



Impact Report

Report

2023 - 2024



Community Development & Health Network



Project supported by the PHA

About CDHN

CDHN is a regional infrastructure organisation working with local communities and across sectors to take action on the social determinants of health and reduce health inequalities. We work with communities to identify their own health and social needs and have a specific focus on those who experience the most disadvantage. With 30 years' experience and a cross sectoral membership of over 2400 individuals and over 110 community and voluntary organisations, we have an extensive reach across Northern Ireland.

We recognise, value, and gather evidence to understand the social determinants of health and people's lived experiences, and together with our members we design, develop, deliver, facilitate, and evaluate initiatives that improve health and address health inequalities. We use our learning, knowledge and experience to create social change and influence policy and practice through training, capacity building and community investment.

Acknowledgements

The Public Health Agency (PHA) are a valued partner in the delivery of the Elevate programme, we thank them for their continued funding and support for Elevate.

We are very grateful to every training participant, mentee, mentor and project participants who helped shape another successful year of Elevate. CDHN would like to acknowledge the following people and organisations for their participation and contribution to the programme this year and this impact report:

Mentors



Mentees

Angaza

Brookeville Enterprises

Compass Advocacy Network

Connecting Minds

Fermanagh Rural Community Initiative

Footprints Women's Centre

Forthspring Inter Community

IMPACT Training

Kilcooley Womens Centre

Kildress GAC

Mental Health Foundation

Moira Community Association

Rathcoole Crew

REACT NI

Resurgam Trust

Rural Support

St Macartan Ladies GFC

Tempo Maguire GAC

The Bridge NI

Warrenpoint Women's Group

Westenders

Elevate Team

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Caoimhe Shields



**Community
Development
& Health Network**

Introduction

The Elevate Programme

The Elevate Programme provides opportunities for the development of skills, knowledge and expertise in **community development** as a way to reduce **health inequalities**. The programme has been evaluated three times with CDHN continuing to refine implementation as a response to current needs and the learning from previous years.

What are health inequalities?

- Health inequalities are the **unfair and avoidable differences in health status** experienced by people in our society.
- These differences are caused by the **social determinants of health (SDOH)**.
- If we want to **tackle health inequalities**, we need to **focus on the social issues** facing individuals and communities as well as the medical ones.



What is community development?

Community development enables people to **work collectively to bring about positive social change**. It is not only about community engagement but a **longer-term process** which starts from people's own experience and enables communities to work together to:

- identify the needs and actions they wish to address
- plan and take collective action
- build on and strengthen their confidence, skills and knowledge
- challenge unequal power relationships
- promote social justice, equality and participation in order to improve the quality of their own lives, the communities in which they live and societies of which they are a part.

Expansion of Community Development Approaches, Department of Health (2018)



In the most deprived areas of NI **men die 7 years earlier** and **women 5 years earlier** compared to the least deprived areas



In the most deprived areas in NI **avoidable deaths** are **3 times higher** than least deprived areas



In better off areas in NI, women have **14 more years in good health** and men have **12 more years in good health**

DoH Health Inequalities Report 2024



Why use community development approaches to address health inequalities?

A community development approach supports communities to build on their strengths so they can improve the local health outcomes that matter most to them. It recognises the root causes of inequality which are often complex and encompass many social factors which lie outside medical care.

By embodying community development values and principles, we can support real partnership with local communities to identify their own health and social needs and improve health outcomes by using their combined knowledge, skills, strengths, lived experience and assets. This is in contrast to more traditional top-down health improvement approaches which focus on information sharing and education for individual behaviour change. While these approaches are important, they will not make significant changes to inequality gaps in the longer term*.

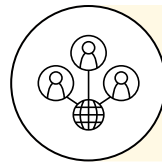
It recognises that group work and collective action are needed to tackle health inequalities as the social factors that influence health are beyond the ability of any individual to control. Community development approaches to health also retain a strong focus on redressing imbalances of power, wealth and resources, while promoting social justice, equality, inclusion and anti-discrimination, and giving a voice to those communities that are less often heard.

**Department of Health (2018) Expansion of Community Development Approaches: Report to Transformation Implementation Group*

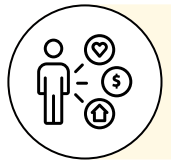
Community Development...



Uses the **energy, leadership skills, and knowledge of people** to tackle the problems identified by the community



Recognises the importance of **social support networks**



Encourages communities to **articulate their own needs**



Encourages **partnership working across sectors**



Emphasises **collective action** to reduce health inequalities



Fits with a **place based population health** approach



Elevate core elements



Elevate Training

Evidence-based workshops exploring health inequalities and how community development approaches can effectively help to reduce them. The training is free and open to anyone with an interest in health inequalities and community development. As part of the Community Mentoring and Grants Programme, mentees are also offered additional training on group work skills, evaluation and impact, health literacy and finance and monitoring.



Community Mentoring and Grants Programme

Elevate mentee groups receive ongoing support from a mentor to identify their own needs and actions in relation to improving their community development practice. Funding from the grants programme enables groups to take action to address health inequalities.



