Place-based initiatives affecting outcomes for children and young people

A review for Save the Children

Introduction

This thematic review for Save the Children (STC) documents key features of effective approaches from 13 evaluations from the US and UK of area-based initiatives that aim in whole or part to improve outcomes for children and young people (CYP). The review will inform STC's Children's Communities initiative.

Some initiatives address multiple disadvantages in health, development and well-being, education, poverty, crime and employment. All are highly ambitious, with some aiming for system or transformative change. Most evaluations report substantial progress towards their goals, but some believe it is too early to judge success or failure. Others point to methodological difficulties in measuring outcomes and focus more on processes and activities.

Appendix 1 contains a description of the main features of each initiative, including their scope, methodology and aims [1]. They overlap to an extent: there are methodological links between, for example, the Evidence2Success (E2S), the UK Communities that Care (UK CTC), the original American initiative (US CTC), and Common Language. Despite these links, there is wide variation in scope, aims and methodology across all 13 evaluations.

After a summary of key points, the report addresses these themes:

- Partnership working
- Leadership in partnerships
- Community engagement
- Using data to inform decision making, monitoring and evaluation
- Staffing training and skills
- Sustainability and value for money

Finally, it discusses some additional messages to emerge from the analysis.

[1] A more detailed analysis of the main points under the thematic headings in this review has been supplied separately.

Key Points

These initiatives are ambitious in scope and scale. Tackling multiple and severe disadvantage requires **collaboration** and a **whole systems** approach. The key to success is to create and sustain **a shared vision** and set of priorities that agencies, and importantly people in target communities, agree upon.

The benefits of successful collaboration include: increased resources, expertise, integrated planning and delivery, and improved outcomes for people, particularly those in the most deprived communities. The risks include: professional barriers, reluctance to share information, unclear accountability and competing organisational priorities. Initiatives in areas with a history of collaborative working will make quicker progress.

Leadership in partnerships requires different and high level skills, notably influencing and negotiation, which take account of professional and organisational boundaries, to facilitate cross-cultural working. It can be found at different levels, including with those involved in coordinating joint provision.

Community involvement is critically important in ensuring success, but often hard to achieve in more disadvantaged communities. Involving and training individuals from community groups can help to overcome resistance and inertia.

Organisations can make good use of **data** and evidence to inform decision making and to monitor and evaluate progress. Community groups and professionals gain skills and insights from shared data collection, analysis and interpretation. Some initiatives faced challenges in analysing data from different sources and at different spatial and temporal levels.

Staff **training** in partnership and team working improves collaboration and reduces the impact of professional boundaries, but can be expensive. The role of **project coordinators** is very important: they can engage in multiple operational and strategic tasks, such as project planning, governance, and resource management, and grow into leadership roles.

Some initiatives had concerns about longer term **sustainability of funding**. Given time and sufficient skills and data, it is possible, although difficult, to come to broad and indicative conclusions about the **value for money** of interventions. But precise measurement of costs and social value in multiple programmes is unlikely.

Achieving progress in reducing disadvantage takes **time**. Continuity of personnel helps to sustain skills and momentum. But it is important to be realistic and **manage stakeholders' expectations** about what can be achieved.

Partnership working

All of these area- or sector-based initiatives are predicated upon some form of collaboration – between professionals, between tiers of government agencies, between public and private/voluntary and importantly between agencies and communities. Partnership working is an essential approach in addressing multi-faceted disadvantage:

> "*The complex nature of most social problems belies the idea that any single program or organization, however well managed and funded, can singlehandedly create lasting large-scale change*." (Channelling Change, p1).

Partnership working brings significant benefits. It can:

- *bring greater expertise* to interrelated issues or problems. In the Promise Neighborhoods program, a fluid and changing set of between 12 and 60 partner bodies (but which always includes schools and local school districts) provides solutions to help the neighbourhoods achieve their ambition of 'cradle to career' care.
- *improve working practice.* The Children's Trust Pathfinders (CTP) have enabled more coordinated provision through key worker professionals, whom CYP and parents/carers felt better met their needs (para. 203). They also enabled:
    - 'problem resolution' – rapid response to social and mental health problems of CYP and families;
    - 'signposting' – referring families to a wide network of services;
    - 'gatekeeping' – diverting families away from over-worked social and health services (para. 228); and
- *improve outcomes*. Education Action Zone (EAZ) partnerships have fostered collaboration between schools and a variety of organisations, professionals and community groups to improve pupil attendance and behaviour and reduce disaffection, all of which directly affect educational attainment in deprived areas (p29).
- *change cultures*. The E2S evaluation identified a discernible 'culture shift' within the area partnership that will in likelihood lead to enhanced well-being for CYP. Similarly, the CTP evaluation notes that working 'more closely together' is not necessarily about new configurations of the workforce; it is at least as much about a new culture or way of working (para. 233).

