Leadership in theory-based evaluation: an exploration of the feasibility and added-value of incorporating a focus on leadership in programme evaluation

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LEADERSHIP IN THEORY-BASED EVALUATION:
AN EXPLORATION OF THE FEASIBILITY AND ADDED-VALUE OF INCORPORATING A FOCUS ON LEADERSHIP IN PROGRAMME EVALUATION

Jessica Ozan

Dr John Canavan
Thesis supervisor

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy to the National University of Ireland, Galway
School of Political Science and Sociology

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Abstract

Evaluation is a relatively new field that is becoming increasingly embedded in society as a social activity supporting modern norms and values. Theory-based evaluations are a contemporary approach to evaluation that aim to identify the causal mechanisms impacting a programme in order to make inferences about its success or failure. Whilst effective leadership has been identified as a factor necessary for a programme’s success, it remains under-considered in literature relating to methodology of evaluation. Drawing on an Irish case study, the process evaluation of the Tallaght West Childhood Development Initiative (CDI), this research aims to address this shortcoming through examining the feasibility and added value of incorporating a focus on leadership in theory-based evaluations. The field work undertaken for this research comprises 155 interviews, approximately 500 documents, and 80 observations. First, a quantitative retro-analysis examines the existence of leadership indicators in interview transcripts from evaluation studies that did not directly focus on leadership. Second, a prospective analysis is conducted of an evaluation study which had an explicit focus on leadership. This research first establishes that leadership is a topic of interest for evaluators and interviewees who talk about leadership features even when the focus is another topic. It then demonstrates that it is feasible to explicitly assess leadership as part of an evaluation study, notably through classic qualitative methods such as interviews, documentary analysis, and observations. To support this argument and establish the added value of incorporating a focus on leadership, a narrative of CDI’s leadership story is depicted, providing detail about emerging formats of collaborative leadership that suit complex social interventions. This research makes the argument that the added value of incorporating a focus on leadership mainly rests in its ability to support causal inferences made in theory-based evaluations through a better understanding of how leadership operates. Theoretically, this approach is compatible with the two prominent types of theory-based evaluations: it can be considered as one of the mechanisms examined in CMO (Context-Mechanism-Outcomes) configurations in realist evaluations, or as a causal mechanism that activates the links between contexts, activities, and outcomes in theory of change approaches. The knowledge produced by this research contributes primarily to the field of evaluation, but is also relevant to other fields such as leadership research and implementation science.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

“Under field conditions in the real world, people and unforeseen circumstances shape programs and modify initial plans in ways that are rarely trivial.”
(Patton, 2008: 325)

1.1 Introduction

Evaluation is becoming an established social activity that is strongly embedded in modern beliefs and values of accountability. Government agencies and organisations want to know if their policies and programmes are working and expect evaluations to provide them with answers. The importance of evaluation is widely acknowledged by policy-makers and funders (Rossi et al., 2004) and the evaluation field has expanded rapidly over the last fifty years. Evaluation research is now supported worldwide by numerous respected associations, is debated at frequent global conferences, and is reported in high profile journals. This substantial attention is supporting the refinement and increased sophistication of evaluation theory.

This thesis aims to contribute to the development of evaluation theory through exploring the feasibility and added value of a new approach to evaluation methodology. This introductory chapter is divided into three sections. The first provides an overview of the background of the research and presents its rationale. The second identifies the research questions underpinning the study. Finally, the third section describes the structure of the thesis.
1.2 Rationale

A shift in contemporary policy-making started with the recognition that social issues are interlocked and need to be addressed simultaneously (Milbourne, 2005). Resultant, has been the new emphasis on collaboration that is promoted through new “joined-up” approaches to policy-making and practice (Williams, 2002; Sullivan et al., 2012). In Ireland the framework for The Developmental Welfare State asserts the need for collaboration between various departments such as education, health, childcare, elderly care, housing, transport, and employment services (National Economic and Social Council, 2005). This approach is more grounded in the United States where new types of programmes such as Comprehensive Community Initiatives (CCIs) emerged in the early 1990s to offer joined up responses. CCIs are complex social interventions, providing a holistic approach through recognising that individual, family, and community circumstances are interlinked (Kubisch, 2005). Such programmes are aimed at addressing various social issues (e.g. education, economy, health, safety, the physical conditions of a neighbourhood) through engaging with numerous stakeholders (Kubisch et al., 2010).

Leadership has been clearly identified as a pre-requisite to the success of programmes addressing social issues (Hudson et al., 1999; Linden, 2002; Browne et al., 2004; Sloper, 2004; Atkinson et al., 2005; Frost, 2005; Brown and White, 2006; Friedman et al., 2007; Horwarth and Morrison, 2007; CAAB, 2009; Duggan and Corrigan, 2009). Yet, notions of leadership have shifted in a way that parallels the emergence of holistic social interventions. In the era of collaboration, organisations and programmes are characterised by inter-organisational work, governance, and networking. Consequently, old models of leadership that draw on authority and hierarchy are not applicable anymore in a world where power is shared between organisations working together towards achieving the common good (Agranoff and McGuire, 2001). New forms of leadership arose in this context, such as collaborative leadership. Indeed, different competencies are required to manage complex, multi-layered initiatives tackling wicked issues.
The multiplicity of stakeholders and layers of intervention involved in complex initiatives make them particularly difficult to evaluate. A distinction can be made between two major contemporary approaches to evaluations: outcome-focused evaluations measure the effects of a programme (e.g. using randomised controlled trials) whilst theory-based evaluations examine the factors impacting a programme (e.g. considering its implementation and context). Theory-based evaluations are deemed to offer the most adequate approach for evaluating complex social interventions (Connell and Kubisch, 1998). Moving beyond the measurement of effects, contemporary evaluation also attempts to provide explanations about a programme’s success or failure. Theory-based evaluations pay particular attention to the context of a programme and make causal inferences1 about what worked and/or did not work (Blamey and Mackenzie, 2007). Evaluation therefore has become a tool that provides information that can be used to improve programmes, inform decision-making, and support replication.

It is from a similar observation to that of Patton’s (see p.1) about the real-world impact people have on programmes that the topic of this PhD research emerged. As a member of a team undertaking the process evaluation of a complex social intervention, the work I undertook for the evaluation brought me to consider the impact human input has on such initiatives and question how evaluations addressed this matter. Individual people influence a programme’s outcomes as they impact on its establishment and implementation. Funnell and Rogers (2011) identify a number of programme factors that affect outcomes. They call programme factors those that are within the control of or can be influenced by people such as funders (e.g. resources) and staff (e.g. quality, quantity, and timeliness of service delivery). Those types of human input are usually examined by evaluations through proxies, such as the fidelity of implementation or

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1 A causal inference is an explanation about the causal links between the intervention and outcomes. The term is sometimes used interchangeably with causal attribution, causal contribution, and causal analysis. Funnell and Rogers (2011) prefer the term causal inference which acknowledges that some outcomes cannot be exclusively attributed to the intervention because of the level of complexity of many programmes.
changes made to the programme’s manual. Yet, factors impacting on outcomes also include components such as adequate staff selection and training, a programme leadership appropriate to the type of programme, management strategies and governance, and good relationship management with stakeholders and partners (Funnell and Rogers, 2011).

Human input is incontestably a central aspect of social interventions. Indeed, the general literature indicates that leadership is a key component to a programme’s success. Yet, leadership is under-considered in evaluation methodology. Indeed, evaluations do not examine leadership when assessing social interventions unless it is an outcome of the programme. Moreover, identifying leadership as a factor impacting on outcomes does not explain how to practically incorporate a focus on such a factor into an evaluation. This research aims to address this short-coming.

This study has a dual focus since it also analyses leadership in order to discover and propose a pertinent conceptual framework for its evaluation. As stipulated by Funnell and Rogers (2011) programme leadership needs to be appropriate to the type of programme. Overall, the policy shift towards “joined-up” working generated changes in the principles underpinning social interventions and their implementation. The changes, which brought with them new types of programmes, called for fresh formats of leadership and different evaluation approaches in order to overcome the challenges associated with complex initiatives. As stated by Rossi et al. (2004: 11) “evaluation research must be seen as an integral part of the social policy and public administration movements”. This research also argues that theory-based evaluations are best suited to incorporate a focus on leadership. Since leadership impacts on a programme’s outcomes, it can contribute to expanding the causal inferences made by theory-based evaluations. Therefore, this research suggests that using collaborative leadership frameworks within theory-based evaluations is coherent with contemporary concerns and contexts.
1.3 Aim and research questions

This research aims to address what is believed to be a shortcoming in evaluation theory and practice. Theory-based evaluations aspire to understand the reasons underpinning a programme’s success or failure. Yet, they do not comprise an explicit focus on leadership in either theory or practice. To explore the potential of leadership as a focus in evaluation methodology, two research questions are identified:

*Is it feasible to incorporate a focus on leadership in evaluations?*

*Is there an added-value to incorporating a focus on leadership in theory-based evaluations?*

Drawing on the literature, this research argues that theory-based approaches are best suited to undertaking this type of work, and that post-modern forms of leadership are appropriate in this context. To address the research questions, this research extensively draws on the case study of the process evaluation of the Tallaght West Childhood Development Initiative (CDI) in Ireland. In 2005 CDI launched its 10 year strategy which drew on a wide range of consultations and research. Its general aim was to improve the health, safety, learning, overall well-being, and sense of belonging of children in a disadvantaged area of Dublin. Seven key services/programmes were implemented and evaluated. The overall process evaluation is one of eight evaluations that examined CDI’s work. The work undertaken for the process evaluation included six process evaluation studies as well as an overall evaluation. This research considers in particular a specific evaluation study that examined organisational processes and relationships. Analysis of this study is used to demonstrate the feasibility of incorporating a focus on leadership in evaluations through the investigation of the methods applied. Additional work was also undertaken especially for this research, including text searches and various further formats of data analysis.
1.4 Structure of the thesis

Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 provides a review of the evaluation literature. Firstly it presents how the field of evaluation emerged as a discipline, highlighting different approaches to evaluation in order to offer a general overview of the field. Secondly, the review focuses on the evaluation approach most relevant to this research: theory-based evaluations. It presents the rationale behind the approach, clarifies terminology, and outlines its key principles. Two major types of theory-based evaluations are outlined: the theory of change approach and realist evaluation. Finally, the chapter explores the benefits and challenges associated with the use of theory-based approaches.

Chapter 3 introduces the conceptual framework of leadership that is used in this research. After a brief overview of the modern literature on leadership from the 1940s, the chapter focuses on leadership in post-modern organisations. Acknowledging a shift in policy and programmes, the chapter considers leadership in new types of programmes such as Comprehensive Community Initiatives. It then focuses on leadership at a micro level through the boundary spanners’ framework proposed by Williams (2010). It argues that the roles and competencies of such actors are the best suited to the implementation of complex social interventions. Finally, it presents a broader framework for the understanding of leadership in collaborative settings designed by Crosby and Bryson (2010). The concepts presented in the two frameworks are the basis of data analysis undertaken in later results chapters.

Both the methodology and research context are presented in Chapter 4. Initially, the chapter provides a summary of the rationale underpinning the study and outlines the methodological orientation chosen, that of scientific realism. It then offers an overview of the case study which is the process evaluation of the Tallaght West Childhood Development Initiative (CDI). It describes the services that were run by CDI and the structures which supported the implementation of its strategy. The chapter continues by presenting the process evaluation. It outlines the general evaluation objectives, identifies the various thematic studies undertaken, and argues that the background of
the evaluation is a theory-based approach. The chapter describes the methods of data collection used to compile the evaluation studies, both retrospectively (i.e. for the process evaluation), and prospectively (i.e. specific to the organisational study). They include typical social sciences methods such as interviews, observations, and documentary analysis. The chapter also presents the methodology used for the data analysis, including a retro-analysis of interview transcripts and further data analysis undertaken in relation to the thesis’ research question. Finally, ethical considerations are examined.

**Chapter 5** addresses the first research objective of ascertaining whether incorporating a focus on leadership is feasible. First it examines whether elements of leadership are already implicitly captured by evaluations through presenting the results from a retro-analysis of the interview transcripts used to compile the evaluation reports for the process evaluation of CDI. The competencies identified in the boundary spanners’ framework presented in Chapter 3 are used here as indicators of leadership activities (e.g. networking, building trust, being diplomatic). Two techniques are used for analysis: text search query and manual coding of interview transcripts. Secondly, the chapter establishes how leadership can explicitly become part of an evaluation study. Drawing on the process evaluation study, *CDI as Organisation: Examining the Processes and Relationships to Support Implementation*, it determines how interviews, documentary analysis, and observations were utilised to produce data pertaining to leadership. The Crosby and Bryson framework for the understanding of collaborative leadership presented in Chapter 3 is used to analyse the type of data produced by those methods. Finally, the chapter examines the successes and challenges associated with each method.

The leadership story, as it took place within CDI, is depicted in **Chapter 6**. This further supports the argument of feasibility and starts demonstrating that incorporating a focus on leadership adds value to an evaluation since it provides evaluators with a clear picture of key dynamics taking place in the implementation of a programme. The chapter answers three questions set in the context of complex social interventions:
Where is collaborative leadership found? What does collaborative leadership involve? What were the challenges for leadership?

Chapter 7 brings elements from previous chapters together in order to discuss the overall findings of this thesis. It considers cross-cutting aspects of this research that constitute important findings which can be used in theory-based approaches: the prospect of considering governance structures as components of leadership, the use of the boundary spanners framework to examine actors, and the way leadership changes to adapt to various implementation phases. The chapter revisits the frameworks used during the research. It also discusses general challenges encountered during this research.

Finally, the previously outlined research questions are answered in Chapter 8, that of “is it feasible to incorporate a focus on leadership in evaluations?” and “is there an added-value to incorporating a focus on leadership in theory-based evaluations?” It is argued that an explicit focus on leadership in theory-based approaches can be particularly valuable. Identified are the various fields to which the research contributes. Additionally, the chapter summarises key findings, identifies limitations, and makes suggestions for future research.
Chapter 2

Literature Review on Evaluations

2.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the first of two literature reviews undertaken for this research. This first review focuses on the field of evaluation while the second one, presented in Chapter 3, considers literature on leadership in order to propose a conceptual framework for this research.

Ireland is one of a number of countries where policy makers have declared a commitment to "evidence-based" practice, making monitoring and evaluation a compulsory element in many publicly funded programmes (Everitt and Hardiker, 1996; Hazlett, 2003; National Economic and Social Council, 2005; Canavan et al., 2009). Evaluation can be defined as “an applied inquiry process for collecting and synthesising evidence that culminates in conclusions about the state of affairs, value, merit, worth, significance, or quality of a program, product, person, policy, proposal, or plan” (Fournier, 2005: 139).

Evaluation is a relatively new discipline and profession that emerged in the 1960s in the United States (US) (Rossi et al., 2004). Throughout the years and depending on the social and political context, the focus of evaluation has changed. However, the current practice of evaluation still reflects many of the approaches undertaken in the past. While evaluation is considered as a new discipline, it is nonetheless a “well established field of study, with contributions by theorists and practitioners in many countries throughout the world” (Owen and Rogers, 1999:22). Evaluation research is supported by a significant amount of literature, approximately 80 professional societies/associations worldwide, and through university courses at both master and doctoral level (Stufflebeam and Shinkfield, 2007; Patton, 2013).
The disciplinary literature is dominated by US publications. Indeed, whilst evaluation has been embedded in the United States for some time, in other countries such as Ireland it is still a “relatively immature and underdeveloped discipline” (Canavan and Dolan, 2003: 264). Therefore, the literature review proposed in this chapter exploits literature mostly generated in America. This is particularly the case when describing the early stages of the evaluation field. Yet, this review also includes perspectives from contemporary authors coming from Europe, Australia, and Canada.

The first section of this chapter presents an overview of the emergence of evaluation as a discipline. It also highlights different approaches to evaluation to provide general context. The second section concentrates on the approach most relevant to this research: theory-based evaluations. To begin, the rationale underpinning the use of theory-based evaluation will be outlined and a clarification of terms often used interchangeably will be proposed. The section then identifies the key principles of theory-based evaluations before focusing on the components of a programme theory and suggesting frameworks for their understanding. Following on from this, the section presents two major types of theory-based evaluations (theory of change approach and realist evaluation) and discusses their commonalities and differences. Finally, the chapter examines the benefits and challenges associated with the use of theory-based evaluations.

2.2 Evaluation: a theoretical overview

The literature provides a wide range of definitions of evaluation. Rossi et al. (2004) suggest that evaluations are a “systematic, rigorous, and meticulous application of scientific methods to assess the design, implementation, improvement or outcomes of a program”. The OECD’s (2002) definition of evaluation encompasses projects and policies, as well as programmes. Some authors include the notion of value in evaluations. For instance, Stufflebeam (2001: 11) defines evaluation as "a study designed to assist some audience to assess an object’s merit and worth". The merit of a programme is associated with its quality (e.g. was the programme effective?) whereas
the worth of a programme is linked to context (e.g. was the programme addressing a need?) (Stufflebeam and Shinkfield, 2007). The use of evaluations is also highlighted in some definitions “An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process of both recipients and donors” (OECD, 2002: 22).

Two key types of evaluations are identified by Cain and Hollister (1972): process evaluation and outcome evaluation. The former determines if an existing programme is implemented and delivered effectively; it is “mainly administrative monitoring” (Cain and Hollister, 1972: 110). More specifically, a process evaluation is “an evaluation of the internal dynamics of implanting organisations, their policy instruments, their service delivery mechanisms, their management practices, and their linkages among these” (OECD, 2002: 30). It aims at understanding the strengths and weaknesses of a programme by examining how it was implemented (Patton, 2008). Overall, process evaluations critically examine the “quality or value of everything about the programme (what it is and does) except outcomes and costs” (Davidson, 2005: 56, cited in Patton, 2008). Contrastingly, outcome evaluations measure the effects of the programme, determining if it was a success or a failure (Cain and Hollister, 1972). An outcome is defined as “the likely or achieved short-term and medium term effects of an intervention’s outputs” (OECD, 2002: 28). Outcome evaluation aims at estimating “the magnitude of a hypothesised effect of some treatment variable on some outcome variable or variables of interest” (Judd, 1987: 23) It can involve a priori analyses through cost-effectiveness studies for instance, or ex post analyses that take place after the intervention (Cain and Hollister, 1972).

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2 Outputs is defined as “the products, capital goods and services which result from a development intervention; may also include changes resulting from the intervention which are relevant to the achievement of outcomes” (OECD, 2002: 28)
2.2.1 The emergence of a new discipline

Throughout the development of evaluation, the social and political context has impacted on the focus taken by theorists. Two frameworks appear useful to understand the evolution of evaluations. Guba and Lincoln (1989) describe four generations through which evaluation became more informed and sophisticated. They identify the beginning of evaluation around 1900, whereas Vedung (2010) uses the more common milestone of the 1960s. The latter author prefers the use of the term “waves” to emphasise the manner in which each generation has “deposited sediments, which form present-day evaluation activities” (Vedung, 2010: 263).

The first generation of evaluation described by Guba and Lincoln (1989) is characterised by measurement. Some authors trace the appearance of evaluations to the use of tests for school purposes, with the first research being published in 1897 by Joseph Rice (Guba and Lincoln, 1989; Stufflebeam and Shinkfield, 2007). At this point, the evaluator is expected to master the use of, and when needed, create measurement instruments (Guba and Lincoln, 1989).

The second generation embodied the birth of programme evaluation. It is characterised by the description of the strengths and weaknesses of a programme and is objective orientated. Evaluations shifted their focus from student performance measurement to the assessment of programme objectives. Measurement is not the aim anymore, and becomes a tool used in evaluations (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). This second generation is well illustrated by what can be considered as one of the first landmarks in the development of evaluations: the “Eight Year Study” of progressive education undertaken by Ralph Tyler in the 1940s (Donaldson and Lipsey, 2006).

The third generation is characterised by the call to include judgment in evaluations and appears in the 1960s. The first boom in evaluation took place in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s, under the Kennedy and Johnson administrations (Donaldson and Lipsey, 2006). The “War on Poverty” and “Great Society” policies, initiated in 1965, symbolised a set of social interventions of a new scale. An important number of large-
scale field experiments took place in a variety of topics such as economy, housing, and health (Rossi and Wright, 1984). These interventions also allowed the evolution of policy analysis and evaluation research as an independent branch of study, as they offered standing, legitimacy, and financial support to scholars: evaluation research became a distinctive field in the social sciences (Rossi et al., 2004). Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (2007: 41) identify the period since 1973 to the present as “the age of professionalism”.

The 1960s and 1970s are described as the “Golden Age” of evaluation. The randomised, controlled, experimental paradigm (the “black box”) dominated this era (Rossi and Wright, 1984). In evaluations, the black box is “the space between the actual input and the expected output of a programme” (Stame, 2004:58). The black box experimental paradigm uses sophisticated methods to measure the distance between objectives and results (Stame, 2004). Vedung (2010: 265) designated this period as the “science-driven wave”.

However, randomised, controlled experiments could only be undertaken under limited circumstances. As continues to be the case, they were hindered by practical, ethical, and legal limitations and require a significant amount of time (Rossi and Wright, 1984; Lipsey and Cordray, 2000). Furthermore, the full coverage of the intended beneficiary population in some interventions implied that there was no way to create appropriate control groups (Rossi and Wright, 1984). With the Reagan administration, social programmes were dismantled and cuts made in various departments, having the consequence of a substantial decrease in the federal funding of applied social research. Furthermore, evaluations showed that social programmes had almost no impact on the population. Many analyses of the “zero-effects” programmes suggested that the lack of results could be due to factors such as inadequate programme design, faulty implementation, misunderstandings of participants’ needs, or because of insufficient development of programme concepts prior to implementation (Rossi and Wright, 1984). At this point, the field of evaluation showed a general rejection of the experimental paradigm and its “positivistic” intellectual roots and turned towards more
qualitative approaches that appeared to be flexible enough to cope with social programmes that tend to vary depending on where they are implemented (Rossi and Wright, 1984). This new approach to evaluation stressed the importance of theory in evaluation, providing a stronger focus on understanding “what works for whom in what circumstances” (Stame, 2004; Pawson, 2005: 359).

Subsequently, Guba and Lincoln (1989: 50) describe the fourth generation of evaluation: “Fourth generation evaluation is a form of evaluation in which the claims, concerns, and issues of stakeholders serve as organisational foci, that is implemented within the methodological precepts of the constructivist inquiry paradigm”. The constructivist paradigm considers that reality is socially constructed. The purpose of evaluations taking this position is not to identify the “right” definition of a programme, but to incorporate the multiple points of views of stakeholders so as to draw a comprehensive description of it. Intensive studies, that are often inductive in nature, concentrate on a small number of cases in this paradigm (Owen and Rogers, 1999). Vedung (2010), acknowledging the shift from randomised paradigm to participatory and non-experimental evaluations, called this period the “dialogue-oriented wave” to emphasise the involvement of stakeholders in evaluations. Rossi et al. (2004) describe a shift from evaluations being shaped by social researchers to evaluations being influenced by consumers, i.e. policy-makers, programme planners, and administrators.

A “Second Boom in Evaluation” started in the 2000s (Donaldson and Scriven, 2003, cited in Donaldson and Lipsey, 2006: 56). Evaluation is becoming a fashionable social activity that is rooted in organisational logics and practices, and engrained in modern beliefs and values (Dahler-Larsen, 2012). This commitment to evaluation echoes the shift that has occurred in public policy from ideology to pragmatism, with a commitment to make research not only useful but also useable (Solesbury, 2001). As a political and managerial activity, evaluation contributes to decision-making, particularly in the field of social policy and public administration (Rossi et al., 2004). As indicated by Pinkerton and Katz (2003: 5) “evaluation is recognised as having an important part to play in advancing the policy and practice goals of citizenship,
consumerism, quality control, value for money, performance measurement, and public accountability”.

Globally, evaluations are becoming a common feature in agencies and organisations (Donaldson and Lipsey, 2006). For instance, voluntary projects in the United Kingdom are often prompted into having an evaluation to demonstrate their value to funders, either as a condition of that funding, or in the attempt to secure funding for the future (Everitt and Hardiker, 1996). Furthermore, recent changes in Ireland have prompted a new commitment to systematic evaluation of policies and programmes that has been most evident in the fields of social inclusion and family support, making family support evaluation a specific area of focus (Hazlett, 2003). Consequently, family support evaluation became “a particular area of expertise” (Canavan and Dolan, 2003: 253). Vedung (2010) describes the current evaluation context as the “evidence-based wave”, in which evaluation is a means of accountability.

2.2.2 Different approaches to evaluation

Contemporary evaluation is a rich and diverse field. Various classifications are useful in depicting the arena. This section firstly presents a popular classification, the evaluation theory tree proposed by Alkin and Christie (2004). Secondly, it provides an outline of existing evaluation approaches through a classification made by Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (2007). Finally, the section identifies different types of evaluation that take place in practice (e.g. formative and summative evaluations).

2.2.2.1 Classification of evaluation theorists

“Evaluation ‘theories’ are almost exclusively prescriptive, that is, they offer a set of rules, prescriptions and prohibitions that specify what a good or effective evaluation study is and how an evaluation study should be conducted” (Christie and Alkin, 2008: 132). Evaluation theorists are the individuals that work towards developing evaluation theories. Alkin and Christie (2004) have organised influential theorists on a tree to trace the roots of theories of evaluation. As illustrated in Figure 1, the trunk is built on
two areas that have supported the development of the field in different ways: social inquiry and accountability/fiscal control. The tree is then composed of three branches: methods, use, and value, on which theorists are positioned according to their priorities (Alkin and Christie, 2004; Christie and Alkin, 2008).

Figure 1: Christie and Alkin's Evaluation Theory Tree (2008: 133)³

³ Permission to reproduce this figure has been granted by Elsevier.
In this classification, the main branch is methods. The methods branch represents evaluation as research, or evaluation guided by research methods, and is the continuation of the social inquiry trunk. Authors on the methods branch (Tyler, Campbell, Cook, Boruch, Rossi, Chen, Weiss, Cronbach, Henry and Mark) tend to focus on obtaining generalisability or knowledge construction (Alkin and Christie, 2004). The branch operates under the post-positivist paradigm (Greene, 1998). This paradigm draws on the belief that systematic and stable relations exist between a social phenomenon and the real world. Evaluations taking this position aim at discovering the causal links between various elements of phenomena and create generalisable knowledge. Quantitative methods and large scale experiments are usually used in this paradigm (Owen and Rogers, 1999). The strong focus on methods and the post-positivist paradigm suggest that this branch of theorists corresponds to Guba and Lincoln’s second and third generation, and to Vedung’s scientific wave.

Authors on the valuing branch (Scriven, Eisner, Stake, Wolf, Owens, House, Howe, MacDonald, Guba and Lincoln, Mertens, Greene) maintain that the most essential component of the evaluator’s role is to place value on data to determine its merit and worth. Some authors, such as Scriven, argue that this role also involves deciding which outcomes should be examined. Those aspects set evaluators apart from researchers (Alkin and Christie, 2004). Scriven (1986: 19, cited in Alkin and Christie, 2004) argues that “bad is bad and good is good and it is the job of evaluators to decide which is which”. Alkin and Christie (2004) place Guba and Lincoln’s fourth generation on this branch. Contrasting with authors such as Scriven, Guba and Lincoln argue that stakeholders should place the value on the programme (Alkin and Christie, 2004). Similarly, Vedung’s dialogue-orientated wave finds some echo on this branch. In a re-examination of their work, (Christie and Alkin, 2008: 134) divide the branch in two
using the “basic axioms of the post-positivist and constructivist paradigms”\textsuperscript{4}. The left branch that reaches towards the methods branch encompasses the post-positivist influence whereas the right branch embraces the constructivist influence. They also add two evaluation theorists (\textit{i.e.} Mertens and Greene) who have particular interest in social justice and deliberative democratic evaluation.

