Final Workshop Report: Measuring and Evaluating Resilience in Transition

Hamilton House, Stokes Croft, Bristol. May 21st 2012.
Part of the project 'Connection, Participation in Community-Based Research: the case of the Transition Movement', funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council in the Connected Communities Programme.
www.transitionresearchnetwork.org

1. Background

The day-long workshop formed part of the AHRC-funded research project 'Community, Participation and Empowerment in Community-based Research', a collaboration between Transition Network and academics at Durham, Bradford, Glamorgan and Manchester Universities, that aims to improve collaboration between academic researchers and Transition Initiatives (TIs). One of three research work packages in this project is a pilot for the development of measurement and evaluation protocols for TIs. These protocols will ideally:

- Be based on robust, replicable methodologies;
- Be compatible with methods for evaluating wellbeing and/or resilience used by government and other major bodies;
- Produce outputs that are relevant, comprehensible, accessible and useful to TIs;
- Be available in formats that allow TIs to undertake self-evaluation without specialist input (e.g. a self-explanatory user-operated web interface);
- Be adaptable to a range of circumstances and applications.

The aims of the workshop were:

- Examine and develop our working characterisation of community resilience.
- Identify and discuss existing evaluations methods from which this work might learn.
- Identify potential contacts and collaborators undertaking similar research.
- Establish a working group interested in taking the work forward as a larger project.
- Agree steps towards developing a funding application to support the follow-on project.

2. Participants

Participants included members of the AHRC project team (Giangrande, Hillary and Henfrey), participants in previous Transition Research Network meetings (Barnett, Harrison, Merritt, Hamilton, North) and specialists in resilience and/or evaluation contacted through professional networks (Mayne, Genus, Zeidler, Dinnie, Harris).
Mandy Barnett (Mandy Barnett Associates)
Lizzie Dinnie (Hutton Institute)
Audley Genus (Kingston University)
Naresh Giangrande (Transition Network/Transition Town Totnes)
Jo Hamilton (Oxford University)
Anastasia Harrison (Open University/Transition Highgate)
Steve Harris (Schumacher Institute)
Tom Henfrey (Durham University/Transition Durham)
Nicola Hillary (Transition Network)
Ruth Mayne (Oxford University/Low Carbon West Oxford)
Amy Merritt (Independent Consultant)
Peter North (Liverpool University/Transition Liverpool)
Mike Zeidler (Bristol Happy Cities Initiative)
Sam Wren-Lewis (Bristol Happy Cities Initiative)

3. Executive Summary of learning and decisions from the workshop

- We will develop an application for ESRC Knowledge Exchange funding to work with a number of Transition initiatives, to co-design and test self-applicable methods for evaluating carbon reductions and community resilience. This will build on existing expertise and experience, particularly from participants' projects Low Carbon West Oxford (Ruth Mayne), EvaLoc (Jo Hamilton/Ruth Mayne) and Low Carbon Liverpool (Peter North). A further application for AHRC follow-on funding is also proposed; whether to do this and what form it will take will initially depend on how the ESRC application proceeds.
- Advice before the workshop from Jayne Cox of Brook Lyndhurst suggested it is almost impossible to devise a single carbon reduction strategy to fit diverse community projects. It is more realistic and effective to support and advise groups to develop their own capacity for self-evaluation, some aspects of which can be comparable.
- Her outline proposal for this would be:
    - Central Transition Network support to help with technical aspects of carbon monitoring, oversee conversion factors etc.;
    - Advice and training to devise Transition Initiatives' own evaluations;
    - Guidance on headings, particularly around behaviour change, but definitely not a 'toolkit';
    - Guidance on questions so that some can be comparable.
- Low Carbon West Oxford is excellent best practice in evaluating community carbon reductions. One of the keys to their success is use of trained volunteers to interview householders in their homes, using the Quicksilver carbon footprinting tool.
- The workshop clearly identified that, for the Transition movement, there are fundamental connections between resilience and wellbeing. We need to show impact in a language people care about, which can be in terms of wellbeing. There is a clear proposition to try using the Max-Neef and Sen frameworks of human needs and capabilities to characterise and link resilience and wellbeing.
- Naresh has devised a diagnostic tool, the "Transition Dog" as a way for Transition initiatives to assess how their group is functioning (as opposed to increases in community resilience and carbon reductions).
- Many creative suggestions were made at the workshop on methods for self-evaluation.
- Participants hope to trial some of the ideas raised at the Transition Network conference in September.
- Some participants commented on a relative lack of attention to power, politics and the influence of vested interests, and raised concerns about the needs to take this into account.
- Audley Genus commented that Transitions Groups/Networks might exemplify social movements which contribute to institutional and systemic change, and noted that there is an opportunity to synthesise literature on social movements with that on institutional theory/systems transition.

