



Dundee Community Development Programme Phase 2: Year 2 Evaluation Report

Acknowledgments

Being involved with the Dundee Community Development Programme over these last five years has been a great opportunity and a pleasure.

We very much appreciate the readiness of project leads and their staff to engage with us during this time, and their enthusiasm and energy in doing so. Their stories have helped us to shape the evaluation into a process that we feel has added value to the Programme.

Thank you to David Dorward for his openness to our ideas and general welcome. Thank you, too, to David Sanderson, Caroline Broadhurst and Kai Woode for sharing your thinking with us over the years; this enabled our evaluation process to be both relevant and dynamic.

We also want to acknowledge the support from Helen, Janice and Kerry at the Rank Foundation.

At our last set of interviews with the projects we asked them to give us three words that summed up their experience of being part of the Rank Programme. These are the words that adorn the cover of the report and give a powerful flavour of the feelings shared with us.

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December 2020

Dundee Community Development Programme Phase 2: Year 2 Evaluation Report, December 2020

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1. Introduction

This is our final evaluation report for the Dundee Community Development Project (DCDP). In this report, we have focused on evaluating what happened in the Programme in 2020, while also reflecting on the Programme as a whole.

We have written the report to stand alone, but also created a set of project-focused stories that we have called 'Postcards from Dundee' which appear as an appendix.

1.1 Context

In our view, evaluation is an art as much as a science; there is no one way of evaluating a complex project like Rank's Dundee Community Development Programme. There is quantitative and qualitative data to analyse and review, observations to be made, and questions to be asked. There are, also, useful approaches such as Theory of Change that help focus on what matters: What's the change we want to see? And what assumptions are we making?

As evaluators for DCDP, over the last five years, we have actively engaged with the projects and people in Dundee. We have even, at times, informed and shaped the programme – through workshops designed to meet needs, and through our annual feedback and reporting to Rank. However, we have never lost sight of the need for, and value of perspective, of the 'outside' view and our role as 'critical friend' to DCDP and to the Rank Foundation.

In this report, we seek to tell the story of this rich and complex Programme, while also evaluating it and drawing attention to learning that we think will be valuable to the Rank Foundation and other funders interested in 'place'.

1.2 Brief history

Before Rank put out a tender for the evaluation of the DCDP (autumn 2015), Siobhan had acted as 'critical friend' to Rank for the Time to Shine programme, and in the later stages of the place-based programme in Hull. At the same time, in other freelance work, Siobhan started working with local authorities, using Theory of Change (ToC) as a methodology for designing innovative responses to problematic issues in Children's Social Care.

Rank's work 'in place' is very different to the challenges of local authority service design, but the complexity is similar. There are many 'moving parts', many inputs and outputs, and a real need for clarity about outcomes, as well as a checking of assumptions.

It was this complexity, and the scale of the DCDP, along with an awareness that to evaluate place-based work well requires early and on-the-ground engagement, that led us to propose working together on the DCDP evaluation, using ToC as the framework for our evaluation.

1.3 Place-based funding

In 2018, we were commissioned by Rank to research and write a report on its place-based work across the UK. The report, *Valuing Place*, was published in March 2019. In this, we identified, ten characteristics of Rank's approach to working in place: Relational; Personal; Valuing place; Challenging convention; Trust-based; Strengths-based; Modelling; Small-scale and grassroots; Leadership; Building capital.

From these ten characteristics, the Rank Executive extracted and highlighted the five that resonated most with their experience of this work, under the appropriate (for Rank) acronym 'CRUST': Capital; Relational; Uniqueness; Strengths-based; Trust.

We will return to these five characteristics as we conclude our report, reflecting on how these apply to Rank's place-based work in Dundee.

1.4 DCDP Evaluation Journey

In November 2015, Claire and Siobhan were appointed by Rank as the independent evaluators of the DCDP over three years from 2016 to 2019. Work started, almost immediately, with meetings and visits to projects by Claire in December 2015.

