



Evaluation of ChangeUp 2004 to 2008

Summative Evaluation Report

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GLOSSARY

FLOs	frontline third sector organisations
LIOs	local infrastructure third sector organisations
NIOs	national infrastructure third sector organisations
NSTSO	National Survey of Third Sector Organisations
TSOs	third sector organisations

1 Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

This report presents our findings from the Summative Evaluation of ChangeUp, commissioned in 2008 by Capacitybuilders to look at the impact and outcomes achieved in the first funding period (April 2004 – March 2008).

The research consortium undertaking this project comprises:

- The Third Sector Research Centre;
- BMG Research;
- GuideStar Data Services;
- Sustain Consultancy.

1.2 Capacity building infrastructure in the voluntary and community sector: the 'baseline' position prior to ChangeUp

1.2.1 Introduction

It is widely recognised that information to evaluate the quality of the support infrastructure within the third sector is historically weak – indeed this was one of the reasons this evaluation was commissioned. There is, therefore, little existing research to inform a formal measure or “baseline” of the quality of the third sector infrastructure before ChangeUp came into operation in 2004. Instead, there is a series of reports which suggest that there were limitations in the infrastructure available to the sector (at that time, typically, in relation to local Councils of Voluntary Services) which could support the development of frontline third sector organisations (TSOs) more directly engaged with communities and individuals.

The most influential report exploring the state of the sector and leading to the launch of ChangeUp was the HM Treasury document *The Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in Service Delivery: A Cross-Cutting Review* in 2002. The expert committee which produced the report suggested that “the current infrastructure has developed piecemeal and, while some parts of the sector are well served, the overall coverage is variable in quality and fragile. There are significant gaps in networks and some duplications”.

1.2.2 The policy environment and the launch of ChangeUp

The launch of ChangeUp followed from the HM Treasury Cross-Cutting Review, which recognised the need to build the capacity of organisations in the third sector, particularly in respect of their involvement in service delivery. It also recognised the importance of capacity building and strengthened infrastructure support to frontline organisations in the third sector, identifying that this support was variable in quality and reach, poorly coordinated and lacking sustainability, particularly at local level.

In the HM Treasury review, capacity building was defined as being about ensuring that VCOs have the skills, knowledge, structures and resources to realise their full potential

– i.e. second tier activity that supports front line delivery and typically involves removing barriers to involvement and investing to maximise the contribution that VCOs can make, as much about releasing existing capacity as about developing new capacity. It identified four different kinds of capacity, all of which have to be achieved to the right level and balanced in the right mix:

- Organisational capacity;
- Technical capacity to deliver specific services;
- Infrastructure capacity; and
- Community capacity.

The Home Office launched ChangeUp in 2003/04, as a part of the government's response to the HM Treasury Cross-Cutting Review, with the aim of radically improving the support available to third sector organisations by 2014. In particular, it envisaged:

...that by 2014 the needs of frontline voluntary and community organisations will be met by support which is available nationwide, structured for maximum efficiency, offering excellent provision which is accessible to all whilst reflecting and promoting diversity, and is sustainably funded.

Addressing the support needs of FLOs, the strategy placed emphasis on the importance of FLOs being better able to improve the performance of their organisation, on workforce development and leadership opportunities, on greater awareness of the costs and benefits of ICT, on good governance, on a high quality volunteering infrastructure and diversification of income sources.

The strategy recognised that although capacity needs could be met in a variety of ways, many frontline organisations relied on third sector infrastructure which in some parts of the country was patchy in coverage and quality and lacked sustainable funding, particularly at the local level. It stressed that at a local, sub-regional and regional level, stakeholders should come together to agree the shape and structure of provision which best suited the needs of FLOs and how this provision should be funded. Local plans were to take account of community planning processes and detail how the needs of diverse organisations and communities should be met in a given area. Plans were to be completed by 2005 so that good quality infrastructure provision was in place in all areas of England by 2009. It was envisaged that at regional, sub-regional and local levels infrastructure should gradually coalesce into geographic hubs of activity with services sharing premises, back office facilities or merging depending on needs.

From 2003 to April 2006 ChangeUp was managed by the Home Office, using the nine Government Offices to manage the regional and local aspects of the programme, which meant that rather different approaches were implemented in each region. The initial experiences during this period were varied – the Scoping Report for this evaluation reported that some respondents viewed the initial process “as a postcode lottery with every government office handling it differently. In some areas little attention was paid to central government guidance whilst in others there is the view that the government office weren't strong enough to exercise their challenge role”.

In April 2006 responsibility passed to Capacitybuilders, an executive non-departmental public body established by the Home Office in February 2006 to administer the programme. Sponsorship of Capacitybuilders passed to the Office of the Third Sector (OTS) in May 2006. The strategy for the delivery of ChangeUp is set by the Capacitybuilders Board (with the approval of OTS), which has overall responsibility for organisational policy, planning the different funding streams, and impact.

For the period covered by this evaluation, the ChangeUp programme has three basic methods of delivery:

- By establishing and supporting national hubs that focused on specific areas of expertise including governance, performance, finance, volunteering, workforce development, and ICT. They were intended to spread good practice and skills in their respective areas either to consortia (see below) or directly to frontline third sector organisations. They were run by relevant organisations, which had contracts to provide these services. Following a review of their effectiveness the hubs were replaced by National Support Services (NSS) in 2008.
- By promoting and supporting the establishment and development of support networks or consortia which are mostly geographically based – either regionally, sub-regionally, or at Local Authority level – but including some which are thematic and address particular groups such as children, young people, families, race equality, and support to social enterprise. Consortia are intended to achieve impact by improving the management, organisation and skills of frontline third sector organisations in their geographical (or thematic) sphere of operation.
- By National Programmes that seek to address specific issues such as the Improving Reach programme which grant aids the provision of support to organisations working for or with marginalised groups including BME communities, refugees and migrants, faith communities, and isolated rural communities.

By March 2008, in addition to the national hubs/NSS, around 130 consortia had been established and around £150 million had been spent (between 2003 and 2008) on the ChangeUp programme.

1.3 The goals of the ChangeUp programme

The original goals of ChangeUp were to provide support which:

- Meets the needs of frontline organisations;
- Is available nationwide;
- Is structured for maximum efficiency;
- Offers excellent provision;
- Is accessible to all (reflecting and promoting diversity);
- Is sustainably funded;
- Engages with the public sector.

In 2007, in its strategy *Destination 2014*, which set out priorities for its 2008-2011 funding programmes, Capacitybuilders modified these original goals. The new goals were stated as:

- Improve the quality and effectiveness of support for third sector organisations;
- Demonstrate the benefits of support services;
- Aim to ensure equal access for all third sector organisations to mainstream support services;
- Target resources where necessary to address the needs of particular excluded group;
- Influence funding policy and practice to ensure sustainable support to third sector organisations;
- Engage with the public sector.

While there is a large degree of commonality between the original goals and this modified set of goals, they are not identical. We have, however, not sought to consider the extent to which the programme met its revised goals, given that they apply to the period of activity fully beyond the time frame of this evaluation.

1.4 Research questions

This summative evaluation study seeks to answer the following high level research questions in relation to the years April 2004 to March 2008 specifically:

- What has happened to support services during the period 2004-8?
 - What factors have influenced these changes?
 - Support from Local support organisations?
 - Support from ChangeUp?
 - Other factors?
 - What changes is it possible to attribute to infrastructure support programmes?
 - What changes is it possible to attribute to the ChangeUp programme?
- What has happened to front line services during the period 2004-8?
 - What factors have influenced these changes?
 - Support from local support organisations?
 - Support from ChangeUp?
 - Other factors?
 - What impacts on FLOs is it possible to attribute to infrastructure support programmes?
 - What impacts on FLOs is it possible to attribute to the ChangeUp programme?

What conclusions can be drawn about the effectiveness of the ChangeUp model support services during the period 2004-8?

1.5 Research methods used

The main research methods used in the study have been:

- A desk review of the existing literature and other evidence on national, regional and local dimensions of ChangeUp and its impact to date.
- Analysis of economic data from GuideStar (income, expenditure, paid employment, financial assets) in relation to both infrastructure organisations and frontline organisations, their changes over time and the associations between them. For this analysis, we used baselines for 2004, 2006 and 2008.
- Twelve locality case studies, selected to represent upper tier local authorities which have different combinations of relative growth in terms of the economic activities of both frontline (FLO) and local infrastructure (LIO) third sector organisations. These cases studies were conducted by a mixture of interview, focus group and workshop discussions with key players.
- Analysis of survey responses of TSOs, exploring the level and type of support they seek and receive, gaps in that support, their perceptions of the quality of support available in their area, and the contribution which they perceive local statutory bodies and third sector bodies make to their success. (Where relevant, these responses have been compared with the responses from the National Survey of TSOs in these same localities).

1.6 Impacts

There was virtually universal agreement in the period from 2002-2004 that infrastructure in the third sector was weak, even in the best-served areas, and very patchy. Whilst little detailed analysis was carried out which could substantiate this judgement, it seems highly likely that this was a fair description of the state of the sector. The need for a major intervention which could bring about radical change is therefore uncontested.

Our research has demonstrated significant distance travelled at national and local levels as a result of ChangeUp. At national level, the serious problems of funding delays which beset the early years of the programme, and which tarnished its image for some considerable time afterwards, have not recurred. At local level, many consortia have been established and are working effectively in areas where there was previously no co-ordination of infrastructure for the third sector – and a considerable number of our 12 locality case studies have made significant progress during the years 2004- 2008.

The funding available through ChangeUp was never intended to cover the full costs of service delivery but instead invest in improvements to the ways in which support services operate. This was not always fully understood within the third sector. The expectations of what the funding would achieve were very high and this has led to a perception that the funding was insufficient to meet needs. This continued to be the case right up to 2008, compounded by the tailing off of ChangeUp funding and the effects of the recession on other sources of income for TSOs, both at the frontline and in the infrastructure part of the third sector. Of course, ChangeUp funding had never been intended to provide core funding to frontline organisations, but this realisation

was not widespread at a local level, which often led to disappointment with the ChangeUp programme.

Economic analysis of the sector for the period 2004-06 shows little evidence of a correlation between LIO and FLO activity, which might suggest that during this period the upper tier authorities with high levels of growth in LIO expenditures had, if anything, lower levels of growth in FLO expenditures. However, the fact that the same analysis for the 2006-08 period shows some correlation might suggest an alternative hypothesis – that the highest levels of growth in LIOs expenditures occurred in areas where the need for capacity building was greatest – as reflected in the low levels of growth of FLOs. This would tentatively suggest that targeting of support to LIOs was successful, in reaching LIOs in those areas where FLOs most needed help.

We have assessed the achievement of the impacts which ChangeUp has intended along a chain of potential benefits:

- Impact on the effectiveness of the overall system of local support through strategic interventions by local consortia;
- Impact on activities and effectiveness of infrastructure organisations;
- Impacts on activities and effectiveness of frontline organisations.

Given the limited budget available, the strategy adopted in the ChangeUp programme was a 'leveraged step change' or 'catalytic' strategy, where the funds spent at national, regional, sub-regional and local level were expected to trigger much wider 'knock-on' or 'ripple effects', so that the actual funding of the programme was able eventually to lever a much larger amount of funding through other sources for the provision of support to FLOs, principally through funding by local government. This approach was not adequately communicated at the time, and was therefore not widely understood. Furthermore, respondents in a number of localities strongly expressed the view that the funding currently available was insufficient to achieve even a leveraging or catalytic purpose, never mind directly filling unmet need.

However, when consortia members were asked to explore the actual and potential leveraging effects of the ChangeUp programme, many examples came to light. This suggests that a much clearer and more prescriptive explanation of what might be entailed in a 'leveraged step change' or 'catalytic' strategy might well have helped to ensure that the programme's purpose at its outset in 2003/04 was better understood..

The decision to 'cascade' ChangeUp funding through national, regional, sub-regional and local levels was also logical, in order that a coherent framework be in place which could identify and meet gaps in provision, which could then be tackled at the right geographical level, based around more 'joined up' engagement with local government as the principle funder of local infrastructure services. The evidence from our 12 locality surveys suggests that over the period in question the ChangeUp 'cascade' model has only fully worked in some of the localities – but where it worked it had valuable impacts.

The significant impacts of ChangeUp on local infrastructure organisations have been identified in terms of better collaboration, efficiency savings, more appropriate services, improved standing with the statutory sector, greater funding opportunities, improved access to other non-ChangeUp funding, increased stability, and a greater

focus on 'hard' issues. However, these impacts were slow to emerge, patchy in their achievement and not always attributable to ChangeUp. Indeed in some areas it has been so slow that this has undermined local confidence in the overall ChangeUp approach.

Nevertheless, the gradual emergence of better partnership working amongst local infrastructure organisations (both between themselves and with the statutory sector), coupled with clearer strategies for changing the capacity of the local third sector, suggests that the local infrastructure sector has indeed been 'changed up' a gear and that, where funding is available to it, it would now be able to direct it in more effective ways than before to the frontline organisations which need support. The value of these local networks of infrastructure providers is highlighted in particular by the costs and problems caused in those areas which do NOT have well-functioning networks of this sort, particularly those areas where there have been major problems with the functioning of the CVS. Again, the value of engaging closely with all statutory partners, including the PCT as well as the local authority, is illustrated by some of the most successful consortia and suggests that, if only slowly, a more inclusive vision of the resource available for capacity building, tailored to the needs of particular sub-sectors within the third sector, is emerging.

The impacts of ChangeUp on local frontline organisations have been explored only to a very limited extent by any of the local consortia during the period in question. Moreover, most consortium members believed it would be difficult to assess this impact, particularly since frontline organisations, quite naturally, have little knowledge of whether a service was funded or originated from ChangeUp or from other sources. Consequently, there is much less evidence around the impact on FLOs than there is around the impact on infrastructure organisations. Again, as with the assessment of impacts on infrastructure organisations, there is widespread agreement among consortium members that it is "too early to say" and general concern that it is very difficult to separate out the influence of ChangeUp 2004-08 from other changes in the local area. Some suggested to us, though, that this will change in the near future, as the benefits of the new partnerships filter through in greater volume to frontline organisations.

Furthermore, there is indeed strong evidence that local infrastructure support has been needed, has been appreciated and has had a positive influence on the success of local organisations. Our survey of TSOs in the twelve locality case study areas shows a high level of activity in seeking support – from 81% of all TSOs in the highest to 47% in two others, with relatively high levels of satisfaction reported generally – almost everywhere over half of all respondents. Moreover, the proportion of dissatisfied respondents was generally very low.

Finally, when TSOs were asked about the contribution of local TSOs to their own success, positive responses ranged from 42% to 15% and negative perceptions were very small (ranging from 0% to 6%). It seems clear that consortium activities have increased awareness of FLOs around the potential value of support, and responses to our survey suggest that, far from dealing with simply a backlog of requests, there is a continuing demand for support which is unlikely to dry up in the near future. In addition, there are a number of areas of support, particularly in relation to raising funds

and income, which are identified as gaps in provision by a significant minority of responding organisations.

General impacts on frontline organisations which consortia considered to be valuable were that ChangeUp had ensured that more local support has been arranged for some frontline organisations than would otherwise be the case, that many frontline organisations have been helped to bid for funding and contracts as a result of the support available, and that support has helped to improve the networking of some frontline TSOs.

2 Background

2.1 Introduction

This report presents our findings from the Summative Evaluation of ChangeUp. This project was commissioned in 2008 by Capacitybuilders to look at the impact and outcomes achieved in the first funding period (April 2004 – March 2008) and to provide a “formative” evaluation to track progress, impact and outcomes over the current funding period (2008-2011).

We set out in the next sections the aims of the Summative Evaluation and the context of the project. Then we outline the model (‘theory of change’) which underlies the ChangeUp programme and the research questions which this research seeks to address. The methodology underpinning the evaluation is then set out briefly. The main body of the report is taken up with the findings on the impact and outcomes of ChangeUp, and an assessment of the ChangeUp model. Finally, the report sets out the next stages in the evaluation research programme.

2.2 About the project

The project was commissioned by Capacitybuilders in October 2008 after a negotiated tendering process. The first year has been devoted to undertaking a Summative Evaluation, of which this is the report. In the second phase of the research, up to March 2011, the research team will work with Capacitybuilders to provide a Formative Evaluation, to track progress, impact and outcomes over the current funding period 2008 to 2011, drawing upon the work of the Summative Evaluation, and to help shape improvements to the programme.

The research consortium undertaking this project comprises:

- The Third Sector Research Centre;
- BMG Research;
- GuideStar Data Services;
- Sustain Consultancy.

2.3 Aims and objectives of the Summative Evaluation

This report provides a summative evaluation, looking at the impact and outcomes achieved in the first funding period of ChangeUp from 2004 to 2008. The research has covered the primary impacts of ChangeUp – namely the impacts on the activities and effectiveness of support services, and the impact on activities and effectiveness of frontline organisations.

2.4 Note on terminology

Throughout this report, in order to avoid repetition of some frequently used phrases, we make intensive use of certain acronyms, namely:

- **TSOs** to refer to ‘third sector organisations’;
- **FLOs** to refer to ‘frontline third sector organisations’;

- **LIOs** to refer to ‘local infrastructure third sector organisations’; and
- **NIOs** to refer to ‘national infrastructure third sector organisations’.

The **key capacity building activities** which are considered in this research include **information, support, advice and training**. For ease of reference and avoidance of repetition, these are all referred to as ‘**support**’ throughout this report.

At various stages in the report, we refer to the *goals, aims and objectives* of ChangeUp and of various stakeholders – we use these terms interchangeably. Where a specific stakeholder uses one of these terms in a particular sense, we mention this explicitly.

We use the term ‘**performance**’ in this report to refer to the achievement of efficiency, effectiveness or the goals which are being pursued. The context makes clear which of these achievements is being discussed.

The term ‘**impact**’ is used in this report to refer to ‘attributable change’, e.g. the changes in outcomes, outputs or activities which can be attributed to the actions of the agency or partnership concerned.

2.5 Indicators of impact used in this study

The indicators used to assess ‘impact’ in this report have been developed from a range of perspectives, as set out in the original research proposal.

In line with the general approach in the UK evaluation and performance management literature, we explore impacts on outcomes, outputs and activities of the organisations and partnerships involved in ChangeUp. The specific performance indicators used to capture these changes are those used by Capacitybuilders in the reporting which they require from those who receive funding; and those used by the organisations themselves (e.g. in their published reports and management information systems)

Where possible, we also explore impacts on effectiveness, efficiency and economy, in line with the performance management methodology used by HM Treasury, the National Audit Office and the Audit Commission. These concepts use the same indicators of outcomes, outputs and activities but usually as ratios – e. g. outputs per unit of input or activity, outcomes per £ spent. In practice, we found relatively little published data on impacts on effectiveness, efficiency or economy in the first four years of ChangeUp. However, NAO report one case study in which information on efficiency was collected by a consortium after 2007 (NAO, 2009: 17). Indeed, as noted elsewhere, the absence of this information underpinned the commissioning of this evaluation by Capacitybuilders in 2008. However, with the increased need for ChangeUp consortia to demonstrate the outcomes and impacts of their programmes and initiatives, we would hope to collect and analyse this sort of information in the next stage of the evaluation covering the period 2008-2011.

3 Context

3.1 Capacity building infrastructure in the voluntary and community sector: the ‘baseline’ position prior to ChangeUp

3.1.1 Introduction

It is widely recognised that information to evaluate the quality of the support infrastructure within the third sector is historically weak. Even during the recent period when government, via ChangeUp and Capacitybuilders, has specifically intervened to generate a stronger and more co-ordinated capacity building infrastructure, evidence to accurately delineate such growth has been patchy. This was recognised by Capacitybuilders when they were established in April 2006 and in 2007 they commissioned a programme of research to scope the design of a formal evaluation framework for ChangeUp in 2007.

There is, therefore, little intelligence which provides a formal measure or ‘baseline’ of the quality of the third sector infrastructure before ChangeUp came into operation in 2004.

Instead, there is a series of reports which assert, mainly on the basis of expert opinion of those engaged in the sector, that there were limitations in the infrastructure available to the sector (at that time, typically, in relation to local Councils of Voluntary Services) which could support the development of frontline third sector organisations (TSOs) more directly engaged with communities and individuals. The lack of specific evidence was openly admitted, even at the time. For example, the QSTG report¹ on *Improving Our Performance* in 2004, said explicitly: “There is limited research available on what VCOs need in terms of support with performance improvement”.

These reports are of two broad types: ‘national’ reports which make assertions about third sector capacity in general; and more focussed reports which identify capacity limitations in specific areas (such as geographic locations or particular types of third sector activity). A summary of the evidence from a selection of such reports is set out here.

3.1.2 National indications of limitations in the third sector’s capacity building resources

The most influential report under this heading was the Treasury’s ‘Cross Cutting’ review of the VCS role in service delivery². The expert committee which produced the report suggested that “the current infrastructure has developed piecemeal and, while some parts of the sector are well served, the overall coverage is variable in quality and

¹ *Improving Our Performance: A Strategy for the Voluntary and Community Sector*, QSTG (NCVO), 2004.

² *The Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector in Service Delivery; a Cross Cutting Review*, HM Treasury, 2002

fragile. There are significant gaps in networks and some duplications”. This report provided part of the early drive towards the establishment of ChangeUp.

Soon afterwards, a national consultation document was published³, which identified the distinctive capacity building needs in the sector under the headings of ‘start up/development’ and ‘information, advice and assistance’ and covering six areas of specialised skills and knowledge (volunteering, BME TSOs, social enterprise, community development, rural communities and ICT). The report commented that “All the needs described above are currently met by a complex mix of generic and specialist infrastructure organisations operating locally, sub-regionally, regionally and nationally. However, their coverage is patchy and quality is variable.”⁴

As a further ‘national’ example, in developing a strategy for performance improvement in the third sector⁵, it was recognised by NCVO that TSOs needed support on a wide range of issues (including workforce development, governance, management, strategy, finance, and IT) and hopes were expressed that national capacity building initiatives (then just starting) would address these needs.

3.1.3 Focussed indications of limitations in the third sector’s capacity building resources

A range of other reports dating to the period before or around the launch of ChangeUp have a less general focus.

Two reports recognise capacity limitations at *regional* level. Firstly, examining funding for infrastructure organisations in London⁶, it was observed that “although most frontline organisations clearly value the support provided by their local CVS, many support needs in London are not being fully met”. In the South West, a series of infrastructure gaps were noted⁷ including the needs of ‘marginalised’ communities, the need for staff training in frontline organisations, the need for better information and for increased networking.

More widely, the weakness of the *rural* infrastructure was recognised: “research identifies substantial need to strengthen training and learning support for rural volunteer and paid staff in the field. It is important that this is addressed in order to successfully build both social and human capital”⁸. Historic weakness in rural capacity was evidently difficult to eliminate since, even by 2005, it was suggested that: ‘Consortium development is not a fast process particularly in areas with very little infrastructure’⁹.

³ *Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure: A Consultation Document*, Active Community Unit (Home Office), 2003.

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 25.

⁵ *Improving our Performance: a strategy for the voluntary and community sector*, NCVO, Quality Standards Task Group, 2004

⁶ *Voluntary Sector Infrastructure Organisations: Availability of Funds in London Boroughs*, GOL, 2004

⁷ *Up for change? An Evaluation of the South West Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Early Spend Programme*, Evaluation Trust, 2004

⁸ *Community Capacity Building and Voluntary Sector Infrastructure in Rural England*, DEFRA, 2003

⁹ *Evaluating the VCS Infrastructure Investment Programme*, DEFRA, March 2005

For other groups, too, there were evidently embedded ‘capacity’ issues. For example, support to *Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups* was observed to be deficient¹⁰ with gaps in support for marketing, fund raising, improving effectiveness, and campaigning.

There is also evidence of limited support in respect of specific areas of third sector capacity. For example, Volunteering England recognised in 2004 that “the *volunteering* infrastructure has evolved over the past 50 years largely without a sense of cohesive strategy or a plan for long-term sustainability”¹¹. In respect of *social enterprise*, it was argued in 2004¹² that *social enterprises* were less understood and rarely promoted in a consistent way by the existing infrastructure for support. And in respect of *ICT* use in the third sector, a 2002 report¹³ suggested that the sector frequently failed to adopt adequate *ICT* strategies and that there was a need for “anyone with a capacity-building agenda” to address *ICT* capacity limitations.

3.1.4 Conclusions

Whilst the evidence of weakness in third sector capacity building resources before the launch of ChangeUp is not systematic and there are major limitations in the available quantitative data, where the issue has been addressed, the findings generally indicated significant weaknesses. Given the government’s interest at that time in growing and exploiting the third sector’s ability to contribute much more widely to social policy in the UK, policy attention therefore turned, via ChangeUp, to tackling these perceived deficiencies in the sector’s capacity.

3.2 The policy environment and the launch of ChangeUp

The launch of ChangeUp followed from the publication of the HM Treasury document *The Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in Service Delivery: A Cross-Cutting Review* in 2002, which recognised the need to build the capacity of organisations in the VCS, particularly in respect of their involvement in service delivery. It also recognised the importance of capacity building and strengthened infrastructure support to frontline organisations in the third sector, identifying that this support was variable in quality and reach, and lacking sustainability, particularly at local level.

In the HM Treasury review, capacity building was defined as being about ensuring that VCOs have the skills, knowledge, structures and resources to realise their full potential – i.e. second tier activity that supports front line delivery and typically involves removing barriers to involvement and investing to maximise the contribution that VCOs can make, as much about releasing existing capacity as about developing new capacity. It identified four different kinds of capacity, all of which have to be achieved to the right level and balanced in the right mix:

- Organisational capacity;
- Technical capacity to deliver specific services;

¹⁰ *Infrastructure for BME organisations in London*, GOL, September 2004

¹¹ *Strategy for Volunteering Infrastructure in England, 2004-2014*, Volunteering England, 2004

¹² *Turning Big Ideas into Viable Social Enterprise*, Cardiff University, 2004

¹³ *Leading the way to ICT success*, The Baring Foundation, 2002

- Infrastructure capacity; and
- Community capacity.

It observed that the current infrastructure had developed piecemeal and that the overall coverage was variable in quality and fragile (although some parts of the sector were well served). It suggested there were significant gaps in networks and some duplication, with further scope for collaborative working between existing organisations. It identified inconsistent current practice across Whitehall in supporting third sector infrastructure by providing technical support for specific projects and building capacity within small community groups. This was its rationale for proposing a single, cross-government strategy for third sector capacity building and infrastructure support, with common purposes, resulting in more coherent and effective delivery, and with links to more a more consistent contribution by local government (which it noted was long-established in some areas, but variable nationally). It commented that the use of ICT in the VCS was low compared with other sectors (except for the very largest organisations), that there were significant skills gaps in the areas of fundraising, volunteer management and trusteeship and significant needs in relation to leadership and management skills (and that skills gaps themselves needed to be better understood), that meaningful involvement by third sector organisations (especially at the smaller end) in partnerships for service delivery could be a problem, and that the partnerships themselves could be hard both to build and sustain.