Authors on the use branch (Stufflebeam, Wholey, Patton, Alkin, Fetterman, King, Cousins, Owen, Preskill) express a concern for the way in which information coming from evaluations will be used and by whom. Evaluation reports aim at informing stakeholders’ decision-making (Alkin and Christie, 2004). This branch operates under pragmatism through examining what works well and meeting the stakeholders’ needs. The methodology used is mostly qualitative but also uses multi-methods (Greene, 1998). Stufflebeam’s CIPP (Context, Input, Process, and Product) model is one of the most popular frameworks on this branch. The concern with informing stakeholders reflects Vedung’s evidence-based wave.

2.2.2.2 Classification of evaluation approaches

Stufflebeam (2001) who belongs to the use branch on Alkin and Christie’s tree (2004) has developed a monograph of the different approaches often employed to evaluate programmes. In 2001, he distinguished evaluation “groups” that include 22 approaches (Stufflebeam, 2001). Six years later, Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (2007) added a fifth group, their analysis including 26 approaches. The different evaluation groups identified are: pseudoevaluations, questions and methods orientated evaluation approaches, improvement and accountability, social agenda and advocacy, and eclectic

\textsuperscript{4} “Where positivists believed that the goal of science was to uncover the truth, the post-positivist believes that the goal of science is to attempt to measure truth, even though that goal cannot be obtained. Constructivism is one element of interpretivism and ontologically takes a relativist stance. There is no single, tangible reality that can be approximated; there are only multiple, constructed realities.” (Christie and Alkin, 2008: 134)
evaluation. Each group comprises of between one and 14 evaluation approaches as indicated in Table 1.

Pseudoevaluations are motivated by political objectives and encompass public relation inspired studies and politically controlled studies. This group displays the political use of evaluations that can be employed to deceptively show or hide the value of a programme, and disseminate unsound or partial findings. It encompasses five different approaches identified in Table 1. Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (2007: 133) qualify the use of pseudoevaluations as illegitimate, “misleading or blatantly corrupt studies offered in the name of evaluation”.

Questions and methods-orientated approaches are either questions-oriented and seek to answer one or a set of narrowly defined questions through a range of methods, or methods-orientated and primarily use one method as a starting point such as a cost-analysis, a randomised experiment, or the theory of a programme. These approaches take the position that it is usually better to answer a few narrow questions well than to attempt a broad assessment of a programme’s merit and worth. This group comprises of the 14 approaches outlined in Table 1. Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (2007: 159) also call these evaluation approaches “quasi-evaluation studies” because of their narrow scope. Yet, these “quasi-evaluations” include the majority (14 of 26) of the approaches identified in the monograph, making their position on the definition of evaluation questionable.

Improvement and accountability approaches stress the need to fully assess a programme’s merit and worth in a comprehensive way that looks at all relevant outcomes. The worth of a programme is usually evaluated through a stakeholders’ needs assessment, while its merit is understood through all of the relevant technical and economic criteria. They usually use multiple qualitative and quantitative methods to cross-check the findings and have an objectivist orientation. This group includes three approaches.
Social agenda and advocacy approaches are directed so as to make a difference in society and empower through programme evaluation. These approaches employ qualitative methods and have a constructivist orientation. Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (2007) note that the strong emphasis on advocacy may hinder their ability to undertake a sound evaluation. This group embraces three approaches.

Eclectic Evaluation approaches include those that show no particular commitment to a philosophy or methodology. They serve the needs of a particular user group through the selection of the most appropriate methods and concepts available. This group represents one approach.
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<th>Groups</th>
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<td>Pseudoevaluations</td>
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<td>Politically controlled studies</td>
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<td>Pandering evaluations</td>
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<td>Empowerment under the guise of evaluation</td>
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<td>Questions and methods oriented evaluations</td>
<td>Objectives-based studies</td>
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<td>Accountability, particularly payment-by-result studies</td>
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<td>Constructivist evaluation</td>
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<td>Deliberative democratic evaluation</td>
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<td>Eclectic evaluation approaches</td>
<td>Utilisation-focused evaluation</td>
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2.2.2.3 Different forms of programme evaluation

A key distinction in evaluations arises between formative and summative evaluations. A formative evaluation is undertaken during the implementation phase of a programme and aims at improving its performance and ensuring quality (OECD, 2002; Stufflebeam and Shinkfield, 2007). Its purpose is to support the improvement of policy and practice (Pinkerton and Katz, 2003). Interactive evaluations presented by Owen and Rogers (1999) present similar characteristics since they consider the implementation of specific aspects of a programme. This type of evaluation (i.e. formative) facilitates learning and informs decision-making in programmes that evolve constantly (Owen and Rogers, 1999). A summative evaluation takes place at the end of the programme and examines the outcomes. It provides a judgment of the worth of the programme (OECD, 2002; Stufflebeam and Shinkfield, 2007). In Owen and Rogers’ (1999) classification, impact evaluations can be characterised as summative. They examine the impact of a programme through the assessment of the intended and non-intended outcomes, reached objectives and the level of performance of indicators. Pinkerton and Katz (2003) note that formative and summative evaluations represent the ends of a continuum rather than conflicting types of evaluations.

Owen and Rogers (1999) identify further forms of programme evaluation. A proactive evaluation takes place prior to the design of the programme. It informs planners about the type of programme required. A clarificative evaluation takes place during the programme and examines the theory of a programme in support of its implementation. A monitoring evaluation takes place in well-established programmes and provides a system to monitor progress on a regular basis. Proactive and clarificative evaluations have a tendency towards being formative evaluations while monitoring evaluations tend toward being summative evaluations. The different forms of programme evaluation identified by Owen and Rogers (1999) align well with Simonelli’s (1996, cited in Owen and Rogers, 1999) Programme (or Project) Evaluation Continuum (PEC). The framework suggests that evaluation should be undertaken at key points in the decision-making process of a programme, that are pre-programme, during implementation, and post-completion. Figure 2 illustrates how Owen and Rogers’
evaluation forms are positioned on Simonelli’s continuum: proactive evaluations take place before the programme begins; clarificative, interactive, and monitoring evaluations occur during the implementation phase; and impact evaluations happen after the programme has been completed.

![Programme Evaluation Continuum Diagram](image)

**Figure 2: Different forms of evaluation on the Programme Evaluation Continuum**

### 2.3 Theory-based evaluations: a contemporary approach

This section presents theory-based evaluations in more detail, an approach that is increasingly used in programme evaluation. Theory-based evaluations allow the understanding of not only whether activities work but how and why, and which aspects of the intervention worked or not, and for whom (Mackenzie and Blamey, 2005). They pay particular attention to context (*i.e.* political, social, organisational, and individual dimensions), acknowledging that specific contexts can increase or hinder a programme’s effectiveness (Blamey and Mackenzie, 2007). Theory-based evaluations aim to “uncover mechanisms through which a programme affects desired outcomes or meets human needs” (Donaldson, 2005: 39). They make causal inferences through examining causal mechanisms. Causal mechanisms are defined as portable concepts (*i.e.* not attached to a particular case) that “explain how and why a hypothesised cause, in a given context, contributes to a particular outcome” (Falleti and Lynch, 2009: 1143).
Theory-based evaluations are well established in the evaluation arena, with special journal issues focusing on the topic, chapters in best-selling text books such as *Evaluation: A Systematic Approach* (Rossi et al., 2004), special conference sessions, and a topical interest group on *Programme Theory and Theory-driven Evaluation* at the American Evaluation Association (Donaldson, 2005; Rogers, 2005; Funnell and Rogers, 2011). Theory-based evaluations have been applied to numerous domains such as community youth services, breast cancer screening, pre-school development, crime prevention, workforce development, health care services, and drug abuse prevention (Donaldson, 2005). Programme theories are also increasingly used by organisations and government. For instance, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation published the *Logic Model Development Guide* in 2004, the British government included a discussion on the topic in its *Magenta Book* in 2003, and the European Commission included programme theory in its guide to evaluability assessment in 2009 (Funnell and Rogers, 2011). Theory-based evaluations are increasingly popular and are considered by some as the “state-of-the-art” in many programme areas (Donaldson, 2005).

2.3.1 Rationale for theory-based evaluations

Pioneering publications mentioning a programme theory are traced back to the late 1950s, early 1960s (Funnell and Rogers, 2011). However, the notion of using programme theory to guide evaluation practice appeared in the 1980s and took hold in the 1990s, especially with the work of Chen and Rossi (Chen, 1989; Donaldson and Lipsey, 2006). Over the years, the use of theory-based evaluation increased and extended to a range of different programmes (Rogers, 2007; Astbury and Leeuw, 2010; Coryn et al., 2011). Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (2007) classify theory-based evaluations as operating among the question/methods orientated approaches, and

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5 A chapter on programme theory was added in the sixth edition of the book.
6 The W.K Kellogg Foundation is a philanthropic foundation providing grants and programmes to support vulnerable children.
7 Published by the British Government Chief Social Researcher’s Office, the Magenta Book is a guide to planning and evaluation.
influential authors such as Chen and Rossi are placed on the method branch of Alkin and Christie’s (2004) evaluation tree. Owen and Rogers (1999) note that they have commonalities with the clarificative and proactive forms of evaluation.

Some evaluation theorists advocated a shift from black box evaluations to theory-oriented evaluations (Chen, 1989). Traditional black box evaluations provide unbiased estimates of net effects but do not give information about why the programme failed nor identify weaknesses (Rossi and Wright, 1984; Harachi et al., 1999). For evaluators, it became increasingly important to move beyond the black box approach and differentiate between implementation failure and programme failure (Harachi et al., 1999; Donaldson and Lipsey, 2006; Astbury and Leeuw, 2010; Funnell and Rogers, 2011). Indeed, many examples of experimental studies produced inconclusive results, generating a “parade of null effects” (Rossi and Wright, 1984; Pawson and Tilley, 1997; Donaldson, 2005; Blamey and Mackenzie, 2007).

Some theorists argue the lack of results came from implementation failure (Harachi et al., 1999; Donaldson, 2005). For instance, programmes were often hastily established, some of them were badly devised and inappropriately or unsuccessfully put into action (Rossi et al., 2004). To illustrate implementation failure, Funnell and Rogers (2011) use the example of a fictional programme called An Apple a Day which distributes seven apples a week to each participant with the intended outcome of improving health. No outcomes (e.g. no health improvement) could be due to implementation failure such as inappropriate delivery (e.g. participants did not receive the apples), poor uptake (e.g. participants not eating the apples received), faulty quality of product (e.g. the apples being too small, unripe, or too ripe). Such factors hinder the effectiveness of a programme and constitute implementation failure. As stated by Lipsey and Cordray (2000), a programme is not automatically followed by effective service delivery. Conversely, if the theory underpinning a programme is faulty, then the programme will not produce the anticipated outcomes, no matter how well it is implemented (Astbury and Leeuw, 2010).
Other theorists understand the “parade of null effects” of those social interventions as “more likely to be due to insensitive programme evaluation than to ineffective social programming” (Lipsey, 1988, cited in Donaldson, 2005: 34). The use of theory-based evaluations emerged as a response to evaluation methodology being poorly adapted to complex social interventions. With policy-makers acknowledging that reality was complex, new types of programmes emerged. To tackle interconnected problems simultaneously, programmes developed multiple strands (e.g. economic, social, health, and education components), operated at different levels (e.g. community, institutional, family, and individual level), became constructed by diverse stakeholders, and came to have many implementers (public, private, third sector) that were expected to work in partnership (Connell and Kubisch, 1998; Stame, 2004; Blamey and Mackenzie, 2007).

This approach underpinned and still continues to underpin numerous Comprehensive Community Initiatives in the USA, the Communities That Care programme and joined-up government in the UK, and the law for integrated social services in Italy (Stame, 2004: 64). Jack (2005: 293) stresses the challenge of evaluating such programmes as “they usually involve so many different individuals, groups and organizations, each subject to an array of potential influences within changing social, economic and political contexts”.

Finding a simple causal link in a multifaceted programme is not possible. Dyson and Todd (2010: 123), commenting on evaluations of complex interventions in schools context, assert that “simple input-output models of evaluation, assuming that the financial, human, and intellectual resources of an initiative will lead straightforwardly to readily identifiable student outcomes, are unlikely to shed much light on initiatives of this kind”. Theory-based evaluations are used as an alternative approach to assess initiatives such as the Sure Start Initiative or Every Child Matters that are characterised as “multi-strands interventions in complex contexts” (Dyson and Todd, 2010: 120).

Theory-based evaluations also appear suitable in cases where randomised controlled trials (RCTs) are inappropriate (Rogers et al., 2000; Weiss, 2004; Coryn et al., 2011). As Rossi and Wright (1984) argue, randomised experiments can only take place in a
limited number of cases. Beyond the ethical and legal limitations, some interventions target a wide range of the population and control groups cannot be established. Furthermore, those evaluations require an amount of time (three to five years) that policy makers cannot often afford (Rossi and Wright, 1984). Theory based evaluation can provide causal explanations8 (Sullivan and Stewart, 2006; Coryn et al., 2011; Funnell and Rogers, 2011), possibly with the same clarity as randomised experiments (Rogers et al., 2000; Weiss, 2004). They also strengthen the validity of evaluations (Weiss, 1997). However, not all theory-based evaluations address causal attribution, the use of programme theory to guide evaluations being sometimes linear and simplistic, limited to acknowledging the occurrence of elements of the logic model (Weiss, 1997; Rogers et al., 2000; Mackenzie and Blamey, 2005; Rogers, 2007). Consequently, some authors argue that theory-based approaches are best used within experimental frameworks rather than as an alternative to it (Cook, 2005: 214).

In addition to programme components, context is a critical issue. As Chen (1989) underlines, the worth of a programme is difficult to assess without having information on the contextual factors which help to make a programme a success or failure. For instance, an educational programme might demonstrate significant improvement in academic performances but the merit and worth would be questionable if results were obtained by verbal threat or the exclusion of bad students. Theory-based evaluations do not simply state if a programme is effective or not, they provide information about the reasons it was successful or failed (Rogers et al., 2000; Weiss, 2004; Chen, 2005b). Lipsey and Cordray (2000: 358) maintain that “one thing that has become clear in the evaluation field is that programme stakeholders and policymakers want an explanation for the results of an outcome evaluation, not just a statement about whether effects were found on selected outcome variables.”

8 For a framework on causal inferences see chapter 15 in Funnell and Rogers (2011)
A characteristic that distinguishes programme evaluation from other types of evaluation (e.g. product evaluation, public accounting) is the necessity to have a holistic approach to evaluate merit. The programme’s intrinsic value, such as achievement of goals, and context have to be examined jointly (Chen, 2004). Therefore, theory-based approaches focus on the programme components that are the most effective, the causal processes through which they work, and the characteristics of the participants, service providers, and settings that impact on the relationships between a programme and its outcomes (Donaldson and Lipsey, 2006). Yet, the focus is not solely on the programme’s merit; theory-based evaluation aims to generate information that will support stakeholders by highlighting the improvements required (Chen, 2004).

2.3.2 Clarification of the terminology used around programme theory

The landscape of theory approaches to evaluation encompasses a variety of terms that are sometimes interchangeable: theory-based evaluation, theory-driven evaluation, programme theory, programme logic, evaluation theory, logic models, and so on (King, 2003; Donaldson and Lipsey, 2006; Rogers, 2007; Coryn et al., 2011). Generally, “theory connotes a body of knowledge that organises, categorises, describes, predicts, explains, and otherwise aids in understanding and controlling a topic” (Shadish et al., 1991: 30). Two key distinctions emerge amongst theory-based approaches to evaluation:

- **Between evaluation theory and programme theory.** An evaluation theory is about how to practice evaluation (Alkin and Christie, 2004; Donaldson and Lipsey, 2006; Coryn et al., 2011). Ideally, an evaluation theory clarifies and justifies evaluation practices (Shadish et al., 1991). A programme theory is more modest and focuses on the nature of the evaluand itself, which is the programme, treatment, intervention, or policy being evaluated (Donaldson and Lipsey, 2006: 64). It is the “conception of what must be done to bring about the intended social benefits” (Rossi et al., 2004: 134). Programme theory includes the causal links between the activities (i.e. operations, procedures,
interventions) and its intended outcomes. In general, when looking at theory in programme evaluation, the attention is on programme theory rather than evaluation theory (King, 2003).

- **Between programme theory and programme logic** (also called logic models). These terms are often used interchangeably (Owen and Rogers, 1999; Rogers, 2007; Astbury and Leeuw, 2010). However, they are increasingly distinguished in the literature (Rogers, 2007; Astbury and Leeuw, 2010; Funnell and Rogers, 2011). Programme logic often refers to the identification of the different elements of a programme and a description of the way they fit together. It examines the relationship between the programme elements (input, processes, outputs, and outcomes) on a technical, descriptive level. On the other hand, a programme theory includes a focus on context and an explanatory component. It examines causal processes through articulating how a programme works, for whom, and under which circumstances (Rogers, 2007; Astbury and Leeuw, 2010). Furthermore, a programme theory draws on formal research whereas a programme logic pulls together informal assumptions held by stakeholders (Funnell and Rogers, 2011).

Various definitions of theory-based evaluation appear in the literature. According to Chen (2005c: 415) theory-driven evaluation is “a contextual or holistic assessment of a programme based on the conceptual framework of programme theory”. It can also be called white box or clear box evaluation, in opposition to the black box paradigm (Astbury and Leeuw, 2010). Rogers et al. (2000) emphasise that a programme theory evaluation uses the programme theory to guide the evaluation, as opposed to evaluations that only explicate the programme theory. Drawing on this, Coryn et al. (2011: 201) use the term theory-driven evaluation to consider “any evaluation strategy or approach that explicitly integrates and uses stakeholder, social science, some combination of, or other types of theories in conceptualising, designing, conducting, interpreting, and applying an evaluation”. Donaldson and Lipsey (2006: 67) propose the term “programme theory-driven evaluation science” as an inclusive definition that refers to the “systematic use of substantive knowledge about the phenomena under
investigation and scientific methods to improve, to produce knowledge and feedback about, and to determine the merit, worth, and significance of evaluands such as social, educational, health, community, and organisational programs”. This definition includes two new words: programme is added to clarify what type of theory is considered in this context and science is adjoined to highlight the rigorous methodology used to answer evaluation questions through systematic inquiry (Donaldson, 2007:11). In the context of this research, to simplify matters, the term “theory-based evaluation” will be used in a way that encompasses the definitions proposed for theory-driven evaluation and programme theory-driven evaluation science. Together the definitions provide a holistic description of theory-based evaluation, emphasising both the methodology and purposes of this approach.

2.3.3 The role of theory in theory-based evaluations

Theory-based evaluation has to start from a well-developed and validated theory (Stufflebeam and Shinkfield, 2007:716). In some cases the programme theory is developed by the evaluator. The theory can build on the literature review of similar programmes or comparable causal mechanisms, interviews with stakeholders to reveal their assumptions and expectations, analysis of the programme’s documentation, and observation of the programme (Owen and Rogers, 1999; Rogers et al., 2000; Astbury and Leeuw, 2010). Owen and Rogers (1999) note that Chen moved away from stakeholders’ views when drawing a programme theory since they might not produce the clearest articulation of complex causal links. To overcome this, he draws on social science theory to reinforce stakeholders’ views (Owen and Rogers, 1999). Using such different methods, the evaluator establishes a model outlining inconsistencies that should be resolved. At the end of the process, the evaluator proposes a formal programme model (Owen and Rogers, 1999: 195). The programme theory can be developed before or during the programme’s implementation and is most of the time condensed in a diagram showing causal links (Rogers et al., 2000; Astbury and Leeuw, 2010).
Programme theory can be used in combination with a number of approaches. Indeed, theory-based evaluations have adaptable features. They can be used as both formative and summative evaluations (Rogers et al., 2000). They are also method-neutral, using both qualitative and quantitative method (Donaldson, 2007). The chosen method will depend on the purpose of the evaluation, the nature of the question, and the form of the answer that will be the most useful (Bass, 1999; Chen, 2005a; Donaldson and Lipsey, 2006). For instance, programme theory can support the design of experimental frameworks (Weitzman et al., 2002; Cook, 2005; Donaldson, 2005). It can also be used to establish hypotheses that will be tested through non-experimental methods (Rogers, 2007). Some authors argue that theory-based evaluations have the capacity to reconcile seemingly contrasting evaluation types such as process and outcome evaluations (Hughes and Traynor, 2000).

Drawing on the review undertaken by Coryn et al. (2011: 32-33), different ways to use theory can be identified. They represent the core principles of theory-based evaluation:

1. Theory formulation: evaluators should formulate a plausible programme theory. The theory can draw on social science theory, and/or stakeholder theory, and/or observation of the programme (Coryn et al., 2011). The use of social sciences theory (lessons relative to what works and what does not) can save precious time for programme designers and evaluators. It also helps the evaluator to estimate if the programme is likely to achieve its goals or not (Donaldson and Lipsey, 2006).

2. Theory guided question formulation: evaluators should formulate and prioritize evaluation questions around a programme theory (Coryn et al., 2011). The articulation of the theory shows precisely what is expected in the activities and outcomes of a programme and therefore supports the evaluators in identifying critical dimensions that must be examined, and those that might not be the most important to assess (Donaldson and Lipsey, 2006; Stufflebeam and Shinkfield, 2007). It also focuses evaluation attention and resources on key
aspects of the programme and therefore refines the scope of the evaluation (Weiss, 1995; Donaldson, 2007; Funnell and Rogers, 2011).

3. Theory-guided evaluation design, planning, and execution: evaluators should consider relevant contingencies (e.g. time, budget, and use) and determine if the evaluation has to be adapted to some aspects of the programme or if it is comprehensive (Coryn et al., 2011). The use of programme theory in the design allows the evaluations to be sensitive and responsive (Donaldson and Lipsey, 2006).

4. Theory-guided construct measurement: evaluators should measure process, outcome, and contextual constructs postulated in programme theory (Coryn et al., 2011).

5. Causal description and causal explanation: evaluators should identify breakdowns (e.g. poor implementation, unsuitable context, and theory failure), side effects including both positive and negative unintended outcomes, determine programme effectiveness, as well as describe and explain cause-and-effect associations between theoretical constructs. An emphasis is put on causal explanation. This core principal is key to dissociating theory-based evaluation from other types of evaluation (Coryn et al., 2011).

2.3.4 Components of programme theory

The articulation of the programme theory is a key aspect of theory-based evaluation. Chen (1989: 391) explains that “the questions of how to structure the organised efforts appropriately and how the organised efforts lead to the desirable outcomes imply that the programme operates under some implicit theory.” Although this theory is frequently implicit or unsystematic, it supplies guidance for the development of the programme and explains how the programme is supposed to work (Chen, 1989).
Rogers et al. (2000) identify two components to programme theory evaluation. One is conceptual, the other empirical. The conceptual component entails that the evaluation should clarify the programme theory. It can be connected to the normative theory that Chen (1989) identified as one of the two sub-theories contained in programme theory. The normative theory gives some theoretical indications on how to design and implement the programme. The organisational plan (i.e. how to manage resources and organise activities so that the intended service delivery system is developed and maintained) and the service utilisation plan (how the target population receives the intended amount of the envisioned intervention through interaction with the programme’s service delivery system) identified by Rossi et al. (2004:140-141) resonate here. In Chen’s (1989) view, the normative theory also provides the rationale and justification for the programme’s structure. This allows the stakeholders and evaluators to better understand the conceptualisation and assumptions of the programme and helps to identify key issues in the programme’s design and implementation. Thus, the evaluation can be responsive to the stakeholders’ true needs and can greatly enhance utilisation (Chen, 1989; Donaldson and Lipsey, 2006).

The empirical component entails that the evaluation should examine how programmes cause outcomes (Rogers et al., 2000). This is consistent with Chen’s second sub-theory: the causal theory. The causal theory indicates how the programme works and under what conditions it will have certain kind of consequences or processes. This can be linked to the impact theory (how the intended intervention for the specified target population brings about the desired social benefits) identified by Rossi et al. (2004). The causal theory is about underlying causal mechanisms which link the causal relationship between the treatment variables and the outcome variables in a programme. This provides information useful for judging the worth of a programme or identifying problems in the programme’s causal processes in order to aid future programme improvement and other policy decisions (Chen, 1989).
A model of programme theory proposed by Donaldson (2007) comprises of inputs (i.e. resources), activities (i.e. actions), and outputs (intermediate result of the actions) that are the programme process theory, as well as initial outcomes, intermediate outcomes, and long-term outcomes that are the programme impact theory. A diagram representing a linear model of programme theory is proposed in Figure 3.

![Linear programme theory model](image)

**Figure 3: Linear programme theory model (in Donaldson, 2007:25)**

Chen (2005) proposes a nonlinear model that provides more context, and is comprehensive and ecological (Coryn *et al.*, 2011). He states that programme theory is a systematic construction of stakeholders’ prescriptive and descriptive assumptions, whether explicit or implicit (Chen, 2004: 136). Prescriptive assumptions consist of what action must be taken and are called change model. They correspond to what Weiss (1995: 58) calls implementation theory which is “what is required to translate objectives into on-going service delivery and programme operation”. Descriptive assumptions comprise the processes that are anticipated to achieve the programme’s goals and are called action model. They correspond to what Weiss (1995) calls programmatic theory. A programme is impacted by both models (Chen, 2004, 2005b). Chen’s conceptual framework of programme theory can be used by evaluators who want to look at the dynamics that underlie a programme’s success or failure. This framework is presented in Figure 4.

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9 Permission to reproduce this figure has been granted by Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
As illustrated in Figure 4, a change model is composed of three elements: goals and outcomes; determinants (i.e. the leverage mechanism that underlies a problem); and the intervention or treatment (i.e. activities of a programme that intend to change a determinant) (Chen, 2005a). Evaluations that focus on the change model surrounding the programme theory are called intervening mechanism evaluations (Chen, 2005c).

An action model is “a systematic plan for arranging staff, resources, settings, and support organisations in order to reach a target population and deliver intervention of services” (Chen, 2005a: 23). For instance, the assessment of policy impact an

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evaluation should consider criteria such as good and flexible working relationships amongst agencies, the existence of an integrated staff team, and services being delivered through a well-planned yet flexible process (Pinkerton et al., 2000: 156). Evaluations that focus on the action model are called theory-driven process evaluations (Chen, 2005c). The action model is composed of six elements that do not necessarily all take place in a programme (Chen, 2005b: 341):

- Implementing organisations refers to the need for the organisation that will be in charge of the implementation of the programme to have the capacity and structure to do so.

- Intervention and service delivery protocols: the former states the nature, content, and activities of an intervention while the latter details the specific steps required for the delivery of the intervention.

- Programme implementers: those responsible for the delivery of services (e.g. case managers, school teachers, social workers, etc.) have a direct impact on the quality of the intervention. Their commitment and competency are key and should be ensured through enacting strategies such as training, communication, monitoring and feedback.

- Associate organisations and community partners: collaboration with other organisations is essential for the intervention’s implementation.

- Ecological context: support should be sought from the environment, such as from families and friends of the targeted population.

- Target population: has valid eligibility criteria, can be reached, and has the desire to participate in the programme.

Funnell and Rogers (2011:150) note that while it is helpful to distinguish the action and change models in theory, in practice “work on the two aspects often takes place at the same time and is seen as a single programme theory development task”. Others (Blamey and Mackenzie, 2007) argue that whilst all theory-based evaluations consider
both models, some have a stronger focus on the change model (e.g. realist evaluation) and others on the action model (e.g. theory of change approach). The two types of theory-based evaluation are presented in the following section.

2.3.5 Prominent types of theory-based evaluation: theory of change approach and realist evaluation

Among theory-driven evaluations, two approaches are predominant. The theory of change approach and realist evaluation are the two “currently favoured ways of applying theory-based evaluation within the UK” (Blamey and Mackenzie, 2007: 440). Sometimes described as “species” of theory-based evaluations (Pawson and Tilley, 1997), the theory of change approach and realist evaluation are cousins belonging to the same family. This section provides a brief description of both approaches and then discusses their commonalities and differences.

