

# **Empowering communities that do not engage through Endogenous and Exogenous Regional Development practices: How to create more sustainable rural communities?**

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# Meaning of Empowerment

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- A process of **transition from** a state of **powerlessness** to a state of relative **control** (Sadan, 1997).
- A united and **systematic effort by a group** to gain **control** over **and improve** their aggregated **lives** by defining problems, assets, solutions, and the processes by which change can occur (Reininger et al., 2006).



# Policy Background

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- The 'reform agenda will **empower communities** to come together to address local issues... **giving new powers** and rights to neighbourhood groups' (Conservative Party, 2010).
- One of the National Outcomes: 'We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where **people take responsibility for their own action** and how they affect others' (Scottish Government, 2014).
- Community Empowerment Bill: 'communities are a rich source of talent and creative potential and **the process of community empowerment** helps to unlock that potential. It **stimulates and harnesses the energy of local people** to come up with creative and successful solutions to local challenges' (Scottish Government, 2014).

# Practical concerns

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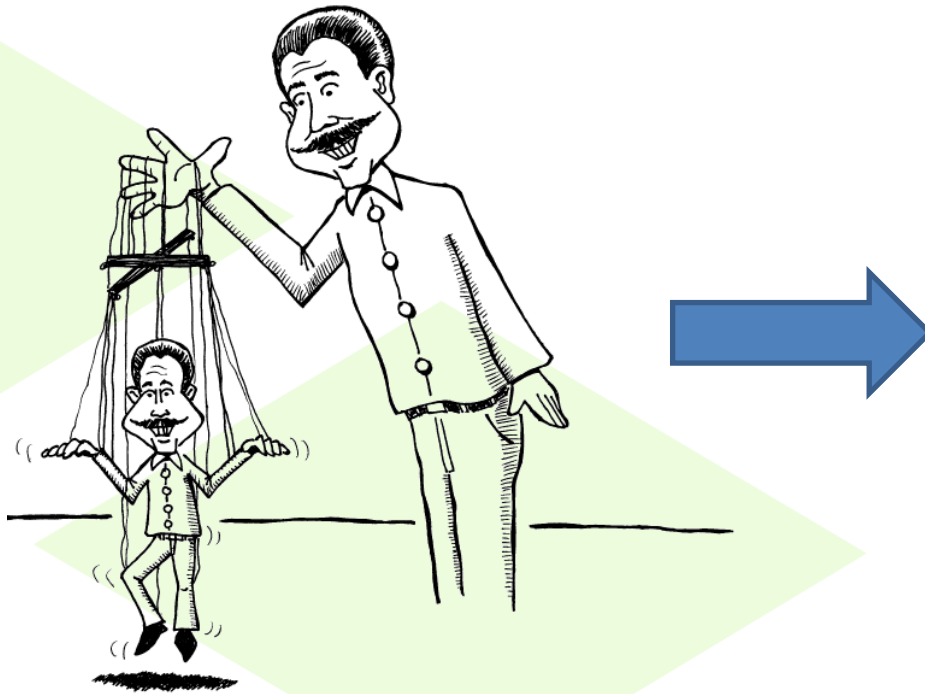


- Are all communities equally empowered?
- What do we do with communities that are less capable and *do not engage*?



‘It can only be expected that community-based strategies for self-help will increase the division and inequality in rural towns by empowering a small, fairly powerful minority who are better positioned to mobilise themselves’ (Herbert-Cheshire, 2000).

# Practical concerns



The movement from the '*hierarchically organised intervening state*' towards the '*cooperative state*' needs to be better understood (Margarian, 2011) .

# Empowerment approaches



**Endogenous** - having an internal cause or origin, growing or originating from within.

**Exogenous** - having an external cause or origin, growing or originating from outside.



Both concepts relate to:

- **the extent** to which a community is capable of **running community programmes** supporting local development.
- the **ability or inability of exercising power** in a particular locality.

