

THE EAST MIDLANDS GLOBAL GRANTS, LOCAL SOCIAL CAPITAL, PROGRAMME



The Catalyst Programme

EVALUATION

FINAL FIGURES – APRIL 2008



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Summary of Findings

- ❖ Catalyst is the East Midlands Global Grants Programme. It is aimed at excluded communities, especially those with low “Social Capital”: i.e. low community spirit, little community activity or structures and high levels of disengagement, unemployment and other problems.
- ❖ Catalyst takes a distinctive approach to mobilising excluded people by putting them in control. They themselves scope the issues their community needs to address, the sort of actions they wish to see developed, and select the proposals for funding.
- ❖ The community is supported in this by a local fieldworker who is key to developing the confidence that this “empowering” approach is *for real*. After a long period of disengagement this first hurdle is often high, but allowing full decision making, rather than advisory or consultancy, roles to community members is vital.
- ❖ This “empowerment” approach is founded in the East Midlands Strategy for Combating Exclusion in Policy Field Two of ESF Objective 3, within which Catalyst sits. This explicit “Community Empowerment Strategy” makes clear that the key to developing involvement of the excluded is to enable them to run their own projects, in response to problems they identify and with actions that they scope.
- ❖ That this Empowerment principle has developed in the East Midlands and within Objective 3 is no accident. It has developed out of the European principles of Partnership and Programming. This has allowed CEFET, as representatives of the Third Sector, to engage with small community groups usually outside the orbit of European funding. Key to CEFET’s ability to do this has been its ability to access Technical Assistance funding, to play a full role as a partner in the region’s strategic development.
- ❖ As a result CEFET has been able to build up a network of grass roots contacts – originally based on Beneficiary Groups of earlier ESF Community Capacity Building – to trial appropriate programme designs.
- ❖ Armed with this information, as a full partner, CEFET was able to persuade other regional partners of the aptness of Community Empowerment and have it inscribed in the region’s policy. This structural position enabled the voices of excluded communities to be driven into the policy and programming of the fund.
- ❖ Catalyst has already been evaluated externally (LRDP 2003) and found to build Local Social Capital and “catalyse” community activity and engagement. It has also been included in 2 DWP-commissioned evaluations of Global Grants by *Insite*, and featured in a presentation to the UK Presidency ESF event in October 2005.
- ❖ Given the distinctiveness of Catalyst’s approach, this present study seeks data on the individual beneficiary characteristics among Catalyst *participants* (not passive beneficiaries), and their trajectory as a result of Catalyst involvement.
- ❖ The main conclusion is that: even though Catalyst has no explicit targets or design imperatives around individual progression, the study (although small) shows a very high level of individual progression.
- ❖ In fact, it is tempting to conclude that high individual progression, among a group previously disengaged and alienated, is **because** there are no explicit employment or individual progression outputs.
- ❖ The study concludes with considerations of further development of the Empowerment approach into a tiered strategy for Inclusion, first at the East Midlands level and then at England level.

Introduction

Catalyst is the East Midlands Global Grants programme.

Catalyst uses the Global Grants reserve in the East Midlands Objective 3 Programme for 45% of total project costs from the European Social Fund. Accordingly the Programme is governed by the regulations attaching to ESF funding. It is designed to address Local Social Capital issues in the region, building on experience in the Article 6 pilots that ran in the UK, and elsewhere in Europe in 1999-2001. It is within Policy Field Two of the regions Objective 3 activity. Accordingly it falls under the Community Empowerment Strategy for Inclusion work under that Priority, as specified in the East Midlands Objective 3 Regional Development Plan, and is explicitly mentioned in that Plan.

Catalyst began operation in November 2001 in a pilot phase covering 10 diverse communities across the East Midlands region. The pilot was a partnership bid from the East Midlands Development Agency (emda), CEFET and the regions 5 Community Foundations. emda provided £300,000 in Match Funding and Financial accountability. CEFET undertook operational control and administrative responsibility as a "Technical Support agency" (TSA), the Community Foundations commissioned fieldworkers operating in each community.

The pilot lasted until the end of 2002, followed by an external evaluation of the Pilot from the consultants LRDP, who are European experts in evaluating Local Social Capital programmes.

