

CHANGEUP PROGRAMME

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PLANS

COLLATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

REPORT FOR CAPACITY BUILDERS

SECTION 3: REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES
INCLUDING EXAMPLES OF GOOD PLANS
AND CAPACITY BUILDING WORK

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CHANGEUP PROGRAMME

Collation and analysis of Infrastructure Investment Plans

Report for Capacity Builders

SECTION 3: REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES

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THE NINE REGIONS

On the following pages are extended notes, based on:

- Analysis of the regional plans and other published information
- Information from other sources such as the ChangeUp portal (www.changeup.org.uk)
- Structured interviews with regional personnel as described in the ‘Methodology and Scope’ chapter of the Main Report (Section 2).

Region	No of consortia/ plans (at all three levels)	No of projects and consortia 2005/6	Regional population	Reader/ interviewer
East	7	144	5,388,805	Nigel Siederer
East Midlands	7	122	4,172,055	Nigel Siederer
London	39	90	7,173,836	Kamila Zahno
North East	5	38	2,514,681	Kamila Zahno
North West	15	118	6,729,722	Des Palmer
South East	21	54	8,002,280	Des Palmer
South West	12	133	4,928,379	Des Palmer
West Midlands	^a 10	90	5,268,319	Nigel Siederer
Yorks & Humber	5	57	4,964,053	Kamila Zahno
Total	122	846	49,142,130	

- a. Only preliminary information available for new regional plan and for urban consortia plans (to be published July 2006)

Important note about this Section

The regional interviewees are identified in each individual set of notes, but it should be stressed that particular views and impressions are not attributable to any particular interviewee. Rather, these are the responsibility of the reader/interviewer concerned (identified above). Also, the views and impressions may have been drawn from a documentary source rather than an interview, and time has precluded the published versions from being checked with the interviewees (though reported facts have been checked as far as possible). In some cases, longer interview notes have been prepared or have been supplied by the interviewees, but these are not being published at this stage, and would in any case be subject to the same reservations.

Overall impressions of regional organisation are the responsibility of the report’s main author, Nigel Siederer. These are in the main report, Section 2, in the chapter: ‘Observations from the regional plans’.

Regional analysis and interviews: EAST

Is the VCS and its capacity reasonably evenly developed across the region?

Unlike other regions, there are few unitary districts, two of them having the largest district populations in the region: Luton (184,000), Southend 160,000. Psychologically, large parts of Beds, Herts and Essex look to London with a significant commuter populations (using at least four differently oriented rail corridors), but Norfolk and Suffolk see themselves as separate. The sector is uneven. There is not a CVS in every district and this may not be achievable (eg Essex, Suffolk) – some district populations are too small to sustain a CVS or funding isn't available or only meets the cost of a single part-time worker. But there have been developments with ChangeUp funds in some districts (eg East Hertfordshire, South Norfolk). There have however been significant developments at county level in Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk (in the latter reducing the number of volunteer bureaux from 16 to 5). Essex is particularly fragmented though there are some strong CVSs. Hertfordshire has strong support from the County Council, with good funding and a compact.

Are there particular types of capacity where the VCS needs strengthening?

There are 6 county-based consortia and 1 regional, so funds were allocated in sevenths, and 133 projects were funded or have second phase bids. By theme, these are analysed into:

- the Hub themes plus:
- Social enterprise
- Strategic development
- Rural issues
- Specialist infrastructure for children and young people, BME, disability, and older people
- Back office services.

How far has the ChangeUp programme addressed any of these needs?

Though some of the projects in performance improvement and workforce development reflect the hubs work and themes (PQASSO etc), some of the specific needs are not met, eg standards in relation to tendering for CYP work, moving from outputs to stating outcomes.

The plan involved developing Clusters where there were:

- opportunities for joint working
- identified priorities within the VCS
- a good case for enhanced infrastructure support.

The clusters are:

1. advice
2. health
3. children and young people
4. older people
5. equalities.

Developing capacity among, with and for BME and refugee / asylum-seeker groups?

A third of the region's BME population is in Luton, very active and likely to become the majority within the foreseeable future. The Eastern counties (notably Cambridgeshire) have growing migrant worker populations from Eastern Europe and Portugal. There is a strong regional network MENTER (Home Office-funded), which is strongly involved in a Change-Up funded Equalities project. There is Faithnet East, and the Voluntary Sector Refugee Network – East of England (both dating from 2001/2). Norfolk REC delivers some training for BME groups across the region. The BME infrastructure in Hertfordshire has been relatively weak but has improved with help from ChangeUp.

Developing capacity in rural areas?

Substantial parts of the region are rural, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk being more than 50% rural, and of the counties only Herts is classified as urban overall. The VCS is evenly but less strongly developed than other regions. The emphasis has been on ensuring that there is a rural delivery dimension to all projects rather than setting up specifically rural initiatives.

Areas and client groups for which VCS infrastructure reach and capacity is weak?

Definitions of infrastructure are not always consistent, and roles of RCCs vary across the issues. The infrastructure may not always be reaching frontline services. More positively, four of the six counties have small 'development banks' which have enabled small projects to start, eg an environmental project in Essex.

Is the programme starting to meet the aim of modernising infrastructure?

Yes. The consortia have been thinking strategically. Though it may be too early to say if there are widespread dividends for frontline organisations, there have been some very good projects and there is good tooling up for the future.

Have plans been made and funds allocated: at County/sub regional, district level?

Roughly equal amounts (about £650K each) have been given to six consortia and £522K to the regional partnership. The consortia have had considerable discretion about further allocation to projects. Fund management has been delegated to the regional umbrella – see below.

Mix and balance between these three levels of planning and fund allocation?

This has been about right. The autonomy of the consortia has encouraged priority-setting. The consortia which have met monthly rather than bi-monthly have been most successful at this. It has also led to skill-sharing across the region.

How effective has the regional planning been? Is there a regional steering group?

There is a regional partnership group with 17 members (formed 2003), meeting bi-monthly. There have been three strategic objectives: Developing infrastructure, Developing partnership and clusters (as above), Mapping and dissemination. There is a regional executive group involving the GO and other public sector funders, plus a wider reference group. The wider regional advisory group may need to be more receptive to working with the public sector, and to developing business links.

What have been the main successes of ChangeUp in the region so far?

The delegation to consortia has led to a growth of confidence and ability at sub-regional/county level. Consortia have been talking to each other, and have developed some momentum. They are willing to discuss joint work, modernisation, even mergers, and have developed some good projects.

Examples of particularly good projects or successes?

- Suffolk was noted by the IIP reader as having an interesting strand on public sector policy making and procurement, based on some good research with the public sector itself where there were some interesting views. (The approach is linked to the Compact, engages with the public sector agenda through locality-based public service advisors (with volunteer policy watchers) with a County-wide function looking at partnership management, policy and advocacy.)
- Also in Suffolk, a good strategic approach to developing infrastructure along a 'healthcare' model where there is generic support at the market town level (the GP surgery), specialist and generic support at the county level (the acute hospital) and specialist support at regional or national level (the specialist hospital).
- Norfolk's scheme for measuring 'soft outcomes', which was taken across the region
- An accreditation scheme in Essex
- The Cambridgeshire Circuit riders project
- Corporate social responsibility developments in Suffolk
- ICT work in developing voice over internet.

A full list of projects is on the regional forum website, and there has been some care to write up projects for learning across the region.

Main difficulties, and things that have gone less well?

- The very rushed timescales – and now, a sense (because of the short timescale for the Community Projects Programme) that previous complaints have not been listened to.
- The reliance, because of this, on consultants, which has led to weaker ownership of plans and projects
- Bureaucracy and slow payment through the Home Office Adelphi system
- Imposed capital/revenue splits which have later been abandoned – leading to too much ICT 'kit' being bought, and, because of the short timescales, bought locally rather than through negotiation of regional bulk-buy discounts
- Further problems with projects having difficulty in appointing staff because of their short projected lifespan (eg nine months)
- Inconsistent quality between some of the plans.

Main approach or priorities for ChangeUp funding in 2007/8?

Second half of 06/07 is the next stage of planning and plans are being re-drawn. This is being used to inform planning further ahead.

Suggested ways in which Capacity Builders could improve planning?

- Offer funding in three-year tranches rather than rushed single years without even medium-term commitment
- Open bidding rounds
- Look for transformational projects
- Avoid dates slipping, and consequent rush to spend money even more hurriedly within a financial year.

What evaluations or reviews have been carried out or are being carried out?

There have been some local evaluations (mostly by consultants), but nothing regionally.

Anything else not covered above?

The GOR decided, after so many payment problems with the Home Office, to contract out payments to a voluntary sector operator. A three-member consortium, with COVER (the regional forum) as the lead body, was awarded the contract, and three staff were appointed. This arrangement, which despite having been operational only since January 2006, has administered about half of the total ChangeUp funding in the region, and is seen by all to be working well.

Links have improved between the regional consortia and the local authorities, with improved participation in local area agreements. This has been true in at least four counties, with notable improvements for example in Bedfordshire.

Interviewees:

Andrew Cogan (COVER – the Community & Voluntary Forum, Eastern Region)

Sue Lowe, Communities, Neighbourhoods & Culture Team, Government Office for the East of England

Jan Cunningham, ChangeUp Regional Fund Manager, COVER

Reader/Interviewer: Nigel Siederer

No of consortia/ plans (at all three levels):	7
No of projects and consortia 2005/6:	144
Regional population:	5,388,805

Regional analysis and interviews: EAST MIDLANDS

Is the VCS and its capacity reasonably evenly developed across the region?

There are 20000 to 36000 organisations in the region, with an annual turnover of £990m and 278000 staff (fte). The plan has a good description of the infrastructure across the region. The investment has been roughly £800K to each of the five counties and adding a premium to Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire to recognise their relatively underdeveloped generic infrastructure and smaller amounts to the regional consortium and to Rutland. Leicestershire and Rutland have however bid successfully for capital funds to address the accommodation deficiency. There are 115 ChangeUp projects.

Are there particular types of capacity where the VCS needs strengthening?

There is activity on:

- workforce development (though not for the infrastructure organisations themselves)
- performance improvement and quality, though not necessarily having the desired impact, for example in relation to contracting (but there is a good example of this in North East Derbyshire)
- volunteer recruitment and ICT
- addressing the accommodation shortage, though not in using premises as a development tool; some premises made available by LAs are poorly located, and significant advantage has been found by groups which have had the money and courage to buy their own premises.

There may be gaps in:

- capacity for funding advice in projects in the consortia
- business planning advice
- governance.

How far has the ChangeUp programme addressed any of these needs?

It has brought people and consortia together. The county consortia have functioned well, overcoming some historic rivalries.

Developing capacity among, with and for BME and refugee / asylum-seeker groups?

