to keep going, the last stage in our ladder includes processes like action planning for the future, expansion, coming up with new ideas, developing further and so on.

Our ladder idea is a simplified version of how the real world works – we have not attempted to show how projects go backwards, sideways, or stall, as well as going forwards.

Groups use the *Making Things Happen* Training Programme for every stage in this ladder. Each stage is very fluid and it's not just new groups who book courses because they are starting out. An older, more established group may also book a course for the same reason, as a result of starting a new project. And, at the same time, a group may be at several stages of the ladder at once with two different projects. We use examples, in table 7, from different groups to illustrate how *Making Things Happen* training is relevant for groups at all different stages of a project.

Table 7. Why did groups go on training? The ladder of development

Stage	Project development	Group examples	
1.	**Starting out** ↓	A member of Walmer Close and Peel Close T&RA booked on a training course on how to work with young people. She became involved after volunteering to sit on a Best Value Panel and the Council suggested she help start a T&RA on her estate. *"They put me in touch with two others who are interested, we are going to use youth as a starting point".*	A volunteer from Hounslow Tenants Association attended 'Managing Community Buildings' for ideas and guidance on how to use the community room on her estate. This room had recently been extended and decorated and she was keen for her TA to start to take more of a role and use this regularly to host events and activities.
2.	**Testing ideas** ↓	Nestegg is an estate based saving scheme that works from a family centre, the project is fairly new and members of the group have being finding it difficult to get people to trust them enough to save with them. They attended the 'Do you want a Credit Union?' training course to see if a Credit Union is a better idea for their area. As a result of training they prepared a presentation for their local authority and other local community groups to convince them to back their plans.	A Housing Officer from Clwyd Alyn Housing Association wanted to target 18-25 year olds to find out their views on housing and was wondering how to go about this. She decided to go on a training course on ways to organise social events. As a result of the training she decided to host a local band event, with free entrance, conditional on everyone completing a questionnaire on housing needs on entry to the event.
3.	**Setting up and doing** ↓	Fisherton Street Residents Association was in the process of establishing an after school club for young people aged between 6 and 13 years old. They had decided to base the club on various themes such as films and sports and decided to go on 'Managing your Community Project' training to guide this process.	The Horn of Africa Women and Children's Association provides support for African mothers in London. A volunteer for this organisation attended a training course called 'Freebies' which looks at ways groups can find out about resources that are available for free. The Association was looking for funding to establish a playgroup to look after children whilst their mothers attend English lessons at a local college.
4.	**Keeping going** ↓	A member of Anfield Playscheme booked on the 'Monitoring and Evaluating a Funded Project' training course to check group is using the right kind of processes and monitoring systems. After Liverpool Council started sending referrals to the playscheme the group has decided to fundraise for a permanent worker to keep going. The right kind of evaluation will help them in putting together funding bids.	The volunteer Treasurer of the Bellamy Road Information Centre, which provides a base for local tenants and residents groups in Mansfield, attended 'The Role of the Treasurer.' He decided to book this training course as the information centre had recently become busier setting up new projects in his local area. He also wanted to check that he was carrying out his role correctly.
5.	**Expanding** ↓	Members of Poets Corner Residents Society went on 'How are you Doing?,' a training course on ways for groups to monitor and evaluate their work, after deciding that they wanted to set up a city wide group to expand on their work as Brighton's only multi-cultural residents group.	A member of Chichester District Community Housing Tenants Association booked onto a training course called 'Finding Out' which looked at different ways of consulting people in the community. This group had been involved in the establishment of a county forum in Chichester made up of tenant representatives from seven areas. The group was also considering starting a regional forum.

How the training works

All *Making Things Happen* training courses are residential and last for two or three days. Trafford Hall organises the Programme over 3-6 months and decides on course topics. Outside training organisations design and deliver the training to Trafford Hall's specification. Trafford Hall advertises the courses, recruits participants and administrates bookings and bursaries.

Usually two or three members of a group come together, and there are between 5 and 10 different groups attending each training event from across the UK. People are encouraged to network and socialise with each other in the evening and in free time. During a training course most of the activity takes place in the main house, and in the summer groups also work outside and make use of the gardens.

Considerable effort is made to ensure that the courses are as interactive and participative as possible with as little sitting and listening as is realistic for the subject matter. Everybody is encouraged to contribute as much as they feel comfortable in doing so. Recognition of the value of 'learning by doing' is incorporated into the training programmes which use a mix of practical small group work exercises, question and answer or group discussion sessions, presentations by the participants themselves, group feedback and role play. Training courses can also include visits to other community projects and sessions with guest speakers, invited to talk to the group about their experiences and to offer 'how to' guidance, advice and practical examples.

There is a session about the *Making Things Happen* Small Grant Fund in each course, where application forms are handed out and people can ask questions. Time is always allocated for action planning on the last day of training so that groups can consolidate their ideas and plan their next steps based on what they have learnt.

5. *Making Things Happen* Programme quality

- The *Making Things Happen* Programme delivered high quality training courses.
- 91% of participants reported that they were satisfied overall with the training courses. 82% thought the level of training was 'about right'. Training met expectations for 89%.
- Considerable organisational effort was devoted to handholding groups through the small grant application process. Small grant funds that do not offer capacity building alongside have higher rejection rates.
- Feedback from groups about the grant application process was that they found the application form simple and brief, the process of applying was easy and clear.
- Trafford Hall is careful to balance the needs of the groups for accessible funding with their need as a funder to ensure grant money is well used. Face to face visits are used to assess grant applications and to assess progress.

The delivery of a consistently high quality of training and the maintenance of an effective system of awarding small grants are very important if the *Making Things Happen* Programme is to achieve its aims.

The following section considers participant's feedback on training quality which takes into account their levels of satisfaction and expectations. We look at the efforts made by Trafford Hall to guide training providers in delivering a successful training event and the role of LSE assessment in sustaining and improving training quality standards.

We also consider the substantial organisational efforts of the Programme in handholding groups during the small grant application and subsequent monitoring processes. We examine these processes and provide three case study examples of small grant fund good practice.

Overall assessment of training quality and feedback loop

LSE Housing used different measures of training quality in our assessment of the quality of courses. Our evidence included participant feedback and LSE assessment against set training quality criteria. We used a combination of measures to give an overall assessment of individual courses in six categories ranging from excellent to poor.

Course assessment	**No. of courses**
- good topic, well delivered with no suggested changes;	5
- good topic, well delivered with minor suggested changes;	34
- well delivered but comments about the specification/topic;	8
- poorly delivered;	4
- poorly delivered and comments about the specification/topic;	1
- disrupted by organisational difficulties.	1

Total	**53 courses**

39 out of 53 courses were broadly fine or excellent in terms of the topic and delivery. Only 5 out of 53 were poorly delivered. 8 courses were delivered well, but the basic topic/specification of aims and objectives needed tweaking. These cases are partly caused by

the attempts by the Programme to develop training on new subjects and to make the courses as innovative as possible. This increases the risks of some courses not working, but could be considered an acceptable cost for a Programme that tries out new training ideas.

We gave feedback, comments and recommendation about changes and adaptation to Trafford Hall immediately after courses. Trafford Hall responded positively to nearly all of the substantive comments, and then negotiated with trainers to raise quality standards. Trafford Hall was very attentive to improving quality standards. In a few cases, Trafford Hall took action during a course to prevent poor training delivery while the event was taking place.

Participant feedback on training quality

One set of measures we used looked at whether participants were happy with training, whether it had met their expectations, and if it had been pitched at an appropriate level. On all these measures, the training courses came out favourably:

- 91% of training participants were satisfied overall with training courses, of which 57% were 'very satisfied';
- 7.5% said they had 'mixed feelings';
- only 1.5% were dissatisfied.

The courses attract a wide mix of people at different levels. We checked that the level of training was one that everyone could understand, regardless of their experience, levels of formal education or basic skills, their length of time as a community or tenant volunteer and prior knowledge. The results were that:

- 82% thought the level of training was 'about right';
- 8% found it a bit advanced;
- 10% thought it was too basic.

Based on their needs, and stage of development, everyone has their own set of expectations of what they want from training:

- 89% of participants found that training covered what they had expected;
- 11% found that training did not.

83 out of 101 training courses met everyone's expectations. Only 18 out of 101 courses had negative comments. Just under half of those whose expectations were not met thought that the training was more basic than they had expected or they had thought that it would cover more. A third had expected a different course content or focus. This confusion may have arisen from poor course publicity or a lack of clarification prior to booking. A fifth had wanted more practical advice than training provided.

Other measures of training quality

Participants' satisfaction is not the only indicator of quality and course coverage. We also judged the content, delivery and organisation of individual training courses using a set of criteria for 'quality' training. LSE also commented on the specification of aims and objectives where necessary, even if the course had been delivered well; for example, if the core idea for training did not relate well to tenant activity on the ground.

There is no widely accepted accreditation framework for community action focused residential training[3]. The criteria for quality training are outlined to training providers by Trafford Hall. They include:

- preparation and advance information, e.g. course programme for participants;
- delivery by named trainers;
- friendly and professional delivery, with high quality back up material and visual aids;
- accessible to a range of educational levels, plain English, and awareness of basic skills issues (e.g. use of laptops for participants with difficulties in writing);
- the use of a variety of training methods that enhance hands-on practical learning, and experiential learning;
- relevant, accurate content, including case study examples and practical ideas;
- the use of interactive and participatory learning techniques where possible;
- strong group management, signposting and timekeeping;
- adaptation to group requirements (in line with the core specification for training);
- time for facilitated action planning by participants.

These criteria closely match the things about courses that participants say they like about training. We analysed 862 responses from 550 different training participants. They said that they liked: the professional way the courses were delivered; that the courses were informative, interesting with practical ideas for ways to tackle problems; the friendly atmosphere; inspirational and professional trainers; well organised and managed courses; information clearly explained and in plain English; meeting others and sharing experiences; the interactive and participatory style of learning; the variety of learning styles; written back up materials; Trafford Hall as a venue.

There were some things about the training that participants felt needed improvement. These criticisms also closely match the criteria for quality training. Participants were unhappy about: too intense or too slow pace of courses; not enough hands-on and interactive learning techniques; irrelevant information or old ideas; not enough case study examples; poor co-ordination and group management; and poor 'sign posting' through the courses (based on 215 responses from 550 people).

Small grant fund good practice

One of the aims of the *Making Things Happen* Programme is to help people to make things happen in their neighbourhoods, particularly new activities by groups that do not have a significant track record of undertaking projects. The small grant fund is a way of facilitating this. We have discussed the many obstacles that tenants' and residents' groups face in taking action. Lack of easy access to funding is one obstacle, and not knowing where to go for funding. The groups also identified complicated grant forms, being unsure about eligibility, and lack of time to apply for funding as barriers. For these reasons, the Programme has concentrated some of its organisational efforts on handholding groups through the grant application and subsequent monitoring processes.

Finding from other research backs this approach up. A study into community involvement in the neighbourhoods targeted by the Government's National Strategy for Neighbourhood

[3] Unpublished report from conference event 'Quality Costs in an Open Market' held at Trafford Hall, July 2000.

Renewal found that these communities can find getting funding complex, difficult and slow. A particular problem is the lack of small scale funding which is available quickly.[4]
These efforts have been successful. Overall, 20% of the applications to the small grant fund were rejected. This compares to a rejection rate of 41% for the small Lottery grant programme 'Awards for All England'[5]. 15% of applications to Awards for All England were rejected because of lack of information, and 'planning and management concerns' were the reasons for 9.5% of rejections to this fund[6].

Feedback from groups about the *Making Things Happen* small grant application process was that they found the application form simple and brief, the process of applying was easy and clear. They particularly liked being able to phone the grant assessor for advice, and having a direct contact with a named person. To date, we have visited 27 grant funded projects (out of 51 grants funded to date). The *Making Things Happen* small grant was the first grant of that size for 7 of the 27 groups we visited. The other groups had received grants previously, but of those many had only been able to do so by accessing similar 'community friendly' pots such as Community Chest funding. 6 of the 27 projects that had received grant funding previously had done so because they had been recipients of a small grant from the Trafford Hall Gatsby Training and Small Grant Programme which used a similar handholding process (the pilot Programme on which *Making Things Happen* was modelled).

Trafford Hall have also been careful to balance the needs of the groups for easy quick funding routes with as little cumbersome monitoring requirements as possible, with their need to ensure probity and maximise the chances of grants being well used. Their face to face visits to initially assess grants, and afterwards, by LSE are a key part of the financial monitoring procedures that help to reduce the burden on the groups, while protecting the funder from misuse of funds.

[4] Duncan, P and Thomas, S. (2000) *Neighbourhood regeneration: Resourcing community involvement*, York: The Policy Press in association with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
[5] Unpublished figure kindly supplied by Awards for All England.
[6] Figures excluding applications to Awards for All England that were rejected due to lack of funds.

The following flow chart shows the handholding grant award procedure.

Support and advice on site
↓
Ideas clarified and developed during training, including info session on grants
↓
Simple, short form given out during the course
↓
On the return home draft applications can be faxed or posted for comment
↓
Informal telephone discussions throughout process
↓
Flexibility to change, develop ideas or put an application on hold
↓
Incomplete applications asked for more information, not rejected
↓
Personal visit to grant applicants to assess application
↓
Quick decisions made on grants
↓
Follow up evaluation and monitoring visit by LSE researcher 9 months into project
↓
Contact maintained with groups across life of project, regular progress reports

When grants are being assessed, Trafford Hall may see if groups can lever in other funding, e.g. by asking for match contributions. They may ask groups to obtain lower quotes, or intervene directly on occasion to progress applications and get better value for money. They also look at applications to see if groups have applied for an appropriate level of resources – whether too low or too high. Nearly half of the grant applicants did not receive the exact amount of money they asked for:

- 20 groups were awarded a grant LOWER than the application amount, the average difference was £800 less;
- 5 groups were awarded a grant HIGHER than the application amount, the average difference was £460 more.

This illustrates the role of Trafford Hall as grant assessors in not just 'processing' grant applications. Instead, they look for better value for money options, and make sure the groups have not under-resourced themselves. The decision making process is relatively quick. The average time between applying and getting a decision was 3 months. The quickest decision took less than a month, and the longest was 7 months.

Successful applicants are then required to give progress and financial reports to Trafford Hall. This ongoing monitoring also involves additional support for projects where necessary. It is supplemented by the visit and interview done by LSE Housing. This light-touch face to face system is more suited to the types of organisations that receive grants, and is appropriate for project monitoring requirements for grants of £3,000 or less. LSE provides feedback to Trafford Hall about what progress we have recorded on grant funded work. Trafford Hall can then use this to check grants are being spent as intended, and negotiate further with groups.