The evaluation was – in the main – glowing about Catalyst's design and operation, stating that it met its primary goal. It made two substantial recommendations for improvement:

- Standardising the local support arrangements in line with the best examples of the pilot, and generally shortening the "command" chain between the TSA and the fieldworkers.
- Ensuring reaping the full value of long set-up times by ensuring provision within a community for at least 2 and ideally 3 years.

Following that the Programme has been rolled out, with those recommendations followed, in four further phases to another 19 communities, for 2-3 years each. CEFET took full financial and operational accountability of the project working where possible with the partners from the pilot, other interested regional agencies and new partners contributing match-funding. This partnership was formed into the Regional Catalyst Partnership, which acts as a reference group for the programme,

In February 2006 the Catalyst programme reached its two-thirds point, and in view of the need to learn lessons for designing any subsequent programme, CEFET began work on an internal evaluation.

The aims of this evaluation are:

- To record the operation of the project so far
- To tabulate the confirmed measured outputs of Catalyst and to project them to the end of the programme
- To sample the beneficiaries of the programme with regard to a series of **input** (length of previous inactivity....etc.) measures and **output** (subsequent activity after participation... etc.) measures
- To factor this sample across the recorded beneficiaries to estimate the actual impact on Social Inclusion of the programme
- To record similar assessments of a programme related to Catalyst
- To consider the potential for more formally building the approach into Social Inclusion activity in a regional programme, especially in the light of the Community Empowerment Strategy and the advent of a new ESF programme in the future.

SUMMARY OF STRUCTURE OF THE EAST MIDLANDS GLOBAL GRANTS PROGRAMME.

Below we list the key points of how Catalyst works.

However it is worth emphasising the most distinctive aspect, described as “revolutionary” by the *LRDP 2003* evaluation and as “unique” by the *Insite 2005* evaluator. That is the devolution of decision making on awarding of the small grants to members of the community themselves. Within parameters set by and upheld by CEFET, *Community Selection Panels* make funding decision.

This puts the community at the centre of activity from the start and builds confidence in the programme. It also delivers an often-stated policy imperative to “put the excluded at the centre of provision that affects them”. It exemplifies also, another key feature of Catalyst, the emphasis on participation in the *process* of activity as well as the value of the *product* of activity. We will see later that this principle, on its own, bears enough fruit to make the programme exceptional value. Or as one participant said (*after Ella Fitzgerald and Banamarama*) “it’s not what you do, it’s the way that you do it!”

Catalyst is defined by:

- ❖ A Local Social Capital Programme, aimed at small projects that in delivery and outcome contribute to the development of Community Spirit and Participation.
- ❖ A single regional scheme, to ensure even-ness of approach and quality, maintenance of the Local Social Capital nature, and to avoid fragmentation and dis-economies of scale.
- ❖ A central Technical Support agency (CEFET), undertaking overall financial management, programme management and eligibility checking. Responsible for ESF and Local Social Capital monitoring and aggregation of data.
- ❖ Composed of eligible areas with populations of less than 40,000, which form a coherent community.
- ❖ Grants available to micro–projects of up to £6,000 (up to £10,000 in exceptional circumstances) which build Local Social Capital. Bidding organisations must have a turn-over of less than £35,000 per annum.
- ❖ Decisions on grants taken by Panels of community residents made up of members of the eligible target groups. These are constituted as Community Selection Panels (CSPs).
- ❖ Projects funded have to show that, as well as aiming at socially useful outcomes, the actual practice of the project should build Local Social Capital through participation. Local Social Capital should be in the “process” as well as the “product” of activity! Projects are designed and run entirely by members of the target community.
- ❖ Autonomy of CSPs within the eligibility conditions of ESF and Local Social Capital compliance. They can tailor their priorities for the eligible area, customise criteria, vary the grant ceiling (up to £10,000) and take final decisions on which micro-projects to support.
- ❖ Local support is devolved through local fieldworkers, usually based in, and occasionally managed by, a local agency. Fieldworkers support the CSPs (with the central technical agency), publicise the local programme and its priorities, assist potential micro-projects in submitting proposals, assist approved projects in delivery, sign-post inappropriate or unsuccessful micro-projects to other channels.