About 6000 organisations are BME-focussed. There is a good deal of sub-regional BME infrastructure, which may not be connecting well with the regional infrastructure. There is a consortium of asylum seeker and refugee networks which is not however well linked in. The BME population is not homogeneous, and there are significant distinctions between the well-established largely city-based BME groups and the rural areas. Lincolnshire does not have a large black population but has a significant migrant workforce in agriculture, mainly new arrivals from Eastern Europe and Portugal. There is some experience of generic infrastructure being effective in reaching BME groups, though in some areas (eg advocacy) this is not appropriate.

Developing capacity in rural areas?

Three-quarters of the region's VCOs are based in urban centres (24% Nottingham), 22% Leicester, 15% Northampton, 14% Derby), which is slightly higher than the general population (60% urban). The VCS in the other counties is substantially rural, but in Northants increasingly influenced by the growth of Milton Keynes. In Lincolnshire a historically under-developed VCS has reviewed and regenerated its infrastructure, reducing from eight LA-based districts to three. In Derbyshire some particular care has

been taken to keep the urban south working with the rural north. High Peak has become a leader in ICT. There seem to have been few problems in Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire. Rutland has shared services and support with Leicestershire when necessary.

Areas and client groups for which VCS infrastructure reach and capacity is weak?

Arts and sports, where traditional funding sources do not reach as arts and sports organisations are not seen as dealing with disadvantage. Links on a funder-user-provider basis could be strengthened. The networks among organisations dealing with older people, children and young people, and disability, are all weak at regional and sub-regional levels.

Is the programme starting to meet the aim of modernising infrastructure?

Yes, bearing in mind that we are only two years into a ten-year programme.

Have plans been made and funds allocated: at County/sub regional, district level?

See above.

Mix and balance between these three levels of planning and fund allocation?

The mix is fair, but...

How effective has the regional planning been? Is there a regional steering group?

There is insufficient integration between regional and sub-regional levels, as the former deal with and co-ordinate regional bodies, and the latter with sub-regional bodies. Some regional bodies have very weak local links, and there is doubt about whether regional infrastructure commands sufficient support from sub-regional organisations to be viable and sustainable. There is room for some local CVSs for example to provide services across the region, thus avoiding duplication.

What have been the main successes of ChangeUp in the region so far?

Starting thinking about difficult issues, such as who should do what. Several LAAs have included ChangeUp projects.

Examples of particularly good projects or successes?

- Reconfiguring the infrastructure in Lincolnshire into three centres
- High Peak CVS and its IT leadership, including design of the national ChangeUp portal
- South West Leicestershire's Playbus – working with travellers and so reached them by putting CVS development workers on the bus
- Parish churches in Northamptonshire with key messages on volunteering.

Main difficulties, and things that have gone less well?

- Long-term sustainability
- Involvement of funders other than ChangeUp, some of whom have the expectation that they may be able to withdraw because of ChangeUp's arrival or have used their involvement to interfere rather than facilitate the drive to improve performance
- The timetable has been so fraught that energy has focussed on meeting the funding timetable rather than bidding for what is strategically desirable
- Inevitably, consultants have been employed, which has meant less ownership of the plans in the sector
- Payment problems meant that the management had to be transferred to a group of community foundations

- Some capital projects have run into difficulties because of delays in planning permission pushing the timing beyond the availability of the funding.

Main approach or priorities for ChangeUp funding in 2007/8?

Facilitate involvement and co-operation by other funders.

Suggested ways in which Capacity Builders could improve planning?

More flexibility over short-range deadlines to allow for transitional funding.

What evaluations or reviews have been carried out or are being carried out?

An evaluation has been commissioned, but progress has been slow because of problems in the voluntary organisation that was contracted. A report may be available by September. There has been some sector mapping.

Interviewees:

Wynne Garnett, Engage East Midlands – the Voluntary Sector Forum

Philippa Morley, ChangeUp Investment Programme Co-ordinator, Government Office for the East Midlands

Reader/Interviewer: Nigel Siederer

No of consortia/ plans (at all three levels):	7
No of projects and consortia 2005/6:	122
Regional population:	4,172,055

Regional analysis and interviews: LONDON

Is the VCS and its capacity reasonably evenly developed across the region?

VCOs themselves are unevenly spread across London with many small groups in inner London setting up in response to need, and fewer in the outer boroughs. However, VCOs in inner London may not take the time to build their organisational strength and remain weak; many fold after a few years. Indeed the greatest disparity in capacity is not geographical but between the more ‘professional’ charity end of the sector and the grassroots front line organisations.

Many LAs in inner London do support their CVSs, but given that there are many more VCOs in the inner London boroughs, some of the outer borough are better funded in proportion to the number of existing VCOs. In terms of the spread of infrastructure support, the picture is complex and mainly depends on the degree of support by, and the relationship with, the local authority.

The way this could be addressed is to strengthen the relationship between infrastructure organisations and the statutory sector by selling the benefits of building the capacity of the VCS to deliver public services.

Are there particular types of capacity where the VCS needs strengthening?

- Many of the local plans concentrated on Hub activities so it may appear that these are priorities but they were often not substantiated and local consortia may have taken these issues as ‘given’ and felt that they had to address them.
- ICT is a huge issue and this has been strengthened by the existence of the delivery of the circuit riders project across the sub-regions.
- Interviewees considered governance an issue, but felt it had not been identified strongly enough in consortia plans. It is not merely a case of delivering governance training, but working out a strategy of engaging trustees at a local level.
- Premises is an enormous issue in London, with its high rents and lack of appropriate buildings.
- There is a need for both the VCS AND the statutory sector to address the issue of public sector procurement so that the VCS is on a level playing field with other sectors.
- The issue of support to social enterprises is an interesting one as some social enterprises have not grown out of a VCS background. Should they be connected more to the VCS, and if so how?
- There is a need for more work to be done on campaigning, influencing policy, and advocacy work on behalf of the VCS. Although not mentioned in the ChangeUp guidance it has been picked up well in the sub-regional and regional plans.
- There is also a need for community development and community capacity building at the individual level to be picked up.

How far has the ChangeUp programme addressed any of these needs?

The ChangeUp programme has enabled issues, problems and potential solutions to get out into the open; the profile of work of infrastructure organisations has been raised. The Local Area Agreement (LAA) guidance mentions ChangeUp (although, see later comment below on LAAs), and the Big Lottery is aligning itself to ChangeUp. However, there were mixed feelings amongst interviewees as to the effectiveness of the ChangeUp programme as a whole, particularly with regard to the Hubs which wrote their business plans before local consortia had developed their plans and therefore have not been

responsive. It is early days in terms of actually addressing the issues, although there have been a number of good pilot projects/pieces of research (see below). The funding is miniscule, particularly in the boroughs and ChangeUp cannot address all VCS capacity building needs, so funders need to be involved. A number of funders sat on the LRC which has been particularly beneficial because they have a common understanding of capacity building needs and how infrastructure needs to be developed to meet those needs. The consortia plans now need to be used as strategic documents to for funding; they will need to be updated annually and consulted upon.

ICT: The sub-regional circuit riders are very good. Managed by LASA they are conscious to fill gaps and not duplicated other good work, for eg the Super Highways project in South London.

Premises: Camden VCS is working with its LA to identify buildings that can be used by the VCS; some regional money has funded a property advice programme that signposts the VCS to premises that they can use in different way: rent, shared premises); Ealing has acquired a building to use as a VCS resource centre (obviously ChangeUp contributed only partially to this).

Procurement: A regional project on procurement is being developed which is a practical programme for front line groups. There is a need for capacity building of the public sector; despite good national guidance on the need to get the VCS involved in public sector contracts, at the local level this has not been addressed very well, in particular, by LA procurement officers.

Community development: Several borough plans mentioned this. Also the Neighbourhoods Sub-group of the LRC concentrated on community capacity building, citizenship, community development and volunteering, and has looked at developing accreditation for community development officers, and how to increase access by BME volunteers to generic support on volunteering.

Developing capacity among, with and for BME and refugee / asylum-seeker groups?

There has been work done here but it is too early to say how it has resulted in better capacity. BME issues have been acknowledged in many borough plans but it is a 2/3 year process to implement measures.

- Good regional project has funded *Race on the Agenda* which is strengthening existing BME networks at sub-regional level and establishing ones where there is none.
- Mapping of the Race Equality Councils across London to look at functions, particularly with regard to capacity building
- Local projects include: the development of a ChangeUp consultation mechanism between Havering CVS and the BME groups who are unfunded and therefore don't have the capacity to participate on the consortium.

Developing capacity in rural areas?

Not applicable, as London is deemed to be fully urban.

Areas and client groups for which VCS infra-structure reach and capacity is weak?

The LRC has an effective Equalities sub-group, although there have been some complaints that some BME groups have been left out. The sub-group has been good at specifying some research projects around equalities infrastructure:

- LGTB – mapping the sector, take up of support by LGTB frontline groups, barriers to support and the specialist support needed
- Women’s Resource Centre – leadership training; procurement and commissioning particularly with reference to women’s health.

Is the programme starting to meet the aim of modernising infrastructure?

Interviewees agreed that the process has resulted in needs being identified and that the profile of the work infrastructure organisations do has been raised. ChangeUp has acted as a catalyst; for example the Association of London Government (ALG) commissioned research to look at how much additional money borough consortia had brought in on the back of ChangeUp. However, there needs to be more mainstreaming of ChangeUp before anything substantial happens. There is reference to ChangeUp in the LAA guidance but it is not clear that the ChangeUp plan/process can be integrated with that of the LAA, and there have been examples where consultation with the VCS has been duplicated. However, the lead officer on ChangeUp at the GO is working with colleagues who work with local authorities to include VCS infrastructure issues in the LAAs.

There was a criticism about how effective the national Hubs have been with engaging local consortia and undertaking outreach. A lot of money has been invested in the six Hubs, and some interviewees thought it debatable about whether they are meeting the aims of modernising infrastructure because the information is too general.

Have plans been made and funds allocated: at County/sub regional, district level?

Funding was allocated for consortia plans in all the London boroughs during 2004-05 with some continuation funding until June 2006. There are also plans for the five sub-regions. The London boroughs and the sub-regional plans had the same allocation of £69,000. The London Regional plan was allocated £175,070 in the period from 2004-06. There were 27 regional projects receiving revenue funding during this period, totalling £1,653,990. The three largest regional projects were:

- LASA (London Advice Services Alliance), which was allocated £613,655 for ICT work at the sub-regional level
- £146,500 to the Scarman Trust in 2005-06 for supporting community development, particularly through setting up support mechanisms for small community groups and individuals who had been/were going through the Community Champions scheme
- £100,000 to the ALG for a procurement project.

Mix and balance between these three levels of planning and fund allocation?

The bottom-up process whereby the local consortia did their plans which then informed the sub-regional plans before the regional plan was written was generally thought to be a good one. Some boroughs wanted guidance (which was supplied by LVSC) while others were content to develop their own plan structure. While this bottom-up principle was laudable, it meant the funding has been minimal. More importantly, there has been a tendency for the borough consortia to want to plan for all infrastructure to be delivered at the local level without considering how economies of scale can be achieved. This has even been a problem at sub-regional level with the example given of all sub-regions wanting a workforce development officer, but only two getting funding through their respective LSCs which leaves a gap in the other three.