In April 2016, we designed and delivered two ToC sessions – one with the Rank Executive and a Trustee; the second with all the DCDP projects. The first ToC session helped to redefine the objectives of the Programme, as a whole, clarifying the six core outcomes for the Programme, which were as follows:

1. Promoting cross sector collaboration
2. Developing resilience
3. Purposeful with clear intent and resourceful
4. Sustainable self-directed community leadership
5. Dundee's reputation for enterprising solutions for positive social change
6. Dundee as the caring city

It also helped to identify the four indicators of success for the Programme:

- Connectivity: networking, cross-sector
- Collaboration: reducing duplication through identifying and meeting need together, not 'silo' working, assessing who is best placed to deliver, etc.
- Resilience: capacity, ability to respond to emergent issues
- Amplification: the sum is greater than its constituent parts - benefits of planning and working together

The second ToC session helped to engage all projects with Rank's ambitions for the Programme, to think about the outcomes they wanted to achieve as individual projects, and collectively.

In May 2017, we ran a 'ToC Revisited' session to review progress against the initial framework. We used this opportunity to look at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the changing context. In our evaluation report at the end of 2017, we particularly noted the key opportunities presented by the Fairness Commission and the anticipated 'uplift' from the opening of the V&A. It was clear to us that the six outcomes from the original ToC sessions remained relevant, and we saw these being owned by the projects. We concluded:

"The over-riding sense is that Dundee is a caring city, and that care underpins all the work of the projects at a time when the economic context is so challenging."

In our evaluation report in 2018, we reflected on our findings from in-depth evaluation interviews we held in the summer of that year:

"... it is clear that the six outcomes remain relevant to DCDP projects; we found that, in general, the project leads responded confidently, using the language of the outcomes in the discussion. Care continues to underpin all the work of the projects, with frequent reference being made to the challenging economic context. The funding being provided for phase 2 projects was acknowledged and welcomed as a real positive; many projects feared no funding at all, so two years rather than three years of funding 'came as a great relief!'"

In January 2019, at the start of phase 2 of the Programme, we ran a new ToC focused on Rank's engaged philanthropy and looking at the DCDP through the lens of the three forms of capital: financial, intellectual, and social. We found this re-framing of DCDP proved very fruitful as a way to stimulate conversation and connections between projects, and with the aims of the Programme as a whole. In our December 2019 evaluation report, we noted:

"It is clear that there are many opportunities for DCDP to flourish. There is an appetite for collaboration ... we see that some clear themes are emerging that connect projects (e.g., dignified access to food, mental health)."

It turned out that 'dignified access to food' would become a driving force for collaboration in 2020.

2. DCDP in 2020

In our overview in 2019, we talked about "challenging times for the sector" in which austerity "has now been taking its toll on the public sector for over ten years". We noted that one of the results of this is that the voluntary sector has been required to step in, again and again, to fill the gaps, but with less and less resource. At the December 2019 Steering Group, Jacquie Roberts, Vice Chair of Dundee Bairns used the word "beleaguered" about the current state of affairs. Little did we or Dundee know how challenging the year ahead would be!

As we noted in our first evaluation report (in 2016), Dundee is a city with a proud history of enterprise ('Jam, Jute and Journalism'), a pivotal role in the development of Comics (through D.C.Thomson's publication of *The Beano*, *The Dandy* and *OorWullie*), recent successes as a leader in the computer games industry, and as a popular destination for students. At the same time, Dundee – like many Scottish cities – struggles with high rates of unemployment and low rates of economic activity. Deprivation is a visible challenge, taking many forms, including 'holiday hunger' and 'funeral poverty'.

Shortly after Covid-19 hit the UK in March 2019, Claire attended the April Steering Group meeting (virtually) and was struck by the energy and 'can do' attitude of the projects. Shortly after that, we started interviewing project leads and quickly saw that there was a story to tell about the role of DCDP in the city's response – a story of collaboration, care, enterprise, resilience, and leadership; themes that emerged again and again through the life of the Programme.

A recent piece of work from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has revealed that, when it comes to Covid-19, we may all be experiencing “the same storm” but we are “in different boats”¹.

So how have the communities of Dundee been weathering this storm?

Amanda from Dundee Rep told us about an online community art engagement project to capture images and experiences from Dundee in lockdown, *Where are you in Dundee?* We heard how she has worked with one of the participants from the ‘Beautiful People’ who does not have internet access to post her contributions online. By mid-July 2020, *Where are you in Dundee?* had engaged with a staggering 90,000 participants.