The Treasury later summarised the review in a follow-up document (HM Treasury, 2004: p.4) as having found:

- Continuing confusion of how best to define the sector in a practical way that allowed application and analysis;
- A lack of coordinated and easily accessible evidence about the ‘added value’ or impact of the sector beyond qualitative case studies;
- Poor levels of understanding of the scale of the Government’s ambition for the sector’s role in public service delivery;
- Little in the way of tools for policy-makers to approach the sector with sufficient understanding and confidence;
- Difficulty in differentiating between the direct benefits of the sector to public service delivery, and the wider benefits that may accrue to society and the economy;
- Ongoing difficulties with partnership working between the public and voluntary and community sectors, caused by:
 - Extreme variety across local areas in the extent to which the sector was involved in public service delivery or community engagement activities;
 - Highly variable impact of local compacts – from real change at best, to tokenistic or one-sided compacts at worst;
 - Continuing barriers in the form of lack of capacity and ineffective and short-term funding practices that reduce stability;
 - Sometimes unrealistic expectations and a lack of understanding in the sector about the realities and priorities of working in the public sector.

Subsequently, the move to strategic commissioning in the public sector, particularly with its strong focus on outcomes, has meant that the members of ChangeUp consortia are now more likely to have to demonstrate to local statutory bodies the outcomes and impacts which they have in their programmes and initiatives. We would hope to collect and analyse this sort of information in the next stage of the evaluation covering the period 2008-2011.

The most recent national report into the ChangeUp programme was that undertaken by the National Audit Office, *Building the Capacity of the Third Sector* (published in February 2009), leading to the subsequent report (with the same name) from the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) in July 2009. The PAC report concluded (p. 3) that the programme had made some impact. It had led to “better partnerships between local support providers, which in turn has had an impact on the capacity of frontline organisations. However, it has no baseline or outcome targets against which achievement can be measured, and the way the programme has been managed has created problems for the third sector. If the improvements brought about by ChangeUp are to be sustained, there are challenges to be met such as finding new sources of income to fund services.”

Since 2008, the economic recession has had an impact on the sector, for example in terms of funding available, on the need for spend and on the levels of volunteering. This has been part of the context for the organisations with which this evaluation has been working, both in the qualitative discussions in the case studies and in the survey of local TSOs, as we have been undertaking the first year of this evaluation.

3.3 The ChangeUp programme

The Home Office launched ChangeUp in 2003/04, as the government’s response to the HM Treasury Cross-Cutting Review, with the aim of strengthening the third sector by 2014. This was to be achieved by radically improving the support available to third sector organisations. In particular, it envisaged:

...that by 2014 the needs of frontline voluntary and community organisations will be met by support which is available nationwide, structured for maximum efficiency, offering excellent provision which is accessible to all whilst reflecting and promoting diversity, and is sustainably funded.

Addressing the support needs of FLOs, the strategy placed emphasis on the importance of FLOs being better able to improve the performance of their organisation, on workforce development and leadership opportunities, on greater awareness of the costs and benefits of ICT, on good governance, on a high quality volunteering infrastructure and diversification of income sources.

The strategy recognised that although capacity needs could be met in a variety of ways, many frontline organisations relied on third sector infrastructure which in some parts of the country was patchy in coverage and quality and lacked sustainable funding, particularly at the local level. It stressed that at a local, sub-regional and regional level, stakeholders should come together to agree the shape and structure of provision which best suited the needs of FLOs and how this provision should be funded. Local plans were to take account of community planning processes and detail

how the needs of diverse organisations and communities should be met in a given area. Plans were to be completed by 2005 so that good quality infrastructure provision was in place in all areas of England by 2009. It was envisaged that at regional, sub-regional and local levels infrastructure should gradually coalesce into geographic hubs of activity with services sharing premises, back office facilities or merging depending on needs.

Specialist infrastructure, including that working with marginalised groups, was to be integral to the development of hubs of activity and diverse organisations were to be represented in the management of generalist infrastructure. Nationally, the hubs of expertise would bring key players together to provide strategic leadership and act as gateways and beacons of good practice on key areas, reaching directly to frontline organisations to develop advanced thinking and good practice. An Infrastructure National Partnership should be created to provide oversight and leadership.

With regard to funding the strategy envisaged that a higher proportion of infrastructure costs should be funded by FLOs through membership fees and the sale of services. The costs of infrastructure services should therefore be included in the core costs of delivery. The key role of public sector in maintaining the existence of strong and robust infrastructure was also acknowledged: public sector funding should be long-term, strategic and focused on clear objectives which infrastructure bodies should deliver to agreed standards.

From 2003 to April 2006 ChangeUp was managed by the Home Office, using the nine Government Offices to manage the regional and local aspects of the programme, which meant that rather different approaches were implemented in each region. The initial experiences during this period were varied – the Scoping Report for this evaluation reported that some respondents viewed the initial process “as a postcode lottery with every government office handling it differently. In some areas little attention was paid to central government guidance whilst in others there is the view that the government office weren’t strong enough to exercise their challenge role”.¹⁴

In April 2006 responsibility passed to Capacitybuilders, an executive non-departmental public body established by the Home Office in February 2006 to administer the programme and improve the coordination of ChangeUp. Sponsorship of Capacitybuilders passed to the Office of the Third Sector (OTS) in May 2006. The strategy for the delivery of ChangeUp is set by the Capacitybuilders Board (with the approval of OTS), which has overall responsibility for organisational policy, planning the different funding streams, and impact.

The ChangeUp programme had three basic methods of delivery:

- By establishing and supporting national hubs of expertise that focused on specific areas of expertise including governance, performance, finance, volunteering, workforce development, and ICT. They were intended to spread good practice and skills in their respective areas either to consortia (see below) or directly to frontline third sector organisations. They were run by relevant organisations, which had contracts to provide these services. These hubs have been replaced

¹⁴ Macmillan et al (2007), *Scoping the Evaluation of ChangeUp – Paper C*, Sheffield: COGS, CRESR, CRC (p. 6)

by National Support Services (NSSs) that are focused on providing support to local support organisations.

- By promoting and supporting the establishment and development of support networks or consortia which are mostly geographically based – either regionally, sub-regionally, or at Local Authority level – but including some which are thematic and address particular groups such as children, young people, families, race equality, and support to social enterprise. Consortia are intended to achieve impact by improving the management, organisation and skills of frontline third sector organisations in their geographical (or thematic) sphere of operation.
- By National Programmes that seek to address specific issues such as the Improving Reach programme which grant aids marginalised groups including BME communities, refugees and migrants, faith communities, and isolated rural communities.

By March 2008, in addition to the national hubs/NSSs, around 130 consortia had been established and around £150 million had been spent (between 2003 and 2008) on the ChangeUp programme.

Figure 1 sets out the path of spending on ChangeUp, (drawn up by the National Audit Office, based on figures supplied by OTS) (the data on early years has been compiled from several systems and there are doubts as to its accuracy and completeness prior to April 2006). It shows that expenditure was low in the first two years, as the programme encountered early difficulties. There was then a “rush to spend” in 2005-06, when the level of expenditure was much higher than in any other year of the programme – almost twice the level of spend in the subsequent year. Nevertheless, there was still an underspend of almost £8 million on the £80 million budget in 2005-06. Since that time, expenditure was more even year-on-year.

Figure 1: Path of spending on ChangeUp, (drawn up by the National Audit Office, based on figures supplied by OTS)

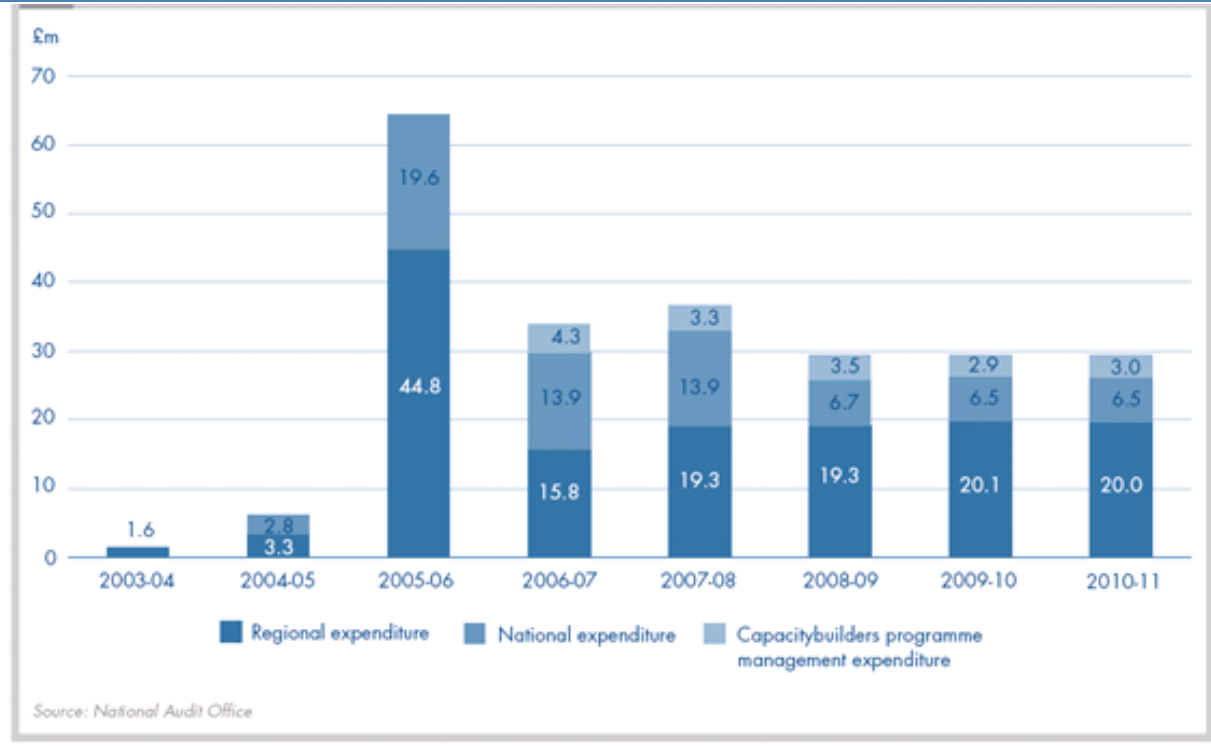


Figure 2 (taken from NAO, 2009: 17) shows ChangeUp expenditure broken down regionally (for consortia) and thematically (for hubs), based on information from Capacitybuilders and the best historic information that OTS could provide.

Figure 2: ChangeUp expenditure broken down regionally and thematically (taken from NAO, 2009: 17)

National expenditure											
Year	Hubs						Other ¹	Total	Capacitybuilders programme management £m		
	Finance	Workforce	ICT	Governance	Volunteering	Performance					
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m			
2003-04	£0.07 million spent but no breakdown available								0.07		
2004-05	0.04	0.05	0.06	0.13	0.07	0.42	2.00	2.77			
2005-06	1.48	1.41	1.61	1.10	1.31	1.43	11.22	19.56			
2006-07	1.00	1.36	2.39	1.38	1.34	1.32	0.85	9.64	2006-07	4.26	
2007-08	0.97	1.63	2.55	1.53	1.35	1.31	1.33	10.67	2007-08	3.29	
Total funding for hubs =						27.31		42.71			

Regional expenditure ²											
Year	Region										Total
	North East	North West	Yorks Humber	West Midlands	East Midlands	East of England	South East	London	South West	Nationwide	
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
2003-04	No breakdown is available for 2003-2004 and 2004-2005										1.55
2004-05	No breakdown is available for 2003-2004 and 2004-2005										3.34
2005-06	4.32	6.18	5.60	4.92	4.42	4.70	4.45	5.68	4.56		44.83
2006-07	1.49	3.05	2.57	2.13	1.95	1.80	1.80	2.83	1.69	0.82	20.13
2007-08	1.58	2.84	2.37	2.87	1.94	1.67	2.23	3.77	2.17	1.13	22.57
Total funding for regions =										92.42	

Source: Office of the Third Sector and Capacitybuilders

NOTES

- 'Other' includes: Priority Services Programme = £2.63 million; Faith Community & Capacity Building Fund = £3 million; other national projects = £3.68 million; and Capacitybuilders set-up costs = £1.1 million
- The variation in funding to different regions reflects the different geographical coverage of 'local' consortia which may be formed around sub-regional; county; district; borough; or city and town boundaries and are often aligned with analogous local government boundaries.
- Each region has a regional consortium, London has five sub-regional consortia and there are 98 'local' consortia, making 112 in total.

ChangeUp funding, of course, comprises only a small proportion of all funding utilised by local infrastructure organisations which support the third sector. In financial year 2007/8 it is estimated that the total expenditure of local infrastructure organisations was just over £700 million and the total expenditure of frontline organisations was over £33 billion¹⁵.

¹⁵ Source: GuideStar Data Services

3.4 The goals of the ChangeUp programme

The original goals of ChangeUp¹⁶ were to provide support which:

- Meets the needs of frontline organisations;
- Is available nationwide;
- Is structured for maximum efficiency;
- Offers excellent provision;
- Is accessible to all (reflecting and promoting diversity);
- Is sustainably funded;
- Engages with the public sector.

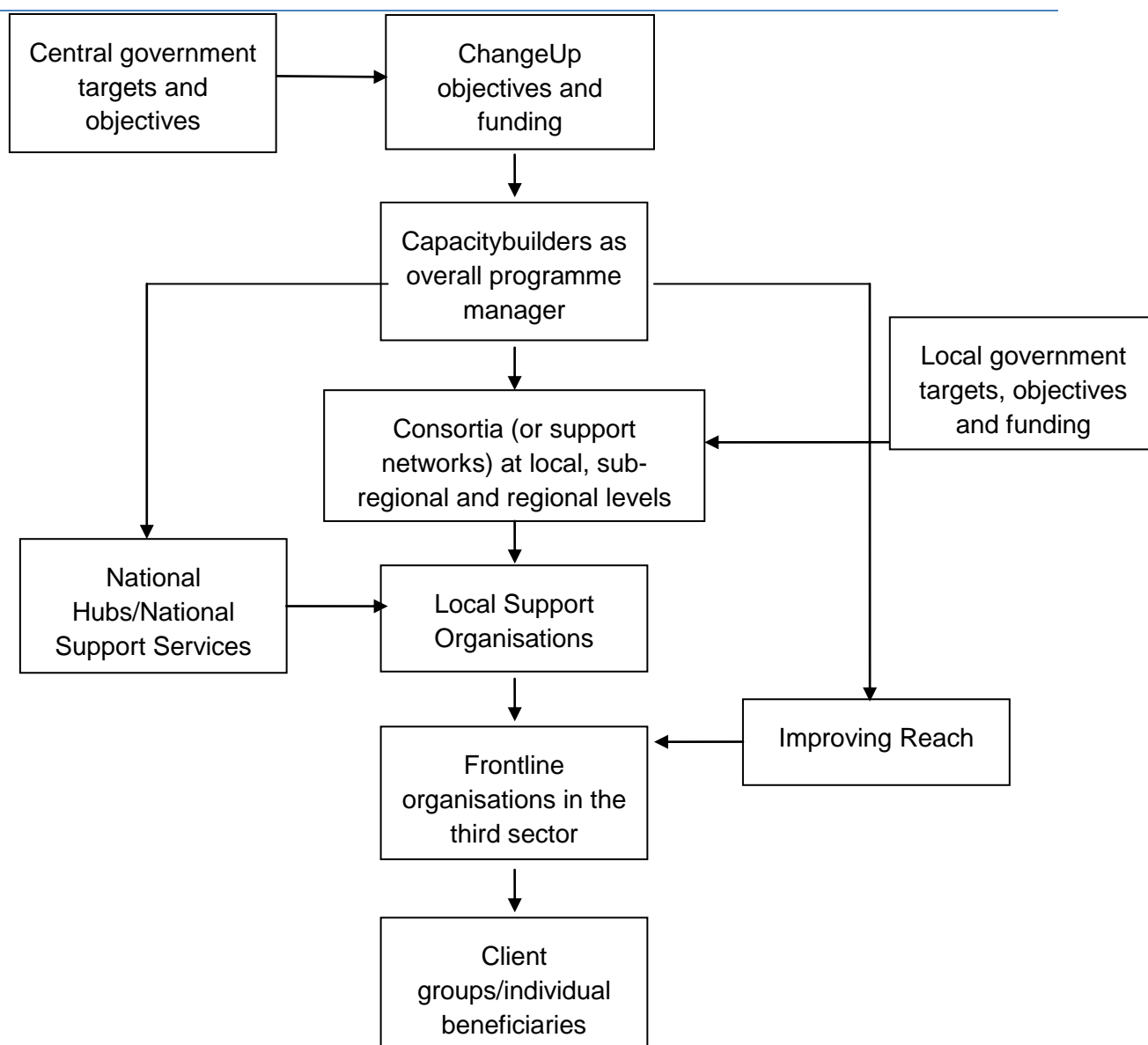
In 2007, in its strategy *Destination 2014*, which set out priorities for its 2008-2011 funding programmes, Capacitybuilders modified these original goals. The new goals were stated as:

- Improve the quality and effectiveness of support for third sector organisations;
- Demonstrate the benefits of support services;
- Aim to ensure equal access for all third sector organisations to mainstream support services;
- Target resources where necessary to address the needs of particular excluded group;
- Influence funding policy and practice to ensure sustainable support to third sector organisations;
- Engage with the public sector.

While there is a large degree of commonality between the original goals and this modified set of goals, they are not identical. We have therefore had to consider the extent to which the programme met its original goals up to 2008. The revised goals referring to the period after March 2008, to which this evaluation does not extend, have therefore not been considered further in this report, and will be addressed in the next stage of the evaluation.

Though complex in practice, ChangeUp's delivery model is simple in structure:

¹⁶ *ChangeUp: Capacity Building and Infrastructure Framework for the Voluntary and Community Sector*, London: Home Office.

Figure 3: ChangeUp Delivery Model

The ChangeUp model is therefore a 'cascade' model. Improvements in support infrastructure at local level are brought about through consortia, supported by national support services and national programmes and working through regional and sub-regional networks.

In the original Framework for ChangeUp published by the Home Office¹⁷, it was stated that the Framework set out a series of "actions that should bring about a step change in support infrastructure for the voluntary and community sector across England". In the consultation documents on Destination 2014¹⁸, Capacitybuilders state: "It is absolutely essential to recognise that the ultimate aim of the programme is to achieve

¹⁷ *ChangeUp: Capacity Building and Infrastructure Framework for the Voluntary and Community Sector*, London: Home Office (p. 67).

¹⁸ *Destination 2014: Investing in Change, Consultation Document*, Capacitybuilders, 2006.

radical change – a transformed third sector operating locally, regionally and nationally. The benefits from investments made in infrastructure organisations must result in a step change in front-line organisations and in the communities they serve.” This statement has not been withdrawn but in the final Destination 2014 document the description of the level of change was put in the past tense – “The Home Office launched ChangeUp in 2003/04 with the aim of strengthening the sector by 2014. This was to be achieved by radically improving support available to third sector organisations”. There was no further reference to radical or step change in Destination 2014 – indeed there was no mention of the degree or pace of change envisaged.

A key principle of the ChangeUp model from the outset was that it was intended to be sustainable: “helping to create sustainable organisations and infrastructure capable of addressing the complex social issues that require public action”¹⁹. One important element of sustainability was recognised to be the ability for infrastructure organisations to charge FLOs for their services: “A higher proportion of infrastructure costs should be funded by frontline organisations through membership fees and the sale of services. The costs of infrastructure services should therefore be included in the core costs of delivery. The public sector also has a key role to play in maintaining the existence of strong and robust infrastructure. Public sector funding should be long-term, strategic and focused on clear objectives which infrastructure bodies should deliver to agreed standards”²⁰

The ChangeUp model has been described to us by Capacitybuilders staff as being based upon a catalytic principle, through which Capacitybuilders seeks to lever significant change in the overall infrastructure available to the third sector by influencing the way it is organised and the capacity of infrastructure organisations to deliver, rather than through core funding its provision. Although the word ‘catalytic’ is not used in formal Capacitybuilders documents, this principle of maximum leverage from the funding available is a fundamental tenet of ChangeUp, since it was recognised right from the start that its funding, however, substantial, could never be remotely sufficient, in itself, to directly fund all the infrastructure needs of the third sector: “Government has a key role to play in maintaining the existence of strong and robust infrastructure. However, because public funding can never cover the full cost of provision, public sector funders should ensure that their funding is strategic and where possible enter into long-term funding arrangements for infrastructure bodies.”²¹

Destination 2014: Our Strategy for the Delivery of ChangeUp lists among Capacitybuilders’ objectives that it will seek to demonstrate the benefits of support services and influence funding policy and practice to ensure sustainable support to third sector organisations. It is this ‘influence’ approach which distinguishes ChangeUp from a simply ‘needs meeting’ programme. Amongst the mechanisms which are set

¹⁹ *ChangeUp: Capacity Building and Infrastructure Framework for the Voluntary and Community Sector*, London: Home Office (p. 17).

²⁰ *ChangeUp: Capacity Building and Infrastructure Framework for the Voluntary and Community Sector*, London: Home Office (p. 10).

²¹ *ChangeUp: Capacity Building and Infrastructure Framework for the Voluntary and Community Sector*, London: Home Office (p. 64).

out in *Destination 2014* for achieving this objective are the commissioning of innovative projects, thus facilitating learning across the sector, and working with general support bodies in the third sector or with those specialist and functional groups who themselves are offering assistance to their frontline constituencies. However, this leverage and 'influence' role is indeed complemented by a more direct role in meeting needs – for example, another of Capacitybuilders' objectives in *Destination 2014* is to target resources where necessary to address the needs of particular excluded groups and one of the mechanisms it lists is implementing specific programmes relating to the broad equalities and diversity agenda.

This concept of a 'leveraging' or 'catalytic' strategy has been hard to explain in ways which could be understood by all stakeholders. It is variously referred to as 'pump priming', creating positive 'knock-on' or 'ripple effects', leveraging extra investment, etc. Finally, ChangeUp was meant to be additional to programmes which existing beforehand and not to displace the activities of previous funders towards other activities. The PAC report in 2009 emphasises that ChangeUp was set up to provide additional capacity building support to the third sector, not to replace existing provision.

3.5 The intended impacts of ChangeUp

As discussed in section 2.1 on the policy environment, the HM Treasury Cross-Cutting Review of 2002 identified that the current infrastructure of the third sector had developed piecemeal and that the overall coverage was variable in quality and fragile (although some parts of the sector were well served). It suggested there were significant gaps in networks and some duplication, with further scope for collaborative working between existing organisations. It identified inconsistent current practice across Whitehall in supporting third sector infrastructure by providing technical support for specific projects and building capacity within small community groups. This is the context for assessing the impacts which ChangeUp had on the third sector.

In assessing the impact of ChangeUp, the key focus is on the intermediary layers set out in Figure 3 – on consortia, local support organisations and national hubs/ NSSs and on frontline organisations. These are the key areas which are the direct targets of ChangeUp funding and where its basic objectives – an increase in third sector capacity and capability – are expected to be realised. In this sense, the effectiveness of national policy making and management has to be judged by what changes are seen to occur at these lower levels of the 'cascade' model.

At the lowest level, amongst the multitude of people who are variously helped by third sector organisations (e.g. as service users or simply as members of the local community), an increase in the strength and capacity of frontline third sector organisations would be expected to result in a corresponding widening and strengthening of services, such that more people received better help. This is what the NAO report (p. 8) refers to as "public benefit, e.g. from more and better support for vulnerable people, community cohesion, advice and guidance, healthcare and social care services, child and youth support, advocacy". The initial Framework for ChangeUp stated that: "Government, the Community Fund and a range of other funders, as well as many frontline organisations themselves, are increasingly interested in outcome reporting. Funders want to know what difference is being made through public and private investment and frontline organisations themselves need to

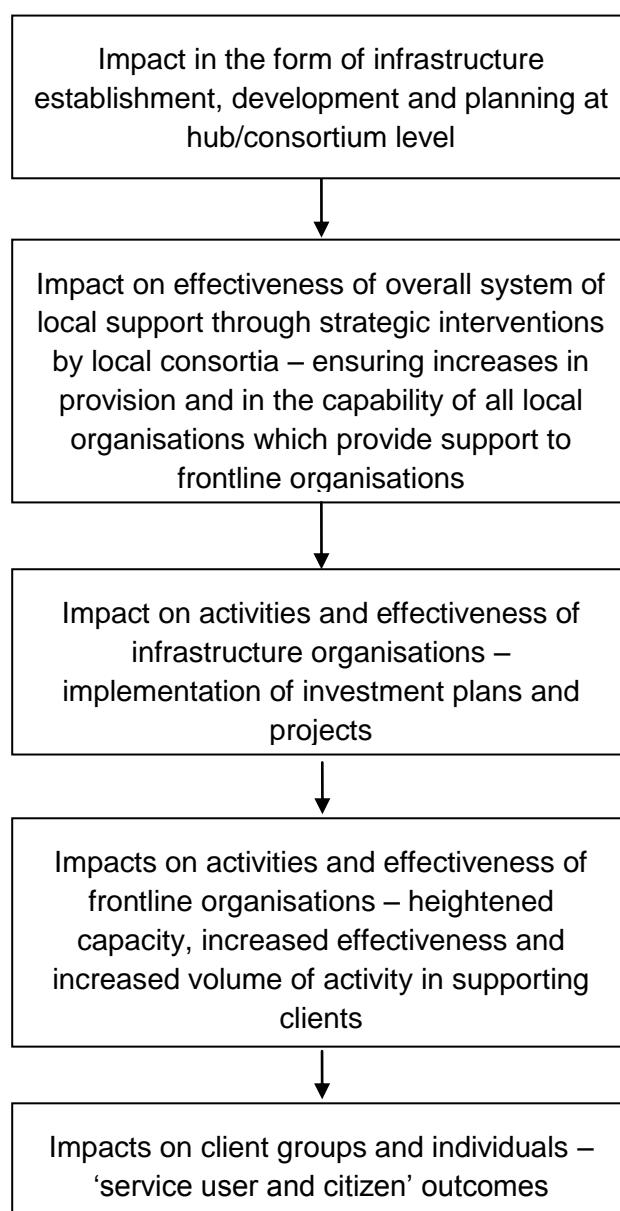
know what impact they are making in order to plan and deliver effectively. Outcome reporting offers an opportunity to focus on the difference made to users and other beneficiaries”. However, for the most part, there is still little evidence of such ‘service user and citizen’ level outcomes – this kind of evidence is difficult to obtain in relation to a relatively small-scale funding programme which explicitly sought to lever change rather than directly fund service provision and is affected by many wider factors and, in the event, information on these outcomes was not often sought from any of the organisations involved in ChangeUp.