Communities Participating in Catalyst 2001 - 2008

Phase	Period	Areas	Participating Communities
Pilot	Oct 01 - Dec 02 15months	10	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clifton, Nottingham 2. Misterton & Mattersey Thorpe, Notts 3. Derwent ward, NDC area, Derby 4. Women in High Peaks and Derbyshire Dales (18 wards) 5. Saffron, SRB area, Leics 6. Greenhill ward Leicestershire 7. Kingswood Estate, Northants 8. Wellingborough, black & minority ethnic communities 9. Mablethorpe, Lincs 10. Billingham & Kyme, Lincs
2	Apr 03 – Sep 06 3½ years	4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Rural Integration in South Holland 12. St Giles Estate, Lincoln 13. Disabled People in Lincoln. 14. Young People in Lincolnshire and Rutland
4	Jan 04 – Dec 06 3 years	6	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 15. BME Communities in Wellingborough 16. Hucknall and Selston in Ashfield 17. Young people in North Nottinghamshire 18. Young People in the Nottingham NDC area 19. Young People in Northampton 20. Ashbourne, Bakewell & Buxton
5	Jan 05 – Dec 07 3 years	3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 21. Young People in Charnwood, Leicestershire. 22. The New Parks ward in Leicester 23. Disabled people on Incapacity Benefit in Leicestershire
6	Apr 06 – Mar 08 2 years	6	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 24. Targeted inner City wards in Corby 25. Community Integration in Boston with East Lindsey 26. Community Integration in South Holland with South Kesteven 27. Young People in the Nottingham NDC area 28. Young people in the Derwent corridor – Derbys. 29. Young People in Lincolnshire and Rutland

The original 10 pilot communities were chosen to reflect a spectrum of types:

- Rural / urban / outlying estates / coalfield /seaside ...
- a cross-section of areas where previous funding had been / or not been available
- a spread across the counties of the region
- an element of thematic (as opposed to just geographical) targeting by including women and BME communities.

Subsequent areas have been including by developing areas throughout the region in response to a co-incidence of match funding availability and evidence of need.

Number of Beneficiaries in each Phase of the Catalyst Programme

Phase	Grant Value	Final Value	No of Micro Projects	No of Direct Participants	No of Community Beneficiaries
Pilot	£ 436,545	£ 545,681	98	1038	6815
2	£ 626,671	£ 777,828	1100	1369	10543
4	£ 996,364	£ 1,248,334	209	2765	71824
5	£ 526,574	£ 656,790	126	574	6514
6	£ 616,275	£ 770,344	100	809	86316
TOTAL SO FAR	£ 3,202,429	£ 3,998,977	643	6,555	182,012

Average Grant £4,980

This table shows a snapshot of actual commissioned micro-projects and their participating beneficiaries as at 31/03/2008.

Wider community benefit numbers are estimates by the micro-projects themselves and vary widely from “passive” benefits such as readership of a community newsletter to much harder “active” benefits such as attendance at a training course or session.

In the main it is beyond the scope of the programme to follow beneficiaries beyond the micro-project level, and this is certainly not possible for “indirect” community beneficiaries except anecdotally.

However, in the following pages are an analysis of a sample of direct participants taken from a range of micro-projects, taken across the phases of Catalyst, across the participating areas and distributed evenly between finished and running projects. Because of longer information chains in the pilot, it has not been possible to include data from the pilot phase, although some of that is analysed in the LRDP external evaluation in 2003.

Input statistics.

The first question CEFET sought to address in the survey is the following:

Is Catalyst reaching beneficiaries through its community-participation method that are:

- a) inactive, and
- b) unlikely to be reached by mainstream activity?

Inactivity.

The survey looked at the length of time participants had been inactive immediately before they began activity in (or in preparation for) a Catalyst micro-project. Respondents were asked how long it was since they participated in: work, learning or community activity.

Average length of time in months since actively:

In work

33.5 months



Only (?) **16.4%** of over-21s had never worked, compared to **62.7%** of young people (20 or under).

In any learning or training

24.7 months



Only **9%** of 21+ year old people had never engaged in any (formal or informal) learning since school. For the 20-and-under group this was **43.2%**.