Ken, from Dundee Foodbank, talked about the huge rise in use of foodbanks during the crisis, and the generosity of the people and businesses of Dundee, while Food Train Dundee have switched to offering telephone-based befriending and support for isolated older people.

Food provision has been a focus of concerted effort and collaboration between Dundee City Council and over twenty local voluntary sector organisations. Many of these are Rank-funded charities, including Link Up Whitfield and Maxwell Gardens supporting a food larder, and Dundee Bairns ensuring school-aged children get fed even when school is closed. Jacky from Faith in the Community Dundee describes how the Rank Foundation and the DCDP has given her and other community leaders “the network to really make this happen and work effectively”.

Eric and Gill from Volunteer Dundee talked about the rapid engagement of volunteers (using a new ‘Get Local Support’ App); building on existing networks within the voluntary sector and making new connections into the business community. Eric has been involved from the early days of DCDP, and commented on the changes he has seen over the years:

“I think the organisations are more resilient than they were when Rank first came ... it kind of forces organisations to root down any barriers and work closer together ... it’s more like you’re a collaboration of organisations who are working to some sort of common goal.”

As Ken from Dundee Foodbank commented, the DCDP makes it possible to hold on to optimism:

“... there’s a lot of difficulties for a lot of people and a lot of people are struggling, but I think you know, there has to be that hopefulness in the sense that we’re all working together and trying to ... plough the same furrow”.

¹<https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/talking-about-coronavirus-and-poverty-guide-framing-your-messages?>

At the September 2020 Steering Group, we heard how committed people are to keeping going, but noticed that it was getting harder and the sense of the long haul ahead was palpable.

In response, we offered an online session on 'avoiding burnout'. From our own experiences, we felt able to share some strategies and tools for supporting self-care. It seemed vital to us to acknowledge that burnout is a real danger within DCDP; the reality is that people and organisations can not carry on at the same level of responsiveness over a prolonged period.

As has been widely reported it is the disadvantaged who have been worst hit by the pandemic. As we know many of DCDP projects were working with the most challenged and deprived populations; in a sense, this year, Dundee has experienced 'a perfect storm'.

Our first 'avoiding burnout' session took place at the end of October and was attended by four project leads. A further session in November included a project lead and two Time to Shine leaders.

2.1 DCDP 2020 Evaluation

This year, we attended online Steering Group meetings and undertook extensive interviews with project leads.

For these interviews, we compiled a list of questions drawing on the full range of themes identified through the Theory of Change sessions –from the initial six core outcomes and four indicators, to the three forms of capital that help define Rank's 'engaged philanthropy'. We used these as a lens through which to reflect on the journey of their projects through the Programme.

As in previous years, we asked questions about numbers. We made the questions open and allowed for creative responses:

- If you had to choose a number or numbers to illustrate the journey of your project over the last five years what number(s) would you choose, e.g., number of beneficiaries reached, number of food parcels distributed, groups run, etc.?
- What is important about the number(s) you have selected and why do they matter?

These questions were answered in a wide variety of ways, but most responses were qualitative more than quantitative. From our experience, many small or grassroots organisations struggle to quantify the impact of their work. Rank has helped with this, by providing access to Upshot for data collection. Many projects – such as V&A and Amina, who worked with Upshot to create a way of capturing data from their joint project – find Upshot an invaluable resource; others do not use it.

2.3 Activities

In Figure 1 (below) we have recorded the various activities over the year.

Timing	Activity	Participants	Outcome
Phase 2: Year 1			
24/2	Steering Group (SG) attendance – in person	CE	Input about our evaluation plan for the year ahead
23/4	SG attendance – online	CE	Opportunity to hear how projects were responding to the pandemic
June	'Postcard' interviews I	CE/SE	Began to capture the stories
14/9	SG attendance – online	SE	Plan for session on resilience/burnout
October	'Postcard' interviews II	CE/SE	Capturing the stories
October	Session: Avoiding Burnout I	CE	4 project leads participated
November	Session: Avoiding Burnout II	CE	1 project lead and two T2S leaders participated
3/12	Final SG meeting – online	CE/SE	Facilitated the reflective session
December	Report	For Rank Trustees	

2.4 Data sources

In writing this report, we have drawn from a range of data sources captured over the course of the year:

- Evaluation interviews, conducted from June to October 2020
- Participation and observation of online Steering Group meetings
- Annual returns (where available)
- RankNet

As in previous years, we expected to review the annual return from each project. However, only five projects have managed to submit their return this year. Given all that projects are dealing with, we understand that there has not been the pressure from Rank to complete the returns as in former years. Another source of data we would usually refer to is the DCDP newsletter, but this has not been produced in 2020.