Given this focus on impact at the level of consortia, hubs, local support organisations, and frontline organisations, the obvious question is what kind of impacts should be observable, given the objectives of ChangeUp, if ChangeUp has been successful in its first five years of operation. Essentially, there is a ‘chain’ of potential impact, as set out in Figure 4.

Of course, the first link in this chain, evidence of the establishment and administrative operation of hubs and consortia per se, is merely a starting point, but given the evidence of a lack of coordination and joined up working before ChangeUp was established illustrated in Chapter 2, this could be seen as a significant achievement. Much more important, however, is that the intervening links should have been successful – in particular, the effective and coherent strategic management at hub/consortium level to develop a capacity building infrastructure and the commissioning of projects which are able to generate real improvements in the ability of frontline organisations to serve their clients. Of course, the chain also has a time dimension. It would be expected that structural and organisational development and project planning would occur at earlier stages of ChangeUp’s lifespan, with impacts on the frontline emerging subsequently.

However, there is an inherent difficulty in assessing the kinds of impact outlined in this chain. For example, increases in the strength of partnership are not easily measured. Often it boils down to opinion, and one person’s ‘better partnership working’ can be another’s ‘increase in bureaucracy’ or ‘central control’. And, whilst some common practical outcomes of ‘increased capacity’ such as more staff, new ICT equipment or websites, or new skills, can be counted (or at least observed), the measurement of less observable outcomes, such as increases in organisational efficiency, cohesion, or confidence, is less straightforward.

In addition, given the catalytic strategy of ChangeUp, it is important to explore the extent to which the impacts identified in the ‘impact chain’ of Figure 4 occur not simply in a one-to-one transfer of support from an infrastructure organisation to a frontline organisation which needs help, but rather results in a ‘chain reaction’ throughout the local third sector, whereby the activities undertaken have positive knock-on effects on other TSOs locally.

Figure 4: Intended impacts of ChangeUp

3.6 National overviews of the ChangeUp programme

In this section, we report the evidence from a series of national studies which considered the progress and impacts of the ChangeUp programme to date. In each case, these studies, whilst offering a national overview, often base it on a series of case studies at regional, sub-regional or local level. Because there was no national evaluation strategy at the offset which ‘automatically’ gathered impact evidence in a systematic format across all segments of the support infrastructure, this ‘building block’ approach, accumulating selective examples to try and come to overall conclusions is necessary. Furthermore, as ChangeUp was designed essentially as a devolved programme from 2004-06, delivered at regional level in a variety of ways by Government Offices, there are some problems in gaining a national picture of the

ChangeUp programme during this period, as there inevitably some deviations from the national ‘architecture’ and ‘strategic actions’ laid down in the original ChangeUp Framework from the Home Office in 2004.

Essentially, therefore, much of the underlying evidence reported in this section differs little in its character from that in the evidence provided by regional, sub-regional or local organisations (which is reported in detail in the Review of Literature, published separately).

The lessons on impacts which emerge from these national studies are brought together and summarised in section 5.1.1 and the lessons on impacts which emerge from the regional and sub-regional studies are brought together and summarised in section 5.1.2.

A relatively early ‘overview’ study was undertaken by The Good Foundations Consultancy²² for Capacitybuilders. The study was based on interviews with regional representatives (in government offices, in regional consortia, and Capacitybuilders regional co-ordinators) and on reviews of planning documents. It was directed to examine the development of planning for greater local integration and of projects to increase third sector capacity. As such, the ‘impact’ examined here was simply that of ChangeUp’s ability up to that point to have generated organisational change (or at least the planning process which would lead to organisational change).

Some problems in consortia were observed – ‘financial year end’ difficulties, inconsistent administration and differences in broad approach, and concerns about sustainability – but the study’s summary conclusions were broadly positive:

‘ChangeUp has made good progress considering it is a 10-year programme and that barely two years have passed since the ministerial launch announcement in July 2004 – the plans on which this report was based being nearly all prepared in, or running to, March 2006 at the latest.

The programme’s achievements include funding more than 700 capacity building projects, and more than 800 projects and plans combined.

Infrastructure investment plans have been drawn up for every part of England (creating well over 100 plans), a process which has in many areas brought about genuinely new dialogue within the local sector, the first-ever assessment of local need, and the first serious involvement of statutory authorities.

There have been many projects reflecting the hub themes, with support projects in the volunteering and ICT fields being particularly widespread, though the work of the hubs themselves has not yet (ie. in the period covered by the plans) made itself strongly felt in local areas.

Other support needs (eg. for social enterprise support, advice on building for statutory sector procurement, and finding affordable premises) have been expressed in the planning processes.

²² ChangeUp Programme, Infrastructure Investment Plans, The Good Foundations Consultancy, 2006

There has been widespread development of BME infrastructure, both in towns and cities with large BME populations and in rural areas where BME populations are widely dispersed, though there are ongoing challenges to find appropriate infrastructure in different circumstances.'

Clearly, this study has somewhat limited value to this review of ChangeUp impacts, as it mainly refers to the situation in 2005, the first year in which there was significant spending on ChangeUp. It is evidence of impact in so far as ChangeUp's needs at that stage were developmental ones – the projects to which it refers were in their early stages and were not evaluated in the paper. It draws mainly on *plans* for prospective activity not activity itself. Its interview-based content reflected the views of 'insiders' rather than of possibly more objective external commentators. Basically, it shows that ChangeUp funding to that point had stimulated considerable planning and dialogue about the capacity issue at a local level.

Shortly after their establishment, Capacitybuilders commissioned a study commissioned by Auriga Consultants²³. This study aimed 'to assess the overall effectiveness of the consortia model, and to develop thinking on possible alternatives, particularly when consortia are not performing well'. It involved examination of such data and relevant literature as was available at the time, interviews with national stakeholders, and stakeholder workshops. Perhaps most pertinently, it included interviews with 105 stakeholders from a varied sample of 20 consortia.

Essentially, in terms of outputs, the study showed evidence of movement from planning (as in The Good Foundations study) to *increased organisational cohesion* of which numerous examples were cited. Thus, In Auriga reported that:

From stakeholder interviews and some of the evaluation reports, we were able to find evidence of some early outcomes from the ChangeUp spend. Consortia members talk of more trust, more sharing. There is some evidence of learning, leading to new ways of working, which are starting to have results.'

Examples were given of these sorts of changes, such as:

- As a direct consequence of ChangeUp, the five CVSs in Cumbria merged to become one pan-Cumbrian organisation strong enough to lead the Cumbria Infrastructure Consortium. Stakeholders said that the outcome is better service: 'They'd now be your first port of call.'
- Some consortia members have used ChangeUp money to lever other funding, including a £24,000 Merseyside consortium grant for good practice guidelines for youth organisations, which provided a springboard for a successful £500,000 BASIS bid, and a database of faith groups in the East of England, costing £12,500, provided a basis for successful bids, as well as a useful resource.
- Others spoke of broader horizons, or improved CVS services, e.g. development of community accounting services, increased referrals to community accounting in West Yorkshire, community empowerment networks helping the sector to link up.

²³ *Fit for Purpose: Review of the ChangeUp Consortia Model*, In Auriga, June 2007

In Auriga also reported a range of new *activities* but also noted that knowledge of the impact of these activities was unavailable:

Asked what consortia have done, stakeholders pointed to a wide variety of activities and outputs. Training courses, work on procurement and IT projects, especially if they provide equipment, were cited as delivering immediate and obvious benefits, though in the absence of follow-up, it was not possible to identify whether there has been any lasting impact. There were suggestions that take-up was low for some courses. Some training, and IT support, was delivered to frontline as well as infrastructure organisations. Spend on IT equipment, support, databases, materials was mentioned.'

And examples of these activities were given, such as:

- In the Wirral, 5/6 small CVSs are coming together to offer a single entry point for organisations seeking their help. Volunteer Centres are going through the same process.
- Support in developing documentation on asset ownership and premises sharing helped a local development trust in Dorset purchase a resource centre.
- 4 CVSs in the Black Country grouped together to bid for funding.
- Merseyside and Manchester consortia (GM2) are working together to deliver joint training to development workers.
- One stakeholder spoke of more attention to quality standards and governance, issues already on the radar. ChangeUp money helped to address them.
- Groups in London have had training in how to set up and update a website.

The In Auriga study also reviewed a number of regional or sub-regional evaluation reports (around 16 of these being available to them at that time). They drew on 'evidence' available from these reports. For example, they quote an East of England evaluation²⁴ as revealing:

- A greater awareness of the role and significance of infrastructure support.
- Effective mapping of capacity of provision.
- Increased and improved networks and partnership working both locally and across the region.
- The development of innovative programmes and, gradually, the emergence and dissemination of best practice.
- Huge investment in infrastructure support (as discussed above this could have been better planned and targeted).
- Greater awareness of and integration with diversity issues/organisations and other specialist infrastructure.
- The basis has been laid for improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of infrastructure support, e.g. sharing of back office services, merging of TSOs.

²⁴ *Evaluation of the consortium support/secretariat role for the 6 County Consortia*, Terry Harding Consultancy for Go East/ChangeUp East Fund Management, September 2006.

- A greater focus on outcomes for infrastructure organisations and the benefits available to front line organisations'

Additionally, the study asked interviewed stakeholders to rate their consortium's effectiveness on a number of factors on a 5 point scale (1 = 'bad', 5 = 'good'). The most frequent rating for 'activity' was 5, for engagement with the local third sector was 4, for engagement with excluded groups was 3, for engagement with statutory agencies and funders was 3, for consortium leadership was 4, and for decision-making was 3. These ratings perhaps suggest that consortia at that point were mostly active but, given the moderate decision-making ratings, not always able to focus their activities as clearly as they might. This perspective is supported by other In Auriga reports of problems facing consortia in the early years of CU, these included examples of lack of engagement of Local Authorities with consortia, lack of awareness of ChangeUp amongst statutory partners (such as JobcentrePlus, the health sector, and so on), 'protectionism and opaqueness', 'lack of accountability to the wider sector of what has been done with ChangeUp money' and 'poverty of tangible output'.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, In Auriga came to the conclusion that the copious material they collected during their study, as exemplified above, did not reach a standard of reliability and precision which could allow it to be considered as 'evidence' of impact:

'This review has not been able to come to a conclusion on the overall effectiveness of the consortia model. There is not enough evidence on which to make an objective judgement. This is not just because it is too early. It is because consortia are not systematically collecting the evidence on which such a judgement could be made.'

Correspondingly, a programme of research commissioned by Capacitybuilders to scope the design of a formal evaluation framework for ChangeUp²⁵, (the outcome of which was the commissioning of this evaluation), and undertaken at broadly the same time, reached broadly the same conclusions. This study involved a literature review, stakeholder interviews, and four sub-regional case studies amongst other elements. Whilst this study was not formally set up to evaluate ChangeUp, a review of evaluation evidence to that point was necessary as a starting point for consideration of how to move the quality and scope of ChangeUp's evaluation processes forward.

This review considered evaluative evidence under four headings:

- What needs are being addressed?
- What activities are being undertaken to address those needs?
- Process – how are programmes operating?
- Outcomes – what difference is it making?

The review noted that *needs* as expressed in Infrastructure Investment Plans (as examined by the Good Foundations report discussed earlier) had tended, not surprisingly, to be defined by consortia according to the themes which ChangeUp itself

²⁵ *Scoping the evaluation of ChangeUp*, COGS, CRESR at Sheffield Hallam University, and CRC at the University of the West of England, October 2007.

had identified at the outset – performance improvement, workforce development and leadership, ICT, governance, volunteering, and financing. However, instances were also observed where a more sensitive diagnostic or research-based or ‘gap analysis’ approach had been used at regional or sub-regional level to assess in more detail what frontline organisations actually, rather than hypothetically, required. The scoping report makes the point that those initial needs analyses which simply followed the initial ChangeUp priorities (rather than the second more diagnostic approach) might have identified a ‘surface level of the kinds of support frontline organisations say they would like to access’ rather than what they truly need in practice.

Turning to *activities*, the scoping report recognises that some regional or sub-regional reviews of ChangeUp²⁶ have looked systematically at substantial numbers of projects directed to the frontline within their areas. It also notes that it was reported (by the Good Foundations review discussed earlier) that:

‘It is one of the achievements of the ChangeUp programme to have funded more than 700 capacity building projects, and more than 800 projects and plans combined. The number of projects undermines the notion that the ChangeUp programme has enabled the VCS to ‘plan’ rather than to ‘do’.’

A report²⁷ of the extensive activities of National Hubs in place at that time was also noted:

‘In their first year of operation, the ChangeUp hubs have set up websites and helplines, launched standards, codes of frameworks, run conferences, seminars and training, undertaken research and consultation, produced briefings, guidance, toolkits and other materials, held meetings to exchange good practice. Most of this has happened over the past few months. As one contributor to the review observes, there has been an explosion of activity in the sector.’

However, the authors of the scoping report conclude, in respect of activities, that, whilst it was possible to generate long lists of things being done, ‘it was virtually impossible to get a comprehensive sense of what, in detail, had been funded or of the overall balance of funding on different areas of support’.

Similarly, in respect of *process*, the scoping report came to the view that *‘it is perhaps not so surprising that the first fruits of evaluation work associated with the programme, emerging primarily through 2005 and 2006, tend to focus on planning and delivery processes. Reports reviewed are replete with reflections about the challenging task of establishing the programme, understanding what it is (and is not), devising structures, partnerships, processes and procedures, and implementing activities.’*

The report notes that, for some, establishing local consortia is thought to be a significant achievement in itself, particularly in those areas where it had been widely noted (e.g. in the Treasury Cross-Cutting Review) that support in the sector was

²⁶ For example: *ChangeUp Good Practice Review and case studies: the North East*, Regeneration Exchange/ ARK 19, 2006 and *Pulling the Threads Together – a report on the Norfolk Consortium’s ChangeUp programme*, Baine and Benson, 2006.

²⁷ *Review of ChangeUp National Hubs*, Durning, 2006.

fragmented and piecemeal. A self-review²⁸ of the programme in the South West reports this in clear terms:

'The establishment and development of local consortia of infrastructure organisations covering all parts of the region is probably the most significant achievement of the ChangeUp programme in the South West. Consortia have established themselves at the heart of the drive for modern, efficient, effective and high quality support for voluntary and community organisations. They are now the main mechanism for collaboration between infrastructure organisations in the South West and are demonstrating this through joint planning, co-ordination of services and a more strategic approach to identifying and addressing the needs of frontline organisations.'

Thus, moving on to an examination of the key question of *outcomes* – what difference is ChangeUp making? – the scoping report argues that there was little evidence at that point of impact of the programme on frontline and community organisations. Various regional or sub-regional reviews of ChangeUp are quoted by the scoping report to make a number of points:

- Where questions of impact are discussed, it is often in terms of expected or potential benefits. “The implication is that questions of impact are not yet being addressed or it is thought to be too early to assess”.
- There are a number of ‘showcase’ type reports which “*illustrate* the benefits of particular activities or interactions but do not *demonstrate* the benefits”.
- There are reports which ask frontline organisations how useful or effective support services have been but do not point to actual improvements.
- ‘Process outcomes’ are frequently identified (greater trust, information share, learning, bringing organisations together) rather than outcomes for the frontline.
- Even where forward movement is identified, in some cases, this is generalised across the third sector and specific effects from ChangeUp inputs to the process, whilst they can be surmised, cannot actually be demonstrated.

Overall, therefore, the scoping report sums up the evidence of impact – in the sense of outcomes for frontline organisations – as ‘somewhat disappointing’.

Capacitybuilders, which was set up to address the acknowledged issues around the management of the ChangeUp programme recognised that the emphasis of evidence on ChangeUp’s performance to around that point (2007) had been on process rather than on frontline impacts. Thus, Capacitybuilders’ programme prospectus²⁹ of December 2007 identified ChangeUp’s successes up to that point as largely being concerned with organisational and infrastructural development rather than with actual observed benefits to frontline organisations:

²⁸ ISSW – *Summary and Achievements*, SW Infrastructure Consortium, 2006

²⁹ *Strategic change in local and regional third sector support: Programme Prospectus*, Capacitybuilders, December 2007

- Consortia have often achieved unprecedented collaboration across support providers, sometimes working together for first time. Some rationalisation and mergers have occurred.
- Most have developed a long term vision for support services in their area.
- Funding has supported:
 - The development of new projects meeting clear gaps in current provision
 - Shared development practice, e.g. around volunteering, ICT.
- Some Consortia have actively engaged with the public sector, and are recognised as key partnerships in LAAs/by LSPs; and/or holding other SLAs.
- Consortia have understanding of the wider policy context and give consideration to the regional agendas.
- Some Consortia have made links with specialist infrastructure at local/sub-regional/regional level.
- The sector has had a high level of involvement in setting local funding priorities and agreeing projects.
- Some evidence of emerging commissioning processes.

And, correspondingly in its 2007 report³⁰ on consultations undertaken in preparation of its 'Destination 2014' strategy, Capacitybuilders acknowledged that frontline impacts were constrained:

'Some frontline organisations were worried that we might be 'investing in bureaucracy' and were unclear about how funding was benefiting them'.

'Many felt excluded by the jargon'.

'Perhaps most worryingly, many frontline organisations were still unsure what support was available and how to access it'.

In 2008, the National Audit Office applied itself to an assessment of capacity-building in the third sector and published its findings³¹ in 2009. As with earlier studies reported in this chapter, the NAO used a literature review and interviews with stakeholders in ChangeUp both at national and consortia level and with some frontline organisations. As with previous reports described earlier, the NAO report, acknowledges change in *partnership working*:

'We found that ChangeUp had achieved an impact (on partnership working) in all the areas but that the impact varied. Although we were unable to quantify impact, it appeared that the impact was:

- *greater in those areas where existing support providers had already been working together to some extent and where there was a general willingness to take the partnership further, and*

³⁰ *Destination 2014, Consultation and context*, Capacitybuilders, 2007

³¹ *Building the Capacity of the Third Sector*, National Audit Office, February 2009

- *less in those areas where there had been significant weaknesses in existing support or obstacles to joint working.*

Partnership involved greater collaboration and dialogue between support providers as well as with other organisations and statutory partners such as health trusts.'

The NAO also recognised that partnership has improved the ability of consortia to target their support more accurately:

'As a result of improved partnership working, ChangeUp has driven and enabled better assessments by consortia of both the needs of frontline organisations in each area and of the gaps in support to them. ChangeUp gave consortia an opportunity to reflect on the role and capabilities of member support providers and gave them the confidence, rationale and funding to focus their efforts better. Prior to ChangeUp, many support providers sought to cover a range of support, for a variety of frontline organisations, to try to 'do everything'.'

Looking at ChangeUp's impacts on *frontline organisations*, the NAO concluded:

'Support has enabled frontline organisations to:

- *reduce the time and resources spent on administrative functions;*
- *provide better support to their own staff and volunteers;*
- *develop and improve policies and governance arrangements;*
- *focus on those aims and objectives that provide public benefit, and*
- *provide new, more and better services to users'.*

And a few instances of benefits diffusing out to actual *users* of the services were also observed by the NAO. These were derived from indirect reports of frontline service managers but included a 'toolkit' which had improved volunteer recruitment and development, young people given better life chances through the supported growth of a community football club, and similar benefits for young people from the strengthening of a guidance and mentoring project.

In support of the National Audit Office's work, Zahna Rao Associates and the Good Foundations Consultancy examined the same six consortia visited by the NAO in more detail. In their overview report³², these consultants recognised that ChangeUp had brought about a change in *thinking* within the consortia: "In 2005 the themes were often aligned with ChangeUp priorities which were reflected in the six National Hubs. In 2008, while the primary focus is still on developing and co-ordinating infrastructure support to better meet frontline need and to extend the reach, there was more reference to the representative role of consortia members in local strategic planning

³² *Six ChangeUp Consortia Distance Travelled*, Zahna Rao Associates and the Good Foundations Consultancy, November 2008

and also to the preparation of the third sector to tender for the delivery of public sector services. The projects within the plans were also more strategically focussed”.

It was also recognised that ChangeUp had provided discussion, planning and reconfiguration of *support infrastructure* which would not otherwise have taken place. ChangeUp had also brought a greater profile to specialist infrastructure, such as that related to BME or youth support.

The report also notes that ChangeUp funding has supported infrastructure support services which have or will receive funding from other sources and “has helped to establish and improve real working relationships between infrastructure organisations and the statutory sector.”

In respect of impact on frontline services, the report’s authors note that it is more difficult to measure direct impact on frontline organisations. In a sense, this will take time to filter through. The impact of better infrastructure support will be hard to measure as many frontline organisations receive their support from a variety of sources. However, the report itemises a number of instances of activities which “have been seen to have a real and lasting difference to the reach and impact of infrastructure on the frontline”, such as the Community Accountancy Service, the Funding Information Portal, a Voluntary Youth Sector Toolkit, and a Volunteering Virtual Hub.

3.7 National Hubs

National Hubs, designed to offer a central resource of expertise to consortia, local support organisations and frontline organisations, in respect of governance, finance, performance, volunteering, workforce development, and ICT, were established in spring/summer 2005 and dissolved in 2007/08. In their period of operation, they were intended to contribute to the total impact of ChangeUp, particularly by supporting the regional, sub-regional and local networks. In this Section, we outline the studies which have been undertaken into their operation and performance. We set out our conclusions from this literature in Section 6.1.3.

Essentially, reporting of evaluation of the Hubs began when, in 2006, Capacitybuilders undertook a review of the Hubs’ performance to that point.

Hubs themselves were each requested to submit a self-assessment in a standard format. The self-assessments³³ were mainly descriptive of partnership development, activity and products in the form of toolkits, websites, seminars, conferences, guides, codes and so on. A couple of examples may suffice to give the flavour of this material.

From the Governance Hub’s submission:

‘The Hub has played an important role in developing and promoting two key governance standards for the sector:

- *Code of Good Governance, which was launched in July 2005 and is being currently promoted and piloted with the sector. The*

³³ Submission to Capacitybuilders for the Review of the Hubs, Six Hubs, July 2006

Governance Hub will be responsible for reviewing the Code in 2007, following feedback from the sector.

- *National Occupational Standards for Trustees and Management Committee Members, which were launched in May 2006 following cross-sector input, consultation and buy-in.*

Both standards were launched via debates held in London and Manchester and attended by key figures in the sector. The standards are available in a range of accessible formats, along with free toolkits available online to enable organisations to implement them. So far, we have distributed over 120,000 copies of the Code and NOS each via events, mailings and the helpdesk. In the Hub's recent research, 61% of VCOs said they had heard of the Code.

The Hub has also developed guidelines and toolkits to support VCOs in recruiting trustee boards, to encourage good practice and the development of more diverse boards.

In addition, the principles of the standards developed by the Hub have been incorporated in those developed by other organisations, eg. Community Matters' code for community organisations.

The Hub is also ensuring the standards are promoted via:

- *Regional champions – these are being recruited via CTN to promote the Code on a regional basis.*
- *Learning support activities – 51 workshops, 50 events, resources for specific audiences, online networks.*
- *Conferences – speaking at conferences such as CVS AGMs, CIMA's Conference, BTEGs Governance Conference.*
- *Embedding the standards in other sector tools, standards and resources, eg. the new VISIBLE standards for community organisations have taken account of the Trustee Standards.*
- *Accreditation development – the Hub is working with the sector to investigate the possibility of creating accreditation standards for trustees and advisers.*
- *Collaboration with key partners to engage local volunteer bureaux/centres.*

*In July 2006, the Governance Hub will launch a sector campaign, **Make Every Move Count**, to increase awareness of the importance of governance, promote the standards and increase access to support to the sector. Activities include:*

- Advertising – including the Third Sector, Guardian Society, Governance magazine and a number of other publications.
- PR – targeting national and trade media.
- Viral marketing – an online ‘governance health check’ has been developed which will be sent to organisations to check the status of their governance and encourage them to go to the website and sign up for information. Organisations are also being invited to sign up to an on-line charter to support the Code.
- A Charity Commission mailing went out at the beginning of July to 110,000 organisations. We will also be mailing professional networks with information including the Charity Law Association, the Charity Finance Directors Group, Management Development Network, NCVO Approved Consultants, Institute of Fundraising and Community Development Exchange. A letter will also go to the CEOs of the largest charities to engage them in the campaign to adopt and champion the Code.’

From the Finance Hub submission:

‘Leadership in developing national standards has included research, expert briefing development, proposals for accredited training and adoption of voluntary kite marks.

Following the success of the innovative community accountancy research mapping carried out in year 1, year 2 will be developing national standards for community accountants. Initial consultation shows that such an approach is welcomed by practitioners and the CVOs with whom they work.

The project commissioned to promote better funding practice has resulted in several expert briefings which will be complemented by training in year two to capacity build both the CVS and local authorities. Subjects covered include full cost recovery, state aid, surer funding, publicly funded assets, and local authority asset transfer.

The BME policy and advocacy work will be producing standards, as a part of its year 2 programme. The proposal is for a kite mark for funders who meet certain criteria in the ways in which they seek bids from BME groups and cover diversity issues in applications.

The information pack for new/small VCOs is being developed into a toolkit to be downloaded from the Finance Hub website. Training of funding advisers will also be rolled out into the regions. Work is taking place to find the best way of cascading training at regional and local levels to address priority areas in year 2.

From year 3 onwards, the Hub intends to focus on working with and incubating intermediaries in frontline service delivery. The Hub will work

closely with Capacitybuilders to develop partnerships with the 127 regional and sub-regional consortia.

The Hub has promoted capacity building issues in the VC sector to new audiences, including local authority and greater participation of BME groups and networking funding advisers and building a national infrastructure for community accountants.'