The Theory of Change approach emerged from the Aspen Institute\textsuperscript{11} and is defined as "a systematic and cumulative study of the links between activities, outcomes and contexts of the initiative" (Connell and Kubisch, 1998: 18). Using a theory of change approach the evaluator examines the initiative’s intended outcomes, the activities it expects to implement to achieve those outcomes, and the contextual factors that may impact on the implementation and/or outcomes (Connell and Kubisch, 1998: 16). The focus is on Chen’s change model. The approach can be adapted to suit the evaluation context (Dyson and Todd, 2010). Mason and Barnes (2007: 167) claim that a theory of change approach to evaluation “should be understood less as an approach which tests the robustness of the ‘theory’ and its implementation, and more as the providing of a framework within which it is possible to construct a narrative of the process of implementation and its consequences.” Simply, in practice, a theory of change evaluation focuses on facilitating the articulation of the theories of change by the

\textsuperscript{11} The Aspen Institute is an organisation based in Washington DC which undertakes educational and policy studies - See more at: http://www.aspeninstitute.org/about#sthash.iBIYu269.dpuf
It starts with a situation analysis (i.e. identifying the problem, causes, opportunities and consequences), then the focus and scope of the programme are defined, and finally an outcomes chain is developed (i.e. representation of hypothesised cause and effect relationships between short term, intermediate, and long term outcomes) (Funnell and Rogers, 2011). Once the theory is formulated, the evaluator ensures that the theory is doable, plausible, and testable (Connell and Kubisch, 1998; Sullivan et al., 2002; Blamey and Mackenzie, 2007). A theory of change evaluation then uses relevant multi-method approaches to monitor the unfolding of the programme in practice, investigating the extent to which thresholds, timeframes, and outcomes are attained (Blamey and Mackenzie, 2007).

Realist evaluation draws on the idea that “programmes work (have successful outcomes) only in so far as they introduce the appropriate ideas and opportunities (mechanism) to groups in the appropriate social and cultural conditions (contexts)” (Pawson and Tilley, 2005: 95). Therefore, realist evaluation focuses on the links between context, mechanism, and outcome (CMOs), a model called “generative causation” (Pawson and Tilley, 1997, 2005). It pays particular attention to the role of individuals and how their psychological and motivational responses activate mechanisms of change (Stame, 2004). Underlying mechanisms encompass how the programme’s resources influence the recipients’ actions. Furthermore, it suggests that whether mechanisms work depends on context, which embraces the characteristics of both actors and location. The outcome pattern comprises various impacts over a range of effects. Overall, in realist evaluation, the emphasis is not on the programme but rather on the underlying reasons or resources that generate change and provide transferable theory about “what works for whom in what circumstances” (Pawson, 2005: 359). In practice, a realist evaluation starts with an attempt to understand the nature of the social programme. The evaluator then maps the various potential CMO (Context – Mechanisms – Outcomes) configurations that could reflect the programme.

12 For more detail on how to articulate a theory of change see Connell and Kubisch (1998), and Funnell and Rogers (2011).
The next step is to undertake an “outcome inquiry” \( (i.e. \) a qualitative and quantitative picture of the programme in action) for each of the configurations. Finally, the evaluation draws on the CMO configurations to develop theories of what works, for whom, and in what context (Pawson and Tilley, 1997; Blamey and Mackenzie, 2007).

Realist evaluation and theory of change approaches propose frameworks rather than a methodology or a technique (Pawson, 2005; Mason and Barnes, 2007). They both belong to the family of theory-based evaluations and therefore show similarities. For instance, they both aim at unravelling elements of Chen’s change and theory models. They consider context as key to causal attribution and central to the replication and possible generalisability of a programme. They both make causal inferences about aspects of the intervention and its impact on recipients; the theory of change through building stakeholders’ consensus about the programme’s theory and then testing it; the realist evaluation through its model of generative causation. They also both use programme theory to inform the evaluation’s design (Blamey and Mackenzie, 2007).

However, various divergences emerge between the two approaches. A key distinction between these two groups of theory-based evaluations revolves around how they consider the black box (Blamey and Mackenzie, 2007). In the case of the theory of change approach, the black box is composed of many theories \( (i.e. \) programme logic identifying the link between activities, context, and outcomes) whereas realist evaluation considers that it is inhabited by people (Stame, 2004: 62). For instance, Pawson and Tilley (1997) consider that it is not the programme itself that generates change, but the people whom when exposed to a programme, in a particular context, trigger the mechanisms producing change.

Furthermore, while the two approaches examine both action and change models, in practice the theory of change approach tends to focus on the former while realist evaluation aims at uncovering the latter (Blamey and Mackenzie, 2007). Most of the evaluations using a theory of change approach provide descriptive information about elements of the intervention and their links. A realist evaluation on the other hand examines the mechanisms leading to behaviour change, formulating generalisable
causal explanations (Blamey and Mackenzie, 2007). Another distinction draws on who articulates the theory. In the case of the theory of change, evaluators engage with a wide range of stakeholders that are engaged in the planning and implementation of the programme. This echoes Comprehensive Community Initiative (CCI) principles relating to community empowerment and capacity building (Judge and Bauld, 2001; Mackenzie and Blamey, 2005; Blamey and Mackenzie, 2007). The realist approach uses a limited and selected number of stakeholders and evaluators choose the most promising theories. In this case, the theories are generated mostly through the evaluators’ knowledge and experience, and the CMO configurations investigated are selected by the evaluator.

Methodologically, a major difference between the two approaches is that the theory of change approach is not opposed to the use of randomised controlled trials to assess attribution. For instance, in the case of the Urban Health Initiative’s evaluation, a comparison group design was built into a theory of change approach (Weitzman et al., 2002). Contrary, realist approaches are epistemologically against the use of controlled trials (Pawson and Tilley, 1997; Blamey and Mackenzie, 2007). Indeed, experimental studies assess the impact of a programme through measuring its effects and do not provide any indication about the mechanisms underlying the causal relationship between a programme and its outcomes, which is what realist evaluation aim to uncover.

Some theorists argue that each approach is better suited to a certain context. The theory of change approach is more relevant to integrated, complex initiatives since they are concerned with the overall programme outcomes and provide a strategic perspective on it at a given level of the hierarchy (Stame, 2004; Blamey and Mackenzie, 2007). The theories examined here are more likely limited to the change model (Blamey and Mackenzie, 2007). A realist evaluation with its CMO configurations provides more accurate and detailed learning, but is less adapted to complex social interventions with diffused leadership (Blamey and Mackenzie, 2007). Instead the approach appears better suited to multi-level governance with vertical complexity which is characterised
by hierarchy and subsidiarity\(^\text{13}\) (Stame, 2004). Nevertheless, other theorists suggest that the two approaches can, and should more often, be combined. Indeed, the theory of change provides strategic learning about the change model and the realist evaluation enables the unravelling of the action model; they are complementary approaches (Sullivan et al., 2002; Blamey and Mackenzie, 2007).

Both approaches are to some extent challenging to implement. Consensus can be extremely difficult to build in when using a theory of change approach, and a lot of time can be spent extracting “noise” out of the process (Dyson and Todd, 2010). The time required to master the approach, the unavailability of information relating to context, and the difficulty of making the distinction between elements of context and mechanisms are examples of challenges encountered during a realist evaluation (Ridde et al., 2012). Overall, the benefits and challenges relevant to the two approaches are similar to those identified in the general literature on theory-based evaluation as discussed in the following sections.

### 2.3.6 Benefits of the theory-based approaches

In summary, theory-based approaches identify the reasons for a programme’s success or failure by looking at how they work. They allow the understanding of not only whether activities produce effects but how and why, and which aspects of the intervention worked or not, and for whom (Pawson and Tilley, 1997; Weiss, 2004; Mackenzie and Blamey, 2005). The major competitive advantage of theory-based evaluations is to offer a solution to the inability of other available approaches to evaluate complex initiatives as highlighted previously (Connell and Kubisch, 1998). For instance, it avoids the common pitfall encountered in evaluating community programmes that is the exclusive reliance on individual-level data (Weiss, 1995; Connell and Kubisch, 1998).

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\(^{13}\) Subsidiarity draws on the principle of decentralisation, meaning “that the higher level does not do what the lower levels can do” (Stame, 2004: 65).
Echoing points already made in this chapter, Rogers (2000, cited in Coryn et al., 2011) identifies the key advantages of theory-based evaluations as: “at their best, theory-driven evaluation can be analytically and empirically powerful and lead to better evaluation questions, better evaluation answers, and better programmes” (p.209) and they “can lead to better information about a programme that is important for replication or for improvement, which is unlikely to be produced by other types of programme evaluation” (p.232).

Theory-based approaches contribute to the development of knowledge. Indeed, this approach supports the development of programme theories and key theories of change (Weiss, 1995, 2004). The knowledge produced by theory-based evaluations can also be generalised and contribute to “social learning” that can be used by a wide range of actors such as programme directors, designers, or funders and provide key information for stakeholders that will be able to develop more effective programmes in the future (Rossi and Wright, 1984; Connell and Kubisch, 1998). For instance, theory-based evaluations can improve programmes by influencing decision-making and/or policy for social programming (Weiss, 1995; Donaldson and Lipsey, 2006; Coryn et al., 2011). Donaldson and Lipsey (2006: 66) suggest that the “integration of theory constitutes a (if not the) major way that evaluation contributes to social betterment by way of knowledge development”. Therefore, evaluators need to disseminate their research to make sure lessons are shared and used (Donaldson, 2007).

Theory-based approaches improve programmes. They support practitioners in the articulation of the programme’s theory. In doing so, they can bring consensus and support clarity among interagency partners and stakeholders about what they are trying to do and why (Weiss, 1995; Hernandez and Hodges, 2006). The articulation of a programme theory brings out inconsistencies that can be resolved before the programme is running at full speed, which sharpens the planning and implementation of an initiative (Weiss, 1995; Connell and Kubisch, 1998; Mackenzie and Blamey, 2005). It also empowers stakeholders, promotes inclusion, and facilitates participation (Connell and Kubisch, 1998; Donaldson and Lipsey, 2006). Theory-based evaluations
support managers and staff in relation to planning and management improvements (Rogers et al., 2000). Indeed, causal inferences identify the weaknesses of the programme as well as the factors which hinder or facilitate programme processes and outcomes. Accordingly, evaluators can suggest possible strategies for dealing with these problems, providing direction to stakeholders (Chen, 1989, 2004; Stufflebeam and Shinkfield, 2007). Brown (2010: 99) asserts that the use of theory-based frameworks “helped to promote clearer thinking about the dose and scale of strategies required to produce results in community change work”.

Theory-based approaches also facilitate the measurements and data-collection elements of the evaluation process, and improve the evaluation’s focus (Connell and Kubisch, 1998; Mackenzie and Blamey, 2005). The development of the programme’s theory allows the identification of pertinent variables and enables the evaluator to make informed decisions about when, how, and on whom they should be measured. Programme theory can also be used to identify and control external factors. Shortcomings in evaluation methods can also be identified. For instance, theory-based approaches will suggest the development of an instrument to measure a variable that could be not be tested (Rogers et al., 2000). Overall, theory-based evaluation “forces evaluators to ‘think’ (and do their homework) before they ‘act’ (employ their favourite methods)” (Donaldson, 2005: 54).

Figure 5 illustrates how knowledge produced by theory-based evaluations contributes to various fields, as identified in this section. It summarises the way knowledge produced through this approach provides useful information for funders, policy makers, programme developers, programme directors and practitioners, as well as other stakeholders. It also highlights that the knowledge produced by theory-based evaluations contributes to the development of social sciences and programme theory. The figure also acknowledges the inputs of social sciences and programme developers into programme theory and how programme theory contributes towards the general development of evaluation theory.
2.3.7 Challenges of theory-based approaches

Despite the numerous benefits generated by theory-based evaluations, this approach also faces challenges. Here, the arguments are separated in two sub-sections. The first provides an overview of the debate around the need for theory in evaluations. The second section outlines key challenges identified in the literature that are inherent to theory-based evaluations.

2.3.7.1 The debate against the need for theory in evaluations

While the use of theory-based evaluations has increased over the years (Donaldson and Lipsey, 2006; Rogers, 2007; Coryn et al., 2011), some authors assert that there is little or no need for theory in evaluations. Before the emergence of theory-based evaluation,
some theorists such as Campbell (1984, cited in Coryn et al., 2011) argued against the use of social science theories in the design and evaluation of programmes since the theories were considered to be poor and the programmes were subject to political and administrative pressure (Coryn et al., 2011: 205). Stufflebeam and Scriven are identified as two major critics of theory-based evaluation (Donaldson and Lipsey, 2006; Coryn et al., 2011). Scriven (1998, cited in Coryn et al., 2011) argues that there is no need for theory in evaluations. He views the role of the evaluator as limited to determining if a programme works or not. In his opinion, determining the worth and merit of a programme does not require an understanding of the underlying mechanisms (e.g. there is no need to understand how aspirin works to be able to measure its effect). Scriven asserts that providing an explanation relative to how and why a programme works falls outside of an evaluator’s role and is beyond the capacity of most of them. He also states that the belief that the evaluation of a programme requires or benefits from programme theory is “the most popular misconception amongst currently politically correct programme evaluators” (Scriven, 2004, cited in Donaldson and Lipsey, 2006:58).

Arguing against the use of theory, Stufflebeam (2001) maintains that this type of evaluation requires the programme to start with either a sound theory that has been tested in similar circumstances, or at least a preliminary stage approaching such a theory. He asserts that frameworks providing programme theories do exist, but only few programmes are supported by well-articulated and tested theories. Therefore, evaluators often have to outline the programme’s theory at the beginning of the evaluation. Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (2007: 185) view this as a “problematic and potentially counterproductive” feature of programme theory-based evaluations. For instance, developing and validating a theory requires time that might not allow the evaluation to be undertaken effectively while respecting deadlines. Evaluators might also put a strong emphasis on the theory development and then have little time left to evaluate a programme that has shifted from the original theory (Stufflebeam and Shinkfield, 2007).
Stufflebeam (2001) and Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (2007) also highlight a number of difficulties related to evaluators developing the programme theory such as usurpation of the staff’s responsibility for designing the programme, possible conflict of interest relative to assessing a theory developed by evaluators themselves, or poor theory development due to the limited time and resources available to test it (Mackenzie and Blamey, 2005).

Furthermore, “programme theory-based evaluation” is classified in the “questions and methods orientated evaluation” approaches in Stufflebeam and Shinkfield’s (2007) monograph, also called “quasi-evaluation studies”. They claim that in most cases the focus of quasi-evaluations is very narrow. It can be limited to answering a set of questions or using a particular method, the assessment of a programme’s merit and worth being secondary in those approaches. Whilst Stufflebeam and Shinkfield acknowledge that in some cases quasi-evaluation studies can be considered as rigorous evaluations, they remain critical and state that they should “not be uncritically equated to evaluation” (Stufflebeam and Shinkfield, 2007: 160).

Defending the use of theory-based evaluations, Weiss (2004) argues that it is probable that programmes draw on a restricted number of mechanisms. She suggests that with the development of the field of programme theory, a point may be reached where there will be no need to develop a new theory for each programme because existing theories will have uncovered the mechanisms. Moreover, Donaldson (2005) states that critics of theory-based evaluations often come from the misconception that a programme theory requires a well-developed social science theory, which is rare. He restates that a programme theory (i.e. small and specific theories of social interventions) can be rooted in social sciences or prior research, but mainly draw on the knowledge held by those closest to the programme.

Rogers (2007) claims that programme theory is increasingly becoming a requirement for organisations and funders who recognise its value for planning and management. Acknowledging that programme theories solely based on practitioners’ assumptions can be poor, she argues that it is feasible and useful to improve the quality of the
theory. This can be achieved through a better analysis of alternative causal explanations, better use of research theories, and better inclusion of beneficiaries’ views (Rogers, 2007: 65). Whilst being critical of the time requirements relative to theory development, Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (2007) acknowledge that when a sound theory exists, evaluators can gain from using it to draw the evaluation and analyse findings.

Finally, while some theorists such as Scriven (2004, cited in Donaldson and Lipsey, 2006) argue that there is no need to understand why a programme works to see if it has an effect, others (Donaldson, 2005) maintain that theory-based evaluations can use an outcome evaluation to test the programme’s theory, providing responses to both questions. For instance, in the case of two Scottish Health demonstration projects, a theory of change approach was used as part of a wider evaluation plan that included quasi-experimental pre and post intervention surveys, a context analysis, and some pre-specified qualitative research (Mackenzie and Blamey, 2005). Therefore, theory-based evaluations provide a more holistic and inclusive approach to programme evaluations than other types of evaluations.

2.3.7.2 Challenges of theory-based approaches encountered in practice

The literature identifies a set of challenges associated with the use of theory-based approaches. Some are linked to problems of theorising. For instance, individual stakeholders might find the process unpleasant, consensus might not be reached, there might be political risks in making its assumptions explicit, all stakeholders need to invest time and political capital, and the evaluation team needs a sufficient workforce to establish strong relationships with the stakeholders (Weiss, 1995; Connell and Kubisch, 1998; Stufflebeam, 2001; Sullivan et al., 2002; Mackenzie and Blamey, 2005). Chen (2004) asserts that to win stakeholders’ credibility, the design of the evaluation has to be responsive to their positions, concerns, and needs. The challenge is to obtain a balance between stakeholders’ credibility and scientific credibility, which can sometimes be contradictory. Chen (2004) suggests seeking stakeholders’
credibility at the beginning of the evaluation and generating scientific credibility at a later stage.

The literature does not provide much information in relation to methods to be used or how and who should articulate theories (Sullivan and Stewart, 2006; Mason and Barnes, 2007). Therefore, these can hugely vary in implementation processes (Mason and Barnes, 2007). Blamey and Mackenzie (2007) suggest using different evaluators for the formative and summative aspects of the work to provide more independence.

Relationships with stakeholders also constitute a challenge. An evaluation often comprises power dynamics. As Kushner (2005) argues, there is no symmetry in evaluation relationships. Despite ethical considerations aimed at reaching parity, he acknowledges that, as soon as the evaluator is external and somewhat independent, there is power imbalance caused by a strategic advantage given to the evaluator. Furthermore, Canavan (2006) recognises that an evaluator has a certain amount of personal power that impacts not only on the direction the evaluation takes, but also on the direction the project takes once the evaluation is completed. Whilst power dynamics occur in every evaluation, they are particularly relevant to theory-based evaluations since they involve substantial interaction with stakeholders (Rossi et al., 2004; Donaldson and Lipsey, 2006). However, Blamey and Mackenzie (2007) suggest that the distance kept between evaluators and implementers in the name of objectivity contributes to the limitations of traditional outcome evaluations. Donaldson (2005: 56) refers to “evaluation anxiety” which implies that “the fear of negative evaluation seems deeply ingrained and inherent to the human condition”. This is similar to what Scriven has been calling “value-phobia”, the fear of being evaluated (Schwandt and Dahler-Larsen, 2006). Indeed, contemplating the possible consequences of an evaluation can generate anxiety and insecurity (Dahler-Larsen, 2012). Evaluation anxiety can impede stakeholders’ participation as they are afraid to feel shame or embarrassment. If levels of evaluation anxiety are dysfunctional it becomes difficult to undertake a rigorous evaluation. Donaldson (2005) advises that evaluators establish strategies to keep good relationships with stakeholders and prevent excessive evaluation anxiety. He also calls
for more lessons from evaluation practice relative to this challenge. Dahler-Larsen indicates that other factors such as previous experience and unethical use of evaluation can generate resistance towards evaluation (Schwandt and Dahler-Larsen, 2006). Some theorists acknowledge that “evaluation may be a culturally violent activity” (Schwandt and Dahler-Larsen, 2006: 500).

Other challenges encountered are related to stakeholders’ requirements. For instance, qualitative analysis may be more compelling for evaluators and allows the modification of causal assumptions, but sponsors often find quantitative data more credible (Sullivan et al., 2002). Weiss (1997) and Rogers (2007) point out that organisations tend to use implementation theories (i.e. theories focusing on the change model that consider activities and short-term outcomes) more than programmatic theories (i.e. theories focusing on the action model which consider the mechanisms of change). This can be problematic since implementation theories can provide a good start for a programme, but have a limited ability to provide information that enables replication (Weiss, 1997; Blamey and Mackenzie, 2007; Rogers, 2007).

Generalisability has for long been debated in social sciences, particularly in relation to qualitative research and case studies (Stake, 1978). Theory-based evaluations face similar critiques related to whether evaluation findings are transferable to other contexts (Pawson and Tilley, 1997; Mackenzie and Blamey, 2005; Donaldson and Lipsey, 2006). Yet, theory-based evaluation theorists (Rossi and Wright, 1984; Connell and Kubisch, 1998; Donaldson and Lipsey, 2006) argue that the approach produces information that can be generalised and used to inform better programming and policy. This is particularly the case for realist evaluation (Blamey and Mackenzie, 2007).

Another key challenge of theory-based approaches is the time required to unravel programme theory (Blamey and Mackenzie, 2007; Stufflebeam and Shinkfield, 2007; Dyson and Todd, 2010; Ridde et al., 2012). Nevertheless, Donaldson (2005) argues that overall, the approach can save substantial time and resources, and therefore be cost-efficient. For instance, in a case where the development of a programme’s theory reveals that the programme is not ready for a full-scale evaluation, efforts and money
can be redirected into further programme development and implementation activities rather than into a summative evaluation that will reveal zero effect. Furthermore, the development of the programme’s theory can refine an evaluation’s scope, allowing informed decisions about evaluation design and methodology that lead to cost-effective evaluations (Donaldson, 2005). The use of existing literature is also identified as a means to save time (Donaldson and Lipsey, 2006). Finally, theory-based evaluations may be time consuming, but are still time efficient compared to randomised controlled trials that take from three to five years (Rossi and Wright, 1984; Lipsey and Cordray, 2000).

Despite knowledge accumulating over time, difficulties still emerge in relation to developing measures for outcomes and activities at multiple levels (Sullivan et al., 2002; Mackenzie and Blamey, 2005). Furthermore, testing the theories can sometimes be challenging: theories of change might be too general and loose to allow for clear-cut testing (Weiss, 1995; Connell and Kubisch, 1998; Stufflebeam, 2001; Sullivan et al., 2002; Mackenzie and Blamey, 2005).

Finally, Donaldson and Lipsey (2006) recognise that this approach is not right for all situations. Like most of the evaluation tools, theory can be very useful under some conditions and not needed in others. For instance, the lack of stakeholder cooperation, or disagreements surrounding programme theory, can seriously hinder the evaluation. It is important to assess the project conditions (i.e. evaluability assessment) to determine if the stakeholders, and the project, are ready for the commitment necessary to use a programme theory evaluation approach (Donaldson and Lipsey, 2006).

2.4 Chapter summary

This chapter presented an overall view of the field of evaluation which has emerged since the 1960s. It recognised how the focus of evaluations has changed throughout the years. At first, evaluators concentrated on measuring effects of large scale social interventions using experimental approaches. After studies showed “no effects”, evaluators turned towards more qualitative approaches, putting an emphasis on
involving stakeholders and informing decision-making. This section of the chapter also indicated that evaluation went through a second boom in the 2000s, which paralleled a shift towards evidence-based policy and practice. Evaluation became a societal norm and a means to ensure accountability.

After identifying the main theorists and approaches the chapter focused on theory-based evaluations, an approach that is currently prevalent and suits the context of this research (i.e. evaluations of complex social interventions). Theory-based evaluations focus on understanding why a programme worked or did not work, in what context, and for whom. They provide more information than an impact assessment, generating theories that can be used to improve programmes and policy. The emphasis put on context allows the approach to make causal inferences on external factors impacting a programme’s efficiency. Components of programme theory were described, particularly Chen’s change and action model.

The chapter then identified the two major types of theory-based evaluation: the theory of change approach and realist evaluation. A theory of change approach focuses on examining the links between activities, context, and outcomes whereas realist evaluation aims to unravel CMO (Context - Mechanisms - Outcomes) configurations. The chapter identified their commonalities (e.g. rationale, focus given to the context) and discrepancies (e.g. how they consider the black box, who articulates the programme theory, and methods used).

Theory-based evaluations have a number of benefits as outlined in this chapter. They offer an approach that is adapted to the evaluation of complex social intervention. They also have the potential to improve programme implementation, evaluation practice, and inform decision-making and policy. The knowledge generated by theory-based approaches is a key benefit to the approach. The section of debate opposing the need for theory in evaluations was outlined, acknowledging that not all evaluators concur with the approach. Practical challenges encountered when using theory-based evaluations were also identified and include problems of theorising, relationships
between evaluators and stakeholders (e.g. conflict of interest, evaluation anxiety), generalisability issues, and the time requirements.

Overall, this chapter demonstrated that theory-based evaluations provide an adequate approach for the incorporation of a focus on leadership. Indeed, they pay particular attention to the context of the programme and the underlying mechanisms explaining its success or failure. The literature related to complex social interventions identifies leadership as a pre-requisite for a programme’s success (Hudson et al., 1999; Browne et al., 2004; Sloper, 2004; Brown and White, 2006; Friedman et al., 2007; Horwarth and Morrison, 2007). Therefore, leadership should be examined within theory-based approaches to ensure the holistic examination of a programme. Yet, leadership has been widely studied and not all leadership concepts are applicable to complex social interventions. The following chapter identifies two frameworks that are relevant to the context of this research.
Chapter 3
Conceptual frameworks for leadership

3.1 Introduction

Leadership is one of the oldest areas of human interest. Philosophers such as Confucius, Plato, Rousseau, Kant, and Aristotle, among others, reflected on the topic with their central question, that of the moral purpose of leadership. This shows the strong intellectual capital on which leadership studies were and are built (Wren et al., 2004). Silvia and McGuire (2010) situate the beginning of the modern study of leadership as taking place in the late 1800s, during the industrial revolution. The topic is explored in various disciplines which include history, philosophy, sociology, anthropology, political science, psychology, neuroscience, and business. Hitherto, varied perspectives were taken to the study of leadership such as those focusing on personality traits, leadership behaviours, and context. Regardless of a very large and varied literature, a current and commonly accepted definition of leadership is proposed by Buchanan and Huczynski (1985: 389, cited in Thompson and McHugh, 2009) as “a social process in which one individual influences the behaviour of others without the use or threat of violence”.

Leadership in organisations is an area of contemporary interest[14] that is pertinent for this research since social interventions are delivered through organisations. Organisational studies are situated at the cross-section of sociology, business, and psychology and contemporary literature indicates that leadership is a key aspect in an organisations’ success. As Bass (1990) highlights, not only do leaders make a difference to their subordinates’ satisfaction and performance, but they also impact on whether their organisations succeeds or fails.

[14] Other areas of contemporary interest include for example cognitive and power approaches, and studies with a focus on gender and minorities. Since those areas do not talk directly to the topic of this research, they will not be examined here.
This chapter presents the conceptual frameworks that will be used to explore the possibility of including leadership as a causal mechanism in evaluations. The first section provides a brief overview of the modern literature on leadership from the 1940s. This section is not exhaustive and aims instead to provide general context. The second section focuses on leadership in post-modern organisations. Acknowledging the growing importance of collaboration and its impact on organisations, the section presents the importance of leadership in Comprehensive Community Initiatives. The chapter then proposes a framework for the consideration of collaborative leadership (Crosby and Bryson, 2010). Drawing on the need to consider the micro-level when looking at programmes, the final section focuses on boundary spanners and suggests that their roles and competencies are useful concepts in the context of post-modern organisations.

