

THREE YEARS ON TENANT EMPOWERMENT GRANT PROJECT REPORT



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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	4
Acknowledgements	5
The Mount Estate	6
The Project	7
Appraising the Community	8
Action Planning	9
Developing Proposals	10
Conclusions and Recommendations	13
Appendices	14

Executive Summary

The Mount Community Association was set up in 1996 to try and improve the quality of life on the Mount Estate. Over a period of ten years the Community Association grew from strength to strength becoming widely regarded as a model example of a Tenants and Residents Association (TARA) with a wide portfolio of funding to address deprivation in the community.

In mid 1996, disaster struck! Renewal funding from WAG was not secured and partnership projects began to fall into disarray.

In reaction to this MCA, with the support of Sazani Associates initiated a review of the last three years and came to the conclusion that their vulnerability was a factor of developing projects to fulfil policy directives and funders' requirements, rather than securing funding to address community priorities.

In order to redress this and to re-evaluate the role of MCA in the community, Sazani Associates, an Approved TEG Agent (ATEGA) was requested to submit a TEG application.

This report aims to detail the process that was followed during the implementation of the TEG. Its approach has been participatory from the outset with an overall intention of transmitting key skills and tools to both the committee and staff that will enable the Association to develop a sustainable framework for its continuation and further development.

Over a period of five months Sazani Associates ran informal workshop sessions to train key members and staff of the association in participatory skills and to use a range of participatory tools to identify and set community priorities and to secure the funding and other mechanisms to address them.

Five priorities were identified:

- Estate Improvements
- Antisocial Behaviour
- Lack of Community Cohesion
- Young People's Involvement
- Access to Service Providers and Key Agencies

Action Plans were drawn up for each priority. Young People's Involvement was selected by the project participants as the example to use to develop a generic funding proposal that could be tailored to meet individual funders' requirements and that could be replicated to address other key priorities.

Individual Action plans developed together with the Youth Proposal are included in the Appendices.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the consistent support of the MCA Operations Manager Megan Bond in the implementation of this TEG. She was the sole representative of the Mount Community Association who was punctual and in attendance at every session. I would also like to acknowledge the support of the Pembrokeshire County Council Tenant Participation Officer Emily Sheen who has actively supported MCA over the last 12 months and in turn the implementation of this TEG.

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The Mount Estate and The Mount Community Association

Mount Estate in Milford Haven, Pembrokeshire is one of the poorest estates in Wales with very high unemployment and levels of deprivation. The Mount Community Association(MCA) has been working for over ten years to improve the living conditions of people living on the estate and offer opportunity to a community categorized as some of the poorest within the European Union.

As one of the leaders in the tenants movement in Wales MCA with the support of Pembrokeshire County Council have been very active at encouraging groups in west Wales to engage in the wider tenant's movement. MCA have created a trading and training arm, MATT and are the first tenants group in Wales to have a trading arm carrying out physical work contracts. There is substantial scope for developing both private sector and local authority contracting arrangements for their trading arm with the opportunity for training for tenants.

In a survey of the estate (January 2005 Funded by Wales Assembly Government through the Tenant Empowerment Scheme) some stark figures were revealed. Less than 5% of the population were in full term employment with unemployment running at 90% in the general community and 75% amongst 16 to 25 year olds. This perpetuates high levels of benefit dependence, 80% in the general community and 75% amongst 16 to 25 year olds. More generally nearly 60% of parents felt that their children were not safe playing on the estate with; "bullying, fighting, traffic, domestic abuse and drink and drugs on the street" given as reasons for parental concerns

In June 2005, MCA became land owners, with amenity woodland under their stewardship and substantial assets in terms of equipment. Unfortunately in May 2006, MCA failed to secure support from WAG to sustain their centre and local services, resulting in a funding crisis and threatened closure of their resource centre. This resulted in a review of the Association and an identified need to try and break the cycle of funding dependency. This TEG was secured to initiate this process. In addition, in September 2006, Sazani Associates successfully negotiated support from NGRID to core fund the centre and to set up community owned social enterprises linked to the woodland, supported by a comprehensive three year project implementation plan.