Examples of small grant fund good practice

Helping group to lever in other resources

The Five Villages Print Shop applied for a *Making Things Happen* Grant to fund a year's lease for a small unit on the Bentilee Estate in Stoke on Trent. Originally the Print Shop's Local Authority quoted a total of £6,000 per annum. The group asked for a *Making Things Happen* Grant for £3,000 to cover this and were applying elsewhere for the remainder of the money.

However, Trafford Hall approached the Council on the group's behalf to attempt to negotiate a lower rent. They also suggested that the Print Shop keep pushing for a reduction. The group was successful in reducing their rent to £1,200 per annum and used the remainder of a £3,000 *Making Things Happen* Grant to fund a laser printer, a sign for the shop front and adverts in the Thomson and Yellow Pages Directories.

Quick decisions

Bentley House Tenants' and Residents' Association applied for a grant to host a week's worth of social events to boost resident awareness of their plans to become a Tenant Management Organisation. This application was made at very short notice after the group was loaned a youth centre for free at the last moment. A quick decision was taken on this grant by Trafford Hall in recognition of the tight timescale and the application pushed through within a couple of weeks. Invoices were sent direct to Trafford Hall for payment.

This group has been on several training courses and are well known to Trafford Hall. This familiarity and continued face to face contact was a big advantage as it meant Trafford Hall was already up to speed with the group and aware of the way they work.

Monitoring grant progress

'Tower Block' Tenants were awarded a grant of £2,500 to create a community garden to provide a non-formal space for tenants to get together. £1,500 of this money was sent to the group to be spent on benches, plants and gardening equipment, and the other £1000 award in principle was towards the cost of putting in a disabled access path – dependent on the group obtaining the rest of the money from their landlord.

The LSE Researcher visited the group 9 months after they received the money to monitor project progress. The group had decided to spend the majority of the grant on plants and tools and had not bought any benches. Despite these being a key part of their application as a way of promoting inclusion and networking between residents. They had not been able to raise any more funding for the path. Trafford Hall has since written to the group to explain why it was important that the money should have been spent as planned, and will now not release the £1,000 allocation for the path as the conditions were not met.

6. Programme added value and value for money

- The costs of developing, organising, marketing and managing the *Making Things Happen* Programme were over a third of the total, the other two thirds went on training and small grant awards.
- Most other short stay residential colleges do not offer community action focused training.
- Demand for the Programme was satisfactorily high. Although a small number of courses had very low levels of demand at under 50% attendance.
- The culture of the Programme is to take risks, try out new ideas for courses and adapt where necessary. ODPM funding underwrote the high risks.
- The Programme used a 'Training First' Model. Trafford Hall has since been able to use their expertise of running the Programme as a model of good practice for other organisations that organise residential learning events for adults.
- The bursary fund was a critical resource that helped plug gaps in local availability of funding for training.
- Take up of the small grant fund was slower than hoped.

Introduction

There are many interesting and potentially useful findings and lessons from the *Making Things Happen* Programme about the added value and value for money it provides. The Programme combines residential training with a small grant fund. We look at issues of charitable 'overheads' and discuss what that means for this Programme. We look at training costs and attempts to reduce them. We explore issues around the rate of application to the small grant fund. We look at other added value features of the Programme, for example the scope for innovation in Government funded initiatives. We then compare the Programme to other forms of training and tenant capacity building support, and give a rough guide to costs.

1. Programme 'overheads' and delivering on Programme aims

There is an understandable concern from many involved with charities and the voluntary sector that the costs of administrating grant funds, delivering help to groups, or of running projects, are kept as low as possible. This is to make sure that the money gets to the beneficiaries and is not taken up by 'bureaucracy' or the organisations that are supposed to be helping. For example HM Treasury considers 15% to be adequate for overhead costs for regeneration programmes.

The costs of developing, organising, marketing and managing the *Making Things Happen* Programme were around a third of the total (38%). The other two thirds went on training and small grant awards for tenants' and community groups. There is a strong case that without the investment in making the Programme happen, it would not have been able to deliver on its aims. We would argue that 'overhead' costs actually represent:

- outreach work to encourage the involvement of a wide range of tenants and residents in training, capacity building and community activity;
- investment in new product development and innovation;
- forms of quality control, e.g. maintaining training quality;
- additional forms of capacity building support for groups.

This is dependent on staff time being dedicated to: proactive marketing and recruitment to new and target audiences; developing new training products and monitoring delivery; and assisting groups through the grant application process. We discussed the ways the Programme raised training quality and offered handholding support for groups in section five.

An in-house management evaluation by ODPM of Trafford Hall's administration of the Programme concluded that procedures for selecting courses to match Programme aims, for day to day running of courses, and for administering small grants were thorough, monitoring was comprehensive, the outcomes were being delivered, and overall the Programme was being administered in an efficient and cost effective manner[7].

Here, we look at the results of marketing and outreach work, and innovation in the Programme.

Proactive marketing and reaching 'hard to reach' groups

As we have described in this report, the Programme reached new, 'hard to reach', embryonic tenants' and residents' groups, and younger and minority volunteers. Trafford Hall has put concerted effort into marketing its training courses in order to achieve these results. It can often be a significant step for community volunteers to go away somewhere unfamiliar to learn for the first time. Persuading people into adult education of any kind often requires much groundwork to be done[8]. The work to attract black and minority ethnic volunteers, in particular, involved organisational learning and development by Trafford Hall in order to be more accessible to minority groups.

Levels of demand for training

Trafford Hall markets the *Making Things Happen* Programme to tenants and residents across England and Wales. This marketing resulted in bookings for training courses overall of 89% of the available training places. This compares well with similar community conference and seminar events. This does not include 6 courses (from 107 planned courses) that were cancelled due to lack of take up.

Not all courses are equally popular. 63 out of 101 courses had attendance rates of 80% or over of the available places. 14 of these 63 had more people on them than the number of places originally allowed. Trafford Hall also uses a waiting list for popular training courses (such as managing community building and fundraising). A small number of courses had very low levels of demand, under 50% attendance. We analysed the reasons for this:

- too short lead-in time or late publicity;
- unclear topic or course title;
- too 'top down' subject, e.g. too Government policy focused.

[7] *Management evaluation of NTRC,* unpublished document ODPM, October 2002.
[8] For example see *Developing Residential Learning: lessons from the Pathfinders,* DfES: Nottingham, 2003 and previous experience at Trafford Hall Richardson, E with Awan, S. (2001) *Barefoot Basic Skills Work and Intensive Learning: Two experimental basic skills projects,* CASE report 16.

Risk taking and innovation

The culture of the Programme is to try out new ideas for courses, adapt where necessary, take risk, be flexible, and try things out. The Government funders backed attempts at innovation even where this increased the risk of spending money at high risk. This is relatively unusual for a Government funded programme. This was seen in the Programme's range of experimental approaches to increasing BME participation, in the flexible approach to grant giving and light-touch grant monitoring, and in the way that the Programme responded to feedback to adapt training. Government departments quite rightly have to account for the spending of public money in some detail. However, the Programme argued that overly rigid rules and bureaucratic checks at every stage would seriously hamper their work. The Programme asked ODPM for the scope to use some flexibility and discretion within agreed limits. This was agreed, in order to help achieve the aims of capacity building for tenants and improving local involvement.

Another area where risk taking and innovation was evident was the range of training courses offered, responding to community priorities. The range of courses offered is updated for each 6 monthly training programme. For example, 13 out of 20 courses offered between April and September 2003 were new for the Programme. An in-house management evaluation by ODPM of Trafford Hall's administration of the Programme also found that the breadth of courses on offer was very wide[9].

The market for community training is not well developed. For example, in the 2001-2002 training programme, 12 of the 25 courses run that year had been developed from scratch for the Programme, by Trafford Hall in collaboration with trainers. There were no existing training packages for community groups on, for example, setting up projects to help families affected by drug misuse, or emerging policy issues such as housing market renewal. Trafford Hall worked to respond to new current issues, such as through the training course on how to tackle low demand for housing, by developing specifications for courses, and developing detailed programmes and content alongside training deliverers.

Rationale for co-ordinating body doing developmental work

The lack of development of training packages, and lack of competition for tenant residential training raises a serious question. Why have many of the training providers not taken the initiative to develop new training packages themselves, even after nearly 10 years of Trafford Hall running similar community training programmes? Discussion with training providers indicates that they are reluctant to do so because of:

- the frontloaded development costs;
- the high risks involved in developing new products;
- the effort and time involved in advertising training;
- the effort and time involved in arranging venues;
- the effort and time involved in recruiting participants and administrating bookings;
- the costs and risks of fundraising for bursary/scholarship places for the sorts of unfunded community groups that would attend.

Training providers acknowledge that the need for tenant training exists, as does the demand, but providing subsidised products for this market is an involved job. All this highlights the

[9] *Management evaluation of NTRC,* unpublished document ODPM, October 2002.

innovation and risk-taking involved in running the Programme. It suggests that there is a rationale for a central co-ordinating organisation doing developmental work on a tenant training programme. It helps to explain why the costs of organising the Programme increased innovation.

2. Programme training costs

Just under half of the spending (45%) on the *Making Things Happen* Programme went on skills, knowledge and motivational development for tenants and residents in the form of training courses. This spending covered the costs of accommodation, meals, training facilities and fees for trainers. A bursary fund was available for unfunded groups to attend training.

Levels of subsidy for training and charges

The groups are mostly tenants' and residents' organisations with annual turnovers of under £5,000, some of which is raised through jumble sales and other small scale fundraising. It is reasonable to expect that they require financial assistance to pay for residential training. In theory, that financial assistance could come from the landlord, local authority or local training funds. 53% of those who applied for a training bursary said there was a budget for training locally. In reality, local budgets for tenant training are limited, or difficult to access, or not in the control of the residents' groups. The Programme provided subsidy in the form of a training bursary from national capacity building funds for 82% of course participants. The bursary fund was a crucial resource that helped to plug gaps in local availability of capacity building training and funding for training, highlighting one of the reasons that this subsidised national training programme for tenants was created.

Making Things Happen Programme training bursaries are funded by the ODPM for English council tenants, the Housing Corporation for English housing association tenants, or the Welsh Assembly Government for Welsh council tenants. There is also a very limited discretionary scholarship fund at Trafford Hall for other residents.

Everyone who attends pays something. People attending on a bursary pay a nominal charge of £5 in order to:
- increase the commitment of participants;
- reduce last minute drop outs;
- increase the 'value' of the event for participants;
- give people the chance to make a contribution themselves to costs (which many tenants feel strongly about).

Other research on organising residential events with adult learners from across England[10] shows that learners can be wary of a residential course because it is free. Some feel that because it is free it has no value, or there is another motive for providing the service. Residential events are different to mainstream adult education provision, which is free at the point of use to those on lowest incomes. A nominal charge helps to overcome wariness of away events.

[10] *Developing Residential Learning: lessons from the Pathfinders* DfES: Nottingham, 2003.

18% of participants paid the course fees of between £150 and £250 from their own organisation's funds (including local authority support workers attending to support tenants), or were tenants who persuaded their landlord, local authority or local regeneration body to provide money for training costs.

Making Things Happen offered limited help towards travel and childcare costs where this was a barrier for people to attend training. There were an average of 2 travel bursaries given per course (out of 20 people), and one childcare bursary awarded every 5 courses (i.e. a fifth of a childcare bursary per course).

Other participants paid their own travel costs, and organised their own childcare arrangements over the 2 or 3 nights.

Training costs and training quality

The two main direct costs of the *Making Things Happen* courses are the venue and the trainers. Trafford Hall venue costs are in line with equivalent[11] adult residential learning centres (e.g. see prices for members of the Adult Residential Colleges Association (ARCA) that have the same social and educational mission as Trafford Hall. Those rates are very competitive compared to private hotel and conference venues.

Where there is a wide range of possible training providers, for example, for courses on presentation skills, Trafford Hall uses a tendering process to select trainers. The selection panel includes tenants who have been on training at Trafford Hall. Tendering raises quality but does not, in the main, put downward pressure on costs. For topics where training packages do not currently exist for tenants and residents, or where only a few organisations are doing work in the field, the *Making Things Happen* Programme maximised value for money by working in partnership with selected trainers to jointly develop new or innovative training courses.

Training costs are in line with the market for this type of community training. However, this is a specialist field with a shortage of good quality training providers. Residential training requires a different skill set to both conventional 'teaching' and even to day training or facilitation. The market rate for trainers (of any quality) reflects this. It is much higher than a Further Education or Higher Education teaching rate[12], and more in line with public sector consultancy rates. Unfortunately, the experience of the Programme is that although shortages have raised prices, they do not always guarantee quality, giving a double problem. Trafford Hall has hosted a seminar on this issue and continues to try to develop a wider pool of potential new training providers[13]. There are few widespread accreditation schemes; anyone can become a 'trainer'. There are serious opportunity costs of poor training for the people who spend up to 3 days on courses, as well as for Trafford Hall, and tenants' perceptions of training more generally.

[11] By equivalent we mean size, quality and facilities

[12] FE and HE rates are hourly, residential training rates usually per day, so calculated FE and HE costs as day rate by allowing 8 hours/day teaching and 3 hours/day evening attendance time at FE and University pay scales.

[13] Unpublished report from conference event 'Quality Costs in an Open Market' held at Trafford Hall, July 2000.

3. Programme small grant fund

One sixth (17%) of the spending went on small grant awards to tenants' and residents' groups. The aim was to try and spend a quarter of the budget (24%) on small grants, but take up of the fund was slower than hoped. The *Making Things Happen* Programme aims to increase spending on small grants to at least a third in future financial years. We look here at this in more detail.

Discussion on low rate of application

Trafford Hall is not a 'hard nosed' funder and care was taken to make the application process as easy as possible. Despite offering small pots of money to every group, it has been difficult to distribute the money. 71% of groups identified resources as a key barrier. Yet less than one in ten of the groups that attended training actually went on to apply for a *Making Things Happen* Grant.

Some groups are taking action that does not require small grant funding, for example liaising with other stakeholders in neighbourhoods and increasing joint working with landlords, police, and health authorities. Not every group that attends a *Making Things Happen* training course is involved with running projects in their community. Some of the groups concentrate mainly on representing their local community, e.g. by sitting on their area's Best Value Panel. Other groups, like some of the 29% who said resources were not a barrier, had adequate resources but attended training for other kinds of help. This reinforces the 'training plus grants' model. Training provides support for groups that need skills and information rather than cash to develop their work.

