

Place-Based Approaches: Characteristics and Learning

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“Place-based initiatives represent one possible response to wicked social problems and policy failure.”¹

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I. Introduction

I.1. About this paper

This paper has been prepared for A New Direction to support its place-based practices and grant activity. It aims to outline the different concepts and approaches within place-based working, in order to support the programming and resourcing of future place-based cultural education initiatives.

The research draws on a review of literature about place-based programmes. It is also informed by presentations and informal discussions at three themed events, coordinated by A New Direction.² These events have allowed the filtering and refinement of key issues and complexities as identified throughout the discussions.³

It begins with a brief overview of the history of place-based practices, which helps to place A New Direction's work in a greater context. In Chapter 2, the paper outlines the range of approaches within the umbrella of 'place-based' work. Then in Chapter 3 five key areas of learning are drawn together as observed during the research for this paper. Finally in Chapter 4, some of the counterarguments of place-based practice are addressed. Peppered throughout, mini case studies of programme examples illuminate areas of practice.

According to an essay written in 2017 by IVAR for Lankelly Chase, the term 'place based', in relation to foundations or national government bodies, commonly describes:

"a range of approaches, from grant-making in a specific geographic area to long-term, multifaceted collaborative partnerships aimed at achieving significant change. In most cases, it is more than just a term to describe the target location of funding; it also describes a style and philosophy of approach which seeks to achieve 'joined-up' systems change."⁴

This quote reflects the range of programmes reviewed during this paper's research, however as we will see in the chapters that follow, the approaches are as multifaceted as the partnerships themselves. We will explore these approaches in depth, their intentions and aims, to highlight place-based practices of not only 'systems change', but community level and structural change as well.

² These events were: the CPP Peer Learning session on cultural ecologies and eco-systems in November 2018 where Jonathan Gross led a research workshop on ecological strategies to place-based work and Tom Anderson from People United presented learning on partnership principles; the Partnerships, Co-production and Compromise event in October 2018 where Eliza Buckley from IVAR presented the challenges and opportunities of partnerships, and the group of delegates discussed power and representation in place-based work; Connect Lab peer learning event in November 2018 where a network of professionals have defined the learning themes which have informed this essay.

³ While these issues may resonate for A New Direction and its associated partners, it should be acknowledged that this is not representative of a total review of issues across this broad practice.

⁴ Taylor, M., Buckley, E. and Hennessy, C. (2017). *Historical review of place-based approaches*. Lankelly Chase. P.9. (<https://lankellychase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Historical-review-of-place-based-approaches.pdf>)

1.2. A brief history of initiatives

“Place-based approaches have grown in popularity in recent years as funders have begun to recognise their potential for providing a more holistic approach to complex problems, as well as engaged in wider debates about the role of their funding in light of shifts in policy and the economy.”⁵

Place-based work arises, most agree, from external factors and forces, as indicated in the quote above, e.g. austerity meaning a reduction in spend and cuts to services, or a change in government/policy focus. However, experiences of unrest or adversity at a local level, such as the London riots of 2011, racial conflict in America and recent French uprisings,⁶ has often kickstarted grass-roots place-based work; communities driving new efforts to heal and come together to support recovery and sustained change.

Brief summary of the evolution of practice

Across the literature of analyses of place-based work, many observe that the main countries pioneering the funding and progress of place-based approaches include UK, USA, and Australia.

According to IVAR’s research,⁷ the first recorded place-based initiative was developed in San Francisco in the 1950s led by a foundation and grasped by US government as a strategy from 1960s, with the War on Poverty (1964+) being one of the first and renowned initiatives in America. By 1973 discourse on ‘wicked problems’ was beginning, particularly in the US: persistent local/social problems, immune to government interventions and at risk of policy failure – demanding new approaches.⁸

England appeared to have cottoned on to the government shift to place-based working with the first ‘Community development project’ beginning in 1968 – meaning there are over 40 years of place-based initiatives in UK. This change in approach led to initiatives in England such as: Enterprise zones in the 1980s; the Single Regeneration Budget and New Deal for Communities in 1990s; the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund; Single Community programme; the development of the Sure Start programme, which emphasises the importance of ‘joined up services’; and Joseph Rowntree Foundation initiatives which gathered momentum in the late 1990s and 2000s.⁹ Internationally, at the same time, UNICEF launches Child Friendly Cities in 1997. From 2010 the country’s Big Local initiative invested in communities where people want to make their neighbourhoods better places to live.

⁵ <https://www.ivar.org.uk/our-research/place-based-funding/>

⁶ Taylor, M., Buckley, E. and Hennessy, C. (2017). *Historical review of place-based approaches*. Lankelly Chase. P.18. (<https://lankellychase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Historical-review-of-place-based-approaches.pdf>)

⁷ *ibid* P.72-73.

⁸ ‘Wicked Problems’ was originally coined by Rittel and Webber in 1973. See Alchemy Research Agency’s presentation on Wicked Problems: <https://www.anewdirection.org.uk/asset/3624/download>

⁹ See for example research by Murdoch Children’s Research institute, 2014, *The evidence: what we know about place-based approaches to support children’s wellbeing*, Centre for Community Child Health. P.10-13 (https://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/ccch/CCCH_Collaborate_for_Children_Report_The_Evidence_Nov2014.pdf) and Taylor, M., Buckley, E. and Hennessy, C. (2017). *Historical review of place-based approaches*. Lankelly Chase. P.72-73. (<https://lankellychase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Historical-review-of-place-based-approaches.pdf>)

Australia tracks a similar history, with the first federal-level initiatives dating from 1973 with the Australian Assistance Plan (AAP) thought to be the first 'place-based' approach to social welfare and service delivery in the country.¹⁰

"In Australia, place-based initiatives ... are linked to Australian public sector discourses of localised social governance that have long challenged orthodox hierarchical bureaucratic command and control governance practices and, more recently, key aspects of the new public management discourse."¹¹

Australia's place-based work increases in earnest from 2000s onwards, with many important initiatives focusing on whole-child development and support for families stemming from the Stronger Communities and Families Strategy of 2000–2008, based on a capacity-building approach. Meanwhile the concept of Collective Impact was being developed in the US from 2011 onwards,¹² which impacted on the approaches being developed in Australia at the time. Collective Impact is considered a significant development in place-based practices defining results-focused, collaborations between philanthropy, community services and business. (We discuss Collective Impact in Chapter 3).

Australia researched and tested the Collective Impact approach considerably, to tackle health inequities and familial deprivation. One initiative in particular, Opportunity Child,¹³ is a collective of "leading partner communities, national organisations and a wider learning network, working together to change the system that impacts the lives of children in Australia". Through its programmes it has pioneered child-focused, 'place-based collective impact' approaches,¹⁴ which will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 3.

Arts and Culture

In addition to these initiatives, the arts and culture have been diligently advancing its own line of practice to challenge limited, and limiting, perceptions of its own value. It has been integrating itself into grass-roots community building, developmental place-making and urban planning for some time – crossing the borders into work with social services, health and wellbeing and regeneration and revitalisation. In England it was through early initiatives such as the Community Arts of the 1970s that we start to understand that the arts can interact with cultures, histories, traditions and place; not only serving as a final product, but as a means for which people can take ownership of a process of change.

However, USA is thought to have spearheaded many place and culture initiatives, with the earliest Percent for Art programme dating back to 1934 – integrating the arts into city and

¹⁰ Murdoch Children's Research institute, 2014, *The evidence: what we know about place-based approaches to support children's wellbeing*, Centre for Community Child Health. P.12 (https://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/ccch/CCCH_Collaborate_for_Children_Report_The_Evidence_Nov2014.pdf)

¹¹ Hogan, D., Reubenstein, L., and Fry, R. (2018) *Framing place-based principles of collective impact* Opportunity Child and Logan Together. (<https://opportunitychild.com.au/download/framing-place-based-collective-impact-principles-a-public-policy-response-to-childhood-developmental-vulnerability-volume-1/>)

¹² Kania, J. & Kramer, M. (2011). Collective impact. *Stanford Innovation Review*, Winter, 36-41. (www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective_impact/?zbrandid=2039&zidType=CH&zid=1634595&zsubscriberId=500518267&zbdom=aracy.informz.net)