The submissions contained few quantitative measures of performance (beyond, for example, recording numbers of seminars run or amount of material distributed). Evidence that the Hubs had had a positive effect on the sector was mainly constrained to testimonials, for example:

'Feedback on our hothouse seminars:

- *"Provocative"*
- *"Fascinating" (chief executive, small national charity)*
- *"Imaginative discussion methods used"*
- *Two thirds of participants felt their expectations of the event were "fully met".*

Feedback on our funders' workshops:

- *Most aspects of the event were scored as "good" or "very good".*
- *"A real insight into funding and performance from a funder's perspective"*
- *"Both fun and thought-provoking" (non-statutory funder).*

(from Performance Hub submission)

"Thank you for the Workforce Hub's contribution towards our 20th birthday conference ... and for participating in the skills workshop which was well received" ACRE

"Your contribution to the CVS network's ongoing learning is very appreciated by NACVS and by the participants in the workshop" NACVS

"We admire your team work and are grateful for your attention to our ideas and comments" (Management Development Network) – on facilitating a consultation session for consultants on the Trustee NOS.

"Well done for your excellent work in herding cats and moving this project forward" (Director, Share) on leading on the development process of the Trustee NOS.

“Thanks, that is great news. We are advising all of our branches (170), each of which is independent and have their own board of trustees, of the NOS and will be promoting all of the resources you are providing, which I must say are excellent, so thank you” Volunteer Recruitment & Development Manager, RSPCA.’

(from Workforce Hub submission)

The overall evaluation³⁴ to which the Hub submissions contributed, drew on a wider range of evidence, including document review, stakeholder interviews, and fifty-four ‘public’ contributions (mainly from second tier or frontline organisations).

Whilst, corresponding to the Hubs’ own accounts, the Durning review found plentiful evidence of useful activity, the review found that the overall impact of the Hubs was diminished by lack of cohesion both between themselves and in relation to regional and sub-regional elements of ChangeUp:

‘The hubs are generally delivering across the range of their remits, and to the challenging targets in their business plans. They have many positive achievements to report against the review criteria. They have not been sufficiently joined up at national level and they have not worked well enough through regional and sub-regional ChangeUp. They and their engaged stakeholders say that it is too early to introduce radical change. There is a group of stakeholders who value their products and services. Much of the feedback from other stakeholders is negative.’

‘There are tensions between the different elements in the wide ranging hub remits. On the evidence presented to the review, their combined responsibilities for identification of need, commissioning, and delivery are managed with probity, but underlie negative perceptions in the field. Delivery preoccupations can get in the way of the leadership role.’

The hubs were decommissioned in 2007/08 with an evaluation of the impact of each being conducted. These evaluations provided some final evidence³⁵ of Hub achievement. Again, this work was mainly descriptive of programme delivery, with little hard evidence of impact. For example, the evaluation of the Workforce Hub asserted, amongst other things, that the Hub had encouraged more people to come to work in the sector but did not provide evidence either that that had happened during the year reviewed or that, if it had, such change would have been a result of the Hub’s activities. (Rather, the report noted that the sector’s workforce increased by 26% in the 10 years between 1996 and 2005, i.e. before the Hub started work). It’s other main summary paragraph of achievement records website hits and successful publicity:

‘The Workforce Hub used a variety of strategies to help deliver the desired outcomes, and effective use of communications underpinned how

³⁴ *Review of the ChangeUp National Hubs*, Durning J. for Capacitybuilders, August 2006

³⁵ For example: *An evaluation of the work of the Workforce Hub 2007/2008*, Wolf, T. and Gordon, K., 2008; *ICT Hub evaluation; final report of the independent evaluators*, Ticher, P., and Eaves, A., April 2008; *Evaluation of the Finance Hub Programme*, Anderson and Gollan Associates, February 2008

organisations have access to the information and signposting the Hub offers. Throughout 2007/08, the visits to the UK Workforce Hub website, which is one of the main access points for the Hub's services and publications, grew month-on-month from an average of 20,000 visits to an average of well over 30,000 visits (and still growing). The Workforce Hub was successful in achieving good press coverage throughout the year – with over 100 national media and sector press mentions, ranging from a David Brindle editorial in Society Guardian about the Workforce Almanac and skills survey, to an interview on BBC Radio Gloucester dispelling myths about paid work in the sector. The monthly Workforce Hub e-briefing circulation figures have grown to well over 5,100 contacts receiving it.'

The impact of the Finance Hub was mainly expressed in terms of creation of a better knowledge base rather than in terms of evidence of better financial management in frontline organisations:

'As individual pieces of work, the development of the Finance Hub website and the outputs of the commissioned projects equate to the creation of a substantial body of high quality information which has benefit to the CVS at every level. Taken as a whole, the work offers a considerable increase in the amount of knowledge available to policymakers about the financial baseline position of the CVS in England. It highlights a mixed picture of financial capacity within the sector and identifies barriers to further development caused by factors outside of the sector itself. As Capacitybuilders moves into a new phase of its ten year strategy, this information has a high value and needs to be used properly to inform future activity.'

The evaluators of the ICT Hub recognise straightforwardly that impact of the Hub was not clearly perceptible and may or may not have been significant:

'It was acknowledged from the outset that the evaluation team would be hard pressed to verify the full impact of the ICT Hub's work. This is partly because the changes are likely to be slow – and many may still be in progress. It is also partly because there are so many potential steps in the chain, and so many other possible influences, that it is hard to say for certain exactly what contribution the ICT Hub made in many (though not all) cases. The effect of input from the ICT Hub may be large or small, crucial or contributory, and possibly conveyed by one or more intermediary organisations. It is likely that in many cases, even the organisation itself would be unaware of how much impact the ICT Hub had had.'

As above, these Hub assessments mainly contribute to consideration of the overall sum of ChangeUp's impacts in the period from 2003/4 to 2007/08.

Following the Durning Report, of which Capacitybuilders accepted the main findings, new national arrangements – the *National Support Services* – were set in train, with the issue of a prospectus and subsequent service commissioning. In particular, Improving Reach was a funding stream introduced in April 2006 to improve access to support for a range of FLOs, in particular black and minority ethnic, refugee, migrant, faith and isolated groups. After being piloted in 2006-2007 and 2007-2008, the

Improving Reach Programme was launched in April 2008. However, given the relatively recent initiation of these National Support Services, and the focus of this summative report on 2004 to 2008, these will form part of the ongoing formative evaluation of ChangeUp.

4 Research questions

This summative evaluation study seeks to answer the following high level research questions in relation to the years April 2004 to March 2008 specifically:

- What has happened to support services during the period 2004-8?
 - What factors have influenced these changes?
 - Support from Local support organisations?
 - Support from ChangeUp?
 - Other factors?
 - What changes is it possible to attribute to infrastructure support programmes?
 - What changes is it possible to attribute to the ChangeUp programme?
- What has happened to front line services during the period 2004-8?
 - What factors have influenced these changes?
 - Support from local support organisations?
 - Support from ChangeUp?
 - Other factors?
 - What impacts on FLOs is it possible to attribute to infrastructure support programmes?
 - What impacts on FLOs is it possible to attribute to the ChangeUp programme?

What conclusions can be drawn about the effectiveness of the ChangeUp model support services during the period 2004-8?

The ongoing formative element of the project will evaluate progress from 2009 to 2011.

5 Methodology

In order to answer these research questions, we have used a number of linked approaches.

5.1 Principles behind the methodology

Our methodology, both in the Summative and Formative phases of the evaluation, is based on the following broad principles:

- Clear statement to all stakeholders of the independence of the research.
- Maximising the use of existing data, surveys and performance management systems.
- Minimising the burden on infrastructure and frontline organisations – secure their buy-in and carrying out the research with them, not on them.
- Investing in sustainable and cost effective methodologies, which can be repeated later to allow further lessons to be learnt, rather than a one-off evaluation.
- Including the full range of goal attainment, input, process, awareness, usage, user satisfaction, output, outcome, and impact measures.
- Combining quantitative and qualitative approaches.
- Involving all stakeholders including support services, consortia, frontline organisations, partners, funders and, as far as possible, incorporating their needs and concerns.

5.2 Research methods used

Given the multiplicity of stakeholders involved and the range of funding sources for third sector capacity building, this evaluation has needed to incorporate a wider range of complementary methodologies, so that data sources are triangulated and different perspectives can be explored using research methods which are appropriate to that frame of reference.

The main research methods used in the study have been:

- A desk review of the existing literature and other evidence on national, regional and local dimensions of ChangeUp and its impact to date. The final version of this review was submitted to Capacitybuilders in June 2009.
- Analysis of economic data from GuideStar (income, expenditure, paid employment, financial assets) in relation to both infrastructure organisations and frontline organisations, their changes over time and the associations between them. For this analysis, we used baselines for 2004, 2006 and 2008. We report the headline findings from this analysis in this report.
- Twelve locality case studies, selected to represent upper tier local authorities which have different combinations of relative growth in terms of the economic activities of both frontline (FLO) and local infrastructure (LIO) third sector organisations. Specifically, the selection was based on the change in an index of 'economic strength' of LIOs and FLOs between 2004 and 2008 (combining overall growth in expenditures and the proportion of organisations experiencing

more than 25% growth in expenditure). (These ‘economic strength’ measures are therefore quite distinct from the perception-based measures of the ‘environment for a thriving third sector’ used in the National Survey of Third Sector Organisations). Each upper tier authority was classified according to the level of growth in expenditures of frontline and local infrastructure organisations. LIOs were categorised as either high or low with reference to the median level of ‘economic strength’, whilst FLOs were classified as high, medium or low with reference to the upper and lower quartiles. This produced a two by three matrix. The following table shows the distribution of upper tier authorities based on the proportion of organisations experiencing more than 25% growth in expenditures.

Figure 5: Distribution of upper tier authorities

Local Infrastructure Organisation growth	Frontline Organisation growth			Total
	Low	Medium	High	
Low	13	38	24	75
High	23	38	13	74
Total	36	76	37	149

For each of the cells in this two by three matrix, two upper tier authorities were chosen as locality case studies. These selections provide a systematic way to select localities for comparison.

- These cases studies were conducted by a mixture of interview, focus group and workshop discussions with key players. An assurance has been given to all participants in the locality case studies that their views will be kept confidential and will not be attributed in any of the research reports. Furthermore, external publications from the research will not name the case study areas.
- Analysis of survey responses of FLOs, exploring the level and type of support they seek and receive, gaps in that support, their perceptions of the quality of support available in their area, and the contribution which they perceive local statutory bodies and third sector bodies make to their success. (Where relevant, these responses have been compared with the responses from the National Survey of TSOs in these same localities).
- Integrative analysis of all the data sources relating to each of the locality case studies.

5.3 Limitations to the methodology

As with all research, there are certain issues in the evaluation of ChangeUp which are problematic and where the research methodology cannot achieve answers to all aspects of the research questions outlined above. In general, these limitations have been well described in previous evaluations which have been undertaken on ChangeUp at national and local level. In commissioning this Summative Evaluation, Capacitybuilders explicitly asked that the design of the evaluation take these into account. They include:

- There is relatively limited systematic detailed information in the management and monitoring information systems of any of the involved organisations on projects undertaken under ChangeUp before 2008.
- The data which have been assembled under ChangeUp have often not been systematically collated and analysed in a form which expedites analysis.
- The management and monitoring information which is available provides virtually no information on impacts. Particularly in the early years, the data collected both nationally and locally was relatively sparse – especially in relation to any dimension of impact. While the GuideStar database provides a good basis on which to build a baseline and growth trajectory of the capacity and sustainability of infrastructure and frontline organisations in England on an annual basis from 2004, it does not contain many of the dimensions of a full ‘impact’ database. The data from the National Survey of Third Sector Organisations (NSTSO), from both 2008 and 2010, may be able to make good some of these deficiencies.
- There may be issues of substitution effects (whereby ChangeUp funding substitutes for the expenditure of other funders) and displacement effects (whereby ChangeUp displaces activity from other areas), so that changes in ChangeUp funding may not represent net additional expenditure on infrastructure support.
- There are problems in demonstrating the directions of causation between variables found in the research to exhibit strong associations. However, the ability to track performance of infrastructure and frontline organisations across all localities – when combined with relevant contextual analysis such as local economic performance – allows a robust comparative analysis which throws light on causative relationships.

6 Research Findings

In this section we set out our findings from the research approaches outlined in the previous section. Specifically, this section contains:

- Summary of findings on impact from desk study of evaluations carried out to date;
- Summary of impacts suggested by economic data from GuideStar;
- Summary of impacts suggested by the surveys of frontline organisations and the NSTSO;
- Summary of impacts (including non-impacts and unintended consequences) identified in each of the 12 locality case studies;
- Summary of impacts of ChangeUp, drawing on all these sources;
- Summary of findings on key themes which serve to explain the impacts.

6.1 Summary of findings from desk review

In this section, we summarise the findings from our desk review of evaluations carried out to date on ChangeUp.

6.1.1 National studies of impacts

From 2005 onwards, a number of ‘overview’ reports have attempted to come to a summary view of ChangeUp’s impacts. These overview reports, particularly those from 2007 onwards, draw broadly the same picture.

They show many instances of impact at the first (or early stage) links on the ‘impact chain’, providing abundant evidence of impacts on process and in the form of activity. There are numerous reports of:

- Organisational restructuring;
- Projects commissioned and delivered;
- Outcome ‘products’ – such as new ICT, new building or refurbishments, websites set-up, ‘toolkits’ developed, brochures printed, training courses and workshops run, accountancy services made available, co-ordinators and outreach workers supported, promotion and marketing of services enhanced, needs researched, and so on.

Interesting examples of good performance are available. For example, the Consultation Document³⁶ on Destination 2014 instances that 75% of all third sector infrastructure organisations have reached appropriate agreed quality standards (and are monitoring their outcomes) and that third sector capacity building needs assessments have taken place in 80% of all local authorities and consequent action taken – but there is no clear baseline against which to measure these achievements nor any indication as to how much of this might be due to ChangeUp.

³⁶ *Destination 2014: Investing in Change, Consultation Document*, Capacitybuilders, 2006.

However, there is no way of systematically quantifying the extent of these ‘process’ changes. Information available (both to the authors of the reports reviewed and to our evaluation team) does not include systematic reports of organisational and structural change for all 130 consortia; nor does it include an exhaustive list of the projects and activities funded by ChangeUp over its lifetime. Essentially, any conclusion as to the overall, national, extent of impacts at these levels must be drawn by extrapolating from available instances and case studies rather than from comprehensive information resources, and by making the assumption that what has occurred in some locations has occurred across England. On that basis, the most precise answer available (from these overviews) to the question ‘what impact has ChangeUp had in terms of inducing change in local organisational structures and processes and in terms of stimulating capacity building activity?’ is ‘a lot’.

This clearly imprecise assessment must be further tempered by the fact that reports of structural change and project and activity descriptions are not always objective. In the case of structural changes, there does appear to be a frequent willingness amongst those involved to discuss various downsides of change (bureaucracy, communication and partnership failures, and so on) and these find their way into the overview reports. Projects and activities, however, are usually either ‘showcased’ – set out as examples of good practice – or are described neutrally with scant information as to whether the projects/ activities (irrespective of their impacts on their frontline clients) were effective in organisation and delivery.

In terms of the impact on FLOs, there is even less information available to the overview reports – what there is consists mainly of self-reports by consortia, regional or sub-regional evaluations undertaken by consortia, or case studies undertaken by the report authors. The information available tends to be in the form of sporadic anecdotes, usually based on assertions by consortium or project managers, rather than directly from frontline organisations themselves. Of course, given that a key priority for ChangeUp in its early stages was to achieve better coordination and collaboration between support services, it is unsurprising that there is only limited information relating to impacts on FLOs during the early period of ChangeUp.

In the light of the low level of evidence of impact, it is unsurprising that overview reports make little comment on value for money. It is not possible to put a monetary value on organisational change *per se*, nor on the value of projects and activities, unless the impact of projects and activities on their intended beneficiaries – frontline organisations – can be measured. Moreover, this latter task is itself very difficult, given the varied and often intangible benefits (such as better management or increased knowledge) which were intended to accrue to frontline organisations.

Overall, therefore, most overview reports tend to agree with the assessment³⁷ made in relation to evaluation of one kind of capacity building initiative (namely, campaigning and advocacy) that ‘evaluation practice seems in fact to be extraordinarily weak... research conducted for this report identified few – if any – efforts to systematically monitor and evaluate and share learning from capacity building efforts. This is not, perhaps, unsurprising given the relatively recent growth in third sector advocacy

³⁷ *Capacitybuilders campaigning programme: evaluating capacity building; supporting paper*, Coe and Stalker, June 2009

capacity building programmes. However, it would seem that the pace of development of advocacy support provision is moving quicker than the pace of implementing evaluation and learning methodologies.’

6.1.2 Regional and sub-regional studies of impacts

Our review of regional and sub-regional evaluation studies comes to the same conclusion as our review of national studies. At the regional level, the Scoping Study concluded: “Regionally, ChangeUp is seen to have worked where the Government Office understood the sector and the aims of the programme, and where there were people in the sector willing to work together with sufficient knowledge and understanding of the potential of the programme. For example the partnership between GOSW, the RDA and the South West Foundation was singled out for effective working, and the involvement of the private and statutory sectors in London is also seen to have contributed to making the most of the opportunities presented through ChangeUp; *“linking into the sub-regions has flushed out people who have never put a bid into the RDA before*³⁸”.

There is abundant evidence of ChangeUp’s effects on local infrastructure and of ChangeUp stimulating activity. This evidence is, however, of mixed quality and cannot be easily aggregated into a coherent and quantified national picture. In particular, evaluation studies to date have not produced systematic evidence that the many cases of structural redevelopment and project delivery have also had widespread observable benefits for frontline organisations, although some comments and testimonials suggest that such benefits may indeed have occurred.

Firstly, much of the impact which is identified is in terms of structural change and generated activity rather than impact on the capacity of local support organisations or frontline organisations.

Secondly, much of the ‘evidence’ of effectiveness (or ineffectiveness in some cases) derives from the assertions of those involved in designing and delivering programmes and projects, not of those on the receiving end of such support. Of course, this doesn’t make this evidence inadmissible but it does have the flavour of ‘hearsay’ rather than of direct evidence.

Thirdly, there is, in fact, quite limited coverage. Given that there are 130 consortia and many hundreds of projects have been supported, the range of evaluation material which bears directly on the impact of ChangeUp seems quite limited.

Fourthly, the depth of review and the content of interviews seem to have differed greatly between studies, so that some studies appear quite thorough whilst others verge on the perfunctory.

Fifthly, as earlier, there is no attempt in the literature to assess value for money. Some of the best studies (e.g. the Norfolk, Yorkshire and Humberside, and Merseyside cases) set out descriptions of projects and their budgets. These allow some sense of

³⁸ Macmillan et al (2007), *Scoping the Evaluation of ChangeUp – Paper C*, Sheffield: COGS, CRESR, CRC (p. 7).

what activity was undertaken and what it cost. This, in turn, allows intuitive judgements of 'value' but these intuitions could easily be wrong. In the absence of benchmarks, of ways, say, of measuring the value of creating new partnerships, and of evidence of any frontline benefit, assessment of value for money is generally not possible.

Sixthly, much of the material available is derives from studies undertaken in 2006 and relates back to the consortium development period. Even studies in the second half of 2008 (the six Consortia Distance Travelled series) were obliged to look in their project reviews back to 2005/06 activities. There is no clear sense of how much of the restructuring done then or development projects delivered in that earlier period have generated gains which had persisted and become embedded by 2008 and how many may have been superseded by further change or failed to have sustained impact.

6.1.3 Impacts of National Hubs

The key conclusions with regard to the 'impact contribution' of the national Hubs essentially mirror those made in respect of regional and sub-regional consortia. That is, that they clearly did things which could (or must) have been of some value to the sector given their width and variety but there is little evidence – beyond measures such as website hits, successful conference scores, and testimonials – of the scope and depth of the value created. As has been noted, following a review of the effectiveness of the Hubs in 2006/07, Capacitybuilders chose to wind them up and replace them from 2008 with the National Support Services (NSS).

6.1.4 Conclusions from the desk study on the impacts of ChangeUp

There is no comprehensive, independent, and consistent record of the changes which ChangeUp has achieved to national, regional and sub-regional structures for the development of local support organisations or of the projects which were funded to allow these organisations to better support frontline organisations.

The incomplete record is, of course, consistent with the possibility that overall structural change has been significant and the volume of activity to improve frontline capacity has been considerable. However, the scale and depth of impact of this structural change and funded activity on the total capacity of frontline organisations cannot easily be quantified. There is abundant inference that activity has produced increases in capacity and, certainly, it seems reasonable to assume that particular initiatives, such as a new local centre for voluntary activity, or an advisory website which receives high numbers of hits, or a guidance booklet of which thousands of copies are circulated, or the employment of a guidance worker for more hours per week, will bring benefits. However, the individual examples from frontline organisation clients constitute largely anecdotal evidence of impact, rather than a rigorous and systematic assessment.

Thus, the history of commissioned impact assessment relating to ChangeUp is limited and cannot support a clear statement as to the difference ChangeUp has made to the frontline in the period up to March 2008. Indeed, this is why Capacitybuilders commissioned a Scoping Study (in 2007) and then this evaluation (in late 2008).

6.2 Summary of impacts suggested by economic data from GuideStar

6.2.1 Overall economic performance of the third sector

The overall economic performance of the third sector would ideally focus on a basket of indicators, looking at different aspects of economic performance, including income, output, efficiency and quality. However, it is still not possible to construct robust and widely applicable measures for quality and efficiency of third sector organisations. (This has also proven difficult for public sector organisations but progress made in recent years, e.g. in the National Indicator set, suggest that similar developments may be available in the third sector in the not too distant future). We have therefore agreed with Capacitybuilders the use of expenditure as a proxy for “economic” capacity. Economic capacity refers to the resources held and utilised by organisations – specifically the financial resources recorded in the annual reports and financial statements of third sector organisations. It has the advantage of being a robust and stable measure that can be used for all TSOs, and can be calibrated using the GuideStar financial history data. Moreover, it can be used to measure growth in capacity over time. Finally, it has the advantage of being scalable – it can be used at the locality level, across all types of TSOs (specifically frontline and infrastructure organisations) and at regional and national level. Whilst it could be argued, at a single organisation level, that a decrease in expenditure might indicate an increase in efficiency, in this research we have always used these measures in aggregate, where significant short-term movements in expenditure are much more likely to reflect capacity changes than efficiency changes.

The GuideStar data for third sector organisations in England shows the respective scale of activity of frontline organisations (FLOs), and local (LIOs) and national infrastructure organisations (NIOs) in 2008. Organisations are categorised according to their primary activities, however, it is important to note that some frontline organisations may also undertake infrastructure activities and vice versa, some infrastructure organisations may provide frontline services.

Approximately 80,000 FLOs account for £34 billion of expenditure - 90% of total third sector expenditure. Expenditure by approximately 1,200 NIOs accounts for £2.5 billion - 8% of total expenditure, whilst 2,000 LIOs only accounting for £700 million - 2% of total spend.

There has been strong sustained growth for the third sector economy between 2004 and 2008 – with similar levels of growth in expenditures across FLOs, LIOs and NIOs. However, whilst the growth of FLOs has been constant across this time period, there are two distinct phases of growth for LIOs and NIOs. Both LIOs and NIOs experienced most of their growth in expenditures between 2004 and 2006; LIOs only increased their expenditures by 13% between 2006 and 2008, whilst growth was substantially lower for NIOs – which experienced only 5% growth.

Figure 6: Increases in overall expenditure by type of TSO, 2004-2008

	Increase in expenditure 2004 to 2008	Increase in expenditure 2006 to 2008	Increase in expenditure 2004 to 2006	2008 expenditure	2006 expenditure	2004 expenditure
Frontline organisations	42%	18%	20%	£33.7 bn	£28.7 bn	£23.8 bn
Local infrastructure organisations	41%	13%	25%	£714 m	£631 m	£504 m
National infrastructure organisations	40%	5%	34%	£2.5 bn	£2.4 bn	£1.8 bn

6.2.2 Economic performance of the third sector across localities

The growth in expenditures between 2004 and 2006, and 2006 and 2008 for frontline and LIOs was measured for all 149 upper tier authorities in England. This analysis revealed that the levels of growth of the third sector economy vary significantly across localities, for example: In a quarter of upper tier authorities the overall expenditures of FLOs increased by less than 13% between 2004 and 2006, whilst at the other end of the spectrum FLOs expenditures increased by over 27% in the upper quartile of upper tier authorities (see Figure 5 – all figures referred to in the text in this section are emboldened in the tables).

This analysis also reveals that in a quarter of upper tier authorities LIOs experienced low levels of growth between 2004 and 2006, and a significant decline in expenditures between 2006 and 2008. By contrast in a quarter of upper tier authorities LIOs experienced high levels of growth in expenditures between 2004 and 2006 (36%). This indicates an uneven growth pattern for LIOs across upper tier authorities.

Figure 7: Growth in overall expenditure across upper tier authorities, 2004-2008

	FLO Change in spend 2003/4 to 2005/6	FLO Change in spend 2005/6 to 2007/8	LIO Change in spend 2003/4 to 2005/6	LIO Change in spend 2005/6 to 2007/8
Number of upper tier authorities	149	149	149	149
25 th percentile	12.85	10.71	1.93	-13.36
Median	18.85	16.50	18.29	3.09
75 th percentile	27.35	24.39	36.36	20.02

In addition to these overall expenditure measures, the GuideStar data was used to measure the proportion of FLOs and LIOs experiencing significant growth (increases in expenditure above 25%) between 2004 and 2006, and 2006 and 2008 (see Figure 6). The overall pattern for FLOs is fairly consistent with approximately 30% of FLOs in upper tier authorities experiencing significant growth. However, the pattern of growth

for LIOs across upper tier authorities is more varied, with only 17% of LIOs in a quarter of upper tier authorities experiencing growth over 25% between 2006 and 2008. In contrast in a quarter of authorities over 40% of LIOs experienced significant growth between 2004 and 2006.

Figure 8: Proportion of FLOs and LIOs experiencing significant growth in expenditure across upper tier authorities, 2004-2008

	FLO Proportion with sig increase in spend 2003/4 to 2005/6	FLO Proportion with sig increase in spend 2005/6 to 2007/8	LIO Proportion with sig increase in spend 2003/4 to 2005/6	LIO Proportion with sig increase in spend 2005/6 to 2007/8
Number of upper tier authorities	149	149	149	149
25 th percentile	28.18	26.63	24.09	16.67
Median	30.21	29.63	32.07	25.00
75 th percentile	32.03	31.34	42.72	33.33

The organisation level analysis for LIOs across upper tier authorities matches the pattern for overall expenditure by LIOs. This correlation is statistically significant for both the change between 2004 and 2006, and between 2006 and 2008 – suggesting that high levels of growth in overall LIO expenditures is strongly correlated with high proportions of LIOs experiencing significant levels of growth i.e. that growth is not concentrated in a small proportion of LIOs.