Crucially, partnership working has the potential to marshal resources from different people, places and organisations to make a greater impact on reducing disadvantage. Some evaluations suggest that collaboration has the greatest effect on reducing disadvantage among the most deprived groups. The US CTC program, for example, seeks to harness community action to prevent adolescents from engaging in behaviour injurious to their health. In comparing CTC areas with control areas, it notes that:

> *"CTC affects prevention system transformation in the presence of community diversity, that is, in communities with high poverty and high minority adolescent populations. These two characteristics of communities appear to dampen prevention system transformation in control communities when compared to CTC communities. This suggests a potential role of CTC in helping disadvantaged communities achieve prevention goals and reduce adolescent health and behavior problems*." (USCTC, p4)

Similarly, the CTP evaluation notes that the examples of improvements for individual children and their families provided in the 2006 survey were often about specific children with complex and varied needs, which required the support of more than one professional (para. 251).

Shared vision

The aim of any collaboration is to achieve shared objectives. A central theme in these evaluations is how initiatives have fostered what the US CTC describes as the main elements of partnership working: networking, information exchange, coordination of activities, and sharing of resources within communities, leading to

> "*broad support and shared responsibility for community-based initiatives, reduced duplication and fragmentation of community resources, more interagency cooperation, and improved implementation and sustainability of system change*" (p4).

This is not always straightforward. As the EDCI evaluation notes

> "*There are times when the desires of the community and partners may not align with EDCI's priorities, and vice versa. To achieve its mission, EDCI must reach consensus with stakeholders through open communication, flexibility, and identifying common ground*. (p7)"

Developing a shared vision may mean that even experienced professionals should seek opportunities to learn different approaches, which they can then pass on. For example, the EAZ evaluation reports that one zone researched how it could bring about improvement in teaching and learning by focusing on how children learn, improve their behaviour, and develop self-esteem. To achieve this, a group of headteachers and lead teachers from six schools visited programmes in the USA. They became the key staff who delivered the cross-phase training for the 'Challenging Education' programme to teaching staff, teaching assistants, governors and LEA staff (p32).

Evaluations from the UK and the USA point to similar findings on partnerships, both in terms of their benefits and their drawbacks. The US Impact in Place evaluation, for example, notes that:

> *"Place-based approaches often function as collaboratives, drawing together disparate resources, organizations, and leaders, all with the intention of driving results in a particular location . . . place-based approaches can connect the work of individual organizations through a shared agenda and a set of metrics that will be used to gauge progress and hold organizations accountable"* (p9)

However, it also notes that creating a common agenda and shared measurement system represent a 'sharp deviation' from how most organisations and their funders operate. Pressure to obtain and justify funding at an organisational level leads to a 'flawed approach', because communities' problems are complex and multi-faceted, beyond the capacity of any single organisation to solve on its own.

Overcoming problems in collaboration

The difficulties include:

- *professional boundaries.* Professionals from different groups may not always communicate well or trust others enough to engage in effective collaboration. In particular, as the Common Language and CTP evaluations report, professionals (and some young people) may be reluctant to share information:

  "*successful information sharing is as much about building professional relationships as written procedures and technology systems*" (CTP, para. 176).

- *unclear accountability.* The Impact in Place evaluation notes that collaboratives are 'messy', and that it is often hard to hold partners accountable (p9). Even in Children's Trusts, which are the most formal and institutionalised forms of collaboration in this set of initiatives, with national guidance on inter-agency governance, joint planning, commissioning and delivery, and pooled budgets:

  "*Lines of accountability and decision-making were not clearly defined in most terms of reference or constitutions for boards undertaking children's trust arrangements*." (para. 2.1).

- *competing or conflicting priorities.* The New Deal for Communities (NDC) evaluation finds that partner organisations report on different national targets, a problem which is exacerbated where they undergo reorganisation. The Full Service Extended Schools (FSES) initiative confirms that partnerships are rarely problem-free, noting that there were inevitable tensions:

  "*where FSESs' desire to enhance their own provision came into conflict with the responsibility of external agencies and the local authority to develop area-wide provision*" (p39).

- *poor or little history of partnership working*. The UK CTC initiative notes that difficulties arise where there is a history or problem or limited experience of partnership working and recommends that, to succeed, participating areas should assess the quality and extent of partnership working in the area (p4).

Leadership in partnerships

In one sense, leadership in partnerships appears little different from that in single organisations. The NDC evaluation, for example, identifies as important that leaders should be visible ('just being there'), long-lasting, have inter-personal skills and good knowledge of how the relevant sector works. Such attributes would apply in most large organisations.

