

Capacity for Change

- Project information



BACKGROUND

There is increasing policy emphasis on enhancing the resilience of (rural) communities, through community engagement, empowerment, asset ownership and capacity-building. A number of public policies and strategies are being implemented to support these developments in UK communities. Drivers for this include the need to increase efficiency of public spend, enhance inclusion, self-reliance and sustainability at community level. However, *measuring* community resilience, and the social and economic outcomes of community-focused policies and projects, remains highly challenging. There is a lack of easily adaptable and practical tools which enable the capturing of aspects of 'change'; and inadequate assessment methods make it difficult to measure how effective these community-focused policy and project investments are.

C4C PROGRAMME

Capacity for Change (C4C programme) is led by Dumfries & Galloway LEADER Programme. C4C specifically targets less-resourced communities in rural Dumfries and Galloway who have not engaged with LEADER or other funding streams in a significant way. C4C will engage communities in activities and processes that enhance existing capacity. The 24-month programme aims to support the development of inclusive and resilient communities.

Dumfries & Galloway working in partnership with SRUC

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C4C EVALUATION

SRUC's role is to monitor and evaluate the C4C Programme throughout its implementation, from pre-planning through to completion. Our aim is to assess the contribution of C4C to community resilience, sustainability, wellbeing and regional rural development. The ultimate aim is to develop a model which will enable us to identify the social and economic outcomes associated with such targeted project investments, for the D&G communities and individuals. The framework should also help in identifying and assessing aspects of 'change' and adaptive capacity of communities in quantitative and qualitative ways. Evaluation of C4C will provide useful data for the development of D&G LEADER's post-2013 strategy and business plan.

DEVELOPING A MODEL FOR ASSESSING 'CHANGE'

Currently, we are conducting an extensive national and international literature review in relation to community resilience. Although in its initial stage, our research has identified a number of models focused on resiliency outcomes. Our analysis of these frameworks identified strengths and apparent shortcomings – the latter making it extremely difficult to assess adequately the social and economic aspects of 'change'.

In order to develop a viable model for assessing 'change', we are therefore combining different models and carefully adapting them to the particular context and needs of the C4C programme. As a result, we are creating a hybrid evaluation combining existing research evidence with contextual factors identified through our fieldwork with with Dumfries & Galloway LEADER Programme and local communities (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Hybrid model for assessing rural community resilience in C4C

Elements/Factors of Resilience	Nature and Basis of Resilience			
	Individual Social Resiliency Outcomes	Community Social Resiliency Outcomes	Individual Economic Resiliency Outcomes	Community Economic Resiliency Outcomes
National and International Literature Review		X		X
			X	X
	X	X	X	X
	X	X		
	X		X	X
Field work	X	X		
		X	X	X
	X	X	X	X
Question design based on existing research evidence and conducted field work	Individual Social Resiliency Questions	Community Social Resiliency Questions	Individual Economic Resiliency Questions	Community Economic Resiliency Questions

(x) – indicates selected aspects of Nature and Basis of Resilience identified in the literature review and through our field work

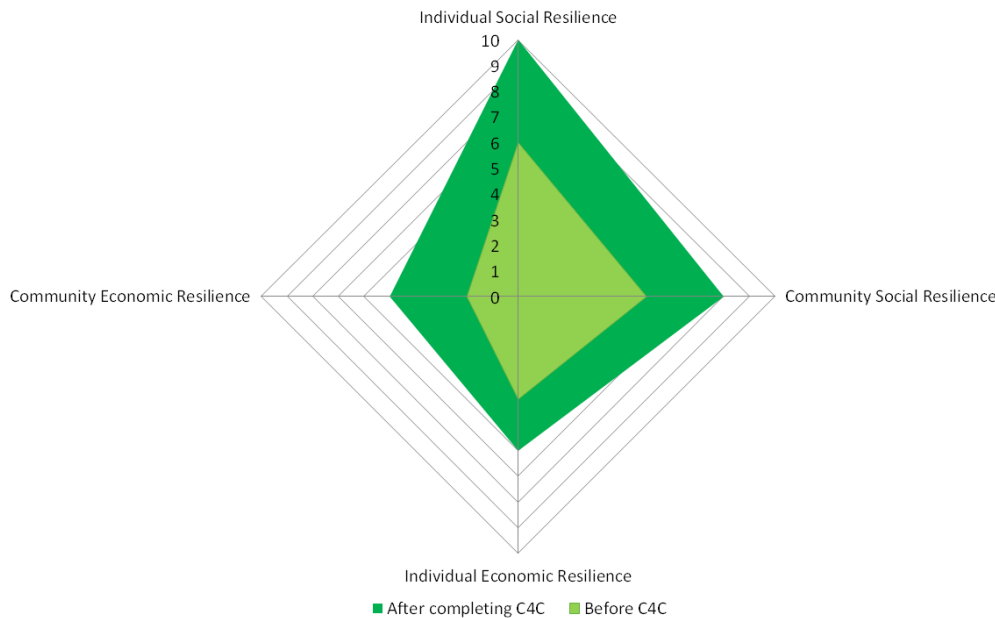
Based on the review of the community resilience literature and on-the-ground information gathered (i.e. data, views, opinions from and about local communities and discussions with D&G LEADER team), we identified the most appropriate themes for capturing social and economic as well as individual and community resilience. To recognise ‘change’, these need to be assessed periodically i.e. before, during and after investment in community resources (see Figure 2).

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Figure 2. Simulation of how we might represent the assessment of four aspects of ‘change’



This approach will be applied in the C4C monitoring and evaluation. We aim to identify how effective the overall C4C intervention is in terms of building community resilience and measure the difference C4C makes within the participating communities. In addition, the research process should enable us to establish a methodological and conceptual framework that will underpin the monitoring and evaluation of other similar C4C-type interventions.

ADVANTAGES OF THE MODEL

- Brings together a number of models and adapts the framework to a local environment
- Examines different aspects i.e. Individual and Community, Social and Economic
- Quantitatively measures aspect of ‘change’ where appropriate, underpinned by qualitative understanding and evidence
- Robust across communities and C4C settings in D&G (each community is likely to engage with C4C in unique ways)

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