

Child-Driven Policy using Youth Participatory Action Research

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Background



An overview of West Cumbria

Geographically isolated

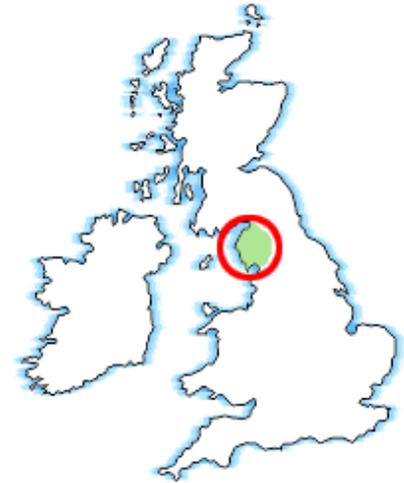
Post industrial area with Sellafield being a major employer

Polarised social demography

Pockets of very high deprivation

Limited services

Below regional and national averages of educational and employment

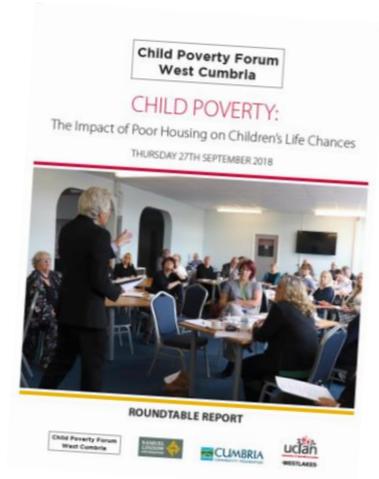


West Cumbria Child Poverty Forum

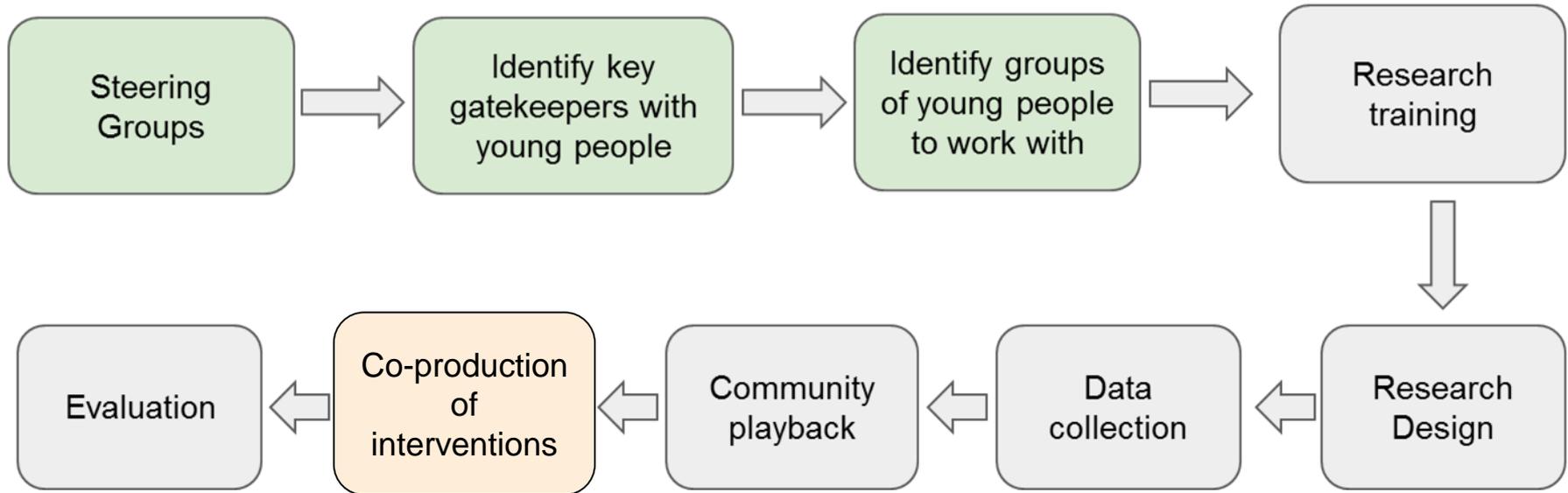


WCCPF is an un-constituted group of professionals from a range of sectors, who meet periodically to share information surrounding child poverty on a local, national and international level. There is representation from Allerdale and Copeland Borough Councils, Cumbria County Council Children's Services, Howgill Family Centre, Barnardo's Allerdale, and UCLan.