Information sharing and networking

Both the Training and Community Mentoring and Grants programme enable those participating to learn, share information and resources and network. The **Elevate portal** www.elevateni.org is an open website sharing evidence-based information, fact sheets, resources, toolkits and training opportunities. It also hosts Elevate Impact stories and reports and the booking form for Elevate training.



Reflective Practice

Community development is an ongoing process that has reflective practice at its core. All training participants are encouraged to reflect on how the training will benefit them in their role and organisation. CDHN have developed a **Reflective Practice Tool (RPT)**. It is used as part of the Community Mentoring and Grants Programme to enable mentees and their groups to reflect on their work and think about how they can ensure that community development values underpin, inform, and present in their practice.

Purpose of this report

- **Demonstrate the impact** of the core elements of the programme
- **Identify areas for improvement** in the programme



How we measured impact

The measurement tools collected information on the project outputs and outcomes.

Measurement tools used

- **Online surveys** administered to training session attendees
- **Monitoring and evaluation reports** completed by mentees
- Mentor **feedback meeting notes**



The impact findings are presented under two headings; (1) Elevate Training and (2) Elevate Community Mentoring and Grants Programme. Information Sharing and Networking, and Reflective Practice are evaluated as part of the Community Mentoring and Grants programme.

1 | Elevate Training

Open training: Health inequalities and community development

Elevate training sessions explore community development approaches as a way to reduce health inequalities. It is free for all participants and delivered either online or face to face.

It is designed for community, voluntary and statutory sectors, and includes:

- Health inequalities in a regional and local context
- The social determinants of health
- Community development principles in action
- Practical examples of action across the social determinants of health.



15

face-face sessions



5

online sessions



203

participants

Participants provided feedback after the training. The majority of training participants (52%) worked in the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector (VCSE); with (43%) from the statutory sector (see Figure 1). Most respondents stated they were paid employees (81%) rather than unpaid or volunteers. The respondents were based in all five HSC Trust areas; there were also 2 respondents who were based outside NI, reflecting the potential reach of online training.

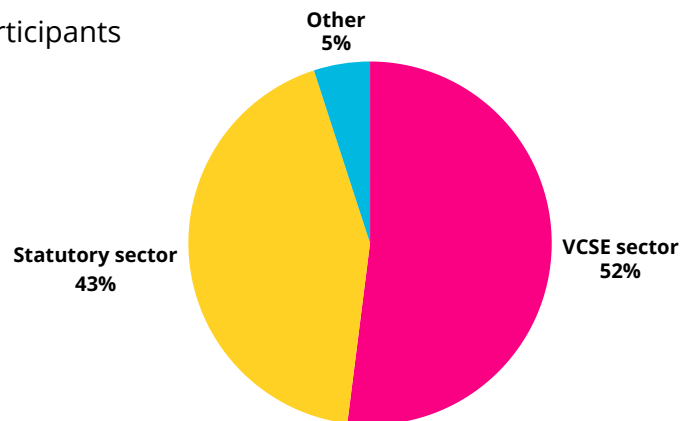


Figure 1: Elevate health inequalities and community development training participants by sector (n=101)

98%

rated these elements of the training as excellent or good (n=100)

- Pitched at the right level
- Balance between taught elements and activities
- Using the right presentation style
- Delivered effectively

“ Statutory sector feedback

“Really helpful **reflective exercises** and **group work**”

“**Speakers were excellent** and facilitated **very insightful** conversation”

“the training was **pitched at a level appropriate to all organisations** which **allowed me to reflect on how I can apply this to my own work**”



“ VCSE sector feedback

“It has made me realise that **we all have power** within us to do better for one another whilst **coming together on a wider scale**”

“I wasn't sure that I could make a significant difference...**the training showed me how I could**”

“loved the fact that it **allowed participation and interaction from those attending**”



Participants' knowledge and understanding increased

Figure 2: Participants who said they had a lot or considerable knowledge and understanding of **community development values and principles**

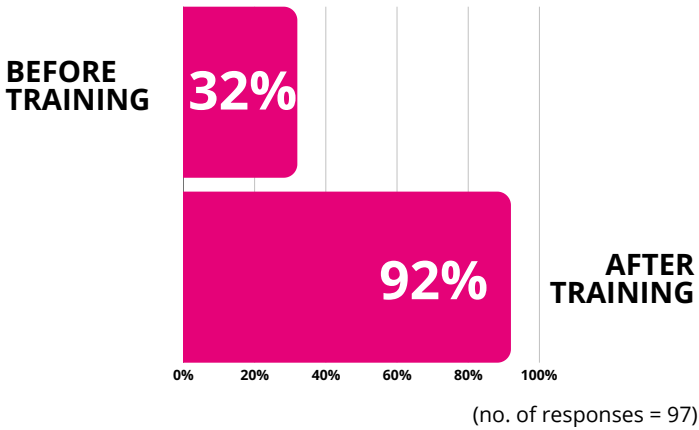
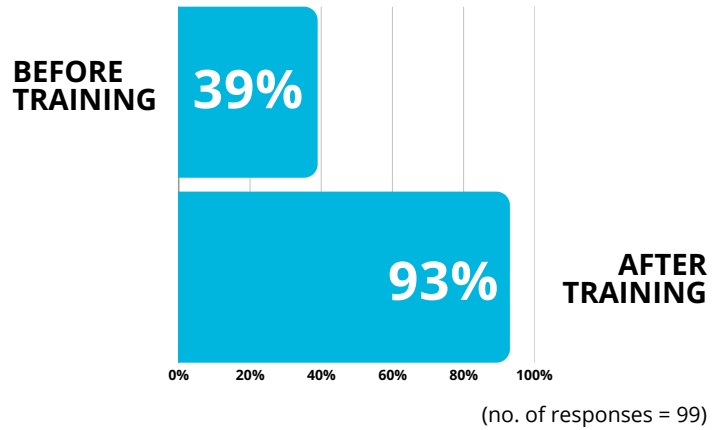