The groups themselves identify lack of resources as a major issue and feel they need more funding. Feedback from the groups involved in the Programme tells us that there are many commonsense reasons why it is difficult for groups to access funding. Community groups are often very busy and it is difficult to find priority and time to write a small grant application (despite wanting the resources) against a background of constant meetings and the ins and outs of day to day projects. Groups may feel scared and intimidated by the paperwork they need to fill in, or cannot identify a volunteer who has the skills, confidence, or inclination, to take on such a responsibility. It can be difficult and time-consuming to work out a project plan, project costings and implementation details for a grant proposal. Applications often entail a lot of thought and research into the feasibility of the idea. Some groups, although they know they want extra resources, find it hard to think of a specific coherent project that fits the criteria and specific amount of money (£3,000) available. All in all, the low rate of application indicates how much more effort is required in order to help groups to start up projects when they have little experience of applying for funds and of running projects.

One strength of the training plus small grant model used by the Programme is that it already recognises, acknowledges and tries to tackle these issues. The 'Training First' model was designed exactly for these reasons. We discuss this in more detail below.

4. Added value features of the Programme

Training plus grants model – added value from residential training and 'training first'

Just providing grants means that only those groups that are already skilled up enough to design projects and make successful applications will be involved in a grants programme. Only those groups that are doing project work that needs a small grant will be stimulated to take further action. This leaves out less experienced groups, or groups that need information and skills to move forward, rather than cash. As we saw in section five on Programme quality, rejection rates for the *Making Things Happen* Programme were 12% compared to 41% for the National Lottery's small grant fund Awards for All England. 15% of applications to Awards for All England were rejected because of lack of information, and 'planning and management concerns' were the reasons for 9.5% of rejections by this fund[14].

Just providing training means that tenant and community volunteers develop ideas for action but can then find it difficult to fund putting ideas into practice. Having a follow on small grant fund is a clear signal to people attending courses that the aim is to develop action back in neighbourhoods.

One of the unique features of the Programme is that it combines residential training with small grants in a 'Training First' model. The model is based on a five year pilot programme, funded by the Gatsby Charitable Foundation. This meant that the *Making Things Happen* Programme used a model that had already been tried and tested, again giving added value to the Programme.

All of the training is residential. The added value identified by participants of 'going away' includes:

- concentrated time away from home and distractions to a fresh environment to focus on action planning;
- time away with other group members to team build;
- chance to meet other groups from across the country and share experiences.

Meeting other tenants and residents from different neighbourhoods was cited as one of the top three benefits of Trafford Hall training. It helps groups that feel isolated in their local context to feel part of something bigger and less as though they are struggling alone.

Cross department working by national governmental organisations

ODPM funding must be spent on council tenants in England. The *Making Things Happen* Programme argued that it was increasingly difficult to make distinctions across the social housing field as tenure diversification and change are extremely rapid. The issue was not just between, but within estates where there are different landlords. It argued that access to the Programme should apply to Welsh as well as English tenants or otherwise some tenants would be unfairly disadvantaged.

Trafford Hall and ODPM worked together to bring on board the Housing Corporation and the Welsh Assembly Government so that the Programme could be open to as many social housing tenants in the UK as possible. The process of agreeing this took many months of

[14] Figures excluding applications to Awards for All England that were rejected due to lack of funds.

discussion. The Programme and its funders wanted to put in this work in order to strengthen the ability of the training and small grants to make a difference wherever tenants and residents were prepared to put themselves forward. Trafford Hall alone does not have the capacity to broker agreements with national agencies like the Housing Corporation, so the backing of ODPM was vital to this happening.

Use of the model and experiences as good practice elsewhere

Trafford Hall have been able to use their experience of running the *Making Things Happen* Programme as a model of good practice for other organisations wanting to organise residential learning events for adults. For example, Trafford Hall and LSE worked together to produce a practical guide book and accompanying video for adult literacy and numeracy providers about developing and running adult residential events on basic skills (literacy and numeracy)[15].

The action focused training plus small grants model has also been used at Trafford Hall to create two new programmes. Young Movers is a programme for young people 11-16 and their adult supporters that uses practical training to inspire young people to develop community projects. The Glass-House, run jointly with the Architecture Foundation, is a national service that offers design training, design advice and other technical support on housing design, community facilities design and urban design to residents in renewal areas across the UK.

5. Comparison of Programme with other forms of community learning and support

We look here at a comparison of Programme outputs (skills and knowledge development, capacity building for groups) with other forms of community learning and support.

Other residential learning events

Most other short stay residential colleges do not offer community focused training. Much of the learning on offer is about individual learning on more conventional curriculum subjects, 'leisure' courses such as painting, or personal development courses, e.g. spirituality and relaxation.

Therefore, a comparison of costs or cost effectiveness between the *Making Things Happen* Programme and other residential training is largely a theoretical exercise. An in-house management evaluation by ODPM of Trafford Hall's administration of the Programme also concluded that it would be "*spurious"* to compare delivery of the Programme by Trafford Hall with other organisations because of the "*unique.. soft attributes*" it brings: a dedicated training centre designed with the needs of tenants in mind; experienced independent staff; unique location; one stop interface between tenants and a variety of funders and Government departments; and excellent opportunities for tenants to meet other groups and network [16].

There are very few residential training events on offer for this audience. There is almost no other intensive residential training on offer on community topics for community groups that

[15] *Developing Residential Learning: lessons from the Pathfinders,* DfES: Nottingham, 2003. For more information contact Trafford Hall.
[16] *Management evaluation of NTRC,* unpublished document ODPM, October 2002.

has subsidised places available. This means that if groups were to be given bursary money directly to purchase training freely, there are few if any equivalent courses on offer.

The other two main residential training programmes are those run by Priority Estates Project and Tenant Participation Advisory Service under the same Government funded programme that funds the Trafford Hall courses – the ODPM National Tenant Training Programme. ODPM tries to keep overlap and duplication between the three Programmes at a minimum. Trafford Hall, PEP and TPAS have good working relationships and try to complement and add to each others' work where possible.

A regional housing focused residential centre in Leicester, Highpoint, has been funded by the Housing Corporation, and is currently developing residential courses for tenants and housing professionals, these started running from April 2004. These are for the East Midlands region only. Trafford Hall are working in partnership with Highpoint so as to ensure any new provision provides additional benefits for communities.

Conferences and seminars

There is a very big market in the community and regeneration field for seminar and conference events. Many of these events have time for debate and discussion, and small workshop sessions. They can provide useful information and case study examples of work from around the country. This sort of debate and information-getting is very different to interactive learning and the skills development that comes through action learning in training. *Making Things Happen* training courses have a strong focus on action planning and action follow through in a way that most conferences and seminars do not. Conferences and seminars do not give direct access to small grant funds.

Other community action focused small grant funds

The experience of comparable small grant funds, such as the Scarman Trust 'Can-Do' Programme, is similar to that of Trafford Hall. That is, the need for 'handholding' grant application support in order to help community volunteers who have not tried things before to start up new activities. We have mentioned the higher rejection rates for small grant funds that do not offer capacity building alongside. The 'Can-Do' Programme also offered outreach work and support to social entrepreneurs so that they could apply. This is similarly staff-intensive to the Trafford Hall Programme.

Other local community training and adult education

Residential training is more costly than locally based training primarily because of the additional accommodation and travel costs. There are usually also additional venue and trainer costs, because much local training is done in community or local authority venues with landlord or local authority in-house staff. Residential training should be additional and complementary to locally based training.

If groups were given the costs of their training places to spend in the training and education market, there are very few available products that would provide them with similar sorts of learning. Even access to local training requires there to be an organisation like the CVS or local authority that has organised training courses.

Adult education classes have very limited provision for community action focused courses. Adult education usually focuses on the individual not the group, so the benefits of team building and working in the project team are lost. These courses take three times the number of teaching hours/contact time (roughly 60 hours as opposed to Trafford Hall's 20 hours) over a much longer period. People have different learning styles and preferences and for some this is much more suitable. For others, an intensive course enables them to get knowledge more quickly. For most adult education courses of this kind the learner must go through accreditation, which not all want or are able to do.

These issues have been debated in the field of basic skills education. Basic skills provision has long operated through locally based adult education-style classes, with a few hours a week over a number of weeks. The Basic Skills Agency has identified problems with recruiting learners, and with retaining learners using this approach. DfES has responded by experimenting with intensive locally-based learning and with short residential courses for exactly the reasons that Trafford Hall runs short residential courses.

And these dilemmas are only relevant where there exists a locally provided adult education course that focuses on being an unpaid community worker. Local community action training, such as the Community Workers course at Lambeth College in London, is relatively rare.

Other community capacity building support

62% of the groups that attend training at Trafford Hall also have a paid worker who supports their group, for example, a youth and community worker, or tenant participation officer. 22% of attendees were recommended to attend residential training by local tenant and community support workers. This strongly indicates that local professional help for tenant participation and community activity is complementary to residential training.

Different types of community capacity building support can all contribute to volunteers' activity on the ground. The following chart shows the pros and cons of four types of capacity building support: local training, residential training, local support and exchange visits.[17]

[17] From Steve Skinner (1997) *Building Community Strengths: A Resource Book on Capacity Building*, London: Community Development Foundation.

Table 8. The pros and cons of forms of community development

TYPE OF SUPPORT	DESCRIPTION	PROS	CONS	SUMMARY
Local, group-based training	- Designed and run specifically for existing group. - Usually provided in response to request from group. - Tailor made to needs. - Based on group site.	- Because based on site, likely to get more people involved. - Group working could lead on to organisational development work/team building. - Language advantages if English not first language.	- If group stuck with inward looking culture, mixing with non-group members could be more effective. - As home based, may not be taken as seriously by participants. - Participants won't meet new people and make contacts. - As specifically designed course, may not be accredited.	For many community groups it is their first contact with training and because of understandable fears around 'education' may be the only initial route into adult learning.
Residential course-based training	- Held in central venue involving members from several community groups. - Pre-set course. - Sometimes accredited.	- Wide range of experience/perspectives from the different groups. - Not specifically requested content so may introduce new ideas/skills. - Participants away from home so may be more receptive to new ideas. - Participants may gain qualification from accredited courses.	- Pre-set course may have elements unrelated to some groups. - Central location may put off people who find travelling difficult. - May only attract participants who are already confident, skilled. - If linked to assessment, may alienate people unfamiliar with process.	May attract people who are already reasonably skilled and confident but brings new ideas and chance for networking/learning from others.
Community mentoring	- One-to-one support (guidance, advice, facilitating learning, support and confidence building). - May involve hands-on, practical work.	- Intensive learning. - Can provide more encouragement and support than course-based training. - Can provide role models of more successful organisations. - Personal and organisational links can lead to ongoing networking.	- Resource intensive approach.	Good for developing individual skills and confidence but requires considerable staff time input.
Exchange visits	- Party from one group visits another group that they perceive can help them in their own development. - Groups learn directly from each other. - Requires careful preparation, good organisation & systematic follow-up.	- Can boost morale by inspiring a 'we can do that too' belief. - May lead to ongoing links between groups.	- Without adequate planning visits can turn in to sightseeing tours. - Host group may try to impress rather than share real experiences. - Gap between groups' relative development may be demoralising for less developed group.	As groups learn directly from each other, may build more confidence than trainer-led learning but needs to be well organised.

Overall Programme costs

The LSE work did not include a value for money assessment in any detail. This was not designed as an economic evaluation of the programme. We did not look at the cost effectiveness of the Programme in producing final outcomes, that is, improvements in the quality of tenant involvement and improvements to neighbourhood quality of life. These are difficult to quantify (although we have described and analysed the outcomes of the Programme in this report).

We provide an extremely crude guide to the costs of the Programme (below) as a reference point for this discussion of value for money. It is difficult to assign overhead costs to different outputs from the Programme because overheads paid for the staff time, office costs, and the marketing needed to develop and run the Programme as a whole. Grants flow from training courses, so it is difficult to assign separate overhead costs to the organisation of the grant fund and organisation of the training programme. We have divided the total costs of organising the Programme across different outputs, as specified.

Guideline costs

Costs of training not including administration or overheads

- average cost of a training place = £250
- average cost of a training course = £250 x 20 people = £5,000
- average training cost/spend per tenants' group where 2-3 people attend a course = £500-£750

Costs of training including total Programme overheads

- average cost of a training place = £450
- THEREFORE average training cost/spend per group = £900-£1,350

Costs of grants including total Programme overheads

- average cost of a £3,000 grant = £9,000 (including £3,000 grant award)

7. Training course skills, knowledge and motivational outcomes

- Participants felt the experience of training overall was extremely instructive and worthwhile.
- 93% were given new ideas, 92% were more determined to take forward an existing idea and 89% of participants said that they will do things differently in the future as a result of the course.
- The biggest single set of benefits people felt they had gained were the skills to organise and develop a project.
- Participants reported increased confidence, an increased awareness and a widened perspective. The opportunity to work and network with other groups led to new ideas and innovative ways to tackle neighbourhood problems.

Does *Making Things Happen* training help? Do groups go away with a renewed determination to get the job done? We look here at what people felt they had gained from training. We ask if groups go away with a renewed determination to get the job done, and if the training was pitched at a level everybody could gain from. We also examine if people got what they wanted from training, what people felt they had gained, by examining the specific skills, knowledge and confidence outcomes from these courses.

We use numerous measures of success of training courses, some directly drawn from what participants themselves tell us. We ask participants if the level of training was one that they could understand, whether after a training course they felt more determined to get the job done, if they got what they wanted from training and what they felt that they had gained. After courses, we then ask people what they've been doing since the course, and if they feel the training has contributed to their follow up work. We detail our findings on all these measures in this section and also in section eight of the report on action outcomes. We also observe selected training courses and use the Trafford Hall criteria for training quality as an additional, external measure of success.

People liked the courses, but the training is about more than people having a good time. Participants felt the experience of training overall was extremely instructive and worthwhile. They felt that the training had given them learning and motivational benefits.

Overall, as a result of training:

- 89% will do things differently;
- 93% were given new ideas;
- 92% were more determined to take forward an existing idea.

We asked people to describe in more detail what they felt they had gained from attending training. We summarised the key skills, knowledge and motivational outcomes using 1,110 responses from 992 training participants (some people gave more than one response).