¹³ <https://opportunitychild.com.au/>

¹⁴ Murdoch Children's Research Institute (2017). *Emerging patterns in place-based approaches: International perspectives*. P.2. (<https://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/ccchdev/1711-CCCH-Policy-Roundtable-Report-Final.pdf>)

new development strategies.¹⁵ Curatorial practices have also been pushed and refined at city level in USA. Curator and lecturer Mary Jane Jacobs is widely considered to have pioneered such curatorial practices within the Chicago art programme 'Sculpture Chicago', bringing the arts into a more holistic placemaking strategy and subsequently redefining 'public art': what was previously understood and valued as an artistic product within the urban/rural environment (sculptures, monuments, murals), is increasingly recognised as programmes driven by local people that play a key supportive role in building strong, resilient and healthy communities and places.¹⁶

For A New Direction's work, place-based programmes begin in earnest from 2012 with the piloting of Cultural Education Partnerships following the review of cultural education by Daren Henley in 2012.¹⁷ Subsequently A New Direction has pushed the agenda forward with [Connected London](#), by linking with the leading country-wide place-based programme [Creative People and Places](#) in 2013 and developing the [Challenge](#) cultural investment programme from 2015. A New Direction's strategic partnership work is underpinned by its [Powerful Partnerships Framework](#) – thirteen ingredients or principles to strengthen strategic collaborations and increase the quality of a partnership's development. Other cultural programmes around this time include the Great Place Scheme which seeks to join up arts, cultural and heritage organisations with other sectors to 'meet local social and economic objectives'.¹⁸ Sector research has responded to these agendas with the Gulbenkian Foundation's inquiry into the 'civic role' of the arts for example, launching in 2016.¹⁹ More recently the Creative Enterprise Zones across London and Creative Civic Change further advance the role of creative and cultural initiatives in the development of places.

It seems there is growing recognition that this is an effective approach to arts commissioning and cultural policy, although one must remember that the increasing number of initiatives mirror the cuts to local arts and key council services. Is there a danger that place-based initiatives are expected to replace stripped back specialist services? Some may even question whether Local Authorities are in fact a place-based initiative themselves – are we replacing one for another?

1.3. Evolving questions

This paper proposes 4 key questions that a developing place-level partnership may wish to consider as its programmes evolve.

1. How do we define 'place'?
2. What is our definition of 'place-based work'?
3. How and why will a place-based approach be effective?
4. What alternative approaches are there?

The paper orders relevant information in support of each question.

¹⁵ Project for Public Spaces '[Creative communities and arts-based placemaking](#)' (2015).

¹⁶ For more information on Mary Jane Jacobs and Sculpture Chicago see for example: Frieze article '[Culture in action](#)', Art 21 article '[Planning Social Practice](#)', and Project for Public Spaces '[Creative communities and arts-based placemaking](#)'. Also see Suzanne Lacy's 'Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art' (1994)

¹⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cultural-education-in-england>

¹⁸ <https://www.greatplacescheme.org.uk/england>

¹⁹ Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (2017). *Inquiry into the civic role of arts organisations, Phase 1 report.* (<http://civicroleartsinquiry.gulbenkian.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Civic-Role-of-Arts-Phase-1-REPORT-SINGLE-PAGES-5-7-17.pdf>)

We recognise that there are many other questions a developing partnership might ask to evolve their programmes of work, indeed within A New Direction's [Powerful Partnerships Resource Library](#) there are a number of tools to support the development of place / partnership initiatives.²⁰ Throughout this paper, references are made to relevant resources for the reader to research.

2. Overview of place-based approaches: distinctions and characteristics

In order to explore place-based distinctions and characteristics, any developing place-level partnership must ask themselves: *How do we define this 'place'?*

The position seems clear from those funding and supporting place-based initiatives, that place is generally defined by geographic and administrative definitions,²¹ but are stakeholders and community groups so clear? There are, many would argue, a myriad of answers; some that can be seen on a map and some not. From definitions that are geographic and location-centred, to ones that are about administrative boundaries,²² to the senses and feelings evoked by place. Given these differences, therefore, the second key question must be: *what is our definition of 'place-based work'?*

A significant part of the review of place-based programmes highlighted the fact that there was a large amount of terminology attached to place-based practices, and little agreement on the definition of approaches. In order to process the information, understanding the different starting points and drivers, the root issues of local challenges, and their subsequent approaches provided a useful way of arriving at a broad view of the terminology.

Place-based initiatives seem to cover a range of foci, including multiple disadvantages in health, development and wellbeing, education, poverty, crime and employment.²³ I observed that these approaches seem to fall within three broad categories or 'points of departure':

- The first is one that takes a broader, **bigger picture** view of an issue at a larger scale, in which place-based working would aim to address the structural causes of the challenge.
- The second is one that takes a **place** or location as a starting point, in which place-based working may aim for systems change.
- The third is one that takes **people**, or a more human/humanistic starting point, where place-based working seeks to support local residents with a more community level perspective to the programme.

In each case common terminology will be highlighted in bold for clarity.

²⁰ A New Direction's [Powerful Partnerships Resource Library](#) is a curated collection of case studies, tools and research to support the 5-stage cycle of place-based partnership work: discover, define, develop, deliver and do more. See for example, these [10 questions for developing partnerships](#) and the questions listed in [Support for effective consortium governance](#)

²¹ See for example the IVAR page: <https://www.ivar.org.uk/our-research/place-based-funding/>

²² Hartridge, B. 'Beyond the Buzz: what is a place-based initiative?' (<https://dartington.org.uk/beyond-the-buzz-what-is-a-place-based-initiative/>)

²³ Children's Community Network. *Place-based initiatives affecting outcomes for children and young people*. Save the Children. (<http://www.childrencommunitynetwork.org.uk/file/1149/download?token=PSqTnZK8>) p.1

There are of course many instances of overlap, where economic initiatives will include social goals for example. With that in mind I have outlined a number of different criteria and characteristics that make up these approaches, the community's role, benefits and issues, and examples of specific programmes are included.

The ambition is to both clarify the distinctions in an attempt to support the work of similar initiatives in development, and also to highlight flexibility; how some approaches have borrowed characteristics from those of other starting points.

2.1. The 'Bigger Picture' as a point of departure

Characteristics and terminology

- Approaches take a '**Structural**' perspective, e.g. "the causes of disadvantage are structural resulting from economic change and related changes in housing and labour market."²⁴
- '**Issue-led**', e.g. specified by a funder with knowledge of the issue or the area.²⁵
- It is '**Top down**', e.g. physical, environmental and government/developer led²⁶ (and can therefore feel **parachuted** into an area).
- Also described as a '**Site-focused**' approach (as opposed to 'place-focused') – a funder will already have an idea they want to pilot that addresses a bigger picture issue, and then develops the programme of activity in a specific area.²⁷
- May also take an '**urban perspective**' focusing on "physical infrastructure and the formal powers and resources available to municipalities [...] A place-based approach that adopts a more urban perspective will likely emphasise economic outcomes in its set of objectives and view. For example, investments in transport infrastructure might be key activities in its strategy."²⁸
- Potentially likely to adopt **Collective Impact** style framework. Traditionally, this framework operates at partnership level and is used to describe work that is "structural or issue led, rather than about people and place" and is often critiqued as not recognising the involvement of community groups.²⁹

How involved is the community?

- The 'bigger picture' approach is more about addressing the structure of a place.

²⁴ Taylor, M., Buckley, E. and Hennessy, C. (2017). *Historical review of place-based approaches*. Lankelly Chase. P.21. (<https://lankellychase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Historical-review-of-place-based-approaches.pdf>)

²⁵ Hartridge, B. 'Beyond the Buzz: what is a place-based initiative?' (<https://dartington.org.uk/beyond-the-buzz-what-is-a-place-based-initiative/>)

²⁶ Taylor, M., Buckley, E. and Hennessy, C. (2017). *Historical review of place-based approaches*. Lankelly Chase. P.22. (<https://lankellychase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Historical-review-of-place-based-approaches.pdf>)

²⁷ Ibid, p.28

²⁸ Hartridge, B. 'Beyond the Buzz: what is a place-based initiative?' (<https://dartington.org.uk/beyond-the-buzz-what-is-a-place-based-initiative/>)

²⁹ The Royal Children's Hospital (2011). *Translating early childhood research evidence to inform policy and practice*. Policy Brief Issue 23, 2011. The Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne and the Centre for Community Child Health. (p.5) (<https://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/ccchdev/1807-CCCH-PolicyBrief-30.pdf>)

- Community groups/residents/local business are probably likely to be involved as consultees in recognition of their local knowledge - programmes are probably less focused on community decision-making or empowerment/capacity building.

Benefits for communities

- Ambition may be for policy change for the eventual benefit of people.
- Emphasis may be on economic developments. (See the [Preston economic model](#) programme example below).
- May include infrastructural change³⁰ and development/redevelopment.
- May involve improvements to municipal services. (See the [Worcester UniverCity Partnership](#) programme example below).