3.2 Modern literature

Academic literature contains many models of leadership based on different perspectives that have developed over time: trait-spotting was popular until the 1940s, the style approach until the late 1960s, and contingency theories dominated until the early 1980s (Parry and Bryman, 2006; Buchanan and Huczynski, 2007). “New Leadership” is a term used to describe a number of approaches that have appeared since the 1980s including charismatic and transformational leadership approaches that emerged through the late 1990s. These different perspectives indicate a change in the focus rather than a cessation of previous theories (Parry and Bryman, 2006). The modern literature still has contemporary relevance as is demonstrated through the revisiting of trait-spotting in some recent studies (Buchanan and Huczynski, 2007). This section presents an overview of these main approaches.
3.2.1 Traits and characteristics approaches

During early modern studies of leadership researchers tried to identify personal attributes and traits that would explain and help predict leadership effectiveness (Silvia and McGuire, 2010). This approach is grounded in the “great man theory” that highlights how some men are born to be leaders, regardless of the context. Stogdill is as a key contributor to this approach and tried to provide a list of traits belonging to leaders in the late 1940s (Fernandez, 2005; Buchanan and Huczynski, 2007; Thompson and McHugh, 2009). He proposes the following categories: capacity, achievement, responsibility, participation, and status.

With the list of attributes growing over the years, many have started losing interest in the trait-spotting approach (Silvia and McGuire, 2010). Furthermore, despite different traits being found to relate to leadership, the correlation between those traits and the effectiveness of leadership was often weak (Yukl et al., 2002; Fernandez, 2005; Bass, 2008; Thompson and McHugh, 2009). The approach was also criticised by feminists for focusing on stereotypically male traits such as dominance, aggressiveness, and rationality (Buchanan and Huczynski, 2007; Thompson and McHugh, 2009). In his later work Stogdill (1948, cited in Wren et al., 2004) made the case that traits alone are insufficient to explain good leadership. In his opinion, leadership is a role rather than a set of characteristics. During this period leadership studies came to conclude that the factors that best predicted the characteristics of a leader were their apparent status and the values, interests, and personalities of their followers (Thompson and McHugh, 2009).

3.2.2 Behaviour approaches

Following the trait-spotting approach, researchers started to look into behaviour as a way to understand leadership (Silvia and McGuire, 2010). This approach was led by by the Ohio State leadership studies and the Michigan leadership studies (Fernandez, 2005; Buchanan and Huczynski, 2007; Thompson and McHugh, 2009; Silvia and McGuire, 2010).
The Michigan leadership studies (Lewin et al., 1939, cited in Wren et al., 2004; Thompson and McHugh, 2009) linked styles of leadership to emotional climate in order to explain the effectiveness of work groups. Three main styles of leadership were identified: autocratic leadership is characterised by strong personal control and rule-bound relationships; democratic leadership is less regulatory and pays attention to collaboration and responsive relationships; and laissez-faire leadership occurs when the leader “fails” to accept the responsibilities of the position.

The Michigan and the Ohio State leadership studies both distinguished two dimensions of leadership behaviour that are similar (Buchanan and Huczynski, 2007; Thompson and McHugh, 2009; Silvia and McGuire, 2010):

- **Initiating structure**: Aimed at defining roles, patterns of communication, organisation and action. It involves behaviours such as establishing standards, allocating roles, and pushing for productivity and performance. It is similar to job-centred task-oriented behaviour and relates to effectiveness.

- **Consideration**: Aimed at developing working relationships, trust and respect. It involves behaviours such as being friendly, being approachable, listening to followers and using their ideas, as well as caring about their morals. It is similar to relationship behaviour, relates to followers’ satisfaction, and is needs-orientated.

The Blake and Mouton Managerial Grid (1964, cited in Wren et al., 2004; Fernandez, 2005) grew from these studies. This key approach to leadership simplified earlier studies and reduced the behaviours to two fundamental categories: task-oriented and relations-oriented.

There were two important contributions as a result of the introduction of behaviour theories. Firstly, leadership is not simply considered as an attribute of a person, but as a behaviour that is open to modification and is, therefore, trainable (Parry and Bryman, 2006; Thompson and McHugh, 2009). Secondly, this approach acknowledges the complexity of leadership behaviours and introduces multivariable hypothesis (Stodgill,
1974, cited in Wren et al., 2004). However, similar to the trait approach, behaviour theories could not identify a set of behaviour that would always result in leadership effectiveness (Wren et al., 2004).

3.2.3 Situational theories: contingent leadership

Contingency theories appeared after the behaviour theories. Behaviour theories failed to explain why some behaviours work in some contexts and not in others. Researchers started focusing on situational variables that in conjunction with behaviours could predict leadership effectiveness. The assumption was that leaders should adjust their style to fit the context. Contingent theories also take into account the role of followers and mark a step towards more complex theories of leadership (Wren et al., 2004; Buchanan and Huczynski, 2007).

Tannenbaum and Schmidt (1958, cited in Buchanan and Huczynski, 2007) proposed a continuum of leadership behaviour going from autocratic and boss-centred leadership to democratic and subordinate-centred leadership. They argued that the preferred style depends on various forces: forces in the manager such as personality and beliefs relative to participation, forces in the subordinates such as the need for independence and tolerance of ambiguity, and forces in the situation such as organisational norms and size and location of work groups. Another key author is Friedler (1972, cited in Wren et al., 2004; Buchanan and Huczynski, 2007) who argued that leaders have a dominant style of leadership. Friedler (1972, cited in Wren et al., 2004) measured the leaders’ attitude towards the “least-preferred co-worker” (LPC). A high LPC score revealed a relations-oriented style whereas a low score showed a task-oriented behaviour. He argued that context determines which style will be most effective and identified situational factors: leader-member relations, task structure, and position power. Eight combinations can result from these factors, they are called “octants”, and a leadership style is associated with each of them (Wren et al., 2004). For example, democratic leaders are preferred in most situations and autocratic leaders will be more acceptable in crisis situation (Fiedler, 1967, cited in Thompson and McHugh, 2009).
Many research studies support Fiedler’s contingency theory. However, others consider that the theory is weak since various issues were identified, including difficulties in assessing complex variables. More specifically, the LPC concept was criticised for being negatively worded, unclear towards what it is measuring, and not accounting for followers’ or leaders’ competence (Buchanan and Huczynski, 2007).

Subsequently, authors attempted to include complex contextual variables in their theories. One of the most famous theories is the “path-goal theory” of leadership. House and Mitchell (1974, cited in Wren et al., 2004) considered the balance of exchange between leaders and followers, accounting for followers’ attitudes and expectations (Thompson and McHugh, 2009). Contrary to behaviour theories that had a twofold approach, they suggested four dimensions of leadership behaviour: directive, achievement-oriented, supportive, and participative. Moreover, the path-goal theory endeavours to explain how and why some behaviour produces positive outcomes (Wren et al., 2004). Vroom and Yetton (1973, cited in Thompson and McHugh, 2009) proposed similar dimensions to House and Mitchell (1974, cited Wren et al., 2004): autocratic, delegative, group dominated, and consultative. They extended the previous model by integrating factors relative to the quality of the leader’s decisions and the information and skills requirements of followers.

The contingency approach became less popular because of inconsistencies in measures, including the reliability of Fiedler’s LPC measure (Parry and Bryman, 2006). Transactional approaches appeared around the same period. These approaches, also called “social exchange theories”, focused on the nature and operation of interactions between leaders and followers. Transactional leaders comprehend their relationship with followers in terms of transactions such as trade and bargains (Buchanan and Huczynski, 2007). A key author is Hollander (1974, cited in Wren et al., 2004) who argued that there is a social exchange between leaders and followers. Indeed, leaders meet expectations, give rewards, and provide support in the achievement of collective goals while in return followers provide the leader with status, esteem, and influence. His notion of “idiosyncrasy credit” also involves the idea that leaders, empowered by
followers, can act outside the social norm to serve the group’s interest (Hollander, 1964, cited in Thompson and McHugh, 2009). The “leader-member exchange theory” proposed by Graen and Cashman (1975, cited in Wren et al., 2004) identifies two types of relationships: one draws on defined roles and formal contracts and involves followers becoming part of the “out-group”, whereas the other draws on expanded and negotiated roles and responsibilities within which followers become part of the “in group”. In-group members show more loyalty and trust and are more productive.

3.2.4 New leadership: transformational and charismatic leadership

New leadership approaches include transformational and charismatic leadership. This indicates a change of orientation towards the “leader as a manager of meaning and the pivotal role of vision in that process” (Parry and Bryman, 2006: 451). Emotions and symbolic behaviours play a key role in such approaches (Yukl et al., 2002; Fernandez, 2005). Burns (1978, cited in Buchanan and Huczynski, 2007; Thompson and McHugh, 2009) is identified as a key contributor to this approach. His model outlined that leaders have to transform followers through making their work build on motivation that comes from inside the individual. They must do this through the realisation that they can fulfil themselves through the commitment to group goals. Bass (1999: 9) makes a distinction between transactional and transformational leadership: “in contrast to the transactional leader who practises contingent reinforcement of followers, the transformational leader inspires, intellectually stimulates, and is individually considerate of them”.

Cultural change, vision, and charisma are central concepts to transformational leadership (Silvia and McGuire, 2010). The approach is indicative of a change in the consideration of leadership since the focus is not on identifying duties and responsibilities anymore, but more about understanding how to control the motivation of followers (Thompson and McHugh, 2009). This approach to leadership can be distinguished from contingency theories by the fact that it has moved from an internal perspective on leadership that looked at followers, to an external one that looks at
context for change (Dulewicz and Higgs, 2005). Nevertheless, the concept still draws on previous theories since it takes into account personality, style, and context (Buchanan and Huczynski, 2007).

Within transformational leadership, one area that was explored in greater detail is that of charismatic leader. Charisma was first put forward as a notion by Weber in the 1920s but became less popular in the 1970s, before then reappearing in the 1980s (Thompson and McHugh, 2009). In an organisational context, House (1977, cited in Wren et al., 2004) proposed a set of charismatic leaders’ traits (e.g. dominance, self-confidence, need for influence, and moral conviction) and behaviours (e.g. role modelling, image building, goal articulation, and demonstration of high expectations and confidence in followers). He also considered their impact on followers in terms of self-esteem, goal acceptance, and feelings of empowerment and outlined that charismatic leaders are more likely to appear in stressful situations. This approach is understood by some as an attempt to reintroduce the notion of human relations into a field that was beginning to be dominated by management functions (Hollway, 1991, cited in Thompson and McHugh, 2009).

Transformational and charismatic leadership have dominated leadership research since the 1980s (Yukl, 1999; Parry and Bryman, 2006). However, transformational and charismatic theories also have their weaknesses. As outlined by Yukl (1999), most theories present weaknesses during the conceptualisation and measurement of leadership processes. In the case of his work, Yukl emphasised the omission of relevant leader behaviours, the neglect of group and organisational processes, and over reliance on weak research methods. The new leadership approach was also criticised for concentrating excessively on top leaders and not always being representative of the majority of leaders. Additionally, it does not pay much attention to informal processes (Parry and Bryman, 2006).

The modern approaches to leadership described in this section still have some contemporary relevance (Buchanan and Huczynski, 2007). However, it can be argued that they are better fitted to private sector organisations which embrace hierarchy and
the concept of “leaders” and “followers”. Modern approaches are not relevant to the context of this research, which considers the public sector organisations encountered in the course of an evaluation. Organisations delivering social interventions such as Comprehensive Community Initiatives (CCIs) are characterised by collaborative work rather than hierarchy. New approaches to leadership responding to this context are outlined in the following section.

3.3 Leadership in post-modern organisations

A more recent literature has emerged in regard to leadership in post-modern organisations that is characterised by collaborative work. Indeed, the current policy arena is characterised by “joined-up” policies that emphasise the need for collaboration (Williams, 2002; Sullivan et al., 2012). This shift started with the recognition that social issues are interconnected (Milbourne, 2005). The term “wicked problems” is used to describe problems that are difficult to define, involve complex interdependencies, and are resistant to resolution (Rittel and Webber, 1973). The policy shift towards tackling wicked issues generated new types of programmes, as noted in Chapter 2 (Connell and Kubisch, 1998; Stame, 2004; Blamey and Mackenzie, 2007). Parallel to this, globalisation and neo-liberalisation engendered changes in public governance and management (Sullivan et al., 2012). The organisations delivering those programmes and policies were impacted by these societal changes and non-conventional modes of organising and leadership emerged (Agranoff and McGuire, 2001).

The emerging field of collaborative leadership builds principally on the work of a small number of theorists. Amongst them, Williams (2002, 2010, 2012) and Crosby and Bryson (2005, 2010) are substantial authors who have published books and articles on the topic. This section, 3.3 presents new approaches to leadership that fit this new policy and programme landscape which is now well established in many countries including Ireland (CFRC/CAWT, 2008) and the UK (Williams, 2012). To help with the understanding of the changes taken on by organisations, the section starts by
outlining a distinction proposed by Williams, that between modern and post-modern organisations. Building on this distinction, it suggests that old models of leadership are not applicable to the contemporary “shared-power world” described by Crosby and Bryson. It then presents the concepts of collaborative public management and integrative leadership and illustrates how post-modern leadership differs from modern leadership. Finally, the review in this section brings the literature from Comprehensive Community Initiatives together with that of post-modern organisations in order to demonstrate that a focus on a specific type of leadership is required in the context of this research.

3.3.1 Modern and post-modern organisations

Williams (2002) observes the developing hegemony of joined-up governance. In order to tackle wicked issues, collaboration is becoming a key aspect of governance and service provision. Huxham and Vangen (2000: 1159) describe a “worldwide movement towards collaborative governance, collaborative service provision, and collaborative approaches to addressing social problems”. They observe that the term “joined-up” is a “buzzword” for British public sector managers. From a government’s point of view, the value of having joined-up policies and integrated services is to ensure that citizens’ needs are addressed seamlessly (Huxham and Vangen, 2000; Milbourne, 2005). Recently, collaborative working has been undertaken through various initiatives, such as those pertaining to economic development, health, environment, education and so on (Huxham and Vangen, 2000).

Within this context, Williams (2002: 105-106) argues that post-modern forms of organisations are better suited than classical ones. As illustrated in Table 2, Williams emphasises that in collaborative settings, organisational action has to shift from intra-organizational imperatives to a commitment to enhancing inter-organisational ability. Furthermore, tackling wicked issues, which are difficult to understand because of the impossibility to clearly identify their boundaries and causes, requires holistic thinking (Rittel and Webber, 1973; Williams, 2010). This involves a language that reflects
relationships, interconnections and interdependencies, contrary to classical organisations that are underpinned by notions of rationality, linear thinking, task differentiation and functionalism (Williams, 2002). Moreover, bureaucratic forms of organisation, professionalism and compartmentalism are undermined by the challenge of interdependencies. Williams (2002) argues that post-modern organisations that are designed around collaboration, partnership and networking appear to be more suitable for the task of tackling wicked issues. Crosby and Bryson (2005) use a different terminology to describe the same distinction. In this case, modern organisations are referred to as “in charge organisations” while post-modern organisations are named “networked organisations”.

Table 2: Modern and post-modern forms of organization (Williams, 2002:105)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Modern</th>
<th>Post-modern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domain</strong></td>
<td>Intra-organizational</td>
<td>Inter-organizational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Metaphor</strong></td>
<td>Mechanistic</td>
<td>Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Form of government</strong></td>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>Governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Form of organization</strong></td>
<td>Bureaucratic</td>
<td>Networking, collaboration, partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conceptualization</strong></td>
<td>Differentitation; tasks and functions</td>
<td>Interdependencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Decisions-making framework</strong></td>
<td>Hierarchy and rules</td>
<td>Negotiation and consensus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competency</strong></td>
<td>Skills-based professional</td>
<td>Relational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Solutions</strong></td>
<td>Optimal</td>
<td>Experimentation, innovation, reflection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Williams (2002: 105) outlines that organisations based on hierarchical control and power are unlikely to provide the setting that enables collaboration. New capacities are required to manage conflict, inter-personal behaviour, as well as fragmented and contested power relations. Decision-making models must reflect consensus formation and trust building. Openness to innovation, experimentation, risk taking and entrepreneurship are desirable when trying to tackle complex social issues. Finding a single “right” solution is not suitable anymore. Finally, Williams (2002) suggests that the skills and competencies required to manage interdependencies are not professional.

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or knowledge-based, but rely on relational and inter-personal attributes designed to build social capital. They allow cultures of trust, enhance levels of cognitive ability in order to understand complexity, and manage to work in non-hierarchical environments with distributed configurations of power relationships.

Williams’ (2002, 2010) description of post-modern organisations parallels the context of Comprehensive Community Initiatives (CCIs), built on comprehensiveness and community building that often make interagency work a compulsory aspect of the programme. CCIs are further discussed in section 3.3.3.

3.3.2 Collaborative public management and Integrative leadership

Leadership in collaborative settings became a specific area of interest because previous theories are not transferable to this particular context. Huxham and Vangen (2000) explain that classical approaches to leadership are based on the interest of a formal leader and their influence on followers (members of a group or organisation) in the process of achieving clear goals. This implies that there is a formally recognised leader with managerial responsibilities within a hierarchical structure. It does not apply to collaborative settings since various organisations are involved, memberships are often ambiguous, and goals are sometimes difficult to agree on. Similarly, Crosby and Bryson (2005: 17) outline that “old notions of leaders who were in charge of situations, organisations, and even nations seemed not to apply”. They use the term “shared-power world” to describe this emergent context where no single person is in charge. Theorists such as Crosby and Bryson (2005) and Huxham and Vangen (2000) claim that a new form of leadership is required to suit post-modern organisations and the societal changes taking place.

3.3.2.1 Defining leadership in post-modern organisations

When looking at leadership in post-modern organisations, two notions come into view as coherent: “collaborative public management” and “integrative leadership”. O’Leary et al. (2006) propose the following definition of collaborative public management,
adapted from the work of Agranoff and McGuire (2003) and Henton et al. (2006): “Collaborative public management is a concept that describes the process of facilitating and operating in multi-organisational arrangements to solve problems that cannot be solved, or easily solved, by single organisations” (O’Leary et al., 2006: 7).

Collaborative public management appears throughout the literature as a new and yet dominant way of governing. It emerged in what many would perceive as the age of networks and collaboration. However, managers have been practicing collaborative public management for decades through the use of models of collaboration16 (McGuire, 2006).

The difference between leadership and management is a debatable topic. Some will argue that the terms are synonymous while others assert that there is a difference. Differences might well be pointed out within the leader and manager functions. For instance, Kotter (1990, cited in Buchanan and Huczynski, 2007) outlines that in regards to creating an agenda a leader’s function is to establish direction (i.e. create a vision, develop strategies for change) whereas a manager’s function is to plan and budget (i.e. decide about actions, timetables, and the distribution of resources). However, this outlook is criticised by many. Other authors such as Mintzberg (1975, cited in Buchanan and Huczynski, 2007) argue that the roles overlap. Management can be understood as a leadership challenge, as illustrated in the Crosby and Bryson (2010) framework for understanding leadership. Furthermore, potential for leadership can also be found in those who do not have formal positions of power and authority (Crosby and Bryson, 2005). Leadership appears to be a “widely distributed phenomenon” (Buchanan and Huczynski, 2007: 720).

16 McGuire (2006) notes that federalism in the United States has always been cooperative and authors have talked about policy administration in terms of shared administration from 1973. Furthermore, many policy studies describe collaboration in public policy implementation in the 1980s.
Another aspect of the terminology that is debatable is the link between public management and non-profit management. Some authors associate public management exclusively with government (McGuire, 2006). Distinctions can be made between public management and non-profit management on various levels. For instance, while government agencies have a single source of funding, non-profits have to face the complexity of multiple sources of funding and stakeholders (Worth, 2009). However, Crosby and Bryson (2010) argue that even if government is an important actor, it is not the only one. Public management can involve a number of key actors including non-governmental agencies. Furthermore, “public sector” is a label usually used in relation to government but it can sometimes be used for non-profits (Crosby and Bryson, 2010). The description of collaborative public management provided above appears to be transferable to non-profit organisations.

The concept of integrative public leadership examines leadership in collaborative settings and shows strong similarities with collaborative public management. Integrative public leadership is defined as “bringing diverse groups and organisations together in a semi-permanent way, and typically across boundaries, to remedy complex public problems and achieve the common good” (Crosby and Bryson, 2010: 211). It involves leading throughout boundaries across micro, meso, and macro levels (Crosby and Bryson, 2010).

3.3.2.2 Characterising leadership in post-modern organisations

Throughout the literature it is suggested that leading in a collaborative setting is fundamentally different from leading a single agency. One of the key distinctions is that leaders manage up (e.g. report to funders) and out (e.g. collaborate with other organisations) rather than down. They also motivate people through persuasion and empowerment rather than command and control (Crosby and Bryson, 2005; McGuire, 2006). The public manager works simultaneously across governmental, organisational, and sectoral boundaries. Public management involves a range of private and public actors in the networked environment in either a formal or informal way (McGuire,
The role of informal leaders appears to become key in collaborative settings (Huxham and Vangen, 2000). Building on Luke’s (1998, cited in Williams, 2002) initial assessment of the differences between traditional and collaborative leadership styles, Williams summarises the differences between modern and post-modern leadership as illustrated in Table 3.

**Table 3: Williams (2002: 112)** contrast between modern and post-modern leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modern leadership</th>
<th>Post-modern leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchical</td>
<td>Non hierarchical and inter-organisational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evokes fellowship</td>
<td>Evokes collaboration and concerted action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takes charges, seizes the reins of an organisation</td>
<td>Provides the necessary catalyst or spark for action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takes responsibility for moving followers in certain directions</td>
<td>Takes responsibility for convening stakeholders and facilitates agreements for collective action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heroic, provides the right answers</td>
<td>Facilitative, asks the right questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a particular solution or strategy</td>
<td>Has a stake in getting to agreed-upon outcomes, but encourages divergent ways to reach them</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The concept of post-modern leadership depicted in the table above is coherent with the characteristics of post-modern organisations where the organisational form is predominantly collaboration. The decision-making framework in post-modern organisations being negotiation and consensus rather than hierarchy and rules, it is not surprising that leaders are considered in terms of catalysts and facilitators (Williams, 2002). Likewise, Linden (2002) notes that the tasks of a collaborative leader relate to providing support in achieving elements such as a shared purpose, gathering the right people, or building trust.

A distinctive feature of collaborative leadership is the lack of formal control over members (Alexander et al., 2001; Linden, 2002; Ranade and Hudson, 2003). Indeed, power is shared amongst members. Some will refer to this as “shared-leadership” (Crosby and Bryson, 2005), others as “collateral leadership” (Alexander et al., 2001). A particularity of leading in collaborative setting is that it involves managing power

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17 Permission to reproduce this table has been granted by John Wiley and Sons.
and controlling the agenda (Huxham and Vangen, 2000). Another aspect of collaborative leadership that is often mentioned is the need to create an inspiring vision that is shared by other leaders (Crosby and Bryson, 2005; Silvia and McGuire, 2010; Williams and Sullivan, 2010). Some consider that the ability to create a vision is a leader’s best attribute since collaboration is based on the will to collaborate and limited budget (Alexander et al., 2001). However, this is not new to collaborative settings since it is a prominent characteristic of new leadership approaches discussed in 3.2.4.

Despite a strong theoretical background the difference between leadership in modern and post-modern organisations has little empirical evidence. To bridge this gap Silvia and McGuire (2010) undertook a comparative study between leadership in hierarchical/single agency structures and integrative leadership behaviours. Their research demonstrated that there is a significant difference between the behaviours used by the same leader when working within his/her agency and their behaviour when leading a network. They build on Van Wart’s distinction (2004, 2005, 2008, cited in Silvia and McGuire, 2010) between three domains for leadership behaviours: task-oriented, people-oriented, and organisation-oriented (i.e. external environment and internal culture). Using this distinction Silvia and McGuire (2010) reveal that people-oriented behaviours are more frequent when leading a network, whereas task-orientated behaviours are more frequent when leading a single agency. Organisational-oriented behaviours are equally frequently displayed by leadership in networks and in single agencies. Their study also presents a rank of integrative leadership behaviours. The first seven behaviours identified by leaders and ranked by extent of use are: treating all members as equal; freely sharing information amongst network members; looking out for the personal welfare of network members; encouraging support from superiors; identifying resources; keeping the network in good standing with higher authority; and creating trust amongst network members. Indeed, trust is a key element of collaboration and leaders are expected to build relationship based on trust with partners (Linden, 2002; Williams, 2002; McEvily et al., 2003; Kubisch et al., 2010; Williams, 2010).
As illustrated above, leading in collaborative settings requires particular capabilities and types of behaviour. Williams and Sullivan (2010) argue that professionals that are competent in their mainstream job in a single agency are not always as efficient in collaborative settings. However, they underline that collaborative leadership skills are acquired and improved by investment in training, professional development, and inter-agency learning. Linden (2002) acknowledges that some collaborative leadership skills are inborn but maintains that others are learnable from getting feedback, observing, and training.

Collaborative settings require both continuity and change in leadership. A balance between continuity and novelty appears to be challenging but appropriate. Indeed, continuity provides stability to an organisation. On the other hand, change in leadership can prove to disrupt momentum and increases the risk of losing integrity. Yet, the injection of new leadership can also be beneficial since it can provide new ideas, fresh energy, and vision (Alexander et al., 2001).

### 3.3.3 Comprehensive Community Initiatives as post-modern organisations

As highly collaborative structures, Comprehensive Community Initiatives (CCIs) are a strong example of post-modern organisations. They are described as recent initiatives, started in the late 1980s and early 1990s, that began as a reaction to a model that represented a top-down, technocratic way of doing business (Kubisch et al., 2002). CCIs are a concept and method of delivering services to communities which use an holistic approach through recognising that individual, family, and community circumstances are interlinked: “the premise was that if these new initiatives could concentrate resources and apply best practices from social services, economic development, education reform, and physical revitalization in targeted neighbourhoods, we would get a whole that was more than the sum of the parts” (Kubisch, 2005: 17).

CCIs are based on two key principles: comprehensiveness and community building (Perkins, 2002; Kubisch et al., 2010). Comprehensiveness is described as an endeavour to attain positive results by concurrently tackling the social, economic, and physical
conditions of a neighbourhood. Community building is an emphasis on participatory approaches that develop leadership, increase “social capital” and personal networks, and strengthen a community’s capacity for improvement (Kubisch et al., 2002). Greater responsiveness, fairness, democracy, efficiency and cost can be expected from this approach (Stagner and Duran, 1997; Chaskin, 2001, 2006).

Similar to post-modern organisations, collaboration is a key component of CCIs. Drawing on a review of 48 CCIs, Kubisch et al. (2010) identify a number of requirements desirable in order to get CCIs to bring about the desired change. Among others, they mention the need for clarity about the “mission, desired outcomes, and operating principles” and the requirement for “effective management of partnerships and collaborations”. The latter requirement involves a range of actors investing significant time and capital to overcome challenges relating to the complexity of the relationships taking place in this particular setting. Similarly, drawing on a number of action research interventions they undertook in the UK, Huxham and Vangen (2000: 1162) identify a number of themes impacting on collaboration: “common aims, communication, commitment and determination, compromise, appropriate working processes, accountability, democracy and equality, resources, and trust and power”. Due to their collaborative component, those themes that match features of post-modern organisations can easily be applied to CCIs. Furthermore, it can be argued that leadership would be a key catalyst to support or enhance those themes. Indeed, Huxham and Vangen (2000: 1171) point out that collaboration requires “continual nurturing on the part of a leader”.

Kubisch et al. (2010) are members of the Roundtable on Community Change at The Aspen Institute. They identify a set of skills pertaining to leadership in the context of CCIs. They acknowledge that they might not exist in one individual but rather across all of the individuals and organisations involved. The skills Kubisch et al. (2010: 31-32) list include:
- Understanding the complexity of issues and relationships while maintaining a focus on goals.
- Inspiring hope and urgency.
- Using community-level data to analyse and mobilise the community.
- Interacting across technical and sectorial boundaries, as well as those to do with race, class, and culture.
- Recognising the power bases that can impede change and engaging effectively with them.
- Establishing and maintaining trust with a wide range of stakeholders.
- Being opportunistic and taking advantage of new political openings, policy trends, funding streams, and economic upswings.
- Being entrepreneurial with regard to funding.
- Being open to learning, creating feedback loops to manage internally, and learning to adapt.