Figure 9: Correlation between the proportion of LIOs experiencing significant growth and the growth in overall expenditures by LIOs, 2004-2008

		Correlation coefficient (Spearman's 2-tail)
LIO Organisation measure 2004 to 2006	LIO Overall expenditure 2004 to 2006	0.335**
LIO Organisation measure 2006 to 2008	LIO Overall expenditure 2006 to 2008	0.287**

** Statistically significant at the 0.01 level

The GuideStar locality measures were analysed to see whether there is a statistically significant correlation between the growth in expenditure of LIOs and the growth in expenditures of FLOs – the hypothesis being that high levels of growth of expenditure by LIOs will be correlated with higher levels of growth in expenditure of FLOs. Tests were carried out for 2004 to 2006 and 2006 to 2008 using both overall expenditure and organisation level measures. The only statistically significant correlation was overall growth in expenditures of LIOs between 2006 and 2008 with the proportion of FLOs experiencing high levels of growth between 2006 and 2008 – a positive correlation suggesting that high levels of overall expenditure of LIOs is linked with high proportions of FLOs experiencing significant growth (25% increase in expenditures).

Figure 10: Correlations of expenditure growth in local infrastructure organisations and local frontline organisations across upper tier authorities

Local infrastructure organisation	Frontline organisation	Correlation coefficient (Spearman's) ³⁹
2004 to 2006		
Organisation growth measure 2004 to 2006	Organisation growth measure 2004 to 2006	0.083
Organisation growth measure 2004 to 2006	Overall expenditure growth 2004 to 2006	-0.095
Overall expenditure growth 2004 to 2006	Organisation growth measure 2004 to 2006	-0.007
Overall expenditure growth 2004 to 2006	Overall expenditure growth 2004 to 2006	-0.037
2006 to 2008		
Organisation growth measure 2006 to 2008	Organisation growth measure 2006 to 2008	0.070
Organisation growth measure 2006 to 2008	Overall expenditure growth 2006 to 2008	0.034
Overall expenditure growth 2006 to 2008	Organisation growth measure 2006 to 2008	0.201*
Overall expenditure growth 2006 to 2008	Overall expenditure growth 2006 to 2008	0.021
LAG: LIO growth 2004 to 2006 compared with FLO growth 2006 to 2008		
Organisation growth measure 2004 to 2006	Organisation growth measure 2006 to 2008	0.052
Organisation growth measure 2004 to 2006	Overall expenditure growth 2006 to 2008	0.057
Overall expenditure growth 2004 to 2006	Organisation growth measure 2006 to 2008	0.059
Overall expenditure growth 2004 to 2006	Overall expenditure growth 2006 to 2008	-0.005

Although the overall conclusion from this analysis is that there is little evidence of a correlation between LIO and FLO activity, it is important to note that three out of the four correlations for the period 2004 to 2006 are negative but all four for 2006 to 2008 are positive – one of which is statistically significant. Moreover, three out of the four correlations which are lagged have also got positive signs (although none is statistically significant).

³⁹ A non-parametric test for correlation – Spearman's – was used because the data for upper tier authorities includes a number of outliers, such outliers reduce the efficacy of parametric test such as Pearsons.

This suggests that in the period 2004 to 2006 the upper tier authorities with high levels of growth in LIO expenditures had, if anything, lower levels of growth in FLO expenditures – thus suggesting that we must reject our original hypothesis. An alternative hypothesis can be formulated that argues that the highest levels of growth in LIOs expenditures occurred in areas where the need for capacity building was greatest – as reflected in the low levels of growth of FLOs. This would suggest that targeting of support to LIOs was successful, in reaching LIOs in those areas where FLOs most needed help.

Although the original hypothesis is not supported for the period 2004 to 2006, the analysis for 2006 to 2008 does provide some supporting evidence for our hypothesis, in that there is now some tendency for the areas which had the greatest LIO expenditure growth to have higher FLO growth in this latter period. However, as these results are not statistically significant, it would be unwise to read too much into them.

Further tests were carried out to see if LIO growth between 2004 and 2006 led to growth in FLOs between 2006 and 2008 i.e. to test whether there is a lag effect. However, no such correlations were found to be significant although three out of the four measures again showed positive correlations, which suggests that this relationship may now be stronger than it was before.

It is, of course, possible that the effects of early LIO growth and improvement in effectiveness may take rather longer to show than the period used in this analysis. Consequently, we will repeat this analysis when the 2009 data become available (in the early part of 2010). Furthermore, we are exploring other ways of identifying any lagged effects between LIO expenditure in an area and subsequent growth of FLOs.

6.3 Summary of impacts suggested by the surveys of frontline organisations and the NSTSO

6.3.1 Background

A postal survey has been carried out in ten of the twelve selected case study areas⁴⁰. A comprehensive list of incorporated and registered third sector organisations was produced using information from the GuideStar database (through discussion with Capacitybuilders, and in line with the sample definition used for the NSTSO survey, some organisations were excluded from the database, e.g. small grant making trusts), and the survey was mailed to ALL eligible organisations in each area (about 5% of which were LIOs, the rest FLOs).

In addition to the surveys of incorporated and registered organisations, the same survey has also been administered to ‘under the radar’ organisations in two localities based on lists from the local Consortia.

Clearly, this survey was commissioned a year after the end of the period to which the Summative Evaluation refers, namely March 2008. Ideally, it would have been conducted in early 2008, but that was not, of course, possible. This means that the responses given by TSOs will not fully reflect the situation at the end of the evaluation

⁴⁰ The late substitution of two areas made it impractical to complete surveys in the remaining two localities over the summer holiday period. The mailings for the surveys in these locations is ongoing.

period. Generally, in those localities where ChangeUp and other local infrastructure is improving, the results reported will be more favourable than they would have been in March 2008 – and conversely for those areas where the provision of local infrastructure has been getting worse. While this inaccuracy is regrettable, it is unavoidable and we believe that it is likely only to distort our findings to a relatively minor degree. (The responses in relation to the Hubs, however, do not suffer from this problem).

The results outlined here are based on returns received by 14 August 2009. It should be noted that these results are interim in many of the areas, but we do not anticipate that further returns will significantly alter the conclusions drawn from the responses to date.

Over 10,000 surveys were mailed and, at the time of writing this report, 1897 had been returned, giving an overall response rate of 18% (varying from 11% in two localities to 28%)⁴¹. A number of organisations (125) returned the survey, or emailed, indicating that they did not feel the survey was relevant for them either because of the nature of their organisation (too small, not third sector etc.) or because of the nature of the questions and the fact that the organisation does not seek support of any kind. This latter factor flags up the possibility that the survey is systematically over-representative of those organisations which have accessed support. This means that the responses may be more favourable (e.g. in relation to the number of TSOs which have accessed support, which are satisfied with the support received, or which are positive about the contribution made to their success by local statutory bodies) than a random sample of TSOs would be. Such a bias is especially likely in those areas where low returns have been made). It has not been possible to eliminate this potential bias, so it should be borne in mind when interpreting the survey results.

The questionnaire dealt with organisational support needs, exploring types of support that have been accessed during the past year and potential support needs anticipated during the next.

The questionnaire asked organisations to identify organisations providing support and respondents were asked to indicate awareness of specific support organisations operating in their area, and to rate these organisations in terms of ease of access and satisfaction. The organisations that were listed for this question differed for each of the localities, and in each case the list of organisations was agreed with a lead consortium member.

The survey also explored awareness of and satisfaction with local statutory bodies, the six national Hubs and other national provision, including industry specific (e.g. Help the Aged) and more general organisations (e.g. NAVCA/NCVO/ACEVO), in order to provide an overall picture of demand and supply for frontline organisations.

In order to understand the qualities of support services that are particularly valuable to frontline organisations, respondents were also asked to rate the importance of several factors that might be considered when choosing a support organisation to approach. Respondents were asked to indicate overall satisfaction with the support available in

⁴¹ At the time of writing survey responses were still being returned, and we would expect final response rates to be somewhat higher than those reported here.

their locality and whether they had perceived any change in the quality of local support services.

The last section of the survey contained several questions taken directly from the National Survey of Third Sector Organisations (NSTSO), in order to allow comparison between the two surveys.

The final section of the survey provided a profile of respondent organisations. Respondents were asked about clients and beneficiaries, areas in which they work and roles they undertake, number of workers in the organisation and the amount and types of income received. These questions are taken directly from NSTSO and were included to ensure that respondent organisations are classified in the same way across the two surveys, in order to improve the reliability of any comparisons that are drawn.

6.3.2 Summary of key survey results

There is great diversity in the responses across all the localities, as expected, but a number of patterns do emerge.

Accessing support. Across our localities, the lowest proportion of TSOs which mention any source of support being accessed is 47% (localities 11 and 3) and the highest is 81% (locality 6). This suggests that there is high level of activity in seeking support. It indicates not only the need for support but also the large volume of support which is available to third sector organisations – this support is big business.

Gaps in support. Across our localities, between 11% and 28% of TSOs attempted to access support but were unable to find it, indicating a gap in the availability of this type of support in that area. This suggests that there is still a significant level of unmet need in the third sector for support. While this is true in all localities, it is particularly acute in a number of places – in our study over a fifth of TSOs in six of the localities reported that they suffered an inability to get the support they needed at least once during the past 12 months. In relation to particular kinds of support for which gaps exist, the most important gap appears to be in 'raising funds and income' – 10% or more of respondents mentioned this gap in five of our localities. No other area of support exhibited a gap for as many as 10% of respondents, other than 10% of respondents in locality 6 who mentioned a gap in relation to support for marketing, PR and image. In general, the gaps were sufficiently small to suggest that they could be met by relatively modest increases in provision in each area. However, some gaps were sufficiently large to suggest that they would be rather difficult to fill – for example, the gap of 7% in locality 10 in relation to equalities and diversity, given that only 4% had actually accessed such support in the last 12 months. Similarly, at least half of TSOs looking for support had not been able to find it in this locality in relation to campaigning and advocacy and recruiting trustees; in localities 8 and 9 in relation to finding or managing office space or premises; and in locality 1 in relation to marketing and PR.

Level of satisfaction with support available: Relatively high levels of satisfaction were reported generally – over half of all respondents to this question reported themselves to be satisfied in all localities except locality 5 (where it was 43%). Indeed, it was very high in some places, e.g. in locality 6 it was 65% and in localities 8 and 10 it was 59%. Moreover, the proportion of dissatisfied respondents was generally very

low – as low as 2% in locality 8, although it rose as high as 15% in Locality 1 and 12% in localities 5 and 9. Not surprisingly, over two-thirds of those who were very dissatisfied (and over 60% of those fairly dissatisfied) were TSOs which had attempted to find support in the last 12 months but been unable to find it. Interestingly, the levels of dissatisfaction tended to be highest in localities where high numbers of TSOs had accessed support and where relatively high numbers of TSOs had not been able access the support they had sought (particularly localities 1, 6 and 9) – this suggests that the danger of dissatisfaction is highest where there is a high level of activity, putting pressure on the capacity of the organisations providing support.

How likely to seek support next year. It is fascinating that in most localities a similar number of respondents reported themselves as likely to use support in the next year as reported that they had used support in the past year. This suggests that, far from dealing with what is essentially a backlog of requests, there is a continuing demand for support which is unlikely to dry up in the near future. Indeed, the experience of an area like locality 6, where 81% of TSOs accessed support last year and 82% expect to do so next year, and where there is evidence that the third sector is thriving, suggests that even successful organisations have important support needs. (Going even further, it may perhaps be the case that recognising the value of support is an important characteristic of TSOs which become successful). This thesis is partly backed up by the fact that localities 8 and 11 are particularly low in expecting to access support next year, just as they were in accessing support last year. There are also low scores in localities 3, 4 and 10. However, another possibility is that FLOs become dependent on support, once they have received it. This alternative hypothesis will be tested out in the Formative Evaluation. One intriguing pattern in the responses related to premises – respondents report that they are substantially more likely to seek support in this area next year than last year – across many localities.

Capacity building by TSOs themselves: Given the difficulty of definitively categorising the role/activity of TSOs, the survey included all registered and incorporated organisations in each locality, including those flagged as infrastructure organisations in the source database (which accounted for around 5% of all organisations). Taking this into account, it is interesting to note that TSOs report that they carry out quite a high level of ‘capacity building’ themselves, as high as 18% of respondents in locality 7, 15% in locality 9, 14% in locality 6 and 12% in locality 5 (although it falls to only 2% in locality 8). In addition relatively high proportions in several localities report that TSOs are among their clients/beneficiaries (26% in locality 7, 21% in locality 9, 20% in locality 1 and 17% in locality 6).

This indicates the potential for working with TSOs, both to improve their own approaches to capacity building but also to mobilise it for the benefit of other TSOs where it is potentially valuable.

Awareness and use of hubs: Awareness of the Hubs amongst TSOs ranged from 32% to 7% but differed significantly between the Hubs – it ranged from 65% in the case of the Governance Hub to 25% for the Workforce Hub. Usage of the hubs was, however, quite unusual – only 38 TSOs sampled had sought support from one or more of Hubs and, of these, 30 organisations had received support from one or more of the Hubs (which equates to approximately 2% of all responding organisations).

Important factors in considering which organisation to approach for support:

The factors mentioned basically divide into two groups: those which over 40% of respondents rated as very important – timeliness, expertise in the relevant sector, value for money, offering specialist expertise, free and tailored – and those which were mentioned by only a quarter or less of respondents as very important – offering local support, offering face-to-face support, offering telephone support, or offering online resources.

To what extent are STATUTORY bodies in the area regarded as influencing an organisation's success?:

The responses here ranged from 58% (locality 6) to 17% (locality 4). Perhaps surprisingly, big positives are associated with big negatives – e.g. locality 6 (58% positive but 14% negative) and locality 1 (32% positive but 14% negative) – which may reflect once again that in these areas there has been a surge of activity, arousing very significant interest by TSOs in getting more support, but capacity constraints have meant that a proportion of TSOs have not so far been able to source their requirements.

To what extent are THIRD SECTOR bodies in the area regarded as influencing an organisation's success?:

The responses here ranged from 42% (locality 6) to 15% (localities 10 and 11). In almost all cases this score is lower than the 'statutory bodies' score. (Interestingly, the negatives here are also very small, much lower than is the case for statutory bodies, which perhaps shows that TSOs are much readier to attribute blame for their lack of success to the statutory sector than to other TSOs).

6.4 Short summary of impacts identified in each of the locality case studies

6.4.1 Introduction

In this section, we set out the key findings on impact from each of our locality case studies, prefaced by a brief summary of the context of the ChangeUp programme in that area.

In each case, we summarise the membership and structure, the funding and activities of the consortium, the general impact, the impact on activities and effectiveness on frontline organisations and the impact on activities and effectiveness of infrastructure organisations.

6.4.1.1 Locality case study 1

Membership and structure: This locality study was undertaken in a lead authority whose Consortium covers several other lead authorities. The Consortium was established in summer 2004, in response to the ChangeUp agenda and comprised 19 local infrastructure organisations from the various lead authorities. Of these, only two were based in the locality itself, although other sub-regionally based organisations were and continue to be active there.

From the start, there were tensions around whether organisation and delivery should be based on the various districts or sub-regionally, and between the various CVSSs and the specialist infrastructure bodies. Once it stopped being 'a clearing house for funds', the Consortium lacked strategic direction or focus; members in the area under review felt that nothing tangible was discussed or done for their local region and disengaged.

Members were writing competing bids for ChangeUp and BASIS (Big Lottery Fund programme to support infrastructure) funds. The key change is the move (since late 2008) to district level working and the development of a locality-based infrastructure consortium 'to give members scope to shape things around local needs and context'. This has led to a far more reinvigorated and positive outlook, as well as a more practical and focused approach. They believe that the move to a more devolved structure enables more effective engagement not only with frontline organisations but also public sector agencies through the LAA/LSP. There is a strong sense that ChangeUp is now not about the money, but being in a strong partnership, raising their profile, getting traction with statutory organisations and making an impact on other funders.

Funding and activities of the consortium: Between 2004-6 ChangeUp funded 28 projects at a cost of approximately £1.2m; however only one of these was allocated to a locality-based organisation (provided to a local body for infrastructure support; the organisation is currently in a state of crisis). The other key grant was Improving Reach funding in 2008 to develop and sustain capacity building support services to faith groups and other excluded communities. Whilst other Consortia members were funded by Capacitybuilders to deliver Consortium-wide projects, anecdotal evidence suggests that the impact of such projects in the locality was limited. ChangeUp is a small player in terms of funding to the key local infrastructure organisations or those sub-regional players who are most active in the district.

General Impact: the overall view is that actual ChangeUp money has had little impact: there is a belief that the money has been spent on central administration; in other districts; or by sub-regional bodies on projects which have had negligible impact on the locality itself. There is a feeling that 2004-8 was something of a false start, during which very little was achieved. However, in its district configuration ChangeUp appears already to be making a practical impact: those members who are members of the district consortium are certainly working closer and smarter, although further funding is required for the necessary infrastructure to facilitate this transformation.

Impact on activities and effectiveness of frontline organisations: the Consortium does not know how much of an impact its work has had on frontline organisations because of on-going difficulties in measuring impact and outcomes. However various indicators point to a lack of real impact including: a continued lack of awareness about the provision of support to organisations; repeated anecdotal evidence which suggests that small organisations are not getting off the ground or managing to get through their first few years, due to a lack of infrastructure support; and recurrent concerns about the failure successfully to embed the equalities agenda. However, results from the survey of registered TSOs in the area suggest that there may be a mismatch between the perceptions of the Consortium and that of local organisations, as awareness of local infrastructure organisations amongst TSOs is particularly high (89% of responding organisations are aware of one or more), as is usage (37% received support from at least one in last twelve months). This awareness may be a result of the high profile and impact of the key LIOs, rather than awareness of the ChangeUp consortium and its role per se. However there is convergence with respect to perceptions of a continued gap in provision, with 26% of responding TSOs mentioning a type of support they have been unable to find over the last 12 months, and the

relatively low number of TSOs in the area per 1,000 population (2.1 compared with national average of 3.4) also supports this.

Impact on activities and effectiveness of infrastructure organisations: although this too was until recently negligible, the new district structure has brought with it improved partnership working: more referrals, shared databases, joint marketing events, more joint bid writing – but it is still very early days. However, there are concerns that the district consortium could mean that a premier league of infrastructure bodies develops, closely linked to each other and to statutory partners, leaving the rest ‘outside the loop’ with many still ‘in a dependency mindset’.

6.4.1.2 *Locality case study 2*

Membership and structure: This Consortium formed in 2004 and is built upon an informal structure where local support agencies were working together to deliver against countywide opportunities. The Consortium is relatively small with 7 current members. There is an established terms of reference for the Consortium which limits membership to infrastructure support providers. Membership includes a rural communities charity, an advice network, a young people and families consortium, a volunteer centre, the local REC and traditional voluntary sector support agencies such as CVSs and voluntary and community action structures.

Funding and activities of the consortium: Between 2004 – 2008 the Consortium has received approximately £900,000 and delivered on 21 projects. The original Investment Plan (IIP) focused on a number of specific outcomes. Its original review focused on the sustainability of the existing local infrastructure organisations which resulted in a merger between 2 CVS organisations to ensure financial sustainability and improved service delivery. The activities delivered through the IIP have covered a number of research areas ranging from volunteering, to social enterprise, to BME support needs and to social infrastructure research. Other projects have focused specifically on internal capacity developments such as improvement to facilities, volunteering services, governance, a range of ICT developments (web portal, ICT upgrades, shared database), and workforce development needs.

General impact: Consortium members believe that this funding stream has had a positive and significant impact and changed the shape of infrastructure and the support services delivered within the locality – “Capacitybuilders fund projects that others do not wish to”. During this time organisations have worked together to build standard approaches in the way services are delivered such as a structured volunteering strategy for the locality. Capital funds have helped to develop internal premises and upgrade the ICT systems, whilst the aforementioned merger has realised both efficiencies and service improvements.

Impact on activities and effectiveness of frontline organisations: A number of projects have been commissioned through the IIP which has had a direct impact on frontline organisations for example its early work on good governance where the project worked with local groups to improve governance arrangements or its sustainable funding and funding advice project which supported the development of a funding network for the locality. Capital spend has helped to improve both premises and facilities within the organisations upgrading the facilities used by frontline organisations.

Impact on activities and effectiveness of infrastructure organisations: The consortium reports an improvement in strategic awareness and partnership working. There has been a significant change in the way that infrastructure services are delivered particularly around volunteering where there has been an increase in available monies and as such both opening hours and numbers of volunteers managed within the locality have increased dramatically.

The consortium is working closely with local government to establish new ways of working following the change to new unitary authorities in the county. The creation of a web portal for the work of the consortium has helped to lift awareness of its work to both frontline organisations and statutory partners.

6.4.1.3 *Locality case study 3*

Membership and structure: The Consortium was established in 2003. Initially comprising mainly CVSs and volunteer centres, it has since broadened its membership and brought in specialist LIOs – it allowed organisations themselves to define whether or not they were LIOs, helping to keep the membership broad. At present, eight CVS, four volunteer centres and 13 specialist organisations are represented. Prior to ChangeUp, a number of LIOs had been meeting across the locality but there had been some resistance to any county-wide partnership not least because of the geography of the region, something that many stated was a significant factor in working together. It was only after ChangeUp funding became available then that the notion became more feasible.

Funding and activities of the consortium: The geography of the locality has continued to present challenges. In 2004, the Consortium undertook research into local needs and produced an Infrastructure Investment Plans (IIP) that identified 25 projects in total. With all the projects being approved, the Consortium received a total investment of approximately £740,000.

General impact: most interviewees felt that ChangeUp had brought about some change in the region. In particular, ChangeUp had given TSOs a reason to work together more closely, form partnerships and achieve improved standing, particularly with the county council. However, there is little hard evidence, as yet, on whether ChangeUp has had an impact on the welfare of citizens and service users. As one Consortium member put it, to locate the evidence of how ChangeUp impacted on real people “you’re following a very long thread”. However, some of those interviewed said that, through the impact made on FLOs and LIOs, this had to have some knock on effect on citizens and service users.

Impact on activities and effectiveness of frontline organisations: For FLOs, both in terms of their activity and effectiveness, there was a view across the Consortium that ChangeUp had impacted on FLOs. What this impact looked like however was not always agreed. For some, this was evidenced through a greater awareness of infrastructure support available, especially what LIOs are there for and what they have to offer. Some also suggested that FLOs were afforded greater opportunities to influence strategic development.

However the quantitative survey of registered and incorporated FLOs in the area suggests there is still some way to go in this respect, as a lower proportion of TSOs

than in other localities report accessing any support in the last 12 months (47%) and one in seven identify a gap in support provision.

Impact on activities and effectiveness of infrastructure organisations: Here, a rather wider impact from ChangeUp was evidenced. Many respondents believed that working relationships within and across the third sector had been improved and strengthened. Through the investment of funds, partly through the Consortium, the third sector had also become more professional, leading to greater standing with the statutory sector. However, whilst there was agreement that relations with a district council had significantly improved, some consortium members felt that this had been to the detriment of working with other local authorities. Disappointingly, working with other statutory sector partners in the region had not improved, and this is echoed by findings from the NSTSO, which identified relatively low levels of contract funding from both local and national statutory bodies.

At county level, the Consortium is becoming increasingly active in engagement and consultation across a range of issues relevant to the wider third sector. One major success was its advocacy and lobbying role in relation to the LAA targets which led to the inclusion of NI7 rather than NI6.

Future funding remains a serious concern for most LIOs in the region. One CVS has recently had to close but few respondents wanted to acknowledge, let alone engage with, the spectre of merger. The recent change of political leadership after more than 20 years of control has also brought some uncertainty for the sector.

6.4.1.4 *Locality case study 4*

Membership and structure: This Consortium was created in 2005 to support the development of a County-wide strategy for co-ordinating and planning VCS infrastructure services to support the third sector. Membership of the Consortium is open to voluntary and community sector organisations whose purpose includes the provision of infrastructure support services to frontline VCS organisations. The current membership involves CVS organisations, specialist infrastructure providers or networks, front line organisations and also significant representation from the statutory sectors. It has had the same accountable body since its formation but has recently moved from a rotating Chair structure to a fixed Chair position. The Consortium has a dedicated co-ordinator to support the work programme.

Funding and activities of the consortium: By the end of financial year 2008 this Consortium had received approximately £325,000 through ChangeUp project funding. In total 18 projects were commissioned, in addition to CDG funding. The majority of spend to date has focused on generic infrastructure services and improving partnership working between CVS providers in the County. This has created some tensions from specialist providers who feel that they have not been able to develop their services to the same level as the CVS partnership. This Consortium also benefited from approximately £80,000 of capital spend monies for improvements to local premises.

General impact: The Consortium has five key aims which are focused upon; improving infrastructure support, communication of support and feedback mechanisms to and with the local third sector, raising quality standards, ensuring

appropriateness of support across sub sectors and to raise the profile of the VCS, strengthening its voice in local partnership and decision-making structures. The Consortium is able to demonstrate solid links with other structures across the county. Since 2005 the nature of infrastructure support particularly around partnership working of the local CVSs has significantly changed to improve sustainability and service coverage.

Impact on activities and effectiveness of frontline organisations: Interviewees from this locality believe that progress has been made but this seems to be limited to generic infrastructure support services which are predominantly delivered through the CVS partnership, volunteering and improved representation structures. Whilst there has been some progress made in specialist infrastructure areas, this has tended to be limited and has not yet significantly improved these structures, but these issues are not only limited to ChangeUp funding. However, there are now signs of specialist BME and Social Care structures forming to increase their voice and engagement in developing areas.

Impact on activities and effectiveness of infrastructure organisations: The most significant change in this programme of work has been around the CVS partnership. An initial scoping exercise for the IIP highlighted issues around sustainability and during this time CVSs in the County have reduced from 5 to 3 to improve sustainability and overall provision to secure the aims of the IIP. An annual event is now held inviting local frontline organisations showcasing the services offered, networks and representation structures for the County. Concerns have been expressed around the future of the Consortium with particular emphasis around future funding streams to co-ordinate this programme of work.