Issues to consider

- Some places with pockets of need/deprivation for example, might be overlooked.³¹

Programme examples: Economic Impact

I. Preston's economic model (UK)

From 2011 Preston, in Central Lancashire, was struggling with high levels of local deprivation and cuts to its government grants. In 2013 Preston City Council developed an idea to rebuild the economy from within.

Working alongside UK think tank, The Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES), Preston learned from a US model of 'community wealth building' in Cleveland (Ohio), which explored how large institutions rooted in the city such as hospitals, airports, colleges, housing associations – and local authorities themselves – can be seen as 'anchors' around which regional economic ecosystems can stabilise and grow.

The CLES identified 12 large institutions anchored to Preston, including the city and the county council, the university, the police and the hospital, who were to aim to keep their spending closer to home. The CLES looked at redirecting the £1.2bn total annual spending power of these anchors to local businesses – helping them seek out existing businesses that could win contracts for example.

The amount spent locally has continued to increase; Preston city council has since spent an additional £4m locally, from 14% of its budget in 2012 to 28% in 2016.

Further reading:

- [In 2011 Preston hit rock bottom. Then it took back control](#) (by Aditya Chakrabortty)
- [The Preston model: UK takes lessons in recovery from rust-belt Cleveland](#) (CLES)
- [Could Preston provide a new economic model for Britain's cities?](#) (by Justin Reynolds)

³⁰ Griggs, J., Whitworth, A., Walker, R., McLennan, D. and Noble, M. (2008). *Person or place-based policies to tackle disadvantage? Not knowing what works*. Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

(<https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/person-or-place-based-policies-tackle-disadvantage-not-knowing-what-works>)

³¹ Taylor, M., Buckley, E. and Hennessy, C. (2017). *Historical review of place-based approaches*. Lankelly Chase. P.23. (<https://lankellychase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Historical-review-of-place-based-approaches.pdf>)

2. Worcester UniverCity Partnership (Massachusetts, USA)

The local Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Worcester, a post-industrial and economically struggling city in Massachusetts, came together from 2004-2008 to form local partnerships with businesses as part of a plan to stimulate and sustain economic development. These partnerships connected the resources of the HEIs with local municipal services – tying them more directly to city government and the business community. Economic indicators were set which the partnerships were expected to deliver against, and expansion of the local tax base became one of the overarching themes of the partnerships.

Programme activity included colleges employing Worcester residents, real estate development, college advisory capabilities, workforce development, downtown development, transportation, students as volunteers, professional interns, and marketing Worcester.

UniverCity had two significant successes: the establishment of a benchmarking system to measure the economic development impacts of colleges and universities, and an overall increase in the amount of money spent by colleges and universities locally (contributing more than \$207 million into the Worcester economy at the end of 2007/2008). Many argue that community level impacts are equally as valuable.

However, over time the partnerships were increasingly considered unsustainable. Limiting factors included inadequate funding, structural problems and lack of clear coherent goals.

Further reading:

- [Community Engagement through Partnerships – a primer](#) (By Armand Carriere)
- [Learning from University-Community Partnerships \(Past and Present\) for Sustainable Development](#) (By Jennie C. Stephens, Maria Eugenia Hernandez, and Mary-Ellen Boyle)

2.2. 'Place' as a point of departure

Characteristics and terminology

- Takes a '**Systems**' approach (e.g. the causes of multiple disadvantage and poverty lie in the failure of local systems, skills and services)³² and requires an approach that looks at the whole system.
- It is '**Top down**' – physical, environmental and government/developer led – and can therefore feel 'parachuted in', however it will be more responsive to community and place than the first point of departure.
- Often also known as a **Holistic broad-based approach** – starting from the characteristics of the place.³³

³²Taylor, M., Buckley, E. and Hennessy, C. (2017). *Historical review of place-based approaches*. Lankelly Chase. P.21. (<https://lankellychase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Historical-review-of-place-based-approaches.pdf>)

³³ Hartridge, B. 'Beyond the Buzz: what is a place-based initiative?' (<https://dartington.org.uk/beyond-the-buzz-what-is-a-place-based-initiative/>)

- Also more likely to involve a **'Place-focused'** approach (as opposed to an issue-led or site-focused approach) – working with the whole place to scope and define relevant issues.³⁴ However, some initiatives may begin with some idea of the bigger issue.
- May incorporate **Collective Impact** as a methodology: a “framework for creating large-scale social and systems change.”³⁵ However, Collective Impact is often criticised for its definition which *excludes* community. (See **Logan Together** programme example in Chapter 3).
- Alternatively, may involve **Asset Based Community Development** approaches which starts from the strengths within the community. (See **Leeds GATE** programme example below).

How involved is the community?

- This point of departure appears more responsive to community and place.
- There is often a greater emphasis on community engagement, with the recognition that this is necessary for services to achieve their goals and ensure participation in the initiative's programmes.³⁶
- It will likely involve communities in decision-making around how best to make improvements, e.g. steering groups of local residents/parents and teachers, or local representation on partnership. (See **Building Health Partnerships in Bolton** programme example, below).

Benefits for communities

- Ambition is for systems reform.
- Commonly about a collective of individuals' common experiences, located in one geographic area.
- Often about individuals' wellbeing and being served better by the system.
- The programme of activities will likely be determined by the communities and its local resources.³⁷

Programme example: Asset-based community development

3. Leeds GATE (UK)

Since 2014 Lankelly Chase has been supporting the Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange (GATE) by together exploring ways to address severe and multiple disadvantage affecting travelling communities.

They explored Asset Based Community Development and Co-production which led to greater understanding of the way that systems and people from marginalised groups interact. The concept of 'place' and 'community' in this programme is a mobile one – where places of residence are temporary. Leeds GATE developed a new concept to

³⁴ Taylor, M., Buckley, E. and Hennessy, C. (2017). *Historical review of place-based approaches*. Lankelly Chase. P.28. (<https://lankellychase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Historical-review-of-place-based-approaches.pdf>)

³⁵ What is Collective Impact? <https://opportunitychild.com.au/what-is-collective-impact/>

³⁶ Children's Community Network. *Place-based initiatives affecting outcomes for children and young people*. Save the Children. (<http://www.childrencommunitynetwork.org.uk/file/1149/download?token=PSqTnZK8>)

³⁷ Hartridge, B. 'Beyond the Buzz: what is a place-based initiative?' (<https://dartington.org.uk/beyond-the-buzz-what-is-a-place-based-initiative/>)

describe the issues these communities face when accessing key services which can lead to a poor quality of life, and identified solutions that may overcome these challenges:

- **Roads:** the assumed access to services (schools, the NHS, accommodation). However, the traveller community may experience 'road blocks', e.g. not being able to secure a school place when frequently travelling.
- **Bridges:** strongest when built from both sides, bridges are moments where the community and system co-design a solution to allow access across road blocks.
- **Tunnels:** solutions people develop for themselves to overcoming access barriers.

Programme activity ranged from workshoping with the traveller communities about their powers, to a community-led activity to provide a Clothes Bank for local residents, to lobbying local politicians for change.

Lankelly Chase will build on this learning of Roads, Bridges and Tunnels with marginalised groups, with new asset-based understanding, and leadership development, to address and amend system driven marginalisation.

Further reading:

- [Leeds GATE project summary](#) (by Lankelly Chase and Leeds GATE)
- [Roads, Bridges and Tunnels - what we've learnt through ABCD](#) (by Rogers, E. for Leeds GATE)

Programme example: Collective accountability and youth representation

4. Building Health Partnerships: Bolton (UK)

Building Health Partnerships is a programme established by IVAR. The programme supports a new, whole system approach to the design, commissioning and delivery of local mental health services through establishing new strategic partnerships.

Bolton's involvement with Building Health Partnerships ran during 2014/15 and 2015/16. The programme was driven by a partnership that included the Bolton Clinical Commissioning Group, Bolton Council Children & Adult Services, Public Health, a consortium of voluntary organisations, Bolton Council for Voluntary Services and an IVAR Facilitator. Additionally, the partnership involved and engaged children and young people with lived experience of mental health services.

The Bolton partnership aimed to support children and families in the following ways: through an improved 'offer' that would provide better access to services; an alignment of commissioning and opportunities for joint/cross-sector approaches; and the development of a 'whole system' approach to mental health through the engagement and involvement of key stakeholders through the process – including co-designing future services with children and young people.