As part of the final December Steering Group meeting, we facilitated a session for sharing reflections and experiences, with participants sharing “One sentence to sum up my experience of being part of the DCDP Programme” (see Section 5, below).

3. Three capitals

In 2019, we used the lens of the three forms of capital within the Rank’s engaged philanthropy approach to frame the Theory of Change (ToC) exploration. The three forms of capital are as follows:

- **Financial Capital:** Rank provides regular grant funding but will often work with organisations or places for six years or more, with flexibility in funding including options for repayable grants
- **Intellectual Capital:** From sharing good practice, paid, and supported internship programmes, advice, education, training and support, access to significant development and leadership bursaries, steering group meetings, external evaluations, and review
- **Social Capital:** Access to formal networks from the Rank Fellowship to RankNet, annual networking conference, leveraging additional support from pro bono advice to the creation of ‘added value’ across the UK

3.1 Financial capital

A goal for Rank in funding a community development programme is to bring new resources but also attention, to the place itself. Rank’s funding raises the profile of the places that it supports and the projects within it. In supporting each place (be it Burnley, Hull, Dundee, or Plymouth), Rank hopes to encourage other funders to look at what is happening, what is being funded, and consider what could be replicated elsewhere.

In this way, individual projects can leverage their Rank funding to attract other funders and use their experiences as part of the DCDP to support grant applications.

Below are some examples of how the DCDP has helped support the development of financial capital in Dundee, including quotes from project leads:

In the case of Dundee Comic School, being part of the Programme led to the University recognising its contribution to the creative economy and “as an attractive proposition for funding and to sustain”, giving the project “a new space and ... a budget to ‘fit it out’, we no longer felt like squatters”.

The funding of specific posts has been a key role in Rank's support for projects, enabling them to develop and extend their reach. The funding of Clare Martin at St Mary's Church Community project to work 'on the ground' has made possible a range of grassroots developments. The flexibility of Rank's financial approach has enabled her to respond to needs and offers as they emerge, and for the project's work to be led by the people it benefits.

Rank's funding arrived at a critical time for Maxwell Gardens, with its three-year grant bringing it back from the "cliff edge ... to build connections and relationships that have given us a much steadier footing." The extended support has helped the project to reach other funders, such that by February of this year it had achieved the full funding it needed for 2020-2021. This financial capital enabled Maxwell Gardens to remain true to its aims and objectives, maintain its "strong focus" and not have "to divert to 'chase the money', we know ... what makes us unique".

3.1.1 Leverage

Throughout 2020, David Dorward has worked tirelessly to use Rank's funding and support as leverage for new funding from other funders, in particular Northwood (D.C.Thomson's Foundation). David worked with DCDP projects to create an attractive and impressive prospectus.

Sadly, these efforts were not rewarded, as David reported to projects in an email at the end of October 2020. In this, David pointed out that Northwood and other funders continue to be interested in individual projects within DCDP but not the sponsorship of a programme. Jacky Close from Faith in the Community responded for many in the DCDP projects:

"I'm really sorry to hear this, especially after all the work you have put into the proposal and to meeting with the Trustees of NT. Thank you for all you have done, we really appreciate it."

In our interviews, we heard that, indeed, many individual projects have been successful in getting funding from Northwood, and other trusts and foundations.

At least one project (St Mary's) is building on all the evidence amassed over the years of the DCDP to make a significant application to the Lottery Community Fund.

3.2 Intellectual capital

Financial support is, of course, extremely important in enabling projects to develop their practice and 'test out' models of support. However, for that development to be sustainable over the longer term they need to make connections, and to have a platform for their ideas and learning.