This in turn provided a secure space to implement the TEG , to identify community priorities and develop a community owned action plans to enable strategic and sustainable development of the Mount Estate Community Association to continue to support and provide an invaluable service for the estate tenants and residents.

The Project

Purpose

To build and strengthen the capacity and capability of tenant and residents group of the Mount Community Association to create opportunities for improved quality of life on the Mount Estate

Objectives

- To train key personnel in participatory techniques
- To support development of community owned action plans
- To impart fundraising skills to the community association
- To identify appropriate funding streams and mechanisms

Outputs

- A rapid appraisal of tenant and residents priorities
- Action plans to detail mechanisms to address community priorities
- Production of community owned projects to implement action plans
- Design and production of a funding proposal
- Completion of a major funding providers application form

Framework

From start Duration in Days	Activity Table	Duration in Days
Week 1	Sazani Associates review data and discuss Project with MCA	2
Week 1	MCA meet with TEG Agent (Sazani) to plan delivery	1
Week 2	Sazani trains MCA team to identify community priorities	2.5
Week 3	MCA and Sazani identify priorities and produce action plans	2.5
Week 4 - 5	MCA and Sazani use action plan to create a project proposal.	2
Week 5-6	Sazani train MCA to write funding bids	3
Week 7	Sazani support MCA to submit funding application	2
Week 11	MCA work with Sazani to re-evaluate community engagement plan	2
Week 12	Sazani feedback and evaluation of project	1
Six months on	Sazani do review of the Action plans with MCA	1
		19 total

Appraising the Community

Once the TEG team has been finalised, the first project meeting was to discuss the research requirements to identify community priorities. Legitimate concerns we raised regarding the community being 'survey weary' and suffering from 'consultation fatigue'. This led to a review of techniques previously used to gather information to support both funding applications and requests for additional support. While some participatory techniques had been used they had been predominantly centred round the resource centre and had involved a minority catchment of the area. In order to provide a service for the community that is determined by community priorities rather than funding ones, MCA need to be able to review their role in relation to the community on a regular basis. To this end, training was given in the use of 'Rapid Appraisal' techniques, followed by the TEG team conducting a collaborative enquiry through a Rapid Appraisal of the community.

Rapid Appraisal

Rapid Appraisal uses Participatory Rural Appraisal methodologies. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) is a label given to a family of participatory approaches and methods that emphasise local knowledge and enable local people to make their own appraisal, analysis and plans. PRA uses group animation and exercises to facilitate information sharing, analysis and action among stakeholders. Originally developed for use in rural areas in developing countries, PRA has been employed successfully in a variety of settings. The purpose of PRA is to enable development practitioners, government officials and local people to collaborate in the development and planning of context-appropriate programmes.

Key tenants of PRA

Participation: Local peoples input into the activities is essential to its value as a research method

Teamwork: The validity of data collected relies on informal interaction and is best done by a team that includes local people with perspective and knowledge of the areas culture and social structure

Flexibility: The combination of techniques is determined by the time and resources available and the topic and location of the work

Optimal Ignorance: To be efficient in terms of both time and money PRA work intends to gather just enough information to make the necessary recommendations and decisions

Triangulation: PRA works with qualitative data. To ensure that information is valid and reliable the research teams adhere to at least three different sources must be consulted or three different techniques used to investigate the same topics

Prior to the research a stake holder analysis was carried out to identify key meeting/ convergence points on the housing estate. The research focussed on three areas: likes, dislikes and change. Triangulation was achieved through basing a series of questions around these three areas in a number of different settings determined through the Stakeholder analysis of the Estate community.

The Stakeholder Analysis

Stakeholder Group	Representative Groups
Housing Estate Residents	General tenants and residents, *** house older persons home, visitors to the resource centre
Local businesses	Mount post office and shop
Educational Institutions	Mount Primary School
Government Institutions	Tenant Participation Officer
Non Government Institutions	MCA committee

Over a period of seven days the TEG team working as individuals and in pairs gathered information from the identified stakeholders; in total over 300 people provided information which amounts to over 50% of the estate tenant and residents.

