

# Process and Outcome Evaluation of the Community Leadership Programme

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University of Leicester, 2023



LEICESTER, LEICESTERSHIRE  
& RUTLAND



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## Executive Summary

### What is the Community Leadership Programme?

The Community Leadership Programme (CLP) is a 12-week course developed to support Community Leaders (CLs) within Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland (LLR) to develop their skills, knowledge, and project management abilities. The aim of this is to support violence reduction through a public health model by developing community support and connection. The CLP has run 3 times since 2020, with a total of 48 participants.

### Who was involved?

CLs from across LLR have taken part in the programme, with a range of experiences in voluntary and third sector work. Youth and young people was a clear theme in the work carried out by those taking part, but a range of organisations and issues were represented. This suggests that the work fits well within the LLR Violence Reduction Network's (VRN) Violence Response Strategy. The course was developed and run by Jones Consulting and tendered by the VRN and OPCC.

### What has it achieved?

- 93% of community leaders have developed new projects since taking part and said they felt more confident about their work and role as a leader
- 100% of community leaders have made changes to their practice since taking part
- 81% have started new collaborative projects with a peer from the CLP

### What are the main impacts?

- Self-Perception and confidence- Community leaders felt more able to work in a strategic and effective way in supporting their communities
- Organisation and vision- The CLP led to increased collaborative work and new partnerships across LLR and allowed CLs to be more successful in securing funding for their work
- Community and networks- Initiatives and collaborations across LLR have developed, expanding local knowledge, activity, and promoting diversity

### What is the key learning?

- A supportive and locally engaged course team and a diverse range of participants in terms of experience is beneficial for the success of the course
- Creating a network of leaders is positive, however, this needs to be appropriately supported to be effective in maintaining development
- Leaders benefitted most from development regarding strategy, processes, and communication such as Theories of Change, funding bids and developing organisation aims

### Recommendations

1. Embed long-term impact evaluation into future iterations of the course
2. Create a co-produced terms of reference between the VRN, course team, and previous cohorts to establish the aims of the CLP and CLN going forward
3. Ensure future recruitment materials make clear the aims, purpose, expectations, and requirements of the CLP
4. Target future recruitment approaches to 'emerging' leaders opposed to those already established
5. Establish oversight and a strategic structure for the Community Leaders Network

## Infographic Summary

**100%**

Said the CLP met their aims and developed their knowledge of community leadership.



**93%**

Have developed new projects since taking part in the CLP.



**81%**

Started new collaborations with a community leader they met through the programme.



## Outcomes of the CLP



### Self-Perception + Confidence

Developing leadership skills improved self-confidence in community leaders



### Vision + Organisation

Strategic planning sessions allowed leaders to develop new ideas and bids



### Community + Networks

Having a community of leaders allowed new projects and networks to develop

## Key Outputs

- Successful funding bids
- New projects in communities
- Community Leadership Network



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## Introduction

This report outlines the findings and recommendations generated from a process and outcome evaluation undertaken on the Community Leadership Programme (CLP). The CLP was commissioned by the Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland Violence Reduction Network (VRN), and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC). The evaluation of the CLP was commissioned by the VRN. The report draws on survey and interview data (48 survey responses to a VRN survey, 18 responses to the 2023 survey, and 6 interviews) collected by both the VRN and the University of Leicester from Community Leaders (CL) who were part of training Cohorts 1, 2 and 3. As well as interviews with those involved in the commissioning and creation of the CLP (3 interviews). Quotes have been included in this report verbatim from interviewees, comprising of CLs, commissioners, and course leaders, however identifying features may have been removed to protect their confidentiality. Collectively, this data allows for a holistic picture of delegate's programme experiences and post-programme outcomes, as well as overall CLP strengths, barriers, and key learning. This report concludes with recommendations for future iterations of the programme or similar work.

This evaluation is small-scale and is, in essence, a snapshot of the impact of the CLP. Not all who had taken part in the CLP were willing and/or able to participate in the evaluation which was undertaken after the cessation of Cohort 3. As a result, responses are limited and, whilst responses are generally positive, data may not reflect the views and experiences of all CLs who took part. The recommendations (see page

21) include consideration of future evaluations and developing a more robust evidence base for this type of project.

## CLP Overview and Aims

The CLP fitted into the VRNs broader strategic priorities and Violence Response Strategy<sup>1</sup>. Specifically, strategic theme 1: leadership and culture change and strategic theme 3: prevention. Actions linked to leadership and culture change included encouraging local providers to incorporate data and evidence-based approaches (priority 1.3), which the CLP materials included information on. Identifying new partnership opportunities was another priority (1.6), which the networking aspects of the CLP responded to. Collaborating with communities and community-based organisations to develop solutions and create positive and safe environments (priority 3.2) specifically mentions the CLP within its actions, with the intention of increasing community involvement with the VRN and its decision making, and for CLs to develop community-led interventions and responses to promote positive and safe environments. The CLP did not explicitly focus on these aspects, but as the report shows, these have been clear outcomes of the CLP.

