‘Making data meaningful’
– the messy business of evidence use in community planning

Claire Bynner
University of Glasgow, What Works Scotland

Research for Change WWS Conference
Glasgow, 14th November 2018
Partnerships such as community planning are found across the world as strategies to deal with complex issues and increase problem-solving capacity...

but

...we know surprisingly little about how community planning works and how local partnerships use evidence (Escobar et al 2018)
Your West Dunbartonshire in Profile

The Alexandria community council area in West Dunbartonshire has a population of 5,076.

Women in Alexandria live, on average, four years longer than men. The estimates of both male and female life expectancy in Alexandria are slightly higher than the West Dunbartonshire average. Men can expect to have nearly 59 years of healthy life expectancy, while women can expect 61 years of healthy life. The difference between healthy life expectancy and overall life expectancy gives a measure of life lived not in good health, which for people in this area is 16.9 years for men and 18.7 years for women. The population aged 65 years and over is slightly higher than in West Dunbartonshire as a whole. The area has a slightly higher than average proportion of single parent households (18%). 36% of young people are not in education, employment or training, while 22% of children are living in poverty, slightly below the West Dunbartonshire average. A lower proportion of people (39%) live close to vacant and derelict land compared to West Dunbartonshire as a whole.

Community Council comparisons with West Dunbartonshire

Women in Alexandria live, on average, four years longer than men. The estimates of both male and female life expectancy in Alexandria are slightly higher than the West Dunbartonshire average. Men can expect to have nearly 59 years of healthy life expectancy, while women can expect 61 years of healthy life. The difference between healthy life expectancy and overall life expectancy gives a measure of life lived not in good health, which for people in this area is 16.9 years for men and 18.7 years for women. The population aged 65 years and over is slightly higher than in West Dunbartonshire as a whole. The area has a slightly higher than average proportion of single parent households (18%). 36% of young people are not in education, employment or training, while 22% of children are living in poverty, slightly below the West Dunbartonshire average. A lower proportion of people (39%) live close to vacant and derelict land compared to West Dunbartonshire as a whole.

Community Council Trends

Life expectancy for males has risen by 6 years in the last 14 years, while female life expectancy has risen by 4 years over the same period. Overall, male and female life expectancy has remained above the West Dunbartonshire average. In the most recent period shown, male and female life expectancy was very similar to the Scottish average.

Population by age group

The overall population in Alexandria reduced by 5% between 2001 and 2014, with the largest decrease being in the number 16-44 years old – a reduction of 11%. Alexandria has a similar proportion of adults with qualifications at Higher level or above to West Dunbartonshire as a whole, but does have a slightly higher level of young people not in employment, education and training.

Key education and economic indicators

Notes

2. Populations presented in the population trend chart and used to calculate life expectancy estimates are taken from NRS small area population estimates and are based on: the 2001 census for the years 1996-2001, both the 2001 and 2011 censuses for the years 2002-2010, and the 2011 census for the years 2011-2014.
3. The Income deprivation index is derived from SIMD 2012. More information on this deprivation index can be found at: http://www.s_oidGovernment.net.uk/publication-2011
4. Life expectancies are calculated based on population estimates and death registrations. 95% confidence intervals have been added on the graphs as an indication of their accuracy. The years of the life expectancy graphs give the mid-year for each life expectancy estimate e.g. the most recent estimate, devised by 2013 represents the life expectancy estimates for the period 2010 - 2014.
5. A notes and definitions document providing further information on the content presented in this profile can be found in the Foreword section of: https://www.westdunbarton.gov.uk/AboutUs/community-councils
6. Front page maps: (c) Crown Copyright and Database Right 2016. Ordnance Survey (Digimap Licence).
## What Works in Community Profiling?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CPP1</th>
<th>CPP2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Systems of analysis</strong></td>
<td>In Profile Dataset - 2016</td>
<td>KnowFife Dataset since 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CPP local geographies</strong></td>
<td>17 Community Councils</td>
<td>104 Community Councils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7 Local Area committees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 Local Management Units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Partnership alignment</strong></td>
<td>CPP and HSCP not aligned</td>
<td>CPP and HSCP alignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff</strong></td>
<td>Small team - limited capacity</td>
<td>10 + research team linked to national knowledge networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use of profiles</strong></td>
<td>Engage partners in community-led action planning</td>
<td>Engage partners in community budgeting, social justice analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From:

“...if only we had more data, more local, more frequently, we could fix this”

To:

“...how can we help you to use the data you already have more effectively to inform decisions?”

Source: Gerry McCartney, Public Health Information Network for Scotland (PHINS) May 2018
Exploring the literature....