Rank's approach is to facilitate this process through a range of additional supports and opportunities. Grassroots projects, in particular, can struggle to lift their heads 'above the parapet' while projects sitting within a larger organisation (such as V&A Dundee), are often unclear how to reach beyond their usual audiences. In believing that the success of place-based funding is in the 'sum being greater than its parts', Rank actively brings its projects together to forge new relationships and build a network of support beyond the life of the Programme.

It is a requirement of the grant that project leads be represented at the quarterly Steering Groups and participate in the evaluation process. This prescriptive aspect is unusual in Rank's otherwise flexible approach towards projects it funds. In the early stages of phase 1, some projects did baulk at the mandatory nature of the meetings, however, all quickly came to see the value of being part of this network.

The Theory of Change events that we delivered, as evaluators, asked the projects to identify how they contribute to Rank's objectives for the Programme as a whole and emphasised this connection and collaboration.

The Programme provided new audiences for the individual projects' ideas and interests and increased their intelligence in terms of what is 'out there'. Over the five years projects looked beyond the 'usual suspects' leading to highly creative collaborations such as Comic School and Advocating Together, Police Scotland and City Church.

In phase 2, in addition to new collaborations such as Amina and the V&A, we saw the emergence of an ever-wider platform reaching beyond DCDP. The ideas and good practice developed through being part of the Programme have attracted attention and opened up opportunities that would not have been available otherwise.

Rank is interested in the 'people in place'. It seeks to encourage the building of individual's intellectual capital through the Internship Programme, leadership bursaries and other opportunities. In turn, these individuals then strengthen their projects, building the resilience of beneficiaries, volunteers, and other staff.

As an example, the funding of Jacky Close's post for Faith in the Community made possible her involvement in Dundee's Fairness Commission. Her capacity to engage people at a very human level ensured that the Commission was in a position to create a new model for consultation with 'lived experience' genuinely at the centre of its work.

Other examples of the development of intellectual capital, from our interviews, include:

Maxwell Garden, which has had great success in supporting the personal development of its volunteers and in enabling local people to directly influence their community development plan. It is recognised now as a model of 'community in action' with people looking to them for advice and guidance as to the setting up and managing of similar projects across Scotland.

Dundee Foodbank has benefited directly from being part of a wider network in and beyond Dundee. All DCDP projects are invited to the annual conference, a forum for new ideas and new connections. It was at one of these that a speaker talked about work with offenders, and Ken realised that there was another local need that he could try to meet. This led to the Foodbank getting involved with what Ken calls "through-care and after-care for Perth prison and start to support them with referrals."

For phase 2 of DCDP, Amina and V&A Dundee came up with an innovative joint proposal for a project developing and delivering community language tours of the museum. The project has provided intensive opportunities for personal development to six women and through a range of activities and training has developed a unique service at the V&A Dundee. The project addresses the complex barriers to community engagement and inclusion. The women have been 'invested in' and provided with a route for income generation. The potential for this model to operate in other museums and galleries is, in our view, significant. As the creative and cultural economy finds ways to adapt to Covid-19 restrictions, we hope such an innovative project can find its place, influencing the V&A, nationally, and beyond.

At St Mary's Community project, Clare has worked to surface ideas and interests. The project taps into the "wealth of knowledge" within the community, as the volunteers often know who needs help, what they need and how best to engage them. Social capital is being built, but so, too, is intellectual capital, with the successful running of cookery groups, a community garden and the 'Come Dine with Me' programme. The ideas for these initiatives have come from within the community, drawing on the skills and interests of its members.

3.3 Social capital

In one sense, all DCDP projects are about the creation of 'social capital' – the glue that binds places together, and amplifies the work of individuals, projects, and organisations.

Below are a few examples, from our interviews, of how social capital has been created this year:

In 2020, social isolation and loneliness are top of the agenda, but these are issues Food Train in Dundee has been addressing for the last eight years through its befriending service. Regular gatherings and organised trips out are not an option at the moment, but Food Train has been quick to make the most of the social capital it has built up over the years.