The purpose of the programme was to identify, develop and support a network of CLs across Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland (LLR). As such, the commissioning, creation, and delivery of this specific CLP is unique to LLR VRN. Within this, the specific aims of the CLP were to:

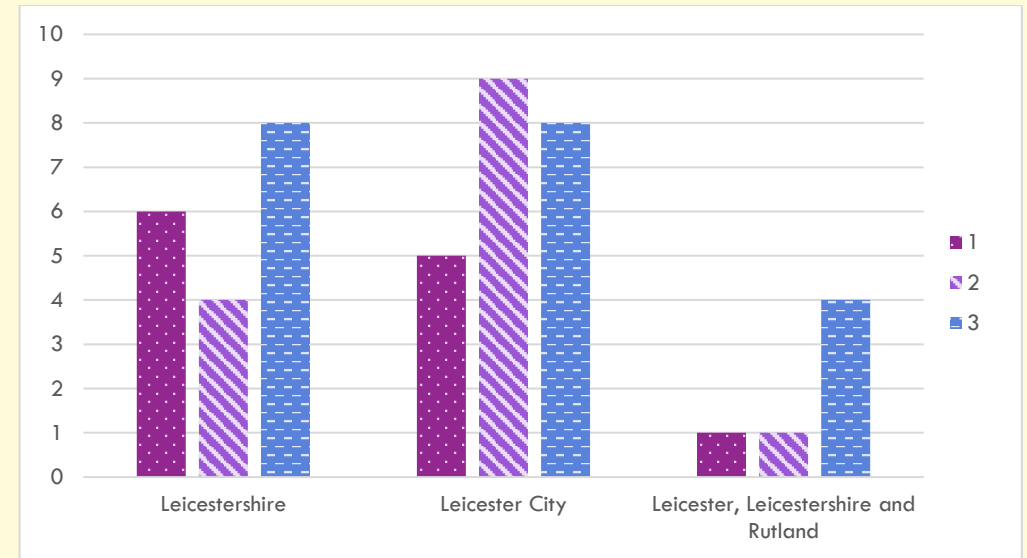
- Build on local knowledge
- Provide CLs an opportunity to learn and develop new skills
- Support CLs to develop projects and affect change in their communities

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.violencereductionnetwork.co.uk/files/ugd/6e2bca\\_9756729aa88d4282868268047a198847.pdf](https://www.violencereductionnetwork.co.uk/files/ugd/6e2bca_9756729aa88d4282868268047a198847.pdf)



The CLP was aimed at CLs from areas identified as having higher levels of deprivation and crime, however, the application criteria did not set limits on location, with CLs from across LLR being eligible to take part. To date, there have been 3 cohorts completing the CLP. This is a total of 48 CLs.

The CLs who have taken part in the programme have varied backgrounds, areas of specialism and levels of occupational experience. The majority of CLs work within Leicester City (48%), however there was representation from across the county (39%) and those working across Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland (LLR) (13%), with Cohort 3 being the most geographically diverse. This geographical data was self-reported from the CLs as part of the application process for the CLP and represents the areas where the CLs said their organisations worked. This means that those categorised as LLR includes those working solely in Rutland, as well as those who work within this area as well as the rest of the county.



*Figure 1: Cohort Location Spread*

The CLP was not directly aimed at reducing violence affecting young people; however, this is a key strategic aim of both the VRN and OPCC and the CLP is part of a theory of change that will broadly support violence reduction through community cohesion (see Appendix 2). In light of this, the advertising and recruitment materials from the programme did not need to specifically mention violence reduction, nor were aimed at organisations and/or groups working around violence reduction. All CLs taking part were asked to describe their work and youth/young people was the most frequently mentioned area, alongside community support. Other areas included sport, health, and domestic abuse. This suggests that the programme was targeted appropriately, and that this approach, whilst not explicitly focused on violence reduction, has the capacity to support violence reduction activities within a public health framework.

Theme	F
Community Support	14
Youth	14
Sport	8
Health	6
Domestic Violence	5
Family	4
Arts	3
Advocacy	2
Mental health	2
Race	1
Gender	1
Homelessness	1

*Table 1: Organisational Themes/Priorities*

The delegates had a variety of backgrounds and experience levels. Across the 3 cohorts:

- 25% of delegates had set up or worked in community groups
- 21% were employed by social enterprises
- 19% were employed by charities
- 10% were employed by statutory organisations

Only 10% of delegates were independent community leaders, whose work was entirely voluntary and not attached to a specific organisation. This suggests that those who were able to participate in the CLP were those who were already more established as 'leaders' within their communities, and that this role was part of their employment. This has implications for accessibility of the CLP and recruitment of future cohorts, with the potential for recruitment of future cohorts to focus more on 'emerging' leaders opposed to those already established.

The CLP course materials address knowledge, project management, and skill development. This includes sessions looking at interpersonal aspects such as different leadership models and how to manage others, practical information such as how to create funding proposals and develop a theory of change, and individual skills such as public speaking and individual strengths.