6.4.1.5 Locality case study 5

Membership and structure: The Consortium was founded after the announcement in 2004 of the national ChangeUp programme. The original group was formed from local infrastructure organisations and nine other major third sector infrastructure providers in the area. Shortly afterwards the CVS closed, after a rather chequered history, and a new CVS has only recently been put in place (with funding from the BIG LOTTERY). This left a huge gap in organisational arrangements for the voluntary sector in the area. The Consortium has therefore not only had to make do without the kind of help which other ChangeUp consortia could expect from the CVS in their area but it has, indeed, had to play part of the CVS role itself, without local authority funding for this work. The consortium now consists of 15 infrastructure organisations. These range from organisations with a regional or sub-regional role, through locality-wide organisations to small local organisations with some infrastructure role.

Funding and activities of the consortium: The consortium has been active but believes it has been hamstrung by lack of funding (although this was £60,000 in 2005-6, and matched neighbouring Consortia in the early rounds of funding). Members of the Consortium argued that the regional and sub-regional structure of ChangeUp has meant that not enough funding had reached the local level (and that the funding of a sub-regional network has not produced value for money). Spend has mainly been on HR training, finance training and workshops on seeking funding. There is still a great need for finance/funding related training. Most of the organisations in the Consortium

do not believe that there has been a significant increase in their funding base over the past four years, although some have benefited from some project funding which has helped them to develop and may lead in time to other funding streams e.g. from the BIG Lottery. There was a general feeling that experience with the BIG Lottery had been better than with ChangeUp – it has been easier to work with, less bureaucratic in its systems and more likely to fund project applications. On the other hand, it is also recognised that, by its very nature, it cannot be so sensitive to local need as the ChangeUp programme ought to be.

General impact: No evidence is available on impacts on citizens and service users. There is evidence of increased activity and improved effectiveness at the level of LIOs in the locality, but no evidence is available of the impacts of this on FLOs.

Impact on activities and effectiveness of frontline organisations: Consortium members believe that frontline organisations have been able to find support for their needs more quickly than before and that a higher proportion of support services have been provided by local suppliers than previously. However TSOs in our survey report relatively low levels of satisfaction with the support available (43%), and the NSTSO survey also reveals concerns from TSOs over income and reserves, and relatively low success in bidding for contracts with local and national statutory bodies.

Impact on activities and effectiveness of infrastructure organisations: By taking a strategic view of collaboration, the Consortium has been able to respond to local needs, while focusing on strategic priorities for the locality. Local infrastructure organisations in the area are now much better networked with each other and are more able to make use of each others' expertise. However, one indicator of potential ineffectiveness is given by the closure in the last year of a number of important local organisations due to lack of funding. The Consortium has been unable to save them from closure, although they will leave a serious gap in provision of infrastructure services locally. Of course, no funding programme can 'save' all organisations which it might wish to support – and some of these organisations may not deserve to be saved. However, it is a concern when so many organisations which are believed to be important to the local infrastructure base cannot be helped by a programme which is meant to have a strategic impact on third sector capacity in an area.

6.4.1.6 *Locality case study 6*

Membership and structure: This locality is a lead authority which is covered by a Consortium which also covers other lead authority areas. The Consortium was formed in 2004, and was built upon an existing network of CVSs working in the wider area. The Consortium sought to focus solely on being comprised of infrastructure organisations, in line with the push from Government Offices at that time for consortia to include only LIOs. The original Consortium was therefore formed with 14 organisations, and this expanded to 18 with the inclusion of organisations that had been supported in developing their infrastructure capabilities. It is important to note that this locality is somewhat anomalous to other Consortium members as it has strong links to two different sub regions.

Funding and activities of the Consortium: The Consortium has received around £2 million through ChangeUp over the past four years. Most of this funding has been

directed at cross Consortium activities with over 40 projects being supported. The locality itself has been the lead organisation for a training toolkit project and received £32,500 for this activity. It also received £25,000 direct funding in conjunction with another CVS as part of a separate project. On a wider level, Consortium members are positive that funding has been distributed equitably and appropriately. Additionally, over £300,000 was allocated to a joint racial equality project involving the locality as part of the Improving Reach programme.

General impact: The Consortium believes that ChangeUp has had a very strong and positive effect on the members of the Consortium and on the local third sector. Key benefits include an increase in strategic thinking by Consortium members with better targeting of activity on areas of greatest disadvantage. Additionally it is widely felt that the development of sub-regional third sector representation on such a scale would not have happened without ChangeUp.

Survey results and NSTSO strongly support this view, with strong responses across the board in relation to third sector and statutory support, and high levels of engagement with LIOs (also true for under the radar organisations). TSOs' reported links with local statutory bodies are highest here (49% have received support from the council and 17% from the PCT), as is NI7 (22%).

Impact on activities and effectiveness of frontline organisations: The Consortium believes that impact on frontline organisations is occurring due to ChangeUp, but measuring and assessing this impact is still in its early stages. Respondents report that frontline organisations have benefited through gaining better visibility amongst PCT commissioners, and through being able to access more organisations in the health sector.

Impact on activities and effectiveness of infrastructure organisations: Members of the Consortium foresee the sustainability of future funding as being the main challenge in the near future. Consortium members feel that they are well prepared for this, with the locality infrastructure body being particularly prepared for the challenges since it has had limited funding from local government in the past so has not come to rely on it. This body's partnership work with the PCT is felt to be a move in the right direction in securing sustainable funding for the third sector, and it reports that being part of the ChangeUp Consortium has contributed to this state of readiness. Furthermore, discussions about merging with another CVS are ongoing and the locality body is open to this possibility. Overall the Consortium sees itself as having developed an important, effective and productive role and expects the partnership to survive but is uncertain as to whether particular lines of development will be viable in the future.

6.4.1.7 Locality case study 7

Membership and structure: The Consortium has 19 members, about 10 of whom are seen as active by the chair. The Consortium originated in the Compact Consortium, where there was 50% representation of the local authority. It seemed sensible to form a ChangeUp and Compact Consortium, as there was better attendance for Compact meetings than for ChangeUp and the ChangeUp issues potentially brought in more strategic issues (and senior people). Now the Consortium

is also taking the lead in the LSP/LAA sub-theme of Social and Economic Development.

Funding and activities of the consortium: The Consortium benefited from the same annual budget as other consortia in the region in the early rounds of ChangeUp, but one organisation in the Consortium received a number of substantial grants over and above this from ChangeUp. A number of LIOs based in the locality have received funding under the Capital Investment and Improving Reach Programmes. However, the Consortium does not monitor nor attempt to incorporate these projects in its strategy.

General impact: There is a strong feeling that the ChangeUp agenda is being led by the Compact, with very strong council influence and weaker influence from the local third sector. There is no direct or indirect evidence of impact on service users and citizens (the locality has high levels of deprivation and is very diverse). Key Consortium members argue strongly that ChangeUp is an overly bureaucratic mechanism and that the national and regional set up “is not cost-effective and consumes vast amounts of time” – they accept that some co-ordination from above is needed but “there are an awful lot of regional working groups”. The role of Improving Reach is not well understood – one senior member of the Consortium commented that it has “some capacity building element”, while another said that it was potentially much more effective than ChangeUp.

Impact on activities and effectiveness of frontline organisations: Consortium members believe there is now an improved ability of some small TSOs to bid for contracts and even for grant aid – but not always actually to deliver services or undertake activities. Some have argued that there has been too much emphasis on the underlying ‘strength of the organisation’, when many small TSOs are basically just as strong as the main project they are currently undertaking. There has been some improvement in networking of BME TSOs in the area.

The survey of TSOs in the area largely supports this: while levels of accessing support are relatively high (77%), a relatively high proportion also identify gaps in support provision (27%), and relatively low levels indicate satisfaction with the support available (50%). However, data from the NSTSO does support the fact that TSOs in this locality are more likely to be the recipients of national statutory grant and contract funding, and to be more satisfied with national statutory funding arrangements.

Impact on activities and effectiveness of infrastructure organisations: Consortium members were already working with each other on the Compact, so ChangeUp did not initiate partnership working. However, the ChangeUp funding has allowed a wider range of joint initiatives. ChangeUp has had some positive impacts helping to put a lot more energy into the Consortium, which is much more effective now. Indeed, the council now funds some of its community development work through the Consortium rather than in-house. It also sees ChangeUp as a key element in delivery of some LAA targets, so has recently been more interested and focused in working with TSOs. Furthermore, the major BIG Lottery project on improving community use of premises came out of discussions in the ChangeUp consortium. Improving Reach has already led to improved level and quality of training for the one particular Forum, stimulated new ideas and improved interactions with high level council officers. However, there is some concern that some of the larger LIOs are in

the Consortium mainly for what they can get out of it and not really working closely together or trying to roll out the learning to other TSOs. Moreover, the Consortium has not brought in the capacity building resources which are available in the local NHS.

6.4.1.8 *Locality case study 8*

Membership and structure: The Consortium was formed in 2003/04. The impetus to organise into a Consortium was generated by the Government Office who met with prospective Consortium members and advised them of ChangeUp opportunities. At that time, there was the prospect of a county-wide Consortium involving all the infrastructure organisations in rural and urban areas. However, after discussion, it was mutually agreed that the most natural Consortium was a 'conurbation' one. The Consortium thus formed regards itself as relatively simple (just three organisations) and with a relatively tight urbanised area on which to concentrate its efforts. From the outset the relationship between the CVSs involved worked well, based on existing good relationships. However, because of personality issues, the contribution from the third member was limited. This has since been resolved with a change of leadership at the organisation in question.

A staff member from one of the CVS was seconded to prepare the Business Plan/Strategy (using this work to develop that individual's own skills and capacity). The Plan/Strategy exercise ran into deadlines and was also regarded as a heavily bureaucratic, top-down exercise driven towards a standard format by Capacitybuilders. The resulting Plan/Strategy was consequently regarded as a necessary 'hoop to be jumped through', rather than as a template for action – 'a business plan too far'. Subsequently, it is recognised that Capacitybuilders have adopted a more practical and flexible procedure and the Consortium now has a work plan which has been agreed with Capacitybuilders and which is regarded as a much more sensible basis for programming the Consortium's activities.

Funding and activities of the Consortium: The two main members of the Consortium received total income of c. £650,000 for the current financial year. Of this around half derived from the two Unitary Authorities, around 10% from the local Primary Care Trust, around a fifth from Capacitybuilders, with the remainder deriving from other sources including BASIS, fees and charges, etc

Key activities of the Consortium include: a focus on support to local social welfare functions (for the elderly, special needs, young people, and others); maintenance of an active volunteering centre; maintenance of a team of funding advisors and organisational development specialists; development of the third sector's capacity to represent itself effectively on key local boards and committees; development of the capacity of the local third sector to respond to service procurement opportunities.

General impact: The Consortium believes that Capacitybuilders has had a very strong and positive effect on the members of the Consortium. Key benefits include a mix of practical and 'philosophical' ones:

- An increase in strategic thinking by Consortium members with better targeting of activity on areas of greatest disadvantage.
- An increase in performance management with increased focus on getting feedback from frontline organisations and (eventually) from their clients.

- Increasing recognition of need to market services.
- A better balance of activity – recognition of who (within the Consortium) can best do particular activities and perform particular roles.
- The development of a volunteer centre which wouldn't exist without Capacitybuilders.
- The development of local third sector representation which wouldn't have happened without Capacitybuilders.
- The development of an internal infrastructure within the Consortium which wouldn't exist without Capacitybuilders funding and impetus.
- Increased expertise in responding to commissioning/procuring opportunities is now present and is being spread outwards to frontline organisations.
- Increased efficiency in use of resources as a result of Consortium formation and development.
- Generally an increased professionalism in members' approach to the third sector's role with a growing awareness of commercial opportunities and of the need to become commercially-minded in the face of anticipated constraint on public budgets.

Impact on frontline organisations: The Consortium is aware that its knowledge of impact on frontline organisations is quite limited and anecdotal. It infers that its work to extend volunteering, build representative capacity, link frontline organisations to procurement opportunities, and so on, is beneficial. Evidence available to this case study included positive feedback from frontline organisations to Consortium-organised events, newsletters, and an e-forum and some positive testimonial evidence. However, this evidence is clearly patchy and, while indicating positive Consortium performance, does not link directly in a one-to-one relationship to ChangeUp funding.

Impact on activities and effectiveness of infrastructure organisations: There are no local infrastructure organisations in the area other than the Consortium members. These members, however, hold a strong view that Capacitybuilders funding has been critical in building a much stronger partnership between members than existed hitherto with good relationships between members, formalised planning, better information systems, and shared funding of programmes and projects. In general, the Consortium partners see themselves as more able to approach their functions in a strategic, professional manner and, thus, able to interface more effectively with statutory agencies and frontline organisations.

6.4.1.9 *Locality case study 9*

Membership and structure: This Consortium formed in 2004 creating a new structure. Upon formation the Consortium decided to include both statutory partners and key front line agencies within their structure. The Consortium consists of 12 organisations; 1 CVS, 1 Volunteer Centre, 1 REC, 1 Faith Group, 1 business community partnership organisation, 5 frontline organisations and 3 members from the statutory sector (x1 PCT and x2 Borough Council representatives).

Funding and activities of the Consortium: Between 2004 – 2008 the Consortium has received approximately £250,000 with the majority of its spend post the original IIP development spend focusing upon two core functions, a ChangeUp Co-ordinator and a

Partnership and Participation worker. Both posts have delivered across the key priority areas for this locality. The key areas of focus for the Consortium have been Development Support for Small Groups, a Third Sector Resource Centre, Volunteering, BME support and engagement, ICT and Procurement.

General impact: With relatively limited funds the Consortium is on the cusp of making transformational change for the local third sector. It has a committed budget of £2.1m for a dedicated Third Sector Resource Centre and is working hard to bring these plans to fruition. The Consortium believes that ChangeUp funding has allowed for a sustained approach to key issues facing the Sector in the locality; and, whilst slow, change will happen. It has also secured 80% funding from the Council for the Partnership and Participation worker when ChangeUp funding ceased thus ensuring that the improved capacity for development work can be maintained within the local CVS.

Impact on activities and effectiveness of frontline organisations: The Consortium carried out a BME research project in its early days and has worked hard to mainstream activities to support new and newly settled groups in the community through its Partnership and Participation worker post and work with other community groups. It has also created an innovative HR support solution for local groups by contracting the services of a local frontline organisation which has a dedicated HR post; thus improving service provision. A number of events have been held with the local sector to inform them of their priority areas and overall plans for voluntary sector infrastructure, this is perceived to have increased the awareness of support services in the locality.

Results from the survey of TSOs in the area certainly support this perception: there is a high level of awareness of local infrastructure organisations (73%) and a high level of accessing support generally (67%), and from local infrastructure organisations specifically (55%). In addition, the NSTSO highlights a relatively high proportion of TSOs who report satisfaction with the support to work with other TSOs to influence local decisions, who report receiving support from other TSOs in the area, and who report satisfaction with the support available from TSOs.

Impact on activities and effectiveness of infrastructure organisations: With a relatively small budget it is difficult to deliver transformational change, but this could potentially happen here. Consortium members do not believe that they would have travelled so far without the funding of a dedicated worker to keep a focus on the strategic plan and forge internal and external relationships and dialogues around change, particularly the case for the Resource Centre.

It has been difficult to find a cost effective solution for ICT services and as such the Consortium is now working at a regional level.

There have been significant organisational changes at the Council which has resulted in the need to re-establish relationships. PCT engagement is reported as being limited. However, the sector is represented on the LSP through the CVS and is looking to improve relationships and reach across the wider sector. In addition, the NSTSO identifies a higher proportion of TSOs in this locality than in most other localities who report contact with local statutory bodies

6.4.1.10 Locality case study 10

Consortium membership, structure and geographical coverage: This locality is a unitary authority which is covered by a Consortium which covers other lead authority areas within the sub-region. The membership until recently was based on one “primary” local infrastructure organisation (LIO) representing each unitary authority plus the Rural Community Council and a sub-regional umbrella body. There is a relatively new primary LIO in the locality, which is the successor body to a previous organisation which was wound up because it lost the support of key stakeholders when it started to compete with other LIOs for funding.

Whilst the new primary LIO was being established the locality was represented on the sub-regional Consortium by another LIO. The new primary LIO’s remit is focused on being a “strategic” body – coordinating the activities of other LIOs, representing their collective interests, and identifying new opportunities. The locality is a relatively “junior” member of the Consortium – which is the product of not only geography, history and scale but also the problems with the previous LIO and the recent emergence of the new primary LIO. The Consortium is dominated by the larger unitary authorities. Capacity building activities in the locality are delivered by a range of LIOs, however, currently there is no volunteer bureau and a local hospice has fulfilled the role of promoting volunteering.

Funding and activities of the consortium: The new primary LIO has three years core funding from the local authority and currently does not have a direct funding relationship with ChangeUp / Capacitybuilders. With reference to the period 2006 to 2008, funding applications coordinated through the consortium were not successful and the locality did not receive designated funding from sub-regional funds – with the locality only benefiting via sub-region wide activities. A recent BASIS funding application has however been successful.

A sub-regional infrastructure Investment Plan and Infrastructure Mapping Research were developed in 2004. An evaluation of ChangeUp activities was completed in 2008. Although this evaluation concluded that key aspects of the plan had been delivered, with reference to the locality itself it noted that “organisations that were suffering operational problems were not ‘fixed’ by their inclusion in the ChangeUp programme”. The evaluation also identified a number of other areas where the infrastructure consortium had not provided a strategic lead. Firstly, there had been little sharing of information and best practice across the sub-region suggesting that the primary LIOs focus was almost exclusively on their own areas. Secondly, no baseline measures for local infrastructure activities had been established. The Consortium has addressed these issues in the plan through to 2011.

The timing of the failure of the previous LIO meant that the locality did not feature in this evaluation of ChangeUp. However, some of the findings from other localities resonated with the experience of this locality particularly in relation to the absence of a volunteer bureau and the lack of peer support.

General impact: The failure of the earlier LIO means that it is difficult to assess the overall impact of ChangeUp in the locality between 2004 and 2008. No cases of positive impact or catalysis were identified. However, the failure of this LIO and the absence of an agency to promote volunteering suggest that the local infrastructure

during this period was not fit for purpose and that the ChangeUp Consortium had not been able to intervene and prevent such problems. These failures have now been addressed with the establishment of the new primary LIO and a sub-regional programme to promote and support volunteering through a volunteering brokerage scheme.

Impact on activities and effectiveness of frontline organisations: The survey of TSOs in the area corresponds with these findings, with low levels accessing support generally (48% accessed any support in last 12 months), a relatively high proportion identifying gaps in support (23%), low level of awareness of local infrastructure organisations, and very low levels of usage of LIOs (9%).

Nevertheless, the economic analysis shows that the overall performance of frontline organisations between 2004 and 2008 was good and doesn't seem to have been adversely affected by the problems with the local infrastructure.

Impact on activities and effectiveness of infrastructure organisations: The underlying delivery network of local support and advice seems robust and has survived a very difficult period. No cases of positive impact or catalysis were identified. The creation of a primary LIO with core funding from the local authority will provide the basis for assessing the impact of ChangeUp during the period of the formative evaluation.

6.4.1.11 Locality case study 11

Membership and structure: The Consortium consists of 12 infrastructure organisations and was specifically developed to meet and administer the needs of the ChangeUp programme. The Consortium's membership ranges from large countywide agencies such, to medium and small size infrastructure organisations delivering with either a District or specialist focus. Whilst the Consortium was specifically created for ChangeUp it formalised a regular meeting structure for local Development Agencies in the county.

Funding and activities of the Consortium: From the period 2004-2008 the Consortium has delivered against 41 projects, 23 have been led by the Accountable body. The total budgeted spend for this period is approximately £1m with the majority of spend (c. £900k) through revenue projects. Projects were organised around a number of strategic themes; performance management, representation and advocacy, partnership working, research and mapping, ICT, Volunteering and Community Development.

General impact: This is a comprehensive suite of projects covering a wide range of themes and organisational structures. Much of the Consortium's early focus was around creating a 'shared standard' around support services within the Sector. The LIO set is quite disparate ranging from large countywide organisations with formalised systems, structures and procedures to small District LIOs with 1 or 2 part time staff. To this end much of the early work focused on creating common support systems and services and upgrading ICT developments. It is universally accepted that without ChangeUp funding (and the structures it has created) much of this work would not have happened.

Impact on activities and effectiveness of frontline organisations: Smaller LIOs have benefited from a number of immediate areas; upgrading IT systems, introducing websites and mapping specific needs of organisations in their locality. This is believed to have improved the potential visibility and reach to frontline organisations; but has created tensions within the Consortium set. In addition a number of structured community events have occurred promoting the work of the Consortium; such as its Volunteering events. The introduction of a County wide Volunteering Strategy has created a universal approach to Volunteering and has improved the numbers of volunteering placements in the County. Other projects have focused on thematic or specialist areas and have worked with groups in their localities, seeking to improve skills and the awareness (and use of) support available.

However, the results from the quantitative survey of registered TSOs are not entirely consonant with this belief that visibility and reach have improved: less than half of responding organisations report having accessed any support in the last 12 months, just over half are aware of a local infrastructure organisation, and only half report satisfaction with the support available to them. The NSTSO further supports this, with low levels who report receiving support from other TSOs in the area, and who report satisfaction with the support available from TSOs.

Impact on activities and effectiveness of infrastructure organisations: For many of the smaller infrastructure organisations the programme of work through ChangeUp has helped to improve internal ICT arrangements and provided an internal focus on the ways of working. Representation and engagement structures have been reviewed with a reported improvement in structures for stakeholder partnership dialogue and representation – this was supported by training and induction programmes. A frustration for this Consortium has been the inability to continue some of its research areas particularly around BME services, where initial research has identified need but funding has not been secured.

6.4.1.12 Locality case study 12

Membership and structure: This locality is a lead authority which is covered by a Consortium which also covers other areas. The Consortium is made up 18 infrastructure organisations in the sub-region, three of which are based in the locality. Consortium members began meeting informally in 2003, which provided the catalyst to organise into a Consortium in response to the opportunities presented through the ChangeUp programme. The Consortium sought to focus solely on being comprised of infrastructure organisations since this reflected the aims of the ChangeUp programme, plus the number of infrastructure organisations was already substantial. It should be noted that the majority of the Consortium members are based in rural and semi-rural districts, and that this locality is quite distinct from the other Consortium members both geographically and economically, hence its CVS operates in a much different context to the rest of the partners. However, the locality's CVS still plays a very active role in the Consortium.

Funding and activities of the Consortium: The Consortium has received over £1 million through ChangeUp over the past four years. A significant amount of this funding was for capital programmes with the locality receiving over £300,000 to redevelop its Volunteer Centre. This funding was identified as being instrumental in enabling the

locality's CVS to accelerate its capital building plans. Other funding has been at a Consortium level, funding over 20 projects, so it is difficult to disaggregate the amount of funding that the locality benefited from as a whole through being part of the programme. There is still a gap in funding BME infrastructure activity in the locality.

General impact: The Consortium believes that ChangeUp has had a generally positive effect on the members of the Consortium and on the local third sector, although there is still development work to be done with BME representation. Some benefits include an increase in strategic thinking by Consortium members, although this has taken some time to arrive at, and the beginnings of the development of sub-regional third sector representation on such a scale which would not have happened without ChangeUp.

Impact on activities and effectiveness of frontline organisations: The Consortium believes that impact on frontline organisations is occurring due to ChangeUp, but measuring and assessing this impact is still in its early stages. Moreover, it believes that frontline organisations would not be aware of ChangeUp nor should they be. Impacts discussed were for the Consortium as a whole as well as within the locality itself. They report that ChangeUp has enabled more support for organisations with accessing funding, and for developing more volunteers.

Impact on activities and effectiveness of infrastructure organisations: From a locality-specific perspective, respondents are mixed in their views about how ChangeUp has impacted on activities and effectiveness of infrastructure organisations. The capital funding has had a significant impact on the CVS's capacity to provide services to frontline organisations, users and the community. However there is a sense that momentum has been lost as funding in the later stages of the programme reduces, and that there needs to be a more concerted focus on developing the capacity of BME infrastructure organisations within the Consortium.