The Building Health Partnerships programme in Bolton helped to re-design a pathway for young people accessing mental health services. Programme outputs for young people included:

- A mobile app produced, for young people to access support and services;
- Information sharing and signposting through hubs;

- Pathways and toolkits to help navigate the systems;
- Genuine co-production of CAMHS Transformation Plan with key stakeholders and young people

The partnership programme helped work towards a collective approach to caring for those most vulnerable as well as promoting resilience and early intervention.

Collective accountability and transparency amongst the different partners and stakeholders was key. The programme's involvement of young service users has had a wider system impact on the way the region works, paving the way for future representation and collaborations.

Evaluation by IVAR showed that the programme supported VCSE mental health services to form a local offer that is more joined up, coherent, and less fragmented, which is clearer for commissioners and service users.

In particular, the partnership programme brought about changes in Bolton's approach to the prevention of young suicide creating a more comprehensive, joined up approach. Suicide prevention is now a key priority locally. In Autumn 2017, the Bolton Health and Wellbeing Board announced a multi-agency suicide prevention partnership strategy 2017-2020, with an ambition for zero suicide in Bolton.

Further reading:

- [Building Health Partnerships in Bolton](#)
- [Young persons mental health and suicide prevention](#) presentation for the North West Mental Health Commissioning Network, by Sherida Collins and Barry Glasspell
- Ivar's [Building Health Partnerships programme](#) information

2.3 'People' as a point of departure

Characteristics and terminology

- Takes a 'Communitarian' approach in recognition of social objectives (e.g. the causes of disadvantage lie within the area and its people)³⁸ and can be government-led, funder-led, or grass-roots.
- Also known as a **Community perspective** approach, which prioritises social infrastructure such as civic participation and social networks. Funders investing in programmes with a community perspective might seek to increase residents' capacity to participate in society in order to address issues like social isolation.³⁹

³⁸ Taylor, M., Buckley, E. and Hennessy, C. (2017). *Historical review of place-based approaches*. Lankelly Chase. P.21. (<https://lankellychase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Historical-review-of-place-based-approaches.pdf>)

³⁹ Hartridge, B. 'Beyond the Buzz: what is a place-based initiative?' (<https://dartington.org.uk/beyond-the-buzz-what-is-a-place-based-initiative/>)

- It is more 'Bottom-up', as opposed to top-down, due to the level of involvement of community groups and/or the level of focus on the people.⁴⁰
- Will include a 'Holistic broad-based' approach – as with the 'place' point of departure - starting from the characteristics of the place and their communities.⁴¹

How involved is the community?

- Programmes will likely have a stronger local fit – of the three 'points of departure', this is most about the local people and their place/locality.⁴²
- Will involve significant community engagement with a vision to developing community and individual capacity and addressing challenges within.

Benefits for communities

- Can achieve neighbourhood level change.⁴³
- Foci may be about local services, systems, opportunities, offer and access. (See **Birmingham SEMH Pathfinder** programme example below).
- Can be hyperlocal in focus which means solutions to challenges are owned by and built from within the area. (See **Pembury Estate** programme example, below).
- Frequently comes out of a local, collective experience of adversity or local unrest.⁴⁴
- The programme of activities will be determined by the communities and its local resources.⁴⁵

Issues to consider

- Can't address structural challenges, e.g. to the structural causes of poverty, as it does not necessarily connect with regional or national policy.⁴⁶
- 'Differences in places are differences in need'⁴⁷ and funders need to be aware that it cannot be assumed that the programmes, approaches or the learning from one area can necessarily be lifted into another neighbourhood.

⁴⁰ Taylor, M., Buckley, E. and Hennessy, C. (2017). *Historical review of place-based approaches*. Lankelly Chase. P.22. (<https://lankellychase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Historical-review-of-place-based-approaches.pdf>)

⁴¹ Hartridge, B. 'Beyond the Buzz: what is a place-based initiative?' (<https://dartington.org.uk/beyond-the-buzz-what-is-a-place-based-initiative/>)

⁴² Griggs, J., Whitworth, A., Walker, R., McLennan, D. and Noble, M. (2008). *Person or place-based policies to tackle disadvantage? Not knowing what works*. Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

(<https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/person-or-place-based-policies-tackle-disadvantage-not-knowing-what-works>)

⁴³ Taylor, M., Buckley, E. and Hennessy, C. (2017). *Historical review of place-based approaches*. Lankelly Chase. P.23. (<https://lankellychase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Historical-review-of-place-based-approaches.pdf>)

⁴⁴ Ibid, P.18

⁴⁵ Julia Griggs, Adam Whitworth, Robert Walker, David McLennan and Michael Noble (2008). *Person or place-based policies to tackle disadvantage? Not knowing what works*. Joseph Rowntree Foundation. (<https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/person-or-place-based-policies-tackle-disadvantage-not-knowing-what-works>)

⁴⁶ Taylor, M., Buckley, E. and Hennessy, C. (2017). *Historical review of place-based approaches*. Lankelly Chase. P.23. (<https://lankellychase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Historical-review-of-place-based-approaches.pdf>)

⁴⁷ Ibid, P.23

Programme example: Hyperlocal and systems mix

5. Pembury Estate (Hackney London, UK)

Pembury is one of three pilot locations for Save the Children's 'Children's Communities' initiative in the UK.

An area with a deep connection to the London riots of 2011, the initiative aims to co-ordinate and deliver a long-term and holistic approach to improving outcomes for children and young people in the area. The initiative has a 'vision for 2025', and it intends to strike a balance between:

- Connecting both children and their parents to the existing network of services in the borough by bringing services closer to the community and exploring how they could be improved;
- Building the capacity of individuals and the community so that they can help themselves.

The Pembury initiative relies on a partnership which includes local residents and a wide range of agencies (including Peabody, Hackney Council, and local schools). It is led by Peabody and Hackney Council and governed by a board, operations group and residents steering group. Activity so far has included:

- Gathering evidence of community need through local consultation and research.
- A vision and theory of change to guide the work.
- Working in partnership to deliver services for children, young people and families.
- Developing new services, in response to community need.

According to the 2018 interim evaluation, service-level impact so far includes the development of new services providing integrated support to families and young people, and the rolling out of this approach to other Peabody estates as a model for neighbourhood transformation. The evaluation hints that the programme needs to continue to develop community capacity and the shared responsibility to drive forward changes for themselves – which takes some time.

Further reading:

- [Pembury Children's Community Webpage](#)
- [Pembury Evaluation report 2018 - executive summary](#)
- [Early Intervention Foundation case study](#)

Programme example: Relational support

6. Birmingham Social and Emotional Mental Health Pathfinder (UK)

Supported by Lankelly Chase, the Birmingham SEMH Pathfinder is a multi-agency, collaborative approach to working with children and families with multiple complex needs.

Research identified that many young people in Birmingham were being expelled from schools and placed in special education for Social and Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) needs, without a real understanding of the reasons behind their poor behaviour. In some cases, these young people were found to be experiencing trauma and mental health problems, rather than special educational needs.

Three key values shape the SEMH Pathfinder to create a model of 'relational support,' which underpins the programme, building strong and trusting relationships with families:

- **Shared authority:** recognising a new approach that moves away from the traditional client-agency imbalance of power, and instead recognises the value of co-production, the expertise of lived experiences and the importance of a non-judgmental approach, built upon a relational model of working. Encouraging parents and young people to create formal structures that can shape practices and policies.
- **Nurture:** working with compassion, empathy and positive regard.
- **Commitment to social justice:** elegantly challenging systems that disadvantage families

A core team of multi-agency professionals works with young people and their families, identified by the schools. The team facilitates a greater understanding of the adverse experiences and the wider circumstances of each family. This informs personalised support structures to enable families to use their strengths to overcome challenges affecting their lives.

The Birmingham SEMH Pathfinder has observed a number of qualitative impacts to date:

- Family members feel more able to disclose the real problems that need resolution;
- Working together throughout the school life of the student offers families, and professionals, an opportunity for longer-term and more positive relationships;
- Practical help is reaching families earlier and more quickly than it would otherwise;
- Sustainable impacts are more likely because of a focus on clients rather than on tasks of each individual agency.
- Positive and longer-term relationships create more capacity in families to enable sustained change.

Further reading:

- [Birmingham SEMH Pathfinder project summary](#)
- Clare Wightman and Rob McCabe, 2018, 'Re-thinking family interventions from an ACE perspective' in [Addressing Adversity](#), Youth Minds (p.336-343).

As mentioned earlier, across this spectrum of 'points of departure', there is often a mix/borrowing of approaches – as highlighted by the programme examples, which have included instances where the value of community representation and engagement play an important role, in balance with economic impact or systems reform.