Leadership in partnerships requires specific skills. What serves as effective leadership in an organisation, such as 'command and control', is almost certainly not likely to work in collaborations. The Channelling Change evaluation talks about 'adaptive leaders', described as

> "*a very special type of leader (to be an influential champion), one who is passionately focused on solving a problem but willing to let the participants figure out the answers for themselves, rather than promoting his or her particular point of view*." (p3)

These leaders can mobilise people without imposing a predetermined agenda or taking credit for success.

Similarly, the CTP evaluation states:

> "*the task of establishing children's trust arrangements demands high level leadership skills . . . The range of services which need to be commissioned, coordinated and provided is wide, crossing professional and disciplinary boundaries and involving different organisational and professional cultures.*" (para. 93).

An important dimension is time: the fact that people in management and leadership positions simply 'stick around' for the duration of the programme means they are able to fulfil a complex and demanding role more effectively:

> "*chief executives/directors of many partnerships whose areas have seen greatest change have been in post for many years; there are statistically significant negative relationships between losing senior staff and change in relation to HPE*[2]" (NDC, para 4.15).

Of course, head teachers play a critical leadership role. Ofsted inspectors found improvement in the overall quality of leadership and management in one EAZ that consulted head teachers about research into leadership and management training models. This informed training for teaching and non-teaching staff that led to head teachers feeling a greater sense of direction and part of a shared mission (p35).

But head teachers may not be natural partners, given their day-to-day focus. The FSES evaluation, therefore, recommends that:

> "*A focus on leadership should be balanced by a clear sense of local strategy (to reduce) the concerns which many FSESs have had about establishing partnerships with other agencies and ensuring the sustainability of their provision . . . (and) reduce the sense*

[2] Housing and the Physical Environment

> *amongst schools with an FSES approach that they are facing challenges that they are unable to meet*." (p85).

Leadership can be fostered, including in schools. The FSES evaluation highlights that a number of case study schools worked to develop 'student leadership', where children and young people gained experience of running their own activities and taking part in school-level decision-making. (FSES, p30)

Leadership in partnership above all requires the ability to influence and negotiate. The CTP evaluation describes these skills as the characteristics of effective leadership in networked organisations, using as particular examples children's trust pathfinders in large shire counties. Here, negotiations involved numerous and geographically dispersed stakeholders, including up to 13 district councils, head teachers and general practitioners (para. 7)

The CTP evaluation quotes a strategic leader in one pathfinder to illustrate the skills required to lead partners in developing children's trusts. This work included dealing with local political leadership, partnership working, planning and commissioning, developing IT systems, workforce development and service delivery*:*

> *You don't have direct power .... For a long time it's about influence and leadership: you need to create strong arguments based on evidence, build alliances, demonstrate how priorities can be achieved. You don't need to manage people, you need to engage, innovate and develop common priorities through negotiation and conversations that people can accept.* (para 99, CTP, NIAS)

Typically, one organisation will lead collaboration. The Promise Neighborhoods program generates a strategy framework and subsequent operational support through its lead ('backbone') agency. The evaluation concludes that the:

> *"extent to which lead agencies rely on partners to provide services along the continuum—and the specific areas in which each is active—depends in part on lead agencies' experience*" (p14).

Community engagement

Along with partnership working, engaging communities in activities to improve their lives is at the heart of all initiatives. Like partnership working, engaging communities meaningfully and effectively brings significant benefits for both individuals and agencies, but also some risks.

The two themes – partnership and community engagement – both require an integrated approach to interventions. For example, the FSES report concludes that

> "*The more holistically focused FSESs were, the more likely it was that their efforts to support and engage pupils would be accompanied by extensive efforts to support and engage both families and local people. In these cases, support for pupils and for their families were delivered as part of integrated interventions, and might easily extend into support for other community members*." (p29).

The Sure Start Local Programmes (SSLP) evaluation points to the need to have the correct balance between professional and community involvement and that the best use is made of available evidence and expertise. But engaging deprived communities is difficult, as the US CTC, East Durham Children's Initiative (EDCI) and NDC evaluations acknowledge. Using members of such group to contact their peers achieved some progress in the NDC initiative (para 4.18).

The Promise Neighborhoods program outlines how the active involvement of community residents is necessary for services to achieve their goals and that differences in take up rates are due (in part) to the level of interest in communities (p 29). The UK CTP evaluation also reports variable interest in participation, although

> "*Children, young people, parents and carers were becoming increasing more involved in many pathfinders in the planning, design and evaluation of children's services*" (para 163).