6.5 Overview of results

Consortium information	Locality 1	Locality 2	Locality 3	Locality 4	Locality 5	Locality 6	Locality 7	Locality 8	Locality 9	Locality 10	Locality 11	Locality 12
IO and LIO matrix position	LL	HM	LM	LM	LL	LH	HM	HL	HL	LH	HH	HH
Number of members	19	7	25	12	15	18	19	3	12	7 (1 in locality)	12	18 (3 in locality)
Number of local authorities	1	2	10	6	1	6	1	2	1	5	7	7
Two tier/single tier	Single, now effectively 2	Two (historically)	Two	Two	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Two	Single
Does Consortium cover wider geography	✓					✓		✓		✓		✓
Population	225,900	410,700	762,100	509,900	222,900	119,800	190,900	138,800	121,200	191,900	557,600	195,400
Number of third sector organisations	465	1,441	2,154	2,153	783	213	1,763	346	226	357	1,887	727
Spend of frontline organisations	£33.9m	£275m	£218m	£259m	£95.4m	£115m	£1,166m	£181m	£21.5m	£88.5m	£200m	£190m
Spend of infrastructure organisations	£2.53m	£4.81m	£5.61m	£10.3m	£3.9m	£1.46m	£10.1m	£0.268m	£0.783m	£0.005m	£4.27m	£5.44m
Number of TSOs per 1,000 population	2.1	3.6	2.9	4.3	3.4	1.8	9.7	2.5	1.9	1.9	3.4	3.9
2004-8 ChangeUp funding	£1.2m (£68k to locality-based)	£900k	£739k		£19k	£2m (£57k to locality-based)	£61k	£130k p.a.	£253k	Not known	£1m	£1m
Improving Reach	£312k					£411k	£297k					
Formation of consortium	In response to CU	In response to CU (based on existing informal structure)	Previously existed	In response to CU	In response to CU	In response to CU (based on existing structure)	In response to CU (based on Compact Consortium)	In response to CU	In response to CU	In response to CU	In response to CU	In response to CU (based on existing informal structure)
Membership evolved	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓		✓

Research Findings

Consortium information	Locality 1	Locality 2	Locality 3	Locality 4	Locality 5	Locality 6	Locality 7	Locality 8	Locality 9	Locality 10	Locality 11	Locality 12
Involve local authority rep	Yes - locally				✓		✓		✓			
Involve PCT rep					✓		✓		✓			
Involve FLOs					✓				✓			
NI6 in LAA							✓					✓
NI7 in LAA	✓		✓			✓		✓				✓
Quantitative survey												
Accessed any support in last 12 months	63%	na	47%	50%	66%	81%	77%	52%	67%	48%	47%	na
Identified lack of support	26%	na	16%	16%	22%	27%	27%	11%	28%	23%	12%	na
Aware of LIOs	89%	na	63%	63%	60%	76%	63%	63%	73%	42%	54%	na
Sought support from LIOs	39%	na	25%	20%	25%	46%	19%	17%	36%	9%	19%	na
Received support from LIOs	37%	na	27%	23%	18%	47%	23%	20%	55%	9%	22%	na
Satisfied with support available	56%	na	57%	50%	43%	65%	50%	59%	54%	59%	50%	Na
Influence of statutory bodies on success (NI7)	32	na	29	17	34	58	22	28	36	22	22	Na
Influence of TSOs on success	21	na	17	20	23	42	33	18	27	15	15	Na
Qualitative findings												
Relationship with statutory bodies	Good	Good	Mixed	Very good	Improving	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Mixed	Good
Clear strategy for sector	Yes	Yes	?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Consultation ongoing	Yes	Yes
Impact on LIO partnership working	Emerging	Positive	Positive	Positive for generic LIOs, poor for specialist TSOs	Positive	Positive	Mixed	Positive	Positive	Unproven to date	Positive	Positive

ChangeUp Evaluation

	Locality 1	Locality 2	Locality 3	Locality 4	Locality 5	Locality 6	Locality 7	Locality 8	Locality 9	Locality 10	Locality 11	Locality 12
Impact on LIO activity level	Emerging	Positive	Positive	Positive	Positive	Positive	Positive	Positive	Positive	Unproven to date	Positive	Positive
Impact on frontline organisations	Unproven	Believed to be positive	Believed to be positive	Believed to be positive	Believed to be positive	Believed to be positive	Unproven	Unproven	Believed to be positive	Unproven	Unproven	Believed to be positive
Evidence of catalytic effect	?	Yes	?	Yes	No	Yes	Some	?	Yes	No	?	Yes
Overview	View that CU money has had little impact to date. Evidence of mismatch between beliefs of LIOs and local TSOs - the latter report more awareness/use than indicated by qual. High profile/value of individual LIOs, esp CVS, but not consortium as a whole	Belief that CU has had positive and significant impact both in terms of infrastructure and TSOs	Belief that CU has had some impact but levels of accessing support by TSOs is low, and TSOs report issues with local and national statutory contract funding	Significant change around CVS structures	Problems with CVS and a lack of funding cited as limitations, and TSOs do have issues with level of support available, but feeling that there have been improvements re: infrastructure and for TSOs, although not evidenced by survey results.	Survey results and NSTSO results strongly support positive views held in locality - TSOs report high levels of engagement with third sector and statutory support, and high levels of satisfaction.	Belief that CU is being led by the Compact, with very strong council influence, and less so third sector. Also that TSOs more able to bid for contracts and grant aid - TSOs point to national rather than local statutory funding, and identify lack of support locally	Belief that CU has had a strong positive impact on members of Consortium - less clear impact for TSOs, who seem to have less engagement with support generally, and with LIOs specifically	View that CU is on cusp of making transformational for local third sector. Certainly high awareness of LIOs amongst TSOs, and high levels of engagement with support generally, and with LIOs specifically	Recent failures in LIOs have created difficulties, and little belief that CU finding has had an impact - responses from TSOs in the area suggest low levels of engagement with support generally, and with LIOs specifically	Belief that CU funding crucial to development of Consortium, and other LIOs have benefitted, but TSO survey shows low engagement with support generally, and low levels of satisfaction with support available	Belief that CU has had a generally positive impact on members and wider sector, but early days, and feelings of a loss of momentum as funding reduces

7 Impacts

7.1 Types of impacts intended

As outlined in section 3.5, we have assessed the achievement of the impacts which ChangeUp has intended along a chain of potential benefits:

- Impact on effectiveness of overall system of local support through strategic interventions by local consortia;
- Impact on activities and effectiveness of infrastructure organisations;
- Impacts on activities and effectiveness of frontline organisations;
- Impacts on client groups and individuals – ‘service user and citizen’ outcomes.

For the most part, there is little evidence on outcomes, such as quality of life improvements for service users or other citizens, which can be attributed as the result of ChangeUp. This is to be expected, given the general difficulty of measuring outcomes and attributing them to specific policies. This applies particularly to ChangeUp, as none of the management information systems nor evaluation mechanisms set up in ChangeUp have encouraged TSOs to gather this information. Consequently, we do not consider this final link in the impact chain any further in this report.

7.2 Impact on effectiveness of overall system of local support through strategic interventions by consortia

The need for a major effort to improve the infrastructure of the third sector was highlighted clearly by the HM Treasury Cross-Cutting Review in 2002 and ChangeUp was a concerted attempt by central government to address the deficiencies in the third sector identified at that time. The establishment of the ChangeUp consortia across the country has been a major achievement and constitutes the most visible element of ChangeUp. However, the key issue in terms of impact is the extent to which the consortia have actually made a difference through their strategic interventions in the local system of support for TSOs.

Many consortia have spent considerable time on how to organise themselves rather than thinking strategically. This was natural at the beginning, when consortia tended to act as ‘clearing houses for big funding’ (as one interviewee put it), but such behaviour often continued post-2006, even though there was much less funding available. Indeed, some consortia have focused mainly on operational issues, such as developing and monitoring projects, liaising with statutory bodies, and complying with the requirements of Capacitybuilders and other funders rather than developing their strategic thinking and pursuing strategic interventions in the local third sector. And, of course, exogenous factors make it difficult to develop and sustain a strategic role for local consortia which is credible to all stakeholders. Consequently, although many consortia clearly became more functional in operational terms by 2008 (just when they had less money to spend on operational projects), many showed little sign of achieving strategic maturity. This slow pace of change was very frustrating to many consortia members.

For most consortia, the key strategic role has been seen as determining (directly and indirectly) the distribution of capacity building funding, in particular the ChangeUp funding. Central to doing this properly have been determining the baseline of need for support in the local area, monitoring changes over time and mapping the supply system of support available to local TSOs. There were concerns in many consortia that neither they nor the key LIOs represented have the resources necessary to play a strategic role effectively – databases, other information sources, analytical and research capacity, access to relevant evaluations, etc. Some consortia members stressed that consortia would be much more effective if they could provide a knowledge resource (a ‘peer-learning set’, as one interviewee suggested) for senior managers of LIOs – but in most cases they were too embroiled in the ‘day job’ of managing their own organisation to be able to fulfil this role.

When thinking of strategy, most consortia tend to consider only third sector infrastructure suppliers, not other infrastructure suppliers. In particular, few of the consortia have taken seriously the support given to the local third sector by the private sector (e.g. the accountants and banks used by frontline organisations) or by those frontline TSOs (e.g. Age Concern and NCH Action for Children) which also undertake capacity building activities (for example, 6% of frontline TSOs in our survey reported that they undertake capacity building and some have major programmes). Locality 9 is the interesting exception here, as it has explicitly attempted to bring into the Consortium representatives of local business and those local frontline organisations which have a resource for capacity building which is or could be shared with other TSOs.

Geographic considerations have caused some problems in arriving at an agreed strategy for the whole Consortium. In particular, where consortia cross local authority boundaries (either across district councils in two-tier council areas or where sub-regional consortia work across the boundaries of upper-tier authorities), there have been recurring problems of communication and willingness to work in partnership. These problems are not, of course, unique to ChangeUp consortia but rather they mirror existing problems of cross-boundary working, often based on either historical non-cooperation or political differences.

While many consortia have struggled to develop distinctive and relevant local strategies, there is a strong feeling in most consortia that local needs should drive ChangeUp funding rather more than they do currently. ‘Although one Capacitybuilders regional manager stressed to us that most decisions on Capacitybuilders funding were made either at the centre or by local consortia, and few were made at regional or sub-regional level, this point was clearly missed by many members of local consortia, who believed that both regional and sub-regional decision-makers were being given more access to ChangeUp budgets than they had themselves.

7.2.1 Strategy for a sustainable step change

Consortia understood and supported the need for a sustainable infrastructure improvement in their area. Furthermore, most were committed to finding ways of bringing about major improvements, if possible. However, most did not believe that they had yet been able to achieve a sustainable step change through ChangeUp.

Few consortia understand the role of ChangeUp as leveraging ‘step change’ through their strategies, acting as a catalyst to achieve major change in the provision of infrastructure in their area. Furthermore, respondents in a number of localities strongly expressed the view that the funding currently available was insufficient to achieve even a leveraging or catalytic purpose, never mind directly filling unmet need. Others accepted the logic that when funding is limited, a leveraging or catalytic role is likely to be a more cost-effective way of achieving results but they admitted that it had not been the way they had gone about designing and evolving their Consortium strategy.

In some consortia there was a strong feeling that there had been significant strategic failures in local infrastructure provision – consortia had not been able to save key local support organisations when they were under threat, e.g. the community accounting organisation in locality 5, the volunteer bureau in locality 10, one CVS in locality 3 (and soon another). This was also commented on by the NAO in its study, where it found that: “... once this initial ‘seed’ funding ended, some services have not continued. Essentially the same service has been sustained in one Consortium area but ceased in another for want of sufficient funding and income from other sources... Unless other funding or income is available, more services and projects are likely to fail, and there is a risk that the 2014 vision of excellent and *sustainable* nationwide support to the frontline is not achieved.”⁴² While no funding regime can guaranteed funding to all organisations which are regarded as useful – and, of course, some organisations do deserve to fail – a danger signal is evident when a strategic body is unable to secure the future of organisations which it regards as critically important to parts of its strategic programme.

However, when consortia members were pushed to explore the actual and potential catalytic effects of the ChangeUp programme, many examples did come to light. The view was commonly expressed that ChangeUp funding has stabilised and strengthened local infrastructure bodies, although it had not lead to a significant increase in income levels for core activities in the ‘core’ consortia members. This has occurred not only through the direct funding available from ChangeUp but also because the existence of the Consortium and improved partnership working between Consortium members has made it easier to access other funding, e.g. BASIS, on the back of Consortium plans. Indeed, Consortium members in localities 1 and 6 made it clear that they now see the Consortium as a device to lever funds from other (non-ChangeUp) players.

This stabilising effect has not only come through more stable income sources. Again in locality 1, Consortium members saw ChangeUp as way of raising their profile and getting serious attention from statutory partners, by demonstrating that they were “joined-up and clued-up” – in this way, it has been a means to an end (although sometimes a non-ChangeUp end). They saw this as far more important than the ChangeUp funding.

Similar views were expressed in many other consortia, where expressions such as “using the ChangeUp brand to lever money” and “using ChangeUp to open doors” were used.

⁴² *Building the Capacity of the Third Sector*. London: National Audit Office (2009).

Some consortia also pointed out that there is another side to the ‘catalytic’ argument – e.g. in many consortia, some support activities have only been viable or sustainable because they attracted support from other sources, so ChangeUp has often not been the sole catalyst. For example, in locality 7, a particular ChangeUp initiative to support local FLOs to achieve ‘quality badges’ was only possible because a major LAA initiative was already working with a large group of FLOs on a quality management programme. This mutually reinforcing approach, where initiatives from different funders are more cost-effective when undertaken together, is indeed part of a ‘catalytic’ approach but through a collaborative effort, rather than through single organisations.

However, in some consortia there was little or no mention of such approaches and no recognition that they were meant to be central to the ChangeUp model.

7.3 Impacts on local infrastructure organisations

Better collaboration: There is substantial evidence in all the locality cases studies that ChangeUp has led to more collaborative working and better communications between local infrastructure organisations. The significant spend on Consortium structures since 2004 has substantially helped here – most Consortium members state that this would not have happened without the ChangeUp funding. This is widely believed to have improved the quality of support services available locally, as discussed below.

While, in the main, these improvements have been confined to Consortium members, these members have usually made up a significant proportion of local infrastructure providers. However, the downside of this is that local stakeholders (including some Consortium members) often see the Consortium as essentially a ‘talking shop’ – and a rather closed set of ‘insiders’. And, indeed, Consortium members often suggested that “if you have been involved, you believe it has made a difference” but they recognised that many of those organisations in their area that had not been involved would not see this to be the case. Given that ChangeUp has required – and received - lots of ‘behind the scenes’ work which is difficult or impossible to quantify, particularly around getting the right representation and voice both within the Consortium and in other arenas, this invisibility has been an irritant to those who have invested significant time in trying to make the arrangements work.

Efficiency savings: Partly through the better partnership working, there have been some savings through joint data bases, marketing initiatives, volunteer support materials, joint ICT systems, etc. While useful in reducing the cost of infrastructure services (either to funders or to FLOs paying for them), these savings have not as yet been very substantial but they will be cumulative over time and are likely to increase more rapidly in the future, now that the appropriate systems are slowly being put in place. In a small number of cases, more dramatic efficiency savings have been sought in projects undertaken or initiated through ChangeUp – the merger of CVSs in locality 2 is an example.

More appropriate services: ChangeUp has led to more appropriate referrals of requests for support between local Consortium members and, to a more limited extent, to other local infrastructure providers. Moreover, in an environment where many funders wish only to be associated with projects which have very vivid ‘up-front and

personal' impacts, ChangeUp has been seen to invest in 'behind-the-scenes investment' projects that other funders will not fund, which gives it added value.

Improved standing with statutory sector: Through the ChangeUp consortia, the standing of TSOs with the statutory sector has increased, and this particularly applies to local infrastructure organisations. This in turn has allowed them to exert more influence in the decisions of these bodies, e.g. in designing the role of the third sector in delivering the targets set out in Local Area Agreements. In turn this has made it more likely that TSOs, both frontline and infrastructure organisations, were more likely to win contracts or be awarded core grants to provide services locally.

Increased funding opportunities: In most localities, the consortia have led to increased energy and expectations in the sector and have enabled more successful joint bids for funding (e.g. from Lottery). In some cases, the consortia themselves have actually led and managed these joint bids (e.g. in the case of locality 7's bid for Lottery funding for the CVS).

Increased stability: ChangeUp has increased the stability of LIOs in most consortia. This has been achieved directly, through the increased flow of funding for infrastructure projects (including, for example, the merger of CVSs in locality 2, the development of a new CVS in locality 5, and the merger of the CVS and Volunteer Centre in locality 7), and indirectly, through the increased standing of the LIOs with statutory bodies and the increased opportunities for non-ChangeUp funding for infrastructure projects.

Focus on 'hard issues': ChangeUp has also forced the third sector in each locality to look at some serious issues in the sector to which insufficient attention has previously been paid, e.g. support to BME and faith-based TSOs. However, these issues have often been difficult to tackle convincingly – for example, Improving Reach is seen by many consortia as a welcome complement to their efforts and one which is more likely to break through some of the barriers which they have faced in taking this agenda further.

Slow pace of change: In spite of the impacts listed in this section, the overall pace of change over the period of the evaluation has been very slow. Indeed, in some areas it has been so slow that this has undermined local confidence in the overall ChangeUp approach. In areas like locality 1 many Consortium members reiterate, with considerable frustration, that ChangeUp is "really just getting started".

Issue of attribution to ChangeUp: In assessing the impacts of ChangeUp on local infrastructure providers, it is important to take into account the effect of the wider funding environment (the recession, changes of local authority policy or political control, the end of EU Objective 1 funding in some areas, etc.). These wider forces make it hard to discern how many of the changes observed in local infrastructure are actually attributable to ChangeUp. Since activities supported by ChangeUp have also often attracted funding from other sources, or have required additional funding to become sustainable, the ChangeUp funding itself has often had a contributory impact rather than being the sole 'catalyst' of the activities concerned – which is, of course, consistent with an overall 'catalytic strategy'. It is therefore possible that some of the impacts outlined above may be an overstatement of what difference was made by ChangeUp itself.

In terms of tracking impact in the future, most consortia have now made good progress in developing IT systems with better databases, e.g. of local organisations and information on types of support available. However, it is clear that it will take some time for these systems to contribute to the evidence base, and many of them are still not designed to capture information on impact. Moreover, not all consortia members are signed up to such developments – there are still some cases of reluctance to share data across organisational boundaries (for reasons other than data protection issues).

7.4 Impacts on frontline organisations

There has been only very limited exploration by any of the consortia of the level of impact that ChangeUp has had on FLOs. Moreover, most Consortium members believed it would be difficult to assess this impact, particularly since frontline organisations have no or little knowledge of ChangeUp. This is not a criticism, since there would be little benefit for FLOs to know about ChangeUp specifically, given that they only want to know how to access support. Consortia have also felt justified in putting a low weight on pursuing evidence of frontline impact by the format of the monitoring requirements throughout the ChangeUp programme.

Consequently, there is much less evidence around the impact on FLOs than there is around the impact on infrastructure organisations. Again, as with the assessment of impacts on infrastructure organisations, there is widespread agreement among Consortium members that it is “too early to say” and general concern that it is very difficult to separate out the influence of ChangeUp from other changes in the local area. Some suggested to us, though, that this will change in the near future, as the benefits of the new partnerships filter through in greater volume to frontline organisations. This is something we will look at further in the formative report.

Nevertheless, there is strong evidence that local infrastructure support has been needed, has been appreciated and has had a positive influence on the success of local organisations, especially for small TSOs and in early years of ‘start-ups’. The most direct evidence comes from our survey of TSOs in the twelve locality case study areas. This shows a high level of activity in seeking support – from 81% of all TSOs in locality 6 (the highest) to 47% (localities 3 and 11). Relatively high levels of satisfaction were reported generally – over half of all respondents to this question reported themselves to be satisfied in all localities except locality 5 (where it was 43%), rising as high as 65% in locality 6. Moreover, the proportion of dissatisfied respondents was generally very low. Given the initial state of the sector in 2004, this appears to represent an important achievement (although, unfortunately, there was no equivalent survey data from around the 2004 period). Finally, when TSOs were asked about the contribution of local TSOs to their own success, positive responses ranged from 42% (locality 6) to 15% (localities 10 and 11) and negative perceptions were very small (ranging from 0% to 6%).

An important part of this success is likely to be due to the fact that Consortium activities have increased awareness of FLOs around the potential value of support. Our survey showed that in most localities a similar number of respondents reported themselves as likely to use support in the next year as reported that they had used support in the past year. This again suggests that, far from dealing with what is

essentially a backlog of requests, there is a continuing demand for support which is unlikely to dry up in the near future.

Some projects in ChangeUp have been around 'bringing up to standard' all the support activities occurring within the Consortium's area. In locality 11, for example, although this had been difficult to achieve, given the disparate nature of the organisations within the county, and without additional core funding to undertake the quality control and assurance, it had been seen as worthwhile and had improved the quality of support services.

A general impact which consortia considered to be valuable was that ChangeUp had ensured that more local support has been arranged for some frontline organisations than would otherwise be the case. (One interesting example is that £300,000 of capital funding from ChangeUp supported the redevelopment of the CVS centre in locality 12, which provided accommodation for FLOs and space available for hire by other TSOs). Our survey of frontline organisations shows that around 25% of all TSOs consider localness as an important criterion in getting appropriate support. The survey also shows that in a number of localities there is a large gap between awareness of any supplier of particular types of support and awareness of local providers of that support – in locality 11, for example, 84% of TSOs were able to name providers of the organisational support, but only 54% named a local provider.

A further benefit of ChangeUp has been the ability of many frontline organisations to bid for funding and contracts as a result of the support available. Our survey shows that 21% and 63% of TSOs (depending on the locality) accessed support for fundraising in the past 12 months. Our interviews in the locality case studies threw up examples of how this support has enabled TSOs to secure substantial grants and win valuable contracts. For example, locality 6, in combination with the wider Consortium, has secured further funding outside ChangeUp for an Information Portal, which is continually accessed by FLOs and LIOs. However, there is no systematic database available to indicate how high the aggregate figure of such income is (nor would all of it be attributable to the support received, of course).

From our locality case study interviews, there is some evidence that Consortium activities have helped to improve the networking of some frontline TSOs – this is likely to be particularly important in relation to smaller TSOs and those working in difficult fields, where the support of peers in a network has been important both in spreading knowledge but also in providing psychological support. A Faith Forum in locality 7 described how the growing strength of the network has helped some of the smaller organisations to develop more confidence in seeking out support for improving their management approaches.

However, a limitation of the impacts on frontline organisations has been that many projects which have been funded by ChangeUp have essentially been 'one-off', with few discernible spin-offs for other organisations or demonstration effects. In this sense, they were unlikely to have the kind of catalytic effects on which the ChangeUp model is based.

7.5 Pace of change

A persistent theme in our discussions with consortia members has been the pace of change. This has generally taken two forms. First, almost everyone has been very frustrated by the very slow pace of change since 2004, partly because expectations were high originally, and partly because many stakeholders (including many Consortium members) find it hard to understand why implementation of ChangeUp plans and strategies has taken so long. One Consortium member put it very succinctly: “There has been an incredibly slow pace of change – the strategic priorities raised in the 2009 strategic plan are very similar to those in 2004” and similar views were widely expressed elsewhere. The role of expectations was also emphasised by one prominent national figure in the capacity building world: “The initial ChangeUp document didn’t help because it promised something to everyone – people understandably read the commitment to sustainable infrastructure across the country as a commitment to [ChangeUp] funding it, and so of course they will complain now that it promised a lot and failed to deliver.”

Second, many Consortium members have commented that it actually does take a considerable time for even basic building blocks to change, such as the level of information available on need for support and on potential support providers. And it takes even longer for fundamentally important drivers to change, such as the willingness of Consortium members to take a strategic view of the needs of their area (rather than their own interests) and the motivation of frontline organisations to seek and use support.

Given these twin concerns, two different sets of recommendations were forthcoming, depending on which concern was given the most weight. Most of our interviewees stressed that it was inappropriate to expect rapid change in such a complex programme as ChangeUp, so that ‘initiativitis’ was likely to be a counter-productive response. However, many wished to see their own Consortium visibly making more rapid progress. Some suggested that this would require significantly more funding, others that mergers and rationalisation of local infrastructure providers would be valuable, still others that a wider pool of potential local providers could be involved (e.g. private sector infrastructure providers and the capacity building resources of some of the bigger frontline TSOs). Some interviewees also believed that their Consortium needed to change its strategy to make it more likely to be implemented.

8 Thematic findings

In Section 8 we have set out our main findings in respect of the impacts of ChangeUp on both infrastructure organisations and frontline organisations. Our research questions, as outlined in Section 3, require an analysis of the main factors contributing to these impacts. In this section, therefore, we set out our findings on the major themes which emerged as key factors during the course of the research serving to explain the findings on impacts. The themes considered here are:

- Distance travelled in ChangeUp;
- Consortia establishment, planning and development;
- Engaging with the statutory sector;
- Funding of the consortia;
- Supporting consortia: national programmes and support services;
- Specialist needs in consortia.

8.1 Distance travelled in ChangeUp

Our research has demonstrated significant distance travelled at national and local levels in ChangeUp.

At national level, the serious problems of funding delays which beset the early years of the programme, and which tarnished its image for some considerable time afterwards, have not recurred. The consultation which Capacitybuilders undertook on Destination 2014 gave the sector an opportunity to suggest some strategic redirection, which has subsequently occurred.

At local level, many consortia have been established in areas where there was previously no co-ordination of infrastructure for the third sector. The Zahno Rao report in 2008 found that two of the six consortia examined had travelled a significant distance over the life of ChangeUp – our research indicates that a rather higher proportion of our 12 locality case studies have made significant progress during the years 2004- 2008.

8.2 Consortia establishment, planning and development

The most visible element of ChangeUp has been the establishment, planning and development of the local consortia to ensure the provision of appropriate infrastructure at local level. The establishment of consortia across the whole of the country was an important achievement given that this was the first time that local infrastructure organisations had been brought together strategically. Moreover it was impressive that this was achieved in a short space of time, very much helped by the fact that attractive funding possibilities were on offer as an incentive. After this initial phase of founding the consortia (or, in some cases, developing them from pre-existing structures which already linked infrastructure providers in the area), their continued development and effectiveness required appropriate membership, effective planning and good operational processes.

In general, consortia were able to demonstrate that they had a clear rationale for inclusion of specific organisations at the outset. However, we found that over time the membership in many of the consortia had ossified and an ‘insider/outsider’ mentality emerged, so that those inside the consortium were seen by ‘outsiders’ as ‘keeping the consortium to themselves’, sometimes in order to give themselves privileged access to available funding. This suspicion does seem justified in a number of consortia. Indeed, in one case study area the old CVS was seen to be competing for funding to increase its own delivery of support activities, which so alienated the other support providers that they ultimately played a major role in the winding up of the CVS and its replacement by a new body which is purely strategic and is not “allowed” to provide services directly. However, there were certainly examples of consortia which were much more open in their membership and their processes – localities 3 and 9 were good examples here.

In most cases, the consortium membership was restricted to infrastructure organisations and this appears to have been generally accepted by most stakeholders as the most appropriate make-up of consortia, since this is the rationale of ChangeUp funding. This has also had the advantages that the consortia could be kept to a manageable size and were more easily able to take a strategic approach to their activities. It has also enabled them to make decisions quickly and not get too entangled in discussions about dividing up resources or funding. However, this also has been a main contributor to the ‘insider-outsider’ divisions which we have identified in a number of consortia – and it has made it harder for the consortia to engage with non-members on those issues where it wished to canvass wider views, e.g. in developing an analysis of support needs in the area. In some areas, too, the local infrastructure organisations were seen to be rather out of touch with the specialist needs of TSOs in their area and it was suggested that key community partnerships and community anchor organisations could have been valuable consortium members. In locality 9, which is an interesting exception to the general pattern, there is representation of a range of external stakeholders, including both frontline third sector organisations and local business – and this is thought by many consortium members to have improved the understanding of the consortium of what strategies are most likely to work locally and also to have brought increased commitment from consortium members.

In some consortia, the level of engagement and ‘buy-in’ even by consortium members is quite low, although in most consortia it has been growing over time. Here, the pre-existing state of collaboration between consortium members has been important – for example, in localities 6 and 12 the previous collaboration of local infrastructure organisations enabled a clear vision to be developed quite quickly for their strategy for infrastructure development. This suggests that there is a natural tendency for close working to develop only after a certain time has elapsed, so that expecting quick results from the establishment of consortia may be unrealistic. The level of engagement by non-members has generally been very low, often in spite of lots of ‘behind the scene’ work by key consortia members, partly because the ‘brand’ of ChangeUp is still relatively little known and understood, but in many cases also because the consortium itself has not sought such external engagement.

At an early stage, all consortia had to do an analysis of local needs for infrastructure support. This was often done in a hurry and has been supplemented since by further, sometimes more detailed studies. For example, locality 6 and the wider Consortium undertake ongoing reviews of areas for development for LIOs and track changes over time through a needs analysis mapping tool. However, there is little evidence that strategic needs analysis is becoming more systematic in most of the consortia.