The course content was developed by Jones Consulting<sup>2</sup> to allow community leaders the opportunity to recognise their existing skills and knowledge and to reflect upon how to utilise and develop these more strategically. One of the core messages of the programme was that it did not train individuals on how to become a leader but allowed leaders to recognise this within themselves and to feel confident in taking this role forward within their community.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.jonesconsulting.org.uk/>

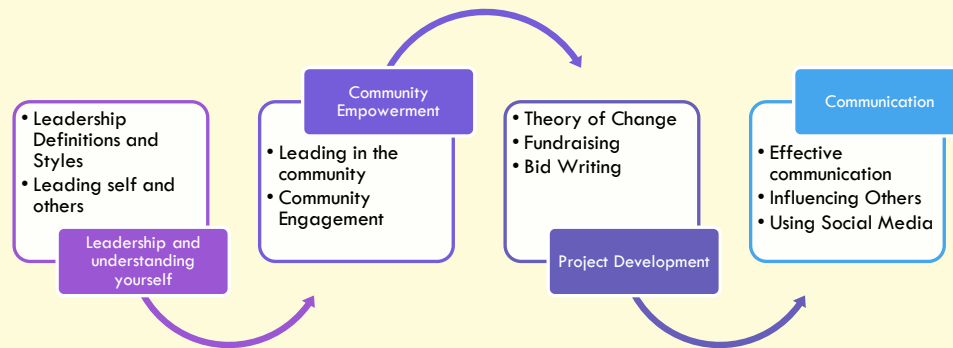


Figure 2: CLP Course Overview

Each cohort of the CLP had a different experience due to logistical changes to the programme. Cohort 1 was entirely online due to COVID-19 restrictions. Cohort 2 was hybrid, with some online sessions and some in-person sessions taking place at Leicestershire Police HQ. Cohort 3 was predominantly in-person and held at the Peepul Centre in Leicester, with some online sessions. These differences mean that the evaluation could not draw like-for-like comparisons between the cohorts but does allow for an understanding of different running styles and its impact on accessibility, engagement, and intra-group community building.

## Experience of the CLP

Each cohort completed an evaluation survey at the beginning and end of the programme assessing their experiences. Additionally, the evaluation team carried out a further survey in 2023, which was sent to all cohorts to gauge reflections on the experience at a different timepoint. Overall,

the CLs experience of the CLP was highly positive, with comments highlighting the value of meeting other CLs, the increased confidence the course gave them, and many positive comments about the course team and guest speakers.

Specific sessions that were praised by delegates included positive deviance, the theory of change and bid writing. The responses to these sessions focused on the skills that CLs had developed from them, such as working more strategically and allowing them to access opportunities that they would not have otherwise. Post-course, there was a statistically significant ( $p \leq 0.001$ ) increase in CLs ratings of their own skills, knowledge, and project management abilities as shown in Table 2.

The only area that did not show a significant increase in self-rating post-course was use of social media. However, the follow-up survey and interviews suggested that the social media session was useful, indicating that perhaps a longer timeframe was needed to assess the usefulness of this aspect. This suggests that overall, these sessions were successful and supportive in developing individual's ability to act as leaders within their communities. Comments throughout the course and evaluation highlighted that those who took part in the CLP were already leaders within their communities, however the CLP allowed them to fulfil this role in a more strategic and considered manner. The CLP sessions focused on developing individuals' skills, knowledge, and project management abilities, which gave opportunities for recognition of existing skills and knowledge as well. The ratings shown in Table 2 are reflective of an increase in CLs confidence to utilise these aspects in their work with communities.



Category		Means		Change	Significance
		Pre-CLP	Post-CLP		
Knowledge	Different Leadership Models	3	4.4	1.4	<.001
	Your strengths as a leader	3.4857	4.2875	0.8018	<.001
	Public Health Approaches	2.6857	4.1143	1.4286	<.001
	Best ways to use social media	3.4	3.8571	0.4571	0.012
	How to access funds	2.4412	3.7647	1.3235	<.001
Project Management	Developing Project Goals	3.2059	4.3235	1.1176	<.001
	Strategic Development	2.8235	4.2647	1.4412	<.001
	Project Management	3.2424	4.4242	1.1818	<.001
	Developing a Theory of Change	2.1765	4	1.8235	<.001
	Project Evaluation	2.7353	4.0882	1.3529	<.001
Skills	Ways to engage with communities	3.5714	4.2571	0.6857	0.001
	Managing a team effectively	3.0833	4.4167	1.3334	<.001
	Presenting and Public Speaking	3.2059	4.3824	1.1765	<.001
	Creating an Asset Map	2.1471	3.7059	1.5588	<.001
	Influencing Others	3.5588	4.3235	0.7647	0.002
	Bid Writing	2.2424	3.6667	1.4243	<.001

Table 2: Pre- and Post-Course Comparison

The sessions that resonated with the cohorts helped them to define themselves as “leaders”. This included identifying how they wanted to work not only with those in their communities, but with other CLs and statutory agencies. Feeling able to approach and work with other

organisations at different levels was key for the CLs in helping them to recognise their own role and ability to create change both within and beyond their communities.