# Capacity for Change Programme



C4C = Capacity for Change  
EU LEADER funding (2011-2013)



## What is the driving force of the C4C initiative?

- To build community capacity and enable less-resourced communities to become empowered and resilient

## Why should we work with less-resourced communities?

- Current LEADER approach might not be efficient
- Support goes to 'capable' communities
- Less-resourced communities miss out on potential support





# Process of C4C development



- Identification of communities that meet all inclusion criteria
- C4C publicity and community engagement activities  
(Community meetings, face to face and one to one meetings, leaflets and notice boards information)
- Verification community readiness and willingness
- Supported community action (communities working with a project officer, financial support to develop local projects)
- Selection of a project idea
- Project implementation and service co-production





# Research questions

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## **Overarching research objectives:**

- How effective is the overall C4C intervention?
- What difference does C4C make to the participating communities?
- What improvements could be made to the C4C programme to make it more effective?

## **Community empowerment questions:**

- How does the community empowerment process begin?
- Who should be responsible for the process of empowerment?

# Methodology of the study



## Stage 1

Initiation of  
the research process

- Development of C4C hybrid evaluation model
- Baseline data collection
- Quantitative & Qualitative info

## Stage 2

Exploring C4C  
processes

- In-depth interviews with C4C stakeholders
- Interviews with C4C project manager
- Exploring How? Why? and Who?

## Stage 3

Finalising the  
study

- Final data collection
- Quantitative & Qualitative info
- Longitudinal data
- Measuring change

# Data collection

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7 villages were invited to take part in the programme and 6 of them accepted the invitation

- **Stage 1** involved conducting 178 face-to-face, semi-structured interviews
- **Stage 2** involved over 30 in-depth interviews
- **Stage 3** involved conducting 137 face-to-face interviews