During the next session all of the information gathered was collated using a consensus building workshop, a variation of the Delphi technique, to identify and agree community priorities. A summary of the findings is included in Appendix 1.

The Delphi technique can be described as ‘a method for structuring a group communication process so that the process is effective in allowing a group of individuals, as a whole, to deal with a complex problem’ (British Council 2004)

From this session five community priorities were identified:

- Estate Improvements
- Antisocial Behaviour
- Lack of Community Cohesion
- Young People’s Involvement
- Access to Service Providers and Key Agencies

Action Planning

The Rapid Appraisal provided information regarding the problems and the changes wanted on the estate and this was used to establish the community priorities, the next task was to identify how to address them in a Specific, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound Fashion (SMART). In order to do this an action planning matrix or framework was introduced to the TEG team as summarised below.

Each community priority was worked through by the team initially under the guidance of Sazani Associates then independently and then by the wider committee under the guidance of the TEG Team with the intention of enabling a skilling up the TEG team to be able to use this approach to addressing community issues in the future. The Action Plan Frameworks are included in Appendix 2.

Community Priority					
Activity Description	Actions to take	Roles & Responsibilities	Resources available/ required	Time scale	Indicators of success

Through carrying out this exercise the TEG Team were able to distinguish the role of MCA in the addressing of the different priorities. Some of them, for example Access to Service Providers detailed services that MCA were already facilitating and this gave rise to issues regarding promotion of services. A key out put of this was that the debt and benefits advice surgery in the Acorn Resource Centre now runs twice a week and is increasingly over subscribed.

Other action plans, for example Young Peoples Involvement Priority identified the opportunity to build on the Cyd Coed funded woodland project and develop a comprehensive education and activity project for the youth of the estate to involve them proactively in their community.

Developing a Proposal

The TEG Team decided to use the Youth Involvement Action Plan to learn how to develop a funding proposal.

Sazani Associates prepared a generic proposal template for the Mount Estate that included the requirements expected from major funding bodies.

Over a number of sessions the TEG team worked through this template using information gathered from the Rapid Appraisal, Priority Setting and Action Planning stages to complete the template.

Potential funding sources were identified and the youth issues template was used to complete a funding application form.

Additional support was also provided in terms of the governance structure of MCA. This included reviewing the existing constitution of the organisation and advising on application for charitable status to enable access to wider sources of funding and hence increasing the potential sustainability and stability of the organisation.

The Proposal Template

Name of organisation applying for grant:

Correspondence address:

Person to contact about this project:

Telephone Number:

E-mail Address:

Website

Your website would be a good place to store valuable information for funders on your achievements.

What is the status of your organisation?

Unincorporated association/ registered charity company ltd by guarantee etc

What is the structure of your organisation?

A diagram of the personnel and lines of management

The Organisation

- *Detail brief history of organisation*
- *Demographic make up of community*
- *Statistical evidence of need, indices etc*
- *Achievements to date*
- *Capacity of Organisation*

The Problem or Issue

- *What are the main problems or issues that you are trying to address*

Local and Regional Context

Locate major documents (digital best) relating to communities/ youth/housing/employment/community safety/sustainability/

*Aim/ Purpose/Goal (Why do you want to do this project)
Wider problem the project will help to resolve*

Objectives

Three or four things the project will do to resolve the wider problem

Stakeholders/ Partners &Beneficiaries

Provide details of any partners and beneficiaries involved in the project and how they will be involved

Stakeholder Group	Representative Groups	Nature of Involvement

Activities

These are the tasks to be done to produce the outputs and when?

Activity 1	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April
Activity 2	XXX	XXX										
Activity 3	XXX	XXX										

Inputs

When required to do so provide additional information, such as the inputs which are needed to carry out these activities. Again, there may be several for each activity and it will help to run through each individually, listing required inputs (resources, equipment, tools, and people). Group the inputs and list each once rather than repeatedly. This may include a summary of the project budget

How will the project be planned and managed:

Who will do what and when? It is important to the funders that they have a named post to relate to, particularly if it is a physical infrastructure project as this may be a regulatory requirement

Outputs/Results

These are the specifically deliverable results expected from the project to attain the purpose/aim/goal

Outcomes

These are the longer term impacts of the project, ie what effect the project will have on the wider problem

Dissemination

How will you tell other organisations in Wales and wider a field about the project and it's findings?