Figure 3: Participants who said they had a lot or considerable knowledge and understanding of **health inequalities**



Participants noted the most useful take away points from the training

“ Statutory sector feedback

“Meeting a wide range of other health professionals and hearing about their work and involvement with community development and addressing health inequalities in their everyday work”

...the importance of language and how words can become imbedded but have different connotations for people as seen in the Social Justice and Equality discussion

“ VCSE sector feedback

“the programme was engaging and informative and has raised my awareness, knowledge and understanding to take forward to impact change within my community”

“That we don't speak up enough and to make change we need to be more pro-active as a community rather than individual organisations to make impactful differences”

Participants discussed the training as allowing them to explore the difference their role can make locally. They:

- Learned new ways of **addressing health inequalities** in their community
- Realised the **power and ability** they have in addressing health inequalities
- Planned to **use the learning** to keep health inequalities in mind **during service delivery**
- Learned about **linking further with community and statutory groups**



Most participants reported the training had **improved their skills** and they felt **more confident**. They planned to share what they had learnt with others following the training. This shows useful motivation which may increase the reach and longer-term impact of the programme if the learning is shared more widely than just those participating in the training.

The training emphasises the importance of collaboration and working with others. Many of the participants highlighted that the most useful learning for them had been around the **importance of connections and partnership working**, and this would change how they approached their work in the future.

Suggestions for future development of training



Looking into what health inequalities look like in **each area**



Create deeper connections to enable organisations to collaborate and work together in their local area



Continue to allow for the choice of **face-to-face or remote** attendance

2 | Elevate Community Mentoring and Grants Programme

The Community Mentoring and Grants Programme is for community groups or organisations who want to develop their community development practice to tackle health inequalities experienced by the community they work with. Successful mentees receive six months group mentoring support from one of our four mentor organisations, and funding of up to £5000 to support them to plan and implement a project focusing on health inequalities in line with locally defined needs.

Project grants

The CDHN team hosted information sessions to promote the programme. Applications were received across each HSCT area, and a total of 21 community groups were successful in their applications to join the programme as mentees, resulting in a total of £100,000 grant allocation.

Information sessions



2

sessions



46

attendees

Applications



45

applications



21

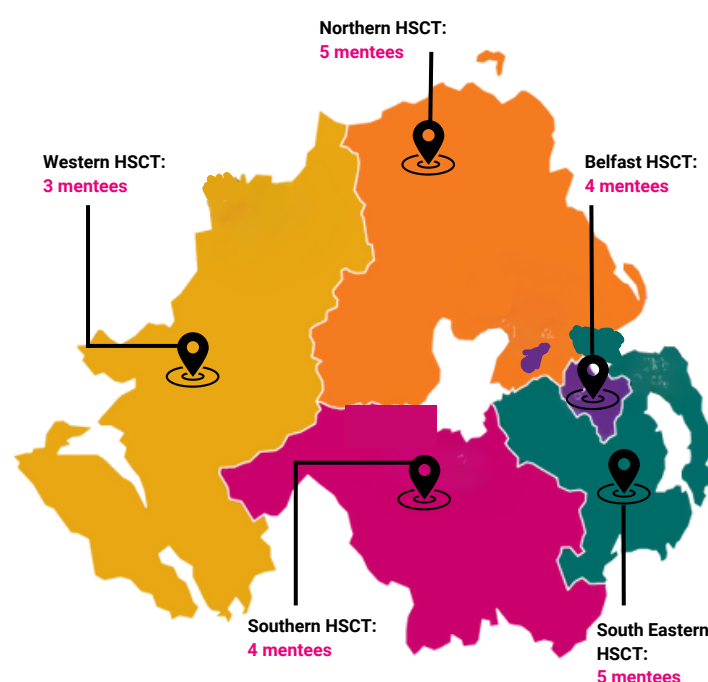
grants awarded

Project aims

Here are some examples of what projects set out to achieve through their project:

- Improve mental wellbeing
- Reduce isolation and loneliness
- Educate about support in the community
- Establish a steering group/committee
- Engage with other like-minded groups
- Address health inequalities
- Promote inclusion and understanding
- Reduce pressure on local health services
- Develop a more collaborative community
- Develop skills
- Support access to essential services
- Improve quality of life

Total:
21 mentees
£100,000



Total people reached:
Over 2,200

The programme worked with people from **all walks of life** including those...

