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Evidencing change

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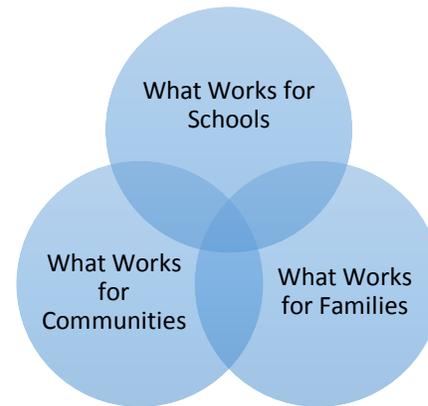
Centre for
Evidence and
Social Innovation

Centre for Evidence and Social Innovation (CESI) Innovation Zones

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www.qub.ac.uk/cesi

We are a large, interdisciplinary research centre, drawing together over 130 academic, research and support staff committed to applied social science research that seeks to improve the lives of children, families and communities. The success of all of our work depends on meaningful and long-term partnerships we develop with a range of stakeholders.



Director, research staff and support staff housed together in our new CESI building.

Campbell UK & Ireland is a national centre of the international Campbell Collaboration hosted by CESI.

Social innovations can be understood, most simply, as **new and original approaches** to tackling pressing **societal needs and problems** that lead to **lasting improvements** in people's lives.

Social innovations are necessary because many of the key challenges facing society – such as educational underachievement, antisocial behaviour and criminal activity, child abuse and neglect, obesity and low physical health, or poor mental health and addiction – have been stubbornly resistant to change.

At the heart of our work is a belief that social innovation needs **high quality evidence**. It is only through the generation and application of evidence that we can learn from previous efforts, be challenged to think differently and to identify and demonstrate the effectiveness of novel approaches to social problems.

Exploratory research that seeks to understand the nature of particular societal problems and help identify where social interventions need to be focused, drawing upon a wide range of innovative qualitative and quantitative methods.

Evaluative research that seeks to determine whether particular social interventions are effective in tackling social problems and leading to measurable improvements in the lives of children, families and communities, typically involving the use of randomised controlled trials or equivalent robust methods.

Evidence synthesis that seeks to draw together and learn from the wider evidence base regarding particular social problems and the effectiveness of various approaches to tackling these, most commonly using systematic review methods that follow the rigorous standards of international organisations such as the [Campbell](#) and [Cochrane](#) Collaborations.

In addition to working with key stakeholders on individual research projects, the Centre has committed investment the development of two long-term and sustained community partnerships locally in Belfast:

Greater Shankill Partnership (Children and Young People Zone)
Colin Neighbourhood Partnership

The Innovation Zones work spans across the core CESI research strands.

We aim to create spaces where we can question existing assumptions and practices, think creatively and develop new and innovative ways of working by drawing together and harnessing the considerable expertise that exists within local communities, the professions and the academic world. **Working together in real and meaningful partnerships to make collective impact.**

Our shared vision is that we not only achieve measurable and lasting improvements in the health and social wellbeing of both communities but that both become beacons for social innovation nationally and internationally, setting out novel and effective ways of transcending some of society's key challenges.

Our work with the Innovation Zones is recognised as one of the University's **Social Charter** programmes (www.qub.ac.uk/social-charter/)

In order to frame the theoretical underpinnings of the work of the Innovation Zones, we are proposing the following three pillars:

1. **Social Interdependence** – creating shared goals, which promote good relationships.
2. **Social Innovation** – using multiple perspectives and trans-disciplinary evidence to produce creative and context relevant solutions.
3. **Critical Thinking** - thinking critically about evidence and understanding the appropriate evidence for improving outcomes and for improving practice.

In order to make collective impact we are working together:

Building capacity (bi-directional).

Co-producing community development initiatives.

Collaborating on research funding proposals and academic outputs.

Exploring Networks on place-based development (local, national and international).