In any community activity

26.7 months



There was little difference between age groups in this category. **32%** had never engaged in any community activity.

Taking the most recent participation in any of these three categories we found that - on average - participants had been completely inactive for

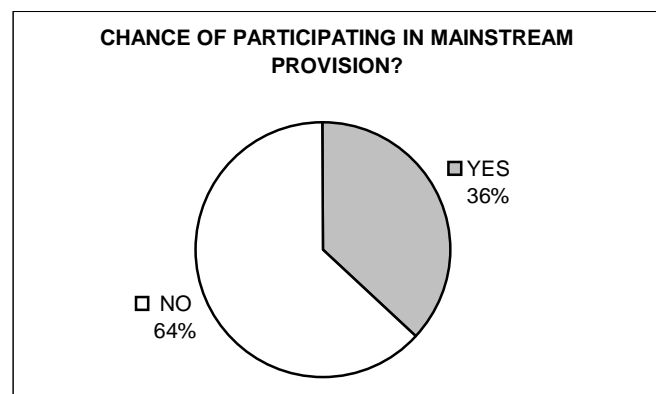
15.7 months



Only **17.2%** had been active before Catalyst – i.e. **82.8%** were inactive.

Reachable by the mainstream?

The survey asked was there a chance Catalyst participants might have participated in a project or scheme run by a mainstream agency. Respondents were prompted with examples including Colleges, JC+ and the LSC but also CVSs and Volunteer Bureaux. Revealing, only **36%** thought there was a good chance they might have participated.



Output Statistics

One of the main aims of the survey is to decide if Catalyst participation has an impact in individual confidence and dynamism that had measurable impact in activity measured in the same way as before Catalyst participation.

This goes way beyond the explicit aims of Catalyst, which is to develop Social Capital, confidence and energy as a prelude to developing Inclusion and participation in labour market activity. However quite surprising results turned out:

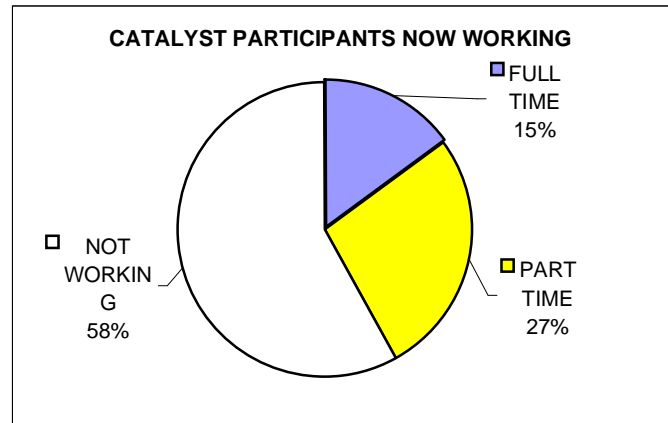
Using the same indicators as for pre-Catalyst activity we tried to assess the change in the following heading

Employment

Respondents who were working were asked to quantify how significant Catalyst had been in reasons for the change in their circumstances.

On average

Catalyst comprised **54%** of the reason. **23%** said "it would never have happened without Catalyst"



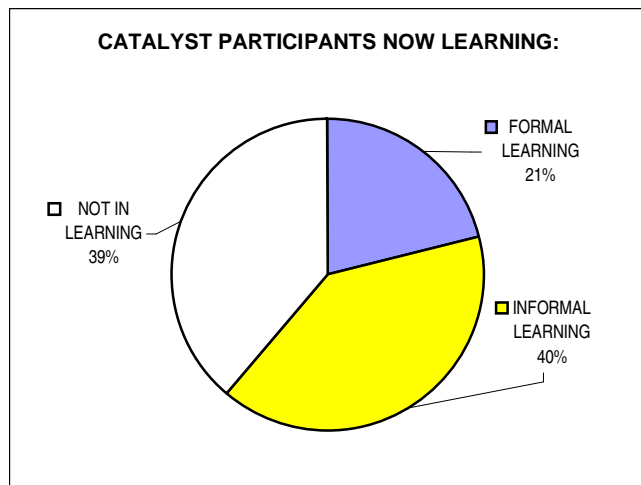
Learning

Respondents who were engaged in learning were asked to quantify how significant Catalyst had been in reasons for the change in their circumstances.