Table 9. What people gained from training

Skills, knowledge and motivational outcomes	*No. of responses*	*Rank*
Project organisation and development - *"I liked the practical info and exercises because I can take them back to my organisation and use them"* how to action plan, organise, set objectives, seek information, research, put ideas into action, organise a project and use practical tools to move forward and get a project up and running.	**199**	**1**
Fundraising knowledge - *"How to write a funding strategy, bids/letters, funding provided - how to find, what to include in a bid"*	**162**	**2**
How to work as a committee/team working skills – *"techniques for structuring meetings, consultations, decision making for different groups, circumstances."* ways to manage a committee, work together, encourage people to get involved, constitutions, how to conduct/plan meetings, how to be a Chair,/Secretary /Treasurer, ways to involve others, create/maintain partnerships, work with consultants and Independent Tenant Advisors.	**145**	**3**
Housing + regeneration initiatives - Tenant Participation Compacts, Best Value, the rights of tenants, information about local power structures, stock transfer, Tenant Management Organisations, neighbourhood management, super caretakers, how to work with the Council and get the right answers.	**118**	**4**
New personal skills - communication, presentation, time management, negotiation, compromise, listening and inter personal skills, ways to pass on information, how to put together a newsletter.	**110**	**5**
New ideas – different, fun and creative ways and approaches.	**55**	**6**
Legal knowledge - *"I learnt more about employing staff with all the extra bits that groups don't always remember to put in the funding bid"* charitable law, salaries, employing and managing staff, insurances, licences, child protection, legal requirements for community buildings.	**45**	**7**
Increased confidence and enthusiasm to get the job done – *"that we can do it."*	**41**	**8**
Ways to work with young people - *"a greater awareness of how issues affect young people and how to engage them in positive activities, consultation etc."* how to set up youth projects, structure activities, consult and talk to young people.	**36**	**9**
Community consultation techniques- how to consult, devise and analyse questionnaires and surveys, use Planning for Real.	**33**	**10**
A widened perspective - increased tolerance of other people's views, learnt from other's experience, broadened outlook.	**31**	**11**
Drug awareness	**24**	**12**
Monitoring and evaluating techniques - *"how to make clear distinctions between aims and objectives, outputs and outcomes, ideas for how to monitor and evaluate projects."*	**22**	**13**
Environmental awareness increased	**17**	**=14**
Greater awareness about **basic skills issues**	**17**	**=14**
How to use theatre - set up a drama production, acting skills, expression and characterisation techniques.	**15**	**16**
How to run a **community building** - *"I learnt all aspects of running a community building, also lots of information to take home and use for reference."*	**13**	**=17**
New contacts with similar groups - *"we are not alone"*	**13**	**=17**
"Not much"	**11**	**19**
Awareness of what NOT to do	**3**	**20**
Total	**1110**	

Specific outcomes

What participants say they like about residential training with other groups is that it gives them a confidence and motivational boost, helps them to learn from others and share experiences, and it gives them ideas and inspiration. We have detailed below some of the comments made by participants after training about what they gained.

- **Generation and sharing of ideas -** Helen attended 'Setting up Support Groups for Families Affected by Drug Misuse' and she reported that training helped her to "*view problems faced by the community in a wider perspective and to see more possible solutions."* Bernadette attended a course on ways to publicise the work of groups called 'Spreading the News'. She wrote: "*it was useful to have our newsletter criticised by another tenant group who also advised me I could put a bid in for the estate for loft insulation on behalf of everyone on a low income."* After 'Young People will take Anything – Including Responsibility' Chris reported that he had found his time at Trafford Hall productive, he was glad that young people had been present on the course, *"I learnt a lot about their views and perception of adults."*

- **Networking/meeting others in the same boat** – Jane found 'Managing Community Buildings' helpful as it "*put us in touch with other people in the same situation and have gone through the same thing as we are now.*" Geraldine found a course on ways to work with young people valuable as a result of "*speaking to other course participants, I have gained encouragement and confidence to push ahead*."

- **Increased confidence** – respondents report greater levels of confidence once they return home and a renewed motivation to 'get the job done' with the new skills and knowledge they have gained whilst at Trafford Hall. Rick attended a training course called 'Energise your Community' which focuses on local energy issues and how to organise a campaign of action around these issues, he commented: *"it motivated me to do something NOW, not next week or next year."* Jim reported after 'Checks and Balances', that he can now "*approach landlords with more confidence, (I) know more about what I am talking about*."

Use of learning materials

People tended to hold onto the information they were given for future reference. We asked 134 people (8% of total number of participants) what they did with their training handouts as a way of measuring how seriously people took learning backup information they were given:

- Nearly one third of respondents filed them away.
- Another third read them.
- 17% used them to plan.
- 17% passed them on to others to read and use.
- A minority, 6%, used them as a group exercise.
- 1% threw them away.

8. Action outcomes from training

- Groups used training to: organise and take action based on what they learnt; review their group's work by looking at their aims or restructuring; plan projects and do further market research and consultation, and fundraise for further activities.
- Six weeks after the courses an average of 5 out of 10 of the groups that went on training had made progress with their ideas and projects. Another 4 out of 10 were planning things in the near future.
- 96% of participants who reported back said that the training helped them when carrying out specific pieces of follow up action in their neighbourhoods, of which 73% said the training had helped them 'a lot'. 4% said it had not helped at all.
- The courses bring people together from different places across the country. These networking benefits continue after the courses with half of the participants keeping in touch with someone they met on the course.

The *Making Things Happen* Programme must inspire groups to take practical action if it is to have an impact at a grassroots level in low income neighbourhoods and social housing estates. The aim of ODPM, Trafford Hall, trainers and tenants investing time, resources and energy in the Programme is to produce tangible on the ground outcomes in the communities it aims to reach.

Part of LSE Housing's research is tracking what happens once participants return home. In the last section, we outlined the skills, knowledge and motivational outcomes of training. We saw that, as a result of training:

- 89% said they would do things differently;
- 93% were given new ideas for projects and tackling problems;
- 92% said they were more determined to take forward an existing idea.

Here we look at if and how people are able to use their skills, knowledge and confidence to do things to improve the places where they live. Do groups use the training received in a positive and meaningful way or does life take over again?

In this section we examine the action outcomes from training. We ask did training help and in what way? Was training still useful after people got home? If so, how was it useful?

We look at what activities the groups were involved in, and the role of the *Making Things Happen* Programme in contributing to longer term project development.

Action outcomes - figures

4-6 weeks after the courses, we asked groups to write to tell us what they have done in the time since the course, and if they think the training helped them to do this. We heard from 69% of the groups. Over half of respondents (56%) had kept in touch with other groups they had met on the course. It is a special feature of residential courses that community representatives have the opportunity to network and share experience across a wide range of community groups.

Ultimately, the Programme is designed to help groups do things, so taking action is a key measure of success. 5 out of 10 of the groups that went on training had made progress with their ideas and projects. 4 out of 10 were still active and planning things for the near future. 1 out of 10 did not plan to do anything.

Did training help?

Groups being active following training is very positive, but how much credit can we give to the training courses for helping people to do this? We asked groups to rate how much a training course helped them take action. In total, 73% of all respondents said they felt the training had helped 'a lot' with their follow up – whether that was doing something, planning to do something, or deciding against. 23% said it helped 'a bit'. 4% said it had not helped.

Table 10. Did training help with follow up activity?

Action?	**Total**	**Helped a lot**	**%**	**Helped a bit**	**%**	**Didn't help at all**	**%**
Yes	386	332	**86%**	48	**12%**	6	**2%**
Not Yet	357	232	**65%**	117	**33%**	8	**2%**
No	54	19	**35%**	19	**35%**	16	**30%**
Total	797	583	**73%**	184	**23%**	30	**4%**

Data from 98 courses, 797 forms

Even those who did not take any action still got something out of the course. We looked more closely at the groups who had not done anything, and some (although not all) of this lack of action was, in fact, a very positive outcome of the training. The courses had helped some groups to test out the feasibility of their ideas before attempting to put them into practice. For example, after attending Employing Staff for the First Time one group commented on their feedback form that they had decided not to do what they had originally planned; "*employing staff is more complicated than I originally thought… my group cannot employ staff owing to us being unincorporated"*. Other reasons for lack of action included internal group difficulties, or external obstacles.

What exactly did groups do?

We have grouped action outcomes loosely into the following categories:
- organising and taking action;
- reviewing;
- planning;
- fundraising;
- internal re-organisation;
- partnerships.

Table 11. Action outcomes across 101 courses

Type of Action	No. of Groups Taking this Action	Rank
Organising and taking action **– Organised an event/planning an event/project/scheme, seeking premises/taking over a building, seeking lease, producing newsletter, setting up an office, seeking charitable status, established youth consultation, working on Compact.**	82	1
Reviewing – **Reviewed objectives/aims/group structure, reviewed constitution and committee structure, carried out exercises/workshops learnt from training, undertaking further training, taking control, began a different approach to problems.**	66	2
Planning – **Looking at way forward, carrying out surveys, identifying needs, looking at feedback, feeding back to tenants/group members, action planning, booking further training, meeting with others, finding more information.**	62	3
Funding – **Fundraised/fundraising, seeking funding, won funding, preparing a bid, approaching a sponsor, reviewed/designed fundraising strategy, submitted a bid, applying for 'freebies'**	54	4
Internal Reorganisation – **Set up a constitution/amended existing constitution, set up a bank account, carried out a risk assessment/skills audit, held first AGM, reorganised group, set up a sub-committee, set up partnership**	16	5
Developing Partnerships – **Working with others, influencing Council, networking**	10	6
Total number of actions	290	

From 234 groups. Some groups had taken more than one action.

Examples of follow up action by groups

Westfield and Halfway Alternative Tenants (WHAT), Sheffield, reported that they are *"seeking to open community office premises in local area and surveying tenants to see what services they would like to be provided locally"*.

Melody Road Estate Tenant Management Organisation, Wandsworth; *"we are setting up the Belbin exercise to assess new members who want to join our committee so we will be doing a workshop to get committee members to show an interest and participate"*.

Springfield Residents Association in Darlington took action by; "*improving the desirability of living in the area by having a Springfield in Bloom competition…getting people to talk to each other and getting skips for garden rubbish (to reduce fly tipping)*".

Central Tenants' and Residents' Group in Tameside undertook a *"review of work methods, set up a communications system* and are *assisting other groups to conduct their own health checks"*.

Monks Croft Residents' Association continued with their plan; *"to produce four newsletters this year and we produced our first one last Christmas. We have put in a bid into the Community Networks BT Award to get a computer awarded to us. This will be useful to produce newsletters, minutes etc".*

These outcomes also relate well to our ladder of project development described in section four, as groups take away and apply what they have learnt in their local communities.

Ladder of development	**Type of action**	**Example from table**
Starting out ↓	**Planning**	**Carrying out a survey**
Testing ideas ↓	**Organising & taking action**	**Planning an event**
Setting up and doing ↓	**Funding**	**Won funding**
Keeping going ↓	**Planning**	**Looking at feedback**
Expanding	**Internal reorganisation**	**Set up a sub committee**

The above information is based on written feedback to LSE after 4-6 weeks. We also carried out telephone interviews with groups to get more detail, below are three examples.

Central Tenants' Association, Nottingham. Consulting the community.

Members of Central Tenants' Association attended 'Finding Out' a *Making Things Happen* training course on ways to consult local residents. *"The second day of Finding Out was directly relevant to us as it's what we want to do in our own neighbourhood".*

At the time of our phone interview the group had decided to organise a Planning for Real event. This is the Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation's method of community consultation which uses models of neighbourhoods to find out people's views about their community *"we're trying to set it up, I've designed my own houses on the computer but I'm finding it really difficult to get a plan of the neighbourhood…I need to know where the greens are, the houses, the facilities…I'm walking the estate at the moment counting houses!"*

Immediately after training the group carried out a survey of their local area but they didn't get many of their questionnaires returned; *"we didn't get a great response, I think Planning for Real will be much better, it's much more visual and to put it bluntly not everyone in our area is literate".*

Following the Planning for Real event the group's next big project was to clean the park on their estate. They thought that they may apply for a *Making Things Happen* small grant to do this; *"we want to clean it up, get rid of the needles and things like that and make it an area that all small children can enjoy – with netball and football facilities, there's nothing like that in our area".*

Kingsheath and District Estate Management Board, Liverpool. Moving forward.

Six members of the Kingsheath and District Estate Management Board (EMB) attended a training course entitled 'Tenant Management Organisations and Transfer' in November 2002. The group went live as an EMB in May 2002; *"when we were in the process of setting up we used Trafford Hall. Our training provider First Call organised several courses there"*.

At present the EMB is coping with the demands and change of stock transfer; *"it's all change, we still operate our own tenants' and residents' group to keep in touch with the local people and we monitor and evaluate everything we do and now to complicate matters we transfer stock next week"!* (end of Jan 2003). The area is transferring from the Council to Bury Bridge Housing, a subsidiary of Riverside Housing. *"We've had to renegotiate our entire management agreement, it's over 600 pages! But it's actually gone smoothly! We thought we'd have major problems…Bury Bridge bought in Solicitors so we had to get a grant…we got £7,000 from the ODPM and got the top dogs from London…they looked at everything and came back with a 12 page comment on the agreement"*.

"From next Monday it's all different…for a start we have to change the names on everything, it's going to be a gigantic job".

The group found TMO's and Transfer very useful, in particular they were pleased with the information they received; *"the new landlord didn't realise that there was already an agreement between an EMB in place, it's groundbreaking…I think it's the Trees Estate in St Helen's and we were given a copy of this agreement so we passed it onto Bury Bridge so they could see that the precedence had already been set"*.

Mercian Tenants' Forum, West Heath, Birmingham. Taking action.

A Tenants' Representative for his housing association, Mercian Housing, chose to go on a training course entitled 'Green Power for Communities' after he had the idea of setting up an energy efficiency project locally. He attended the training course to see what would be possible; *"it was good because it confirmed a few things I had thought"*.

On his return, he reported what he learnt to the housing association. As a result they have decided to take forward a project to install solar panels on the roof of every Mercian Housing property; *"we're on stage one at the moment…the HA is carrying out the feasibility study – who's done it? Can we visit? Impact of something like this? We need to find out all this plus how to pay for it…there are loads of Government sources of funding out there. The Tenants' Forum have put forward this idea but it's now in the hands of the HA…I estimate that there are 3,000 roofs that would need solar panels"*.

Return to the real world – continuing barriers

The tables above show an immense amount of follow through activity by groups after they have been on training courses. But there are still many obstacles to tenants' groups' activity back in the real world. Community action is never plain sailing. After a training course these groups often return home to difficult environments and the same barriers or tensions as before. The Capacity Building Programme does not, and cannot, work in isolation to this. Residential training cannot magic away difficult ongoing local issues.

This is not an argument against training. Indeed, local barriers are one reason that groups attend training, in order to find ways of overcoming blocks to their activity, and keep momentum up. We illustrate this with some examples shown below. All the groups featured have attended training and three out of the four groups have received a *Making Things Happen* grant to develop further, indicating the groups' determination to continue despite setbacks and their ability to deal with problems that arise.