While acknowledging the importance of effective leadership, Kubisch et al. (2010) point out that it is not the sole reason for success in CCIs. Successful organisations also have “structures and systems to ensure accountability, use data and management information to track their work, reward success, and identify and remedy the causes of failure” (Kubisch et al., 2010:20).

One of CCIs greatest challenges is the large array of stakeholders involved, as stated by Jack (2005). This issue was also highlighted in the Irish context (Breathnach, 2007). Leadership can help overcome some of the challenges that might emerge during the implementation of a CCI. For example, launching and sustaining a CCI is difficult work, particularly in relation to ensuring the cooperation of participants who have not traditionally worked together. This is especially the case when money and power must be shared. Furthermore, establishing a CCI can present certain advantages such as not being beholden to any particular community group. However, because the organisation is new, it may lack credibility and power (Stagner and Duran, 1997). Stagner and Duran (1997) also highlight the importance of acquiring credibility with established
groups and winning their respect and support. Furthermore, another factor affecting their success is the delicate balance between short-term and long-term goals. Leaders have to focus on early short-term successes to build support and maintain funder and community interest in the long-term goals (Sviridoff and Ryan, 1996).

Kubisch et al. (2010) suggest that the challenges encountered in CCIs cannot be simply overcome through charismatic or visionary leadership, even if this does address most problems. They also require a flexible management style that adjusts to circumstances and focuses on building and maintaining relationships: “relationship building is the glue that holds the pieces together and the lubricant that allows the effort to move forward” (Kubisch et al., 2010: 53).

The most relevant feature of CCIs as post-modern organisations is that the leadership they require is a key aspect of collaboration and is often cited as a pre-requisite to their success (Hudson et al., 1999; Linden, 2002; Browne et al., 2004; Sloper, 2004; Atkinson et al., 2005; Frost, 2005; Brown and White, 2006; Friedman et al., 2007; Horwarth and Morrison, 2007; CAAB, 2009; Duggan and Corrigan, 2009). More specifically, Williams and Sullivan (2010: 9) argue that in a collaborative setting leadership “is important to facilitate and design effective structures and decision-making processes to move the agenda forward in pursuit of shared purposes”.

3.4 Frameworks adapted to this research

The emerging field of collaborative leadership studies builds principally on the work of a small number of theorists. Amongst them, Williams (2002, 2010, 2012) and Crosby and Bryson (2005, 2010) are established authors that have published books and articles on the topic. Their work is relevant to the context of this research since it addresses

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18 In the case of CCIs, leadership is also about enhancing leadership amongst residents. Indeed, residents, through the community building approach, can build skills and get involved at a managerial level within the organisation, and later on might get a leadership position outside of the community (Kubisch, et al., 2010). While this might not be the case for other types of programmes, leadership is an outcome of CCIs.
leadership in post-modern organisations. The next section describes the framework proposed by Crosby and Bryson (2010) for the understanding of leadership in collaborative settings. This framework is embedded at the meso-level (i.e. organisational level) and describes different categories of elements that should be examined in order to understand leadership. The section then presents the concept of boundary spanners proposed by Williams (2010). This framework focuses further on the micro-level (i.e. individual level) and proposes a set of roles and competencies associated with the concept of boundary spanners.

3.4.1 Proposed framework for the understanding of collaborative leadership

Crosby and Bryson (2010) propose a framework in order to assist with the understanding of leadership in the particular setting of collaboration. Their framework suggests that leadership should be understood in light of the initial conditions that impact processes and practices, structure and governance, and outcomes and accountabilities. Contingencies and constraints also influence both processes and practices and structure and governance, which are both co-dependent. While most of the framework focuses on structures and mechanisms, it provides insights at the micro-level through its inclusion of processes and practices. Williams’ (2010) criticism of collaboration frameworks (i.e. they largely focus on the meso-level and neglect the micro-level) is therefore not applicable in this case. The following section provides a description of the framework illustrated in Figure 6\(^{19}\). Each category is then described in further detail.

\(^{19}\) Permission to reproduce this figure has been granted by Elsevier.
Figure 6: Collaborative leadership framework (Crosby and Bryson, 2010, p. 217)
3.4.1.1 Initial conditions

In their framework, Crosby and Bryson (2010) indicate that initial conditions such as general environment, sector failure, and direct antecedents have an explicit impact on processes and practices, as well as on structure and governance. Elements considered as initial conditions are outlined in Table 4.

Table 4: Initial conditions from the Crosby and Bryson (2010) framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial Conditions</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>General environment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Turbulence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Institutional and competitive forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sector failure</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direct antecedents</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Initiators, sponsors, and champions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- General agreement on the problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Existing relationship or network</td>
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Crosby and Bryson (2010) suggest that collaboration is more probable in turbulent environments, and also when leaders believe that the problem cannot be resolved by sectors/organisations working separately. There additionally needs to be a general agreement on the nature of the problem. The analysis of initial conditions should also focus on looking for individuals who can exercise leadership, whether they are initiators, sponsors, or champions. Finally, initial conditions also include existing relationships or networks.

3.4.1.2 Processes and practices

The framework indicates that processes and practices are influenced by initial conditions as well as contingencies and constraints. They are interconnected with structure and governance, and impact on outcomes and accountabilities. Table 5 illustrates the elements which comprise the category of processes and practices.
Processes and practices include the wise design and use of forums, arenas and courts. These are important since they determine what is put on the political agenda. Leaders support stakeholders in the creation and communication of a shared vision. Through the design of forums, they also pay particular attention to the creation of cross-boundary groups (i.e. groups in which people are gathered from different knowledge backgrounds in order to produce boundary actions) that will have boundary experiences (i.e. shared or joint activities creating a sense of kinship among individuals and a capacity to go beyond boundaries). Leaders also build formal or informal agreements for the collaboration. The form, content, and processes used to do so will affect the outcomes of the collaboration.

Crosby and Bryson’s (2010) processes and practices also involve planning, which is more successful when leaders support participants to combine two types: deliberate planning and emergent planning. Deliberate planning involves a cautious articulation of mission, purposes and objectives, roles and responsibilities, and different steps, including implementation. This type of planning is more likely to appear when collaboration is mandated. Emergent planning occurs when a clear understanding develops over time, facilitated through conversations, and is more likely to arise when collaboration is not mandated.
Many challenges occur in collaboration and can be overcome if leaders use resources and strategies to facilitate power balance, prevent imposed solutions, and manage conflicts. It is also important that both formal and informal leadership is built at multiple levels. This is facilitated by cross-boundary governance and working groups.

Crosby and Bryson (2010) identify “sponsors” and “champions” as two leadership formats. A champion is “a person who is [a] tireless, process-savvy organiser and promoter of the change effort”, whereas a sponsor is “less involved in the process, but deploys authority, money, or connections to move the change effort forward” (Crosby and Bryson, 2010: 219).

Leaders have to build trust which can be defined as “confidence in organisational competence and expected performance, and a common bond and sense of goodwill” (Chen and Graddy, 2005, cited in Crosby and Bryson, 2010: 223). Finally, leaders also have to convince internal and external stakeholders that collaboration is a legitimate form of organising.

3.4.1.3 Structure and governance

Crosby and Bryson’s (2010) framework indicates that structure and governance are influenced by initial conditions as well as by contingencies and constraints. They are entwined with processes and practices, and impact on outcomes and accountabilities. Table 6 identifies the elements included in this category.
Structure and governance are less often mentioned in the collaboration literature than processes and practices. Yet, in CCIs it is common to have an overarching structure providing general leadership. The structure “provides oversight, maintains adherence to vision and values, and integrates the component pieces while at the same time giving substantial autonomy to managers” (Kubisch et al., 2010: 55).

Crosby and Bryson (2010) note that the strategic purposes of a partnership have an effect on structures. A distinction is made between policy or strategy-making partnerships and resource exchange and project-based partnerships (Agranoff and McGuire, 1998, cited in Crosby and Bryson, 2010). Leaders should make sure that the structure of the collaboration is flexible enough to deal with changes and local environment complexities. Drawing on these dynamics, focus should be put on incorporating new members and seeking succession in leadership.

On the governance level, Provan and Kenis (2005, cited in Crosby and Bryson, 2010) distinguish between three types of governance structure for collaboration: self-governing structures (i.e. where decision-making comes from regular meetings of members or informal, frequent interactions), a lead agency providing major decision-making and coordinating activities, and a network administrative organisation (i.e. where an organisation is formed to oversee affairs related to the collaboration). Leadership is critical in matching correctly the governing mechanisms with the context. Likewise, the processes used by leaders to develop the structures will impact the effectiveness of collaboration.
Huxham and Vangen (2000), in a similar way, highlight the correlation between structures (i.e. the organisation and the individuals associated with it, as well as the structural connections between them) and processes (here defined as formal and informal instruments such as committees, workshops, telephone and email use, through which the collaboration’s communication takes place). Both are part of what they call “leadership media”, a concept that also includes participants. The leadership media influences the formation and implementation of collaborative agendas. Processes influence the structures that are created and that can influence the agenda. Structures influence process designs and participants activities. Participants influence the design of both processes and structures. This framework is more specific to the understanding of leadership in relation to the influencing of a partnership’s agendas.

3.4.1.4 Contingencies and constraints

In Crosby and Bryson’s (2010) framework, both processes and practices, and structure and governance are affected by contingencies and constraints. The various elements contained in this category are identified in Table 7.

Table 7: Contingencies and constraints from the Crosby and Bryson (2010) framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contingencies and Constraints</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Top-down or bottom-up collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Type of level of collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Power imbalances and shocks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Competing institutional logics</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Contingencies and constraints can affect processes and practices, and structure and governance in various ways. For instance, leaders have more freedom in setting up structures and governance mechanisms when collaboration is initiated in a bottom-up way. However, those structures and mechanisms will surface more slowly than in top-down collaborations in which they would be specified in advance.
Collaboration can occur at various levels, such as system-level planning, administrative activities, and service delivery. The level of the collaboration will impact the need for negotiation, the most negotiation being required for system-level collaborations. Leaders should adjust the level of investment needed to facilitate negotiation between stakeholders so that it matches the level of collaboration.

Furthermore, power imbalances and shocks that are experienced over time have negative impacts on the collaboration’s success. Therefore, leaders have to allocate resources and build in strategies for dealing with them. Finally, leaders have to reframe issues in ways that are accessible to everyone and go beyond competing institutional logics.

3.4.1.5 Outcomes and accountabilities

Crosby and Bryson (2010) indicate that outcomes and accountabilities are impacted by many elements: initial conditions, processes and practices, structure and governance. Furthermore, contingencies and constraints indirectly impact on outcomes and accountabilities through the effect they have on processes and practices, and structure and governance. The elements comprised in this category are identified in Table 8.
Table 8: Outcomes and accountabilities from the Crosby and Bryson (2010) framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes and Accountabilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcomes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Public value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- First, second, and third order effects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Resilience and reassessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accountabilities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Systems to track inputs, processes, outputs, and outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Results management system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Relationships with political and professional constituencies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Crosby and Bryson (2010) suggest that collaborations create more public value when leaders build them on the interest of many individuals and organisations. The collaboration’s success can be assessed at three levels: first order effects are immediate results (e.g. creation of social, intellectual, and political capital), second order effects occur when collaboration is in progress (e.g. new partnerships, coordination and joint actions, joint learning, changes in practices, and changes in perceptions), third order effects occur later (e.g. new collaborations, less conflict between partners, results on the ground such as adaptation of services, new norms for addressing wicked issues). Leaders should aspire to having positive effects at the three levels.

Furthermore, Crosby and Bryson (2010) point out that collaboration will be more successful if leaders persist with an accountability system that follows inputs, processes, and outcomes. The use of diverse methods for collecting, interpreting and using data also has a positive impact on collaboration. So does the use of a management system built on sound relationships with key political and professional constituencies. Crosby and Bryson (2010: 226) also highlight the notion that “wise integrative leaders will also be sure to reassess the entire initiative once outcomes are clear”. If the successes do not exceed failures then some redesign should be considered, or maybe efforts should be concentrated elsewhere. Leaders should be resilient, celebrate the achievements, draw attention to lessons from both successes and failures, and bring partners together for future activities. They suggest that the general
leadership challenge in collaboration can be understood as the challenge of aligning all those elements (i.e. initial conditions, processes and practices, structure and governance mechanisms, contingencies and constraints, and outcomes and accountabilities) in a way in which “good things happen in a sustained way over time” (Crosby and Bryson, 2010: 227).

Crosby and Bryson (2010) conclude that their study leads to “the unmistakable conclusion that creating and maintaining cross-sector collaborations presents a major integrative leadership challenge”, but not ignoring the idea that “the normal expectations ought to be that success will be very difficult to achieve in cross-sector collaborations, regardless of leadership effectiveness” (Crosby and Bryson, 2010: 227). In spite of this, Crosby and Bryson (2010) call for more research on the topic since success depends largely on leadership of various kinds. A focus on the micro-level is provided in the next section.

3.4.2 Boundary spanners

Williams (2002, 2010) outlines that the dominant research and policy discourses surrounding collaboration are often restricted to a limited discussion about the effectiveness and sustainability of structures and mechanisms. He argues that the pivotal contribution of individual actors is understated and neglected. In his opinion, the success of inter-organisational experiments comes equally from the people engaged in the process and their ability to apply collaborative skills to the resolution or improvement of complex problems. Williams (2002, 2010) argues that a focus on a micro-level (i.e. on an individual actor) should be incorporated in future research and debates.

Leadership is a crucial aspect of developing partnership working (Hudson et al., 1999; Ranade and Hudson, 2003; Browne et al., 2004; Sloper, 2004; Frost, 2005; Brown and White, 2006; Friedman et al., 2007; Horwarth and Morrison, 2007). Authors focusing on leadership in collaborative settings argue that the leadership style necessary in such settings is different from the one associated with managing hierarchical, single
organisations. Therefore, the skills required in this particular setting can be different from the usual skills identified in the leadership literature (Williams, 2002; Ranade and Hudson, 2003). Ranade and Hudson (2003) highlight that the concept of leadership is more “diffuse and subtle” in collaborative settings. Individuals that manage single organisations featuring modern characteristics (e.g. decision-making based on hierarchy and rules) may not have the required skills to manage in a collaborative setting. For instance, Frost (2005: 49) argues that “effective leaders will be ‘boundary spanners’ who can work across traditional divides and make the most of the opportunities that are presented”. This section presents this particular type of leadership, providing a focus on the individual level. It proposes a definition of “boundary spanners” and explores their role, competencies, and personal attributes.

3.4.2.1 Definition of the term “boundary spanners”

The literature displays an absence of consensus on the definition of “boundary spanners”. Overall, boundary spanners are “actors whose primary job responsibilities involve managing within multi-organisational and multi-sectorial arenas” (Williams, 2010: 2). They are organisational representatives who are “intimately involved in the day-to-day relationship building activities and operations within the developing partnership” (Noble and Jones, 2006: 897). Boundary spanners work across traditional divides and make the most of the opportunities that are presented to develop partnership working (Frost, 2005).

Aldrich and Herker (1977) highlight that boundaries are a key characteristic of organisations since an organisation exists within the limits in which some people are included and others are considered as outsiders. Therefore, by definition, every organisation has some boundary spanners, at least at the level of the CEO (Aldrich and Herker, 1977). Boundary spanners have traditionally been considered to be individuals working across organisational boundaries. However, the notion of “internal boundary spanners” has also been recently introduced and refers alternatively to individuals that
operate within organisations but across departmental divides (Wright, 2009, cited in Williams, 2010).

Whilst some theorists use the term in an overarching manner, Cross and Prusak (2002) consider boundary spanners as one of four common roles played in organisations. The other roles include central connectors who bring people together in an informal network, information brokers who associate different sub-groups in an informal network, and peripheral specialists who can be consulted by anyone in the informal network. In this case boundary spanners are defined as individuals “who connect an informal network with other parts of the company or with similar networks in other organisations” (Cross and Prusak, 2002: 106). Yet, this approach is specific to informal networks and does not consider formal networks and positions.

The literature can also be unclear in regards to a boundary spanner’s position within an organisation’s hierarchy. Some claim that boundary spanners occupy middle managers positions. Challis et al. (1988, cited in Williams, 2002) state that they are not located at the top of the organisation’s hierarchy, but have access to it. Noble and Jones (2006) make a clear distinction between the roles of project champions and boundary spanners. In a different way to boundary spanners, project champions do not become personally involved in the day-to-day processes of the partnership. They tend to “cheer from the sidelines” and intervene only when needed. In their study, boundary spanners have middle-managers’ positions, or at least a position below “project champions”. Contrastingly, boundary spanning activities can be associated with project leaders according to Brion et al. (2012). Others, such as Hutt et al. (2002, cited in Williams, 2002), also argue that boundary spanning should occur at multiple levels: top management, middle management, and operational personnel. Ansett (2005: 38) highlights that the context of cross-sector partnership requires a new type of leadership provided by different actors: “They are often hidden within organisations, in different guises and at different levels, and may not be immediately identifiable as leaders”.
The early perspectives about boundary spanners suggested that their function is the management of the interface between organisations and their environment (Williams, 2010). Boundary spanners were considered at first within the private sector. Various authors perceived that boundary spanning activities involve two different functions: information processing and external representation or gatekeeping (Aldrich and Herker, 1977; Ansett, 2005; Adams, 1976, cited in Williams, 2010). The former is mainly about avoiding an overload of external information by filtering and facilitating the transmission of information. Mediating critical information provides substantial informal power and status to the boundary spanner (Tushman and Scanlan, 1981). Aldrich and Herker (1977: 220) highlight that, when representing the organisation, boundary roles also involve “resource acquisition and disposal, political legitimacy, and a residual category of social legitimacy and organisational image”. They argue that representing the organisation is sometimes more about making it visible than information sharing – despite the fact that the latter is a key aspect of boundary spanning activities. Tushman and Scanlan (1981) argue that this function is less powerful than information processing because it does not hold critical information for the organisation. Thompson (1967, cited in Williams, 2010) claims that boundary spanning activities involve controlling threats from the environment. Williams (2010) highlights that boundary spanning is then perceived as a job for “special people” who are described in various ways in the literature: organisational representative, organisational liaison, foreign affairs person, and internal communication star. In the public and non-profit sectors, the focus of boundary spanners moved from protecting/managing an organisation and its environment to working together for shared purposes and common objectives (Williams, 2010; Isbell, 2012).

Aldrich and Herker (1977) highlight that boundary spanning activities are sometimes formalised into a full-time position but can also only be part-time activities. Williams (2010), building on a similar distinction, argues that there are two types of boundary spanners:
• Individuals who have a dedicated job working in multi-agency settings and serving as a connection between different constituencies (*e.g.* crime and community safety co-ordinators, community strategy officers and partnership coordinators in the public sector).

• Individuals (practitioners, managers, and leaders) who assume boundary spanning activities as part of an ordinary job role. For the same reasons that collaboration is more and more often mandated, an increasing number of jobs require boundary spanning activities.

3.4.2.2 Role of boundary spanners

Boundary spanners have a key role to play managing across organisational boundaries as partnership co-ordinators or developers. Dyer *et al.* (2001, cited in Williams, 2010) consider that their main functions include improving knowledge management, increasing external visibility, providing internal coordination, and helping to eliminate accountability and intervention problems. While the main functions described above are relevant to many managerial positions, Ranade and Hudson (2003) and Ansett (2005) identify a number of functions that are different to conventional line management duties. Amongst those functions some are similar to those required in collaborative settings (*e.g.* managing power, motivating, focusing on short term outcomes while maintaining the focus on long term ones, building and creating relationships, building trust) while others are specific to boundary spanners (*e.g.* managing across and upwards rather than downwards, creating and assembling resources owned by others, translating the knowledge back into the organisational culture).

Williams (2002, 2010) proposes a typology of roles of boundary spanners that has evolved over time. The first two roles identified are those of reticulists and entrepreneurs (Williams, 2002). Ranade and Hudson (2003: 45) consider reticulists as “individuals that are skilled at mapping and developing policy networks, identifying where linkages and coupling are possible, able to build coalitions and alliances with
other committed and powerful individuals in their own and other organisations”. For example, Isbell (2012) evokes the fact that not all non-profit organisations are equal around the table, with differences in resources creating power inequalities that have to be managed by boundary spanners. Williams (2002) indicates that networking and information sharing are key aspects of a reticulist’s work. Similarly, other research shows that obtaining political support and scanning for ideas are the boundary spanning activities that have the greatest impact on performance (Brion et al., 2012). The disciplinary literature broadly indicates that the ability to cultivate a network of personal relationships is an essential prerequisite for effective reticulists (Friends et al., 1974, cited in Williams, 2010). The term reticulist is sometimes used by authors in a similar way to the overall definition of boundary spanners (Friends et al., 1974, cited in Williams 2010, Hudson et al., 1999; Ranade and Hudson, 2003).

The second role identified by Williams (2002) is the one of entrepreneur. This identification reflects the view that current public policy issues cannot be answered by traditional approaches, but require new ideas, creativity, lateral thinking, and rejection of conventional practices. The literature highlights that individuals in this role should be risk takers that are committed and ready to finding new ways to tackle wicked issues (Challis et al., 1988; Williams, 2010). Goldsmith and Eggers (2004, cited in Williams, 2010) note that boundary spanners are skilled at risk analysis. Throughout the literature Williams (2002, 2010) identifies different types of entrepreneurship:

- Civic entrepreneurs are creative individuals and “lateral-thinking rule breakers” with visionary thinking and an inclination for opportunism. They also have strong political and managerial skills that can be used to support risk-taking (Leadbeater and Gross, 1998, cited in Williams, 2002; Williams, 2010).

- Policy entrepreneurs are “catalysts of systemic change” (Crosby and Bryson, 2005: 156). They can be involved at different stages of the policy change cycle, they manage ideas and understand the framing of problem causes and explanations, they analyse and manage the multiple interests that are
associated with public problems, they help to design or re-engineer appropriate structures to sustain desired changes (Crosby and Bryson, 2005). They also have a major part in identifying possible couplings within new policy windows, finding solutions to problems, and taking advantage of political events showing potential (Kingdon, 1984, cited in Williams, 2002; Williams, 2010). Developed political connections are key to this role (Williams, 2010).

- Public entrepreneurs are individuals that “introduce, translate and implement an innovative idea into public practice” (Roberts and King, 1996, cited in Williams, 2010: 16). They are innovators and risk takers. Williams (2010) adds a third role to the ones first identified: the interpreter and communicator20. These individuals are skilled at managing differences. They invest the time to build an effective relationship and are ready to show empathy towards the perspectives of others. The process of developing an interpersonal relationship involves exploring, discovering and understanding the people and organisations they represent. Personal relationships are central to the role of the interpreter/communicator. They allow the boundary spanner to identify commonality and interdependency. Furthermore, boundary spanners work in an environment where reality can be perceived in different ways depending on the disciplinary background, roles, past experiences, interests, and political/economical point of views (Schon and Rein, 1994, cited in Williams, 2010). Therefore, they take the role of “frame articulators” that manage and translate the different meanings (Benford and Snow, 2000, cited in Williams, 2010).

20 The boundary spanners’ framework was further developed by Williams in 2012 through the introduction of a fourth role, the role of coordinator. However, this role is not outlined here to insure clarity in regards to the framework used during this research in 2011. New components of the Williams’ framework are discussed in Chapter 7.
3.4.2.3 Competencies

The characteristics that underpin the skills and legitimacy of reticulists have not been widely researched, but it is proposed that they include technical or competency-based factors as well as social and inter-personal skills (Hudson et al., 1999). Williams (2002, 2010) defines the competencies associated with boundary spanning roles as skills, abilities, knowledge and experience. The following classification of competencies is applicable across the three different roles mentioned above (Williams, 2002):

**Building sustainable relationships:** Collaboration requires the management of differences. Crosby and Bryson (2005) describe “personal leadership” among other leadership capabilities. This involves the use of personal assets to build and sustain relationships based on trust and reciprocity. Mediation, communication, and interpersonal skills are crucial (Ranade and Hudson, 2003). For Williams (2002), developing good interpersonal relationships involves a process of exploration, discovery and understanding of individuals and agencies (i.e. their roles, responsibilities, problems, cultures, operating systems, accountabilities, and motivations). This information is critical in order to allow boundary spanners to identify areas of commonality and interdependency. In Crosby and Bryson’s (2005) categorisation, the appreciation and respect of different cultures and perspectives is part of “organisational leadership”. Building and promoting trusting relationships is a fundamental component of boundary spanners’ work, with trust itself often being considered one of the key factors in collaboration (Linden, 2002; Williams, 2002; McEvily et al., 2003; Ansett, 2005; Noble and Jones, 2006; Worth, 2009; Williams, 2010). While this competency applies to boundary spanners in general, it is particularly relevant to those taking the role of the interpreter and communicator (Williams, 2010).

**Managing through influencing and negotiation:** As highlighted via the analysis of the distinction between modern and post-modern organisations, collaboration is characterised by consensus and equality. Influencing involves being persuasive and diplomatic, constructive and non-judgemental, leading sometimes and facilitating in
others, and being acutely aware of the political and personal sensibilities surrounding exchanges. Collaboration also involves negotiation with a number of different parties around issues such as aims, funding proposals, priorities, and resource allocations. Networking is also central to boundary spanners’ roles since it allows access to the newest information, contemporary ideas, support, gossip and potential scandals, resourcing opportunities, and up-to-date knowledge of changing government priorities. All of this insight is important for building a shared agenda. Ranade and Hudson (2003) highlight the need for a firm position of power and legitimacy. Reticulists in particular should be perceived by others as having enough legitimacy to assume the role. They should also be perceived as unbiased and able to manage different points of view. For Ranade and Hudson (2003), competencies additionally involve a sense of priorities, previous experience of interagency approaches, and a participatory development style.

Managing complexity and interdependencies: Collaboration involves individuals and agencies with disparate levels of knowledge and competency. Crosby and Bryson (2005) add that there is also a need to understand the web of interdependencies and connections that underpin collaborative exchanges. Bingham et al. (2008) highlight that boundary spanners are skilled at network design and Crosby and Bryson (2005) use the term “leadership in context” to describe this competency, which includes the appreciation of social and political context as part of it. The skill of network design is then strongly present within the role of the reticulist, whose skills include a good comprehension of different modes of behaviour applicable to different types of relationships between agencies and among actors, and an understanding of the ways by which people influence each other within that context (Friends et al., 1974, cited in Williams, 2010). For Williams (2002, 2010), this involves a comprehension of the variety of connections that appear at different levels, in different ways, and in different moments during the partnership process. During the planning and formulation stage of the collaboration process the links involve partner search, problem identification, delineating roles and responsibilities, negotiating objectives, and elaborating cross-cutting agendas. At the implementation and delivery stage, they involve contacts,
agreements, protocols, and budgeting. Finally, at the evaluation stage, they involve joint accountabilities and the measuring of outcomes. Ranade and Hudson (2003) indicate that a good knowledge of those stages imparts boundary spanners with a better understanding of the time and patience required for successful collaboration.

Managing roles, accountabilities, and motivations: This area of management requires delicate judgement. Boundary spanners can find themselves with conflicting accountabilities, as organisational representative and collaborative partner. Agranoff (2004) highlights the need for boundary spanners to be sensitive to roles and responsibilities. In general, the management of conflict is identified as an important skill for boundary spanners (Williams, 2002; Bingham et al., 2008). Williams (2002) identifies the need to incentivise collaboration and Huxham and Vangen (2000) similarly outline that leaders have to enthuse and empower partners for collaboration to be successful. The ability to listen has also been identified an important attribute to collaborative leadership, since communication is essential (Alexander et al., 2001). For Williams (2002), motivations can be divided into three categories: hegemony (i.e. the only way to do it), resource opportunity (i.e. to realise own internal goals through accessing resources from elsewhere), or mandated (i.e. encouraged or compulsory). Depending on the motivation for collaboration, convenient or fragile relationships may occur.