Some of the volunteers and many of the charity's beneficiaries have been socially isolating, but the work continues, with befriending now taking the form of regular catch-up telephone calls, as well as deliveries of shopping, where needed, as manager, Grant Simmons notes:

"it's been really, really good, because then that's our regular contact for people so we're still tackling that social isolation, still tackling that loneliness, and also signposting all the people into services they might need as well."

The main aims of the Dundee Comics Creative Space (DCCS) project were to run workshops for kids and create a university studio where artists could be paid a fee for their work: "Each needed the other to survive and thrive".

As part of the University of Dundee, one of DCCS's major initiatives is its Public Information Comics sparked by a partnership with another DCDP project, Advocating Together – to raise awareness about Disability Hate Crime. This provided a source of income for DCCS, as well as setting the template for the method and approach for all that followed, including work with the University of Dundee Schools of Education and Social Work, and Dentistry, as well as libraries across Tayside and a recent commission about the transition from primary to high school.

Working with the children was a way to build resilience and open young minds in a creative way. For many of the young people the Comic Clubs were a place to connect:

"the kids who come here build a community for themselves - 'this is where I have friends' and discover they have talents and skills".

One strand of work for Amanda Lowson and colleagues at Dundee Rep engaged and supported young people with additional support needs, while 'Feel Good Friday' is the Rep's weekly well-being programme for anyone aged 21 years of age or over living with a long-term health condition. Amanda notes how this work supports resilience in participants:

"I think the project has been very resilient and the fact that I've been working with some very vulnerable people who have also been given resilience, you know ... we need each other, we need the building."

Over the years, engagement and creative learning has often involved collaborations with other projects in the DCDP, including Advocating Together, Amina, Bauer Media, Faith in the Community and Food Train. Amanda's role has been to make connections and develop opportunities. She feels that her own resilience, and the resilience of the engagement work, has been greatly helped by being part of the Rank-funded Programme:

"... you feel confident when you're with a really strong family, as well, which is absolutely what Rank has been. Like if I had a question ... or anything, I wouldn't hesitate to pick up the phone ... I felt secure within ... the very strong structure"

At City Church, Rank's funding and the DCDP have played a key role in the regeneration of the Friary in terms of opening it up to the wider community. The space has developed into a community facility, used by a variety of groups who would struggle to find a 'home' for their meetings and activities otherwise. The footfall over the last five years has gone from minimal numbers to over 10,000 visitors; key to that has been the funding of Anne Stock's post by Rank. People and organisations have come to the building and used its spaces because of the profile that was raised by being part of DCDP. Anne emphasises how the collaborative approach, that is actively encouraged by Rank, has created opportunities that would not have happened otherwise.

With Faith in the Community (FitC) we see the practical application of asset-based thinking; training and supporting people to identify and build on what they have within themselves. It is about encouraging and enabling people to become stronger, in the place they are in; to recognise that what they know about themselves and their communities 'on the ground' is of value.

This approach also helps build resilience, "building capacity, enabling them to have the skills, the connectedness to do it better for themselves, where if we walk away, they are OK".

Jacky described the work of the Fairness Commission and the "transformation over the last three years in the Commissioners", that by putting 'lived experience' front and centre of this work it has even greater power. That by being 'heard' the Commissioners began to "believe in themselves" and could connect with other's experiences to recognise the role that underlying factors of adverse childhood experiences and poverty had in their current lives. She describes how this insight then helped them to shift from a 'place of shame' to finding ways to bring about change within the community.

3.3.1 Leadership

Leadership is an important aspect for Rank in selecting which projects to support. Tony Thornthwaite, the minister of Coldside Church, was someone who fitted with Rank's model of a community leader. As sometimes becomes very clear, a person's value is even more apparent when they have left. Tony retired in late 2019, leaving Yvonne Grant, at the helm, and a Rank-funded Community Development Worker to continue running the fantastic array of clubs and activities that had been established under Tony's management. The pandemic has dealt a real blow to this project with everything shutting down. The worker, concerned for her longer-term future, left to do teacher training, then Yvonne had an accident and has only recently returned to work.

In the Annual Return to Rank, Yvonne acknowledges how much the local community valued the social groups and the 'Eat what you want, pay what you can' Main Street Cafe. She believes that the connections that people made through the project can be revived. Yvonne adds her voice to others within DCDP in appreciating the flexibility of Rank's funding approach which will enable this project to use its remaining grant differently to rebuild social capital within this community.