North London Residents' Association – lack of local support

This group is working with their Council to open a community facility. *"The renovations finished two weeks ago, we're putting the projects in now, but we won't be running it ourselves, we're just not strong enough".*

Two women from the group attended Community Projects. They decided to go away on training to take time out because their group hasn't been working very well together; *"our committee is terrible, we have so many tensions and difficulties…it's not that people don't want a community house, they just don't want to do the work… Community Projects was the best course we'd ever been on – by the time we left we knew our project inside out…unfortunately it wasn't so positive once we got back".*

"It's a question of keeping your confidence going, it's OK when your not in your backyard (at Trafford Hall) but when you're dumped back in the negativity it's really hard".

The next step is the group's AGM; *"we need to turn the AGM to our advantage, it's an uphill struggle getting support at the moment but the AGM will hopefully drum up support".*

The 'Urban' Tenants' and Residents' Association – conflict with their Local Authority

In Summer 2002, 87% of the residents on the 'Urban' Estate voted yes in a ballot to decide whether the group should choose the right to manage the homes on their estate. However since then the group has been suspended by their landlord over an alleged discrepancy in their accounts after the group paid for lunches for their Tenants' Advisors. Morale on the estate is very low and residents are frustrated by the declining condition of their homes.

The 'Walsall' Tenants' and Residents' Association – vandalism and theft

This group runs an organic gardening project on two allotments on a piece of land at the side of their estate in Walsall, in the West Midlands. The group does not have a strong relationship with other allotment owners and people on the site have accused them of having preferential treatment from the Council. Over the years they have had to hide any new equipment in case it got stolen.
Recently the group's shed was stolen, along with the gardening equipment inside. They have decided to install concrete foundations for their new shed.

The 'West' Residents' Association – lack of facilities

The 'West Estate' in the West Midlands had a long and proud tradition of youth activities, run from a youth club, built on the estate in the 1970s. However, after the closure of the Community Association that had organised these activities since the late 1980s, things started to go downhill and the Residents' Association struggled to cope with its limited resources to provide replacement activities. By 2002 the youth club building was abandoned and vandalised and the Residents' Association lost its base to host social events for local residents. The youth club has now been knocked down and there instead are plans to build a new school on this land. The Residents' Association is currently campaigning for space in the new building for community events and activities for young people.

How useful was training after people returned home?

So it is clear that real life obstacles continue to exist after people return from training. We wanted to find out if people still saw a benefit from the training courses once they had returned home, back to some of the same issues, and when the initial inspiration and enthusiasm for action may have worn off or been overtaken by daily life. We have heard back from 69% of all groups across the Programme, a very high response rate for a postal survey. This in itself is an indicator of the value the groups give to Trafford Hall training.

Across 98 training courses:

- 91% found training useful for their local work, of which 69% rated it as 'very useful';
- 5% found it a bit useful;
- 2% found it not at all useful;
- 2% thought that training was good, but not relevant.

We have responses from 158 people about the ways the training course has been useful since they returned home.

Table 12. In what ways was training useful?

Way in which training was useful	No. of participants recording this answer	Percentage of response
Increased knowledge/understanding/awareness to develop a specific project or group – i.e. how to run a community building, how to help those with basic skills issues, how to work with young people	**63**	**39%**
Gave impetus to take action/practical ideas and techniques/how to action plan	**23**	**15%**
Met new groups, networked and made contacts	**23**	**15%**
Valuable reflection time, the ability to look at things from a different perspective and increased levels of motivation and confidence	**20**	**13%**
New information, exchange & generation of ideas, increased awareness of possible strengths and weaknesses/barriers	**19**	**12%**
Learnt about where to go for funding/further help and resources	**7**	**4%**
Training was not useful	**3**	**2%**
Total	**158**	**100%**

40% of our respondents found training useful because it increased their awareness of a specific subject. This matches people's motivations for booking on a course in the first place and shows that groups have a clear aim – rather than just using the training course as an opportunity to get away for a few days.

15% of people found the opportunity to meet new groups and network useful. This backs up the value of making training residential; similarly 13% found the opportunity to take time out and reflect valuable.

The overall usefulness of training impacts on the effort people make to recommend and tell others about training and links into the loop of word of mouth and self promotion of the Programme outside the usual 'paid' channels of publicity and promotion of the Programme.

- 97% of respondents across 98 training courses reported that they had told others about the training course, creating a 'ripple effect' from the courses.
- 90% had actively encouraged others to attend a training course at Trafford Hall.

The courses bring people together from different places across the country. The networking benefits continue after the courses. Half of the participants kept in touch with someone they met on the course.

Such high satisfaction rates initially suggest that participants in the Programme are easily pleased, rather than genuinely assessing the value of the courses for their work. This turns out not to be the case. As well as asking people if training was generally useful, we also ask them to rate how much a training course helped them with the specific piece of work they went to Trafford Hall to develop.

The table below demonstrates that course participants can be more critical, where applicable, when feeding back. They distinguish here between the general value of training and the exact usefulness of training in relation to their specific projects. For example, 87% of people who found training very useful also found that it helped them a lot when carrying out follow-up action. The majority (69%) found training very useful, and most of those people also said it helped with their particular project work.

However, 13% of those who rated training as generally very useful, found it only 'a bit' helpful when taking a follow-up action. In addition, of those who found training generally useful, over half only rated it as 'a bit' helpful for their work once they returned home.

Table 13. How much did the training course help with this action?

General value/specific value	Helped a lot on project %	Helped a bit %	Didn't help %	Total
Very useful generally	87%	13%	-	100%
Useful	40%	57%	3%	100%
A bit useful	3%	58%	39%	100%
Not at all	7%	20%	73%	100%
Good, not relevant	33%	67%	-	100%

Data from 70 training courses.

Longer term action outcomes

The action outcomes above were measured in the first couple of months after training.

We kept in contact with groups, by informal visits, phone interviews, and face to face interviews to track longer term outcomes to see if this impetus was kept up. This has revealed ongoing community activity, sometimes with further training and the opportunity to apply for small grants from Trafford Hall providing a significant impetus for continued development.

Below we outline examples of groups that we contacted nine months, or over, after the completion of training in order to track project development and progress.

South Hylton Village Residents' Association, Sunderland

A volunteer from the Residents' Association attended 'Managing Community Buildings' in January 2001 and we contacted her for feedback 16 months later. She found the course useful and enjoyable and the information they learnt was relevant to the group at the time. After the course the group started a business plan for a new community building. The Residents' Association is still doing well, the business plan has now been completed and a site has been selected. The group is now concentrating on raising money.

However this member has now left the group as result of ill health but is continuing her personal learning by doing classes on IT and how to programme computers.

Piccadilly Area Residents' Association, Burnley, Lancs

A group member, Linda, attended Working with Young People in April 2001 and we spoke to her a year later. *"I'm not saying I wouldn't have done things without the course but it gave me the ideas and motivation"*.

Immediately after the training course, Linda sent a letter to every resident on her estate asking them if they would be interested in a play scheme for children aged between 5 and 13. *"I got loads of replies"*. Straight after this the group got in touch with the local authority who immediately backed their plans – providing paid workers and a room. They have over 70 children that regularly use the play scheme.

"After this the teenagers wanted something so I got in touch with the Tudor Trust". Linda's first idea was to raise money for skateboard ramps for teenagers to use in the local park - she received a contribution from the Tudor Trust and her Residents Association raised the rest of the money through jumble sales and other fundraising events including a fun day. *"I got in touch with the Tudor Trust again with the idea of a youth shelter"*. This time the Residents' Association was given more money and this was match funded by the Parks Department in her Council. This money also included funding for two outreach youth workers.

The youth shelter was built in April 2002 and is aimed at young people aged between 14 and 24, but Linda thinks they get all ages using the shelter *"it's a base and it's much better than them hanging around the streets"*. The shelter is in the local park next to the skate ramps.

Villages Housing Tenant Participation Working Group, Liverpool

Julie attended Barefoot Basic Skills Worker (BBSW) in May 2001. *"It was great, it opened my eyes to the fact that people hide their basic skills problems, I'm now much more aware. As part of my job I need to get people to fill in evaluation forms and now I make sure I offer them help. It's been invaluable"*. We spoke to her 16 months after she completed the training course, at this point she had recently begun working as a Health Development Worker for a lottery funded charity.

After BBSW, Julie had the idea of establishing a chill-out zone in the local youth club for the area's young people. The charity she was working for was taking over an old infant school; which has 8 classrooms and a large hall and they had a budget of £40,000 of capital to invest in the school. At the time of our telephone call Julie was consulting with local young people over what they would like to see the money spent on.
She has had a brainstorming and discussion session with young people, who say that they would like couches, videos and games in their chill-out zone.

Brentwood Day Centre, Middleton, Manchester

Two part-time project workers from the Brentwood Day Centre attended 'Setting up Support Groups for Families affected by Drug Misuse' in July 2001. *"It was absolutely brilliant, it was my first course and we knew it was what was needed....it was a real boost"*. We spoke to one of the workers, Beverley, 14 months after the completion of the course.

"The Brentwood Day Centre has an open door policy and is open to anyone over the age of 16….we do things with mental health, the disadvantaged, health and anything in general people need to have a chat about". Shortly after the course Beverley sent out questionnaires to 600 homes in the three areas that the day centre covers. They got roughly 100 responses. They asked on the questionnaire if people would like a telephone support line or a drug councillor at the centre. *"The support group help line came out on top"*.

In response the group recruited three volunteers and at the time of our interview was planning to place an advert in their local newspaper for more. *"We need at least two volunteers each night…we are going to run the help line from 3.30pm until 7.30pm Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, if it takes off we'll run it more days. The more volunteers we get the better"*. They were planning to train the volunteers based on what they had learnt at Trafford Hall. The pilot for the help line was going to be initially based in a small room in the day centre. The phone line had not been connected yet. *"Things have been a bit slow because we want to do it right and do it together, but we are trying our best"*. They have had help from Rochdale Health Action Zone to do this.

The development of groups' work across training courses

The vast majority of people on the Programme (88%) have only attended one training course in this Programme. Across the Programme around a tenth (12%) of people have been on more than one training course. This shows that some people go back to Trafford Hall to develop their learning, but that the Programme is spreading learning across many different tenant representatives.

But even though the participants are mostly different each time, some are from the same groups. As groups set up new projects and think of new ideas it is not uncommon for them to book different members on several training courses at a time to help them in the development of their plans. A fifth (21%) of groups have sent members on more than one course. Around half of participants are attending training at Trafford Hall for the first time.

We have outlined two short case study examples below to illustrate the development of learning by the groups across training courses.

Southwold Tenants' Association, London

This group decided to set up a theatre group for young people on their estate after becoming more and more worried by the increasing number of local gangs and related crime in their local area.

August 2002 'Public Meetings'	The group booked a course on ways to hold public meetings to work out the best method to recruit people off the estate to help out. Immediately after the course, the group held a public meeting and recruited three more people to help out, including a qualified drama teacher who lives locally.
↓	
September 2002 'Managing your Community Project'	After deciding to hold their first production – a West Indian Pantomime, the group attended a training course on how to manage their theatre project. On the last day of training the group produced an action plan of everything they needed to do in order to achieve their target date. They also brainstormed on additional constructive activities to hold in the meantime.

Adur Consultative Forum, West Sussex

Adur Consultative Forum, in conjunction with a neighbouring estate's tenants' and residents' association, are campaigning for a community base to be built on a piece of waste ground on their estate.

April 2003, 'Consulting your Community'	Two members of the Forum booked 'Consulting your Community' to find out ways to find out the views of local people on their community house project. After training, the group contacted a tenant advisory body, who carried out a consultation event with local people which looked at possible plans and layouts for the new house.
July 2003 'Recruiting & Managing Volunteers'	The group's project suffered a setback after their neighbouring tenants' and residents' group folded. As a result, members of the forum booked 'Recruiting and Managing Volunteers' to find out ways to drum up more local support and involvement. Following training they decided to put up posters in their local Post Office, run an information stall at their local supermarket and arrange some sort of fun, social activity as a way of attracting people.

9. *Making Things Happen* Small Grants

- The most common type of project funded by the *Making Things Happen* Small Grant Fund was for group information and publicity (12 out of 51 awards).
- The grants were awarded in line with Programme aims of helping people to become better informed about issues in their local area.
- *Making Things Happen* Grants have resulted in new facilities, activities and skills for both the groups and their wider communities.
- Our main areas of concern on grant assessment were: a number of Information Technology projects seemed to have poor usage; several groups had weak links to the wider local population; there was a risk that some projects would not continue in the long term.

The small grant fund

Every group that attends a *Making Things Happen* training course is eligible to apply for a *Making Things Happen* Grant, up to a maximum of £3,000, to either use for a new project or to use for new developments to an existing project.

The grants are available for all Local Authority or housing association tenants' or community groups in England and Wales, and are now limited to one per group.

The money is aimed at helping participants to develop their skills, knowledge and ability to tackle local problems and improve conditions in their neighbourhood. The grant should either enable local communities to become:

- Better informed about local issues and/or
- Build their capacity to take part in decisions that affect their community, particularly around the management of their homes.

Between February 2001 and September 2003 there were 63 grant applications from 54 groups. There were:

- 51 successful grant applications for 46 groups;
- 12 unsuccessful applications;
- A total of £121,189 awarded;
- A total of £37,780 turned down.

Less than one in ten groups that attended training applied for a grant. On average it took those groups 4 months after a training course to submit their grant application. This quick lead-in time means they started thinking about what to do with the money more or less immediately.

Grant funded projects

46 groups have received a total of 51 grants; the table below provides a breakdown of the types of projects funded. The largest single group of projects (12 out of 51) fall under the banner of group information and publicity, for example to publicise the groups' own work, and other local information, such as developments on a housing stock transfer. Grants for

information and publicity are in line with grant criteria to help people be better informed about local issues.