3.4.2.4 Personal attributes

Drawing on disciplinary literature, Williams (2002, 2010) lists a number of personal attributes usually associated with boundary spanners: extrovert personalities (e.g. outgoing, sociable, friendly, people orientated, cheerful), moral soundness (e.g. respect, openness, honesty), and commitment to work (e.g. persistence, hard work). Other personal attributes include diplomacy, tact, dispassionate analysis, self-discipline, self-restraint, punctuality, courtesy, and reliability. Ansett (2005) distinguishes soft skills from “hard business” skills that are typically highly valued by employers. Soft skills are a component of emotional intelligence which itself is
recognised as a key factor in management success. In the case of boundary spanners, they include empathy, open-mindedness, active listening, strong communication skills, strong abilities to synthesise information, emotional maturity, and integrity. Linden (2002) uses the case of the Montgomery County Early Childhood Initiative to explore the concept of collaborative leadership. He identifies four qualities of collaborative leaders: their resoluteness and drive, modesty, their ability to be inclusive, and a collaborative mind-set (i.e. their ability to identify possible connections).

The attribution of the consequences of people’s actions to their personal attributes opens the debate up around training. Williams’s (2010) view is that personal attributes or traits are likely to influence the manner in which the actor undertakes their boundary spanning role. Drawing on the assumption that boundary spanning activities are successful thanks to personal characteristics, he questions how far it is possible to train people to become boundary spanners or to enhance their work. As mentioned previously, Linden (2002) states that some leadership skills are inborn but others are learnable. Overall, the significance of personality is subject to intense controversy and will likely remain a topic of debate (Williams, 2010).

To summarise, this research proposes to consider leadership through the framework proposed by Williams (2002, 2010). This framework possesses the advantage of being applicable to post-modern organisations that deliver social interventions, since it was generated by Williams whilst he was reflecting on how organisations work collaboratively to tackle wicked issues. Table 9 condenses the roles and competencies identified by Williams (2010).
Table 9: Roles and competencies of boundary spanners (Williams, 2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Competencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reticulist</strong></td>
<td>• Networking&lt;br&gt; • Managing accountabilities&lt;br&gt; • Appreciate different modes of governance&lt;br&gt; • Political skills and diplomacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“individuals who are especially sensitive and skilled in bridging interests, professions and organisations”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entrepreneur</strong></td>
<td>• Brokering&lt;br&gt; • Entrepreneurial&lt;br&gt; • Innovative and creative&lt;br&gt; • Tolerates risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“people that are committed to find new ways forward on specific concerns”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interpreter / communicator</strong></td>
<td>• Inter-personal relationships&lt;br&gt; • Communication, listening, empathising&lt;br&gt; • Framing and sense-making&lt;br&gt; • Building trust&lt;br&gt; • Tolerance of diversity and culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“people that invest time to forge an effective working relationship and a readiness to visualise “reality” from the perspective of others”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5 Chapter summary

The chapter presented an overview of the classical approaches to leadership (i.e. traits and characteristics, behaviour approaches, situational theories, transformational and charismatic leadership) before asserting that they were not applicable to contemporary post-modern organisations. Post-modern organisations are characterised by features such as inter-organisational work, governance, networking and partnership, various interdependencies, and negotiation. To work in this context, a new type of leadership had to emerge. Indeed, in a shared-power world leaders are catalysts for change who facilitate decision-making through building consensus. Collaborative public management and integrative leadership were presented as contemporary approaches to leadership. The chapter also demonstrated that Comprehensive Community Initiatives share similar features with post-modern organisations, particularly in terms of their approach to collaboration.
Finally, the chapter proposes two frameworks that are relevant in the context of this research. The Crosby and Bryson (2010) framework identifies a set of categories that should be considered in order to understand leadership in collaboration settings. These are: initial conditions, processes and practices, structure and governance, contingencies and constraints, and outcomes and accountabilities. Their framework provides a meso-level approach that was used to analyse data during this research. A micro-level approach is proposed by Williams (2010) who developed the concept of boundary spanners (i.e. individuals that work across organisational boundaries). He also identifies a set of three roles associated with boundary spanning activities: reticulist, entrepreneur, and interpreter/communicator. This framework was also used for data analysis throughout this research.
Chapter 4
Context and Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the context and methodology of this research which is based on the process evaluation of the Tallaght West Childhood Development Initiative (CDI). This doctoral research and the process evaluation were strongly intertwined. The PhD research questions were drawn from experiences had whilst being part of a team conducting CDI’s process evaluation. Concurrently, the research had an input into the process evaluation since it influenced some of the questions asked in a particular study called *CDI as Organisation: Examining the Processes and Relationships to Support Implementation*. The PhD research uses this particular study to address its research goals. Therefore, the methodology of the process evaluation is part of the methodology employed for this thesis and is featured in this chapter.

The structure of this chapter is as follows. Firstly, the chapter outlines the research’s rationale and central questions, and clarifies how the PhD research and process evaluation are connected. Secondly, the methodological position in relation to key ontological and epistemological perspectives is outlined. Following this, a third section of the chapter presents the case study approach employed for this research, that of a process evaluation. The strategy, key principles, services and supportive structures of CDI are depicted to allow for contextual understanding. The overall objective of the process evaluation is described, as is the thematic approach used to address the evaluation’s questions. A fourth section identifies the data collection methods used both retrospectively (*i.e.*, for the process evaluation), and prospectively (*i.e.*, specific to the organisational study). They included three social sciences methods typically used in evaluations: interviews, documentary analysis, and observations. In a fifth section, the chapter presents the methods used for the data analysis. They comprise of a retro-analysis of interview transcripts and of further data analysis undertaken in relation to the thesis’ research question. Finally, ethical considerations are discussed.
4.2 Rationale and research questions

The PhD research and the process evaluation study have mutually influenced each other and as a result their methodology are often intertwined. The PhD research shaped some of the questions in the process evaluation and was based on the experience of being part of a team conducting the overall process evaluation and more particularly of compiling a thematic study examining organisational processes and relationships. Furthermore, the research questions being addressed in this thesis drew on reflections that emerged during the process evaluation.

I joined the process evaluation team as a PhD fellow in March 2009, a few months after the start of the evaluation. Quickly, my observations of CDI as an organisation combined with the work undertaken for the process evaluation brought me to question both the role of leadership in organisations and also how evaluations address such phenomenon. A literature review revealed that whilst leadership was identified as vital for a programme’s success, it was under-considered in evaluation methodology. This research aims to address this short-coming. It argues that theory-based evaluations are the best suited approach since they pay particular attention to the context of a programme and aim at making causal inferences about its success or failure. It also identifies post-modern forms of leadership as appropriate for the context of this research. To explore the potential of leadership as a focus in evaluation methodology, two research questions are identified:

- *Is it feasible to incorporate a focus on leadership in evaluations?*
- *Is there an added-value to incorporating a focus on leadership in theory-based evaluations?*

The process evaluation comprised six thematic studies and an overall evaluation study, all of which are described in section 4.4.2. Across the course of the evaluation the amount and variety of activities undertaken by CDI to implement its programme was noted. It became apparent that the relationships established by CDI throughout its work
were central to the organisation’s success. Consequently, in September 2010 the organisation requested an additional study that would capture in greater detail the processes and relationships underpinning its work. An evaluation plan was developed in February 2011 and agreed in April of the same year. This request for a study focusing on organisational relationships took place after the PhD research had started and offered a great opportunity to introduce a formal focus on leadership in an evaluation study. While CDI expressed the desire to commission a study capturing processes and relationships, it was the process evaluation team that suggested examining leadership as part of that study.

The process evaluation was therefore used as a case study to investigate the PhD research question. The fieldwork and analysis undertaken for the study which focused on organisational relationships provided the basis for this research. The data collected was subsequently re-analysed with the PhD research questions in mind. The connections existing between the doctoral research and the process evaluation study are illustrated in Figure 7. Observations and interviews undertaken during the process evaluation generated the PhD research question, which in turn influenced the process evaluation by way of introducing a focus on leadership in one of the studies. This particular study was then used as a base for the PhD thesis.
4.3 Research orientation

Key ontological\(^{21}\) and epistemological\(^{22}\) perspectives are divided between objectivism/positivism and constructionism/relativism. Objectivism and positivism consider that social phenomena are external facts that can be objectively studied through natural sciences. Post-positivism disagrees with the positivist position that researchers do not influence what is observed and focuses more on explanations than predictions, but still seeks to identify objective effects. Constructionism and relativism consider that there is no absolute truth, social phenomena and their meaning are constantly created by actors - the world is socially constructed (Bryman, 2004).

\(^{21}\) Ontology is the philosophical study of the nature of being.

\(^{22}\) Epistemology considers that nature of the knowledge and how it is produced.
This research argues that theory-based evaluations are best suited to incorporating a focus on leadership. It is therefore not surprising that the position taken during this research is of scientific realism. This position is advocated by Pawson and Tilley (1997, 2005), two important theorist in the study of theory-based evaluations. Realism places itself as a position which “avoids the traditional epistemological poles of positivism and relativism” (Pawson and Tilley, 2005: 94). Rossi et al. (2004: 16) acknowledge that whilst evaluators use social research methods, it does not mean that they have to stick to particular social research styles (e.g. quantitative or qualitative, experimental or ethnographic, positivistic or naturalistic). Similar to theory-based evaluations, scientific realism concentrates on mechanisms of explanation and their contribution to the development of scientific knowledge (Pawson and Tilley, 2005). Realism research relies on multiple perceptions (i.e. triangulation of data sources) about one reality to build an understanding of this reality, contrarily to constructivist research that considers that the participants’ perception is reality (Pawson, 2005). Furthermore, O’Regan (2010) claims that scientific realism is a useful position for evaluators, because it is a position which agrees that there is an objective reality where the effects of a programme can be studied, yet distances itself from post-positivists’ acceptance of objective effects and constructionists’ denial of an objective reality. The focus is not on measuring precise effects of a programme, but on providing explanations about the mechanisms underpinning its success or failure.

The quality of positivist and constructivist research is usually measured using indicators such as internal validity\textsuperscript{23}, credibility, and authenticity. The validity of scientific realism is dependent on the context (Healy and Perry, 2000). Scientific realism is different to positivism because it considers that social reality is fragile. This therefore means that the causal impacts studied by scientific realists are variable and context-dependent, rather than static like positivist findings. Healy and Perry (2000: 125) identify a number of criteria to judge the validity and reliability of realism. For instance, they explain that a “quality criterion for realism research is ‘contingent

\textsuperscript{23} Internal validity refers to the causal relationship between variables and results, it can also be called logical validity.
validity’, that is, validity about generative mechanisms and the contexts that make them contingent”. Other criteria they identify include methodological trustworthiness (i.e. the research can, for example, be audited through analysis of a case study database or quotes), theory-building (as opposed to positivist approaches that do theory-testing), and the validity of construct (as with positivism, the constructs need to be measured). Furthermore, Pawson et al. (2005:30) identify two other criteria, which are relevance (i.e. the focus is not on a topic but on the theory) and rigour (i.e. inferences made should be strong enough to make a methodologically credible contribution to the testing of a theory).

This research argues for the incorporation of a focus on leadership in theory-based evaluations, because leadership is an important factor that can explain why a programme works or does not work. Furthermore, as an evaluator, I do not take part in the methodology debate opposing qualitative and quantitative methods. Similar to that in theory-based evaluations, my position is method-neutral. The methodology used should be determined by the nature of the question and the form of the answer that will be the most useful (Pinkerton and Katz, 2003; Chen, 2005a; Donaldson and Lipsey, 2006). It should not be determined by evaluators’ preferences. Overall, a scientific realism position reflects the ethos and stated aims of this research.

4.4 Case study approach: the process evaluation of the Tallaght West Childhood Development Initiative

The approach taken is that of a case study. A case study is defined by Yin (2009: 18) as the investigation of “a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident”. Yet, the case study here was not that of an organisation, but of a process evaluation. As Stake (2000) indicates, a case study is “not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied”.

Case studies have been criticised for being “of almost no scientific value” (Campbell and Stanley, 1966, cited in Flyvbjerg, 2006: 221), but this criticism is indicative of the common misunderstandings about case study research. Identified by Flyvbjerg (2006),
they can be summarised as follows: theoretical knowledge is more valuable than practical knowledge, generalisation is not possible from case studies and therefore they do not contribute to the development of scientific knowledge, case studies can be used to generate hypotheses but not to test them or build theory, case studies are biased and difficult to summarise. Others indicate that whilst external validity (generalisation) seems robust, internal and construct validity\(^{24}\) are weaker quality measures in case studies (Gibbert \textit{et al.}, 2008).

However, a number of theorists have built arguments against these criticisms. It can be stated that case studies can actually be suitable for generalisation (Stake, 1978; Gibbert \textit{et al.}, 2008), with some theorists suggesting that a cross-case analysis of four to ten case studies give sufficient basis for analytical generalisation (Eisenhardt, 1989). Case studies do not provide statistical generalisation like randomised controlled trials do, but they support analytic generalisation where a case is used to exemplify, represent, and generalise a theory (Yin, 2005; Flyvbjerg, 2006). It is further argued that case studies can build a theory that is “novel, testable, and empirically valid” (Eisenhardt, 1989: 532). Moreover, Gibbert \textit{et al.} (2008) identify strategies with which to increase internal validity such as a clear research framework, pattern matching \textit{(i.e.} comparing observed patterns with those predicted or found in other studies), and theory triangulation. Construct validity can also be enhanced through triangulation of methods as well as through the establishment of a clear chain of evidence.

A case study is a pertinent choice in the context of this research since it is a valid approach during the early phases of a theory when new variables and their relationships are being studied (Eisenhardt, 1989) and when preference is given to gaining insight into causal mechanisms rather than causal effects (Gerring, 2004: 352). This suits theory-based approaches that aim to make causal inferences rather than measure effects.

\(^{24}\) Construct validity refers to the quality of the conceptualisation.
Whilst the case study is of a process evaluation, this evaluation took place within the particular setting of the Tallaght West Childhood Development Initiative (CDI). To allow for an appreciation of the case study’s context, an overview of CDI as an organisation is therefore provided, presenting its strategy, key principles, services, and supportive structures. This section describes the overall process evaluation, identifying evaluation questions and the thematic approach used to answer them. A particular focus is given to the study that considers CDI as an organisation since it was used to incorporate a focus on leadership.

4.4.1 The context: Tallaght West Childhood Development Initiative

A Comprehensive Community Initiative approach of the kind described in Chapter 3 was under trial in Ireland in three disadvantaged areas of Dublin (Ballymun, Darndale, and Tallaght West) as part of the Prevention and Early Intervention Programme (PEIP). This programme of social interventions was co-funded by the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs and the Atlantic Philanthropies. The Childhood Development Initiative (CDI) in Tallaght West was one of the three PEIP sites.

CDI emerged in 2003 when a group of community leaders, residents, and professionals started working together to gather ideas on how to improve the future of the children in their community. In October 2005, CDI launched a 10 year strategy entitled *A Place for Children: Tallaght West*. This strategy was outcome focused and drew on a wide range of consultations (with parents, children, service providers, and policy-makers), reflections (through a consortium and working groups), and research (such as the examination of best practice models). The aim was to improve the health, safety, learning and overall wellbeing of children in the area and to increase their sense of belonging to the locality (CDI, 2005c). Five key principles underpinned CDI’s work: all aspects of the project, from service design to management and delivery were shaped by those living and working in Tallaght West; every element of the CDI programme served to enhance and strengthen interagency relationships and service integration; CDI would inform Government thinking, policy-making and curriculum development;
the CDI experience would impact on support and training for practitioners and service managers; and CDI would work to ensure that those services which were demonstrated to have had a positive impact on the community, and met an identified need, were continued beyond the life of the project (CDI, 2005c). Drawing on those key principles, CDI delivered a number of services in Tallaght West:

- **The Early Childhood Care and Education** was a two year prevention programme set across nine sites intended to strengthen children’s (aged three and four years) positive dispositions to learning so that they would be ready for the transition to school. The programme used an approach called High/Scope that supports children learning through play. Other features of the programme included a parent-carer facilitator who supported parents in addressing specific needs based on family values and desires as well as primary health in the form of speech and language therapy, dental care and nutritional wellbeing.

- **Doodle Den** was a one year after school programme that provided intensive support aimed at improving literacy for five or six years old children. The programme also was targeted towards contributing to better school attendance, developing learning outside of school, and enhancing relationships with family and peers. CDI commissioned local organisations (*i.e.* Citywise and An Cosán) to deliver the programme in partnership with five primary schools in Tallaght West.

- **Mate-Tricks** was a one year after school programme. It was a prevention and early intervention service that aimed to enhance pro-social skills and competencies in nine or ten year old children through addressing issues of self-regulation, perspective-taking and problem solving. The programme blended elements of two already established programmes: The Strengthening Families Programme\(^{25}\) and Lochman’s Coping Power Programme\(^{26}\).

\(^{25}\)This parenting programme aims to reduce behaviour problems, delinquency, and alcohol and drug abuse in children. It also intends to improve social competencies and school performance (Strengthening Families Programme Ireland).
CDI commissioned a national organisation (Foróige) to deliver the programme in five schools in Tallaght West.

- **Healthy Schools** was a whole-school approach to improving children’s health and access to primary care services through ensuring the provision of appropriate and effective engagement with services. It aimed to identify where improvements in the current healthcare referral pathways could be made. The programme was delivered on a continual basis throughout the school year in five schools across two campuses. The implementation of the programme involved the integration of a Healthy Schools Coordinator (HSC) into each school campus.

- **The Community Safety Initiative** aimed to improve safety within the home, school, and wider community environment by engaging community residents, Gardaí, the local authority and other stakeholders. It involved developing and implementing both a community safety agreement and a programme of activities that addressed the factors that were identified as negatively impacting on the community’s experience of safety. The initiative was rolled out across two sites in Tallaght West: Jobstown and Brookview. Also, part of the Community Safety Initiative was the programme titled Safe and Healthy Place. Designed in agreement with South Dublin County Council, this aspect of the programme focused on improving the physical fabric of the area in order to reduce the negative impact on children’s health and well-being, as well as to improve their sense of belonging to the community.

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26 This programme draws on risk factors for substance use and delinquency and addresses key factors such as social competence, self-regulation, and positive parental involvement (University of Alabama).

27 Gardaí is the police force in Ireland.
• **The Quality Enhancement Programme** was a broad programme which aimed to build capacity in Tallaght West. It comprised three elements: special talks or conferences, lunchtime seminars, as well as workshops and training courses (short, medium, and long term). The programme was open to all practitioners and in some cases to community members as well.

• **The Restorative Practices Programme** was introduced by CDI in 2010 to develop the community’s ability to manage conflict. It introduced techniques to build relationships, solve problems, and prepare participants to use restorative practice in their everyday roles. Training was provided to the management and staff of various types of organisations (i.e. voluntary, statutory, community) in Tallaght West.

Independent evaluations took place for each of the programmes. Overall, two programmes achieved their goals. The Doodle Den programme made “moderate improvements in the children’s literacy”, and had a positive impact on improving concentration and reducing problematic behaviours in school (Biggart et al., 2012: 1). The Restorative Practice programme was also successful overall. The evaluation indicated that the programme was well delivered and effective in improving people’s ability to deal with conflict in work/school, in the home, in the community, and in interagency settings (Fives et al., 2013).

Other programmes showed some level of impact or progress for a number of indicators, but did not achieve the anticipated outcomes in full. This was the case for the Early Childhood Care and Education programme that had no measurable effect in terms of cognitive and language outcomes, but did positively impact both the quality of the curriculum and the activities being planned and implemented in services, as well as

28 This section provides a brief overview of the outcomes achieved by CDI. Further detail about the successes and challenges of each programme can be found in the evaluation reports cited in this paragraph.
other facets of the programme\textsuperscript{29} (Hayes \textit{et al.}, 2013). The Healthy Schools programme similarly did not show any short-term impact on children’s health\textsuperscript{30}. Yet, some progress could be noted, such as the improvement of depressive symptoms for children aged 7 to 12.

Mitigating the lack of desired impact and progress for some of the programmes were lessons learned during those programmes. For the Healthy Schools programme for instance, the evaluation report described the programme as very ambitious, aspiring to bring about change in a short period. Still, the programme provided important implementation lessons for future school-based initiatives focusing on children’s health (Comiskey \textit{et al.}, 2012). The evaluation of the Community Safety Initiative stated that long-term goals were not met, yet again documented that progress was made in achieving intermediate outcomes\textsuperscript{31}. It identified a number of challenges encountered during the implementation of the programme\textsuperscript{32}, challenges that were identified and analysed by CDI for lessons as to why certain approaches did not bring about the expected change (Kearns \textit{et al.}, 2013).

In the case of the Mate-Tricks programme, CDI acted to quickly dismantle the programme upon receiving its evaluation results. Out of 21 indicators, 19 showed no significant difference between the children attending the programme and the control group while two indicators showed a negative effect (an increase in child-reported anti-

\textsuperscript{29} This includes the positive effect of the intervention’s parenting course on the quality of the home-learning environment, which may well lead to positive outcomes for children in the future. Gains for children were also noted in terms of improved behaviour and social skills, child attendance, and better speech and language prognosis on entry to school.

\textsuperscript{30} The evaluation indicated no impact of the programme on increasing breakfast intake, and reducing factors such as depressive symptoms, children’s thoughts of changing their weight, incidences of reported bullying, intention to smoke when they are older, rates of children who were obese or rates of absenteeism over time.

\textsuperscript{31} Intermediate outcomes include mobilising community capacity around safety, improving perceptions of safety and the physical fabric of the area, and involving children in safety-related activities.

\textsuperscript{32} For instance, the evaluation identified the following challenges: low community representation, lack of an agreed implementation framework, and insufficient level of tangible progress over 3 years.
social behaviour and authoritarian parenting). CDI reacted promptly and focused on sharing the findings at a local level, particularly through their Research, Evaluation, Policy and Practice (REPP) Project (O'Hare et al., 2012).

As illustrated in Figure 8, a number of structures oversaw and supported this programme of work: the CDI Board and the CDI team were central to the organisation’s governance. The CDI team was supported by the Implementation Support Group (ISG) and subcommittees related to the services (i.e. the Healthy Schools Steering Committee, the Safe and Healthy Place Steering Committee, the Community Safety Initiative Subcommittee, and the Restorative Practice Management Committee). A number of subcommittees were accountable to the Board. They were the Expert Advisory Subcommittee, the Finance and Risk Sub Committee, the Human Resources Subcommittee, and the Communication Subcommittee. Furthermore, the Board was accountable to its funders (i.e. the Atlantic Philanthropies and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs). The governance chart also shows the advice and support relationship CDI had with the Children’s Services Committee. Whilst the chart indicates that the Children Services Committee is linked to the Board, it was also well connected to the ISG since the majority of the ISG members were also members of the Children’s Services Committee.
The governance chart presented here was drawn in 2012 and provides a good representation of CDI at the time of the PhD research\textsuperscript{33}. For the case of this research, three structures were particularly relevant: the Board, the CDI team, and the Implementation Support Group (ISG). The membership and function of those structures have evolved over time from 2005 to 2011. Those changes are examined in Chapter 6 which depicts CDI’s leadership story. Here, the structures and their membership are described in a way that allows a general understanding of CDI’s governance structures at the time of the interviews in May and June 2011.

\textsuperscript{33} Some discrepancies exist between the structures presented in the governance chart and those in place at the time of the interviews. Yet, they were minor changes: the Human Resources Sub Committee was called the Executive Subcommittee, the Communication Subcommittee was a working group, and the County Development Board was not mentioned. However, the County Development Board had no direct relationship with CDI.
The Board was composed of a number of experts from fields such as community development, research, health, early education and early years, and change management, as well as community representatives. According to CDI’s website in 2010, the Board’s functions included providing leadership and the taking of responsibility for the strategy’s implementation. It was also charged with overall governance and accountability; the responsibility of overseeing staffing, finance, programmes, learning, evaluation and mainstreaming; reporting to the Office for the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs and to the Atlantic Philanthropies; and reporting on strategy implementation, spending, the attainment of targets, and learning.

The Implementation Support Group (ISG) was composed of representatives of the voluntary and statutory sector including: the Health Service Executive, Tallaght Partnership, the National Educational Psychological Service, An Cosán, South Dublin County Council, the National Education Welfare Board, Tallaght Gardaí, Barnardos, South Dublin Children’s Services Committee, Lucena Clinic, Child and Family Services, the Vocational Education Committee, and the South Dublin County Childcare Committee. According to its Terms of Reference in 2010, the general function of the ISG was to support the Board and Team in implementing the CDI strategy, in part through enhancing interagency work and service integration in the area.

The CDI team34 was composed of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), two part-time Community Engagement Coordinators, a Corporate Services and Governance Coordinator, a Finance and Administration Assistant, a part-time Quality Specialist Officer, two full-time Quality Specialists, a Research and Evaluation Officer, an Administration and Communications Coordinator, and an Administrative Assistant. Overall, the CDI team was responsible for the implementation of CDI’s service and

34 The CDI team described here is the one that was in place during the interviews undertaken for this research in 2011. Changes that occurred between 2007 and 2011 are outlined in Chapter 6.
programmes. They worked closely with the various subcommittees or steering committees established for the services.\(^{35}\)

The **Expert Advisory Subcommittee** comprised a number of national and international academics. The Chair was a member of the Board and both funders attended meetings. The main function of the subcommittee was to support the development, implementation and review of the research and evaluation taking place in CDI.

The **Finance and Risk Subcommittee** was composed of financial experts and solicitors. The Chair was a member of the Board. The subcommittee was responsible for finance, external audit, and corporate governance (*e.g.* risk management).

The **Executive Subcommittee** (later the Human Resources Subcommittee) included the CEO, the Chair of the Board, and the Chair of the Risk and Finance Subcommittee. The subcommittee’s main function was to support the CEO on human resources issues.

The **Communication Working Group** (later the Communication Subcommittee) comprised the CEO, the Administration and Communications Coordinator, communication consultants, and the CES. Their function was to develop an action plan for the implementation of a communications strategy, provide a monthly review of the action plan and advise on progress, identify potential barriers and solutions, and identify and maximise public relations opportunities.

### 4.4.2 The process evaluation

In winter 2008, the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre (CFRC) was contracted for a period of three years to undertake the Process Evaluation of the Tallaght West Childhood Development Initiative. Process evaluations focus on the

\(^{35}\) The subcommittees or steering groups specific to the services are not described here since they were not involved in the governance of CDI overall. Their role was limited to the service they represented.
implementation of a programme, whether it reaches its target population, and it is delivered effectively (Cain and Hollister, 1972; Shreirer, 1994). More specifically, process evaluations comprise “an evaluation of the internal dynamics of implementing organisations, their policy instruments, their service delivery mechanisms, their management practices, and their linkages among these” (OECD, 2002: 30). Those internal dynamics are examined in an attempt to understand the strengths and weaknesses of a programme. Process evaluations aim to grasp what is happening, why, and how. They seek explanations for a programme’s success or failure (Patton, 2008). Process evaluations capture and document the day-to-day reality of a programme. They do not measure the effects of a programme (Rossi et al., 2004), nor do they consider its cost (Davidson, 2005, cited in Patton, 2008). They can provide useful feedback at the early stages of a programme or be used at a later stage through their provision of information used for the replication of an effective programme (Patton, 2008).