Staff specifically employed to work with communities can play a key role. In the EDCI project, Early Childhood Parent Advocates act as the 'primary connection' for families to a 'pipeline' of services, such as learning and developmental delays, among others. They:

> "*serve as the glue that brings EDCI and the community together through trusting relationships. These kinds of relationships take time to build, but are worth the effort. They provide the necessary foundation on which EDCI is established and on which it will continue to be successful*." (p5).

Most evaluations report that community engagement is a pre-requisite for improving outcomes, and record a number of ways in which this is achieved. The CTP initiative, for example, involves parents, children and young people in different ways including:

- *enabling parents to participate in an initiative to develop a "school communication with parents' programme";*
- *enabling parents to influence organisational matters, interview new staff and be represented on a Sure Start board;*
- *consulting children and young people in one area about the five outcomes contained in Every Child Matters;*
- *involving young people in a youth council, supported by support workers; and*
- *funding an older young person by a local Children's Fund to undertake an audit of activities available for children* (para. 164).

But most evaluations also point to the inherent problems in obtaining effective community involvement. The NDC evaluation notes that this is because groups such as businesses and young people have traditionally tended to play only a marginal role in regeneration (para. 4.18). It argues that the initiative should see community empowerment and capacity building as vehicles through which to sustain impact and that local neighbourhood management schemes can provide vehicles for ensuring residents are engaged in prioritising local issues (para. 3.24).

The UK CTC discusses the question of 'community readiness' to participate or engage in initiatives. It highlights the varied starting points in each of the projects and attributes the success of one in following the CTC model and implement a wide range of programmes not just to good management and coordination (although these were important). It reports that:

> *"the fact that the Southside project was located in a community that was already starting to address many of its difficulties and had created a positive infrastructure in which to work suggests that*

> *other CTC projects located in similar environments should be able to achieve greater levels of success. For example, Southside had an active community development programme that helped to broaden the membership of the CTC group"*. (UK CTC p65)

The US Impact in Place initiative develops this theme in more detail. It notes that making the shift from a focus on programs to a focus on people, places, and results requires a deep understanding of each domain, stating that:

> *"A prerequisite to catalyzing and sustaining the work is an authentic desire for change within a community. Leaders of place-based efforts must be guided by the voices of residents. How do families experience public safety challenges? What are the dreams and aspirations for the community's children? One way to get there is to create opportunities for residents to be actively involved throughout the entire process. Engaging community members in the needs and assets analysis—at the beginning of a place-based reform effort—creates an initial sense of ownership of the community's challenges and can help ensure that change efforts are relevant and accountable to residents over time".* (Impact in place, p8)

Among the measures its Promise and Choice partnership used to promote community engagement were:

- *Hosting community-wide meetings to ask residents and families of Wheatley Courts to share what they think are the greatest needs of the east side and voice ideas for how funding should be used;*
- *Successfully executing a Memorandum of Understanding between Promise and Choice partners to incentivize parent participation and support student retention in schools in the target area;*
- *Facilitating daily calls and establishing recurring meetings for Choice and Promise leadership to align goals and define roles; and*
- *Committing Promise and Choice partners to share aggregate data to successfully implement the neighborhood revitalization plan.*

Community engagement appears easier at a smaller geographic level, typically that of a school. The FSES evaluation, for example, reports on one school that became a 'hub for change' in its area, raising community aspiration and pupil attainment by:

> *"engaging with parents as key factors in the lives of pupils and as key community members. Parents are seen as 'achievers' whose success, will by example, impact directly on pupils and the wider community. In order to deliver this vision, there are three strands of action: community re-engagement in learning and parental involvement in schooling; the development of services for young people; and raised school performance and profile." (p25)*

The school achieved this re-engagement through developing a community learning centre (CLC), which acts as a user-friendly and responsive hub to cater for people who may not have been in a learning environment since school and who are vulnerable, such as those in the care of the Probation Service. Its 'open door' policy, with access to a crèche, aims to encourage adults onto courses to build confidence and restore self-esteem before moving them on to more demanding provision. For some, there is the possibility of working in the school, or learning about IT alongside pupils. Adults can act as role models for pupils. (FSES, p25)

Social capital

Community engagement aims to help increase social capital in areas. The key difficulty these programmes face is the inverse relationship between the amount of social capital and the extent of deprivation in a community. For example, while the NDC evaluation reports that the 39 partnerships have made "*immense and sustained efforts to engage with local communities*", with benefits that accrue to those who do get involved, nonetheless interventions have made little difference to the amount of social capital and concludes that:

> "*with hindsight this was not always a realistic objective for the Programme. Some NDC areas lacked much in the way of community capital when the Programme was launched; key players in the community move on; some social capital indicators have not changed a great deal; and most people do not, anyway, engage with their local NDC partnership to any significant degree. Community engagement requires consistency, dedication and commitment*." (p7).