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*Whichever area you work in or whatever realm that you're in, you lead people all the time and people don't recognise that. Sometimes you need a Prime Minister or President or something like that, but no, every individual is a leader.*

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The overall experience of the CLP was very positive, with CLs providing glowing feedback both immediately post-course, and when contacted by the evaluation team.

- 100% of those who participated in the evaluation survey said the course met their aims, developed learning, and was applicable to their work.
- 93% of survey respondents said they felt more confident as a leader following the course.
- 100% of survey respondents said they had made changes to their practice following the course.
- 93% had developed new projects since participating in the course.
- 81% of these projects involved collaborating with CLs they had met through the CLP or CLN.

These new projects included expanding existing initiatives, developing new projects and submitting/obtaining funding for them. This suggests that the CLP is a successful component of the VRNs strategic plan, and

that it is supporting more opportunities for community development and engagement across LLR. Creating a positive experience for CLs which supports and enables them to develop new work within communities is an indirect way of reducing violence, however evidence suggests that this is effective (Byrdsong, Devan and Yamatani 2016)<sup>3</sup>.

### Positives

A number of factors were highlighted across the cohorts as positives of the CLP, but 3 were consistently praised: **connection with others**, **strategic planning**, and **self-development**.

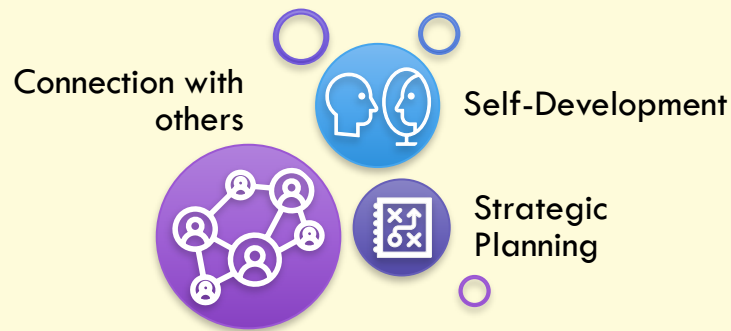


Figure 3: Positives

Developing connections with other CLs was highlighted by every respondent and interviewee throughout the evaluation as a benefit. Many commented that they were unaware of the breadth and diversity of work occurring within communities both within their local area and more broadly. Making these connections allowed the CLs to see new

possibilities of the work they could do, and to develop a support network for themselves as leaders.

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*More people coming together, more people with different skills, diverse skills coming together equals better help, doesn't it? Better support and better initiatives and developments that can happen through it.*

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Strategic planning content in the course facilitated CLs to recognise their position as a leader, and that they were able to make their ideas happen. Sessions on leadership styles and how to develop strategic goals gave the CLs the language and tools that they either had not considered previously or did not have access to. This strategic focus led to CLs commenting that they felt they could delegate more than they had previously, allowing them more time to focus on big ideas, and developing collaboration and funding bids. These sessions also gave the CLs the terminology and framework to discuss their work in ways that funders and statutory organisations respond to. This supported successful bids and allowed the CLs to feel confident their ideas would be received well.

Self-development was not an explicit aim of the course but was something that really resonated with the CLs who took part. Increased confidence was frequently mentioned, as was the space for self-reflection, and the focus on *how* to be a leader within their specific community or organisation. The course being commissioned by a statutory

<sup>3</sup> Byrdsong, T.R., Devan, A. and Yamatani, H. (2016) "A ground-up model for gun violence reduction: a community-based public health approach" *Journal of Evidence-Informed Social Work* 13(1) <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15433714.2014.997090>

organisation meant that the CLs felt that the VRN and OPCC were investing in them as individuals, which supported their confidence and helped them to feel like their work was being recognised and valued as part of the overall strategy.

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*The opportunity to grow, develop and network were almost limitless.*

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### Negatives

Whilst the overall response to the CLP was highly positive, some aspects were less well received, or were identified by CLs as areas for development. These were largely logistical, relating to **time and accessibility**. Whilst engagement and attendance across all 3 cohorts was very high, CLs noted that taking part was a significant time commitment. Fitting the CLP between work, family, and community commitments was challenging for some, and it was acknowledged that not everyone would be able to participate because of this. Additionally, the location of the sessions divided the cohorts. For those based within Leicester, attending in-person sessions was easier, whereas those travelling from across the county had to take into account additional time and cost for transport. Where sessions were held online, CLs mentioned screen fatigue, and the difficulty in having group discussions. These are concerns that many organisations are facing though and are not unique to the CLP. Balancing accessibility and engagement will be a factor with all delivery methods.

Where sessions were in-person, being based at a 'neutral' space was seen as a positive by CLs. Where Cohort 2's sessions were held at

Leicestershire Police HQ, this raised concerns about whether or not this was a 'safe space', especially for those working in communities that have historically had difficulties with the police. Whilst the course team's approach managed this well and allayed some of these concerns, this does imply that holding the course in a 'police' setting may be challenging for some CLs and impact upon participation. Cohort 3 sessions took place at a community centre within the city, which was roundly praised and seen as being inclusive and showed the programmes commitment to community spaces as valuable places.