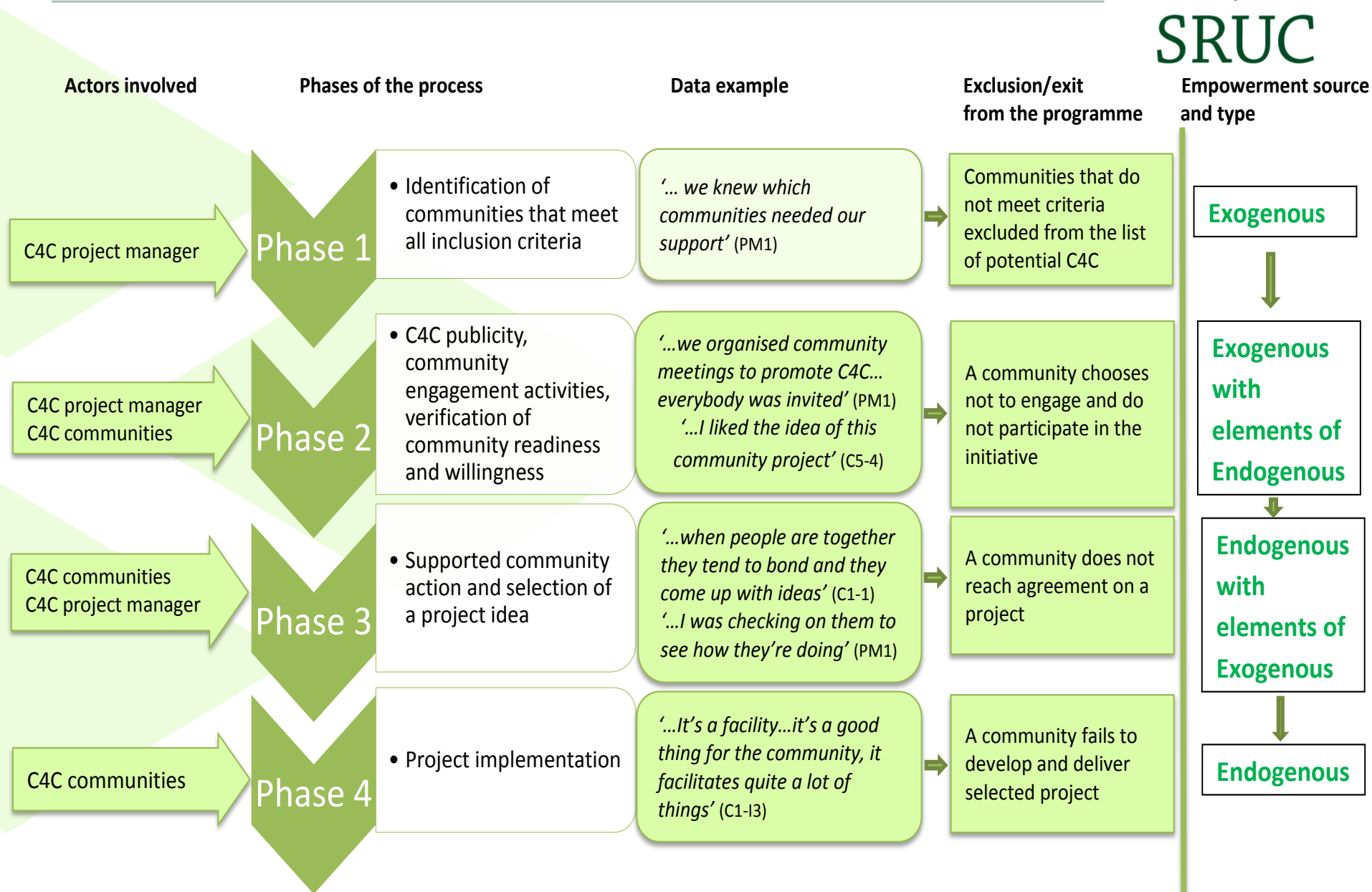
# C4C results

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- C4C communities identified diversified priorities and different local needs inducing:
  - Community garden
  - Kitchen project
  - Heritage project
  - Community sculpture
  - Community path linking two villages
- 3 out of 6 villages successfully completed the project

# Exogenous and endogenous empowerment



- **Funding source as a platform for community engagement:** *'We got something for nothing didn't we?...I think the idea's excellent...the fact that there is finance available'.*
- **Supported community action and work of a project manager:** *'Obviously we didn't know what we were doing and we had somebody to guide us. You definitely need somebody that knows how the project works to help you work through it.'*

# Participation

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- **Being part of a region programme as a trigger of community participation:** *'We often feel that we are neglected. So to be part of this project was great'.*
- **Confidence as an essential component building community empowerment:** *'People will be interested and perhaps that will encourage, just even if it's half a dozen people, to get more involved...so that's a real advantage'.*
- **Development of social capital through community involvement:** *'it forced people to work together who normally wouldn't, so that was a positive. It led within the village to an opening of communication channels which was also positive'.*



- **Development of new and appreciation of existing resources:** *‘We’ve actually got to the end...there is a tangible result now. And it got the village talking... it’s an extra facility’.*
- **Knock-on effect and added value:** *‘now we’re looking into ways to raise money separately to try and get a carpet put in the hall to make it nicer so that if we are having people hiring the hall for a café...so from the kitchen it’s spawning other ideas to make the hall more useable’.*

Phase of the process	Observed Empowerment Practices	Observed Community Empowerment causes and outcomes	Progression from engagement and participation to empowerment (EPE)	Key actor/s
Phase 1	Exogenous	<i>Funding source as a platform for community engagement</i>	Engagement (E)	Project manager
		<i>Supported community actin and work of a project manager</i>		
Phase 2	Exogenous with endogenous	<i>Being part of a region programme as a trigger of community participation</i>	Participation (P)	Project manager with increasing power of community members
		<i>Confidence as an essential component building community empowerment</i>		
Phase 3	Endogenous with exogenous	<i>Development of social capital through community involvement</i>		
Phase 4	Endogenous	<i>Development of new and appreciation of existing resources</i>	Empowerment (E)	Community members
		<i>Knock-on effect and added value</i>		

# Conclusions

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In order to empower communities that *do not engage* and build their resilience the following stages are necessary:

- **Engagement** (run by a community development officer)
- **Participation** (which involves collaborative work and transfer of power, resources and control from the development officer to community members)
- **Empowerment** (a stage in which communities take ownership of the project and run the community development initiative).

# Conclusions

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- Community empowerment needs to be thought and, in relation to communities that do not engage, it should **start with building the capacity** of communities.
- The assumption that **all** communities might be ready to do things for themselves is unrealistic.
- In relation to communities that 'do not engage', the research highlights a need for **tailored structural support**.



# Thank you for your attention



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## Recent C4C publications:

**Steiner, A.** and Markantoni, M. (2014) Exploring Community Resilience in Scotland through Capacity for Change. *Community Development Journal*, 49(3), pp. 407-425.

**Steiner, A.** (2014) Building community resilience and empowering communities that 'do not engage', Rural Policy Centre research briefing.

Skerratt, S. and **Steiner, A.** (2013) Working with communities-of-place: complexities of empowerment. *Local Economy*, 28(3), pp. 320–338.

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