But where social capital exists, further progress is clearly possible. The UK CTC evaluation notes that, in addition to good management and coordination:

> "*The fact that the Southside project was located in a community that was already starting to address many of its difficulties and had created a positive infrastructure in which to work suggests that other CTC projects located in similar environments should be able to achieve greater levels of success.*" (p65).

Risks in community engagement

Some evaluations note that interventions and activities can bring risks of counter-productive outcomes. The FSES report, for example, identifies how the initiative tended to have a 'deficit' view of pupils and local people, and what it calls a 'heroic' view of schools. It highlights the dangers of paternalistic approaches to local people, and in terms of prioritising the schools' view of the world over other community members and agencies (p28).

The Common Language report describes a related risk. Professionals seeking smooth, speedy and inter-disciplinary decision making may find that parents and children see this as 'ganging up' on them, for example, by agreeing actions and decisions before meetings (p174).

Using data to inform decision making, monitoring, and evaluation

Overall, the evaluations report positive outcomes for the use of data to inform evidence-based decisions:

> "*Data was collected that yielded unprecedented insights into the extent of children and young people's developmental needs and their match with current service provision. Priorities were identified, and necessary funding agreed to allow the introduction or greater availability of relevant, research accredited interventions* (E2S, p93)."

The Impact in Place report asserts that place-based and collaborative strategies will not succeed without clearly identifying the results to be achieved and the metrics to gauge progress (p9). But it is positive about the impact this can have on creating beneficial outcomes:

> "*Once a community has established a clear results framework, an education-centered, place-based approach builds a cradle-to-career continuum of solutions to dramatically improve the results*

> *over time. Because the results are comprehensive—including both education and other social supports—the solutions also will be comprehensive*." (p11).

Another US initiative reports similar findings on the importance of data and metrics in measuring outcomes through collaboration:

> *"Shared measurement is essential, and collaborative efforts will remain superficial without it. Having a small but comprehensive set of indicators establishes a common language that supports the action framework, measures progress along the common agenda, enables greater alignment among the goals of different organizations, encourages more collaborative problem-solving, and becomes the platform for an ongoing learning community that gradually increases the effectiveness of all participants"*.
> (Channeling change, p5)

Local professionals and communities find the process of analysing the data very useful in helping them to make decisions about services based on evidence. The UK CTC programme also finds that shared data analysis increased professionals' knowledge about risk and protection.

But these positive perspectives must be balanced against what some UK and US evaluations identify as an important issue for any place-based initiative, namely, the extent to which it has access to data at the right temporal or spatial level.

Given the intricate relationships and nexus of services in collaborations that address health, education, crime, employment and the environment, pulling together and making use of data from these sectors in a way that all partners can use them effectively can be a major challenge:

> "*Systemic and rigorous data collection . . . is a challenge in any field or business, but especially when, as is the case with EDCI, the data come from numerous partners, transient communities, or access to data is limited (e.g., student data).*" (EDCI, p7).

Even in education, where there is a wealth of schools- and examination-based data, evaluations point to problems for initiatives in measuring progress. For example, the FSES report states that analysis was hampered because data were aggregated for the whole population, most of whom attended school some time

before FSES began. In the US, the Promise Neighborhoods program alludes to the gap between a local objective and the available national indicators:

> *The target population for some of these indicators is the group of children attending school at a certain set of grade levels, but for many indicators the target population is all children living in the Promise Neighborhood. Although the specific proportion of the population each Promise Neighborhood intends to reach varies to some extent by site (see site profiles in Appendix C), all are working to achieve population-level results, defined by PNI as when at least half of children and families are connected to needed services and supports and experiencing improved results* (pp6-7).

The UK CTC evaluation takes a different perspective on education data, although it acknowledges that more needs to be done in this area:

> *There is limited national and local data that can realistically be useful for measuring risk and protection at the level of the community . . . 'Low achievement in schools' is slightly different. As our evaluation showed, this data is available and of a good standard although we would suggest that more work in this area needs undertaking. For example, schools have to collect a range of data annually for the DfES and this is a comprehensive data set that is available at the local and national level. Undertaking a more detailed analysis of what is available and how it can measure risk and protection in schools would be a significant improvement on what exists at present.* (UK CTC, p74)

Implicitly acknowledging that education data are available and can be used to measure progress, the Ofsted EAZ evaluation points to the clearest lack of progress in using data in this set of reports. Raising attainment was often uneven, it says, in part because:

> "*the analysis of need at the outset of the zones' work was sometimes not thorough and sharp enough (and) monitoring and evaluation have been slow to develop*" (p40).