Despite one of the main positives of the course being the connection and opportunity for discussion between CLs, sessions overrunning or not having time to cover all the planned content due to discussions taking longer than expected was raised as a negative by CLs. This suggests that CLs expectations differed from those of the course team, who saw this discussion as more valuable. The CLs view was that they had dedicated this time to hear from the course leaders and guest speakers, and that discussions could have been moderated to allow time for all the planned content.

The opportunity to network was seen as highly valuable by CLs, and the Community Leaders Network (CLN) (see page 13) set up by Cohort 1 was mentioned frequently. However, it was commented that the CLN seemed to lack direction and purpose, with CLs wanting more defined organisation and a clearer approach for the network.

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*What seems to happen every time we meet up is we want to realign our vision and that happens every time we meet.*

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The CLN is clearly still in development and received very positive feedback in general. However, for this to be successful on a long-term scale, there may need to be a more defined structure and terms of reference for the group. One of the reasons why this has not yet happened, is that the CLs see the CLN as a community of equals, meaning there is a slight reluctance to become the 'leader of the leaders'. As this is a clear concern of those involved within the CLN, it is likely that these discussions will take place organically, however, supporting networks like this requires an awareness of these issues.

## Outcomes of the CLP

### Were the aims met?

It is important to consider effectiveness of a project in relation to its aims. As stated, the CLP was aiming to build CLs knowledge and skills, and support new projects within communities. It is clear that the CLP has achieved this. From the evaluation process, the CLs, course team, and VRN all perceived the aims of the CLP slightly differently. The VRN set out to develop clearer links with community organisations and develop channels of communication on a local level to facilitate the broader violence reduction agenda. The course team wanted to empower CLs to feel confident as leaders and able to reflect upon their own journey within their communities. CLs had less defined aims for their participation, with many applying to the CLP to gain more information, or out of a curiosity to find out what the programme had to offer.

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*It was a bit of a, "Let's just see what happens." I read the overview, thinking, "OK, there's a few bits here that I think I'm going to need".*

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This curiosity rather than having clear developmental aims for participation in the programme maybe due to the Cohorts representing more established CLs, who already have experience of a variety of aspects of this work. Those who are 'emerging' community leaders may have more specific aims for participation, such as building their network or skill development.

These differing aims suggest that the recruitment information could have been more explicit about the purpose of the CLP. Whilst the VRN and OPCC carried out a rigorous process of screening applicants to gain a mix of location, organisation type, and community focus, some CLs themselves did not see their applying to participate as strategic for themselves or their organisation.

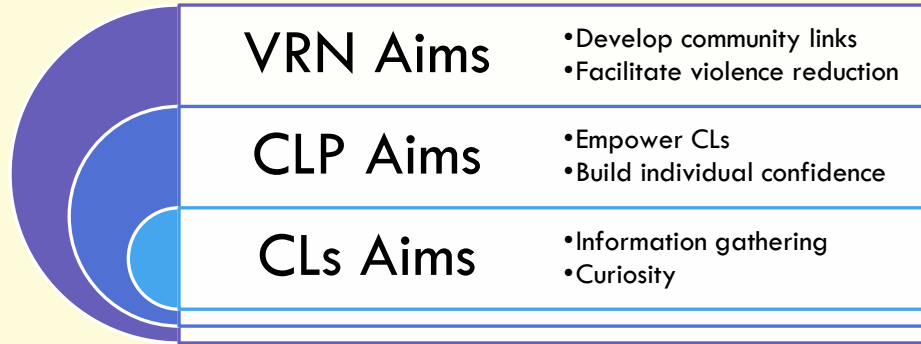


Figure 4: Programme Aims

Of the evidence available from the evaluation, CLs have developed promising planned strategies and secured funding for future activities that will benefit local communities. These activities indirectly support violence reduction efforts and suggesting that the CLP has met its aims. However, at present the longer-term effects of these activities are unclear. This suggests that future versions of the CLP would benefit from including longer-term data collection to show the outcomes on a broader scale. This might include requiring delegates to report on what they have achieved within a year of completing the course. Additionally, an assessment of existing data collected by the VRN correlating areas where violence occurs and the number of CL-led projects in those areas would be a possible method to quantify the CLP's impact on violence reduction.

### Outputs

There are a variety of outputs from the programme. 93% of CLs had started new projects since taking part, which included community events, youth programmes, starting Community Interest Companies (CICs), developing training programmes for communities, and hosting networking

events. The case examples in this report are illustrative, but are by no means a comprehensive view of the work that has resulted from the CLP.