How effective has the regional planning been? Is there a regional steering group?

It was considered that the LRC has been an effective body, meeting every 6 weeks. There are sub-groups: equalities, advice, income generation, neighbourhoods, governance and ICT, and one about to set up on the Olympics. There was the right balance of a manageable sized group and an inclusive one, although there will always be tensions around this. Initially there were 30 members in the main consortium and it took time to bed down and get decisions. The planning environment felt safe with honest debate. The participation of funders has been particularly helpful as they have been able to tie in ChangeUp to the London Funders' Group.

Now there will be a slimmed down group but the sub-groups will be opened up.

However, while process of planning has been good, the proof of the pudding will be in the implementation. The regional plan has picked up themes not mentioned at local and sub-regional level, but there was some criticism, or fears, that some themes in the sub-regional plans might have been more appropriately planned at regional level.

What have been the main successes of ChangeUp in the region so far?

A not insignificant success is all the consortia at all 3 levels are functioning and delivering. Bringing people together in a partnership is beneficial. At the regional level, the impact of bringing funders together and raising the profile of infrastructure organisations has been good. The process has acted as a catalyst but now this needs to be mainstreamed (particularly through the LAA process).

Examples of particularly good projects or successes?

The greatest success is that ChangeUp has facilitated a process where some projects are being delivered. Examples are mentioned throughout this report. Below are some interesting projects both delivering at the local level and regionally:

- Accommodation project in Ealing – setting up an accommodation website which describes rooms for hire, hot desking availability. All premises on the website have been checked for accessibility.
- Ealing planning project: VCS are getting involved with developments at the planning permission stage and seeing whether developers can develop premises for the VCS
- Islington Consortium has influenced the LAA to include VCS work
- Lambeth consortium felt that the issue of the lack of a volunteer bureau was so important it put all of its ChangeUp funding into producing volunteering services
- Regional report on the degree to which LAAs had engaged the VCS. This has been picked up by the DCLG who are using it and the data.
- The work of the Equalities sub-group was particularly successful with different equalities groups working together for the first time both to find common ground and to raise awareness of differences in needs between different groups.
- A regional project was managed by the London Archives, Libraries and Museums Council – who were funded to develop links between the local CVSs and local voluntary projects in this sector (eg local voluntary museums, local history projects, local archives). This was a good example of raising awareness about infrastructure support amongst a group of organizations who do not generally tap into such support.

Main difficulties, and things that have gone less well?

The timescale has been very difficult and information about ChangeUp and the funding allocations came out at different times rather than being available at the same time. Many boroughs hired consultants to write their plans which has meant that consortia have not built their own capacity for planning. It has also been quite difficult at times keeping the focus on strategic issues when there is funding around. The devolvement of plans at the very local level has meant very small amounts of money for the boroughs.

Main approach or priorities for ChangeUp funding in 2007/8?

- There needs to be a priority to specifically improve capacity amongst VCOs that deliver services for marginalised groups. More work around improving the working relationships between generic and specialist organisations would help in this respect. ChangeUp could fund collaborative projects to test ways of working of working together.
- More work needs to be done around the relationship between the ‘professional’ end of the sector and small informal groups.
- There should be recognition that ChangeUp is about supporting communities in their neighbourhoods and not just about getting the VCS to deliver public sector services.

Suggested ways in which Capacity Builders could improve planning and procedures?

- Capacity Builders needs to devise a funding strategy and more streamlined procedures. In particular information should be given in an ordered way and all the funds should be announced annually so that consortia can select which is most appropriate for it. Timescales should not be so tight – a 3 month period between the announcement and application. There should be a light touch to monitoring – 6 monthly rather than quarterly.
- There needs to be some sort of system for sharing good practice.
- Capacity Builders should lobby the Government for stronger advice for LAAs to take account of the ChangeUp plan in drawing up their agreements.

What evaluations or reviews have been carried out or are being carried out?

Review of the processes of the LRC and the production of an evaluation framework – to report on 30 June.

Interviewees:

Elizabeth Balgobin: Chief Executive London Voluntary Services Council

John Routledge: Consultant and ChangeUp coordinator, LVSC

Dinah Cox: Chief Executive of Race on the Agenda and Chair of the Equalities Sub-Group of the London Regional Consortium

Lisa Greensill: Head of Voluntary and Community Sector Team, Government Office for London

Jill Walsh: London Regional Coordinator, Capacity Builders

Reader/Interviewer: Kamila Zahno

No of consortia/ plans (at all three levels):	39
No of projects and consortia 2005/6:	90
Regional population:	7,173,836

Regional analysis and interviews: NORTH EAST

Is the VCS and its capacity reasonably evenly developed across the region?

The capacity of the VCS is patchy across the region. This is more to do with the strength of the CVS rather than any geographical reason.

Are there particular types of capacity where the VCS needs strengthening?

This is difficult to say as the sub-regional and regional IIPs mainly consist of a list of activities with very little needs analysis. More robust research on the needs of VCOs in the context of the sustainable communities agenda should be undertaken. CVSs need to be strengthened to deliver core support services to the VCOs, and regional infrastructure organisations need to be strengthened to deliver on the policy agenda. Regional infrastructure lacks capacity to engage at a policy level in regional partnerships, and the indeed the Government Office has commissioned a Neighbourhood Renewal Advisor to look at developing a corporate approach to working with the Third Sector.

How far has the ChangeUp programme addressed any of these needs?

The ChangeUp programme in the North East mainly funded new short term projects which were favoured by the partners in the sub-regional consortia and regional steering group. However, that said there is some linkage with Hub themes: for example strengthening funding advice work, developing a Skills and Training Forum to look at workforce development, funding ICT champions, and work on the volunteering infrastructure. However, little funding went to building up infrastructure organisations to be sustainable, either at the local, sub-regional or regional level. At the local level, the CVSs in the main are fairly weak. ChangeUp has also not addressed a key need for strengthening the regional infrastructure to respond to the regional policy priorities eg stronger, safer communities, health, worklessness, children and young people etc. There will be great opportunities for VCOs to be providers and they will need a strong specialist infrastructure capable of advising VCOs how to get involved as deliverers.

Developing capacity among, with and for BME and refugee / asylum-seeker groups?

There is a need to develop the capacity of BECON, the BME network, and the GO has commissioned an NRA to look at this. ChangeUp has funded the development of an inter faith network. There will be increasing issues around refugees, asylum seekers and migrant workers and the relationships with the older established communities.

Developing capacity in rural areas?

The RCCs are effective and experienced and know how to engage at the policy level. Defra funding may have helped with developing capacity in rural areas and the sub-regional consortia had a good rural focus to them. There was a good allocation of ChangeUp funding for rural issues. There are some good examples (Northumberland and Durham) where the concerns of rural VCOs have been embedded into LAAs. Here the LAAs have developed a strategic approach to working with the VCS.

Areas and client groups for which VCS infra-structure reach and capacity is weak?

The issue here is to build up regional infrastructure to deliver to front line groups whose service users are from disadvantaged groups. Much of the work so far has concentrated on developing specialist equalities networks. On the equalities front the regional consortium funded a project to pump prime the development of an Equality Networks Consortium body, as well as individual projects targeted at particular equalities groups:

an LGBT network, a regional forum on ageing, a mental health consortium, a youth sector infrastructure, and a youth exclusion infrastructure. Many of these networks are to connect workers in those fields together to facilitate communication and information exchange. However, there is no regional structure for disability. There is also no infrastructure for women's groups but more of a community development approach would be needed to build up women's groups.

The Government Office strongly acknowledges the need for specialist infrastructure – not only building the capacity of the traditional equalities groups, but to develop capacity amongst potential VCO providers to deliver on regional priorities such as health, worklessness, children and young people. It would be very important that this specialist issue-based infrastructure would embed equalities and ensure a range of specialist providers who worked with equalities groups (BME workless people, LGTB young people).

Is the programme starting to meet the aim of modernising infrastructure?

The problem has been that the short-term funding meant that a strategic approach was not taken and the longer term aim of developing a strategic plan to 2014 was not met. Projects had to happen within 18 months, there was no real time for robust evaluation of need, and it is not surprising therefore that the vested interests of existing organisations came to the fore. Having said that there is some level of achievement. The Plans developed some useful projects and got everyone around the table.

Have plans been made and funds allocated: at County/sub-regional, district level?

There are four sub-regional consortia: Durham and Northumberland were co-terminous with existing counties and consequently an existing county infrastructure was in place, whereas Tyne and Wear and Tees Valley were not existing counties and did not have a sub-regional identity. There was also a regional plan.

The regional total for 2005/6 was £4,152,716 which was divided up amongst the 4 sub-regional consortia and the region according to a formula that was agreed at regional level:

- Region: 15%
- Durham: 18%
- Northumberland: 14%
- Tees Valley: 23%
- Tyne and Wear: 30%

Continuation funding during 2006/07 of £596,760 was allocated in the same proportions.

Mix and balance between these three levels of planning and fund allocation?

The fund allocation had been worked out using an agreed formula for splitting the funds between the 4 sub-regional consortia and the region, so the mix and balance was agreed to the right one. However, the planning was not really coordinated and the sub-regions took their own approach, with some producing their own district plans.

How effective has the regional planning been? Is there a regional steering group?

Regional planning was done through a Regional Steering Group which met approximately every four weeks. Many of the 18 regional projects mentioned in the IIP are about setting up specialist regional networks, something which is considered

important so that regional infrastructure can be in a good position to advise front line organisations on how to get involved in delivering statutory services.

What have been the main successes of ChangeUp in the region so far?

Some of the ChangeUp sub-regional consortia are beginning to see how they can influence LAAs. This has required identifying what the needs of the statutory sector are and seeing how VCS can engage in this. However, although there have been some good examples of VCS engagement in LAAs there has been less work on developing the capacity of the VCS to deliver within the LAA. This may happen in time, but it requires recognition of true partnership working between the statutory and voluntary sectors.

Examples of particularly good projects or successes?

Some of the regional networking projects are interesting as they will pave the way for groups of specialist providers to develop a voice and influence both services and the commissioning process. For example the NE mental health consortium is bringing together VCS providers of mental health to become a stronger voice.

Main difficulties, and things that have gone less well?

The ChangeUp programme has been looked upon as a short term funding stream, rather than a catalyst for additionality. In many ways funding has got in the way and has led to the production of lists of activities.

Main approach or priorities for ChangeUp funding in 2007/8?

ChangeUp funding should be regarded as only one stream in a number of funding streams aimed at modernising the VCS. To this end Capacity Builders must talk to other funders such as the Big Lottery, local foundations and statutory funders so that they align their funding priorities to those of ChangeUp. Funding now should be to implement the plans but many of the ChangeUp plans are not strategic forward plans so perhaps the main priority should be for consortia to produce those strategic plans to 2014.

Suggested ways in which Capacity Builders could improve planning and procedures?