The difficulty of 'objectively' measuring the impact of any initiative in reducing disadvantage should not be underestimated. The complex, multi-faceted and inter-connected aspects of disadvantage in different communities are unlikely to

be accurately captured by national or regional aggregate statistics, often collected for different purposes and using different mechanisms. A comparison of target and control areas, for example, may not reveal statistically significant differences, or allow an assessment of the impacts or associations between interventions and outcomes.

But the evaluations overall do record that those involved believe positive improvements can result from area-based and cross-organisation activity. Large-scale and robust survey results, as well as qualitative data, show that it is not safe solely to rely on national performance indicators to assess impact, although in some cases it is perhaps too early to see any change. The CTP evaluation is a good example:

> *"In some pathfinder areas, respondents gave examples of positive improvements in outcomes that they considered had resulted from their work. In our 2006 survey, 25 of the 31 sites reported specific examples where they felt that their children's trust pathfinder had improved outcomes for children and young people. The quality, range and breadth of this evidence varied across authorities. Some areas reported on how their work had made a difference to individual children and families, while others reported on changes which affected particular groups of children and their families, but which would not be reflected in national indicators. A few pathfinders reported improvements which could, in principle, affect national indicators in the future" (para 249)*
>
> *"Many reported improvements centred on enhancing access to services, measured in terms of positive feedback from users rather than as outcomes tracked in available performance indicators" (para 253)*
>
> *"The evidence so far indicates that pathfinders are beginning to have some confidence that there are specific positive outcomes for groups of children as a result of their work, even though as yet none of these claims can be supported with national indicators . . . there will obviously be a time lag before pathfinder initiatives make a significant difference to indicators" (para. 255).*

Staff training and skills

Training in various topics is an important part of these initiatives' success, both for partner agencies and on occasion for the communities they work with.

Training topics included:

- Working in teams and interpersonal skills (NDC);
- Integrated practice for professionals working across boundaries (CTP, Impact in place);
- Professional development for teaching and non-teaching staff (EAZs, Impact in place)
- Data analysis (Channelling change)

Also needed is training in partnership working itself. The UK CTC evaluation notes that:

> "*Professional workers and local people also highlighted the importance of having training and support in this work, recognising that professionals need access to other forms of information to ensure that best practice is achieved*."(p78).

The Common Language initiative addresses the need for social work professionals to understand better how to utilise research findings in their practice (less true of medical professionals). It notes that their reluctance or resistance to this can be overcome by coaching and 'carrot-and-stick measures to encourage compliance'. It calls for more resources for training as well as an overhaul of existing provision:

> "P*rofessionals tend to come together when they are confronted with a common problem (but) where inter-disciplinary training is suspected of encroaching upon cherished domains or to be a precursor to extra work, or if key stakeholders do not consider the intended change important, it is likely to be resisted: in this respect some existing training may need to be decommissioned*" (pp173-174).

Training is expensive, however, and some evaluations reported insufficient funding or resources to provide what was needed. This was the case with the CTP programme, for example, which also noted that commissioners of children's

services ought to be aware of the opportunity costs involved in recruitment and training, to maximise value for money.

While training is clearly important for some initiatives, some also point to the importance of staff with skills and knowledge staying in post, to help ensure success. And the NDC report, in addition to the value of a stable staff base, also identifies the benefit of employing people with an interest in regeneration, noting that this often means recruiting people from the regeneration area itself (para. 4.14).

The role of project coordinators

The pivotal role and skills of project coordinators were mentioned by several evaluations. In the E2S, for example, a project coordinator was appointed early on and at a sufficiently senior level to facilitate communication across the partnership (p8), a point reinforced by the UK CTC evaluation:

> "*Co-ordinators play a critical role in the project. They are responsible for bringing partners together, overseeing delivery, fundraising, managing resources and strategic development . . . co-ordinators are essential for helping the programme progress, and we recommend that all community-based prevention projects like CTC have someone employed with co-ordination responsibilities. This was most apparent when co-ordinators left a project*." (p70)

This suggests that coordinators can play a more important role in sustaining change than simply project managing interventions and activities. Lower level managerial or coordinator roles in a partnership setting can exhibit, or perhaps more accurately 'grow into', leadership roles:

> "*Children's trust pathfinder managers . . . undertook a number of leadership roles including managing pilot initiatives, joint commissioning, coordination and change management. They played critical roles in building working relationships between agencies, and . . . contributed to the establishment of inter-agency governance arrangements*." (CTP, para. 102).