4. Agenda

The day began with a round of introductions and agenda-setting, followed by a discussion based on a working paper on resilience evaluation in Transition prepared by Tom and Naresh and circulated prior to the event. Subsequently, Mandy and Ruth each gave short presentations about their work on evaluation, with shorter statements from Mike and Pete on their own work and a brief discussion. After lunch, three break-out groups discussed different aspects of evaluation and reported back. A closing session discussed next steps.

5. Session 1: Open Discussion on Evaluating Resilience

After five or six years of existence, Transition is at a critical turning point. It has achieved a phenomenal level of exposure, and a remarkable pace of growth as a movement, but in order to build on this and retain its credibility, it needs to show it is delivering. This puts a responsibility upon those within Transition to be proactive about defining its goals, criteria for evaluating these, metrics and methods for measuring progress against these criteria, and formats for their communication. Otherwise, there is a danger that these will be imposed in inappropriate ways, incorporating unrealistic goals and/or criteria and impracticable techniques for evaluating these. In addition, there is the far greater danger that in setting evaluation criteria that don't lead to sustainability or resilience we will be pursuing the wrong outcomes and in doing do create non-transformational change processes that won't in fact deliver what is needed.

Timescale is an important factor in this: Transition has only existed for a few years, but its goal of achieving broader societal shifts can only be achieved over decades. It is important to identify goals appropriate to both shorter and longer timescales, and set evaluation criteria accordingly. It is also important to note that we are dealing with properties of complex systems that behave in non-linear fashion. Resilience, like similar emergent properties, is subject to step-changes, sudden and dramatic shifts from one state to another. The changes that lead up to such a shift are very often not the same as the changes the shift itself involves, and we need a better understanding of the relationship between broader goals and the incremental steps leading towards these.

As one example, at the present stage in Transition's life, the capture of hearts and minds through awareness-raising and instigation of ongoing debates or explorations of what is sustainable may be more realistic measure of success than direct reductions in carbon emissions, which in many Transition projects may become evident only in the long term. Acceptance of this in, for example, policy circles, could in itself represent a significant success. However, there are problems with definition, measurement and evaluation of something that is perhaps woolly and potentially ephemeral. Any evaluation would also need to take into account the need for attitudinal changes in attitude to translate into changes in lifestyles and socio-economic systems, rather then treating them as ends in themselves

At this point, Transition's impacts on people's capacity actively to shape their world by creating positive visions and acting upon these may, in contrast to direct measurable reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, be huge. This also indicates Transition's broader potential relative to more mainstream or conventional approaches to carbon reduction. Particularly if dominant institutions are seen as barriers to resilience, Transition implies a questioning and deinstitutionalisation of outdated ideas and the institutionalisation of new ones more relevant to a resource-constrained world. Peter North has examined how this occurred in the abolition of slavery. Advocates of slavery commonly based their case on arguments as to its economic necessity, very similar to those raised by neoliberal theorists against environmental and social constraints on economic activity today. From a different angle, innovation theory examines the uptake of new ideas in relation to the numbers of people receptive to them, and barriers to this raised by institutional inertia and active opposition by vested interests. These also suggest a need for new decision-making mechanisms, governance structure, regulations and rules: attention to evaluation potentially takes thinking in this area to another level.

In practical terms, we can identify two tiers of evaluation relevant to any Transition initiative. The first tier represents internal assessment, of how the initiative is working as a group. The second tier is assessment of how the initiative is impacting on its broader community. We might tend to assume the two are related: that the more effective a group's internal processes, the more significant its broader impacts, and that external success may feed back into improved dynamics for the group. We might also suppose that as a group becomes effective in the second tier – i.e., in their community - a change occurs where by the constituents of a TI start to come from the early majority and less from the early adopters. However, both of these assumptions are untested, and need further examination.

Both first-tier and second-tier evaluation need to be integrated with the broader activities of the group undertaking them if they are to feel meaningful and not appear a drain on people's time and energy. Evaluation implies goal setting, and these goals, and the tools for assessing progress, must be appropriate to the stage of development and specific circumstances of the group in question.