On average

Catalyst comprised **62%** of the reason.

25% said "it would never have happened without Catalyst"



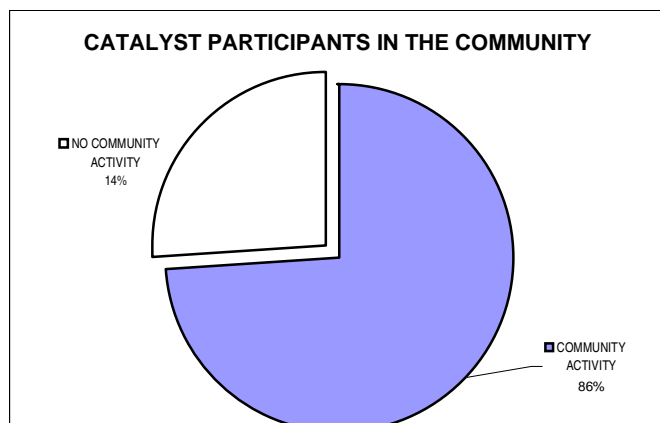
Community Activity

Respondents who were engaged in community activity were asked to quantify how significant Catalyst had been in reasons for the change in their circumstances.

On average

Catalyst comprised **63%** of the reason.

26% said "it would never have happened without Catalyst"

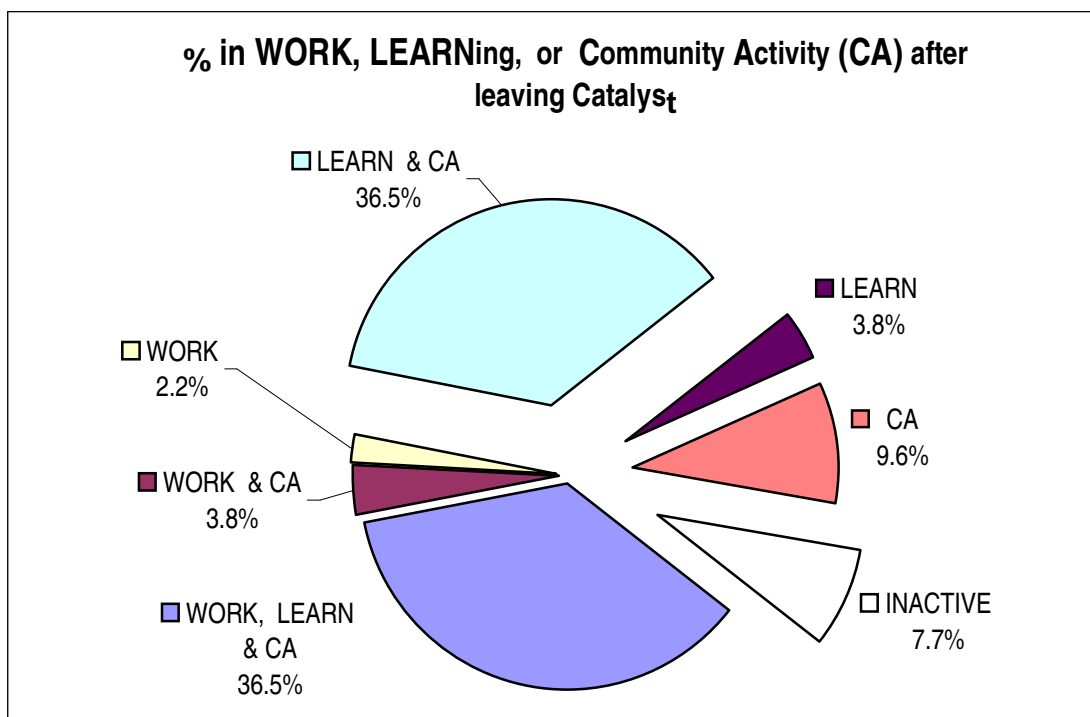


Catalyst: Moving from Exclusion to Inclusion

Catalyst is a Local Social Capital programme. It aims to develop community dynamism, co-operation and confidence as a basis for further development by the community and its members.