A process evaluation can either stand alone as an assessment of the programme’s circumstances or complement an impact evaluation (Rossi et al., 2004). In the case of this research, seven service evaluations that were outcome-focused ran in parallel to the overall process evaluation. They included six of the services identified previously36, and an additional evaluation assessing the Speech and Language Therapy Service that was a component of two CDI programmes (i.e. Early Childhood Care and Education and Healthy Schools). The evaluations of CDI’s services were undertaken by different institutions, as indicated in Table 10.

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36 The Quality Enhancement Programme is not mentioned here as it was considered in the overall process evaluation.
The process evaluation team presented an evaluation plan that outlined a set of questions pertinent to the programme’s processes. Those questions underpinned the overall evaluation work. They included:

- What theories and concepts informed the development and implementation of the CDI strategy and its various components?
- What aspects of the process worked / did not work and why?
- What were the strengths and weaknesses?
- What facilitated implementation (both strategy development and roll out)?
- What resources were involved, how was their allocation prioritised, and were they used efficiently?

To answer those questions the process evaluation team took a thematic approach. Drawing on CDI’s strategy and core principles, the evaluation plan proposed a set of five cumulative studies. Those studies examined the following themes:

- Theme I: Origins and strategy development of CDI
- Theme II: Interagency relationships and service integration
- Theme III: Impact on support and training for practitioners and service managers by CDI
- Theme IV: The project - service design, management and delivery - shaped by those living and working in Tallaght West
- Theme V: Mainstreaming: Government thinking, policy making and curriculum development

The process evaluation also encompassed the assessment of three domains: fidelity (i.e. the extent to which the programme is faithful to the manuals), organisation (i.e. the extent to which the project is well managed and implemented), and utilisation (i.e. the extent to which the programme reaches the intended beneficiaries). The various themes and domains considered throughout the process evaluation were cross examined in a final overall study.

Throughout the evaluation, the CFRC engaged in a consultation process with its commissioner to clarify the scope of the evaluation for each study and also to agree on evaluation questions. This process ensured that the evaluation studies were responsive to the commissioner’s needs. The necessity of engaging in negotiations to tailor the evaluation plans to stakeholders’ needs is highlighted in the disciplinary literature (Rossi et al., 2004; Bamberger et al., 2006; Patton, 2008). Beyond enhancing utilisation of evaluation findings, this process set out in clear terms the aims and objectives of each study. The result was the prevention of conflicts, which could otherwise arise once the report is submitted if there are different understandings of the evaluation compass.

During the course of the evaluation the amount and variety of activities undertaken by CDI to implement its programme was noted. It became apparent that the relationships established by CDI through its work were central to the organisation’s success. Interest in understanding such mechanisms prompted a request from CDI for an additional study in September 2010. This process evokes what Patton (2008) describes as Active-Reactive-Interactive-Adaptive evaluators who consult evaluation users to ensure utilisation of evaluation findings.
It was agreed with CDI that the additional study would document and examine the processes and relationships CDI had utilised to implement its strategy and principles. The request for this specific study focusing on organisational relationships took place after the PhD research had started and offered an opportunity to introduce a formal focus on leadership in the evaluation study. The process evaluation team suggested that the study should include the examination of leadership. The idea was welcomed by the commissioner. The study objectives were:

- To identify the relationships which CDI established and maintained to begin implementing its strategy;
- To identify the processes which CDI established and maintained to begin implementing its strategy;
- To identify and examine how leadership impacts on processes and relationships in the case of CDI;
- To identify and examine what worked well in establishing both relationships and processes for implementation;
- To identify and examine what difficulties emerged in establishing both relationships and processes for implementation;
- To draw out implications of the CDI organisational process experience for future Comprehensive Community Initiative-style work in Ireland and elsewhere.

The process evaluation also delivered an overall study, integrating elements from the outcome evaluation reports for CDI’s services (see Table 10) and the various process evaluation thematic studies delivered between 2009 and 2013. The process evaluation interim reports were first submitted to CDI then revised after comments from members of the CDI team and the EAC:

- Study 2: Interagency Working and Service Integration in Tallaght West (Submitted August 2010, revised February 2011)

37 In the case of study 4, comments from a member of the EAC came after the report was revised, generating a second wave of revision.
- Study 3: CDI Experience Impacting on Training and Support of Managers and Practitioners (Submitted November 2010, Revised July 2011)
- Study 4: CDI as Organisation: Examining the Processes and Relationships to Support Implementation (Submitted July 2011, Revised September 2011 and November 2011 Post EAC comments)
- Study 5: CDI and the Community (Submitted November 2011)
- Study 6: Mainstreaming and Sustaining Services (Submitted August 2013)

The process evaluation was not specifically set within theory-based approaches. Yet, the evaluation questions shared similar concerns with those encountered in theory-based evaluations (i.e. they concern theories underpinning the programme’s strategy and explain why the process elements worked or did not work). For instance, amongst the evaluation questions outlined in the previous section, some referred directly to the programme’s theory and causal mechanisms:

- What theories and concepts informed the development and implementation of the CDI strategy and its various components?
- What aspects of the process worked / did not work and why?

Furthermore, some of the themes examined for the process evaluation explored causal mechanisms that underpin a programme’s success or failure. Indeed, themes such as ‘interagency work’, ‘community engagement’, ‘support and training’, and ‘organisational processes’ can be considered as mechanisms that activate the link between activities and outcomes. Those themes also speak directly to Chen’s action model that includes elements such as programme implementers, associated organisations and community partners and ecological context (Chen, 2005a). Evaluations that focus on the action model are called theory-driven process evaluations (Chen, 2005c).

Evaluators using a theory-based approach can sometimes be involved in the development of the programme’s theory. In the case of this study, the evaluation team did not support the articulation of the programme’s theory. Similar to most evaluations in the neighbouring United Kingdom (UK), the process evaluation started after the initiative had been established and implementation was underway. Mason and Barnes
(2007) note a difference in the role of evaluators using a theory of change approach in the United States (US) and those applying it in the UK. Indeed, while in the US evaluators often work with the programme’s implementers to develop a theory of change, UK evaluators tend to have a more distant relationship with the programme since they often start working on projects that have already been launched and therefore are not involved in their design (Mason and Barnes, 2007). Most UK public policy has requirements for evaluation, but the tendering process delays the beginning of such evaluation, making it difficult for the programme and the evaluation to develop simultaneously (Sullivan et al., 2002; Mackenzie and Blamey, 2005).

In this case, CDI’s strategy was the closest account of the programme’s theory. The process evaluation examined how the strategy was developed in one of its thematic studies. Other themes examined by the process evaluation were identified as CDI’s core principles, and can therefore be considered as elements of the programme’s theory. However, CDI did not outline with precision how change was expected to occur. Whilst principles such as interagency work and service integration were identified as core to CDI’s work, expectations from those particular aspects of the programme were not clearly delineated. Several process evaluation studies pointed out the lack of theory underpinning the organisation’s work principles, expressing such concern in their conclusion and indicating that clear expectations should have been set in advance.

The thematic approach used by the process evaluation can be understood as a way to examine causal mechanisms underpinning the programme’s success or failure. As indicated by Mason and Barnes (2007), theory-based approaches provide a framework that gives the opportunity to tell the implementation story and consider its aftermaths. Using a theory-based approach is not a matter of applying a particular method or technique (Pawson, 2005; Mason and Barnes, 2007). Therefore, it is argued here that the CDI process evaluation took place within a theory-based approach, using mixed methods to provide a narrative of the implementation of the programme whilst examining key factors impacting on its outcomes.
4.5 Data collection methodology

This section presents the various data collection methods used for this doctoral research. Two literature reviews were undertaken in order to provide strong foundations to the study. The first review focuses on the field of evaluation (Chapter 2) while the second one considers literature on leadership in order to propose a conceptual framework for this research (Chapter 3). Both literature reviews followed the same research strategy. They commenced with a general review of fundamental disciplinary handbooks suggested by contacts who were specialists in the field. Once key theorists were identified, an institutional library was used to access more books, whether on site or via inter-library loans. The National University of Ireland, Galway library offered searchable library databases such as ARAN, JSTOR and Scopus which enabled search by key words in documents, authors, publishers, affiliation. The databases also allowed advanced searches by key words, which could be also be combined or excluded. Journal articles were mostly discovered and accessed through the use of the academic search engine, Google Scholar. Initial exploration of the literature consisted of queries that searched for key words (e.g. ‘theory-based evaluations’, ‘theory of change’, ‘collaborative leadership’, ‘boundary spanners’). The literature used in this research necessarily focused on narrow concepts such as ‘theory-based evaluations’ and ‘collaborative leadership’. A process that proved fruitful for broadening the search spectrum and also for ensuring that literature related to such concepts was rarely missed was using the Google Scholar option that allows the viewing of lists of books and articles that cite an article of interest. This allowed access to articles published at a later stage, providing an indication of how other theorists reacted to an article. A final review technique employed once key journals were identified (e.g. New Directions for Evaluation, The Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation) was to scan further issues in order to discover the latest developments in the field.

In general, evaluators employ social research methodology to collect and analyse data relevant to the performance of a programme. Yet, evaluators often need to innovate and improvise as they work towards collecting evidence about social interventions (Rossi et al., 2004). Similarly, this research drew on three typical social research
methods, which are interviews, documentary analysis, and observations, but also improvised at times, such as when using a table drawing on the literature to stimulate a conversation about leadership competencies. This section identifies retrospective data collection that took place over the overall process evaluation. Then, it examines more specifically prospective data collection gathered for the study, CDI as Organisation, Examining the Processes and Relationships to Support Implementation. While a general overview is given here, the strengths and weaknesses of each method in relation to gathering data pertaining to leadership are outlined in Chapter 5.

4.5.1 Retrospective data collection: the overall process evaluation

Social research methods are deemed to be “an appropriate approach to the task of describing program performance in ways that will be as credible and defensible as possible” (Rossi et al., 2004: 16). The overall process evaluation used a combination of methods that comprised interviews, documentary analysis, and observations. Triangulation (e.g. using multiple methods of data collection) is commonly used in evaluations to strengthen the validity of qualitative research (Yin, 2005). It involves comparing the data gathered to corroborate, elaborate, or identify discrepancies (Bamberger et al., 2006: 147). Interviews, documentary analysis, and observations are further described in the next sub-sections. Table 11 provides an overview of the work undertaken for CDI’s process evaluation. In total, 155 interviews or focus groups were conducted. Additionally, a large number of documents were examined (between 59 and 833 depending on the thematic study), and 96 observations were undertaken by the process evaluation team. Two studies also included surveys. Interviews, documentary analysis, and observations are further described in the next sub-sections.

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38 This is the number of interviews analysed for the purpose of this research. Further interviews were undertaken at a later stage (2013) for the process evaluation in order to update information needed for the mainstreaming and sustainability study, taking the total number of interviews/focus groups to 179.
4.5.1.1 Interviews

Qualitative practice in evaluation “is a narrative craft that involves the telling of stories (...) with the aim of understanding, and often action, as the improvement of practice or the reframing of policy conversation, toward the appreciation of pluralism and complexity” (Greene, 2000: 989). Interviews are one of the methods that enable evaluators to understand and articulate the programme’s story. The interviews and focus-groups undertaken for the process evaluation involved a range of stakeholders including CDI team members, members of various governance structures, managers of services, front-line staff of services, and other key informants such as those involved in the development of the initiative. The interviews were undertaken by different members of the process evaluation team. Table 12 specifies the number of interviews I carried out and the number conducted by others for each thematic study.
The interviews conducted were semi-structured and an interview guide was prepared in advance to ensure that participants responded to the same questions. This tool was also central to guaranteeing that the same questions were asked by the different interviewers. While participants were asked similar questions, the schedule made sure to capture particularities of different positions (e.g. Funders, Board members, service providers) and was flexible enough to adapt to the respondents individual answers (Fontana and Frey, 2000). Some interviews took place over the phone. This method of interviewing was favoured by the process evaluation team when possible, because the CFRC and CDI were based in different cities. Telephone interviews were used to keep the evaluation cost down and reduce researchers’ travelling time. This approach was deemed suitable since all participants having key positions in CDI were aware of the existence and purpose of the process evaluation. Moreover, the process evaluation made it clear in the invitation to participate in the interview that it could take place face to face if the interviewee wished so. All interviews were fully transcribed.

4.5.1.2 Documentary analysis

The process evaluation team received over 6,000 documents from CDI. This allowed documentary analysis to play an important role when it came to capturing CDI’s work. Nevertheless, the large volume of documents constituted a challenge for the evaluation – time constraints set a limit on the amount of documents that can be examined.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme of evaluation report</th>
<th>Interviews conducted by the researcher</th>
<th>Interviews conducted by others</th>
<th>Total interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Origins and strategy development</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interagency work and service integration</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and support provided by CDI</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDI as organisation</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community involvement</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainstreaming and sustainability</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall evaluation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total interviews</strong></td>
<td><strong>61</strong></td>
<td><strong>94</strong></td>
<td><strong>155</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Therefore, a process was put in place to identify a hierarchy of key documents to be considered. This identification process was developed in collaboration with CDI to ensure that no key document was omitted. The team identified a list of documents considered central to the theme examined and sent the list to the Evaluation Officer in CDI for confirmation and possible suggestions. The documents were then examined with the evaluation questions in mind.

The process evaluation team also had access to CDI’s Team journal which was completed on a regular basis by the CDI staff. The journal was considered to be a space where team members could freely express feelings that related to their work. To ensure an efficient use of this tool by the staff, it was agreed with CDI that it would not be used as a source of data for the reports. Nevertheless, the journal imparted to the process evaluation team an insight that guided potential evaluation objectives and interview schedules for each study.

A limitation of documentary analysis is that they are produced by individuals attending the meeting and subsequently holding a stake. They are to some extent subjective notes taken by an individual with a particular point of view and therefore reflect an author bias (Yin, 2005). Moreover, as Patton (2002) indicates, documents can be inaccurate or incomplete with great variance in quality. Access is also identified as a potential weakness of documentary analysis, in some cases it may be deliberately blocked (Yin, 2005). Anachronism is yet another possible limitation to the use of documents (Bamberger et al., 2006). Nevertheless, Patton (2002: 307) argues that documentary analysis provides a special insight into the programme, “a behind-the-scenes look” that is not observable and provides considerable leads for interview questions. Secondary data is also valuable as a resource that can be used to reduce the time and cost of an evaluation since it has the potential to prevent or reduce the need for primary data collection (Bamberger et al., 2006). Challenges and successes associated with the use of documentary analysis are further discussed in Chapter 5 which examines the feasibility of assessing leadership through various methods.
4.5.1.3 Observations of meetings

The method used was non-participative and the observations were unstructured. This means that the process evaluation team did not interfere with the meetings, observers remained silent unless addressed and took extensive notes. The observations were unstructured because they had to capture elements pertaining to all the themes being studied and intended to provide an overall account of the meeting. This was achieved through extensive note-taking, which record in as much detail as possible the behaviour of participants in order to provide a narrative account of that behaviour (Bryman, 2004). Field notes can be taken in various ways. Patton (2002: 302) describes them as the “most important determinant of later bringing off a qualitative analysis (...) they should contain everything that the observer believes to be worth noting”. The process evaluation’s field notes contained both descriptive elements (i.e. what was said by whom) and observations made throughout the meeting.

As the researcher that made the majority of the observations, I produced an overview of the notes after the meeting and made additional comments, such as highlighting sections that were particularly pertinent to one of the evaluation themes or writing down feelings and reflections about the meeting. Although this process was time-consuming, it provided important context for the evaluation (Yin, 2005). It also allowed the process evaluation team to access primary data, as opposed to minutes of meetings that might include the bias of the person that took them. Indeed, direct observations provide a better understanding of reality since they cover events in real time (Yin, 2005). Challenges and successes associated with observations such as their capacity to support contextualisation and the researcher’s impact on a meeting (Yin, 2005) are further discussed in Chapter 5.

Various strategic meetings and events were observed such as:

- Board meetings
- Implementation Support Group meetings
- Team meetings
- Team development days
- Service managers meetings
- Service subcommittees or steering committees such as the Healthy School Steering Committee
- Service practitioners Communities of Practice
- Strategic Working Group meetings
- Communication Working Group meetings
- Transition planning workshop
- Lunchtime seminars
- Conferences (e.g. The Story so Far)
- Social events (e.g. Summer BBQ)

4.5.2 Prospective data collection: the organisational study

This section focuses on the specifics of the data collection methods used for the organisational study which is central to the PhD research since it had a focus on leadership. This particular study encompassed the analysis of 24 interviews, 80 observations cumulated between the beginning of the evaluation and May 2011, and approximately 500 documents that included:

- Minutes of Board meetings
- Minutes of Implementation Support Group (ISG) meetings
- Minutes of Executive Subcommittee meetings
- Board reports
- Minutes of Team meetings
- CDI’s newsletters
- CDI’s strategy
- Documentation of other working groups (e.g. the Strategic Working Group, the Communication Working Group)
- A human resources report commissioned by CDI
The documentary analysis and observations of meetings techniques were not changed for this particular study. Therefore, this section focuses on interviews which have a number of specific features. In the case of the study, *CDI as Organisation: Examining the Processes and Relationships to Support Implementation*, I conducted the majority of the interviews (15 out of 24). It was decided that focus groups were not an appropriate method of data collection in this case since leadership can be a sensitive topic. A collective setting did not appear appropriate to discuss such a topic as it would have limited the amount of data generated and probably made participants uncomfortable. Limitations related to the topic’s sensitivity and ways to overcome this challenge are outlined in Chapter 5 and discussed in Chapter 7.

The sample of participants involved in the interviews for the organisational study included 12 team members, 10 members of governance structures, and two funders. The funders were included as key contributors and influencers of the programme. As illustrated in Figure 9, the members of governance structures mostly belong to the Implementation Support Group and the Board. Yet, because of the strong relationship between CDI and the Children’s Services Committee (CSC) two of the ISG members also held positions in the CSC, and therefore represented both organisations during the interview. Similarly, Board members also sat on other subcommittees. Thus, the interviewees comprised members of the Finance and Risk Subcommittee, the Expert Advisory Subcommittee, and the Executive Subcommittee. This sample of interviewees subsequently provided a good representation of CDI’s governance structures. The 12 CDI team members comprised nine team members that were working in CDI at the time of the interview, as well as three of the four CDI members who had resigned. The latter were contacted with CDI’s approval. The process evaluation team felt it was important to include the views of those who were present for the early stages of the programme and who had left. To protect the interviewee’s anonymity, interviewees are grouped in clusters and will be identified as Funders, ISG members, Board members, or Team members.
As a result of the interview schedules being adapted to different positions, eight different schedules were prepared for the following categories: ISG members; Board members; Chairs of governance structures; CDI current team; CDI past team; CDI CEO; Funders; Children Services Committee members. Variations between schedules were sometimes minor (*e.g.* the use of tense between the schedules for the current CDI staff and the past CDI staff), but could include different questions reflecting specific responsibilities such as in the case of the chairs and CEO. The interview schedule mostly focused on capturing the interviewees’ role, the processes established to support work with other structures, and the factors impacting on relationships. Interview schedules can be found in Appendix A. Only a limited number of questions were directly focused on leadership. A table presenting those questions for the various categories of interview schedule can be found in Appendix B.
Interview schedules were sent to the participants prior to the interview to allow time if desired for reflection and factual verification. For example, questions related to dates or membership could require factual verification. The interview schedule came with another document outlining the roles and competencies of boundary spanners. The idea of using this method was derived from a similar approach used during the interviews undertaken for the process evaluation study on the training and support provided by CDI. The fieldwork for this study commenced with a CDI team focus group that clarified their understanding of training and support. From the discussion in this session a framework was created outlining the different types of support provided by the team. The framework was used as a guide during the interviews and to support the documentary analysis, providing indicators for the various types of support identified. Since the framework was positively received by team members, it was decided to use a similar approach for the study assessing CDI as an organisation. In this case, the framework proposed drew from the literature presented in Chapter 3. An email sent to interviewees, containing the interview schedule and document referring to boundary spanners, included a brief definition of the boundary spanners concept. The section of the email that relates to the document read as follow:

_The second document presents the roles and competencies of "boundary spanners". Boundary spanners are individuals who work across organisational boundaries. A more detailed definition is provided in the document. During the interview, we will look at how those competencies apply or not to your position (see question 6 in the interview schedule)._

_Let me know if you have any questions._
The attached document contained a general definition of boundary spanners as well as the three roles identified by Williams (2010) and the competencies required for each role. The aim was to provide a clear and understandable framework through which to discuss roles and competencies during the interview. The document can be found in Appendix C. The email also specified that participants could ask questions about the two documents, but no further information was requested.

The boundary spanners document was not used during the interviews with the funders. Indeed, the funders were not considered as potential boundary spanners since their leadership takes place vertically (i.e. top-down) rather than horizontally. However, they were asked to identify skills required for a CEO to implement a complex social intervention such as CDI.

Field work for the study, *CDI as Organisation: Examining the Processes and Relationships to Support Implementation*, was undertaken in May and June 2011. The 24 interviews conducted lasted an average of 56 minutes, ranging from 25 to 160 minutes. The majority of the interviews (15 interviews out of 24) were conducted over the phone. It is important to note here that the process evaluation team would have personally met all of the 24 interviewees at various meetings and functions on numerous occasions prior to the telephone interview.

Interviews provide a direct focus on a particular topic such as leadership. Additionally, they are insightful since they provide access to causal inferences as perceived by participants (Yin, 2005). Major pitfalls of interviews are bias due to poorly constructed questions, and response bias (Yin, 2005). The interview questions for this study were

39 The general definition provided was: Boundary spanners are “actors whose primary job responsibilities involve managing within multi-organisational and multi-sectorial arenas” (Williams, 2010: 2). They are organisational representatives that are “intimately involved in the day-to-day relationship building activities and operations within the developing partnership” (Noble and Jones, 2006: 897). Boundary spanners can work across traditional divides and make the most of the opportunities that are presented to develop partnership working (Frost, 2005).

40 Two of the interviews that were conducted face to face took more time than expected and had to be completed over the phone.
also examined by the Principal Investigator of the process evaluation team as well as the Research and Evaluation Officer of CDI. Other challenges arose in relation to the topics’ sensitivity, time constraints, and terminology. A description of those challenges and how they were overcome can be found in Chapter 5 which examines the feasibility of assessing leadership through such methods.

4.6 Data analysis methodology

The data analysis involved in the process evaluation was undertaken in a number of ways. When starting a study, relevant documents were read to provide general context and allow the evaluation team to acquaint themselves with the material. The documents were later re-examined to look for themes specific to the study. Following this, observation notes were re-read with themes that emerged from the documentary analysis and evaluation questions in mind. A similar process took place to analyse the interviews. The structure of the schedule provided the starting point of the thematic analysis, which was then adapted to the data emerging from the transcripts. Interviews were coded through a Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (NVivo) to ensure systematic analysis. This is a non-exhaustive account of the data analysis undertaken for the process evaluation. A more detailed description of the analysis required for the PhD research is now provided.

Whilst this research drew on the data collected for the process evaluation study, *CDI as Organisation: Examining the Processes and Relationships to Support Implementation*, additional work was undertaken to investigate the feasibility and added value of incorporating a focus on leadership within evaluations. First, to determine whether leadership is already implicitly captured by evaluations, a word count was undertaken to identify the presence of leadership indicators in interview transcripts. Second, interviews were analysed a second time, in light of the research questions underpinning this work.
In both cases, NVivo was used. The use of the software required a two day in-depth training which included the availability of subsequent support. Similar to for most researchers, the software was used mainly as an organising tool (Smith and Hesse-Biber, 1996, cited in Welsh, 2002). It also allowed the analysis of original features such as the time spent on a particular section of the interview. However, the general exploitation of the software was basic. Nvivo supports researchers in organising their data through coding text and breaking it down into manageable units (Welsh, 2002). Those units are called nodes and represent a theme or sub-theme identified throughout the analysis. A node contains various numbers of references which symbolise a section of an interview that was coded. One reference can be transformed into one or more quotes. The use of NVivo is described in more detail in the following sections.

4.6.1 Retro-analysis: searching for leadership features

One of this research’s stated aims is to determine if incorporating a focus on leadership is feasible. To address this, it was decided to investigate whether the topic was already implicitly captured by evaluations. This interrogation draws on the idea that if leadership is instrumental to programmes, the topic must be discussed during most interviews. Demonstrating that interviews comprise leadership indicators would indicate that evaluations already consider leadership elements.

It was decided to use Williams’ boundary spanners framework to identify key words that would be used as indicators of leadership. Indeed, the competencies associated with the three roles of boundary spanners reflect boundary spanning activities (e.g. networking, brokering, communicating, building trust) which should occur in a collaborative leadership setting, providing an approach that focussed more on the day-to-day activities that would be evident in transcripts. Williams’ (2010) framework could also be transformed into a list of key-words, which was not the case for Crosby
and Bryson’s (2010) framework. Table 13 displays in bold the words from the framework that were used as indicators of leadership for the word search. A keyword was identified for each competency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boundary spanners’ roles</th>
<th>Competencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reticulist</strong></td>
<td>• Networking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Managing <strong>accountabilities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Appreciate different modes of <strong>governance</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <strong>Political</strong> skills and <strong>diplomacy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entrepreneur</strong></td>
<td>• <strong>Brokering</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <strong>Entrepreneurial</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <strong>Innovative</strong> and <strong>creative</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Tolerates <strong>risk</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interpreter / communicator</strong></td>
<td>• <strong>Inter-personal relationships</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <strong>Communication, listening, empathising</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <strong>Framing</strong> and <strong>sense-making</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Building <strong>trust</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <strong>Tolerance</strong> of diversity and culture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 13: Roles and Competencies for Boundary Spanners (Adapted from Williams, 2010)**

In addition to the indicators identified from the framework, the word search included the word ‘leadership’. It appeared logical to include the word ‘brokering’ along with ‘negotiation’. Indeed, ‘brokering’ was never mentioned in interviews. Acknowledging the rare use of this word and yet the centrality of the concept to the competencies of entrepreneurs, it was decided to search for the word ‘negotiation’ too. In total, 20 different words were searched as indicators of leadership.

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41 The categories identified in the framework are too general and loose to be used as key words in a word search. For instance, in the category ‘Structure and Governance’, none of the elements (i.e. membership, structural arrangement, and governance mechanisms and structures) are transformable into key words that could possibly indicate the existence of references to leadership in interview transcripts.
The retro-analysis comprised two waves of data analysis. The first wave employed a text search query through NVivo to explore the presence of indicators in 131 interview transcripts. The second wave of analysis comprised of the manual coding of 17 interviews. Both methods are described in the following sub-sections.

4.6.1.1 Using NVivo’s text search query

To further investigate the idea that leadership might already be implicitly mentioned during interviews, a retro-analysis using a text search was conducted on the 131 interview transcripts\(^{42}\) undertaken as part of the process evaluation. Leadership was not directly addressed in those interviews. See Table 12 presented previously for details on the number of interviews per thematic study.

NVivo offers various options for a word search. For instance, when searching for a word the programme proposes different degrees of matches, from the exact word to words with a more general meaning. The NVivo website (QSR International) uses the word ‘sport’ to illustrate the different degrees available:

- Exact matches only (\(e.g.\) sport)
- Including stemmed words (\(e.g.\) sport, sporting)
- Including synonyms (\(e.g.\) sport, sporting, play, fun)
- Including words with a more specialised meaning (\(e.g.\) sport, sporting, play, fun, running, basketball)
- Including words with a more general meaning (\(e.g.\) sport, sporting, play, fun, running, basketball, recreation, business)

\(^{42}\) This number comes from the overall number of interviews (155) minus the 24 interviews undertaken for the study CDI as organisation. This equals to 131 interviews that have no particular focus on leadership.
When possible, the word search included stemmed words. It was decided not to include synonyms as they comprise words that do not necessarily have the same meaning as the exact word (e.g. sport and fun). However, at times, the stemmed words could also have different meanings. For instance, a stemmed word associated with ‘governance’ was ‘government’. The two words having a significantly different meaning, it was decided to exclude stemmed words in the case of ‘governance’ and perform a search for the exact word instead. Therefore, a sample of interviews\(^43\) was examined to determine if the stemmed words were appropriate in the context of this research or not. For each leadership indicator Table 14 shows which stemmed words were included in the text search query\(^44\). When stemmed words were excluded, it also indicates which stemmed words were not appropriate. Some interview quotes are used in Chapter 5 in order to illustrate the type of data emerging from the retro-analysis.