Evaluation of all types requires tools, processes, understanding of scale, and appropriate focus. Many of these exist in useful forms elsewhere, and many will also be emerging within Transition. It is important to take stock and make best use of what we already have and what might be available to us. It is also important to be aware of the differences between indicators and tools to assess these. Making evaluation tools more generally available to Transition and other low carbon groups is an important task, and one possible area where academic study can make a strong contribution to practical action.

We also need to be aware that evaluation is a communicative act, and ask ourselves what audiences we are trying to reach: different criteria, methodologies and forms of communication will be necessary for different groups, and we need to identify who evaluation is for, and by whom it will be undertaken. Scale is another important issue here, one in which Transition Network may have a role as an intermediary providing guidance to help cross-scale communication (e.g. between groups operating at community scales and national policy makers). A number of global indicators exist that might allow such linkages but currently insufficiently capture grassroots and/or local contributions towards sustainability. For instance, the Inclusive Wealth Index developed by the UN University and due to be launched this year at Rio+20, the Millennium Development Goals (which may be replaced by Sustainable Development Goals following Rio+20), and GDP+ (taking into account social, natural, productive and human capital).

A danger in this is that excessive attention to evaluation, especially by formal methods, leads Transition to become bureaucratic. There is also a need for a balance between toolkits provided from the top or centre, and inclusive, bottom up processes. Characterised as, "what you do to do what you do better", evaluation can in itself be regarded as a resilience-building exercise. It can thus be informed by understandings of governance, collective learning and decision making in non-hierarchical societies, and viable systems models such as those of Stafford-Beer, which show resilience as an outcome of the appropriate balance of modularity, connection and co-ordination

Parallel to Odum's idea of the seed bank as a repository of biological information, a resource that in terms of current ecological theory we can regard as contributing to the diversity of the ecosystem, we can regard knowledge of resilience-building as a community resource: a form of community lore that may be captured for the benefit of the community. Within communities, knowledge swaps may play a parallel role to that of seed swaps, in the form of the 'communiversity', a forum for community members to learn from each other. This presents a possibility of a new form of evaluation within communities, taking the form of collectively building knowledge for transition. Applying this thinking to the Transition movement, as a community of practice, suggests more inclusive processes for developing and undertaking resilience evaluation involving ongoing, broad-based collaborative design and knowledge exchange among a potentially large number of activists.

When assessing impacts on resilience, we can consider Neil Adger's distinction between 'bouncing back' and 'bouncing forward'. A key assumption behind Transition is that it can promote a better – more resilient – society, but this raises the question of what sort of resilience we are seeking to build, and what the indicators of that might be. Particularly in present economic circumstances, and since the emergence of economic contraction as the 'third driver' of Transition, we also need to consider the relationship of resilience-building efforts to austerity: are they achievable under these conditions, and can they provide alternatives to or safeguards against their effects?

Attention to resilience raises questions about resilience to what, and in whose terms it is to be characterised. Transition explicitly links decarbonisation efforts to resilience building, but not all responses to climate change or peak oil will build resilience, and resilience to these specific threats does not necessarily translate into resilience in other respects. It also raises a question of the timescale over which we consider resilience to operate, and its relationship to sustainability. If sustainability and avoiding dangerous climate change imply a need to defer resource use and accept constraints on energy use, this may lead to limit capacities to fulfil wellbeing. The Happy Cities index takes this into account through inclusion of an ecological index.

More work is needed on how resilience interacts with human needs, happiness and wellbeing. The use of wellbeing measures may be far more concrete and closer to community action than attention to more general and/or abstract properties associate with resilience. The needs-based framework shows some promise in this respect, but could be extended by attention to Sen's work on capabilities.

The need for evaluation also implies a need for tighter definition of what it is we are seeking to do. Many of the criteria we might use to evaluate the impacts of a Transition initiative in its home community are implicit in the different ways we might explain it to different people. The formal and informal knowledge of those experienced in talking about Transition in diverse settings may be an important resource in defining evaluation criteria and the appropriate ways to communicate them.

Factors evaluated must also encompass both concrete-measurable and emotional-measurable factors: not just, how are we doing, but also, how does it feel? Above all, we need indicators that resonate: to be effective, they must be clear, comprehensible and meaningful to those who use them and to whom they are communicated.