The CLN is a network set up by members of Cohort 1 for those who had taken part in the CLP. The CLN has held regular meetings since its inception and all CLs from subsequent cohorts have been invited to join. The network's purpose is to facilitate information sharing between CLs, to work collaboratively, and to act as a representative voice for grassroots, charity and third sector groups from across LLR. Representatives of the CLN have been invited to join the VRN's strategic board, which has allowed them to have their views heard in a space that they would not otherwise have access to, and allows decisions made by this board to be more appropriate to the communities and individuals they will affect. Because members of the OPCC delivers sessions on the CLP, this helped CLs feel able to contribute when invited to strategic board meetings, as they felt familiar with members of the OPCC already. This gave CLs confidence that their views were valued.

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*The fact that we now have that connection to the VRN and the OPCC does help massively, I think. Just for the sake of they know who we are as people now as well, so they trust us and value us, I think that's been the main benefit.*

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The CLN also allows CLs to share information informally between meetings, through an online group chat. This has been used to flag opportunities to the group, share funding calls, or invitations to events happening across LLR. Where individuals may not have the time or ability



to attend the more formal meetings, this allowed scope to still be involved in the network. Additionally, the CLs found having a space to chat and gain support from peers to be useful and allowed them to feel connected.

The CLN is currently still in its early stages of development, with in-person meetings providing a space for members to catch up and share information rather than having a clear strategic focus at present. This is something that many of the CLs mentioned, with a desire for a clearer structure and purpose of the network to be established. However, this has become a formalised role, meaning that these changes are likely to happen in future.

### Areas of change

When reflecting upon the impact that the CLP has had, delegates shared examples that can be broadly clustered into changes at the personal level, at an organisational level and at a community level. These are expanded upon below:

#### *Personal level impact*

Largely aligning with a core aim of the CLP, CLs noted various ways in which the programme had positively influenced their perceptions of themselves. An increase in confidence was repeatedly cited by survey respondents and interviewees, as noticed within themselves, and highlighted by some of their colleagues. Within this, changes to self-esteem, self-perception and self-development were all noted as a direct outcome of having engaged with the CLP.

## CASE STUDY: STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT

Members of Cohort 3 have recently been awarded funding to conduct a research project between LLR and Sweden, in addition to starting a new CIC focusing on young people's support.

*"We just **started a CIC** this year to support youth work across Leicester... we're going to Sweden next year to do a research project about youth work."*

*"We're going to go and visit the youth group and then we're going to take our findings and come back to our youth group and say okay, **what do you think we should change** here and then we're going to do a whole showcase event and film, and all sorts. **It's going to be so exciting.**"*

Factors that supported this shift were:

- Feeling that their work was valued by the VRN and statutory bodies.
- Meeting other like-minded community-driven individuals.
- Being empowered through enhancing and learning new knowledge, technical language, and skills, with opportunities to enact these.
- Having the language to articulate the value and uniqueness of their work.

As a result of this, CLs shared changes in their approach to work:

- Refining their job roles, signposting to other services, and delegating where appropriate.
- Seeking guidance strategically where needed from those with specialist knowledge, such as other CLs or statutory bodies.
- Putting themselves forward for positions of leadership or authority.

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*She was quite transparent in saying that the programme had given her the confidence to be able to go off and run that [training].*

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Together, these changes at a personal level allowed CLs to be more strategic in their approach, leading to more ambitious projects and work taking place. This was a direct result of delegates feeling more confident and comfortable with their role as a 'leader', allowing them to focus on progression and development beyond the work they and their organisations were already doing.

#### *Organisational level impact*

At an organisational and business level, some CLs shared how their newfound technical knowledge, confidence and connections has enhanced their short-term practice and their long-term visions for their work. Survey data showed that 42% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the CLP gave them skills that they could not have gained elsewhere.

## CASE STUDY: PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

A CLP delegate has recently been awarded funding to conduct a community-based initiative working with local young girls to bring them together in a safe space. The project aims to develop their practical skills, support them in generating an income and facilitate challenging conversations about their lives centring around upcycling their bedroom furniture.

*"[It] happened quite organically as part of the leadership programme... and it developed into the Material Girls project"*

*"[It's] getting our teenage girls out of their bedrooms, off their phones, with a piece of furniture from their bedroom that we learn to flip, upcycle. But then, we also use that space to generate [difficult] conversations"*

Translating these skills and knowledge into practice, CLs shared the following areas of noticeable growth within their organisations post-CLP:

- Having a clear vision, mission and goals for their work that is underpinned by action plans, clear communication/advertising strategies and strategic use of CLs time and resource to enact these.
- Draw upon the expert knowledge of newly established networks.
- Being able to locate the significance of their work within the local community and surrounding provisions – and, importantly, feeling that their work was valued by statutory services.

- Expand the current provision that they offer, either individually or in collaboration with other CLs met through the CLP.
- Having the confidence to start new projects and organisations, develop new training and partnerships, and submit bids for funding (many of which have been successful).