Evaluation and Monitoring

- Quantitative ways of measuring or qualitative ways of judging timed achievement of goal/purpose/aim
- Quantitative ways of measuring or qualitative ways of judging timed production of outputs

Things to consider, how will you measure progress yourselves and how would an outsider know you have achieved what you set out to achieve.

Assumptions and Risks

Factors out of project control which, if present, could restrict project progress

Sustainability

- Will the benefits of the project be sustained after the project itself comes to an end and, if so, how will this be achieved?
- What will happen to the Assets?

Budget

Presentation should be clear and detailed to ensure eligibility for example

<i>Project Activity Costs</i>	<i>Yr1</i>	<i>Yr2</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
<i>List items</i>			
<i>Totals</i>			

Other funding sources

<i>Funder</i>		
<i>Amount Secured</i>		

Read the application form again and make sure you have done everything you have been asked to do and included everything you have been asked to send. Get someone to double check this. Additional considerations:

Partnership Declarations

Evidence of match funding

Potential Funding Sources

Funder	Nature of Projects	Amount	More info
Heritage Lotteries Fund:	Parks for People	£250K-£5million	www.hlf.org.uk
Environment Wales	Sustainable Development	£1000-£10,000	www.environment-wales.org.uk
BIG Lottery	Investing in Communities	£10,000-£1million	www.biglotteryfund.org.uk
JPaul Getty JR Charitable Trust	Social welfare, self help	£2000-£15000	www.jpgettytrust.org.uk
LloydsTSB foundation	Disadvantaged groups	£500-£10,000	www.lloydstsbfoundations.org.uk
Esmee Fairburn Foundation	UK biodiversity, sust food systems	Av £30,000	www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk

Conclusions and Recommendations

The TEG project was completed in July 2007 with a presentation of the outputs detailed in the appendices of this report.

This TEG project set was participatory from the outset and sought to engage a sufficient number of members of MCA that the skills to identify priorities and secure funding would be within the committee as well as the project staff.

Continuity of involvement in the TEG by the TEG Team could have been improved, there does appear to be confusion between initial involvement and commitment to a process. Further research could be carried out on how to sustain committee and volunteers involvement in a process.

In conclusion, this TEG has provided MCA with a firm base from which to develop their role within the community as both a service provider and sign poster towards advice and support.

Sazani Associates wish them every success.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Summary of Rapid Appraisal Results

Top ten positive aspects of life on the Mount Estate
(86 responses)

- Improvements to estate infrastructure
- Improvements to accommodation standards and facilities
- Mount community association, Resource Centre and Staff
- Good Community Spirit
- Variety of Ages living on the estate
- More Police Community Service Officers
- Local shop and post office on the estate
- Mount Infants school
- Family Centre
- Community access to the woodlands

Priority Setting of Problems and Suggested Changes

<p>Anti- social behaviour</p> <p>Problems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drug dealing • Drug use • Noise & late night parties • Alcohol • Fights & aggression • Domestic violence • Crime <p>Changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More police presence on the state • Sign posting to rehabilitation services • Counselling & advice service • Outreach workers 	<p>Estate improvements</p> <p>Problems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rubbish & litter • Dog mess • Messy contractor's • Estate maintenance: fencing gardens, verges etc. • Voids not being filled • Young people housed in flats • Hilton house in particular <p>Changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photographic evidence • Engage with PCC & local council (estate improvement committee meeting) • Design & sponsor bin campaign • Community composting scheme
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<p>Service Providers & Bureaucracy</p> <p>Problems :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployment • Poverty • Underage pregnancy • Communication with agencies • Confusing information provided • Benefit boundaries • Debt & monetary issues <p>Changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life skill training programme • Advocacy & support • Advice surgeries – housing, law etc. • Support service, sign posts • Information sharing between agencies • Job centre representation • Partnerships 	<p>Social Attitudes/ Community Involvement</p> <p>Problems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apathy • Laziness • Perception of estate • Lack of skills – confidence • Gossip • Breakdown of family networks • Transport issues <p>Changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create community activity programme • Find out what people want • Community transport scheme • Create & offer opportunities to engage • Skills programme / workshops • MCA PR campaign
<p>Youth Issues</p> <p>Problems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woods are not child friendly • Nothing for kids to do • No safe place/ youth club • Children bored • Under age drugs/alcohol abuse <p>Changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve more kids in woodland activities • Activities for 7 – 11 year olds • Employ youth worker • Provide educational activities • Long term activities needed not just one offs • Out of office hours usage/ provisions – holidays & evenings 	