Table 14. Breakdown of *Making Things Happen* grant funded projects

Type of project	No. of projects	Example of project funded
Group information and publicity	12	Computer equipment to use to produce posters, regular newsletters, flyers and information on developments for a T&RA on an estate undergoing stock transfer.
Community facilities	10	Funding for a community café Development Worker for one year to run a community café, develop and extend a group's volunteer base to take this role over and to organise specific community events.
Advice, support & information	7	Training in communication skills, information dissemination and referral techniques to enable links to be built between mainstream service providers and members of the African community in London, in order to offer advice, signposting and liaison.
Social event to increase local involvement and to publicise group work	6	Community timeline event to celebrate 50 years of a diverse community in Leeds and map out the changes across the years by involving local young people and pensioners in creating a timeline.
Youth facilities/activities	5	Employment of a part time youth officer to provide activities for 6-12 year olds to encourage more interaction amongst a mixed community.
Community consultation	2	Training on community consultation techniques to find out the needs of a multi-ethnic community.
Community garden	2	The creation of a community garden to provide space for residents of a sheltered housing block for the elderly to socialise and sit together.
Theatre project	2	The collection of 'stories' from people of diverse cultural origins to be dramatised and eventually published as a storybook.
Crime project	1	Funding for a mobile CCTV unit for the local community to record evidence of criminal activity and to work with the Police using this.
Energy conservation project	1	Photocells to replace timed light switches as a pilot project to convince the estate's landlord that this can save energy and money.
Parenting project	1	Provision of a 'Confident Parent, Confident Children' training course aimed at developing positive parenting.
Arts project	1	Arts project to design and paint a mural on the outside of a large leisure centre, in the middle of an estate, with the view to promote a greater sense of ownership amongst local residents.
Fundraising training	1	Tailored in-house fundraising training for a group's management committee to enable them to keep going and increase their ability to apply for more funding.
Total	51	

Local activities

The groups that received grant funding are also active in many areas providing a wide range of activities for local residents and input into housing management. Groups' other activities included:

- **Involvement in estate regeneration**. Members of the Edward Woods Tenants' and Residents' Association are involved with the re-development of their estate. This has been allocated about £8 million for improvements, *"we're working our way down the wish list!*"
- **Lobbying for service improvements, and involvement in Best Value**. For example, the Woodlands Community Association: *"since we've been involved we've put pressure on the housing department and with the co-operation of the surveyor we've got a lot of outstanding repairs done."*
- **Developing user-led provision of services**. E.g. the 'West' Residents' Association decided to become a Tenant Management Organisation after local residents became concerned as more and more of the voids on their estate were transferred to a local housing association without consultation.
- **Training and education.** High Trees Development Trust provides training for tenants, including IT, drug, alcohol and sexual health awareness, a course on self confidence and personal development, driving theory practice tests and music production.
- **Working with service providers**. The Victoria Estate Action Group, in conjunction with North Tees Primary Care Action Trust, organised for a 'Health Bus' to be parked on their estate for one month. This provided things like advice on health, diet and fitness and blood pressure testing.

Local support networks

62% of participants had access to paid worker support – usually a Tenant Participation Worker employed by the groups' landlords. Training and small grants from the *Making Things Happen* Programme are additional forms of support for groups. A combination of different forms of help produces results at a local level by providing impetus for practical activity.

When we visit groups we ask them to map out the external groups they use for support, pots of money, advice and training. Groups list a variety of organisations, often finding these after painstaking research into what is available and the sorts of organisations that can help them. Groups often have links, reciprocal relationships and active projects with at least 10 different organisations and bodies in their area.

Contacts are often passed on by word of mouth. Training courses are a place for this to happen. Over half of the participants stay in touch after a course, often maintaining contact by email, letter, phone calls and visits to each other's areas.

Table 15. Who do groups work with and what do they get?

Organisation	What do the groups get?
Landlord	**Money, training, facilities, help in kind, printing and IT facilities**
Local Authority	**Money, training, help in kind**
Tenant Participation Worker	**Advice, support, day to day assistance , skills, back-up, source of contacts and ideas**
The Police	**Volunteers for social events, advice, money, partners for projects**
Other Resident Associations	**Skills and knowledge exchange, sharing of resources, moral support, local back up, source of contacts, ideas**
Local training providers	**Training, facilities, IT access**
Advice & support charities	**Training, money, partners for projects**
Colleges/schools	**IT access, training, partners for projects**
Fire service	**Volunteers for social events, advice, money**
Youth services	**Outreach work, youth activities, money, ideas, skills and advice, partners for projects**
Area Panels	**Training, money**
Local businesses	**Money**
Tenants' Federation & national bodies	**Money, skills and knowledge, facilities, local back up**
Environmental charities	**Physical improvements, money, volunteers, skills, advice**

Breakdown of grant applications

By training course

There were no significant differences between training themes in the amount of applications that were generated. Courses around 'Organisation, Development and Management', although about organisational skills rather than about specific projects, led to as many grant applications as courses about 'Community Action', and 'Estate Issues'.

By geographical area

The regional distribution of grant applications was roughly in line with the regional attendance on courses. The one exception was the East region, where attendance on courses was 6% but they had received 16% of grant awards. However, this does not reflect a skew in grant awards as the figure is based on relatively small numbers of grants (51 grants).

The money

Table 16. Grant amounts up to September 2003

	Total amount of grants requested from 63 applications	Average grant request	Total amount awarded to 51 projects	Average amount awarded
Amount (£)	£174,827	**£2,775**	£121,189	**£2,376**

The average amount requested is just under the £3,000 maximum, with the exception of one group that asked for only £384.

Rejected grant applications

12 grant applications were turned down. The applications were for a similar range of projects as the successful applications – community garden, community building, youth work, social event and advice work. Groups are given the option to rewrite and resubmit their application if they want to. The table below summarises the reasons for rejection of the applications.

Table 17. Why were grants turned down?

Reason why grant was unsuccessful	No. of grants refused
Did not meet the criteria of getting tenants involved in decision making	4
Not enough "new or development" involved in project	2
Already funded IT equipment that could be used for project application	2
Group does not meet criteria of being a group of LA or HA tenants	1
Mismatch between set up of group and project planned	1
Unclear grant application	1
Grant on hold after changes to project by group	1
Total	12

Overall grant outcomes

We assess each grant funded project under positive and negative outcomes, using evidence from our visit and interviews, as shown in the example given below. Our assessment categories are very positive, good, tried but not yet successful, and poor. The example below is of a good grant project.

Example of assessment of a grant funded project

Good grant project		
Basford and Riber Tenants' and Residents' Association Creation of a play area & garden for use by the whole community to encourage involvement.	**Positive outcomes** • A clear meeting, relaxation and play space for two neighbouring estates. • Well used and popular with the local young people who previously did not have anywhere to hang-out. • The basketball court in the play area is used by the whole community.	**Evidence** • Several groups of children were playing in the garden when we visited and asked to borrow pogo sticks whilst we were there. • A local person was holding a birthday party on the basketball court the day after we visited. • We also saw photos of the group's events showing good attendance.
	Issues and problems • There is some doubt as to how easy it is for people off the neighbouring estate to access the equipment due to (understandable) concerns over security (on paper this estate is included in the group's target area and membership). The tension between security and wider access hasn't been resolved.	**Evidence** • We asked how new residents on the estate, and those on the neighbouring estate, can find out about borrowing the equipment. The group advertises in leaflets and in their newsletter, but "*if I didn't know you, you wouldn't get it!*"

To add to our assessment of groups and grant-funded projects, we made an effort to talk to someone from outside the group when we visited projects. The external commentators had to be someone who was familiar with the group's work, but who was not part of the day to day running of the project. Where we met a representative from the landlord organisation, the groups chose and invited the external stakeholder in all cases. The presence of these 'referees' gave us a check on the credibility of the groups, and a different perspective from the outside, although one usually sympathetic to the groups. We also tried to talk to users of projects casually where possible, and go on visits when project activity was taking place, as well as to get other forms of evidence of project success, e.g. photos of events, to verify information from groups about attendance.

Based on the evidence we collected, including interviews and visits to grant groups, we have summarised the overall impacts and outcomes below.

Summary of overall impacts of grant funded projects

Positive grant outcomes	Negative grant outcomes
▪ Boosted local community involvement, e.g. community consultation carried out on a new community house project. ▪ Developed skills and increased confidence to represent local communities during processes of change such as stock transfer and local area regeneration. ▪ Promoted new ideas, e.g. community conference resulted in the idea for a community café. ▪ Improved the quality of local information, e.g. newsletters used as source of local information during stock transfer. ▪ Encouraged links with others, e.g. community timeline project involved local elderly support groups and schools. ▪ Stimulated local activity, e.g. single mums support group established.	▪ A number of Information Technology projects seemed to have poor usage. ▪ Several groups had weak links to the wider local population. ▪ The benefits of some grant funded activities were one off rather than longer lasting.

Making Things Happen Grants have resulted in new facilities, activities and skills for both the groups and their wider communities. In addition to carrying out their grant funded project, groups have needed to build-up wider links, working relationships and contacts, which in some cases are maintained after the completion of the project.

So the grants have a long term impact also. Many of the positive grant outcomes can be drawn upon again, contributing to a group's ability to move up and down the ladder of development. This makes life easier for those volunteers involved, contributing to their ability to set up other projects. We look at the negative outcomes in more detail in a later section.

Referees and other evidence - external assessment of grant funded groups and their work

Referees who were employed by social landlord organisations, e.g. as housing managers, emphasised the general value of tenants' and residents' groups. They told us how a good working relationship with the group can make their job, and the work of the social landlord, easier. A Senior Assistant Neighbourhood Officer in the Midlands told us:

"You build up a nice relationship with people. It makes your day to day work a lot easier when you've got rapport with tenants. Tenants are our ear to the ground, we're not there on site. They've got a good idea of how the Council works and ask for achievable things. People say to me, you go home every night, and that's right. We rely on tenants to come and tell us what their problems are. There are endless examples. Very simple things you only realise if you live there or have a bit of commonsense. Like why can't we have the streets

swept after the binmans been? We wouldn't realise. When you look at the very strategic you don't see the viewpoint from the ground."

Workers related this point to the wider impact of a group's work on the ability of the landlord to deliver services. For example, a Peabody Housing Manager commented on one central London group *"the TA works with you. We work together or there's no point. The TA's business isn't minor complaints. Instead they bring the community together, and work to improve services."* An Area Manager for Metropolitan Housing Trust said of a tenants' group in Nottingham: "*they're one of the major successes, there's been big changes in the overall environment and they've genuinely contributed to making it a popular estate....if there is a particular problem with a tenant they work with us to make it a nicer place to live"*.

Several workers told us how pleased they are that the group is doing well. A Tenant Participation Officer for a group in the North East said *"I'm really proud of them, they're a success story."*

We also spoke to people who are familiar with the group's work as local residents, people who use the projects, Councillors and local workers for other community organisations. Without exception they were well aware of the value of the group's activities and soundly endorsed their work. They were able to tell us about the benefits of the group's work on their own lives and the lives of other local residents. An older resident commented on a tenants' and residents' association in the West Midlands *"they spent it really well, they deserve every help they can get. I wouldn't go out the door if it wasn't for this…..if we haven't got this, we haven't got anything at all."* A local parent said of a community house in North East England: *"my kids love it here."* A customer of a community café we met on the day said of a social event "*it was great fun, I got a sore throat though as I had to shout to be heard!"*

External commentators pointed out the general community building benefits of groups' work. A Councillor familiar with the work of a group in Stoke on Trent said of their grant funded project: *"that grant had an impact, John is doing a fantastic job, we use it, the print shop has become an essential point for the community and its value for money as well."* A worker for an elderly people's project said of a community group in Leeds: *"this project is really lovely, it genuinely works as a community centre, it's exemplary, everyone's from different backgrounds with different problems but they bridge the gaps"*.

Successful grant case study examples:

The *Making Things Happen* Programme has funded a wide variety of projects. We have visited all of these projects 9 months after they received their grant to track progress and document the impact of the grant. At the time of writing, LSE Housing have visited just over half of the recipients (27 out of 51 grants). Visits to assess other grant awards are ongoing, triggered at 9 months.

The three examples below go into further detail as to the types of groups that apply for money and what they do with this. Delves West Residents' Association used their grant to host a social event aimed at bringing together two quite separate local communities and increase the profile of the local Tenant Management Organisation. The Victoria Estate Action Group applied for a grant for IT equipment to produce newsletters to keep their estate informed during stock transfer. The third example looks at The African Families Foundation

innovative grant funded project that aimed to bridge the gap between the African community and mainstream service providers in Britain.

All three groups:

- Worked in partnership with local agencies.
- Consulted local people.
- Actively responded to local concerns.
- Spent the grant money as they said they would.
- Continue to work towards the same goals.

Delves West Residents' Association; improvements in a divided area

Delves West is a large estate of about 700 homes, about 10 minutes from the centre of Walsall in the West Midlands. Many of the members of the Residents' Association have lived in this area for most of their lives and remember the estate as a clean and pleasant area to raise children with plenty of jobs and opportunities for local people.

Things started to go downhill in the 1980s and the estate was nick named the 'forgotten area' by the Daily Mail. As numbers of empty properties rose, the estate's relationship with their neighbouring estate, Delves East, began to worsen as Delves West was typecast as the 'rough' area.

In 1995, after several meetings at the local primary school, a local man suggested to the group that they could do something directly about the situation on the estate if they formed a Tenant Management Organisation.

The Delves TMO was officially launched on April 11th 1999. Technically this is two TMOs – one for Delves West and Delves East. But people on the two estates, and the TMOs themselves, prefer not to make this distinction.

Things have noticeably improved since the TMO took over the management of the estates and the relationship between the TMO and the Residents' Association is very close and many of the residents on the TMO Management Committee are also on the Residents' Association Committee. At the beginning of 2002, the group decided it was time to celebrate and publicise the improvements in their local area by organising some social events around the Queen's Jubilee in June 2002.

The Chair of Delves West RA attended 'Running Social Events' in March 2002 and realised that she could apply for a *Making Things Happen* Grant to take their idea forward. They decided that they also wanted to use the events to try and boost local people's knowledge about the work of the TMO (in light of a proposed stock transfer) and to get people from the two estates talking and socialising together to try and break down any remaining barriers between the two areas. They were awarded the grant in June 2002.

In the end the group held five separate events aimed at all age groups on the Delves West and Delves East estates. The group was nervous that nobody would turn up but over 250 local people attended. There was also enough money to give everyone a Jubilee gift.

At the moment the group is attempting to secure some land opposite the TMO office and hope to be able to open a community centre there to provide regular social activities for local people. One local pensioner commented *"if it wasn't for them I wouldn't ever have a reason to go out my door…they deserve all the help they can get!"*

The Victoria Estate Action Group, Stockton

The Victoria Estate Action Group was established in 1990 by a small group of local residents who felt that their estate's problems were being ignored by the Council. The Victoria Estate is a five minutes walk from Stockton-on-Tees town centre and around the corner from a brand new sports centre and a regenerated waterfront. This used to be a popular place to live, close to the shops and places of work, with a stable population living in the estate's flats and maisonettes. But in the 1980s as levels of unemployment, drug addiction and crime rose, the estate began to empty as those that could afford to move, did.