3. Learning: How and why will place-based work be effective?

So far, this paper has aimed to support two key questions that any developing place-level partnership will be considering: *How do we define 'place'?* And *What is our definition of place-based work?*

This chapter explores the third question: *How and why will place-based work be effective?* Initially we look briefly at the benefits of a place-based approach for partnerships and stakeholders following the detailed review of two place-based initiatives: Building Health Partnerships in Bolton and the Birmingham SEMH Pathfinder. (See these programme examples above)

This chapter then draws together learning about 5 aspects of place-based working: evaluation; effective partnerships; community involvement and engagement; sustainability; and ecology. These areas of learning were identified during the review of literature and the development of the programme example case studies, and were informed by discussion points at three events with A New Direction.⁴⁸

3.1. Benefits of a place-based partnership approach

The following list is a brief summary of the benefits for partnerships and stakeholders of place-based initiatives, informed by the review of a range of literature and illustrated by two place-based initiatives Building Health Partnerships in Bolton and the Birmingham SEMH Pathfinder.⁴⁹

Some benefits include:

- Better local-level relationships and more logical joined-up working

In Birmingham, greater **relationship building** across agencies and families is creating a broader support structure.

In Bolton, collaborative and partnership working has **strengthened relationships, ideas, practice** and in turn supported **cost savings**.⁵⁰

- Increased capacity and ideas

In Bolton, partners joined forces to **generate ideas** for how to provide better access to children and young people's mental health support services.

- Opportunities for co-creation with service users

⁴⁸ CPP Peer Learning session on cultural ecologies and eco-systems in November 2018; Partnerships, Co-production and Compromise event in October 2018; Connect Lab peer learning event in November 2018

⁴⁹ As the assumption is that the reader is already engaged and persuaded by this sort of practice, these benefits are not exhaustive nor are they intended to convince the reader of something they have already bought into.

⁵⁰ Sourced from: <https://www.ivar.org.uk/our-research/building-health-partnerships-bolton/>

In Birmingham, parents and young people are recognised as an important **part of the solution** for support and advice for families in crisis, and also inform and steer policy and wider systems change.⁵¹

In Bolton, approaches were co-designed, integrated, asset-based to provide **local solutions**.⁵²

- Change / Effectiveness

In Birmingham, the multi-agency partnership has seen the potential for a **systems-level approach to change**, adopting methodologies including Geels' theory of systems change, Co-resolve, as well as ORSC (organisation, relationships, systems coaching).⁵³

In Bolton, the cross-sector partnership met the health and wellbeing needs of local people **more effectively**.⁵⁴

- Sustainability

In Birmingham, **sustainable impacts** are felt to be more likely because of the multi-agency partnership's focus on clients rather than on tasks of each individual agency.⁵⁵

3.2. Areas for consideration

The following five points propose ideas for developing partnerships to reflect on, whilst considering the question *How and why will a place-based approach be effective?*

3.2.1. Evaluation, reflection and sharing learning

The majority of the literature agrees that evaluating a place-based approach can be challenging. In particular, programmes are often not funded to be able to observe and capture long-term outcomes. Therefore the value, success, sustainability and legacy is often unclear.⁵⁶ Additionally, the range of partners will bring different objectives that are diverse, and each one will have their own competing evaluation approach.⁵⁷ Stakeholders' interests and priorities may shift over time, and for some there may be tensions between local and national objectives.⁵⁸ Also, the common thread of change that might be sought through these

⁵¹ Wightman, C. and McCabe, R. 'Re-thinking family interventions from an ACE perspective' in Addressing Adversity, Youth Minds (<https://youngminds.org.uk/media/2142/ym-addressing-adversity-book-web.pdf>) (p.342)

⁵² Sourced from: <https://www.ivar.org.uk/our-research/building-health-partnerships-bolton/>

⁵³ Sourced from: <https://lankellychase.org.uk/project-summary/birmingham/>

⁵⁴ Sourced from: <https://www.ivar.org.uk/our-research/building-health-partnerships/>

⁵⁵ Wightman, C. and McCabe, R. 'Re-thinking family interventions from an ACE perspective' in Addressing Adversity, Youth Minds (<https://youngminds.org.uk/media/2142/ym-addressing-adversity-book-web.pdf>) (p.342)

⁵⁶ Taylor, M., Buckley, E. and Hennessy, C. (2017). *Historical review of place-based approaches*. Lankelly Chase. P.59. (<https://lankellychase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Historical-review-of-place-based-approaches.pdf>)

⁵⁷ Munro, F. (2015). Place-Based Working, Iriss. (<https://www.iriss.org.uk/resources/irisson/place-based-working>)

⁵⁸ Taylor, M., Buckley, E. and Hennessy, C. (2017). *Historical review of place-based approaches*. Lankelly Chase. P.55. (<https://lankellychase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Historical-review-of-place-based-approaches.pdf>)

initiatives is qualitative: behavioural shifts, the quality of relationships, the nature and meaning of participation (in programmes or indeed in society overall).⁵⁹

For some, this lack of robust evaluation and evidence of impact has challenged the extent to which the case for place-based working can be made.⁶⁰

There is a range of advice available, and the next few paragraphs bring together the evaluation approaches and methods as identified during the research for this paper.

Steps to consider:

- Theory of change – to define the assumptions in which the programme is built and define what success might look like and how it can be measured. “Community members are an important part of this process and have sometimes been involved as community researchers, tapping into a variety of creative methods including film and social media. This gives them ownership of the process as well as new skills.”⁶¹
- Theory of Place – this will allow partnerships to articulate the rationale for working in a place and map out its focus/foci and resources.⁶²
- Co-creation of an evaluation strategy with the partners, to “help ensure that long-term outcomes and changes are captured alongside any capacity building, participation, relationships and behaviour change.”⁶³
- Building in time regularly for conversations about “what we really want to achieve” and “putting the issue at the centre of the table.”⁶⁴

Evaluation and impact measurement approaches:

- Contribution Analysis, adopted by Iriss.⁶⁵
- Participatory/Utilisation-Focused evaluation or Narrative Approaches, adopted by Iriss⁶⁶
- Public value approach, adopted by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation⁶⁷

⁵⁹ Munro, F. (2015). Place-Based Working, Iriss. (<https://www.iriss.org.uk/resources/irisson/place-based-working>)

⁶⁰ The Royal Children’s Hospital (2011). *Translating early childhood research evidence to inform policy and practice*. Policy Brief Issue 23, 2011. The Royal Children’s Hospital, Melbourne and the Centre for Community Child Health (https://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/ccch/Policy_Brief_23_-_place-based_approaches_final_web2.pdf)

⁶¹ Taylor, M., Buckley, E. and Hennessy, C. (2017). *Historical review of place-based approaches*. Lankelly Chase. P.55. (<https://lankellychase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Historical-review-of-place-based-approaches.pdf>)

⁶² Originally emerging from the research of R. Barker during the development of Ecological Psychology (1968), Theory of Place is now advised for and adopted by place-based programmes, according to Taylor, M., Buckley, E. and Hennessy, C. (p.28)

⁶³ Munro, F. (2015). Place-Based Working, Iriss. (<https://www.iriss.org.uk/resources/irisson/place-based-working>)

⁶⁴ Eliza Buckley, during her presentation at the Partnerships, Coproduction and Compromise event, November 2018.

⁶⁵ Munro, F. (2015). Place-Based Working, Iriss. (<https://www.iriss.org.uk/resources/irisson/place-based-working>)

⁶⁶ Ibid

⁶⁷ Telfer, S. (2013). What makes effective place-based working? Joseph Rowntree Foundation. P.2-3. (<https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/what-makes-effective-place-based-working>)

- Get Talking, a creative and embedded evaluation approach adopted by the CPP Programme in Stoke on Trent.⁶⁸

These lists are by no means exhaustive. However, as identified by IVAR's research into the history of place-based work, "evaluation is not just about impact; many funders are as interested to learn how change is achieved and want to capture unanticipated outcomes."⁶⁹ An important step therefore is to capture the learning and share it.

Some strategies for tracking learning include:

- A structured action research process, to acknowledge learning and adapt programmes continuously.⁷⁰ Or to 'fail better' as one presenter said at the CPP event.
- Peer learning exchange, to share, learn, reflect and critique.⁷¹
- Research – building time to read up to date research material and consider how to implement ideas is vital and should be a core element. "Being creative about ways to build intentional learning strategies into day to day operations" is important, advised one report for USA funders of place-based programmes, First 5 LA.⁷²
- Process evaluation – an important tool documenting, assessing and learning from the development and implementation of a programme.⁷³

Readers considering these points within their own programmes may find value in referring to the [Powerful Partnerships Resource Library](#).⁷⁴ In particular, the self-reflection tools in the [Powerful Partnerships framework activities](#) support how learning is tracked and shared.