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*[A] year ago, if you'd said to me, "You're going to write a bid," I'd be like, "No, I don't think so. I'm dyslexic, no, like severely dyslexic, I just can't do it, just can't do it." But just getting the guidance, looking at a few examples, having an idea, just that concept that I think, "Do you know what? I'd, I would put money in this, like I want to put money in this."*

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#### *Community level impact*

In addition to changes to CLs self-perception and practice, broader outcomes were shared relating to the wider community. These more wide-reaching goals and initiatives are largely underpinned by a strengthening to the aforementioned areas, coupled with a substantive increase in knowledge surrounding who else is working within the community, what areas of need are being met, what gaps in provision exist and what areas of need exist or are emerging. Some ways in which the CLP has supported CLs to effect change within LLR are detailed below:

- Data sharing where appropriate between organisations to better understand areas of need and how they can expand to meet said need or draw wider attention to a problem.

- Creating community-based events to promote diversity, inclusion and cultural educational in meaningful and inspiring ways.
- Responding to local needs and initiating interactive services, such as sport clubs, groups and facilitates.
- Creating and disseminating materials, best practice documents and self-help guides to support low resources community members to partake in purposeful activities, such as summer holiday workbooks for parents, carers and young people.
- Supporting community cohesion, ensuring that provisions created for the local community are culturally and historically informed, acting to affirm diverse community members whose heritage is being represented and educate those who are learning about diversity.

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*We saw it in lockdown with people doing food parcels, that community cohesion, bringing people together. That to me was community cohesion, that was for me showing and seeing real community leaders.*

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The relationships formed within the CLP were highlighted by delegates, the course team and the commissioners as being one of the most valuable outputs of the programme. These relationships, both formally and informally, are said to act as a community of leaders that are enabling each other to do their best work and expand their reach throughout the community. This is being enacted in the following ways:

- The CLN has played a significant role in supporting networking, knowledge exchange, upskilling and support of CLs.

- Beyond this, building upon already connections with the VRN has provided a platform for CLs to enhance and promote their practice, but also influence practices and discussions occurring at strategic and operational levels.

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*Those sort of relationships, those networks that just would not have been built in the same way if it wasn't for the programme.*

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## CASE STUDY: COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS

CLP members came together to successfully host a Caribbean Carnival in an area of LLR where an event celebrating diversity had not previously been held.

*"We had Black Caribbean carnival dancers in the street, we had people doing Gujarati cooking, we had jerk chicken on the barbecue. **We brought colour to the community.**"*

*"It was such a success. It just brought a certain richness to that community that they hadn't experienced before... **it broke down a few barriers as well.**"*

## Evaluation

It is clear that the CLP was viewed very positively by all involved with it, and there are genuine tangible benefits that have resulted from this work. To effectively evaluate the CLP, it must be considered what the barriers and strengths are of the programme, and what the key learning is from this. This can allow any future work developed from the CLP to be more effective and strategically approached.

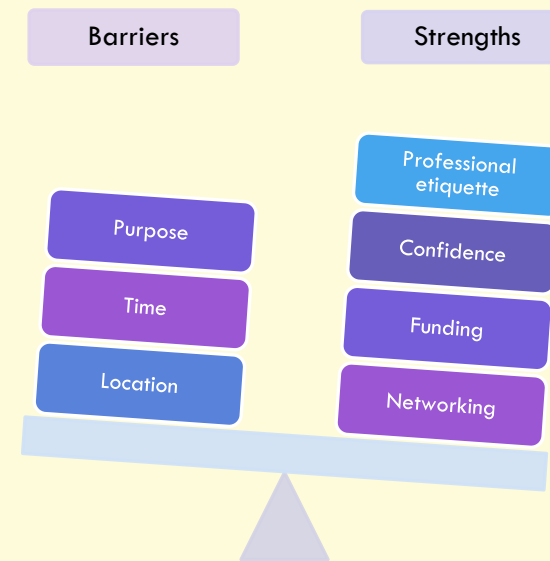


Figure 5: Barriers and Strengths

### Barriers

Various barriers to the success of the CLP were highlighted by the evaluation, some practical and some ideological. The practical barriers were around location and timings, to ensure that the course is accessible

and manageable for those participating. To overcome these barriers, it is suggested that future iterations of the CLP or similar courses are:

- Hosted in a community space
- Networking/discussion sessions are hosted in a hybrid format
- Session dates/times are made clear during recruitment

This will allow CLs to feel they are able to contribute to discussions in a 'safe space', but also allows the option of joining remotely for sessions that are likely to run over (such as group discussion/networking). Making clear when and where sessions will be when the course is advertised will allow CLs to plan well in advance and manage their commitments when applying to participate.

The ideological barriers are more focused on the purpose of the course and what it is trying to achieve. As highlighted, the VRN, course team, and CLs all had differing aims, and considering the outcomes of the course makes it difficult to state whether or not the CLP successfully met these aims. The CLs confidence improved, and many have started new projects since taking part, however, some of these are individual developments rather than community developments. Many CLs have set up Community Interest Companies (CICs) or consultancy services since taking part, which whilst this may have positive impacts upon communities, the course as it currently stands does not explicitly lead to or require community development activities as a result.