At DCCS, Damon has moved on to an academic job at Duncan and Jordanstone College of Art, while Rebecca – who was a Time to Shine leader – now runs the Space.

In the North East Project, a partnership between Link Up, Discoverin' Families and the Under-12 project (for phase 2 of the DCDP), we heard how community development and community leadership go hand in hand:

"Work focuses on building confidence and capability, providing space, opportunities for training and access to tools, such as participatory budgeting. The team have seen many positive signs: the Christmas Fair in 2019 doubled in size, and seems to be becoming "embedded" in the community; the men's group is seen as having a "transformational effect"; the men have "come together" to support each other's mental health, become friends and are volunteering to help others ... The Activate course has helped identify and develop leaders in, and of, the community ...

Ross, a Time to Shine leader in 2016, continues to work in Fintry and is a source of referrals. Students studying Community Learning and Development at Dundee University, come to the North East on placements, and then stay engaged."

At FitC, Jacky Close's leadership embodies the values and intentionality of building social capital in a meaningful way. She came to DCDP with these qualities and skills, the Programme and Rank's approach, "they let us flex and grow" has enabled her to flourish. In turn this has empowered her to develop the potential in others, "to unite and collaborate and respond as a community".

From these examples, and many others, it is clear that DCDP has created a strong legacy of community cohesion and strength that looks likely to stand the city in good stead.

4. Opportunities

4.1 RankNet

Throughout this most difficult of years, we have seen the Rank Foundation go out of its way to respond to the pressures experienced by the voluntary sector as a result of the pandemic. The speed, agility and quality of Rank's response has been impressive.

Before the end of March 2020, Rank was using RankNet mailings to communicate with all organisations in the network in a clear, positive, and supportive way, to launch two sources of funds for the sector: An Emergency Fund and a Resilience Fund.

"The Rank Foundation recognises there is already significant disruption to the work of many of the charities and organisations we support, and we have a strong track record in responding positively and proactively in times of national need. Rank is fully committed to helping grantees to continue to work as best as they can and have signed the Funders Response to COVID19."

In addition, it has hosted a range of online opportunities for connection and reflection including "Well-being with Rank", with sessions on mindfulness and self-care. Feedback on the sessions showed 86% of respondents rated these as "beneficial" and offering "a breakaway from the workday ... time to reflect".

4.2 Time to Shine Leaders

Time to Shine (T2S) has been a popular programme within DCDP over the years, with several Time to Shine leaders staying on in their host organisations, or in the wider voluntary sector in Dundee.

In 2020, one of the T2S leaders is hosted by a DCDP project: Sophie Dolan at Link Up. However, as part of the support for T2S from the National Lottery Community Fund, another eight projects in Dundee and the surrounding area are hosting T2S leaders this year. This represents a significant investment in the development of voluntary sector leaders in the Dundee area – another way of creating both social and intellectual capital.

4.3 Training & Development

Access to bursaries for individuals and organisations with the network, and for sharing learning, is part of Rank's wider offer to projects. In previous years, we have noted that the take up of these offers by DCDP has not been high. As evaluators we promoted these opportunities and always asked about them in our interviews and focus group sessions. Individuals within projects generally referred to "not having the time" and "being unsure what they might use it for". It surprised us that people did not take up the opportunity (pre-Covid) to visit other Rank funded projects across the UK. From our conversations it became clear that the logistics of juggling family life, workload, and that additional hour from the city centre to the Edinburgh and Glasgow transport hubs were real barriers for many.

In the final year of the Programme, bursaries were paid out for individual coaching, and for training on creating digital content. In addition, Dundee Volunteer and Voluntary Action received an organisational bursary of £2,000 for the development of an Application to support the sign up of volunteers – which has proved invaluable to the success of volunteer engagement as part of the response to the pandemic.

5. DCDP Project 'last words'

At the final DCDP steering group on 2 December 2020, we invited all the projects to tell us something about their experience of being part of DCDP. What was striking was the warmth and appreciation that people expressed about Rank's approach as a funder and towards David Dorward as the Associate:

"Instead of a short time numbers-based approach, Rank's involvement has allowed for long term quality community engagement and participation to take place in St Mary's."