At this stage, evaluation for Transition should be formative rather than summative, and ask the question, "where have we got to so far?" rather than, "have we done it yet?". Self-determination in evaluation, if this resists taking on the language of funders and policy-makers, can by engaging with these on its own terms become a Trojan horse with which to challenge the dominant values.

Evaluation must also achieve a balance between applicability across different settings and circumstances on the one hand, versus replicability, comparability and generalisability on the other. Individual Transition initiatives and other local groups and projects can be very different, but it is often necessary to communicate with policy-makers and similar at broader levels of analysis, and in more general terms.

6. Session 2: Presentations on Evaluation Methods

Ruth Mayne gave a presentation on the monitoring framework developed by Low Carbon West Oxford (LCWO) to assess the effectiveness of their Low Carbon Living Programme. LCWO was set up by West Oxford residents following the floods of 2008, with the aim of achieving 80% reductions in carbon footprints by 2050. The monitoring framework has at its core the principles of community empowerment, and aims to be feasible in relation to existing resources, promote community learning, produce valid and reliable data comparable with that from systems used by other communities, and avoid unnecessary duplication of effort that would result from creating parallel systems. Its purposes are to enable the community to feed back in to and improve project design and implementation and so enhance its effectiveness; provide an evidence base that can motivate the community, support other communities, and influence policy-makers. LCWO's monitoring framework also helps the project to be accountable to the community, other stakeholders, and donors. Key indicators are community engagement and inclusiveness, behaviour change, reductions in energy use and carbon emissions, and socio-economic impact and the sustainability of these impacts. Data collection involves a variety of questionnaires and surveys, plus use of the Quicksilver carbon footprinting tool.

Mandy Barnett gave a presentation on the Happy Museums Programme, which uses wellbeing as the key indicator of impact of change initiatives. Based on the Social Return on Investment model and triple bottom line of economic, social and environmental indicators, it aims to tread the line between the need to talk to policy-makers in language they can understand and not subordinating broader aims to the narrow vision of prosperity that frames dominant policy orientations. Key to this is the vision of improved wellbeing through reduced consumption put forward in Tim Jackson's Prosperity Without Growth, and the role of museums and the arts in achieving this, as recreational and educational alternatives that do not involve direct consumption. Evaluation methods for Transition can build on such learning

Mandy's presentation provoked a great deal of debate as to the value of the Stern Review and the dangers of adopting the language and criteria of the powerful. The Stern Review called for immediate action to mitigate climate change based upon a purely economic analysis. Being rooted in mainstream economic discourse meant it spoke directly to policy-makers, and for this reason the Stern Review is the overwhelming reason government and business now treat climate change as an issue demanding serious attention. Pete's work with businesses and local authorities in Low Carbon Liverpool is only possible because of the space for dialogue this has opened. However, some participants also felt there is a danger in pandering too much to mindsets that prioritise a narrow set of economic criteria over all others, and that if we approach evaluation too much in those terms we risk undermining the broader benefits of our work in showing the limitations of this, the need to move beyond it, and opportunities to do so.

7. Session 3: Breakout discussions

After lunch, participants broke out into three discussion groups covering different aspects of evaluation: what to evaluate, how to do it, and how to communicate this to Transition groups.

Breakout Session 1: Indicators: What do we want to evaluate?
Facilitation and Write-up by Ruth Mayne

Primary Audience for Monitoring and Evaluation

- Members of Transition groups and/or members of the local geographical community. (One participant felt the primary audience should be members of Transition groups whereas others thought it should also be members of the wider community, however defined)

Possible purpose of Monitoring and Evaluation

Provide evidence/local narratives & stories to:

- Strengthen and widen movement
- Engage community
- Internal group development
- Accountability
- To influence policy (only some groups consider this currently relevant)

Clarification of Transition Initiatives' objectives and projects/types

Objectives:

- **Primary objective**: promote local resilience (and/or self-reliance?) in the face of threats from climate change, Peak Oil (and economic recession?)
- **Secondary Objective**: to contribute to mitigation of threats and to socio-technical transformation (NB It was not clear whether this was generally a Transition objective or not. It would be useful to clarify whether Transition Initiatives explicitly seek to contribute to mitigate climate change and socio-technical transformation, or if this is a necessary outcome of local activities?)