3.2.2. Effective partnership work and collective impact

A New Direction has already done much research into 'powerful partnerships', however a scan of the literature and observation of advice at three place-themed events has identified information and examples to add to what many of us already know.

- Be clear about your own drivers, what is it you are all really trying to achieve – as a funder and as an individual in a partnership? "Know thyself".⁷⁵

⁶⁸ For more about Get Talking, see: <http://blogs.staffs.ac.uk/ccu/current-research-and-projects/creative-and-participatory-evaluation/get-talking/>

⁶⁹ Taylor, M., Buckley, E. and Hennessy, C. (2017). *Historical review of place-based approaches*. Lankelly Chase. P.55. (<https://lankellychase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Historical-review-of-place-based-approaches.pdf>)

⁷⁰ Eliza Buckley, during her presentation at the Partnerships, Coproduction and Compromise event, November 2018.

⁷¹ See for example the Creative People and Places blog about peer learning: Greater than the Sum of its Parts, by Sara Robinson (2015) (<http://www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/blog/greater-sum-its-parts-unlocking-potential-peer-learning>)

⁷² Juarez & Associates and Harder+Company (2011). *Best Practices in Place-Based Initiatives: Implications for Implementation and Evaluation of Best Start*. First 5 LA. (p.18). (https://www.first5la.org/files/07864_2LiteratureReview_NoAppendix_11282011.pdf)

⁷³ Ibid, p.26

⁷⁴ As mentioned earlier, the Powerful Partnerships Resource Library consists of case studies, tools and literature to support developing partnerships at place-level. [Powerful Partnerships Resource Library](#)

⁷⁵ Juarez & Associates and Harder+Company (2011). *Best Practices in Place-Based Initiatives: Implications for Implementation and Evaluation of Best Start*. First 5 LA. (p.22). (https://www.first5la.org/files/07864_2LiteratureReview_NoAppendix_11282011.pdf)

- Time, roles and responsibilities all need to be clear.⁷⁶
- Leadership: who will do the relationship building?
- Be realistic: "It may never be possible for organisations doing such work to please everyone all the time."⁷⁷
- Openness - Are we being honest with each other?
- Humanity - Taking time to listen and really hear, can enable a true dialogue and collaboration, not just a transaction.⁷⁸
- What do we need to give up in order to gain more?⁷⁹
- Consider different frameworks for working together effectively.

Collective impact: What is it?

Here we look closely at one framework for collaboration, most commonly part of the dialogue of place-based work: Collective Impact, defined in 2011 by Kania and Kramer.⁸⁰

Collective Impact consists of 5 original 'conditions' to support transformative change in partnership: A common agenda; Shared measurement systems; Mutually reinforcing activities; Continuous communications; The presence of a lead organisation that brings dedicated staff to coordinate and handle the logistics of partnership working.⁸¹

Things to consider...

- According to an Australian Policy Briefing by the Centre for Community Child Health, Collective Impact is often used to describe work that is "structural or issue-led, rather than about people and place."⁸²
- Most widespread criticism is its 'top-down' characteristics emerging from a 'top-down business consulting model'⁸³ - not addressing community engagement or including communities as decision-makers and active collaborators.⁸⁴
- According to some, Collective Impact purists will need to be mindful that solutions will both require, and cause, significant systemic changes. Therefore, a mix of systemic and policy change, and engaging government within Collective Impact programmes, is

⁷⁶ Tom Andrews and Eliza Buckley both offered similar advice in their respective presentations

⁷⁷ Telfer, S. (2013). What makes effective place-based working? Joseph Rowntree Foundation. P.2-3.
(<https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/what-makes-effective-place-based-working>)

⁷⁸ Andrews, T. (2018). The Four Pillars of Partnership. Creative People and Places.
(<http://www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/blog/four-pillars-partnerships>)

⁷⁹ From the Partnerships, Coproduction and Compromise event, November 2018.

⁸⁰ Kania, J. & Kramer, M. (2011). Collective impact. Stanford Innovation Review, Winter, 36-41.
www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective_impact/?zbrandid=2039&zidType=CH&zid=1634595&zsubscriberId=500518267&zbdom=aracy.informz.net

⁸¹ Ibid

⁸² Policy Brief Issue 23, 2011. *Translating early childhood research evidence to inform policy and practice*. The Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne and the Centre for Community Child Health. (p.5)
<https://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/ccchdev/1807-CCCH-PolicyBrief-30.pdf>

⁸³ 10 Places Where Collective Impact Gets It Wrong by Tom Wolf (2016)
https://charterforcompassion.org/images/menus/communities/pdfs/230209_Wolff_reprint-1.pdf

⁸⁴ Ibid

advised. This is because causes of issues such as poverty, disadvantage and poor outcomes for children and young people can be both social and economic.⁸⁵

- However, increasingly, Collective Impact programmes are borrowing characteristics from other approaches across the 'points of departure' mentioned in Chapter 2, frequently including more community engagement.

An alternative framework: Place-Based Collective Impact

Australia adopted the Collective Impact framework with zest from 2011 onwards, with over 80 Collective Impact style programmes across the country by 2016.⁸⁶ However, observing some of the limitations and criticisms of the five conditions, it refined the concept to develop a 'Place-Based Collective Impact' approach specifically for child-development initiatives. This provided a new framework consisting of a further set of principles in addition to the original conditions, to guide and drive programmes.

One key difference is that Place-Based Collective Impact is about systems and communities rather than about structural change or being issue-led.⁸⁷ It is "a comprehensive, systematic and dynamic model of principles of practice framed as an organisational theory of action within a larger system level theory of change."⁸⁸

However, its limitations are acknowledged; "Place-Based Collective Impact initiatives are not... necessarily appropriate policy responses to policy challenges that are less complex and less immune to conventional policy solutions. In effect, their remit is quite limited."⁸⁹

Ecology informs the Place-Based Collective Impact model, looking at the specific ecological context of child development.⁹⁰ This is explored further in the following case study about Place-Based Collective Impact initiative **Logan Together**, in Australia NSW. Ecology is also discussed further later in this chapter, see **A Better Start Blackpool** programme example.

Programme Example: Place-Based Collective Impact

7. Logan Together

Logan Together is a Place-Based Collective Impact initiative in the Logan community, south of Brisbane, Australia. Recent data shows that there are over 42,000 children aged 0-8 years, in a region that is considered one of the fastest growing areas in Australia.

⁸⁵ Smart, J. 2014. 'What is Collective Impact' Australian Institute of Family Studies

<https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/collective-impact-evidence-and-implications-practice/what-collective-impact>

⁸⁶ Graham, K., & Weaver, L. (2016). Engage for impact (presentation). Canberra: Department of Social Services

⁸⁷ Policy Brief Issue 23, 2011. *Translating early childhood research evidence to inform policy and practice*. The Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne and the Centre for Community Child Health. (p.5)

<https://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/ccchdev/1807-CCCH-PolicyBrief-30.pdf>

⁸⁸ Hogan, D., Rubenstein, L., and Fry, R. (2018) *Framing place-based principles of collective impact, Vol 1*.

Opportunity Child and Logan Together. (p.4) <https://opportunitychild.com.au/download/framing-place-based-collective-impact-principles-a-public-policy-response-to-childhood-developmental-vulnerability-volume-1/>

⁸⁹ Ibid (p.7)

⁹⁰ Ibid (p.52)

The initiative, supported by Opportunity Child,⁹¹ is explicitly focused on reducing high levels of childhood developmental vulnerability in that region. It began in 2015 with a vision for Logan: “making a difference to the lives of 5,000 kids in Logan by 2025.” It endorses a long term, whole community effort to create the best life opportunities for every child in Logan and seeks collaborative innovation for systems change.

The partnership comprises human services sector workers, NGOs, state, federal and local government, philanthropic organisations, and the Logan community - a diverse group of people from throughout the community who share a passion for children’s development. Partners pool resources and align their focusses on improving outcomes for Logan kids: to grow them up well.

Logan Together has defined 4 ‘Design Principles’ which help define its programmes: Engagement and mobilisation; collective partnerships; co-design; and shared aspirations and outcomes.

The programme of activity includes strategic projects and tactical projects.