"David D, you have been the glue that has kept us together, we've loved working with you and are extremely grateful for the time and care you've given us."

A strong theme was the connections and collaborations made possible through being part of the Programme:

"Best thing about being funded by Rank, is the sense of community between the Rank family and all that happens because of that."

"I feel I have been part of a strong, supportive, creative family with Rank at the helm providing brilliant opportunities for us all."

"The connections that have been made might not have happened but are of great value and will last for years to come."

"This has allowed us to become connected in new and diverse ways, bringing supportive lasting relationships which have carried us through these tricky times and will continue to do so as we move forward into an unknown future."

Several people talked about what being part of DCDP had given to them both personally and professionally:

"Being part of the DCDP has been both a safety net and a trampoline; it has given me confidence and reassurance when times have been tough, but also propelled me upwards to make new networks, connections and – above all – friends"

"Getting to know a diverse range of people, new knowledge, opportunities for interesting experiences has helped me grow in confidence, opening up endless possibilities, to make the most impact in my professional and personal life"

Genna, who recently joined the Programme through Dundee Bairns referred to it as "an opportunity I had been looking for, for a long time, and the post has opened a valuable network of connections with an amazing wealth of knowledge, experience and opportunity to help change lives and build for the better".

Sabrina at Amina was very clear that "without this programme, our project wouldn't have happened". She also shared the impact on one of the project's beneficiaries, who has said "that it has been a life changing experience for them, and it been great to be part of that journey and be part of the project".

Vicky from Advocating Together spoke on behalf of the Advocators and Champions to say that "the new opportunities the project has given to people with LD [Learning Disabilities] and people with Autism has been priceless".

6. Next steps

At the Steering Group meeting in December, it was made clear that this was the 'end of a phase' rather than the end of the journey for DCDP and Rank. The Rank Executive and the Rank Associate will now work together on a transition plan, early in 2021.

From the last Steering Group meeting, it is clear that the community that has been supported and created by Rank in Dundee is strong and will keep connecting, collaborating, and building on the strong foundations that have been laid.

7. Conclusion

In concluding this report, we returned to the CRUST acronym, and reflected on how these characteristics have 'shown up' in the DCDP.

Capital

The use of this lens has been a powerful new way to look at the contributions made to the Programme, and to Rank's over-arching approach to funding. DCDP has made a significant contribution to the growth of sustainable financial, intellectual, and social capital in Dundee.

Relational

At the final DCDP Steering Group, David Sanderson talked about the reconnaissance that he and Caroline carried out in Dundee over seven years ago. We also heard about the experience from David Dorward's perspective. He confessed that, when he first heard about Rank's interest in Dundee, in his role as Chief Executive of the Council, he was unsure about getting involved. However, once he met with David and Caroline, he said he "couldn't do enough to help". A fruitful and long-standing relationship had begun.

As evaluators, we have sought to mirror this relational, 'on-the-ground' approach, with our regular visits to Dundee to attend meetings, run workshops, and generally, build relationships with the projects and teams. It is clear that, during the pandemic, it was the strength of the relationships that allowed the DCDP projects – and others in the wider network – to respond in such a cohesive and effective way.

And, finally, again and again, we have heard project participants talk about DCDP and Rank as a "family".

Uniqueness

As Caroline commented at the final Steering Group meeting, every place is unique. As evaluators, we have seen the unique strengths of Dundee grow; we have seen DCDP projects connect and, through this, the amplification of the city's caring, enterprising, and resilient character.

Strengths-based

The DCDP projects work from a strengths-based and appreciative stance. For Rank, the emphasis is 'on the people in place': viewing people as 'assets' and 'resources' that can be supported and developed to enhance the focus, energy and resilience of the vital work they and their projects undertake.

Trust

The projects reported that they felt Rank, as a funder, trusted them to deliver – and to adapt as required to circumstances.

The connections and, indeed, friendships built up through DCDP have proved invaluable. We heard how people can pick up the telephone, send an email, ask for help, and they know that people will respond. This is a legacy of trust that we feel confident will continue.

Claire Edwards & Siobhan Edwards
18 December 2020