




CENTRE FOR REGENERATION EXCELLENCE WALES
 CANOLFAN RHAGORWAETH ADEYWID
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**▶ Enabling 'Purposeful Citizenship':
 Towards New Models of Governance**
Civic Participation in the Countryside Conference
 Department of Politics and European Studies
 Palacky University
 26th - 27th September 2012


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▶ Geographical Context




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▶ The Social Context

- Post-industrial Communities
- Decline of coal, steel and heavy industry
- High levels of economic inactivity
- 1997 32% child poverty rate
- Pockets of acute deprivation


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▶ The UK Policy Context

- 1997 New Labour government
- Recognition of poverty and social exclusion
- Area-based policy
- Strong emphasis on community participation


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▶ The Welsh Policy Context

- Post 1997 Devolution
- Poverty eradication, a central policy objective
- Consultation and development of Communities First
- Commitment 'for a generation'
- Commitment to community participation


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▶ Communities First

- 132 Communities identified
- Identified from Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation
- Financial and social support for community level interventions
- Long term commitment


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► **Programme features**

- The Community Audit
- The Capacity Development Plan
- The Community Action Plan
- The Communities First partnership


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► **Community Engagement**

- Evidence of active community engagement
- 750 community partnership members (*estimate*)
- High levels of volunteering
- Community participation in events and programmes


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► **Community Empowerment**

Definition:
An ability of community members to influence other actors to behave in ways in which they would not conventionally have behaved. They would be able to influence the values and assumptions of statutory partners and thereby develop different outcomes for service providers

- Empowerment not realised
- Two stage decision making process (outside the partnership)


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► **Barriers to Empowerment**

What prevents achievement of 'purposeful participation'?

- Community capacity
- Statutory agency capacity
- Regulatory and financial restraints
- Local democratic structures


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► **Community Capacity**

- Skilled and able community members
- Require additional support and training
- Require confidence building
- Support from community development team is essential

Solution = Clear Support Mechanisms and Multi- Level Opportunities to Engage


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► **Statutory Agency Capacity**

- Decision making structures
- Organisational and professional cultures
- Existing working practices
- 'Institutional Resistance' to community empowerment

Solution = Clearly Define Relationships and Deliver Training for Agency Teams



► Regulatory and Financial Restraints

- Clash between community and agency objectives
- Agencies have statutory obligations
- Financial regulation requires strict protocols
- Insufficient budgets to make community objectives happen

Solution = Flexibility of Regulations and Increased Budgets



► Local Democratic Structures

- Conflict with elected councillors
- Partnerships: no electoral legitimacy
- No clear processes to ensure full representation of sections of community

Solution = Ensure Full Engagement With, and Participation Of Local Councillors



► Towards a model of new governance

- Empowerment is possible
- Communities can influence decisions makers
- Communities can improve public services
- Requires collective commitment and organisational change
- Design effective community and statutory agency partnerships
- The objective must be 'co-production' of services



► References

D. Adamson and R. Bromiley (2008b) *Community Empowerment in Practice: Lessons from Communities First*. Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York.

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