- who are older
- from ethnic minority groups and from a mixed ethnic background
- who are parents
- with mental health issues
- with learning disabilities
- experiencing homelessness
- experiencing addiction
- who are children, young people and their families
- with neurodiversities
- experiencing poverty
- who are socially isolated
- in rural areas
- in socially deprived areas
- experiencing menopause symptoms

Projects engaged with their groups using a **variety of creative and interactive activities** including...



Health booths



Cooking groups



Touring NI sites



Arts and Crafts



Role playing



Story telling



Music



Community events



Poetry



Farming



Peer support



Pottery



Tea/coffee mornings



Mentees and mentors

Mentee groups receive ongoing support from a mentor to identify their own needs and actions in relation to improving their community development practice.

A recommended minimum contact time between mentor organisations and mentees was agreed between CDHN and mentoring organisations. The focus of the mentoring is determined by and tailored to the unique needs of each group to address the specific goals, challenges, and aspirations of the mentees, ensuring that the mentoring experience is relevant and impactful for each group.

The bar chart below shows the variety in the focus of the mentoring. The topic with the greatest amount of focus was support to deliver the project (67%), followed by networking (57%) and future planning (57%). Reflective practice, project budget and governance were the only topics which some mentees did not focus on during their mentoring.

Mentoring support

Number of sessions

One-to-one: 62

Group: 68

Attendance at sessions

Majority of groups had:

1 person (4 groups)

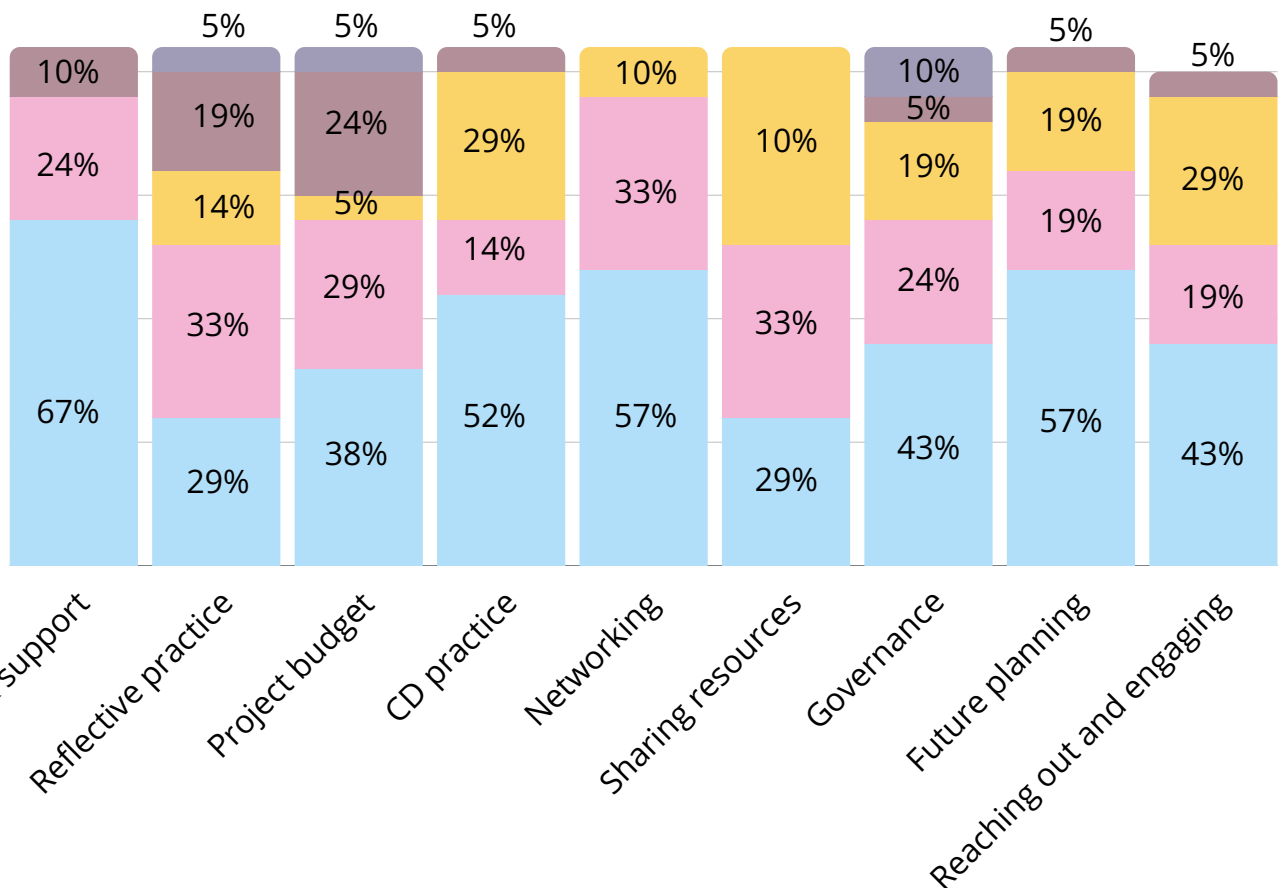
2 people (3 groups)