The Knowledge into Action cycle ....source: Gerry McCartney, Public Health Information Network for Scotland (PHINS) May 2018
Shift in language towards knowledge mobilisation – recognition of the importance of ongoing collaborative relationships and interest in how groups of people produce, share and use knowledge to address real world problems
Falling into the evidence to action swamp!

- **684 papers** in the social sciences (Ferlie, 2012)
- **71 substantial literature reviews** (health, social care, education) (Davies, 2014)
- **61 models** (Tabak, 2012)
- **100 terms** (McKibbon, 2010)
### WWS - Making Data Meaningful

- **How does evidence become meaningful and useful so that it can be acted upon?**
- In-depth study of a single CPP, fieldwork conducted by Dr Anna Terje
- Telephone interviews, face-to-face interviews (23) and observations of local partnership meetings (12)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community planning role</th>
<th>Knowledge producer role (Ward 2017)</th>
<th>N=</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operational staff and managers (housing, policing, cleansing, greenspace)</td>
<td>Frontline practitioners and service providers responsible for delivering services to members of the public and for designing and implementing services and programmes</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community planning officers, research and policy officers in a central team</td>
<td>Professional knowledge producers who produce evidence for the local authority and local governance bodies and networks/knowledge brokers/knowledge mobilisers</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community members</td>
<td>Members of the public as intermediaries acting on behalf of their communities</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic directors (housing and health)</td>
<td>Decision-makers responsible for commissioning services and designing local strategies</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What types of knowledge are mobilised?

Whose knowledge is being mobilised?

Why is knowledge being mobilised?

How is knowledge being mobilised?

Why, whose, what and how? A framework for knowledge mobilisers,
Why mobilise knowledge in community planning?

- To change practices and behaviours (Ch)
- To develop new policies, programmes and/or recommendations (Po)
- To develop local solutions to practice-based problems (So)
- Improving performance and outcomes while reducing costs
Whose knowledge is being mobilised?

Professional knowledge producers

Frontline practitioners and service providers

Members of the public

Professional networks and partner organisations
How is knowledge being mobilised?

- Establishing and brokering relationships (Con)
- Disseminating and synthesising knowledge (Di)
- Facilitating interactive learning and co-production (Int)
What types of knowledge are being mobilised?

- **Technical knowledge** – practical skills, experiences and expertise (T)
- **Scientific / factual knowledge** – research findings, quality and performance data, population data and statistics, evaluation data (Sc)
- **Practical wisdom** – professional judgments, values, beliefs (Wi)
The practical wisdom of a local housing manager

“Bins were overflowing, people not correctly recycling... the problem was lots of rubbish lying around the streets”

• Meetings were held between officers from housing, cleansing and environmental health services to seek a solution

• The initial approach was strengthen enforcement and ‘incentivise’ local residents to change their behaviour and take responsibility

• Overtime the housing manager changed her perspective on the problem and how to respond...
“Mental health can be a challenge in all aspects of our job. You're asking somebody to recycle ...when really some mornings they don't even want to get up and wash their face...

...Lots of time is spent with tenants trying to get an understanding, bringing in colleagues from Cleansing that are skilled in the knowledge of recycling and encouraging people. But sometimes you can't; sometimes there is no solution. Then you have to get your colleagues from mental health services at the Health and Social Care Partnership, and that can be challenging in itself!”
Model of knowledge types for public service reform

**Practical wisdom**
considered judgements on alternatives for practical action underpinned by values and ethics

**Craft knowledge**
knowledge based on practical experience - sensitive to context and gained over time

**Empirical knowledge**
drawn from a range of relevant data sources including quantitative and qualitative research

See more in *Making Data Meaningful*. Available at: whatworksscotland.ac.uk/making-data-meaningful
What works?

• **Knowledge mobilisers** – recognise the *key roles and skills* of staff in translating and dissecting evidence, communicating evidence with sensitivity to context.

• **Increase organisational capacity** - reduce pressure for continual change, increase time for *learning*.

• **Make connections** - establish stable collaborative *relationships* across sectors, services, departments, organisational levels.

• **Co-create knowledge** - integrate empirical knowledge, craft knowledge, and *practical wisdom* to address complex and interconnected policy problems.
Reading and Resources

• Making Data Meaningful — evidence use in a community planning partnership in Scotland
  http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/publications/making-data-meaningful/

• What Works in Community Profiling? Initial reflections from the WWS project in West Dunbartonshire

• Unravelling The Evidence To Action Maze – presentation by Dr Vicky Ward, Reader in Management, St Andrew’s University (PDF)