Internal ICT has modernised LIOs (especially websites) but it was generally felt that this will take time to impact on FLOs. The development of IT systems to provide databases of local information and member organisations were identified as initiatives which will provide a good basis for tracking impact, but this will take some time as the evidence base is built-up. In a number of cases, even these databases have been slow to develop and are not yet available in an easy-to-access form. However, there are some cases, e.g. locality 6 and its wider Consortium, where these databases are well established, accessed by a large number of organisations and are proving valuable.

8.3 Engagement with statutory sector

A closer relationship with and a better understanding of the statutory sector has emerged over time.

Indeed, in some localities the local authority plays a major role in the consortium, although this is often driven by other agendas than simply ChangeUp. In locality 7, for example, where the consortium oversees jointly both ChangeUp and the Compact, the original Compact consortium consisted 50:50 of third sector and local authority members and the current consortium still has a high number of local authority (and other statutory body) members.

In other areas, such as locality 9, the statutory sector is indeed part of the consortium but plays a limited role in the internal issues facing the consortium, as it feels it must focus on rather different agendas in its overall work with the third sector. In other areas, the consortium has clearly made a decision to keep the statutory sector out of the formal structures of the consortium – in locality 2, for example, the consortium development plan specifically excluded formal membership of the statutory sector.

In a number of localities, the consortium has played an important positive role in giving the third sector a greater role in setting the targets embodied in the LAA and delivering these targets through service delivery and other interventions – although sometimes this role had to be fought for, given the central importance which many stakeholders place upon the LAA as the main arena for setting priorities in local services over the next few years. In other areas, rather fewer in number, there was a strong belief that the consortium – and sometimes the third sector more generally – had been frozen out of decision-making on the contents of the LAA and, less commonly, helping to deliver the chosen targets. In a third group of localities, the consortium had been invited to make a contribution to the LAA process but members were unsure whether it had been able genuinely to make any difference to the decisions which emerged. Where consortia crossed local authority boundaries, they often had quite different experiences between the different local authorities and local strategic partnerships involved.

Getting strong engagement from statutory bodies other than local authorities remains problematic in most localities. PCTs and police authorities were often seen by consortium members as protective of their own delivery mechanisms and reluctant to let the third sector develop an increased role. However, locality 6 area provides a beacon of how it might be done differently. The CVS here has mapped the provision of PCT services locally and in the wider area by TSOs and the PCT is being very receptive to expanding the work it commissions from TSOs in line with the NHS's World Class Commissioning programme. Again, in localities 5 and 7 the local PCT is engaging in major capacity building exercises with the third sector, in both cases working with consortium members – but not yet working closely with the local consortium as such. This suggests that a wider vision is slowly emerging of how all infrastructure provision for frontline organisations in an area can be brought together – although it is only being fully implemented in only a few localities (and tends, as yet, not to involve local private sector providers to any significant degree).

While we found many examples of statutory organisations, particularly local authorities, working well with local third sector support organisations, it was stressed to us even here that the role of individual personalities has been centrally important in providing the basis for real partnership working. In that sense, this closer partnership relationship between the third sector and the public sector has not yet become embedded in the public service and policy systems. Where PCTs and police authorities were engaging with the ChangeUp agenda (e.g. in localities 7 and 9), the role of personal commitments and relationships was seen to be particularly influential. Revealingly, organisational and personal relationships have been influential in locality 7 PCT launching a major capacity building initiative with the third sector together with a local foundation which is not part of the ChangeUp consortium.

Links with national government bodies have been hard to establish for most consortium members. Where this has happened, the local infrastructure organisations concerned have usually had a long established track record of programme management at a sub-regional level, and therefore previously established good links with government, e.g. through its offices at regional level. For example, one organisation in the Consortium covering locality 6 has excellent links with the Home Office and DWP, partly based on its role as a sub regional grant giver/programme management body (and therefore not really because of its role in ChangeUp).

8.4 Funding of the consortia

ChangeUp funding is generally only a small part of infrastructure funding in each area (and usually a small part even of public sector funding).

Most consortia believe that ChangeUp funding has stabilised and strengthened local infrastructure bodies – partly by helping them to access other funding, such as BASIS, on the back of Consortium plans. They suggest there has been no significant increase in income for core activities – this was never intended to be the direct consequence of ChangeUp but a successful 'catalytic' strategy should have brought radical change to the ability of these organisations to meet local support needs.

Of course, it is the small scale of this funding which means that it has to be catalytic and cannot possibly play the role of mainstream funding to meet the support needs of local third sector frontline organisations. However, this catalytic role is easier and

more likely to be effective where the wider funding environment is favourable – especially in areas which are priorities for additional funding for infrastructure and support e.g. through EU funds.

Fluctuations in funding by the local authority can be more problematic to consortia than changes in ChangeUp funding. Consequently, when a local authority changes (or threatens to change) its funding arrangements for the third sector, this can have major destabilising effects on TSOs. In locality 3, for example, where there has been a recent change in political leadership after two decades of control by the one party, planning in some of the major TSOs is in limbo, until a clear policy emerges from the county council. The vision of ChangeUp was to demonstrate to local authorities the value of well organised, effective infrastructure, by leveraging up standards and extending reach to disadvantaged communities, in order that local authorities would be encouraged to give more sustained support. This appears to have been generally, if not universally, achieved in our 12 locality case study areas.

Similarly, in the future it may be critically important to widen the focus of the ChangeUp consortium's collaborative work to other partners. Work in locality 6 with the PCT has revealed that £10 million is coming into TSOs from the PCT and that building on this will be key for the future of the local third sector, as local authorities are not going to have this level of funding.

8.5 Supporting consortia: national programmes and support services

Our evaluation of the role which National Support Services (NSSs) and National Programmes play in supporting consortia is still at an early stage. Moreover this summative evaluation is intended to cover the period up to March 2008 only. We report here only some interim indications emerging from the locality studies and the survey of TSOs in our 12 case study areas.

8.5.1 Role of Hubs

In our survey of third sector organisations in the 12 localities which we have studied, awareness of the Hubs varied widely – it ranged from 32% of TSOs in locality 7 to 7% of TSOs in locality 10. It also differed significantly between the Hubs, ranging from 65% in the case of the Governance Hub to 25% for the Workforce Hub. Few of the TSOs responding to our survey had actually used the Hubs – only 38 TSOs (from our 1897 respondents) had sought support from one or more of Hubs and, of these, 30 organisations had received support.

This picture was confirmed in our qualitative work in the locality case studies. Amongst consortium members there was a general lack of awareness of the Hubs. Even some of those aware of the Hubs suggested that their marketing and communication strategy was not proactive. This may have been exacerbated in the changeover from Hubs to National Support Services, as, in a context of 'information overload', the image of the NSSs has been weakened now that they have lost the collective 'brand' from which the 'Hubs' had benefited. This will be explored further in our evaluation of NSSs.

Reporting limited use of the Hubs, consortium members suggested that it was difficult to identify the added value of their provision, as they generally were felt to be distant

and too generic to inform and guide what was happening at local level. Some questioned the selection of Hub themes and most of our interviewees did not understand the role for Hubs in the cascade model of ChangeUp. In these circumstances, most consortia admitted that they had played little role in the promotion of usage of Hubs by local infrastructure providers.

8.5.2 Role of Improving Reach

The first of the new national programmes was Improving Reach, which was welcomed in most localities and had already achieved considerable awareness. Although it was launched with a set of pilots in 2006-07, it was generally seen as 'just starting', reflecting the fact that its general launch had come in 2008. It was interesting that consortia members generally did not identify Improving Reach as part of ChangeUp – indeed, some contrasted it with ChangeUp, indicating that they already had hopes that it would be a much easier programme to deal with, and more effective in its outcomes, than ChangeUp had been. This reflects the problems of promoting ChangeUp as an overall 'brand'. As the Summative Evaluation focuses on the period up to March 2008, Improving Reach (and the other National Support Services) will be dealt with in more detail in the Formative Evaluation phase.

8.6 Specialist needs in consortia

Consortia members had a number of concerns with how specialist support needs had so far been dealt with through the consortia.

One area of concern for many consortia was that it was continuing to prove difficult to convince frontline TSOs to consider systematically how they would tackle the new challenges presented by the move in statutory bodies since 2005 towards a commissioning/ procurement relationship with the third sector, rather than a grants relationship. While consortia feel they have made real progress in growing the voice of the third sector in the decision making processes of local authorities, and to some extent other LSP partners, there is a persistent concern that the demand for support by frontline TSOs has been much too low and that this will have unfortunate repercussions later, when those TSOs find that they are being disadvantaged in future funding rounds.

This was an area where the capacity problem was perceived to be more on the demand side than on the supply side, although some doubts were expressed as to whether the support programmes being offered were actually tailored to the commissioning and procurement practices of the local authority and other local statutory bodies in the area.

8.6.1 Equalities agenda

Finally, a key concern in many consortia was the difficulty of providing adequate support for TSOs serving primarily vulnerable and disadvantaged groups or dealing with equality and diversity issues. In particular, there was a widespread failure to embed BME projects in consortia programmes. While the consortia usually identified at an early stage of their existence that there were clear needs for support for BME groups, several obstacles tended to recur to make implementation difficult. Some consortia reported difficulties in obtaining core funding to carry out the community

development work needed. In some, there was simply reluctance to allocate ChangeUp funding to these needs as a priority. In other cases, there have been continuing problems in coordinating many of the BME organisations involved – the Consortium in locality 7 pointed to the 30 Somali groups in their area, which were not prepared to work with one another, were reluctant to respect and value each other's needs and requirements, and were resentful if any support were given to organisations other than their own. This made it very difficult to respond to the identified support needs. It is interesting that the NSTSO survey in late 2008 reported that equalities groups are far more likely than average to access support services – the concerns expressed by local consortia suggest that, nevertheless, current levels of access are insufficient.

While these difficulties of coordination and implementation were most prevalent in relation to BME issues, similar problems had occurred in some consortia in relation to disability issues, e.g. in localities 1 and 3. Organisations working in these fields tended to become disenchanted with the 'lip service' paid to their requirements, often spelt out clearly in strategic plans, etc. but then not leading to action on the ground. For example, in locality 1 the local infrastructure organisation specialising in disability has gone bankrupt and the BME equivalent is in crisis, leading to a debate about why the consortium is not able to help, given its strategic role in the area. While it is not possible for any funding or support programme to guarantee the continuation of all potentially relevant TSOs, and some TSOs may deserve to fail, however important their role in an area, the inability to support key local TSOs whose failure may have a knock-on or 'ripple' effect on others is clearly a matter for concern for a local strategic co-ordinator of third sector infrastructure provision. At the very least, it may present the local consortium with the need to launch a replacement TSO, which can often be more difficult than rescuing an existing TSO which has developed problems.

All consortia agreed that these experiences with continuing, unsolved problems around support for TSOs working with vulnerable and disadvantaged groups provided a clear rationale for the introduction of the Improving Reach programme, which was piloted from 2006-07 onwards.

8.7 Working with ChangeUp at national, regional and sub-regional levels

The roles of regional and sub-regional networks – those that exist above the level of local consortia – have been questioned by many consortia. They are generally seen as diverting funding and other resources away from local infrastructure organisations, without adding value. As mentioned above, many consortia members believed that both regional and sub-regional decision-makers were being given more access to ChangeUp budgets than they had themselves and resented this, believing that they could be more effective if these budgets were available to them for spending on local projects. In the words of one TSO director: "I'm bored at the regional meetings – not convinced that they have much to offer in this area. Our problems are local, not regional, so we should keep it local". One consortium lead suggested that the sub-regional network arrangements have not been properly thought out - "not cost-effective, consume a vast amount of time, and haven't got much money". (Several

others agreed with these sentiments, except that they thought too much funding was channelled through these mechanisms).

8.7.1 Working with funders?

The Home Office was responsible for ChangeUp from 2003 – 2006, when Capacitybuilders assumed the management role and OTS became the responsible government department. Government Offices had delegated authority for the implementation of the subnational ChangeUp programme until Capacitybuilders took over in 2006.

ChangeUp priorities and funding in the early period are seen as having been driven by ‘top-down’ priorities, despite the role of consortia in determining the funding of local initiatives – this is generally believed by consortia members to have been inappropriate and to have resulted in patterns of local funding which did not allow highest local priorities to be tackled. After Capacitybuilders took over responsibility for ChangeUp, more of the spending decisions were made locally, but within a significantly reduced level of funding. However, the memory of the early period persists with many consortia, who think and behave as if ChangeUp is being ‘steered’ from regional or national level. This suggests that there is relatively limited understanding of the decision making process within Capacitybuilders and ChangeUp, which allows considerable misunderstandings to occur and persist.

At an operational level, strong perceptions persist amongst consortia members over the period of this evaluation that unreasonable deadlines have continually been set for spend and documentation and that this characteristic of ChangeUp continued after its management was taken over by Capacitybuilders.

8.8 Assessing the performance of the ChangeUp model

The evidence from our 12 locality surveys suggests that the ChangeUp ‘cascade’ model has worked to varying degrees across our 12 localities. In a number of localities, it has not worked well. In a few localities, it has worked well and there it has had valuable impacts. In many cases, it has only partially worked – typically, it has given rise to new structures and processes at the level of the local consortium, but then the impact has not cascaded much further. However, consortium members are generally confident that the right building blocks have been put in place, from which the third sector in their locality will benefit in the next few years. This will be explored further in the Formative Evaluation.

The analyses of impacts (section 7) and of key themes emerging from the evaluation (section 8) have demonstrated that the ‘cascade’ model on which the ChangeUp programme is based exhibited some blockages. In particular:

- Regional and sub-regional levels can be seen during the period of this evaluation (up to March 2008) to add little value at local level;
- Whilst it has achieved significant change in terms of better partnership and planning, the rationale of ChangeUp as a mechanism for ‘leveraged sustainable step change’ has not been widely understood at a local level.

- Local consortia have not sought to influence and improve the full range of provision of support at local level, focusing mainly on that provision which is made by third sector specialist infrastructure providers.

Where these blockages are observed by consortium members within their locality, a significant degree of frustration is expressed that the efforts involved in delivering ChangeUp can be disproportionate to the results achieved.

However, the evidence from the case study areas suggests that where the 'cascade' model works properly, a high level of infrastructure support is demanded by frontline organisations and satisfactorily provided by local infrastructure organisations. Moreover, there is evidence from localities like locality 6 that when the model works well it raises the awareness of frontline organisations about the value of support and stimulates higher demand – the kind of 'leveraged step change' effect which is central to the design of ChangeUp. (Of course, this increased demand also raises the possibility that the type of support demanded is not immediately available and may result in increased number of local TSOs that are dissatisfied with the support available to them – but these, ironically, are indicators of potential longer term TSO success, as well as short term failure in the support system).

9 Summary and conclusions

There was virtually universal agreement in the period from 2002-2004 that infrastructure in the third sector was weak, even in the best-served areas, and very patchy. Whilst little detailed analysis was carried out which could substantiate this judgement, it seems highly likely that this was a fair description of the state of the sector. The need for a major intervention which could bring about radical change is therefore uncontested.

Our research has demonstrated significant distance travelled at national and local levels in ChangeUp. At national level, the serious problems of funding delays which beset the early years of the programme, and which tarnished its image for some considerable time afterwards, have not recurred. At local level, many consortia have been established in areas where there was previously no co-ordination of infrastructure for the third sector – and a considerable proportion of our 12 locality case studies have made significant progress during the years 2004- 2008.

The funding available through ChangeUp was never intended to cover the full costs of service delivery but instead invest in improvements to the ways in which support services operate. This was not always fully understood within the third sector. The expectations of what the funding would achieve were very high and this has led to a perception that the funding was insufficient to meet needs for support of frontline TSOs to the extent being identified at local level. This continued to be the case right up to 2008, compounded by the tailing off of funding from 2006 onwards.

We have assessed the achievement of the impacts which ChangeUp has intended along a chain of potential benefits:

- Impact on effectiveness of overall system of local support through strategic interventions by local consortia;
- Impact on activities and effectiveness of infrastructure organisations;
- Impacts on activities and effectiveness of frontline organisations.

Given that the demand for funding was far higher than the available budget, it was logical – perhaps even inevitable – that the strategy adopted in the ChangeUp programme was a ‘leveraged step change’ or ‘catalytic’ strategy, where the funds spent at national, regional, sub-regional and local level were expected to trigger much wider ‘knock-on’ or ‘ripple effects’, so that the actual funding of the programme was able eventually to lever a much larger amount of funding through other sources for the provision of support to FLOs. This strategy has only worked sporadically. However, when consortia members were pushed to explore the actual and potential leveraging effects of the ChangeUp programme, many examples did come to light. This suggests that a much clearer and more prescriptive explanation of what might be entailed in a ‘leveraged step change’ or ‘catalytic’ strategy might well have helped more consortia to adopt this approach in their area.

The decision to ‘cascade’ ChangeUp funding through national, regional, sub-regional and local levels was also logical, in order that a coherent framework be in place which

could identify and meet gaps in provision, which could then be tackled at the right geographical level. The evidence from our 12 locality surveys suggests that over the period in question the ChangeUp 'cascade' model has only fully worked in some of the localities – but where it works it has valuable impacts. In most other cases, its effectiveness has not been fully demonstrated to date – typically, it has given rise to new structures and processes at the level of the local consortium but the time taken to achieve these means positive results are only likely to be seen in the period covered in the next phase of the evaluation (2008-2011).

The impacts on local infrastructure organisations have been identified in terms of better collaboration, efficiency savings, more appropriate services, improved standing with the statutory sector, greater funding opportunities, increased stability, and a greater focus on 'hard' issues. However, these impacts have been slow to emerge, patchy in their achievement and not always attributable to ChangeUp. Nevertheless, the gradual emergence of better partnership working amongst local infrastructure organisations (both between themselves and with the statutory sector), coupled with clearer strategies for changing the capacity of the local third sector, suggests that the local infrastructure sector has indeed been 'changed up' a gear and that, if more funding were available to it, it would now be able to direct it in more effective ways than before to the frontline organisations which need support. The value of these local networks of infrastructure providers is highlighted in particular by the costs and problems caused in those areas which do NOT have well-functioning networks of this sort, particularly those areas where there have been major problems with the functioning of the CVS. Indeed it is arguable that ChangeUp provided a firm basis from which many infrastructure organisations were able to engage quickly and effectively with emerging new local decision making structures including LSPs and LAAs. Again, the value of engaging closely with all statutory partners, including the PCT as well as the local authority, is illustrated by some of the most successful consortia and suggests that, if only slowly, a more inclusive vision of the resource available for capacity building, tailored to the needs of particular sub-sectors within the third sector, is emerging.

The impacts of ChangeUp on local frontline organisations have been explored only to a very limited extent by any of the local consortia during the period in question. Moreover, most consortium members believed it would be difficult to assess this impact, particularly since frontline organisations, quite naturally, have little knowledge of ChangeUp. Consequently, there is much less evidence around the impact on FLOs than there is around the impact on infrastructure organisations. Again, as with the assessment of impacts on infrastructure organisations, there is widespread agreement among consortium members that it is "too early to say" and general concern that it is very difficult to separate out the influence of ChangeUp 2004-08 from other changes in the local area. Some suggested to us, though, that this will change in the near future, as the benefits of the new partnerships filter through in greater volume to frontline organisations.

Furthermore, there is indeed strong evidence that local infrastructure support has been needed, has been appreciated and has had a positive influence on the success of local organisations. Our survey of TSOs in the twelve locality case study areas shows a high level of activity in seeking support – from 81% of all TSOs in locality 6 (the

highest) to 47% (localities 3 and 11), with relatively high levels of satisfaction reported generally – almost everywhere over half of all respondents. Moreover, the proportion of dissatisfied respondents was generally very low.

Finally, when TSOs were asked about the contribution of local TSOs to their own success, positive responses ranged from 42% (locality 6) to 15% (localities 10 and 11) and negative perceptions were very small (ranging from 0% to 6%). It seems clear that consortium activities have increased awareness of FLOs around the potential value of support, and responses to our survey suggest that, far from dealing with simply a backlog of requests, there is a continuing demand for support which is unlikely to dry up in the near future.

General impacts on frontline organisations which consortia considered to be valuable were that ChangeUp had ensured that more local support has been arranged for some frontline organisations than would otherwise be the case, that many frontline organisations have been helped to bid for funding and contracts as a result of the support available, and that support has helped to improve the networking of some frontline TSOs.

10 Appendix 1 – locality case study consultation outline

Who are the key infrastructure organisations in this area? Are they generalist/specialist networks, resource bodies? How active are they? Are they used frequently or not? Why? Are any of these keen to be more involved in the consortium than they have been? Why have they not achieved this?

How do they relate to the consortium/consortia?

How was each/the consortium formed and organised in your area – lead bodies, accountability, representation and levels of involvement? Did this build on previous structures?

How much were you (or your organisation) involved in this process at the outset and subsequently? How does your organisation now fit into this picture? What is your role, how much time does it take?

Organisational arrangements in the ChangeUp consortium (only Consortia members who are NOT based in the locality)

Who convened the first meeting of infrastructure organisations and when? Was this prompted by the ChangeUp programme?

How helpful was the IIP when it was drafted in 2005/6? Who took the lead in preparing it?

Was this drafting an inclusive process? How much commitment was there to the principles within it?

How was the evidence base collated? What were the main issues and sensitivities?

Who was engaged in this collection & collation of evidence? Who did not engage in the evidence collation but should have done? What were the main issues and challenges in this process?

How helpful were the Business / Strategy Plans when they were drafted in 2007?

Was this drafting an inclusive process? How much commitment was there to the principles within them? Had this level of commitment changed since the drafting of the IIP? What did you learn or do differently based on the original IIPs?

How have the organisational arrangements changed over the years?

Are the organisational arrangements now more effective than they were originally? Why do think that is?

Expenditure and what funding (including ChangeUp) has been received?

What have been the main changes in your organisational spend from 2004 and why did they occur?

What are the main sources of infrastructure spending in your area/your organisation?

What are the main sources of funding of infrastructure organisations in your area/your organisation? Any breakdown of levels of funding by types of organisation?

What ChangeUp funding was received in your area/by your organisation (inside the plans and separately, e.g. Improving Reach). [Log of spend available?]

What have been the other significant infrastructure funders in this area – local authorities, BASIS? Has their pattern of engagement or involvement changed over this time? If yes, why?

What was been funded from the 2005/6 plan – the consortium and projects? Themes continuing/sustained? Projects/themes dropped? What were the main reasons for these changes?

Did your organisation or the consortium as a whole get funding from Consortia Development Fund?

Main features and projects of the 2008 plan and how it has changed from previous pattern and strategy?

Are there still important gaps in the funding for third sector capacity building in this area? What are they? Are there any plans for tackling them? Are you involved in this?

Has your organisation's length of funding moved significantly towards longer term funding?

Outcomes and impact since 2004

What has improved in the consortia? Communications? Teamwork? Planning? Skills? Has there been mainstreaming of the equalities agenda? Evidence?

What have been the main improvements visible in your organisation (locally) since 2004? Communications? Teamwork? Planning? Performance management? Quality management systems? Skills?

Has there been mainstreaming of the equalities agenda, if this has happened, what difference has it made? How have services to hard to reach communities improved?

Have you managed to achieve any organisational efficiencies through these projects, if so what?

Are you now delivering services in collaboration or partnership with other service providers? If so, what?

Has the way you now deliver services significantly changed through ChangeUp programmes, if yes, evidence?

What has improved in local frontline organisations? Communications? Teamwork? Planning? Performance management? Quality management? Skills? Has there been mainstreaming of the equalities agenda? Evidence?

Has service delivery been improved locally? Evidence?

What impact have these changes had on the outcomes experienced in the quality of life of local people? Evidence?

To what extent do you think these changes to service delivery and quality of life outcomes can be attributed to the improvements in infrastructure that you as an organisation have helped to bring about locally?

And to what extent do you think these changes in quality of life can be attributed specifically to ChangeUp (i.e. the project delivered through ChangeUp)? Evidence?

Relations with statutory sector?

What influence have statutory bodies had on the consortium? How good are relationships? How has this changed?

Is the voluntary and community sector properly represented on the LSP? Has the voice of the third sector capacity building sector been properly heard on the LSP?

How much influence did the voluntary sector have in agreeing the 35 key targets in the LAA? How many of these targets depend heavily on contributions from your specific organisation?

What is the statutory sector's record in consulting the community through voluntary and community organisations? What have been the role to date of the LINK network and other locality partnerships in bringing in the third sector to consultation processes?

Are voluntary organisations interested in running statutory services locally? Which services? Does statutory sector *want* them to run these services – or other services? Does the statutory sector believe that the local third sector is now more able to run these services? What evidence do you have for these answers?

Has your funding increased from your local statutory partners, yes, no – log

Has there been a direct increase in support services to frontline organisations by local public service organisations?

Are you now working with other government agencies e.g, Business Link, Learning and Skills Council – is this as a direct consequence of ChangeUp?

National and regional support

Where do local voluntary and community organisations generally look for support? To their own national networks or to CVSs and other local infrastructure bodies?

Which if any of the hubs were useful to you?

Have you been contacted pro-actively by the new National Support Services in ChangeUp? Have you used them? How much have they helped you to deliver support to front-line TSOs? What about the old Hubs – did you use them? Any help?

Reflections

Have the changes which the consortium has helped to bring about in the local third sector since 2004 been because of ChangeUp or would they have happened anyway?

Have the improvements to the working of local frontline TSOs which your specific organisation has helped to bring about locally since 2004 been because of ChangeUp or would they have happened anyway?

What significant problems remain in infrastructure support in the local area? Is the 2008 plan tackling these appropriately?

How do you see the Consortium and infrastructure developing?

What, if any thing, would you change about ChangeUp funding and Capacitybuilders funding?

Have the projects been incremental to the changes or have they been a central part of development? Without changeup funding would the changes your organisation has delivered in the sector have happened anyway?

Revealing case studies

Which case studies would you highlight as particularly good examples of infrastructure activity/projects?

In particular, can you suggest good case studies how infrastructure improvement has contributed to:

- Innovative collaboration;
- Service planning and/or delivery;
- Diversity and reach;
- Relations with the statutory sector;
- Improved services commissioning?

11 Appendix 2 – locality case study stakeholder list

As well as Consortium members, the evaluation encompassed the views of the following stakeholders where possible:

- Local Authorities – including representation from regeneration, economic development, community services, social care services;
- Local Strategic Partnerships;
- Frontline organisations;
- Local employers;
- PCTs;
- Faith based organisations;
- Equalities organisations;
- Police Forces;
- Regional bodies.



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