4 people (5 groups)

Sharing learning

20 out of 21 groups shared learning with their colleagues

■ A great amount
 ■ A moderate amount
 ■ Some
 ■ Very little
 ■ None



CDHN Team



CDHN manage and deliver the Elevate programme and provide ongoing support and guidance to Mentors, Mentee groups and training participants, building and maintaining a strong partnership with PHA to ensure a successful capacity building programme is delivered in the heart of the local communities. This includes:

- Building local and regional cross-sectoral connections
- Managing the allocation of the Community Mentoring and Grants programme
- Building essential skills and knowledge through training
- Supporting mentees with monitoring and financial returns
- Updating the Elevate Portal and sharing useful resources
- Support Mentors to provide tailored advice to mentees on achieving their project outcomes
- One-to-one support visits and phone calls to mentees
- Ongoing support and guidance with each of the mentee and mentor organisation
- Measuring and reporting on the programmes impact

100%

rated the **support and guidance provided by the CDHN team as excellent or very good**

“
Nothing is never too much for them to do - they are very professional and so glad we have had the chance to work with such a good team of people (Rathcoole Crew)
 ”



“
The support and guidance could not have been better...The Elevate team are a positive collective of sincere and caring people (The Bridge N.I)
 ”

One improvement was suggested for staff in providing support to projects:

“
...having additional platforms for projects to share their experiences, challenges, and best practices could enhance collaboration and learning across different projects (Connecting Minds Project)
 ”



Information Sharing and Networking

The Community Mentoring and Grants programme provides a space for mentees to work together and connect with one another. This networking allows them to share ideas, learn from each other's experiences, and make use of each other's strengths, creating a supportive and resource-filled environment.

Networking



43

launch event attendees



20

networking event attendees



48

celebration event attendees

109

new connections made

with other groups and organisations

“...It was useful in collaboration of **information** and individual networks; for example, Rural Support is creating a new location for Plough On group this year and through the networking from Elevate we have **found a potential Group Leader for this upcoming group** – this demonstrates the **importance of having a space to build connections** (Rural Support)”

“We have developed a large range of new connections, **both locally** in the implementation of the project **and its journey**, but also through the interactions with CDHN and the mentoring group, giving us some **fresh insights**, some wider reaching **community supports, outlets and resources**, but also to offer the services we can deliver to a **wider audience** (Impact Training)”

Elevate Portal

Mentees were encouraged to explore the Elevate portal for additional information and resources on community-based approaches, social determinants of health, health inequalities, policy, and the impact of previous Elevate projects. They were also encouraged to share the portal with others.

Access portal here:

www.elevateni.org



Feedback from mentees who used the portal was generally positive; however, they highlighted the need for improvements in navigation and user-friendliness. Additionally, they suggested incorporating more interactive elements to enhance engagement.

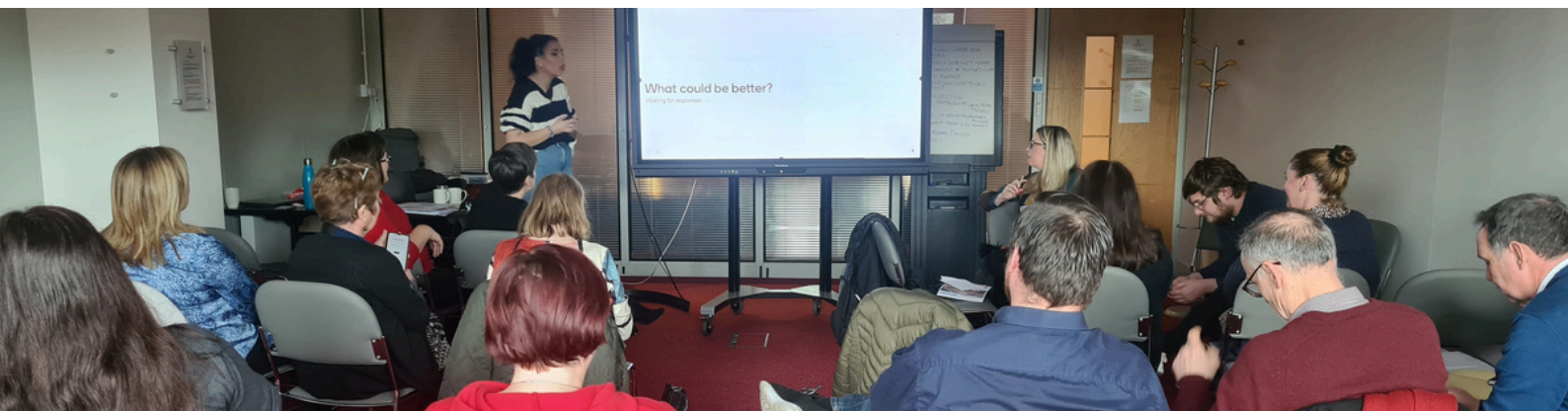


All mentees avail of free CDHN membership. It provides a connection to over 2400 members working across sectors in NI taking action on the social determinants of health and health inequalities, and the opportunity to be involved to CDHN networking, training, policy, influencing and research.