As such it has no direct or immediate output goals for the individuals involved in participation. Of course, community dynamism, co-operation and confidence are marked by the upturn of those things in the individuals involved, or those close to the activities and projects. A cultural shift in optimism, to try new initiatives, to lift up one's personal ambitions, affects people more widely than the projects themselves. It is beyond the scope of Catalyst itself to capture this cultural shift and its impact on communities in the longer term. However for the first time we have gathered Active/Inactive data on participants.

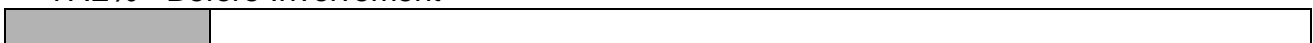
Taking all the above data together we can see a remarkable pattern of activity after Catalyst:



Of course, some Catalyst participants would have been “active” before Catalyst, the “Input” data actually allows us to make a comparison.

For those involved directly in Catalyst projects **activity** prior to involvement with Catalyst ran at

17.2% - Before Involvement



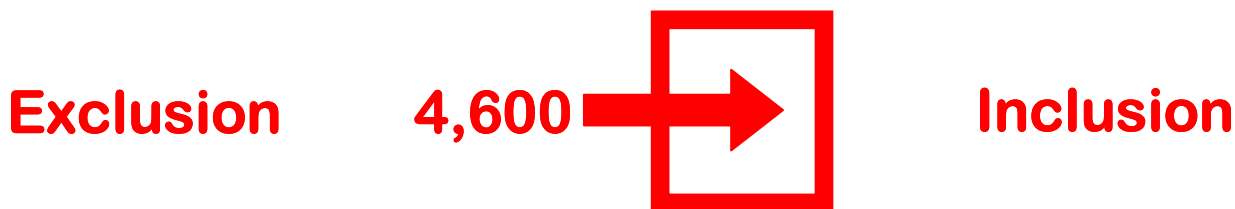
For those completing involvement (measured again, on average, 6 months after completion) activity ran at

92% - After Involvement



This marks a transition from inactivity to activity (among direct participants only) of at least **74.8%**.

Taken with the total Catalyst participation (expected to be over 6,200 people – it is worth reminding ourselves again – mostly in communities with low levels of infrastructure, community capacity, success rates or long term support) – this means Catalyst will move 4,600 people from Inactivity to Activity or...



This development, in 29 small communities of place or interest over 6½ years, will cost something over £4m, but (at 2003 prices) this works out at £877 per individual (this would be £1,017 at 2008 prices). This is staggeringly good value, and with this calculation you get all the actual “products” of the micro-projects, all their direct impacts on their communities, and the general raising of confidence and activity stimulated indirectly, by example, by Catalyst **free!** In other words this is in addition to all the Local Social Capital benefits.

The Gap between Global Grants and Mainstream Provision

Last year’s DWP Evaluation of the European Social Fund Objective 3 Global Grants programme (*Insite Research*) was generally positive about the role and effect of Global Grants. It did note the following problem, however:

“while Global Grants may have filled a gap in grassroots funding provision... there remained a significant step from Global Grants to other ESF or mainstream provision... The size of this step is so large as to prevent progression”. (DWP Research Report 287 [Dr. Gerwyn Jones et al] – p 24)

If this is true for Global Grants in general it must be expected that it would be particularly true for Catalyst which works with the smallest groups in the most excluded communities. CEFET has long proposed a particular sort of community capacity building, aiming at mobilising excluded people in their own organisations to organize activities to tackle their own community’s exclusion, as the next step. The East Midlands did follow this structure for a period under the Community Empowerment Strategy. However this sort of work seems to have been diminishing in the last 3 years. CEFET was happy, therefore, to start work with Nottinghamshire LSC last year on precisely such a programme. The programme, called the TIGER fund, has the following features:

- modeled on Catalyst;
- but with slightly larger, more established organisations, and with an element of developing provision by the organisation;
- targeted on West Nottinghamshire;
- selected by a panel of peers from the communities;
- grant size equivalent to £15,000 - £20,000 for a full year;
- required to demonstrate development of individual volunteer/activists from the affected community.