> *"The existence of dedicated leadership structures to give time and status to the management of FSES activities emerged as crucial to the development of all FSESs . . . Most schools reported that their coordinator was a member of the Senior Leadership Team, was*

appointed specifically to carry out this role, and/or spent over half of their time on FSES activities". (p31)

"Learning points concerning the project's strengths included the way that Perth & Kinross Council, NHS Tayside and Police Scotland raised awareness of E2S among relevant staff. Presentations and briefings by the DSRU were widely commended. A project coordinator was appointed early on and at a sufficiently senior level to facilitate communication across the partnership. Her administrative experience, growing confidence managing the programme and continuation in post all contributed to the project's implementation." (E2S, p8).

Sustainability and value for money

Many evaluations discuss the adequacy of resource levels in general, and the sustainability of initiatives when initial funding runs out in particular. While partnership working has the potential to increase, redirect or attract funding (as in the E2S initiative), it seems clear that a lack of resource (commitment, effort and finance) over time is a problem for the UK and US CTC initiatives, for FSES, CTP, and the Promise Neighbourhoods initiatives.

For example, the three projects in the UK CTC initiative had a small start-up grant from the funder, which enabled them to employ a coordinator and buy-in services. But they experienced major problems in getting funding for aspects of the Action Plan, which delayed or limited implementation. The evaluators set out the two main implications if the local or national state failed to invest in longer term interventions such as CTC:

"*First, the area is likely to maintain a fragmentation of prevention services that are tied to short-term funding opportunities. Co-ordination and sustainable services will not happen. Second, if the project lets people down in deprived communities after they have put so much time and effort into developing co-ordinated plans then they are likely to feel cynicism and negativity about the willingness (or not) of public services to support local initiatives*." (p72).

In contrast, the EAZ report from Ofsted notes that funding has been planned carefully to ensure future sustainability from external sources (p26). The CTP

evaluation reported evidence of potential and actual efficiency savings by reducing gaps and overlaps with services provided by other agencies, mainly by reducing the number of out of area placements. The Pathfinders intended to reinvest these savings, although few had yet done so.

Value for money

Only the NDC (using shadow pricing) and FSES evaluations assess in depth whether an initiative achieved value for money (VFM). Both suggest it is possible to reach reasonably robust conclusions. The FSES evaluation, for example, followed the 'Green Book'[3] methodology for cost-benefit analysis (CBA), which quantifies input costs and benefits and estimates the social value of outcomes to different stakeholders to calculate 'net present value' (NPV).

This ran into a number of problems in collecting accurate data on costs in partnerships, and quantifying and valuing benefits. As a result, the evaluation accepts that CBA shows indicative rather than precise results, but is confident enough to conclude that

- costs are high, but so are benefits;
- for most schools, FSES activities provide "reasonable" value for money, based on an analysis of NPV; and
- FSES investments are even more worthwhile when considering the most disadvantaged young people.

Additional messages

In considering these evaluation reports, a number of other messages emerged.

It takes time to reduce disadvantage

Collaborative initiatives may take years to overcome the complex and severe disadvantages communities face. The Promise Neighborhoods evaluation, for example, reports that funders and stakeholders sometimes fail to realize that it will take more than two decades for the first children born in a new Promise Neighbourhood to make their way through the full pipeline and to complete college (pp x-xi).

[3] HM Treasury, The Green Book: Appraisal and Evaluation in Central Government, TSO, 2013

Staff continuity, developing skills and fostering relationships, is of critical importance in sustaining momentum and ensuring successful interventions over time.

It is important to be realistic and manage expectations

Failure to achieve systemic and transformational change quickly may invite disillusionment and even cynicism. So it is important to manage expectations of funders, partner agencies and – critically – community groups about what initiatives can achieve.

NDC Programme investment in areas, for example, amounts to no more than 10 per cent of existing mainstream spend. That said, the NDC evaluation records considerable change in all 39 participating neighbourhoods between 2002 and 2008 and transformational change in ten.

It is possible to measure success

Even if precise measurement and attribution is not possible, analysis of primary and secondary qualitative and quantitative data collected at different levels and for different purposes can usefully illustrate broad directions of travel:

> "*E2S has led to the implementation of some evidenced interventions on a scale that will make it increasingly probable that children and young people's wellbeing is influenced for the better . . . The "transformation" desired by the local authority's chief executive has yet to be achieved, but the E2S project has taken important steps in the desired direction, overcoming considerable obstacles along the way*" (E2S, p103.).

Although difficult, it is worth pursuing efforts to assess the value for money and efficiency of activities. Cost-benefit analysis will be problematic at a whole programme level, but possibly much more productive at the level of individual interventions.

Multiple disadvantage requires an integrated multi-systems approach

These evaluations show it is possible make a substantial and positive difference to individuals' lives through targeted, well-managed and well-resourced interventions. However, there is no standard or 'one size fits all' approach. Partnerships that respond flexibly and with a whole systems approach to

interconnected disadvantages in housing, health, employment and education are more likely to succeed in helping people. The greatest improvement is likely to be seen with the most disadvantaged individuals.