Typical Transition projects may include: e.g. renewable energy, food/permaculture, behaviour change, time banking, skills training etc

Possible questions/Lines of Investigation:

Relevance - i.e. to what extent do local people see Transition Initiatives as relevant to their lives/ needs/priorities? (Query –it may be helpful to distinguish between people's immediate needs and long term needs? (Seyfang)

Effectiveness – how far are Transition Initiatives meeting their stated objectives to promote local resilience? (Requires definition of appropriate local resilience)

Efficiency – is local resilience an efficient way of meeting people's needs? (Seyfang) i.e. what is the effect on cost of living, convenience, comfort (which all also matter to people)?

Impact/equity – does local resilience improve people's well being, i.e. how far does it fulfil basic needs? Who benefits/who bears the costs?

Project design/proof of concept – in what ways are Transition Initiatives meeting people's needs? Are there better ways of doing this? What are the distinctive competences, roles and limits of Transition Initiatives in meeting these local needs? What are the duties/roles of other actors, e.g. local authorities, other local agencies, government?

Clarifications required:

- What is the Transition movement's theory of change i.e. of how to achieve change? What are the relative emphases on behaviour change, structural/systemic change, institutional change, and to what extent are the boundaries between these well defined and linkages among them explored?
- How does the Transition movement define resilience? Is this the same as localisation?
- What is appropriate resilience and/or localisation i.e. do we know what forms of localisation will have a positive impact on people's lives?

Possible Indicators

Notes

- I have adapted the indicators slightly following the workshop to improve sense
- The indicators are not aligned to the above questions/lines of investigation, but would need to be once those are agreed.
- The indicators could easily be regrouped in other categories, if these are more appropriate
- There was a very useful document with a list of resilience indicators floating round at the workshop which could be usefully incorporated but I do not have access to it[1]
- The way the indicators are grouped below is not meant to suggest a linear relationship – there will be interactions and feedback loops between them

1. Capability of TI groups

- Numbers, types (diversity/equity) motivation of volunteers/project participants/members in TI initiatives; motivation of volunteers;
- Sustainable financial plan/resources;
- Technical skills and expertise;
- Theory of change
- Effective change strategy, e.g. involving strategic mix of:
  - living and modelling change;
  - motivating and supporting local people to make changes;
  - disseminating and sharing knowledge, e.g. through networking, partnership, collaborations etc.;.
  - influencing others to make change happen, e.g. local authorities, government

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[1] This refers to the set of resilience indicators for Totnes in Table 7.8 in Hopkins, R., 2010. *Localisation and resilience at the local level: the case of Transition Town Totnes (Devon, UK).* PhD thesis, Plymouth University. These were included as an annex to the working paper on Transition and Resilience circulated prior to the workshop. Another version is available in Hodgson, J. & R. Hopkins, 2010. *Transition in Action, Totnes 2030, an Energy Descent Action Plan*. Transition Town Totnes. Totnesedap.org.uk

2. Effects/outcomes of TI activities on local resilience
Individual (and public) understanding – e.g. what matters - wellbeing vis-a-vis GDP? What are the ecological limits? How can we live more fulfilling lives?
Individual agency – a person's belief that they can take meaningful action (includes e.g. motivation, knowledge & skills, intention/commitment)
Community capacity – social networks; human, technical, and financial resources; skills, community organisations; partnerships/collaborations
Local resources - availability and cost/price of: locally grown food, clean/renewable energy, water, other resources; people using Time Banking/LETS schemes; local businesses; amount of money kept in local economy;
Behaviours/social practices/lifestyles – changes in residents' household energy use, modes of transport, recycling, food production/consumption, consumption patterns/lifestyles; cultures of sharing etc
Policy changes –changes to policy framework and financial incentive structure that facilitate resilience (i.e. changes in terms of public debate, policy agenda, policy commitments, policy implementation); widening of democratic space (ie types of groups participating in public decision making)

3. Links between local resilience and people's well being

- Economic - income; access to food, energy, water etc; access to other basic goods and services; skills; jobs
- Social - friendships, support networks, sense of belonging, sense of community pride, etc
- Health – warmer and healthier homes, public spaces, healthier lifestyles
- Participation – participation in local community and council decision making, engagement in public forums/consultations/petitions

4. Relationship of local resilience to ecological limits

- Carbon emissions and other greenhouse gases
- Biodiversity

<u>Breakout Session 2: How do we gather data?</u>
Facilitation and write-up by Mandy Barnett

Defining the question
How do we collect data:

- Locally and into the centre
- About the evaluation of transition groups AND initiatives (projects)
- In a spirit of action, shared enquiry, appropriateness, respectfulness, robustness, ethical, measurable, relevant – accommodating all working/learning styles and preferences
- In a way that is efficient
- In a way that feeds back and fosters dialogue
- For the purpose of self-management but reconciling what 'we' want with what 'they' want (funders?)
    - If there is agreement between the two then fine, if one skews the other then should it be happening, and does it still align with the 'spirit' described above?