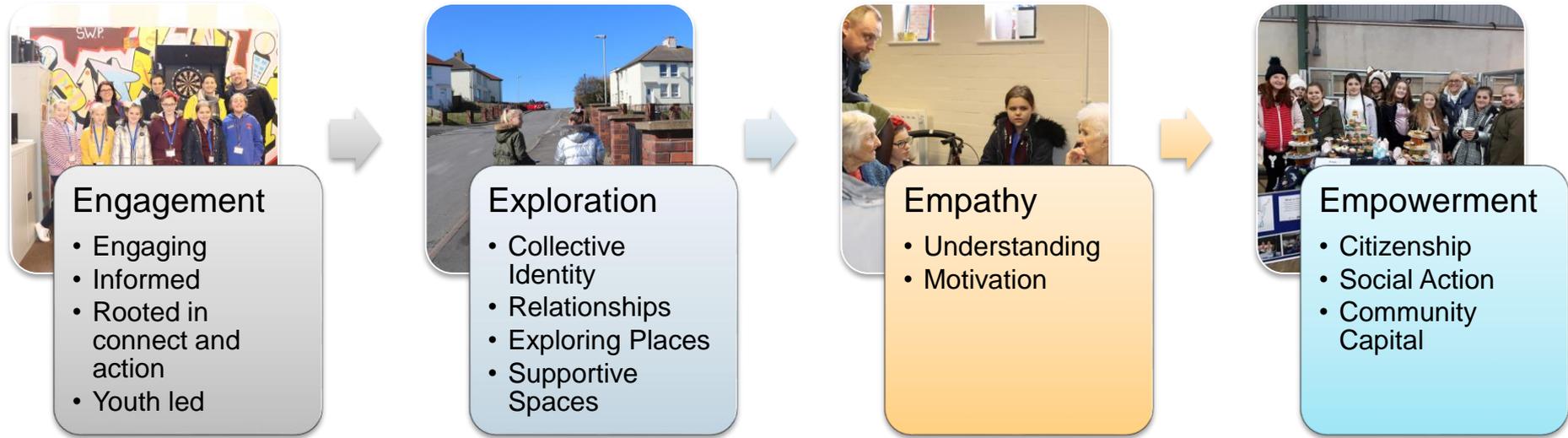
The aim of the Forum is to share information and expertise and raise the profile of child poverty in West Cumbria, keeping the issue at the forefront of the public, and the statutory services.



Connected Communities West Cumbria



Cultivating Citizenship through Community Capital



Child-Driven Policy using Youth Participatory Action Research



Youth Citizenship

Participation in civil society, community and/or political life, characterised by mutual respect and non-violent and in accordance with human rights and democracy (Hoskins, 2006)

Youth citizenship is features in a number of UK and EU policies, such as the Civil Society Strategy (Cabinet Office, 2018) and Horizon 2020 (European Commission)

Children are excluded from much of civil society (Larkin, 2014; Moos-Mitha, 2005)
Safe relational spaces are essential (Cockburn, 2007)

Children experiencing poverty are face significantly more barriers to enacting their citizenship than their more affluent counterparts (Ridge, 2011)

PAR and YPAR

- Participatory action research (PAR) is a research tool whereby community participation and action are central.
- An explicit outcome of PAR lies in questioning some form of inequality, and champions empowerment in the participants who are part of the research (Rodríguez & Brown, 2009; Fox, et al., 2010).
- Youth participatory action research (YPAR) focuses on three elements:
 - youth participation as partners, often called 'co-researchers';
 - projects that aim towards public impact;
 - critical perspectives on inequality (Camarrota and Fine 2008; Checkoway and Richards-Schuster 2006; Colatos and Morrell 2003; Frost 2008; Mitra, Serriere, and Kirshner 2014; Rubin and Jones 2007; Sabo Flores 2008).
- Many YPAR projects are grounded in the concept of critical consciousness (Freire, 1996), whereby young people seek to identify, understand and take actions against social inequalities.

The Magic 6

Participatory Action and Learning Experiences
with Roma Youth

Training Manual



A collaborative learning resource written with Roma young people and professionals working with PEER Youth in Romania, Bulgaria, Cyprus, England, France, Lithuania, Ireland, Italy, Scotland, Spain and Wales.

Cath Larkins & Andy Bilson

This project is funded by EU JUST/2013/FRAC/AG/6230

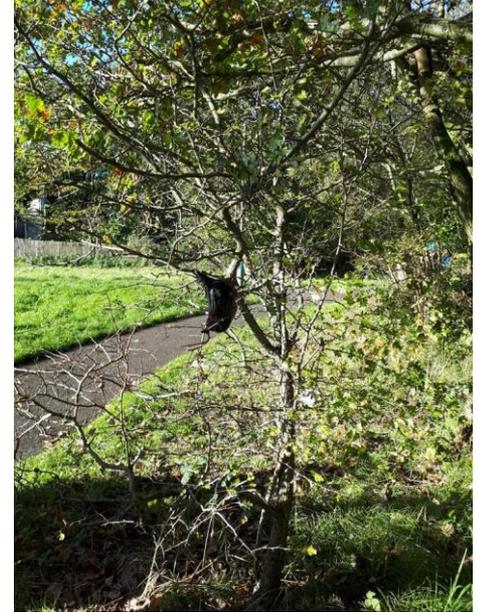
Figure 4: The Magic 6 Framework



Public Spaces Protection Order



Photographs and anecdotes from the children are currently being used by the Council's solicitors who are in the process of writing a number of Public Spaces Protection Order.