Appendix 2

Examples of Priority Action Plans

YOUTH PROJECT

Description Of Activity	Actions To Take	Roles/ Responsibilities	Time scale	Resources	Success Indicators
Indoor outdoor woodland activity base	Gather youth's for design & input of structure.	M.C.A School} Youth input } Competition	May 2007	Funding avenues Green Giant project , established partnerships	Completed structure
	Architect advice Planning	Local specialist woodland advisor	June 2007	Match funding	Youth involvement
	Material/ Tools source	MATT {materials/tools}	June2007	MCA	Program of events
	Costing of project	MCA /Architect. (Site)	June2007	Woods	Wider communities
	Site/location	Volunteers/youth/outside agencies/MATT/ YOT	July-August 2007	Equipment/saw mill	Access/ability
	Who identify those going to construct it	Publicise project for input MCA	July 2007	Some materials	School/estate
	Skills analyses on estate	Local ECO centre for advice	July 2007	ECO centre	
	ECO- Friendly utilities	MCA/Steering group	June 2007	Cydcoed	
	Finalise plan	Local press, open day, school, newsletter	July2007	Letters of support	
	Promoting	MCA		Experience	
	Management/staffing	MCA to source quotes	July 2007		
	Insurance cost			Local council	

Antisocial Behaviour

Activity	Actions To Take	Roles/Responsibility	Time	Resources	Success Indicators
Drug/alcohol	Newsletter	Relevant agents	Summer 2007	Resource Centre	Newsletter distributed
Information Provision	Gather info	MCA		Matched funding	Advice sought from the community
Domestic abuse	Edit prepare	Local centre(Europa House)		MCA	Radio spot
Crime	Outside agency articles	Helpline directory		PCC	Newsletter
	Printing	Shelter		MCA members	Funding obtained
	Distribution	Sponsorship/PCC/Local printing firm		PAVS	Continual programme
	Local radio	PRISM		Outside agencies	
	Email	Pembrokeshire radio		Release	
	Spokesperson	Police		Police	
	Signposting to rehab services	Local press Mercury/Telegraph		BROCY REM	
	Newspaper	YOT/community service			
	Prepare editorial	PAVS			
	Open surgery meeting room	Volunteers			
		BROCY REM			

Sazani Associates is a Wales based community interest company with expertise in the following fields in the UK, EU and overseas:

- Participatory Appraisal and Action Research
- Organisational and Strategic Development
- Social and Strategic Environmental Assessments
- Evaluation and Impact Assessment
- Development Education
- Education for Rural Livelihoods
- Rural Sustainable Livelihood Strategies
- Children's Rights and Juvenile Justice
- Health and Social Welfare Systems
- Management of EU Funding Streams

Our object is to pursue social, economic and environmental research, educational and development projects for the benefit of rural and urban communities and their environs. This is enhanced through our philosophy of mutual capacity building, both within Sazani Associates and with project partners.

Sazani Associates was established in 2004 by an interdisciplinary group of highly skilled professional consultants, academics and project managers in the field of socio-economic and environmental development and education. It came into existence through a shared recognition of the need to develop and support effective and accessible means to integrated planning, natural resource management and sustainable livelihood development and education to positively influence people, organisations, systems and processes across the globe towards pursuing environmental, social and economic best practice.

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