ChangeUp needs to be regarded as a partnership programme between the VCS and its funders, including national funders such as the Big Lottery, local foundations, and those who commission public services. In that way the regional consortia need to be much more strategic and act to raise the profile of the VCS and what they can do to deliver services. If one of the main components of ChangeUp is to modernise infrastructure so that it can support frontline organisations to deliver public services, then there needs to be a move towards true involvement and influence of the VCS in the LAA process. Can Capacity Builders influence the government to incorporate an item into the local authority CPA framework whereby they are judged on their performance on how they have reviewed the needs of the VCS and produced a funding strategy?

What evaluations or reviews have been carried out or are being carried out?

No formal evaluation of the regional programme.

Interviewees:

Ray Cowell: Former director, VONNE - Voluntary Organisations' Network North East

Rob Strachan: Head of Community Policy, Government Office of the North East

Reader/Interviewer: Kamila Zahno

No of consortia/ plans (at all three levels):	5
No of projects and consortia 2005/6:	38
Regional population:	2,514,681

Regional analysis and interviews: NORTH WEST

Is the VCS and its capacity reasonably evenly developed across the region?

Over half of VCS organisations in the region are in the Greater Manchester area with the bulk of the remainder in Merseyside. Lancashire is rich in its VCS but not good at working together. What there is in Cumbria and Cheshire is run mainly by volunteers. Capacity is ‘massively uneven’ but it would be unrealistic to expect that it would be evenly distributed given the considerable population differences. In Cumbria co-operative working between infrastructure organisations was well established. ChangeUp has acted as a catalyst and provided resources for a further building of these relationships. In Manchester GMCVO were strong and vibrant already, ChangeUp has helped it to be more inclusive. Much the same could be said of Merseyside. Bringing together Cheshire (rural) and Warrington (Urban) into one consortium was a challenge but they have benefited from sharing experiences.

Much good work has been done across the region to improve the capacity of infrastructure organisations to equip them to provide support of a better quality, targeted better and more efficiently. It is too early yet to tell what impact ChangeUp has had.

Are there particular types of capacity where the VCS needs strengthening?

Greater Manchester, for example had only 6 Volunteer centres in 10 LA areas. In Cumbria ICT at service-delivery level is still weak as is the involvement of young volunteers and there is a lack of contracting experience. It was pointed out that the hub themes are ‘not how it works’ and are an artificial division (a view echoed by other regions).

There is in every sub-region a network set up with financial support from the NWDA to help new and existing social enterprises and they could be better used to develop the social enterprise nature of the sector. However, before that happens there is a job to do to develop the business skills of managers and Trustees in the sector.

How far has the ChangeUp programme addressed any of these needs?

Both Greater Manchester and Cumbria have addressed ICT needs. One of the 8 cross-regional projects is co-ordination of ICT investment implying that that ICT is a weakness across the region (which would not be surprising as it appears to be in most other areas). In some areas community accountancy projects have made a start on increasing business skills of managers and trustees.

Developing capacity among, with and for BME and refugee / asylum-seeker groups?

A huge issue in Greater Manchester with tensions between BME groups; disillusionment and cynicism about previous initiatives that promised much but delivered little; limited capacity of groups; and ‘a very painful process’ overall. This was a priority for their continuation funding. Cumbria has commissioned an Equality and Diversity tool-kit. Cheshire has done some good work with travellers. General view however, is that the work has only just begun.

Developing capacity in rural areas?

Cumbria’s work is almost all about capacity in rural areas and is being delivered through its five CVSs. Some good practice has emerged, eg Cumbria’s toolkit for BME proofing services and the use of ICT including video conferencing. Greater Manchester and

Greater Merseyside have found this issue difficult (as might be expected given they are primarily urban conurbations). In Merseyside there has been some good work through links with faith communities.

Areas and client groups for which VCS infra-structure reach and capacity is weak?

Local Authority support is very varied with minimal investment in infrastructure. In Greater Manchester the youth service, guides, scouts, children's organisations and sports and leisure are not part of process. Generally the engagement of the faith community (with the exception of Merseyside) has been difficult but a new regional network of Faith Communities might help.

Is the programme starting to meet the aim of modernising infrastructure?

In some areas, yes. In Greater Manchester there is strong collaboration with for example, sharing payroll services, networks of trainers and a joint initiative between the Greater Manchester and Greater Merseyside consortia. There is some clear evidence of better working together leading to amalgamations (e.g. Volunteer Centres on Merseyside and CVSs in Cumbria). In Greater Manchester a network of district-based infrastructure organisations is working together in a network but capacity varies enormously. Excellent work has been done to improve the use of ICT helped by building on a pre-existing regional grouping. Overall progress is patchy. In Lancashire, for example, not much has been done in spite of some early indications of innovation in the creation of a Workforce Development Group in partnership with the County Council and the LSC.

Have plans been made and funds allocated: at County/sub regional, district level?

There is no regional consortium (possibly unique in that respect). Five sub-regional consortia have produced plans. There are 10 district level plans all from the Manchester area, although these are often not much more than a couple of pages.

Mix and balance between these three levels of planning and fund allocation?

£6.18m was allocated at county/sub-regional level to the five consortia plus a further £1m of continuation funding. Each local consortium received £10k from the Greater Manchester allocation.

There are 8 cross-regional projects and 105 sub-regional and district projects (but no breakdown available of where and what these are).

How effective has the regional planning been? Is there a regional steering group?

GONW set up RAG (Regional Advisory Group) to advise them but it was never representative, never accountable and heavily influenced by the GO. Five consortia got on board and drove its direction. It is now 'dead in the water'. The RAG 'debated late in the day' the regional projects and the GONW then acted on its advice. On ICT matters there has been some good regional planning and shared activities driven by the 5 consortia rather than the RAG.

It is not clear why there is not a regional consortium. All one respondent would say was that 'it wasn't an issue'. It certainly feels (unlike in the south east and the south west) that the Advisory Group was heavily influenced (and mismanaged?) by the GO. Could the turnover of officers have anything to do with it?

What have been the main successes of ChangeUp in the region so far?

In Greater Manchester the main achievement has been ‘relationship building’ with everyone now ‘round one table’. This view was echoed by the GO secondee who said it has forced them into working together with examples of possible mergers of CVSs in Cumbria and Volunteer Centres elsewhere. Another success has been the involvement of the public sector in the consortium. All Volunteer Centres in Greater Manchester now working together as are the four refugee organisations. Delivery in Cumbria did not get underway until June 2005 so it is too early to assess impact although public service delivery work with LA and PCT’s was highlighted as successful. The joint work between the five consortia around ICT has been a success.

Examples of particularly good projects or successes?

Greater Manchester personnel legal advice service through Greater Manchester Pay and Employment Rights organisation; in Cumbria IT work is starting to have an impact; Community Accountancy in Greater Merseyside has been a success story; some interesting work in Cheshire with travellers.

Main difficulties, and things that have gone less well?

The understanding of ChangeUp, its purpose, was often too difficult to grasp for some infrastructure organisations and therefore to sell to other sector organisations. There have been different interpretations – was it about infrastructure or about front-line organisations? This debate has caused some friction with consortia.

Another problem was getting money out fast while remaining inclusive. The large amounts of money and the short time-scale have also been problematic. (This is a point that the respondent from Cumbria made).

Some infrastructure organisations did not have (and still do not have) the capacity to manage projects effectively.

In Greater Manchester the involvement of BME groups has been a major problem. (See above.)

Main approach or priorities for ChangeUp funding in 2007/8?

Consolidation – it would be mistake to introduce new initiatives – and continuation of existing projects. Sharing the learning and identifying good practice.

Capacity Builders would do well to get the consortia to look again more closely at the objectives of ChangeUp and to test their plans, actions, ideas against this and also to examine the impact – or at the very least put in place the mechanisms to examine the impact – of what they are doing. They should also look at the capacity of infrastructure organisations – many simply do not have a business-like approach. They need to get their own houses in order –managing people, finance and projects – before they work with front-line groups.

Suggested ways in which Capacity Builders could improve planning?

Initial burst of activity was a good thing but they now need to slow down and bring everyone with them.

What evaluations or reviews have been carried out or are being carried out?

GMCVO is producing three publications, all due by end July – a list of all grants awarded, a learning document and a successes and failures report. Some of the regional projects have been evaluated but no reports have yet been made public. Cumbria has commissioned an evaluation of whole programme and the report due end July. Cheshire has set up peer review teams.

These apart it appears that there has been little systematic evaluation. There was no real requirement for consortia to undertake systematic monitoring of their own activities and they did not attach conditions to grants they allocated. The Home Office and Treasury were far too light with their touch (according to one respondent). Capacity Builders needs to look at monitoring procedures.

Anything else not covered above?

ChangeUp has transformed the scene in Greater Manchester where it has been ‘fantastic’. Cumbria is equally positive but concerned about the large amount of money they had to spend in a short time.

There are issues around regional projects (not only in this region but elsewhere) and questions of their management, effectiveness and evaluation. Overall responsibility for the eight in the North West in theory lies with the Regional Advisory Group but all respondents have concerns about its viability.

Overall comments

A region that is difficult to get a handle on, because it does not have a regional consortium. Within it there are two major conurbations that contain most of the VCS contrasted with substantial rural areas with a low VCS presence. The ChangeUp structure and geography therefore make generalisation impossible (according to one respondent). However, there have been some moves towards rationalisation; there is evidence of increased co-operation within some consortia geographical areas and also between consortiums. There has been a lot of activity with over one hundred initiatives but little evidence yet of the impact that these may have had.

Contributions from

- Alex Whinnom, CEO, Greater Manchester Centre for Voluntary Organisations
- Karen Bowen, CEO, Eden CVS and lead person for Cumbria Consortium
- Ann Marie Wrigley, on secondment from New Era Enterprises (East Lancs) Ltd to the Government Office for the North West
- Mary-Jane Peach, Capacity Builders Regional Officer, who was not in a position to comment extensively as she had only been in post since May and her understanding was therefore very limited.

Additional material from ChangeUp portal entry *ChangeUp in the North West region*

Reader/Interviewer: Des Palmer

No of consortia/ plans (at all three levels):	15
No of projects and consortia 2005/6:	118
Regional population:	6,729,722

Regional analysis and interviews: SOUTH EAST

Is the VCS and its capacity reasonably evenly developed across the region?

A variable picture: weak structures at pan-Berkshire level; relatively less support in Bracknell Forest and limited capacity in Buckinghamshire (but should be borne in mind that region embraces 10 counties and has 34,000 VCS organisations).

Are there particular types of capacity where the VCS needs strengthening?

Commissioned research in 2004 identified four priority areas of need: ICT support, Social Enterprise support, financing and funding and, what the region now calls Additional Support Programme but then identified as support to frontline BME organisations. Business and action planning has also subsequently emerged as a significant weakness with many plans failing to show how the needs they have identified will be tackled.

How far has the ChangeUp programme addressed any of these needs?

All four priorities have been addressed through regional programmes: different models of ICT support are currently being piloted and evaluated; places on Social Enterprise courses run by the regional economic development agency were funded; workshops were run on public procurement and a DVD has been produced. Each consortium has been required to address the additional support needs of minority or hard-to-reach groups in their plan, has had to show how groups have been engaged in the process, and also involve them in the consortia. Numerous projects have been set up.