Appendix 1: Evaluations in this report

Document (Title in report)	Author(s)	Country	Date	Period	Target group(s)	Project aims
Developing a Common Language in Children's Services through Research-based Inter-disciplinary Training (**Common Language**)	Nick Axford, Vashti Berry, Michael Little & Louise Morpeth	UK	2006	N/A	Social workers and children's services professionals	A strategy to promote better inter-agency co-operation and to increase the utilisation of evidence in practice
The New Deal for Communities Experience: A final assessment (Final Report - Volume 7) (**NDC**)	Louise Morpeth	UK	2010	2002-2008 (programme ran from 1998-2010)	Deprived neighbourhoods	To transform 39 areas over 10 years by achieving holistic change in relation to: crime, community, housing & physical environment (HPE), education, health, worklessness
Prevention Service System Transformation Using Communities That Care (**US CTC**)	Eric C. Brown, J. David Hawkins, Michael W. Arthur, John S. Briney, and Abigail A. Fagan	USA	2011	2001-2007	Community leaders	To evaluate the extent and ways in which CTC reduces the adolescent health and behaviour problems by identifying elevated risk factors and depressed protective factors and implementing preventive interventions.
Does Communities that Care work? An evaluation of a community-based risk prevention programme in three neighbourhoods (**UK CTC**)	Iain Crow, Alan France, Sue Hacking and Mary Hart	UK	2004	1999-2004	Children in communities at risk of developing social problems	CTC aims to: • transform professional practice • actively involve the local community in the identification of risk and protection and increase protection • to use evidence to make changes to services. • to bring new resources into the area
East Durham Children's Initiative Impact Summary (**EDCI**)	Duke Center for Child and Family Policy at Duke University and EDCI	USA	2016	2011-2015	Children and families	To provide support before birth through graduation to help all children in the EDCI zone graduate from high school, ready for college or career.

Document (Title in report)	Author(s)	Country	Date	Period	Target group(s)	Project aims
Evaluation of the Full Service Extended Schools Initiative: Final Report (**FSES**)	Colleen Cummings, Alan Dyson, Diana Pearson, Carlo Raffo, Lucy Tiplady, Liz Todd, Deanne Crowther	UK	2007	FSES initiative launched in 2003	Schools, children, families	To improve educational attainment and broader well-being of children by offering seamless services to children and families
The impact of Sure Start Local Programmes on seven year olds and their families - The National Evaluation of Sure Start (NESS) Team (**SSLP**)	Institute for the Study of Children, Families and Social Issues, Birkbeck, University of London Melhuish, E., Belsky, J., Leyland, A.	UK	2012	Sure Start began in 1998. 57 reports on SS have been published since 2001,	7 year olds and their families	To enhance the life chances for young children growing up in disadvantaged neighbourhoods
Education Action Zones: tackling difficult issues in round 2 zones (**EAZ**)	Ofsted	UK	2003	Initiative began in 1998	Schools and pupils	Help schools and communities address factors associated with low attainment
Children's Trust Pathfinders: Innovative Partnerships for Improving the Well-being of Children and Young People - National Evaluation of Children's Trust Pathfinders Final Report (**CTP**)	University of East Anglia in association with the National Children's Bureau	UK	2007	2004-2006	Children	To bring together education, health, social services and other partners, to promote cooperation with the aim of improving children's well-being.
Building Better Outcomes For Children Through Evidence Based Practice: An Evaluation Of The Evidence2success Project In Perth & Kinross (**E2S**)	David Utting, for JRF	UK	2016	2012-2015	Local agencies and communities, with specific reference to children and young people	to improve the health and education welfare and wellbeing of children and young people from birth to adolescence
Channelling Change: Making Collective Impact Work (**Channelling change**)	Fay Hanleybrown, John Kania, & Mark Kramer	USA	2012	Not specified	Muliple and multiply disadvantaged communities	To achieve large-scale social impact through common agenda, shared measurement, coordinated activities, continuous communication, lead organisation
Promise Neighborhoods Case Studies (**Promise Neighbourhoods**)	Lara Hulsey, Andrea Mraz Esposito, Kimberly Boller, Sarah Osborn	USA	2015	Since 2010	Children	To offset the effects of growing up in poverty by building a comprehensive continuum of "cradle-to-career" supports

Document (Title in report)	Author(s)	Country	Date	Period	Target group(s)	Project aims
Impact in place: A Progress Report on the Department of Education's Place-based Strategy (**Impact in Place**)	US Dept. of Education	USA	2012	2010-2012	Children and families	A place-based approach to achieve ‘cradle to career’ support