Defining the data

1. How healthy is the group?
2. Is it reducing carbon?
3. Is it building resilience, wellbeing and equality within ecological limits?
4. Is it engaging new audiences/markets/activists?

- More work useful on what is the theory of change? E.g.
    - How much do groups like 'rules' and how much militancy – does the movement continue to challenge the norm?
    - Does a badge matter?
    - Make sure we explore hearts and minds, impact, different timescales for different groups
- At the moment it's simply: healthy groups (as tested by the dog model used in Transition training) lead to:
    - Carbon reduction
    - Resilient communities

Collecting the data

Use of existing data (from where? what?)
Data we collect
Ideas:

- focus groups
- ethnographic
- questionnaires
- continuously/as part of everyday activity
- produce a booklet
- observation of groups at training
- use PhD students
- skills audit to find evaluation skills within groups (e.g. from work)
- photos
- count new faces
- training for self facilitation as part of existing Transition Training provided by TT&C and its global network of trainers. Also use training to collect data
- training at the conference (and collection of data?)
- all research should include control elements such as deadweight (what would have happened anyway?) and attribution (who/what else was responsible?)
- planning (formative) and retrospective (summative) evaluation
- use of social and other media – 'conversational evaluation' e.g. tweeting
- simple tools , like dot voting, counting numbers
- Survey Monkey
- NEF's Communities Count
- voxpops on phone/videos
- use the spirit of competition (e.g. we were the 46th transition town)/indexing
- peer evaluation between community groups?
- 'disguise' evaluation as something more interesting, like making a film
- make sure it creates positive messages/reinforcement
- get in touch with local university/academic

Making it happen

- How do we collate the data and feed back the learning?
- Is a paid role necessary?

Breakout Session 3: Communicating the importance of evaluation, and motivating Transition groups to get involved
Facilitation & write-up Tom Henfrey

1. What are the aims of this communication?
    a. To show the relevance of evaluation to Transition
    b. Provide positive motivations for people to get involved in evaluation
    c. To show that it can provide tangible and achievable benefits
    d. To communicate the opportunities it can provide
2. Why is evaluation useful to a Transition initiative?
    a. Benefits to the group
    b. Benefits to individuals – will it be fun, will it make them happy?
3. Why is evaluation of Transition initiatives useful to Transition Network?
    a. The need to learn from successes and failures
    b. Ability to aggregate data and communicate to others
    c. Capacity to feed back to Transition groups.
4. What are the implications for resources?
    a. Transition Training: could build in attention to why and how to evaluate
    b. Evaluation as a possible technique for reinvigorating a group – e.g. link with THRIVE training
    c. Possible source of specialisation of roles within a group
    d. Evaluation may have costs: financial, time, energy…
5. What motivates people: Drive by Daniel Pink suggests that motivation requires autonomy, mastery and a sense of purpose. Communication about evaluation needs to address all of these:
    a. Mastery and autonomy can derive from existing skills and motivation for learning, in particular many people in Transition groups are involved in or learning about Permaculture, in which evaluation is an integral part of the design process. Permaculture thus provides a familiar basis for a common framework based on concepts directly relevant to Transition, able to accommodate all the diversity and singularity of local detail.
    b. Sense of purpose can derive from connecting the small and local to the larger, in other words individual Transition initiatives to the broader Transition movement. People find it fulfilling to be part of something bigger than they are, and people who are already actively involved in Transition – attracted and committed to its 'brand' - have a strong sense of purpose. This can be heightened by a feeling that they are actively contributing to the evolution of the Transition movement, which in turn can benefit from a broader intellectual base.
    c. In summary, providing a mechanism for groups to self-define their criteria and methods for evaluation, collect their own results, and feed all of this back into the movement as a whole would help nurture diversity in Transition, and increase inclusiveness and participation in the movement as a whole.