Developing capacity among, with and for BME and refugee / asylum-seeker groups?

This was recognised early on by running an Additional Support Programme (ASP) that has covered BME, minority faith, gypsies and travellers and refugees and asylum seekers. The programme has highlighted the need for community development work with small groups. The ASP groups are working towards forming a regional body. In general this part of sector is under-resourced, under-managed and its specialist infrastructure is weak. Modest continuation funding has enabled some ASP projects to continue, albeit at a lower level.

Developing capacity in rural areas?

Slightly contradictory feedback on this question. Capacity in rural areas is variable and, whilst at least four consortia covered it well in their plans, many did not. However, RCC's were the lead body in many areas, suggesting that rural issues are on the agenda.

Areas and client groups for which VCS infra-structure reach and capacity is weak?

Minority faith groups were included in the ASP programme as well as having their own regional body. Volunteering, however was not universally taken account of in plans. The focus has been on generic rather than specialist support so there is little on disability or youth groups, for example.

Is the programme starting to meet the aim of modernising infrastructure?

Some of the regional programmes on Funding and Finance, and ICT have started to meet this aim and the creation of 20 consortia plans where none previously existed is a start of what has been called 'a journey'.

Have plans been made and funds allocated: at County/sub regional, district level?

Plans have been made at regional, county and unitary level. Fund allocation included a significant number of regional and local projects reflecting regional priorities.

Allocations to the 20 local consortia were not based on expressed need but on equal shares for all with a minimum of £100k and £124k for nine shire counties

Mix and balance between these three levels of planning and fund allocation?

A total allocation of £5.8m. £1.8m to the regional programme; £2.25m to 20 consortia; £1.32 to the capital fund and £430k on admin, secondees' salaries and meeting costs. A further £715k was given to the continuation fund and allocated to the consortia on the basis of declared need.

Four broad themes in regional programme (but number of projects not known). We do know that around half of the regional programme budget went to the ASP programme and that 19 grants were made to local consortia under this scheme. Twenty consortia received grants but there is no information on the number of projects this has resulted in. The capital fund resulted in 30 projects. The ChangeUp portal states that 54 projects were funded with a total investment of £5.4m (presumably not counting the £430k that went on admin and other costs). My feeling is that the number of projects could be higher.

How effective has the regional planning been? Is there a regional steering group?

Although the Regional Consortium was set up by the GOSE it has been very much a partnership; membership is very broad; it has always been chaired by a representative of the VCS, and it made the decisions about the ASP money. It met monthly until March and now meets bi-monthly. Although the two respondents gave highly positive comments on the merits of the Regional Consortium the evaluation report shows that there were other contrary views.

What have been the main successes of ChangeUp in the region so far?

The Regional Consortium is seen as a success. All 20 consortia, began from different starting points, have travelled a long way in producing development plans and carrying out excellent projects in the process. People have come together. Communication and collaboration between individuals, voluntary organisations and statutory agencies has increased substantially. There is a greater understanding of the sector, its size and diversity. The secondees from the VCS to the GOSE, known as ChangeUp Co-ordinators '*played an absolutely essential role and have been highly praised*' (Evaluation report).

Examples of particularly good projects or successes?

The Capital Programme (to which £1.32m was allocated) of 30 diverse projects and the Additional Support programme (budget of £800,000), both apparently unique to the South East Region, have 'added real value'. The Local Authority Agreement tool-kit and the public procurement DVD were considered to be of merit.

Main difficulties, and things that have gone less well?

The direction from the Home Office and Ministers has not always been clear and there was a lack of clarity at the start. Short time scales and imposed deadlines. The programme often stalled and there was a lack of information. A huge amount of manpower has been put in to make it work, taking people away from the normal jobs and responsibilities.

Some of the key stakeholders in both local authorities and the VCS were unable to see the bigger picture; there were personality clashes; inappropriate statutory interventions.

The allocation of the funds, although within the short time scale probably the most pragmatic method, was considered to be over-simplistic, unfair and did not reflect local circumstances. Many of the local areas were overwhelmed at being given such a large sum to spend in just one year. *'This has meant that funding was not always spent in the most useful and cost-effective way'* (Evaluation report). There is strong criticism of what is considered to be inappropriate largesse.

Main approach or priorities for ChangeUp funding in 2007/8?

Suggested ways in which Capacity Builders could improve planning and procedure

It is not easy to separate out responses to these three questions so it makes sense to consider all comments regarding Capacity Builders under one heading. A number of suggestions have been put forward (not all of them appear at first glance to be practical or to come within Capacity Builders remit) including:

- bringing the ASP infrastructure (which is virtually non-existent) up to the level of mainstream
- investing in community development in order to develop basic infrastructure
- professional mentoring for dysfunctional lead players (what the correspondent called 'emotional intelligence injections')
- training/workshops to enable consortia to improve their Plans (to include business planning, funding and finance and Governance) (Surely the latter two are the responsibility of the national Hubs?)
- providing strong and clear leadership and a clear strategic sense of direction
- having respect for people on the ground, listening to what they have to say and taking a consultative approach
- taking a realistic view of how quickly the VSC can respond to directives – in other words no more tight deadlines – by working to realistic timetables
- setting up mechanisms for sharing good practice (perhaps a section on its website)
- insisting upon comprehensive, measurable action plans
- clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the national Hubs.

What evaluations or reviews have been carried out or are being carried out?

An independent evaluation on the pilot ICT projects is due at the end of June. An independent evaluation report concentrating on the first 12-months of the planning phase was launched and made public in June 2006.

Anything else not covered above?

There is a lot of concern about the Hubs: are they necessary or just duplicating what is already being done at a local level; they don't seem to know what goes on in the region and they do not consult; they do not appear to talk to each other. They are perceived to be a 'stitch-up' and 'jobs for the boys'. They are expensive and taking a significant amount (one third) of resources. The review promised by Capacity Builders is therefore welcomed.

Overall comments

A region that appears to have got itself together and is probably more advanced than others. There has been sensitive and appropriate support from the GOSE. It was probably first out of the blocks with an evaluation of the planning stage.

There is plenty of good practice emerging that will be relevant to other regions and other consortia - what makes for a good IIP, the evaluation of the planning phase, evaluation of pilot ICT projects, the ASP programme and the Local Authority Agreement tool-kit.

Interviewees and contributors by email:

Jacinta Thorley, Chair of RAISE – Regional Action and Involvement South East

Maggie Fivian, Programme Manager, ChangeUp - Government Office for South East

Alison Wright, Finance Officer, GOSE

(The Regional Officer for Capacity Builders felt that he had not been in post long enough to make a valid contribution.)

Additional material from:

ChangeUp in the South East: An evaluation by Morris and Nichols

Reader/Interviewer: Des Palmer

No of consortia/ plans (at all three levels):	21
No of projects and consortia 2005/6:	54
Regional population:	8,002,280

Regional analysis and interviews: SOUTH WEST

Is the VCS and its capacity reasonably evenly developed across the region?

No, it is variable. Research commissioned for ChangeUp shows gaps and weaknesses in Dorset and Somerset with a poor level of investment. The grant allocation to the sub-regions did not reflect deficiencies as it was partly based on population so ChangeUp did not put more resources where they were most needed. Leadership in some areas is inward looking and unwilling to consider new approaches. Bristol has well established infrastructure support.

Are there particular types of capacity where the VCS needs strengthening?

- There are weaknesses across all high levels of hub objectives.
- Least activity around governance and financial management and funding.
- Shortage of specialist support.
- Weakness of BME sector.

How far has the ChangeUp programme addressed any of these needs?

A major issue has been around equalities and support for BME groups and a debate about mainstreaming or separate accountable infrastructure development. There is a lot of tension around this issue. There has been considerable community development work in far south west with informal BME groups.

There are 14 regional projects covering the themed key objectives but mainly focussed on performance improvement, workforce development and finance. However, there is 'not a huge amount' of linkage between regional projects and the local level. For example, the evaluation of the Workforce Development project concluded that the project was not wholly successful in reaching front-line groups. Funding advice has been addressed through a grant to Wiltshire Charities Information Bureau to train up advice workers. Governance was given a low priority amongst regional projects.

ChangeUp has forced the pace on sub-regional collaboration although it is still too early to assess impact.

Developing capacity among, with and for BME and refugee / asylum-seeker groups?

Money has been injected into Black South West Network (based in Bristol), the Black Development Agency (Bristol), Fata He (Plymouth) and Linking Communities (Gloucester). Concern over whether this will be sustained because of future funding uncertainty. The successor to the Steering Group, the Infrastructure Partnership, has a BME sub-group.

Cornwall has produced a diversity tool-kit. Equality South West has been commissioned to look at three consortia and how they have responded to BME needs.

Developing capacity in rural areas?

Population is split equally between urban and rural. South West Acre Network (SWAN) has been instrumental in addressing rural agenda with a rural community council on each county consortium and in some cases is the lead agency. However, there are doubts whether activity has yet reached down to grass roots groups. SWAN and the Black South West Network are working together on diversity training. Gloucestershire RCC is working on a rural proofing toolkit. Rural proofing is one of the strategic priorities in the

SWVCS Infrastructure Plan. Gloucestershire consortia is providing training to bring all RCCs up to PQASSO level 2.

Areas and client groups for which VCS infra-structure reach and capacity is weak?

Faith groups have their own network and will soon launch results of mapping exercise. Regional theme projects include Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual groups (generally under-funded), youth organisation networks and single-parent organisations. Poor linkage between local and higher levels with regard to older people, disability and young people.

Is the programme starting to meet the aim of modernising infrastructure?

There has been improved collaboration, better communication and better use of resources. Longer-term planning is beginning to be built-in with recognition of the need to look further ahead. There is more realism about what can be achievable. Awareness of the importance of quality service is increasing due, in part, to expectations from funders. The Regional Infrastructure Summit Group brings together 16 infrastructure organisations and has modernisation as one of its aims.

Have plans been made and funds allocated: at County/sub regional, district level?

Plans and funding have been at regional and county and sub-regional level. There has been some tension about the level at which activities should take place.

Mix and balance between these three levels of planning and fund allocation?

The breakdown of the allocation of £5.88m was: £2.92m to 11 consortia; £1.66m to regional themes; £0.9m to capital and £0.4m to support costs. A further £764k was allocated to the Continuation Fund and divided between the consortia and the regional themes. There are 90 sub-regional projects and 14 thematic regional projects (two organisations are working together hence a figure of 15 given in some documents).

How effective has the regional planning been? Is there a regional steering group?

The regional Steering Group was primarily an advisory group to the GO and was chaired and serviced by it. It met bi-monthly. The decisions on who would be funded were made by the VSC through a Working Group, which did not involve the GO, and made recommendations to the Steering Group. The Group recently become the Infrastructure Development Partnership with a much more clearly defined role in planning.

What have been the main successes of ChangeUp in the region so far?