An ecology approach has informed this project model:

“For the most part, our analysis relies on ecological data reported at the community level. Using a combination of aggregated ecological data and individual level data, we were able to generate a comprehensive picture of key outcome indicators of the health and wellbeing of children (and their families) and the particular risk and protective factors associated with these as outcome measures...”

Logan Together tracks the impact of its work through developmental, health and social data studies across children and parents. Targets within these focus areas are set for 2025, however at time of writing (2019) it was acknowledged that an impact cannot be observed so soon.

Further reading:

- [Logan Together](#) website
- [Framing Place-Based Collective Impact Principles: A Public Policy Response to Childhood Developmental Vulnerability prepared](#) by Opportunity Child with Logan Together.
- [The origins of Logan Together](#)

Readers considering frameworks for effective partnerships within their own place-based programmes may find value in referring to the [Powerful Partnerships Resource Library](#). In particular, the [Powerful Partnership framework](#) sets out 13 ingredients for ‘joint work of value’.

3.2.3. How should communities be involved?

A review of literature and observation of the discussions at the three place-themed events has identified three important ingredients in ensuring communities are involved and represented:

⁹¹ Opportunity Child is a whole-child development investment programme. It funds a great deal of Place-Based Collective Impact initiatives supporting child development across Australia.
<https://www.opportunitychild.com.au/>

- Power: Looking at the hierarchies in organisations for power-sharing opportunities.
- Commitment: Taking definitive action, involving the right people/groups, seeing it through to the long term, which requires bravery at a high level in an organisation
- Money: Fund it and/or budget for it.

Each option has different implications on the relationship with local residents, and in each case there is likely be the tension between 'letting go' of decisions vs accountability/being accountable to the mission of your programme/organisation.

A review of literature has informed some common power-sharing models, identified below.

Power-sharing models

- Boards, panels, local advisory groups: these groups are frequently adopted by place-based programmes. Usually supported by Terms of Reference, community representatives will support the decision-making to some degree, often with a defined degree of voting power. However individuals may struggle to commit to regular meetings over the period of time needed, and numerous programmes have experienced either difficulty recruiting a panel or a 'drop-off' in attendance.⁹² Establishing together what partners want for these communities and what participants/residents want from the process, may increase commitment (although programmes will always compete against everything else in the lives of those people/ in this place, which impacts on their decisions about whether to take part).
- Local community coordinator roles: Ambassadors, Bridge-builders, Connectors (e.g. CPP), Local coordinators (e.g. Communities First Wales), Light Touch Facilitators (e.g. Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Big Local initiatives).⁹³ These are representatives, on the ground, locally known, who are able to use their communication networks to increase awareness and engagement and maintain momentum in the programme. However, they are often self-elected, and may wrestle with their own interests. Some programmes also over-rely on volunteers, and therefore it may be wise to consider budgeting for funded roles.

Readers considering power-sharing structures within their own programmes may find value in referring to the [Powerful Partnerships Resource Library](#). In particular, the documents [10 guiding questions](#) and [Harnessing young people's voices in powerful partnerships](#) supports partnerships to consider how to embed local voices, specifically representation of young voices, into the early development of programmes.

Power and commitment – things to consider

"Arrive gently. Engage patiently. Stay a while."⁹⁴

This quote implies a commitment to long-term programming, revolving around building trusting relationships and confidence. This also implies a shift: from communities engaging with programmes, to *programmes engaging with communities*. How much time should effective engagement with communities take?

⁹² Examples include individual CPP programmes, as well as Communities First Wales, Taylor, M., Buckley, E. and Hennessy, C. (2017). *Historical review of place-based approaches*. Lankelly Chase. P.47.

(<https://lankellychase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Historical-review-of-place-based-approaches.pdf>)

⁹³ Ibid

⁹⁴ Carolyn Sawers, Corra Foundation, (<https://www.ivar.org.uk/our-research/place-based-funding/>)

IVAR outlined that one year minimum, for any programme, should be spent generating ideas and building buy-in.⁹⁵ Many funded UK place-based programmes appear to last 3 years, or consist of 3-year rounds of funding which are open to reapplication afterwards. However...

"Problems that have been decades in the making will not be reversed in a few short years".⁹⁶

According to US literature, 7-10 years is a common time-frame for a programme, reflecting the commitment needed and the reality of the amount of time change can take.⁹⁷ With this in mind, the sorts of change that can be realised in a 3-year programme suddenly feel limited. Capacity and capability may be observed in pockets of the community, but health, economic and deeper-set social outcomes will likely come much further down the line.

Readers looking for more guidance on committing to and resourcing more democratic community engagement within their own place-based programmes may find value in referring to the [Powerful Partnerships Resource Library](#). In particular, the [Shared decision-making toolkit](#) offers practical guidance and examples from the Creative People and Places programme.

3.2.4. Place or ecology?

An ecological approach to place-based practices is something A New Direction has been exploring since 2016 alongside researchers Dr Jonathan Gross and Dr Nick Wilson of King's College London.⁹⁸ But not everyone is aware of how to, or ready to, work in this way yet.

Points to consider...

- Ecological approaches can support place-based work and it provides a greater holistic dimension to both how the interrelationships operate in a place and indeed help form and shape a place, as well as the barriers to taking part.
- The language of place and ecology is often mixed, combined, confused, but not all place-based work involves/engages in an ecological understanding of the factors.
- However, Logan Together, mentioned earlier, and A Better Start in Blackpool specifically reference it. Both programmes take the theoretical view of an 'ecological systems model' to child development - originally defined by US psychologist Bronfenbrenner in 1979⁹⁹ - as a basis for data gathering to influence the ways these

⁹⁵ Taylor, M., Buckley, E. and Hennessy, C. (2017). *Historical review of place-based approaches*. Lankelly Chase. P.52. (<https://lankellychase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Historical-review-of-place-based-approaches.pdf>)

⁹⁶ The Royal Children's Hospital (2011). *Translating early childhood research evidence to inform policy and practice*. Policy Brief Issue 23, 2011. The Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne and the Centre for Community Child Health. (<https://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/ccchdev/1807-CCCH-PolicyBrief-30.pdf>)

⁹⁷ Examples include individual CPP programmes, as well as Communities First Wales, Taylor, M., Buckley, E. and Hennessy, C. (2017). *Historical review of place-based approaches*. Lankelly Chase. P.52. (<https://lankellychase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Historical-review-of-place-based-approaches.pdf>)

⁹⁸ See [Caring for Cultural Freedom](#). Additionally, since 2018, A New Direction and King's College London are collaborating on a new piece of Ecology research with the Creative People and Places programme.

⁹⁹ American psychologist Uri Bronfenbrenner developed the ecological model of child development: that children do not develop in a vacuum but grow up in, and are shaped by, complex overlapping and interactive social ecologies of one kind or another. He featured the child at the centre, surrounded by close/immediate family and household influences, followed by informal networks (including neighbours, friends, peers), community networks and services, and broader social environmental and political influences (See Framing place-based principles of collective impact, by Opportunity Child and Logan Together.

programmes develop.¹⁰⁰ This may be relevant to A New Direction and the nature of their work, as well as other place-based initiatives supporting children and young people in some way.

- Additionally, it is important for funders to be aware of the very fact that a place-based programme will always be part of a 'larger community ecology', which may include other place-based initiatives.¹⁰¹

Readers wishing to explore ecological perspectives within their own place-based programmes may find value in referring to the [Powerful Partnerships Resource Library](#). In particular, [Caring for Cultural Freedom](#) puts forward a cultural ecology model for supporting cultural learning.

Programme example: Place and Ecology

8. A Better Start Blackpool

Blackpool has some of the most deprived communities in the UK. It was awarded 10-year Big Lottery funding from 2015 to 2025 as part of A Better Start, which aims to design and develop a strategy and programme to transform children's life chances.

Bronfenbrenner's 'ecological systems model' for early childhood development underpins this initiative: the ecology and layers of broader societal influence, and how these might affect parenting in the community, are being explored.

Led by the NSPCC, the partnership includes the Local Authority, Clinical Commissioning Group, Blackpool Hospital Teaching Trust, Police and the community. It brings together local families, communities and agencies from across public, private and voluntary sectors. The programme aims for systems transformation and programmes are divided into activities that support change for a population and change for those with additional needs experiencing high levels of adversity.

Programme activity comes under three main, interrelated areas:

- diet and nutrition
- social and emotional development
- speech, language and communication.