In 1994 the group moved into one of these empty houses on the edge of the estate and opened up the house as a local place for people to use as a meeting and relaxation point. The group keeps this building open all day during the week and the Council, local advice services, debt agencies and drug and alcohol support groups hold regular sessions here.

Volunteers from this group first decided to go on a course at Trafford Hall about Tenant Participation Compacts in June 2001 after they were asked by their Council to become involved with putting together an area compact.

The Victoria Estate Action Group were awarded a grant to pay for badly needed IT equipment. They received a computer, photocopier, ink cartridges and paper. They applied for a grant to produce newsletters to inform local residents about the transfer of the management of the Council's housing stock to an Arms Length Management Company in mid 2001. The group currently produce a quarterly newsletter for 1,400 households and the newsletter was a brilliant source of information during stock transfer. A local worker commented; "*everything I knew came out of the newsletters, people were always popping in and asking me questions, it was brilliant to have some information to hand out to them*".

The Victoria Estate Action Group is continuing to react to changes in their local community. In the last two years asylum seekers, mainly young men and single women, have been moved into the empty flats on the estate and the group became worried after hearing about violence towards asylum seekers. They decided to make sure that this doesn't happen on the Victoria Estate. The Council now tells the group every time somebody new is moved onto the estate so that newcomers can be welcomed and introduced to their neighbours. So far, things have gone smoothly. The group also runs a laundry service for asylum seekers and collects donated clothes and furniture to redistribute to the people who arrive with nothing.

The African Families Foundation, London

The African Families Foundation (TAFF) is a voluntary organisation which represents and promotes the interests of small grassroots African community groups. It has over 60 members in the UK and these groups mostly work in the spheres of health, youth, family support and the elderly.

The group heard about Trafford Hall from Waltham Forest Voluntary Council and decided to book a training course on ways to make things happen in local communities.
After training the group decided to set up an innovative 'community advocacy project' involving representatives from all its member organisations. This project is aimed at bridging the gaps between Africans living in the UK and mainstream service providers.

The group was awarded a £3,000 *Making Things Happen* Grant for training for 15 people to gain the skills needed to go back into their communities and help African families access the health, education and welfare services available. It was also aimed at encouraging these families to get involved with local community organisations and structures as a way of reducing their isolation, especially amongst new arrivals to Britain.

Training looked at things like local social and community structures, provided information about rights to healthcare, benefits, education, training and how to help people access translation services, needs assessments and referrals to service providers.

Three months after the completion of the training every participant had gone on to work with at least three families. For example, one volunteer liaised between a family and social services making the particular situation less stressful, quicker and easier for both groups. TAFF is currently applying for further money from other funders to fund volunteer expenses to keep the momentum going.

Life after 'rejection'

The *Making Things Happen* Grant is only one pot of money out of numerous others. The groups we see are generally very resourceful and have to deal with rejections of their grant applications. If a community group is to keep going they have to be skilled in seeking out other sources of cash.

We tracked one group whose application for a *Making Things Happen* Grant was turned down because it did not meet the criteria. Although rejected, the group went on to find the money elsewhere and still used their *Making Things Happen* Grant application for a project more relevant to the Programme.

Larches and Savick Community Association, Preston

The Community Association runs a boxing club for local young people (both boys and girls) as a way of improving the relationship between two neighbouring estates in Preston and providing keep fit activities for young people. On the nights the club is on, juvenile nuisance complaints to the Police have reduced by as much as 70%. The group lacked proper safety wear and basic equipment including a training ring which they needed in order to get insurance and membership of the Amateur Boxing Association.

The group applied for a £3,000 *Making Things Happen* Grant to fund a training ring, head guards, gloves and protective clothing. This grant application was turned down because it did not meet the grant criteria of either enabling local residents to become better informed about local issues or by building their capacity to take part in decisions that affect their community.

In response to this decision the group decided instead to apply to Awards for All.This took a lot longer than they envisaged and the group was disappointed by the ensuing delay in being able to enter young people into competitions. They also ran the risk of losing their existing members. They were eventually awarded the money.

The group was disappointed by Trafford Hall's decision to reject their grant application. The Chair commented *"I suspect the funders just thought it was another sports club looking for new equipment and not the work we are doing…they thought it would be people punching each other…but it's not, it's discipline, respect for yourself…it gets them (young people) off the streets."*

But this was not the end of the story. After further contact and negotiation with Trafford Hall, the group went on to successfully apply for a grant to host a Jubilee social event aimed at the whole community.

Debates within the Programme about the small grant fund

The *Making Things Happen* Grant Programme has thrown up some interesting debates and questions about how to use small pots of money to kick start tenant activity and community projects. Across the Programme, we have had three areas of concern:

- A number of Information Technology projects seemed to have poor usage.
- Several groups had weak links to the wider local population.
- We worried about the ability of small pots of money to create longer lasting benefits that are more than one off.

1. *Use of small grants for Information Technology*

Nearly one third of the grants awarded (15 grants) paid for information technology alongside other office equipment. Items included: powerpoint projectors, laptop and desktop computers, printers, scanners, digital cameras, photocopiers, faxes and laminators.

We have visited 6 of the 15 projects. 3 out of the 6 groups had either not yet used, or rarely used, their IT equipment. They all expressed the opinion that the equipment was good to have and an asset for the group and they were sure that it would come in useful 'one day'.

One group had not yet bought the powerpoint projector they had applied for and had borrowed one instead.

In only 2 cases did LSE feel that the group was making good use of its IT equipment. For example, the Beacon Regeneration Partnership has a high profile nationally as a model of good practice on partnership working and has won several respected awards for its work. The group now gets asked to talk to organisations across the country. They used their laptop and projector to present their work locally, regionally and nationally. The equipment is also used back at base by local residents. One member of the Partnership, a local tenants' group that uses the same building, have since been awarded a grant for IT equipment for a drop-in computer training suite.

The grants to purchase computer equipment raised three key issues:

- Lack of open access to equipment for all group members, and members of the community.
- Low levels of use of equipment.
- Lack of training and skills to use the equipment.

In principle, giving grants for computer equipment and other technology is a good idea. It is important for groups to be able to access the Internet, type up reports and meeting minutes and computerise their accounts. Computers are also a way of storing a large amount of information, possibly overcoming a lack of office or storage space (a common problem for community groups).

However, the *Making Things Happen* Programme did bring up questions about the use of giving grants for brand new IT equipment which only one person/a few select members of the group know how to use. IT equipment also brings up storage and security issues. At least two groups were worried about leaving their grant equipment in a place where other people can use it in case it got damaged or stolen. There is a tension between groups' sensible concerns about security, and giving wider access to equipment for other residents. The fact that equipment was new added to this tension as the equipment had a high value.

The bigger point is that getting IT is a new step for groups, done at risk. Unlike projects such as environmental improvements, IT equipment only adds real value when it is used. Groups cannot be sure beforehand how useful the equipment will be.

In recognition of this, the *Making Things Happen* Programme has taken several steps to deal with these issues:

- Trafford Hall has introduced a pilot scheme to encourage groups that are applying for a computer to buy a reconditioned computer instead. One group has taken advantage of this so far and it has worked well, the group afterwards commenting that they were impressed by the Programme's search for a recycled, low cost alternative.
- They have offered funding for training on how to use equipment to groups alongside buying equipment.
- They have produced a leaflet for groups on buying recycled IT equipment at lower cost.

2. Sustainability of some grant funded projects

Four of the twenty-five grant funded projects we visited were experiencing problems in keeping going. The projects were making slow progress as a result of a lack of volunteers; one was a youth club which needed more parental volunteers to keep open and the other was a community house project where it was unclear whether it had wider support on the estate outside the group. Pots of money do not operate in isolation to the problems community groups experience in getting things done. These pressures of a lack of money and the lack of 'manpower' or community support are the same barriers reported by groups in section four that stop them putting their plans into action.

The projects we visited had received both capital and revenue funding for projects, revenue funding included running costs and salaries. All revenue money was for 12 months only. At the time we visited, half of the twenty-five projects were fundraising to continue the activity that Trafford Hall had grant funded. Without generating ongoing funding, these projects were at risk of stopping. Trafford Hall asks groups how they will continue to fund project costs after the grant has run out. Most groups say they will fundraise from elsewhere to do this. The groups often do small fundraising themselves (car boot sales, jumble sales, 'bonus ball' lottery draws, dances and suppers etc) to cover some of their group's core running costs such as copying, but the potential to generate much surplus from very small-scale activity is limited. Many small-scale community activities need subsidy of some kind to continue.

Therefore, it could be considered reasonable for the *Making Things Happen* Programme to call projects 'potentially sustainable' if they have to rely on generating further grant funding to keep going.

3. One-off benefits?

In a minority of the groups we visited, we expressed doubts about the long term benefits of the grant funded project. In four projects out of the 25 we visited, the benefits were positive but arguably one-off or not long-lasting.

One of the four projects was a community directory of all the local groups and support organisations in their area. The group itself admitted that the information was going out of date as fast as they could check it. Three groups received a grant for a social event and, although successful events on the day, the long term benefits of these three events are hard to quantify in terms of the *Making Things Happen* grant criteria of encouraging more formal involvement in local decision making or by enabling communities to be better informed about local issues.

Not all of the grants for social events had this outcome. There were six grants in total for social events by the *Making Things Happen* Small Grant Fund. Three of those grant funded events have boosted resident involvement, as groups used the event as an opportunity to carry out consultations with local residents, e.g. to gather their views on a proposed community house project. In the three cases we have doubts about, the opportunity for follow through was not capitalised on as much as it could have been. However, in all three cases, community morale was clearly boosted; one group gained two new volunteers, one event forged links between local schools and an elderly support project. The events also raised the profile of all four groups.

10. Conclusions

- There is likely to be continuing demand and need for subsidy for tenant participation and community capacity building.
- Housing is a starting point for activity in many low income neighbourhoods.
- More local and regional support for tenant involvement is potentially very complementary for a national programme like the Making Things Happen Programme. If there was more local and regional support a national programme would still have an important role to play.
- A national centre dedicated to social housing tenants and tenant training raises the profile of what is otherwise a series of ad hoc, isolated and fragmented activities.
- A national framework gives coherence to regional work. There is scope for Trafford Hall to help generate outreach training in the regions that broadly mirrors the success of the *Making Things Happen* Programme.

The *Making Things Happen* Programme is an innovative programme of residential training linked to follow-up small grants for social housing tenants in England and Wales. It supports and inspires tenants and residents to be involved in decisions that affect their neighbourhoods. It facilitates community volunteers to work with service providers to improve the quality of services delivered to low income council estates and other social housing. It enables people to start new small projects that contribute to better quality of life in neighbourhoods.

The *Making Things Happen* Programme supports tenants and residents in improving neighbourhoods and increases their ability to be involved through:

- ideas and grant funding for new ways to increase community involvement and community consultation;
- information for tenants about major housing changes such as stock transfer or changes in management linked to stock options appraisals to reach the Decent Homes Standard;
- practical suggestions for quick wins in housing management such as dealing with empty homes (voids);
- skills and motivational development of tenants' ability to influence large scale regeneration spending decisions and to be partners with other neighbourhood stakeholders;
- expert advice, skills training and funding for tenants' and residents' groups to develop as organisations (e.g. financial and management systems);
- encouraging tenants' and residents' groups to promote community integration, and social capital, e.g. between residents from different ethnic backgrounds;
- skills, project study visits and funding for work with young people;
- examples, practical ideas and grant awards for tenants to help tackle anti-social behaviour, crime reduction and community safety work;
- grant awards and case study examples for tenants' projects that improve communal environments;
- information, project study visits and funding to develop energy efficiency work on estates;
- grant awards and skills development training for community facilities that offer social support for families and education for low skilled adults;

- backing and confidence boosts for liaison and signposting work between residents and housing service providers.

The value of tenant and community involvement is demonstrated by the wealth of examples we have painstakingly collected from low income neighbourhoods across the country. 69 projects are used in this report. Our findings are based on data and evidence from 1,700 tenant volunteers and 770 tenants' and residents' groups. This represents a significant body of material on tenant involvement and capacity building.

The *Making Things Happen* Programme worked hard to attract a spread of community volunteers, including younger and minority representatives – usually seen as 'hard to reach'. It has placed a strong emphasis on raising and maintaining quality standards in training, in the absence of any widely accepted accreditation framework for community action focused residential training. It has promoted good practice in the way it awards small grants to tenants' and residents' groups, e.g. handholding support for tentative applicants and flexibility and light touch monitoring without sacrificing financial propriety.

New forms of capacity building were developed through the Programme – both the model of residential training plus small grants ('Training First model') and the individual training packages. These new tenant capacity building products were able to be developed at high risk because of the existence of Trafford Hall as a central co-ordinating organisation, based in a training venue specially created for the purpose of tenant training. Trafford Hall was able to fulfil its charitable aims to offer training and support to people in social housing neighbourhoods because it was supported by ODPM for the frontloaded development costs. ODPM funding underwrote the high risks involved in developing new products, the effort and time involved in advertising training, recruiting participants and administrating bookings. ODPM, Housing Corporation, and the Welsh Assembly Government made the Programme possible by providing bursaries and small grant award funding for unfunded tenant and community groups. Three different governmental organisations have worked together to make the Programme happen in a way that is accessible to the widest geographical and tenure spread of social housing tenants who put themselves forward to be involved.

The Gatsby Charitable Foundation had previously laid the groundwork for Government funding for the Programme by funding a 5 year pilot training and small grant programme around community self help which tested out the model and its ability to produce positive community involvement outcomes.

The Programme has the added value, identified by participants, of 'going away' on residential training, which provides concentrated time away from home and distractions in a fresh environment to focus on action planning, time away with other group members to team build, and a chance to meet other groups from across the country and share experiences. Meeting other tenants and residents from different neighbourhoods was cited as one of the top three benefits of Trafford Hall training. It helps groups who feel isolated in their local context to feel part of something bigger and less as though they are struggling alone.

Follow up monitoring of training participants after training shows that resident representatives continue to value training after they get home. They credit training for small practical ideas and confidence boosts that have helped the follow up action they have taken. Some groups return to Trafford Hall on courses as their work develops. The small grant fund has given grant awards to projects that have achieved outcomes such as an increase in

community involvement by people from ethnic minority backgrounds, and linking council tenants to IT and the internet.

The work of the groups that are involved in the Programme is linked to current national policy agendas, even if the groups themselves do not realise the wider significance of what they do. The *Making Things Happen* Programme has deliberately tried to make its training programme relevant to national policy on housing and community regeneration, in order to help Government to reach down to grass roots level.