So this is a bigger Catalyst-type programme but with a more direct address to individual progress. TIGER only commissioned projects to start work in 2006, so output statistics are not analysed here, but TIGER can provide 100% input data by tracking recruitment of volunteer/activists.

The TIGER Fund – Input Statistics

Inactivity.

People signing up as volunteer/activists within TIGER are asked the same questions as for the Catalyst survey. As one might expect with a programme more specifically targeted on individual inactive people the statistics are more impressive in this regard.

The survey looked at the length of time participants had been inactive immediately before they begun activity in (or in preparation for) a TIGER project. Respondents were asked how long it was since the participated in: work, learning or community activity.

Average length of time in months since actively...

In work

43 months



54% had never worked

In any learning or training

29 months



26% had never engaged in any (formal or informal) learning since school.

In any community activity

35 months



59% had never engaged in any community activity.

Taking the most recent participation in any of these three categories we found that - on average - participants had been completely inactive for

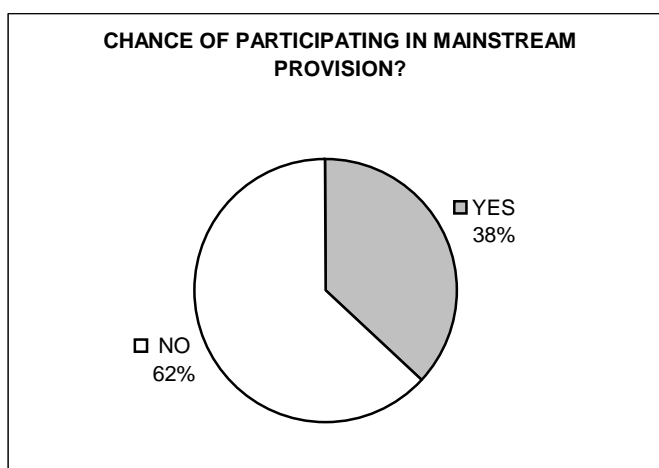
22 months



Reachable by the mainstream?

The survey asked was there a chance TIGER participants might have participated in a project or scheme run by a mainstream agency. Respondents were prompted with examples including Colleges, JC+ and the LSC but also CVSs and Volunteer Bureaux.

Only 38% thought there was a good chance they might have participated. This is an almost identical result to Catalyst.



These results are exactly what you would expect from a programme pitched slightly "above" Catalyst, and more directly individual-focused. Although there are some links to Catalyst mostly that is through reputation or "climate", direct community overlap is below 30%.

Imagine how a structurally linked programme might fare?

The Future of Inclusion Work - Summary of Key Issues

There seems little doubt that Catalyst succeeds in mobilising inactive people, it has also been shown (in the external evaluation) to achieve its primary explicit aim: To build Local Social Capital. It now proves to measurably stimulate direct Inclusion for its participants, **even though that is not a “foreground” or “frontal” aim of the programme.**

It is no surprise to CEFET, and many others working at street-level / Grassroots on Inclusion activity that Catalyst

- outperforms mainstream activity,
- is actually reaching the excluded,
- conforms to and establishes a basis for the region’s Community Empowerment Strategy and
- provides almost unparalleled value for money.

The questions that require attention now are:

- A. What role can Catalyst fulfill in the next Programme?
- B. How far can the strategy that set Catalyst’s approach and methods be extended to an integrated set of Inclusion activities?

Let’s take these questions in turn:

Future scope of Catalyst as a Global Grants Programme.

Catalyst will have operated for 6½ years by the end of the current programme. As the DWP Evaluation notes, in common with most Global Grants Programmes it has struggled with Match Funding problems. This has led to uneven levels of activity, diseconomies of scale and uncertainty of provision. There have been occasions where the level of Match Funding might have sunk below a critical level where delivery was impossible. All things considered the current level of activity is probably little above the minimum where effectiveness, strategic integrity and sustainability are achievable.

The implication of this is that, for a full seven year provision (at the price level of the next 2007-13 programme) will require Catalyst to operate at a minimum of **£5.2m**.

However given its success and scope CEFET is sure there would be demand for double that level of activity – **over £10m** – in the East Midlands.