Relationships – working together on a common agenda – were a major success. There is an increasing realisation of the need to modernise. The autonomy of the Steering group and the 11 consortia. Development of sub-regional consortia in each area. Work with rural community councils around human resources. The Torbay consortium's relationship with its Local Authority. Some of the capital grants.

Examples of particularly good projects or successes?

- Rural proofing toolkit, currently in its final stages.
- The diversity toolkit.
- The workforce development strategy produced by the Workforce Development project.
- The intranet site www.changeupsw.webexone.com is unique.

Main difficulties, and things that have gone less well?

The regional approach should have been more strategic, so rather than inviting bids it should have been limited to one project from each of the six hub themes (rather than the current 14). This would have forced collaboration.

Some organisations do not understand how big the game is and the need to work inter-dependently. There is still resistance, compartmentalisation and narrow vision. Mediators had to be brought in during the early stages to bring some people into the network! (See comments in South East report on a similar subject.)

The whole equality and diversity agenda and how it was handled was a major problem. There was a lack of clarity of what was expected from the consortia with them working on parallel papers and the four BME organisations feeding their views into them late in the day.

The Steering Group was not managed well by GO who set it up, chaired it, dominated the agenda and serviced it. (The GO has a different view and was especially proud of delegating decision-making on grant allocation to the VCS.)

The stop-start nature was a problem with early, main then continuation funding and now a hiatus and uncertainty over the future.

The lack of promotion of services to front-line groups by the infrastructure organisations. The Workforce Development Project evaluation for example, concludes that the project was not wholly successful in reaching front-line groups.

Main approach or priorities for ChangeUp funding in 2007/8?

- Enabling consortia to develop and implement by reflecting what they see as their priorities in their patch.
- Understanding the needs of the newly emerging and smaller specialist organisations and supporting them.
- Focusing on front-line user organisations.
- Rewarding those who are able to demonstrate that they can engage in partnership and can deliver by actively encouraging collaboration, joint-planning and joint-delivery. Encouraging consortia to develop links with local authorities.
- Providing long-term security to whatever it funds.

Suggest ways that procedures could be improved?

The process was unnecessarily complicated given the amount of money involved. Capacity Builders should keep it clear, simple and appropriate. Devolve decision-making down to the regional level.

Suggested ways in which Capacity Builders could improve planning?

It should take a strong account of regional plans. Listen to the local level and not just the big national organisations. Develop mechanisms for identifying and for sharing good practice

Need to tie up with other government or quasi-government funders, such as the Big Lottery. Every GO region has a Funder Forum that CBs should be involved with.

What evaluations or reviews have been carried out or are being carried out?

- Review of three consortia and how they have responded to BME needs - due end June.
- Review of sub-regional consortia and 14 regional projects using Defra's 360 degree approach - due early July.
- An *Achievements paper* summarising what the 11 consortia have done so far - due end June.
- *SWVCS Workforce Development Project, Final Evaluation report* (March 2006).

Anything else not covered above?

There is a strong inter-related connection between performance/workforce development and governance so the creation of separate hubs is not helpful and does not reflect reality on the ground.

Note: The same point was made by one of the North West respondents.

There is a huge amount of cynicism about Hubs. Why have they received massive levels of funding? They lack understanding of what is going on in the region.

Overall comments

Well advanced on rural issues. Is aware of, and is tackling, issues around BME but probably at the expense of other areas. Good on evaluation with one already published and others due shortly. Has moved from Regional Steering Group to formalised Infrastructure Partnership and has produced a thoughtful and all-embracing plan that gives broad framework for future direction.

Interviewees:

Stephen Woollett, CEO of South West Forum – the regional voice of the Voluntary and Community Sector

Dawn Woods, Assistant Director, Community Cohesion Team, Government Office for the South West

Victoria Zastava, ChangeUp Policy Lead, GOSW

Vernon Samuels, Regional Co-ordinator for Capacity Builders (formerly with the GOSW)

The Director of the Black South West Network was invited to comment but has not done so.

Additional material from:

ChangeUp portal: *ChangeUp in the South West region*,
South West Forum website

SWVCS Workforce Development Hub Final Evaluation Report (March 2006)

Current ChangeUp Investment Priorities & Links between Regional and Sub-regional Programmes in the South West

Reader/Interviewer: Des Palmer

No of consortia/ plans (at all three levels):	12
No of projects and consortia 2005/6:	133
Regional population:	4,928,379

Regional analysis and interviews: WEST MIDLANDS

General comments

The West Midlands is the most complicated region as the planning has been based on 22 consortia (far more than any other region), some of which are based on themes rather than geographical areas (or in some cases themes within local areas). A new regional plan is to be launched by the ChangeUp Strategy Group on 14 July 2006, a week after the completion of this report; the new plan was seen in draft in late June.

The planning consortia are :

- 5 geographical consortia, based on the five largely rural counties; of these:
 - Herefordshire is a 'unitary' area and some work is shared with neighbouring Worcestershire
 - the Staffordshire plan is a joint one with the unitary area Stoke-on-Trent
 - Warwickshire is a joint plan with the Coventry unitary area
 - the Shropshire plan by contrast covers the rural districts only and not the more urban unitary Telford and Wrekin.
- 4 urban geographical consortia, in:
 - Birmingham
 - Black Country (covering the local authority areas of Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall, and Wolverhampton)
 - Solihull
 - Telford and the Wrekin
- a regional generic consortium (Regional Action West Midlands), which is broadening its role from one of representing the VCS into broader service and support
- 2 specialist cross-district consortia:
 - Community Facilitators (individuals who can conciliate at street level Birmingham, Stoke, and Sandwell)
 - Strengthening Social Enterprise Support (Birmingham, Solihull)
- a district BME consortium (of African / Caribbean Organisations in the Black Country)
- specialist regional consortia, on:
 - race equality (West Midlands RE Consortium)
 - social entrepreneurs and sustainability (based at the Initiative for Social Entrepreneurs)
 - health infrastructure (based at RAWM)
 - ICT (Midlands Open Source Technology at BVSC)
 - a consultancy database (PTAS – Professional Technical Aid Services, at Digbeth Trust)
 - social enterprise training (ELVS – Enterprise Learning in the Voluntary Sector, at Co-operation Black Country)
 - children and young people (Growing up in the West Midlands - at BAYC)
 - social accounting (started by All Saints Action Network, Wolverhampton)
 - refugee infrastructure (based at Digbeth Trust)

Analysis for this region has therefore been based on:

- a draft of the new regional report
- the five rural IIPs which have been analysed in the same framework as all other IIPs

- summaries in the regional plan of the other IIPS, both the thematic and the urban geographical ones, which give less detail than the IIPs generally.

Is the VCS and its capacity reasonably evenly developed across the region?

The region has two parts, the rural counties and the urban areas (Birmingham, Solihull, Black Country and Telford/Wrekin). They have different needs and have planned separately. The levels of VCS sophistication are very different. Among urban areas, there may be under-development in Stoke-on-Trent, which has had less investment in an area that has lost its manufacturing base, a weaker CVS, and where there has been even more of a scramble for new moneys than elsewhere. Solihull, with pockets of deprivation amid affluence, suffers from an ‘outer borough syndrome’ of being underdeveloped, dominated by its large neighbour, and having its needs under-recognised. Its earlier IIP was late, and planning is no longer being done jointly with Birmingham.

Are there particular types of capacity where the VCS needs strengthening?

How far has the ChangeUp programme addressed any of these needs?

Capacity has been traditionally weaker in rural areas – but for the ChangeUp programme the rural areas’ planning started with Defra money in July 2004, several months ahead of the urban ones. Renewed urban plans are now emerging with the new regional plan, which has strong thematic and geographical elements – many of the thematic elements covering the whole region. 16 activity headings have emerged, particularly important ongoing ones being underlined:

- Continuing consortium development
- Staff and Volunteer Training – including mapping skills levels, needs, and resources – in leadership, business development, governance, quality and procurement and ICT training.
- Promoting Volunteering – recruitment, and mapping volunteers’ support needs
- ICT – a wide range of ICT interventions, including support in identifying ICT needs and installing networks in individual organisations, establishing web-sites, and training and technical support, using open systems as an important aspect of the work; the need for further investment has been widely highlighted
- Advice and information to VCS organisations - identifying needs and putting in place people, organisations and systems to meet them, including website development and providing information on quality and procurement issues.
- Representation and policy development work
- Support for social accounting - looking in the audit process at social as well as financial implications as part of the audit process
- Rural VCS development – identifying and filling in geographical gaps and specific issues with dispersed communities (eg the needs of older people), sometimes involving greater participation by the VCS in Parish Council strategy development
- Filling in other gaps – especially to front line organisations where VCS support services are not being provided and establishing mechanisms to provide those services
- Support for BME and other under-represented communities – in some cases provided under the specific BME heading, and in others it is included within other activities
- Providing Health and Social care services – Support for organisations and networks providing services in health, disability, and social care

- Providing services for young people
- Providing refugee support services – mapping and analysing the support needs of organisations serving refugees and asylum seekers
- Support for social enterprise – including incorporating social enterprise thinking into VCS infrastructure and other VCS organisations, providing other options than dependence on grant funding
- Fundraising and sustainability – support for fundraising, training in social enterprise and understanding business models
- Cohesion – support and training to people faced with community conflict or other disputes.

Defra money started process in July 2004, which meant that planning in the rural counties was six months ahead of the rest of the region which started with the beginning of ChangeUp in July 2005. The strategy has not attempted to create new organisations but rather to build capacity.

Developing capacity among, with and for BME and refugee / asylum-seeker groups?

There may be a need to redress towards urban BME priorities. A regional BME network lost its HO funding and is being re-established through an inter-agency working group. BME capacity building seems to work better at local level (particularly local with themes) than at sub-regional or regional levels. An unsuccessful (so far) attempt was made to consolidate a refugees/asylum seekers/migrant workers' network earlier this year. But BME issues are addressed to some extent within generic consortia and other thematic projects, eg health. Among the 9 thematic projects are African/Caribbean infrastructure in Black Country, and Refugee Infrastructure Impact, and a Race Equality West Midlands project to develop BME infrastructure.

Developing capacity in rural areas?

Rural organisations may lack capacity to take up properly the funding that they have won. There is a culture of separatism in several of the counties (notably Shropshire) which is not always helpful. Rural areas vary, with for example farming communities and areas that are dominated by commuters and their families. Isolation and weak services are common. Contacts are difficult to make as the costs of initially engaging people are high, and organisations are difficult to sustain because of transport issues.

Areas and client groups for which VCS infrastructure reach and capacity is weak?

There is little linkage across county boundaries, meaning that similar support resources are developed separately with little sharing. Some headway has been made by calling joint meetings but this tends to dissipate when reported back. But there have been some successes, eg a Rural Stress Support Network.

Is the programme starting to meet the aim of modernising infrastructure?

Yes – see above – though the timescales have been very tight.

Have plans been made and funds allocated: at County/sub regional, district level?