8. Session 4: Next Steps

Agreed Actions:

- Scribe and send round the days reflections: Tom, Naresh, Ruth, Mandy
- Build a longer term project:
  - Apply for ESRC Knowledge Exchange Grant (or follow-on funding) to train a team of 'barefoot' researchers in evaluation methods. Ruth, Jo and Nicola are taking this forward, with support from Pete, Tom and Naresh.
  - Apply for AHRC Follow on funding for a project more aimed on developing and operationalising the needs-based framework for evaluating resilience, in collaboration with Transiton Initiatives. To proceed once the ESRC evaluation takes shape, with Tom and Naresh driving.
- Continue to develop resilience paper towards a publishable academic paper, and a non-technical guide for Transition activists – all welcome
- Continue to collate evaluation methodologies
- Possible activities at the Transition conference (London, Sept 15th-16th):
  - Workshop on evaluation techniques for Transition (Pete is interested in doing this)
  - We could also do a workshop on what research is about and for instance how to use survey monkey
  - A pilot of the needs-based approach to assessing resilience

Other possibilities and issues:

- We need to work out how to communicate these ideas to other stakeholders
- One role of evaluation is motivational and we need to identify the best methods to do this.
- How to do evaluation, and what to evaluate are two obvious questions
- We could put together a training day on evaluation techniques for Transition Initiatives
- Lots of existing bottom up evaluation methods to make use of
- Do a literature search and create a handbook of participatory research methods for Transition Initiatives, which could be fundable
- Explore what the unexamined assumptions of the movement are – maybe at a session at the conference
- Develop a theory of change of the movement as a whole, and explore deviations from this in local groups/initiatives
- Set up an open source Transition research database holding the collective outputs

9. Annex: Workshop Report by Steve Harris

Steve Harris prepared a report on the workshop for colleagues at the Schumacher Institute, reproduced with his permission here.

On Monday 21st May 2012 I represented the Schumacher Institute at a one-day workshop in Bristol on "Evaluation Methods for Transition Initiatives". The workshop was part of a series jointly organised by the Transition Network and Durham, Bradford, Glamorgan and Manchester Universities and funded under the Connected Communities programme of the Arts and Humanities Research Council. The workshop, in Hamilton House, Stokes Croft, was led by Tom Henfrey of Durham University and Naresh Giangrande of the Transition Network and Transition Town Totnes. The participants were drawn from universities, research institutes, consultancies and community initiatives; most (but not all) were also personally involved in transition initiatives in their localities.

The workshop activities were carried out through a mixture of presentations, plenary discussions and Open Space sessions. The proceedings were framed by a 'Draft Working Paper on Resilience and Evaluation in Transition' authored by Henfrey and Giangrande that was circulated prior to the meeting. Although relatively little time was spent on the more theoretical aspects of the work, a number of participants felt that some more general and human-centered concept such as 'well-being' or 'happiness' might provide a better framing for the evaluation process that the ecologically-oriented concept of resilience; however this was view was hotly contested by those who felt that such measures might not be directly connected with the core concerns of Transition, i.e. dealing with the social and economic impacts of climate change and resource depletion. Setting this complex debate aside for another day, the focus quickly moved toward more practical questions: who is the evaluation for, what does it aim to achieve and how should it be carried out? Over the course of much lively debate substantial progress was made on the first two questions, and a work programme developed to tackle the third set of more methodological issues. A consensus emerged that the primary purpose for evaluating Transition Initiatives was to further motivate and empower those taking part in the initiatives themselves, recognizing achievement and building a collective knowledge base around what were the most effective and transformative actions carried out in particular locations. This was seen as facilitating collaborative learning within initiatives and across the Transition Network as whole, providing a sound basis for developing the body of 'Transition Tales' emerging from grassroots experience around Britain and the world. A secondary outcome of the evaluations would be the firm basis they could provide for communication with external bodies – funders, local councils and so on – and, just or perhaps more importantly, with the wider community in transition locales. The latter part of the day concentrated on how the evaluations should be done, with a particular concern that in order for Transition Initiative participants to be sufficiently motivated to take part in suitably effective self-evaluation processes the 'big vision' of building a collective knowledge base should be supported by a range of practical, accessible and enjoyable evaluation techniques. It was noted that many such techniques have already been developed around the world, and the workshop concluding with the resolution that funding should be sought to support the important follow-on activity of reviewing the range of such techniques, identifying those most likely to be suitable for the Transition movement, and piloting them with a representative sample of Transition Initiatives. A long, fruitful and tiring day ended with thanks to the workshop organizers, with some participants going on to an early evening meal in the company of SISS Director Ian Roderick.