Mentee Training

Mentees have access to tailored evidence-based workshops exploring a variety of topics to build their knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to actively contribute to their organisational and community development goals. Session topics include health inequalities and community development, group work, health literacy, evaluation and impact practice, and finance and monitoring.

Topic			
Health Inequalities and Community Development	1 session	19 mentees	Online
Evaluation and Impact	1 session	17 mentees	Face to Face
Health literacy	1 session	8 mentees	Online
Group work skills	1 session	9 mentees	Face to Face



90% of mentees agree that **Elevate training helped them understand how community development approaches can address health inequalities** (n=21)

“Through **case studies and practical examples**, we gained a deeper understanding of how to **engage communities effectively** and empower them to tackle health inequalities proactively (**Connecting Minds**)”

86% of mentees agree the **learning from the training helped them to deliver our Elevate project** (n=21)

“Learning **led us to change** and development of our evaluation processes to **ensure delivery was more impactful** (**Kilcooley Women’s Centre**)”

“The health literacy training made us become **more aware of the impact that a person’s environment** may have on their wellbeing and how obstacles to access **may not always be obvious**, it may be **unique to that person** but has resulted in an inequality...one of our members who did not know that you can use your local pharmacist for support - **we signposted her** and she was able to get her problem resolved (**Westenders**)”

Reflective Practice

CDHN have developed a Reflective Practice Tool (RPT) to enable groups to reflect on their work and think about how they can ensure that community development values underpin, inform, and present in their practice. The RPT is used in the Elevate programme with mentors supporting mentee groups to complete the tool at the start and the end of their project.

The RPT has been evaluated internally through feedback provided by mentees and key insights were used to implement meaningful improvements to the tool. Mentees and mentors are also encouraged to continually reflect on their participation in the programme, and what it has meant for their organisation, participants, and wider community.

Programme experience

Our mentees speak for themselves...

Most mentees had a **positive experience** of participating in the programme:

“Our participation in this project has **increased our capacity** to envision, equip, energise and engage our community, to be more confident and impactful in **playing a transformational role** in community development and change in the lives of the men around us” (**Forthspring Inter Community Group**)

The **value of having a mentor** was emphasised:

“The mentors demonstrated a **high level of expertise, professionalism, and dedication**, offering tailored guidance and support that directly addressed our needs and challenges. They were...**committed to helping us achieve our goals**” (**Connecting Minds**)

Mentors also provided feedback on their experiences...

Elevate mentors play a crucial role in the continuous improvement of the programme. Their feedback, shared at regular engagement sessions with the Elevate team and at a dedicated feedback session in March 2024, helps shape the mentor model.

Ongoing assessment and development ensures that all participants benefit from the two-way mentoring relationship.

Mentors engage with mentees in multiple formats, including face-to-face meetings, phone calls, online sessions and group mentee meetings fostering a culture of networking.

The mentors felt that overall the community mentoring model is beneficial, providing opportunities for community organisations to make connections, learn from each other, share strengths, and to work together.



Impact of the Community Mentoring and Grants programme

The Elevate programme has five high level outcomes:

Outcome 1 | People and communities are better able to identify their own needs and actions

Outcome 2 | People and communities develop their confidence, skills, knowledge and understanding

Outcome 3 | People and communities have greater capacity to take collective action using their strengths and resources

Outcome 4 | People and communities are better able to challenge unequal power relationships

Outcome 5 | People, communities and systems promote social justice, equality and inclusion

The Elevate outcomes are based on the Community Development National Occupational Standards (CDNOS). Community development is a long term process, however, the Elevate Community Mentoring and Grants programme is only for a six month period. The intention is that the six month programme will provide a catalyst for long term change beyond mentoring and grant support.

In the application process, mentees identified the outcomes they wanted to focus on over a six month period, while acknowledging that the work to achieve their goals will take longer. At the end of the programme, each mentee was supported by CDHN staff to record their impact story (all mentee impact stories are available at www.elevateni.org/impact). In addition, each mentee completed an end of project monitoring form in which they were asked if their project had contributed to the above outcomes; and to give examples of how they felt they were achieved. Using this evidence, we present each of the outcomes and demonstrate how they were met across three levels:



Programme participants

People who took part in mentee organisations' programmes funded through Elevate



Mentee organisations

The organisations that received mentoring and grants through the Elevate programme



Wider community

The benefits of the Elevate projects on the wider community



Outcome 1 | People and communities are better able to identify their own needs and actions

A community development approach to health starts with people identifying their own health and social needs and issues and deciding what matters most to them. It is then about them taking actions to address what is most important to their community. This outcome explores if people and communities are better able to do this.

