

## TSRC Advisory Board 28.09.09

Issues raised in group discussion about **Below the Radar**

### About definition

- What is the purpose of looking at BTR – why do we want to know about BTR activity?
- Core activity should be unregistered actions and informal organisations
- Look at developing different dimensions or phases of activity
- Is it possible to be above and below the radar(s) simultaneously?
- When looking at different types of BTR activity it's important to look for thresholds i.e. the £5K limit for "small charities" or threshold for attracting a community loan
- How to distinguish Third Sector activity between commercial, neighbourly, service delivery, informal economy – boundaries

### Lifecycles

- Should we follow the BTR activities that are on an upward trajectory to see how they evolve?
- How important is longevity? Too much focus on sustainability can lead to 'flogging a dead horse'
- What is the relationship between availability of grant funding and sustainability? Sometimes grants keep activities going in an artificial way

### Funding, support and extent of activity

- Is there a relationship between the availability of support infrastructure (i.e. network organisations and community resources) and the extent of BTR activity?
- What is the relationship between the availability of funding in different areas and the extent of activity
- What is the relationship between grants, commissioning and mission?
- Does the existence of formal groups crowd out then informal voluntary sector?
- What is the relationship between local authorities and BTR activity? In what ways do local authorities encourage or discourage BTR actions?
- Does the socio-economic construction of an area matter? Are wealthy areas more BTR active?
- What impact does the transition from voluntary to paid staff have on the way that BTR activity operates?
- Are you more effective being below the radar?
- What are benefits and disadvantages of going BTR?
- Will personalisation help BTR to flourish?
- How can those organisations who want to remain small be supported to stay small without losing their identities?
- Are there occasions when being BTR is the only option if you want to achieve your goals?
- What do organisations need to achieve their aims? Do they want to be left alone?

## **Leadership and group formation**

- Look at personality and leadership – hero and heroine – personalities – ‘born leaders’
- It is important to look for individual activity as well as group actions
- How do groups evolve from activity initiated by an individual?
- How do individuals/groups identify an issue?
- Look at the followers as well as the leaders -what triggers the belief that someone is worth following?
- What is the role of community hubs in facilitating activity? Anglican priests as a good example
- Why do people set up new organisations rather than joining similar ones? This may be particularly important where memorialisation is involved.

## **Other interesting areas**

- Look at cultural activities – this area is neglected
- Important to consider the “fun” sector
- It is important to look at community dynamics
- Look at role of physical environment on BTR activity, i.e. terrace housing versus tower block
- How do different environments facilitate or prevent different types of social capital
- What happens around social networking? It is critical to explore the virtual world and the use of texts
- How does social networking enable mobilisation?
- What is happening in second life?
- How can the anonymity of BTR respondents be maintained when research is undertaken at neighbourhood level, possibly over a period of years?