The different planning timetables for urban/rural have made regional joint planning virtually impossible. The Defra money came onstream first, and here is now concern that some of the regional plans, over 2 years old, need updating. Money was held back after rural plans were ready, pending submission of urban plans. Allocation of funds has been:

Regional £829K, Programme management: £284K, Urban: £2,367K, Rural: £2,299K. = £5,779K.

Mix and balance between these three levels of planning and fund allocation?

The rural projects may need more support to deliver what they have been funded for.

How effective has the regional planning been? Is there a regional steering group?

Strong effort at regional planning have borne fruit in a more integrated new regional plan. This has meant acknowledging problems because of the different timescales and the rural/urban split. There are good 'pairs' of planning, eg Herefordshire/Worcestershire, Warwickshire/Coventry, but cross-boundary working has been patchy. So Shropshire and Telford do not work together well. Black Country has been successful and can work with Birmingham. Considerable effort has been put into keeping the rural areas and urban areas outside Birmingham consulted and involved – ensuring that the 'City-region' has its needs recognised but does not dominate. This is also true of the Regional Assembly, which has a third of its members who are 'other stakeholders'. Regional Action West Midlands (RAWM) is considering converting itself into the regional consortium; its original purpose was to influence regional government rather than to plan the VCS.

What have been the main successes of ChangeUp in the region so far?

Every consortium has researched and mapped its context, results for the rural counties being included in the IIPs. But there is still a need for coherent data collection and analysis methodology across the region. There have been some good links to Local Strategic Partnerships, and some extensive conversations about development, bringing people to the table who have not been involved in discussions before.

Examples of particularly good projects or successes?

- Staffordshire partnership
- Walsall BME work
- The regional health alliance
- Community planning in Herefordshire
- Mapping in Warwickshire.

Main difficulties, and things that have gone less well?

Expectations were too high in Year 1, and processes and messages were not always clear. There is a need to develop a medium-term planning horizon. There has been too much emphasis on plans and re-writing plans, rather than space to implement and update them. There is wariness of satellites of national organisations, whose initiatives do not necessarily connect with local planning.

Main approach or priorities for ChangeUp funding in 2007/8?

There is still a need for better links with LSPs. ChangeUp should try to be a catalyst for change, and for synergy between funders. It needs better processes, and planning for continuity.

Suggested ways in which Capacity Builders could improve planning?

Encourage links across boundaries so that tools and support are not reinvented.

What evaluations or reviews have been carried out or are being carried out?

A small study has been commissioned by the GO for the West Midlands with two main aims:

1. To assess the impact ChangeUp has had to date on infrastructure organisations in the West Midlands and
2. To assess the process of implementing ChangeUp.

The research is being done by Aston University Centre for Voluntary Action Research, and led by Hans Schlappa who has substantial experience of research and of the voluntary and governmental sectors in the region. The methodology comprises documentary analysis of minutes and other material relating to the Assessment Panel (which made decisions on funding applications from sub-regional consortia) and the Strategy Group (which tried to do things 'regionally') and semi-structured interviews with consortia chairs and GOWM staff. Data is currently being analysed and a draft report is due for comment with GOWM in early/mid July.

Interviewees:

Sharon Palmer, Regional Action West Midlands

Christine Eade, Deputy Director for Social Exclusion, Government Office for the West Midlands

Mary Jane Peach, Capacity Builders Regional Co-ordinator (new in post)

Reader/Interviewer: Nigel Siederer

No of consortia/ plans (at all three levels):	10*
No of projects and consortia 2005/6:	90
Regional population:	5,268,319

* Information to be confirmed when new regional plan published, July 2006

Regional analysis and interviews: YORKSHIRE & THE HUMBER

Is the VCS and its capacity reasonably evenly developed across the region?

There is a lot of VCS activity in South Yorkshire because of its Objective 1 status, but that does not necessarily mean that their capacity is more developed than in some of the more rural areas. Indeed they may be more unstable than organisations elsewhere in the regions because they are used to one source of funding.

As far as infrastructure support goes, it is pretty much available across the sub regions and frontline groups would know how to access it.

Are there particular types of capacity where the VCS needs strengthening?

- ICT comes through as a need.
- Workforce development has been identified as a need.
- Funding and finance.
- Governance, however, does not come through as a need and there are few ChangeUp projects addressing this. (This may be an unidentified need.)
- Commissioning and procurement is a vital consideration. VCOs are not getting mainstream contracts with the public sector. There is a need for relationship building with local authorities in particular. VCS engagement with LSPs is very important but the response from LSPs is patchy across the region. There is a need for some sort of process that encourages LSPs to engage with the VCS in the LAAs – in planning and decision-making and not just in delivery.
- The question of a voice for specialist and equalities groups has been raised, particularly at the regional level.

How far has the ChangeUp programme addressed any of these needs?

ICT activity – was thought to have been effective on the whole, but the approaches were different in each sub region and rather than responding to need the approach was rather dependent on what organisations were already delivering in the locality. For example in West Yorkshire it was coordinated at the sub regional level, but was delivered at the district level by local or specialist organisations. In Kirklees a disability organisation with expertise in ICT was contracted to run a helpline and a 121 support and was able to give advice to generic organisations on ensuring the use of ICT was accessible. While these approaches suited each sub region, there needed also to be a regional approach which connected more with the national Hub. There is also a need to build supply as well as demand. In South Yorkshire they are using commercial services. An important point relating to supply is that some charities may be restricted in their constitutions about the areas where they can deliver.

Funding and finance – There are some good examples of funding advice bureaux. There are also some community accountancy projects but there may be too many separate projects. There could be economies of scale with fewer projects that provide services across the region.

Workforce development – for example in North Yorkshire ChangeUp enabled an existing service on HR advice for VCOs to expand from 10 hours a week to full time and the demand for the service has indicated it is meeting a need. Effectiveness of some of these backroom services (e.g. payroll, employment rights service for workers) could be increased by being delivered on a regional basis but this had not happened through the regional planning process.

Procurement – through ChangeUp, the GO commissioned the VCS to run workshops on the LAA process – negotiation, procurement etc. Aimed at the VCS they brought in speakers from the public sector to talk about good practice. The culmination of this work will be an All Partner event which will include public sector agencies, thus giving an opportunity for mutual debate and understanding.

The ‘voice’ issue – has been addressed through the specialist regional networks that have been set up (referred to below).

However, it is very early to analyse the effectiveness of some of this work. What is needed is a baseline and an evaluation methodology

Developing capacity among, with and for BME and refugee / asylum-seeker groups?

There have been projects looking at this, but it must be acknowledged that previous work is patchy across the region and that the BME regional network had folded.

- Work on networking, influencing and creating channels of communication between BME VCS and the public agenda is considered as an important aspect of capacity building, although this is not about organisational capacity building. ChangeUp funding at regional level contributed part of the funds used to develop a BME Panel, a different way of creating a voice where the Panel members were recruited as experts rather than as representatives of an organisation. The purpose of the panel is to provide a voice for the sector to influence regional organisations eg the Regional Assembly. The Panel is supported by a network development worker whose role it is to support the members rather than do any liaison/influencing work.
- ChangeUp has funded a Refugee Network (led by the Northern Refugee Centre) and the Northern Network of Travelling People. These networks have been funded through a national fund rather than through the GO allocation. The Refugee Network is a network of community development workers working in Refugee Community Organisations with the aim of increasing the engagement of RCOs to work influence mainstream policy making. Funding this work through ChangeUp has helped the RCOs connect with VCS structures in the region, so this is very good example of specialist organisations who are now more aware of how generic support can help them. The aim of the Northern Network of Travelling People is to enable travelling people and those who work with them to advocate directly to public agencies.
- There was regional work commissioned to produce a Race Equality Framework for consortia to measure how far they were engaging BME groups and delivering their capacity building needs. This has been taken on in North Yorkshire but other consortia have found it difficult to prioritize the time to work through the framework.
- Some BME sub regional projects have developed in South Yorkshire mainly around capital projects (eg resource centres) but this has not been easy (one organisation folded, and one has not yet obtained match funding that had been promised by the LA).

Developing capacity in rural areas?

At the regional level ChangeUp funded a rural policy officer to liaise with the 2 RCCs in the area. There is only one RCC for the whole of Yorkshire and thus it is of paramount importance that generic infrastructure support is made more accessible to rural communities and organisations. To facilitate this happening the Yorkshire RCC, through CU, has been able to co-locate workers within the CVSs, thus enhancing the CVS's understanding of the rural agenda.

Areas and client groups for which VCS infra-structure reach and capacity is weak?

The regional programme has funded networks as a means to raising the issues faced by specialist VCOs who meet the needs of particular groups:

- The Connexions service has been funding voluntary youth organisations at the sub regional level and the CY programme funded a regional network to bring them together.
- A women's network in Hull has been funded to look into the viability of setting up a regional network of women's organisations.
- There is a new regional inter-faith forum which had a successful launch recently and is highly regarded by players in the region, including Yorkshire Forward.

Is the programme starting to meet the aim of modernising infrastructure?

Although it has got people working together it is difficult to say that it is starting to meet its aim. ChangeUp is a long term strategy with short term funding. Modernising infrastructure is a continuous process and it is hard to see where it is going. The process so far has been one of planning and implementing small projects. There is a lot of information available but it is unclear how it will be used. VCOs complain that local authorities and the public sector are not good at funding infrastructure. There is therefore a big role for Capacity Builders to push this agenda forward otherwise the good work that has started will not be able to be implemented.

Have plans been made and funds allocated: at County/sub regional, district level?

- Early spend – sub regions got the same amount of money to produce an evidence base on needs.
- Mainstream spend – sub-regions got £1.1 m for sub regional activity but the spend of £750,000 for regional activity did not happen until 3 months into this programme. Thus it had to delivery in a shorter timescale. The idea behind this was that the regional activity should be informed by the sub regional plans and activities.
- Continuation funding – 5 equal amounts were awarded to the 4 sub regions and the region.

Mix and balance between these three levels of planning and fund allocation?

Although at a contractual level it looks as though the planning and fund allocation was simple. However, the planning and delivery differed in the different sub regions:

- South Yorkshire had a large number of district based projects
- In the Humber it was mainly sub regional projects
- In North Yorkshire there was a mixture: mainly revenue funded activities at the sub regional level, and capital funded projects at the district level
- In West Yorkshire there was no capital spend. Some projects were delivered at the sub regional level while others were planned at the sub regional level but delivered at the district level through sub contracting.

In the main this mix was good as it allowed for local variation. The model of coordination at the sub regional level and delivery at the district level can be good at meeting local needs. One of the sub regional volunteering projects was good as it brought volunteer centres together for the first time.

How effective has the regional planning been? Is there a regional steering group?

The Yorkshire and Humber Regional Forum is a membership acting as a consortium not a structured consortium and existed before ChangeUp. The Regional Forum called a meeting of regional infrastructure agencies and some sub regional agencies that worked across sub regions. This loose grouping of about 30-35 members worked with the change up development worker and a consultant to produce the IIP. The Forum may now be looking at formalizing this grouping into a consortium (need to check with Judy).