Programme participants

90% of mentees agree that **participants are more able to identify actions to improve health in their community** (n=21)

*"We established **feedback mechanisms** to encourage **ongoing dialogue** with participants and solicit their input on project activities...we fostered a **culture of openness and accountability**, ensuring that the project remained responsive to the evolving needs of the community" (**Connecting Minds Project**)*

Mentee organisations

95% of mentees agree their organisation is **more able to take action to improve the social factors** that impact on the health of the people and communities they support (n = 21)

*"The Syrian women have grown confidence to consider **social factors** they face aside from language and financial constraints....All the groups **enhanced our learning within community** and ways to help tackle and understand health inequalities" (**Footprints Women's Centre**)*

100% of mentees agree their organisation is **more able to connect with people and identify their needs and the community they support** (n=21)

*"As part of our project, we conducted a comprehensive **needs assessment** within the community to identify the **specific challenges and priorities** of residents. This involved...surveys, focus groups, and interviews" (**Connecting Minds Project**)*

*"The project was able to improve identification of needs and actions. The **activities went on while indicators were picked up and responded to**, for example, isolation, poverty" (**The Resurgam Community Development Trust**)*

Wider community

95% of mentees agree their organisation is **more able to identify community needs and implement actions and support for the wider community** (n=21)

*"With our young people delivering key messages **to their peers**, the **social reach and value** of the project was enhanced immeasurably as they **lead and delivered lots of the content to those around them**" (**Impact Training**)*

Outcome 2 | People and communities develop their confidence, skills, knowledge and understanding



A fundamental part of building capacity in communities for health is developing people's confidence, skills, knowledge and understanding. This is explored in this outcome.

Programme participants

100% of mentees agree the project **increased participants' confidence** (n=21)

*"The strength and conditioning programme for young females has given participants **increased confidence in their ability to perform gym moves...** has given them greater confidence in relation to **body image** by demonstrating that **being strong is good for health**" (St. Macartan Ladies GFC)*

90% of mentees agree the project **increased participants' skills to express opinions on their health and social wellbeing** (n=21)

*"Parents have identified that they are able to **label the challenges they face without judgment** or feeling that it is a lack of parental skills that make the struggle to parent difficult" (Moira Community Association)*

90% of mentees agree the project **increased participants' knowledge and understanding of the social factors that impact health in their community** (n=21)

*"...the experience of our ESOL tutor...included sessions around local culture and traditions to ensure those attending **became more aware of those they lived beside**" (Fermanagh Rural Community Initiative (FRCI))*

Mentee organisations

95% of mentees agree their organisation has **provided more opportunities for participants to develop their skills** (n = 21)

*"We organised a **series of skills workshops...** leadership development, communication skills, and digital literacy, providing participants with valuable knowledge and practical tools to **navigate various aspects of their lives**" (Connecting Minds Project)*

95% of mentees agree their organisation has **more knowledge and understanding of the social factors that contribute to root causes of ill health** (n=21)

*"**Listening to the experiences, knowledge and skills** the individuals had gave FRCI a real understanding of the **additional barriers** the group had as they integrated into the local communities" (Fermanagh Rural Community Initiative (FRCI))*

Wider community

100% of mentees agree their organisation is more able to **share knowledge, expertise and learning about health inequalities and community development in the wider community** (n=21)

*"We used the **story boards and artwork** at an International Women's Day event to talk about the project... also during the mental health arts festival to **further engage people** in the project" (Mental Health Foundation)*



Outcome 3 | People and communities have greater capacity to take collective action using their strengths and resources

Collective action happens when people come together to achieve a common goal. It facilitates a shift in emphasis from supporting individuals to supporting communities through their collective voice. This outcome explores how groups identified common goals and worked collaboratively to create positive social change.

Programme participants

100% of mentees agree the project enabled participants to **come together, identify common issues and develop a collective voice** (n=21)

*Participants felt heard having the different groups to discuss their personal lived experience helped to **build their voice together and consider issues**. The BAME event, group work and mentoring all allowed to build relations and share knowledge which will be invaluable in future **(Footprints Women's Centre)***

*"The project brought two separate youth groups together **who had never met before** and were able to **discuss issues** relating to young people and the wider community" **(REACT)***

Mentee organisations

100% of mentees agree their organisation is **more aware of other groups and organisations that can also help the people and communities they support** (n=21)

*"Parents have shared resources amongst the group and with SENcircle volunteers which has **enabled us to signpost** i.e different opportunities, therapies and other groups that might be beneficial. **Resources** around interventions have also been shared. We have made a lot of **networks** with other organisations who have similar target groups that will **help us shape future practice**" **(Moira Community Association)***

Wider community

95% of mentees agree participants have become **more connected with other groups/activities outside of the project** (n=21)

*The local first responder scheme was established this year, and was greatly influenced by local clubs...This was **only possible by our club being respected within our community**, and this has been achieved by our **engagement** with the wider community, not just players and families of players **(St. Macartan Ladies GFC)***

*"the group had a trip out to their local RNLI station and **on their own accord collected donations** and provided the RNLI with the donation and **speech on how they see the charity as having huge importance in their local area** " **(Rural Support)***

Outcome 4 | People and communities are better able to challenge unequal power relationships



This outcomes explores how people and communities use their voice for change, become advocates for change in their communities and challenge unequal power relationships. Power in a community is the ability to affect decision making processes using the strengths, skills, assets and resources within, it is the capacity to bring about change and the energy that gets things done.