Reflections



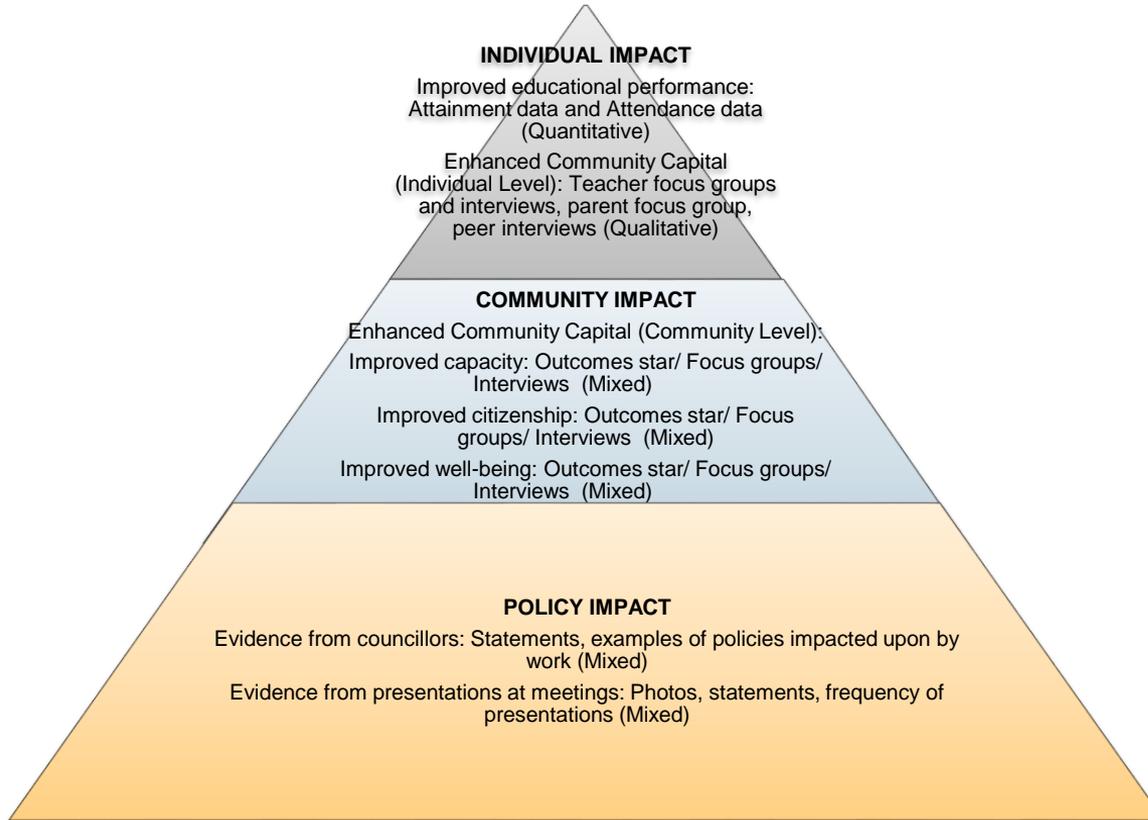
Networks Matter

- Child Poverty Task and Finish Group
- Public Spaces Protection Order Task and Finish Group

Attitudes Matter

- Receptive
- Respectful





Individual Impact

- Improved educational performance: Attainment data and Attendance data
- Enhanced Community Capital (Individual Level): Teacher focus groups and interviews, parent focus group, peer interviews

As much as [the police] help us, I also think of it as we're helping them, if we're changing the community they're going to be more free

I have found that not everyone is proud to call their community their home but as a group we know we can change that

Community Impact

- Enhanced Community Capital (Community Level):
Improved capacity: Outcomes star/ Focus groups/ Interviews
(Mixed)
- Improved citizenship: Outcomes star/ Focus groups/ Interviews
(Mixed)
- Improved well-being: Outcomes star/ Focus groups/ Interviews
(Mixed)

Impact: Policy

“The Girls Gang have been integral in a Children’s Charter project we’re taking forward at the council. The charter will enshrine the commitments of the council to the children of Copeland, and we’re extremely grateful for the contribution of the Girls Gang”

Julie Betteridge, Executive Director of Operations at Copeland Borough Council

“The experiences of the children and the evidence they have gathered has been critical in creating the Children’s Charter that will be implemented at Copeland Borough Council. We are hoping to have a launch event for the charter which will be children focused rather than dignitary focused. We hope this empowers the children involved in the project to participate in the democratic process throughout their lives and show that they can have a real and tangible impact on the lives of people in their communities”

James Young, Scrutiny Officer at Copeland Borough Council



Thank you for your time. Any questions?

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