Initially there was a Regional VCS Advisory Group but the GO then set up a 2014 Strategy Group with representatives of the public sector and the voluntary sector. The VCS participants were recruited on the basis of their expertise and included some specialist organisations. However, there were no representatives from the sub regional consortia nor the Regional Forum and the 2014 group felt dislocated from the process. The role of the 2014 group was to provide an overview of the sector and its infrastructure needs, but particularly to engage with the public sector. However attendance from public sector agencies was not consistent. This group has now been reviewed and it has been agreed that there will be a higher level strategic advisory group named the Yorkshire and Humber VCS Futures Group, and that the VCS will elect representatives as a constituency. Public sector agencies will be represented by senior staff. The Futures group won't just be focusing on ChangeUp but will be the main place for the engagement of VCS and the public sector and how ChangeUp can be used as a vehicle for deepening that engagement.

What have been the main successes of ChangeUp in the region so far?

- The sub regional approaches were felt to be good as they were varied according to need in that sub region. The whole process brought people to together to identify issues, to plan for the future, and to decide on a collaborative basis how to spend £1m within a year. The programme opened up discussions on collaborative working and peoples have started sharing information and resources.
- There have been a small number of large projects which have resulted in a step change.
- Funding for ICT is a success – as it is difficult to get funding for this in the sector. As ICT training is often not accredited, the LSC would not have funded some of the courses that ChangeUp has funded.
- The block fund at regional level for networking was successful at bringing specialist issues to the fore, and was cost effective. Specialist networking has engaged people who have not been engaged before e.g. people of faith and refugees.

Examples of particularly good projects or successes?

Projects have been mentioned throughout this report. Others are:

- The volunteering infrastructure worked very successfully at getting the volunteer agencies working together, and getting the Volunteering England regional development worker working in the regions. This enabled volunteer agencies to be more effective.
- The Information and Research Resource was thought to be a good example: this is an online database of research. The resource is now looking at funding through Basis to get a part time editor in post.
- The Homelessness Network linked development workers together to share information (horizontal networking), but this quickly linked to the Regional Housing Board which

found the link useful. If links like this are valued, this could be a route to sustainability for a particular network.

Main difficulties, and things that have gone less well?

- Timescale and the short lead in times. It took 2 years to develop the ChangeUp strategy and then 3 months for the IIPs to be developed.
- ChangeUp relies on a partnership approach but the partners may be in competition for other funds which can make for uneasy relationships at times
- The relationship between the national Hubs and consortia needs to be more effective. There has been duplication with the work some Hubs are doing with front line organisations without checking in the region and sub region what is going on already. This is confusing for front line organisations. Another issue with the Hubs is that sub regional or regional VCS does not always have the capacity to use the material. Some of the Hubs are starting to produce good material but it takes local resources to get it out across the region, eg coordinating events in the region, linking up with local projects working on the same theme.

Main approach or priorities for ChangeUp funding in 2007/8?

- The funding priorities need to build on the work that has already been planned. There should not be a national imposition of new priorities but consortia should be encouraged to implement their plans. They also ought to be encouraged not to spread out funding too thinly, giving a lot of projects a small amount of funding.
- The planning work needs to continue and plans need to be reviewed and updated. Some IIPs were strong on vision and strong on identifying activities, but this did not necessarily mean the plan was strategic. The GOYH has commissioned some work to review plans and to link them more with regional strategy to get a more consistent and strategic approach. This should allow VCOs to use the document as a negotiating tool with funders to demonstrate the fit with regional and sub regional strategy.
- There is a concern about the new Consortia Projects Programme to be funded from September 06 to March 08, but with £9m to spend in the first 6 months and £8m to spend over the following year. This means projects will rush to spend money in the first 6 months and then not have a similar amount of money the following year. There is a danger of missing the change management aspect of ChangeUp through the tapering of resources.
- There needs to be some sort of sector development council for the sector which might attract LSC or DTI funding – could ChangeUp establish this. The sector needs to be recognised as a major employment sector. For example, it is thought to be 3 or 4% of the GDP, more important than agriculture or mining, and yet more attention nationally and regionally is paid to redundancies and loss of employment in these sectors.
- There needs to be more connection with LAs. The sector does not usually have an organised relationship with LAs. There needs to be more VCS involvement in the LAAs – for example perhaps there could be a volunteering target. The whole process has been one of change management for infrastructure organisations and it has taken place without identifying some of the basic issues – one of the main ones being about how infrastructure organisations will be funded in the context of the public sector being mainly interested in commissioning front line services. Where does support for

infrastructure come in here? Local authorities need to understand the importance of infrastructure in getting the front line VCOs fit to deliver public services, for example specialist infrastructure which is able to broker and manage large contracts on a sub regional basis. There needs to be more attention paid to commissioning and procurement, and perhaps Capacity Builders could consider funding a national Commissioning Unit either centrally or regionally.

Suggested ways in which Capacity Builders could improve planning and procedures?

- Data collection should be in a consistent format to allow Capacity Builders to analyse results and to compare across regions.
- There should be flexibility about the financial year end.
- There should be more time to plan and deliver projects – the timescale for the next round of funding means that consortia only have from October to March to deliver.
- Capacity Builders need to influence other funders to align funding and to align funding procedures. The Big Lottery’s Basis fund should be complementary to ChangeUp but the timescale is out of sync and the application form is very different. Also the RDAs, through the Single Pot, could align some of the funding towards infrastructure development (In Yorkshire and the Humber it seems that Single Pot funding cannot be used to match fund ChangeUp)
- As new programmes come on stream there should be more development time and a longer opportunity to organisations to put forward proposals and justify them.
- Capacity Builders Grants Team seems very well organised and helpful as regards its internal procedures related to grant funding.

What evaluations or reviews have been carried out or are being carried out?

No formal evaluation of the regional programme but a consultant has been commissioned to work through the Defra evaluation toolkit with some consortia.

Anything else not covered above?

The pressure and responsibility put on consortia has perhaps not been fully recognised. They have had to plan and also be accountable for allocating funds for activities and they are not formal organisations. They have responded very well in the main. In many ways this is not a sustainable approach and perhaps consortia need to be more formalised.

Interviewees:

Mark Crowe: Head of Development, Yorkshire and the Humber Regional Forum for Voluntary and Community Organisations

Cressida Woodall, Voluntary Sector Infrastructure Coordinator, Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber

Neil Bennett, Regional Coordinator, Capacity Builders

Reader/Interviewer: Kamila Zahno

No of consortia/ plans (at all three levels):	5
No of projects and consortia 2005/6:	57
Regional population:	4,964,053

SOME EXAMPLES OF GOOD PLANS AND WORK

From the analyses of the plans:

Lewisham

References to and links with wider agenda and strategies – activity plans identify need, potential funding sources and local linkages as well as costs, timetable and anticipated outcomes.

South London CVS Partnership

Well written, professionally presented plan that “*one feels confident in their delivery*”. Clear milestones (although only 1 year plan), produced by an existing consortium that appears to be working well. Each CVS takes a lead in specific areas (Hub potential).

Wokingham

One of the few plans that attempts to show short-, medium-, and long-term targets (although less well specified over time and would have benefited by showing time lines for each project).

Bristol

Reader’s comment: “*One of my strongest plans*”. Cross references between eight separate funding proposals within a hub model, suggest that infrastructure organisations are working closely together, and have an integrated strategy.

Somerset

Strongly focused on priorities, with four funding proposals. One priority is to strengthen the BME umbrella and develop a wider diversity network, presumably because of Defra’s urging, though ethnic minorities in Somerset are only 1.2 % of the population. The case in favour includes that the population is growing, and more likely to be vulnerable when in a small minority.

Cornwall

Plan has well worked out timetabled implementation outputs and outcomes specified, and covers the County properly in terms of themes and geography, also relating to regional BME initiative even though the County BME population is low.

Central London Sub-Region

Identifies alternative funding sources in some detail. It is not clear whether the, very precise, sums identified are aspirational; if secured, this is an impressive result.

Bexley

One of few plans that looked beyond one-year and had 8 medium-term objectives and one long-term objective each with tasks, costs, milestones, outcomes and something on sustainability.

West London

This had a limited number (3) of manageable objectives, costed over 5 years.

Cumbria

The revised plan was shorn of all supporting material and so it focused solely on its 22 aims/objectives. Each of these had 7 sections including purpose, outcome and timeframe, clearly presented.

Richmond

Example of a very well laid out plan which had as its first section the need, with background on consultation and the key issues identified as well as baseline data on existing infrastructure and the front line VCS. The second section laid out the vision and mission, key challenges and then the IS plan itself. The Plan was clearly for the years 2005-2014 and was not couched in terms of a bid to ChangeUp but looked at planned action under the key Hub Themes as well as a further theme on representation, promotion and negotiation. Where it falls down though is on implementation as there is no accompanying costed-out action plan of activities year by year, but it is logical and to be commended.

West Sussex

Had an interesting approach to targeting support to priority communities (based on location, age, and interest). They are to develop a self assessment toolkit on getting infrastructure agencies to assess how they reach the wider community and to develop peer support for infrastructure agencies. Part of the approach would be to work with frontline organizations to encourage them to include priority communities as their service users – ie widen their base.

Bromley

Had a strong focus on community development but the plan is fairly weak at describing this – create a community development forum and a strategy to build relationships between community development organisations, statutory services and external funding opportunities. There may be better examples.

North London Sub-Region

This is a sub region of contrasts (one third urban, one third suburb, one third open space/green belt) with an economy the size of Birmingham and a population of over a million. Excellence was characterised by lateral thinking - outside the confines of the VCS - and the inclusion at many levels of non-VCS organisations such as Middlesex University, LSC North London and a Job Centre. In the same vein their plans recognise the major contribution that already has, and could yet be made, by such grant givers as City Parochial, Bridge House and the Lottery. By virtue of this wider foundation and involvement it is possible to see how the plans have a real future.

West Yorkshire Sub Region

A huge sub region comprising Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield, with a population of over two million. Excellence is characterised by a deep understanding of the need for ‘joined up’ planning and action: eleven priority activities are listed with five cross cutting themes: skills and excellence; accessibility and inclusion; partnership and collaboration; sustainability; and rural proofing. One manager with a total overview of the plan has been appointed and there are clear indications about funding opportunities for the future and even an exit plan should things not turn out well.

Positive Outcomes:

Bolton

Mentions success in targeting hard to reach groups and development of new services, eg tailored training, to meet their needs (not clear that this is a result of ChangeUp). They plan to set up a formal bank of local trainers.

Milton Keynes

The proposal for a VCS intranet has received funding and may be underway. It is part of a strong plan.

Cheshire & Warrington

Have delivered a Gateway building in Warrington: a significant capital project, providing a base for VCS sharing. (Note, while this is a result if its origins are in ChangeUp, there has also been a backlash; plans to replicate it through the sub-region have been abandoned. The overall plan is weak.)

From the regional interviews:

Many more examples are given in the Regional reports which form the main part of this Section, so are not repeated here. Lists with positive summaries of individual projects also appear on some regional websites.