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*I don't do it anymore because I'm doing some other things now and it wasn't really for me [...] I've been there and done that and yes, I still believe it's very much*

*needed because you can have influence and effect change in that sphere, in a smaller thing.*

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The showcase event at the end of each CLP course allows CLs space to discuss their journey and their future plans. This could be an opportunity to allow CLs to focus the skills and knowledge they have developed more explicitly into communities, by using this showcase as an opportunity to pitch a future project they would like to do. As various stakeholders from across LLR attend these events, this would be a good opportunity to network with others interested in similar areas of work and allow a more explicit focus on the CLP as part of a community development approach.

### Strengths

The strengths of the CLP were evident on individual, organisational, and community levels, as discussed throughout this report. Following the programme CLs were more confident in their work and themselves as leaders, allowing them to be more ambitious in their work and develop bigger ideas. This developed confidence was supported by having a clear network of leaders, allowing coworking and joint projects to be developed as well as providing social and emotional support for each other. Some of these collaborations have developed into successful funding bids and new work taking place within communities. The CLP scaffolded this work by not only developing CL's confidence but teaching them the 'professional etiquette' that is often used within these spaces. This allows CLs to have their ideas and vision heard by gatekeepers, and for this to come across in a way that is more likely to receive funding and/or support from statutory institutions. For many of the CLs feeling



able to discuss their work within these spaces contributed greatly to their confidence and self-assessment of their abilities as a leader.

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*It's really nice to go to national events and national meetings and say, "I'm from [Organisation] in Leicester, we're a really small city but, do you know what, we've got some amazing leaders from here that are doing national things."*

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The course team were highlighted by many of the CLs as a strength of the course. The range of guest speakers was praised, as was the approach of the course team themselves. Whilst the course team's expertise was in professional development and leadership rather than violence reduction or community work, the delegates found their approach to be supportive, informative, and effective.

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*...the good thing was is they were able to bring in a facilitator who knows community. [Jones Consulting] and the team are incredible.*

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That the course team were based in and familiar with LLR, was seen as particularly beneficial. Having an understanding of the context in which CLs work occurred allowed discussions to be specific and meant that

delegates felt that they didn't have to explain or justify what they were doing in ways that those not familiar with the area would require.

These strengths all have had clear impacts upon the practice of those who have taken part in the CLP across the 3 cohorts. However, at this point it cannot be seen if this is creating longer-term impacts in relation to community development and violence-reduction. The course content that was delivered to the 3 cohorts has developed these strengths and does this very well. It is clear that the CLs have improved confidence in their ability to act as leaders in their communities and organisations, and to develop new work and projects based upon this. These projects appear to be more clearly rooted in strategic planning, with clear outcomes, which has contributed to greater success in obtaining funding for this work. These are all highly positive aspects; however, these things could be more explicitly embedded within the current course structure and requirements.

To build upon these strengths it is suggested that:

- Developing collaboration becomes an explicit part of the programme.
- The showcase event is used as a 'springboard' for new projects.
- A session focusing on framing your work for other organisations/professions is added to the course content.

### Key Learning

- A supportive and locally engaged course team and a diverse range of participants in terms of experience is beneficial for the success of the course.
- A network of leaders is positive; however, this needs to be supported to be effective strategically.

- Leaders most benefitted from development regarding strategic language and processes, such as Theories of Change, funding bids and developing organisation aims.

## Recommendations

Overall, it is recommended that the CLP continues to run within LLR. There are clear benefits to CLs from participating in the course, and this works well within the VRNs overall strategy. However, it is suggested that the following recommendations be enacted for future versions of the CLP.

- 1. EMBED LONG-TERM IMPACT EVALUATION INTO FUTURE ITERATIONS OF THE COURSE**
- 2. CREATE A CO-PRODUCED TERMS OF REFERENCE BETWEEN THE VRN, COURSE TEAM, AND PREVIOUS COHORTS TO ESTABLISH THE AIMS OF THE CPL AND CLN GOING FORWARD**
- 3. ENSURE FUTURE RECRUITMENT MATERIALS MAKE CLEAR THE AIMS, PURPOSE, EXPECTATIONS, AND REQUIREMENTS OF THE CLP**
- 4. TARGET FUTURE RECRUITMENT APPROACHES TO 'EMERGING' LEADERS OPPOSED TO THOSE ALREADY ESTABLISHED**
- 5. ESTABLISH OVERSIGHT AND A STRATEGIC STRUCTURE FOR THE COMMUNITY LEADERS NETWORK**

If these recommendations are implemented, this will allow the CLP to build upon the positive outcomes it has already established and ensure long-term sustainability. This will also support the development of communities in-line with the VRN's Violence Response Strategy, whilst allowing them to develop clear evidence of the efficacy of this on both micro and macro levels. The links between CLs, the OPCC and VRN will support further future work and assist with the overall aims of crime reduction.

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*It's recognising that whatever I might do, we all have the same aim which is to bring a community closer together and make it a safer and better place to live*

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## Appendix 1: Glossary

CL- Community Leader

CLN- Community Leader Network

CLP- Community Leadership Programme

LLR- Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland

OPCC- Office of the Police and Crime and Commissioner

VRN- Violence Reduction Network

## Appendix 2: Theory of Change