Programme participants

76% of mentees agree participants are more able to **use their voice for change** (n=21)

*Our young people have become more actively involved in **community activity**, and through their own work and through demonstrating their positive impacts have **influenced community representatives to take heed and listen** to their inputs and messages...it is a **very positive start to increasing the voice** and representation of our young people (**Impact Training**)*

*With **information comes power** and the different facilitators gave the knowledge to the parents/carers who were then able to **advocate for their children/young people** in a variety of different settings (**Compass Advocacy Network (CAN)**)*

62% of mentees agree the project enabled participants to **use their influence and challenge unequal power relationships** (n=21)

*The project has brought **like-minded people together**...Having voices that are likeminded and **strongly passionate about the one topic** can be a strategic way to challenge unequal power relationships (**Rural Support**)*

Mentee organisations

72% of mentees agree their organisation is **better able to get decision and policy makers to listen to the voices of the people and communities they support** (n=21)

*We have had some **engagement with our local MLA**... through these conversations we have also discussed the **inequalities** children face in our community and the **lack of resources and absence of services**...highlighting the need for **local politicians to take action**, particularly since the re-establishment of the NI Assembly (**Moirra Community Association**)*

Wider community

76% of mentees agree their organisation is **more able to influence decision and policy makers to take action on the issues in their community** (n=21)

*As a result of an **improved evaluation system** we have collected **more relevant data** that supports us in our mission to **drive change for women's health with policy makers** (**Kilcooley Women's Centre**)*



Outcome 5 | People, communities and systems promote social justice, equality and inclusion

In pursuing social justice, community development and health approaches start from the belief that everyone should have equal access to health, wellbeing, justice, wealth and opportunity. Central to community development practice is celebrating diversity, challenging all forms of oppression, discrimination, sectarianism and racism and promoting social justice, equality, social inclusion and giving a voice to those communities that are less often heard. This is explored in this outcome.

Programme participants



96% of mentees agree **participants co-designed the Elevate project** (n=21)

Our participants participated in **co design forums** for the organisation that fed into the design for Elevate. We have **identified a need for empowerment activities for migrant women in the community**, which will be taken forward in a future project (**Kilcooley Women's Centre**)

100% of mentees agree **participants' diversity and cultures were more understood and appreciated** (n=21)

during our "One World Day" community event, we celebrated diversity by showcasing different cultures through **music, dance, and food**, fostering a **sense of belonging and acceptance** among attendees (**Connecting Minds Project**)

Mentee organisations



91% of mentees agree **their organisation is more aware of hidden, excluded or isolated people in their community** (n=21)

We reached significant numbers of young people that **otherwise would not have received this opportunity** and have been **excluded from sport** (**Tempo Maguires GAC**)

95% of mentees agree **their organisation has widened their reach to include people from different backgrounds and cultures in their work** (n=21)

By being inclusive of everyone the project has been able to **welcome people who wouldn't normally be associated with our club**, closer to our club; while also bringing people from all backgrounds together through various activities (**St. Macartan Ladies GFC**)

Wider community



95% of mentees strongly agree or agree **their organisation has promoted social justice, diversity and inclusion in the wider community**

The project was steered by the needs of the Syrian women, the older residents were learning and the sessions grew with the group to make it **inclusive and open**. This project has allowed the centre to move further into the wider community and **not just concentrate on members that specifically use the centre** (**Footprints Women's Centre**)

Conclusion

The Elevate programme continues to be incredibly impactful, with the benefits going beyond the training and programme participants to the mentor organisations and wider community, and developing skills, knowledge, and expertise in community development as a way to reduce health inequalities across sectors and throughout Northern Ireland.

It successfully builds capacity in community development approaches to take action on the social determinants of health. For many training participants and mentees it is the beginning of a new way of thinking about health inequalities - understanding and recognising that structural inequity can be addressed through a collective, bottom-up approach in communities that reflects people's lived experiences and local needs, instead of a top-down, individualistic approach.

Community development is a long-term process, and while the Elevate programme operates within limited time constraints, it has served as a powerful driver for change. It has largely achieved its high-level outcomes. Though future efforts should prioritise developing confidence and skills in challenging unequal power relationships.

It is also evident that as a training and funding programme, Elevate is more than the sum of its parts. It creates a cumulative effect, inspiring and motivating people and communities and galvanising them into action. The building of relationships, the connections, networking, information sharing, support, training and reflective practice have been hugely beneficial for the people and communities involved and have provided the scaffolding for social change and collective action to address health inequalities.



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