- Currently, there is one key community-based participatory research intervention project that spans both the Colin and Shankill communities, that is, the ‘Crescendo’ project.
- ‘Crescendo’ is inspired by ‘El Sistema’, a music education programme that boasts a range of benefits for the children involved and their wider communities.
- Committee driven, the CESI team are working with the community leaders from the Colin and Shankill communities, as well as representatives from the Ulster Orchestra.
- A process and implementation study (PhD studentship) is being undertaken in the 4 schools currently receiving Crescendo. The project has supported the Ulster Orchestra in the development of the programme logic model; the development of programme content; the structure of lesson plans and development of programme manual. To ensure readiness for evaluation and a fair test of programme impact, this stage has also included the development and piloting of pre and post-test measures of assessment and the identification of implementation factors that may impact on programme fidelity.

- The Innovation Zones team have been supporting the Greater Shankill Children and Young People Zone and their 20 year vision to transform the lives of those within the Shankill community, starting with a commitment to the children and young people.
- Practically, this involves lifelong engagement (in the form of conversations) with children and young people to establish their goals and aspirations and to identify and provide wrap around support where necessary.
- The process, protocol, guides, tools, resources, training mechanisms (for those significant adults holding the conversations with the children and young people) etc., for this process have been co-designed by the teams from CESI and the Shankill Children and Young People Zone. Conversations with children and young people are on-going.
- Iterative process – e.g. pathfinder feedback, analysis workshops, document revisions.
- The findings from these conversations, as well as continually refining the process, will inform a child-centred, bottom up, outcomes framework for the community, which will inform service provision and community resource.

- Application was submitted in January 2019 to the 'Urban Innovative Actions' EU funding scheme under the theme of Urban Poverty.

'The X-Change Project: Addressing Urban Poverty Through Community-University Evidence and Social Innovation Centres (Qzones)'

- Co designed and co developed between Belfast City Council, Greater Shankill Partnership, Colin Neighbourhood Partnership, Queen's University Belfast.
- It is an evidence & social innovation X-Change project that proposes a local, individualised, holistic & person-centred model of tackling persistent poverty, as faced by the communities.
- To facilitate this X-Change, the presence of community-university innovation centres in the two communities and the university, in partnership with all project partners, is proposed, i.e., 'QZones' (QZone Shankill/QZone Colin & QZone CESI).

The QZones will (key features):

- Provide a platform for testing new innovative solutions to addressing urban poverty using person-centred evidence-informed approaches with embedded rigorous implementation & evaluation monitoring.
- Be staffed by CESI academics/researchers & community professionals, working together in inter-disciplinary and inter-sector teams. This will enhance evidence-based practice & facilitate bi-directional knowledge exchange.
- Provide space & resource to facilitate professional development & organisational cultural change, e.g. CESI researchers will learn from community practitioners, becoming more embedded in community practice & life & vice versa.
- Linked to the above, all staff roles will have core delivery, education & research aspects to the roles to facilitate such knowledge X-Change.

'QZones' will host 4 main implementation work packages with the collective aim of breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty:

- (1) (CESI) This exchange is facilitated by the development of three 'QZone' sites, 'QZoneColin', 'QZoneShankill', 'QZoneCESI'. These 'QZones' will be a physical space, with 'shop front' presence in each of the communities, and the university which will host a range of academics, researchers and practitioners working together on a range of evidence and social innovation activity. Activity will be centred on: evidence and research synthesis, generation and management; and professional development/ capacity building activity of professionals working across all partners.
- (2) (Colin Community) This is a person centred & holistic approach to supporting parents by creating individual pathways & wrap around support enabling them to engage better with evidence informed parenting programmes with follow up support to encourage individuals into harder skills based & employability training. Additional extended collective outcomes are also anticipated: e.g., improved quality of home life, better family/child outcomes & wider benefits including increased participation in decision making & community engagement.
- (3) (Shankill Community) A child-centred bottom-up approach, inviting all children in the area to engage in a series of 'conversations' about the 'story they want their lives to be'. These conversations will inform designated pathways & the provision of sustained support to help the children achieve their desired outcome. Additional extended collective outcomes are also anticipated for the family & wider community.
- (4) (CESI) Designed to provide a rigorous & on-going evaluation of the project led by an independent senior CESI academic. This work package will also evaluate & compare the three different sets of activities highlighted in the above work packages on a series of specific results.

- Development of an Evidence and Social Innovation Course
- Generation of a community seminar series
- Visiting fellows with CESI
- Recent Strategy Planning Day

Thank you

CESI Innovation Zones Team:

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