CEFET recommends a level of Global Grant expenditure – following the Catalyst model – for the East Midlands of **£7.5m** in the next ESF Programme.

Another issue of Catalyst is that it cannot be an even programme. Start up requires time, and 3 year programmes for a specific community are proportionally more effective than shorter ones, widening the range of impacts and spreading indirect effects more broadly.

The implication of this is that a staggered roll-on of communities is beneficial, which concentrates spending in the middle years of a 7-year cycle. (See Annex 2 for an example).

If current Match Funding requirements persist, this recommended level of £7.5m would require identification of £4.125m Match – an unlikely prospect. The minimum figure would require £2.86m, which would be difficult enough.

It seems a strange irony that Co-Financing, introduced with a stated aim of removing the Match Funding barrier to access by smaller groups, should not benefit those that need it most: the recipients of Global Grants. It seem a natural option for Co-Financing to prove its worth by releasing funds as an **ESF-only** payment to Intermediary bodies to operate

Global Grants. Needless to say this must be done without any dilution of the special features of Global Grants rehearsed here and elsewhere.


An ESF-only Global Grants fund at the levels indicated here would require dedicating 4% - 8%, let us say **ideally 6% of total East Midlands ESF**, to the system. Ideally, we would also argue, not to Global Grants as a general system with unspecified content, but to a system explicitly modeled on **Catalyst**.

Can Catalyst approach and experience form a basis for a more general integrated approach to Inclusion? - A modest Proposal

We have noted above the indirect “climate” effect that Catalyst had to a programme slightly more beneficiary-centred, and slightly nearer the mainstream (TIGER) while still adhering to the region’s Community Empowerment Strategy. We posed the question of how a structural integration of the two approaches might work in communities facing exclusion.

Two years ago CEFET, TSEN and Leeds Metropolitan University developed an analysis tool, called the “SEND scale”, to analyse where a project or activity was situated in relation to mainstream labour market provision. Local Social Capital activity dealing with people a very long way from the labour market was at the bottom of the scale, which moved through community capacity building (very like TIGER), participation projects, barrier-related actions, basic and pre-vocational skills work up to NVQ. The scale gives a conceptual framework for analysing delivery in a Social Inclusion, Reaching-the-hard-to-reach, or combating inactivity Programme, and given the proven record of Catalyst and TIGER could be used to develop an integrated strategy:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	Level 8	Level 9
SOCIAL CAPITAL	“COMMUNITY MOBILISATION” CAPACITY BUILDING		NEEDS-BASED ACTIONS		TRAINING	- CENTRED ACTIONS		
Local Social Capital – Small Grants	Developing Community Organisations	Widening Grass Roots Activity	Community Controlled Participation Actions	Community Specific “Barriers –to- Employability” Action	Wider Basic Skills Action	Pre-Q Vocational & Employment Work	NVQ 1	NVQ2



The double line, in between Levels 6. & 7., is to indicate a division between specific Social Inclusion actions and those provided by the mainstream, not distinctively “Inclusion” and usually accessible for a wider spectrum of beneficiaries.

When explicitly followed, the Community Empowerment strategy did in fact commission a set of actions across the lower two-thirds of this scale in the East Midlands. The SEND analysis made the case that “to involve the Socially excluded, those hardest to reach, the most inactive, the furthest from the labour market or the longest outside the labour market a **stepped spectrum of activity between Levels 1 to 6 is required**, with concerted and integrated actions (plural) being planned in accord. The need for integration is not to seek a wide-spectrum highly intensive action aiming for quick gains, all the evidence is that this fails, but for a clear, community based strategy”.¹

Catalyst and TIGER programmes can clearly and effectively cover the lowest 3 levels of such a tiered approach. Persevering with the Community Empowerment theme, so successful hitherto in the East Midlands, could well be effected by a third “Barrier/Employability” set of activities covering levels 4, 5 and overlapping level 6, working at roughly double the value of the Catalyst or TIGER tiers.

In our view, such a 3-tiered integrated approach to producing a network of small, local, community-led activities entirely founded on the Community Empowerment principles would stand a good chance of actually delivering Inclusion within a regional programme.

¹ DWP Scoping Study on Capacity Building “Building Capacity for What?” (TSEN 2004)