A simple framework was developed to guide the commissioning of projects and activities, as defined by the community service providers and professionals. Projects should:

- demonstrate a reduction in community stressors
- help build individual capabilities

<https://opportunitychild.com.au/download/framing-place-based-collective-impact-principles-a-public-policy-response-to-childhood-developmental-vulnerability-volume-1/> p.52)

¹⁰⁰ See both Hogan, D., Rubenstein, L., and Fry, R. (2018) *Framing place-based principles of collective impact, Vol 1*. Opportunity Child and Logan Together. (<https://opportunitychild.com.au/download/framing-place-based-collective-impact-principles-a-public-policy-response-to-childhood-developmental-vulnerability-volume-1/>) and Juarez & Associates and Harder+Company (2011). *Best Practices in Place-Based Initiatives: Implications for Implementation and Evaluation of Best Start*. First 5 LA. (https://www.first5la.org/files/07864_2LiteratureReview_NoAppendix_11282011.pdf)

¹⁰¹ Juarez & Associates and Harder+Company (2011). *Best Practices in Place-Based Initiatives: Implications for Implementation and Evaluation of Best Start*. First 5 LA. (p.24). https://www.first5la.org/files/07864_2LiteratureReview_NoAppendix_11282011.pdf

Further reading:

- Programme website: <https://www.blackpoolbetterstart.org.uk/>
- [A Better Start](#) programme information
- [Emerging patterns in place-based approaches: International perspectives](#)

3.2.5. Sustainability

According to the literature researched for this paper, many place-based initiatives do not effectively address sustainability. This may be down to a lack of clarity about what is being sustained (the programme, the organisation body, community impact...), and time-limited funding for programmes that often resource activities rather than the process structures that can support future sustainability.¹⁰²

In many ways, sustainability brings together the four areas for consideration previously discussed: evaluation, partnerships, community engagement and ecology.

Points to consider...

- What are you hoping to sustain? Is this hope shared by/communicated clearly to all partners and stakeholders?
- Working directly with communities offers the potential to embed change from within, however this sort of work requires substantial capacity to sustain the engagement of the community groups.
- How will you exit the place – what will your exit strategy be?
- How will you measure the degree of change? What makes successful sustainable impact?
- Handing over the power of decisions and action to local residents arguably increases the potential for change to be sustained.
- What is a realistic timeframe for a programme to create sustainable impacts?

Readers looking to explore these issues of sustainability as well as the wider implications of power-sharing within their own place-based programmes may find value in referring to the [Powerful Partnerships Resource Library](#). In particular, [Power Up](#) delves deep into the complexities of these practices.

4. Concluding thoughts: Considerations, complexities and counterarguments

In this final chapter, key areas for consideration are pulled together to support the following questions that developing place-level partnerships may be considering:

¹⁰² Association for the Study and Development of Community (2007). *Scope, scale and sustainability: What it takes to create lasting community change*. Maryland: ASDC

1. How do we define 'place'?
2. What is our definition of 'place-based work'?
3. How and why will a place-based approach be effective?
4. What alternative approaches are there?

4.1. How do we define 'place'?

The position seems clear from those funding and supporting place-based initiatives, that place is generally defined by geographic and administrative definitions,¹⁰³ but is this how you choose to define the area you will work in? Is your definition of place shared by other partners? Is it shared by those who live and work and have experience of the area? There are a variety of answers to the question of defining 'place'; some that can be seen on a map and some not. Definitions will range from those that are geographic and location-centred, to ones that are about administrative boundaries,¹⁰⁴ to the senses and feelings evoked by place.

4.2. What is our definition of 'place-based work'?

How will you decide the characteristics of the approaches to adopt/ invest in, and which characteristics to borrow from other 'points of departure'?

How will you choose to fund your initiatives – responding to an issue, or starting from a challenge? Or starting with the place and its people as your point of departure, to co-define the focus/issue? The literature reviewed identified the tension between these approaches,¹⁰⁵ on the one-hand working with/in a set of assumptions that forms a top-down approach which may not be truly relevant to a place, on the other hand starting from scratch and staying responsive to arising needs will be challenging if trying to achieve local/partner buy-in – what are they buying into?

4.3. How and why will a place-based approach be effective?

What lessons can we learn from previous place-based initiatives around evaluation, effective partnerships, community involvement and engagement, sustainability and an ecological approach?

- Evaluation: are we clear on what we want to collectively achieve and how we can collectively measure it? How will we track and share learning?
- Partnership: what frameworks can support how we can be effective in working together to address our shared goal? What will we give up in order to achieve more? Are we being honest and open with each other?
- Community engagement: where do power-sharing opportunities exist? Can we resource power sharing models? Can we sustain a long-term approach? What capacity is available?

¹⁰³ See for example the IVAR page: <https://www.ivar.org.uk/our-research/place-based-funding/>

¹⁰⁴ Hartridge, B. 'Beyond the Buzz: what is a place-based initiative?' <https://dartington.org.uk/beyond-the-buzz-what-is-a-place-based-initiative/>

¹⁰⁵ See for example: Taylor, M., Buckley, E. and Hennessy, C. (2017). *Historical review of place-based approaches*. Lankelly Chase. P.28. <https://lankellychase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Historical-review-of-place-based-approaches.pdf>

- **Ecology:** Is there greater value in taking an ecological approach? This can support place-based work with a holistic dimension of interrelationships, opportunities, issues and barriers, as well as identifying other place-based initiatives. Is the language of ecology helpful to your programme context? Programmes that are focused on children and young people may also refer to the ecological systems model of child development.
- **Sustainability:** what are we hoping to sustain in this place? How will we measure sustainable impacts? What will our exit strategy be?

4.4. What alternative approaches are there?

The principle counterargument to place-based approaches to transformational change, is people/person-focused. Advocates for this approach maintain that the best chance of improving the lives of people is to deliver improvements to them, regardless of where they live.¹⁰⁶

Place or people? Can the two ever be divided? As mentioned previously, funders' definitions of 'place' are frequently location specific and often specific to local authority boundaries.¹⁰⁷ However, do the people of a given place share this definition, or might they also talk about the more emotional, personal, human responses about living in this place? Or the nuances of feeling like you belong, or not? Possibly. If this is the case, might there be natural, or even 'logical', synergies between place and person-based approaches?¹⁰⁸

A number of writers on the subject of place-based practices seem to agree, some citing the gaps that a person-specific approach will have (e.g. misdiagnosis of issues, lack of an asset-based approach, tokenistic community engagement and short-term horizons).¹⁰⁹ On the other hand, according to the Centre for Community Child Health in Australia, place-based approaches are 'not sufficient on their own' to ensure a sustainable improvement in child and family outcomes. They list a further two approaches which may complement place-based approaches: One is person-based as mentioned before, where direct help is available to individuals with the most need. The other is a national approach, to minimise the impact on families from regional and national level stressors such as housing, employment and education.¹¹⁰

The implication of this argument feels similar to the growing caution that exists alongside the growing momentum of place-based initiatives: We cannot enact change through these collective initiatives at the expense of/replacement of specialist local services in council departments. Local services are a basic civic right. Additionally to this, there are wider forces

¹⁰⁶ Barca, F. McCann, P. Rodríguez-Pose, A. (2012) *The Case For Regional Development Intervention: Place-Based Versus Place-Neutral Approaches* (<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1467-9787.2011.00756.x>)

¹⁰⁷ See IVAR's funding framework for example. <https://www.ivar.org.uk/our-research/place-based-funding/>

¹⁰⁸ Griggs, J., Whitworth, A., Walker, R., McLennan, D. & Noble, M. (2008). *Person or place-based policies to tackle disadvantage? Not knowing what works*. Joseph Rowntree Foundation. (<https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/person-or-place-based-policies-tackle-disadvantage-not-knowing-what-works>)

¹⁰⁹ Munro, F. (2015). *Place-Based Working*, Iriss. (<https://www.iriss.org.uk/resources/irisson/place-based-working>)

¹¹⁰ The Royal Children's Hospital (2011). *Translating early childhood research evidence to inform policy and practice*. Policy Brief Issue 23, 2011. The Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne and the Centre for Community Child Health. (p.5) <https://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/ccchdev/1807-CCCH-PolicyBrief-30.pdf>

impacting people and place that are happening regionally, nationally and even globally that are beyond the control of place-based initiatives. We need stronger policy, whether local or national, to support some of these key structural issues.

Therefore we arrive once more at the need for a mix of approaches, as explored through the three different 'points of departure' in Chapter 2.

And as we begin to discover and adapt these mixed approaches, will there remain such a clear difference between the characteristics and points of departures of place-based work?

Or are these distinctions a useful mechanism to maintain?

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