Towards the future

But some big questions still remain.

The sustainability of the Programme, and of the projects its supports, is dependent on ongoing subsidy. There is likely to be continuing demand and need for support for tenant participation and community capacity building for several reasons. Tenants have long been active in trying to improve the physical environment, the maintenance of their homes, and customer care, and are still active in helping to drive the improvements in housing management and housing provision that have already happened. Most social landlords now recognise the need to involve tenants and residents in decisions about their housing and the added value that this brings. Successive Governments have given high priority to tenant involvement in housing. Tenant involvement is central to most of current housing policy. Tenants are generally unable to pay the full costs of training themselves, or to generate income to run small projects in low income neighbourhoods. Given all this, there is likely to be a continuing need for subsidy for tenant involvement and community capacity building. It is not clear yet how the Programme and the grass roots projects can be funded easily without subsidy on a long term basis.

Local authorities are developing their commitment to providing resources for tenant participation. Levels of commitment and structures for tenant participation vary by area; tenants are dependent on local availability and accessibility. The picture is similar for other social landlords. A small number of community based organisations, for example Development Trusts, operate as local community support organisations, funding local activity through their own income. To do this they operate on a sufficiently large scale to generate income from assets to fund capacity building and community activity. In order to deliver successfully these Development Trusts need to be established for at least 5 years and have at least £1m in turnover and/or assets[18]. Most successful Development Trusts have been given endowments. They require volunteers who want to create community based organisations of this kind. Most large scale area based regeneration programmes are coming to an end and will not be replaced. Some do currently provide funding for training but accessibility varies and the coverage is patchy.

National charities prioritise their resources on supporting new high risk work and gaps in provision. In comparison to Government, their funds are tiny. For example, the largest single source of generalised grant making by a private organisation only has a total pot that is equivalent to 3% of Government annual neighbourhood renewal funding, which is itself only

[18] Steve Wyler, Director of Development Trust Association at closed seminar at Trafford hall on Community Action and Neighbourhood Management, 2003.

2% of total public expenditure[19]. They are keen to see their pump-priming work being mainstreamed to ensure its sustainability, and to protect their limited resources for new work.

Government recognises the need for subsidy for capacity building but is unclear what forms this should take, who should organise and provide help and what the focus should be about the aims of providing support. These issues have yet to be resolved. There is also still some emphasis within Government programmes on time limited funding for capacity building programmes.

Therefore, we can see that subsidy is available from different local and national pots, but it is often difficult for tenants' groups to access these sources themselves for training and projects. Therefore, it makes sense for the Programme to provide bursaries and small grants direct. It would be an immense amount of work and administratively extremely complex for a national programme to try and cohere funding streams from over 350 different local authorities, over 2,000 housing associations, many local regeneration schemes and several different national programmes.

Housing is a starting point for activity in many low income neighbourhoods. The condition of the neighbourhood environment - security, cleanliness, vandalism and crime, green spaces – is a catalyst for action for many tenants' and residents' groups. Neighbourhood management and neighbourhood warden initiatives have garnered tenant backing for these reasons. Landlords and tenants share a common set of priorities of improving the condition of homes (to the Decent Homes Standard), and the condition of neighbourhoods (liveability). Housing and linked environmental services have immediate relevance for people in social housing areas and they do respond to failures in delivery of those services. Tenant involvement in housing and the environment has delivered improvements to services. Tenants' and residents' groups also cast their net more widely to other neighbourhood renewal work, such as work with young people, partnership with health care providers, crime reduction and education.

There are currently many neighbourhood focused initiatives trying to develop community participation. A huge range of Government departments are running initiatives that encourage resident involvement. This has led in some areas to a heavier burden for the minority of tenant and resident representatives who are actively involved. Many of those volunteers come from tenants' and residents' groups, which provide an organisational basis for involvement in ways that are not replicated in other service areas.

The *Making Things Happen* Programme is a national tenant training programme. There are already devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales. The implementation of Government policy is co-ordinated by Government Offices for the Regions in England. Decisions about housing investment are now being made at regional levels via Regional Housing Boards. Regionalisation is a logical step for a country the size of the UK where there is massive variation between regions in terms of needs and assets.

The implications for a national tenant support programme are potentially very positive. Community and voluntary sector infrastructure is very patchy across different areas of the country, by local authority area and by region. There are very few opportunities for

[19] Presentation from charitable funder to seminar at Trafford Hall on Community Action and Neighbourhood Management, 2003.

residential training at a regional level. The opportunities for action-focused intensive training even at a local level are slight. Other forms of complementary support for tenant involvement and tenant activity – such as mentoring, hands-on community development, local training, networking, shadowing, study visits and exchanges – also have potential for much greater expansion and more consistent coverage. There has been recognition of the need to raise the quality of community action support[20]. In short, there is room for local and regional development of tenant capacity building work. Moves are underway, but in very early stages, such as work to develop Regional Centres of Excellence. The aim is to provide new learning, mentoring, research on good practice, continuing professional development, information technology and joint working to help residents and professionals with neighbourhood renewal and the built environment.

None of this negates the need for national programmes. The original rationale for the creation of the National Tenants' Resource Centre at Trafford Hall, with backing from ODPM (DoE at the time), was that a national centre dedicated to social housing tenants and tenant training could raise the profile of what is otherwise a series of ad hoc, isolated and fragmented activities. This gives tenants reassurance that their work has value. Coming together from different regions helps tenants and residents to share experiences and galvanises enthusiasm. It gives social housing tenants a voice at a national level where otherwise their contributions may not be recognised. There are few other structures for bona fide grass roots tenant volunteers to see the wider picture. Tenants who are active on a national level are in an incredibly small minority, out of the minority that get involved. Therefore, a national programme is a way of pulling together a critical mass of active tenants and residents in order to raise the quality of their work and help people feel less isolated and buried in day to day problems. A national framework gives coherence to regional work. A national quality standard based on tried and tested programmes could contribute to regional quality standards.

Trafford Hall have already started to experiment with outreach training on their other programmes. For example, The Glass-House design advice service runs the 'Places by Design' training course. This helps community groups understand the principles of good urban design, and then apply those principles to their own neighbourhoods. Groups can then apply to run Places by Design in your Neighbourhood to spread learning and opportunities to apply design principles to neighbourhoods on to other residents. These local courses have been successful, but labour intensive to develop. There is scope for Trafford Hall to help generate outreach training in the regions that broadly mirrors the success of the *Making Things Happen* Programme.

The Programme is funded to run until 2005 and therefore ways to develop the national programme and complementary outreach programmes after this should be developed.

[20] e.g. see Survey of Community Workers by the Community Development Foundation in 2003.

Appendices

1. Training feedback questionnaire

2. Action follow up feedback questionnaire

3. List of projects used in this report

1. Training Feedback Questionnaire – all participants asked to complete immediately after a training course

The London School
Of Economics and
Political Science
(University of London)

Trafford Hall Training Courses

Please tell us what you thought about the course, there are no right or wrong answers

1. **Has the course given you new ideas?** (please circle) **yes/no**
(Please give an actual example of an idea or other thing you have learnt)

2. **Will you do anything differently as a result of the course?** (please circle) **yes/no**

3. **Has the course encouraged you to take forward an existing idea?** (please circle) **yes/no**

4. **Summarise here <u>from your action plan</u> the three key actions you plan to take when you get back.**

   1.

   2.

   3.

5. **Was there anything you wanted from the course that you didn't get?** (please circle) **yes/no**
   If yes please tell us what:

6. **What did you think about the way the course was taught?**

7. **What have you learnt from the course?**

8. What did you like best about the course and why?

9. What parts of the course or exercises did you find least useful and why?

10. Was any of the training something you 'didn't like' but did you good?

11. How could the course be improved?

a)

b)

c)

12. Please tick the phrases that describe what you thought about the course. You can tick more than one.

	"There wasn't enough time to chat to the other students"	"I enjoyed the opportunity to talk to others"	
	"Some people dominated discussion"	"Everybody was able to have their say"	
	"The teacher should have stuck to the timetable more"	"The programme was well organised"	
	"I was bored some of the time"	"There was no time to be bored"	
	"Not enough group work"	"I enjoyed the group work"	
	"The trainers didn't know enough about our type of situation"	"The trainer was familiar with our situation"	
	"More real-life examples please!"	"There were lots of practical examples"	

Any other comment?

13. What did you think about the level of the course? (please circle)

☹much too basic	a bit basic	about right ☺	a bit advanced	much too advanced☹

14. Overall, how happy are you with this event? (please circle)

very unhappy ☹	unhappy	mixed feelings	happy	very happy☺

If there are any comments you do NOT want the trainers to see - please turn over & write them on the back of this form. THANK YOU

2. Action follow up feedback questionnaire – sent 3 weeks after the completion of training to all participants.

LSE HOUSING UPDATE SURVEY ON TRAFFORD HALL TRAINING COURSES

Many thanks for agreeing to complete this form. There are **no** right answers –
Please return by ********** *to:*

Helen Beck
CASE
The London School of Economics
Houghton Street
London WC2A 2AE

Tel: 0207 955 6681
Email: H.M.Beck@lse.ac.uk

What is the name of the group you belong to?:…….

What is your name?.....

About the Course:
How useful was the course for your work locally? (Please tick)
Not at all useful ❑ A bit useful ❑ Useful ❑ Very useful ❑ Good but not relevant ❑

In what way? ……

……

Have you told others about the training course? **YES** ❑ **NO** ❑

Have you encouraged anyone else to attend training at Trafford Hall? **YES** ❑ **NO** ❑

Have you kept in touch with anyone you met on the course? **YES** ❑ **NO** ❑

Is there a paid worker who supports your group **for example**, youth and community worker, tenant participation officer? **YES** ❑ **NO** ❑

If **YES**, what type of worker are they? .....
who do they work for?.....

Has your group taken any follow up action? **YES** ❑ **NO** ❑ **NOT YET** ❑

If YES: a) Please describe what you are doing in your own words.

b) Did the training course help with this: a lot ❑ a bit ❑ not at all ❑

If NOT YET: a) Please tell us what you want to do next.

Has the training course helped with your plans: a lot ❑ a bit ❑ not at all ❑

IF NO: a) Please tell us why:

b) Has the training course helped you at all - perhaps in other ways?

If you received handouts, what did you do with these after training?

- Read them
- Threw them away
- Used them as exercises with group
- Filed them for future use
- Used them to plan
- Passed them onto others

Do you have a problem with funding and resources? **YES ❑ NO ❑**

If **YES**, is it because (you can tick more one)

- We need large amounts of money over £30,000
- No time to apply
- Not sure where to go for funding
- Complicated grant forms
- Funders don't want to fund what we need

Other – please say what ……
……..

Apart from funding, what are the **barriers** to putting your plans into action?

1. .....
   .....
2. .....
   .....
3. .....
   .....

Are you intending to apply for a Capacity Building Grant? **YES❑ NO ❑ DON'T KNOW ❑**

If **YES**, when are you intending to apply? **NOW ❑ SOON ❑ LATER ❑**

If **YES,** if possible, describe your project in one sentence
……

Would you like any other organisation/person to receive information about the Capacity Building project?

Name.....Address.....
.....Postcode.....Tel no.....

List of projects used in this report

1. The Drug Action Team, Runcorn
2. North West Community Association, Preston
3. Thorns Tenants and Residents Association, West Bromwich
4. Sharrow Tenants and Residents Association, Sheffield
5. Delves West Residents Association, Walsall
6. Foster and Three Bells Tenants and Residents Association, Darlaston, West Midlands
7. Communic 8, Blackpool
8. Plas Madoc Youth Partnership, North Wales
9. The Lakes Residents Association, County Durham
10. Southwold Tenants Association, London
11. Cumbrian Partnership, County Durham
12. Beacon Hill Residents Association, Cleethorpes
13. Mount Community Association, Pembrokeshire
14. Bath Place Community Venture, Leamington Spa
15. Meriden Residents Association, Watford
16. Brunswick Tenants Group, Manchester
17. Basford and Riber Tenants and Residents Association, Nottingham
18. Chester Leaseholders Association, Chester
19. Victoria Estate Action Group, Stockton
20. North East Lincolnshire Tenants Assembly, Lincolnshire
21. Walmer Close and Peel Close Tenants and Residents Association, London
22. Nestegg, Preston
23. Fisherton Street Residents Association, London
24. Anfield Playscheme, Liverpool
25. Poets Corner Residents Society, Chester
26. Hayes and Harlington Community Development Forum, Middlesex
27. The Horn of Africa Women's and Children's Association, London
28. The Bellamy Road Information Centre, Mansfield
29. Chichester District Community Housing Tenants Association, Chichester
30. Hounslow Tenants Association, London
31. The Clywd Alyn Housing Association, North Wales
32. Westfield and Halfway Alternative Tenants, Sheffield
33. Melody Road Estate Management Organisation, Wandsworth
34. Springfield Residents Association, Darlington
35. Central Tenants and Residents Group, Tameside
36. Monks Croft Residents Association, Cheltenham
37. Bilborough Central Tenants Association, Nottingham
38. Kingsheath and District Estate Management Board, Liverpool
39. Mercian Tenants Forum, Birmingham
40. Bentley House Tenants and Residents Association, Manchester
41. Harvills and Hawthorn Estate, West Bromwich
42. South Hylton Village Residents Association, Sunderland
43. Holts Village Management Board, Oldham
44. Piccadilly Area Residents Association, Lancashire
45. Villages Housing Tenant Participation Working Group, Liverpool
46. Moss Rose Community Project, Macclesfield
47. Brentwood Day Centre, Manchester
48. Chesterton Community Forum, Newcastle

49. Bushbury Tenants and Residents Association, Wolverhampton
50. Adur Consultative Forum, West Sussex
51. Edward Woods Tenants and Residents Association, London
52. Woodlands Community Association, Middlesex
53. Sahara Communities Abroad, London
54. Kennedy House Tenants, Bradford
55. Forest Heath Tenants Assembly, Suffolk
56. Adventure Zone, Hull
57. Abbey Orchard Tenants Association, London
58. Five Villages Print Shop, Stoke on Trent
59. Ingol and Tanterton Action Group, Preston
60. High Trees Development Trust, London
61. The African Families Foundation, London
62. Bolton Multicultural Arts, Bolton
63. Ferryhill LADDER, County Durham
64. Larches and Savick Community Association, Preston
65. Colchester Credit Union, Colchester
66. Rural South Tenants Association, Chichester
67. Beacon Community Regeneration Partnership, Cornwall
68. East Rose Community Group, Blackburn
69. All Hallows Community Project, Leeds