\(^{43}\) The sample consisted of the two or three interviews with the highest frequency of words. This was sufficient to gauge if the stemmed words encompassed were appropriate or not.

\(^{44}\) There is one exception here for ‘leadership’. Indeed, ‘leadership’ was initially searched for as an exact word, whilst ‘leader’ and ‘leaders’ were searched independently. Throughout the analysis it was decided to merge the two elements to provide a stronger category.
In order to test whether some thematic studies produced more data pertaining to leadership than others a matrix was created. It indicated the frequency with which leadership indicators appeared for each of the thematic studies. The results of this can be seen in Chapter 5. The findings of the text search query were also reorganised manually into the boundary spanners framework in order to allow a visualisation of their spread across the three roles.

A text search query has a number of limitations. For instance, words identified can be part of the interviewer’s discourse rather than the interviewee’s. Furthermore, some words did not appear at all in the query results. This is possibly due to the specificity of the vocabulary, such as in the case of ‘brokering’ which is not commonly used in a day-to-day conversation. Another explanation is that the exact word search did not produce any result, but that stemmed words were too loose to be discriminative. For example, ‘listening’ did not appear in interview transcripts, and ‘listen’ was used as an

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership indicator</th>
<th>Stemmed words included</th>
<th>Stemmed words excluded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Leader, leaders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>Network, networks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountabilities</td>
<td></td>
<td>Account for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td></td>
<td>Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>Politically</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplomacy</td>
<td>No stemmed words</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brokering</td>
<td>No stemmed words</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiation</td>
<td>Negotiated, negotiating, negotiate, negotiator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial</td>
<td>Entrepreneur</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>Innovative, innovativeness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative</td>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Risks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td></td>
<td>Listen, listened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathising</td>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framing</td>
<td></td>
<td>Time frame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense-making</td>
<td>No options</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>Trusting, trusted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolerance</td>
<td>Tolerate, tolerating</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
interjection during interviews so was not discriminative enough to account for a leadership indicator. This illustrates a major limitation of a text search query. Indeed, such a query does not account for concepts, it identifies words. Therefore, if interviewees talk about governance without using the word ‘governance’, this will not be captured by the word count. Such limitation is highlighted by Brown et al. (1990, cited in Welsh, 2002) who indicate that the existence of multiple synonyms and different ways to express the same ideas makes it difficult to retrieve all pertinent responses.

4.6.1.2 Using manual coding

To overcome the challenges identified in the previous section and provide an accurate picture of the frequency of leadership indicators in transcripts, a limited number of interviews were manually coded. This second wave of analysis required the creation of a new project in NVivo with nodes representing the same indicators as for the text search query. The coding process involved reading each of the 17 interview transcripts and manually coding sections of the interview into some of the nodes. Similar to observations made by Welsh (2002), the manual coding uncovered a higher number of leadership indicators than were revealed through the text search query.

The interviews used for the manual coding were undertaken for the process evaluation study focusing on CDI’s work towards mainstreaming. The seventeen interviews were selected on the ground that, as indicated in Chapter 5, they appeared to have more indicators of leadership in them than other groups of interviews. They also possessed the advantage of having been conducted by other researchers, except for one interview (see Table 12). Therefore, the interaction taking place during the interview was not biased by a particular interest in the topic of leadership. The qualitative manual coding enabled the capturing of numerous elements associated with leadership indicators even though they did not always include one of the key words identified. Those results are discussed in Chapter 5.
4.6.2 Prospective analysis: content and thematic analysis

To determine the feasibility and added value of incorporating a focus on leadership in an evaluation study, additional analysis was undertaken. The 24 interviews undertaken for the process evaluation study *CDI as Organisation: Examining the Processes and Relationships to Support Implementation* were re-analysed with the research questions in mind and through the lens of Crosby and Bryson’s framework (Chapter 3). This framework was chosen because it provides benchmarks to understand leadership in collaborative settings. Matching the data gathered during the process evaluation study with components of the framework validates the argument that the findings pertain to leadership. For this research, data analysis was undertaken in three waves.

In the first wave, the five key categories from Crosby and Bryson’s framework (*i.e.* ‘initial conditions’, ‘processes and practices’, ‘structure and governances’, ‘contingencies and constraints’, ‘outcomes and accountabilities’) were used to create folders containing nodes which encompassed the components of each category. The process was therefore deductive (*i.e.* framework-led). An illustration of this setting is displayed in Figure 10, where the main categories from Crosby and Bryson’s framework are in folders on the left hand side of the screen. In this particular case, the category ‘processes and practices’ is displayed, with the nodes representing its components being listed in the middle of the screen. To illustrate the data, quotes are provided in Chapter 5 for a restricted number of sub-categories that were selected because they are the best through which to analyse the section aim. The reason for them being the best is that they contain the greatest number of references to leadership, and therefore logically the most likely to tell us about leadership in the context of CDI.
Figure 10: First wave of data analysis in NVivo

The second wave of analysis took place during the coding phase when sub-themes started to emerge from the interview material. Sub-categories were merged or created in order to provide a better representation of their content. For instance, the Crosby and Bryson framework does not provide much detail of challenges related to leadership. Yet, different types of challenges were identified throughout interviews. Drawing on the data, child nodes representing sub-themes (such as ‘types of challenges’) were created. Therefore, the parent nodes (i.e. nodes representing an overarching theme) were based on the framework in a deductive manner whereas the child nodes (i.e. sub-themes) emerged from the data in an inductive way. Memos were also used at times when links between different nodes or with the literature emerged during the coding.

The third wave of data analysis consisted of reorganising the nodes in a way that would allow a narrative of CDI’s leadership story. A new folder named ‘Chapter 6’ was created to contain reorganised nodes. A step was taken away from Crosby and Bryson’s framework to incorporate new categories and sub-themes into a coherent
structure for Chapter 6 as exhibited in Figure 11. Some nodes were merged, child nodes from the second wave of analysis became parent nodes, and new parent nodes encompassing various elements of the framework created. For instance, ‘building trust’ and ‘building legitimacy’ in Figure 10 were merged into ‘building trust and legitimacy’ that became a child node attached to the node ‘equilibrium’ in Figure 11. Some nodes’ titles were reviewed and clarified during the writing of Chapter 6, but overall the structure of the chapter was drawn from the nodes displayed in Figure 11. The three main sections of the chapter examine how leadership takes place (who and what), what it entails (‘entailment’), and the challenges pertaining to leadership.

Figure 11: Third wave of data analysis in NVivo
Whilst I was familiar with the content of the interviews and had analysed them a first time for the process evaluation study, as time passed between the analysis undertaken for the study and the PhD research analysis (more than a year), I developed a new perspective on the topic, especially since I was looking at it with new research questions in mind. The process evaluation study had actually included a section dedicated to leadership alongside other sections which examined the structures and processes established by CDI to implement their strategy. With the added use of the Crosby and Bryson framework it became clear that most of the process evaluation study was indeed addressing leadership – leadership takes place through structures and processes as well, as is demonstrated in Chapters Five and Six.

The use of NVivo also generated original results that would have been difficult to produce with manual qualitative data analysis. For instance, NVivo was used to calculate the proportion of a response within an interview or the time interviewees spent examining the boundary spanners document. When coding in NVivo, the programme indicates the proportion of the document that is encompassed within the selected quotes. This technique was used in Chapter 5 to analyse participants’ reactions to a particular interview question. The method revealed that an interviewee’s response to that question represented 17% of the interview. Using a similar method, the time spent on sections of an interview can be calculated. In the case of the question related to the boundary spanners framework time was calculated using a proportion equation, which multiplied the length of the interview by the coverage of the quotes addressing the boundary spanners document and divided the amount by 100. For example:

\[
x \text{ (time spent on boundary spanners)} = \text{length of interview in minutes} \times \frac{\text{proportion of the document covered by quotes}}{100}
\]

\[
x = 50 \times 20 / 100
\]

\[
x = 10 \text{ minutes}
\]

Overall, the exploitation of NVivo for the data analysis proved to be useful. It was generally used as a data management tool, but also allowed some interesting and original approach to data analysis (e.g. cross-referencing text search results with the
different themes of the process evaluation studies, calculating the proportion of an answer or the time spent on a particular section of the interview). It also facilitated the analysis of interviews, in this particular case, through allowing quick linkage between a specific reference in the node and its source. Hence, it was easy to access the rest of the interview if the reference was unclear or lacked context. This option is clearly advantageous when compared to more laborious manual qualitative data analysis. It was thus used on several occasions throughout this research to gain a better understanding of a quote’s context.

4.7 Ethical concerns

This research used the data produced by the Tallaght West Childhood Development Initiative Process Evaluation. Full ethical approval was received for the evaluation from the Research Ethics Committee of the National University of Ireland, Galway. Data collection did not involve children or vulnerable groups, and therefore represented little risk to participants.

The process evaluation is one of seven evaluations undertaken on the behalf of CDI in Tallaght West. Therefore, the evaluation team and CDI were both conscious of a possible research fatigue amongst participants. The overall process evaluation used secondary analysis (e.g. the review of service evaluations reports) to avoid overburdening participants with duplicate questions. Yet, the thematic approach used by the process evaluation created different layers of interviews within the evaluation. Because of the size of the organisation, several key informants with strategic positions were interviewed more than once. Nevertheless, participants could refuse to take part in any of the interviews. Furthermore, this ethical issue did not concern this doctoral research directly, but was identified as an issue for the overall process evaluation. Since this research used interviews that had already been conducted, it did not contribute to the overburdening of participants.
Anonymity and confidentiality can be difficult to guarantee in a setting as small as CDI. This research paid particular attention to ensuring anonymity for key informants. Interviewees were grouped in clusters and identified as Funders, ISG members, Board members, or Team members. As described previously, a number of key informants were active on more than one structure. This was not accounted for throughout this research. Whilst the leadership story might therefore lack in detail at times because of this, it was the only way to ensure participants were not identifiable.

Finally, the sensitivity of the topic was determined to be an ethical concern throughout this research. It was a challenge that emerged during the interviews and is described in Chapter 5. Here it can be noted that the measurement of personal attributes might not be appropriate in the context of evaluations. Bass (2008) suggests that the assessment of leadership can be used as a recruitment tool but can also provide information for the counselling and further development of leaders that already hold the position. Discovery of successful leadership characteristics is an important goal, as is the identification of potential training that could enhance or provide these characteristics if necessary. However, those characteristics can be reached through the proxy of competencies. Furthermore, this research takes the position that personal attributes are inborn and therefore not learnable. Since no training or alternative solutions can be proposed, there is little appeal in considering personal attributes when assessing leadership. Another reason for not taking personal attributes into account in evaluations is that their measurement belongs to the field of psychology and requires specific knowledge and tools that may not always be accessible. Therefore, personal attributes are not considered in the context of this research. Ethical issues surrounding the assessment of leadership are discussed in Chapter 7 and 8.
4.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the context and methods used during this research. An overview of the research rationale and question was also given. The chapter revealed how the research questions drew on observations made in the field during the process evaluation and explained how the PhD research and process evaluation were intertwined. Indeed, the PhD research was influenced by the evaluation and has concurrently shaped interview questions for one of the studies. The chapter then clarified that the research orientation taken here was of scientific realism.

The chapter also provided a description of the case study, the process evaluation of the Tallaght West Childhood Development Initiative (CDI). The strategy of CDI aimed at improving the health, safety, learning, and overall well-being, and sense of belonging of children in Tallaght West. The organisation implemented a number of services (e.g. Doodle Den, Mate-Tricks, Healthy School Programme, ECCE, Quality Enhancement Programme, Restorative Practice) to fulfil this programme of work. Two key structures were identified as vital for the implementation of the strategy: the Board and Implementation Support Group. The chapter also depicted the thematic approach taken by the process evaluation to assess the internal dynamics underpinning the strengths and weaknesses of the programme. It also argued that the process evaluation shared common concerns and objectives with those encountered in theory-based approaches. They both intend to explain why a programme worked or did not work.

Data collection methods were identified. They included semi-structured interviews, a sampling process to identify key documents, and unstructured observations of meetings and events. The chapter additionally examined more specifically the data collection undertaken for the organisational study. This study was central to this research since it comprised a focus on leadership, and resultantly this research drew heavily on it. That specific set of data collection comprised 24 interviews, approximately 500 documents and 80 observations.
The methods used to undertake the data analysis for the process evaluation were briefly described. More detailed was the additional analysis undertaken to address the doctoral research questions. It describes two methods used retrospectively, a text search query on NVivo and the manual coding of some interview transcripts having no particular focus on leadership. This analysis was undertaken to determine whether leadership was already implicitly captured by evaluations. The chapter also presented how a three wave thematic analysis of interview data took place using NVivo. It outlined how the first wave of analysis drew on a deductive process whereas the last one was more inductive.

Finally, the chapter examined ethical concerns, concluding that this research represented little risk for participants. This section acknowledged that measurement of personal attributes might not be appropriate in the context of evaluations. Other ethical considerations such as the sensitivity of the topic are discussed in Chapter 5 which describes challenges encountered during interviews, and Chapter 7 which brings all the findings together so that this issue can be reflected upon. The findings produced as a result of the application of the methods outlined in this chapter are presented in the following chapters.
Chapter 5
The Feasibility of Assessing Leadership

5.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the feasibility of assessing leadership in the context of evaluation. Theory-based evaluations pay particular attention to context and provide information relevant to understanding the factors underpinning a programme’s success or failure (Connell and Kubisch, 1998; Coryn et al., 2011). This knowledge is essential for improving and replicating programmes and for informing decision-making (Chen, 2004; Weiss, 2004; Rogers, 2007). Therefore leadership, which is often identified as a pre-requisite for a programme’s success (Hudson et al., 1999; Linden, 2002; Browne et al., 2004; Sloper, 2004; Atkinson et al., 2005; Frost, 2005; Brown and White, 2006; Friedman et al., 2007; Horwarth and Morrison, 2007; CAAB, 2009; Duggan and Corrigan, 2009), should be considered as a causal mechanism in theory-based evaluations. This chapter asks two questions which when answered will provide sufficient evidence to determine if leadership analysis should be integrated into theory-based evaluations:

1. Is leadership already implicitly captured by evaluation studies?

This first question draws on the idea that if leadership is instrumental to programmes then it must already be discussed during interviews. If this is the case then the topic is already included within the data collected as part of evaluation studies. To further investigate this idea section 5.2 of this chapter contains a retro-analysis of the interview transcripts used to compile the Childhood Development Initiative (CDI) process evaluation. The focus of this retro-analysis is the search for leadership indicators identified by Williams (2010) as roles and competencies of boundary spanners. Two methods are used to undertake the analysis: text search query and manual coding.
2. Is it feasible to incorporate an explicit focus on leadership in an evaluation?

This second question is answered through reviewing the outputs of methods used during the CDI process evaluation when leadership became a focus of that evaluation. Section 5.3 of this chapter includes a discussion of how interviews, documentary analysis, and observations were used to evaluate leadership in the context of an evaluation. For each method, the type of data generated is analysed with the spotlight of the collaborative leadership framework proposed by Crosby and Bryson (2010). This analysis supports the argument that the information gathered informs leadership. Following this, successes and challenges are discussed to determine the extent to which the method is efficient. Finally, a concluding statement is made about each method.

5.2 Retro-analysis: finding leadership in transcripts

This section considers whether leadership was already implicitly captured in evaluations. As indicated in Table 15, 131 interviews were undertaken for six different evaluation studies, all of which had no explicit focus on leadership.

Table 15: Number of interviews undertaken for each of the process evaluation studies not focused on leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme of evaluation report</th>
<th>Number of interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Origins and strategy development</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interagency work and service integration</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and support provided by CDI</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community involvement</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainstreaming and sustainability</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall evaluation</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total interviews</strong></td>
<td><strong>131</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2.1 Finding leadership in transcripts through text search query

The 131 interview transcripts were examined for the presence of leadership indicators using NVivo’s query option of ‘text search’. The competencies of boundary spanners identified by Williams (2010) were used as indicators of leadership. A text search was carried out for these 20 competencies, which are listed in Table 16.

Table 16: List of leadership indicators (adapted from Williams, 2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplomacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brokering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolerance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The NVivo search revealed that leadership indicators were present in all of the transcripts. Illustrated in Table 17 is the frequency of each across all of the transcripts, varying from zero to 273 references depending on the indicator. Two words appeared more than 100 times each in the transcripts: ‘relationships’ (273 references) and ‘communication’ (178 references). Logically, these words also appeared in the highest numbers of sources: ‘relationships’ was mentioned in 91 different interview transcripts and ‘communication’ in 60 different transcripts. This indicates that they were not simply limited to extensive use in a small number of transcripts, but

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45 Further information about the use of NVivo and exact text search criteria is outlined in Chapter 4.

46 A reference symbolises a piece of an interview that was coded. One reference can be transformed into one or more quotes.

47 In this case sources are interview transcripts.
widespread throughout the interviews. Other leadership indicators appeared between 10 and 100 times as shown in Table 17.

Words that had one or no reference included: ‘entrepreneurial’, ‘tolerance’, ‘sense-making’, ‘empathising’, ‘brokering’, ‘diplomacy’, and ‘framing’. The absence of such indicators could be partially due to methodological limitations as described in Chapter 4 (i.e. the exact word not being present and stemmed words not being discriminative). However, it was surprising that indicators such as ‘tolerance’ and ‘diplomacy’ did not appear in the text search at all.
Table 17: Frequency of leadership indicators in transcripts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>References</th>
<th>Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiation</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political skills</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolerance</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense-making</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathising</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brokering</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplomacy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The word ‘leadership’ \(^{48}\) appeared 62 times in all interviews and at least once in 35 interviews. This supports the argument that the topic of leadership was brought up by interviewees without being prompted by the interviewer. For instance, in an interview that took place for the process evaluation study, *Interagency Working and Service Integration in Tallaght West*, a member of the Implementation Support Group indicated that leadership was an important factor for the success of the structure:

\(^{48}\) As indicated in Chapter 4 the text search for leadership also includes the words ‘leader’ and ‘leaders’.
(Interviewer): “So what you mean is not everybody around the table was a stranger to begin with anyway?”

(ISG member): “No, no, definitely not. There was key previous history of work relationships, but maybe not at the same extent, you know? Education’s trying to sit at the table (…). So there were a couple of other kind of key players... County Council was another one. So I think they might have been used to sitting with each other (…) But again I think it was leadership, and management, and the structure of CDI that enhanced it I think.”

Furthermore, the frequent mention of leadership indicators in transcripts showed that while leadership is not always explicitly mentioned, its various aspects are usually discussed during interviews. Of these, ‘relationships’ and ‘communication’ occurred at a much higher incidence than other indicators, suggesting that they are perhaps the most central to the concept of leadership. For example, ‘communication’ was mentioned by a Board member during an interview for the process evaluation study, *Mainstreaming and Sustainability of Services*. In this case, the interviewee referred to ‘communication’ as a strategic element required for the programme:

(Interviewer): “And do you think that CDI was able to, in a very deliberate way and a very thought out way, get the community to be involved from the very top down? (…) So for instance you’ve been on the board and you were saying you were one of three [community] people on the board. So that would be on the level of governance and then right down into the community itself and the individual programmes they are running.”

(Board member): “Aw, yeah they did, it just needs to be more like teenagers involved and you know… Or I’d say a bit more communication on, am, in the community because as I said not everybody knows about it. Now, even though they do put it in the Tallaght Echo and there is only so much they can do as well, and there is only so much I can talk about (…).”

Table 3 shows that leadership indicators can be further organised so that they are divided between three types of role that can be performed by boundary spanners. Again identified by Williams (2010), these are: ‘reticulist’, ‘entrepreneur’, and ‘interpreter’. The table shows that indicators associated with all three roles were reflected in the transcripts, but the role of ‘entrepreneur’ had fewer references (no indicator has above 38 references) in comparison to the roles of ‘reticulist’ and ‘interpreter’. The two indicators with the highest incidence (‘communication’ and ‘relationships’) both belonged to the role of ‘interpreter’. Indicators that did not appear
in the transcripts (e.g. ‘diplomacy’, ‘brokering’) were not specific to a certain role; they were spread across all of the boundary spanner roles. The absence of some indicators in the transcripts does not therefore undermine the framework, because it is capturing the three categories of boundary spanner nearly equally. These results show that the boundary spanners’ framework is clearly pertinent in the context of complex social interventions such as CDI’s.

Table 18: Frequency of leadership indicators organised by boundary spanners' roles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boundary spanners' role</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reticulist</td>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Political skills</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diplomacy</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneur</td>
<td>Brokering</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negotiation</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Entrepreneurial</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Innovation and creativity</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreter</td>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Empathising</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Framing and sense-making</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tolerance</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The numerous indicators identified here emerged from interview transcripts which had different focuses. The process evaluation consisted of five thematic studies covering the topics of: origins and strategy, interagency work, training and support, community, mainstreaming, as well as an overall process evaluation study. The differences between those thematic studies in terms of the number of leadership indicators per interview were assessed in order to test whether some thematic studies produced more data pertaining to leadership than others. As illustrated in Figure 12, the average number of
leadership indicators (*i.e.* the 20 words previously identified as indicators) present in transcripts varied from one theme to another. They went from an average of five references per interview for the study on the origins and strategy of CDI and for the overall process evaluation to 11 for the mainstreaming study. Yet, because of the small number of references per interview the differences are not significant.

![Bar chart showing the average frequency of leadership indicators per interview in thematic studies](chart.png)

**Figure 12: Average frequency of leadership indicators per interview in thematic studies**

Results from text search did not comprise references to leadership indicators without using the key word associated to them. To overcome this limitation a limited number of transcripts were manually coded in order to identify cases where such indicators were not explicitly identified, but did occur.

### 5.2.2 Finding leadership in transcripts through manual coding

Seventeen interviews undertaken for the evaluation study focussing on mainstreaming were selected for the manual coding process because they showed a higher incidence of leadership indicators than other studies. If non-explicit references were being made to leadership indicators they would most likely be in these interviews that were
comparatively more “data rich” when it came to leadership content. Table 19 presents the results of the manual coding, indicating the number of references generated per node and the number of sources in which each indicator was mentioned. The manual coding allowed for the identification of a total of 505 incidences where leadership indicators were referred to in the 17 interviews. The number of references produced varied greatly depending on the indicators, going from three references for ‘tolerance’ to 85 references for ‘communication’. As with the text search, ‘relationships’ had a high incidence (44 references).

Table 19: Coding of mainstreaming interviews in NVivo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nodes</th>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountabilities</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political skills</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplomacy</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brokering</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovative and creative</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolerance of risk</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening, empathising</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framing and sens making</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolerance</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>505</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

49 A node represents a theme or sub-theme identified throughout the analysis. In this case, they represent the leadership indicators sourced from the boundary spanners’ framework.
Manual coding captured content related to leadership indicators that did not necessarily contain one of the keywords identified in section 5.2.1. To illustrate this, the example of a reference to the ‘communication’ node is displayed in the following quote. In this example the word ‘communication’ was not used, yet the funder was clearly referring to CDI communicating with key stakeholders:

“So I think they [CDI] are in that space now and beginning the conversations with policy-makers and with political system around where we’re at. That phase where we want to actually start talking to you about what we’ve found and how what we’ve found can support you in terms of what your ambitions are, in terms of policy and practice, for the areas that we’ve been working in.” (Funder 1)

Unlike for the text search, each occurrence of an indicator in a transcript attained at least a single reference when coded manually. An important difference between the two types of coding appeared with consideration of the node for ‘framing and sense-making’ which scored no references in text search, but accumulated 77 references with manual coding. This example helps to conclusively illustrate the limitation of the text search.

From the case of retro-analysis it was demonstrated that, in the case of CDI, evaluation studies that were not centred on leadership were nevertheless capturing information on the subject. Leadership was implicitly captured by various process evaluation studies regardless of their own differing thematic focuses. Indeed, the theme of an evaluation study had little impact on the number of leadership indicators present in transcripts; they were consistently mentioned in all interviews. In this case such a finding confirms the centrality of leadership in the programme’s implementation, and it is a finding that could likely be paralleled in other case studies considering similar programmes and

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50 ‘Communication’ was chosen to illustrate this point because it had a high incidence in both the text search and the manual coding. It has already been used in this chapter to illustrate the text search. The use of the same node allows for a clearer comparison of the types of data captured using both techniques.

51 The high incidence of this particular indicator in manual coding is possibly due to the fact that participants are asked to make sense of their environment during an interview. Therefore, a lot of framing and sense-making is taking place because of the interview.
using the same analysis methods. Furthermore, the high number of references produced whilst manually coding some interviews suggests that it might be possible to return to interviews that were not seeking to identify leadership issues and analyse them in order to answer new leadership related research questions.

In order to argue more strongly about the feasibility of incorporating a focus on leadership in evaluations, leadership also needs to be examined through the lens of an evaluation that explicitly examines leadership. The following section describes how a focus on leadership was established in an evaluation study.

### 5.3 Bringing a focus on leadership to an evaluation study

In September 2010 it was agreed that the CFRC would examine CDI’s organisational processes and relationships. The evaluation plan proposed by the process evaluation team included a formal focus on leadership. Fortunately, CDI’s CEO had an appreciation of the importance of leadership and was interested in understanding how leadership was impacting the organisation’s work. No debate took place around the value of examining leadership; it was simply introduced in the evaluation plan as an element to be assessed. The commissioner having no objection to the focus on leadership was the primary reason this research was possible, and likely it would have been impossible without such consent.

The remainder of this section determines whether, having achieved consent, it is then feasible to incorporate a formal focus on leadership within an evaluation study. Three methods used in the study *CDI as Organisation: Examining the Processes and Relationships to Support Implementation* are examined in respect of their ability to address this research question. These methods were used alongside each other during the evaluation and consisted of interviews with key informants, documentary analysis, and observations. Triangulation (*i.e.* using multiple methods of data collection) is commonly used in evaluations to strengthen the validity of qualitative research. Analysis for each of the methods starts with the consideration of the type of data generated, and how the data relates to the Bryson and Crosby (2010) collaborative
leadership framework (illustrated in Figure 13). This analysis validates the argument that the findings pertain to leadership\(^ {52} \). The strengths and weaknesses of each method are then analysed to determine the method’s capacity to capture leadership and in order to establish whether in an overall sense it is feasible to incorporate a formal focus on leadership in an evaluation using a theory-based approach. Finally, a concluding statement is provided that summarises the long-term prospects for each of the three methods in evaluations targeted at assessing leadership.

\(^ {52} \) The Crosby and Bryson (2010) model was of particular importance as it provided benchmarks that were used as indicators of the nature of leadership. The argument made in this research was that if the data gathered through the evaluation study was representative of the various components of the framework, then it would signify that the findings pertained to leadership.
Figure 13: Collaborative leadership framework (Crosby and Bryson, 2010, p. 217)
5.3.1 Interviews

Twenty-four interviews with key informants were undertaken for the study, *CDI as Organisation: Examining the Processes and Relationships to Support Implementation*. While focus groups were used for the other CDI evaluation studies, the nature of the interview questions for this thematic study (i.e. on the subject of relationships) necessarily restricted the deployed method to the more private medium of the one-to-one interview. The sample of interviewees included team members, members of two key governance structures (the Board and the Implementation Support Group\(^{53}\)), and both funders. An interview schedule including questions directly pertaining to leadership and a document outlining boundary spanners’ roles were sent to the participants ahead of the interview\(^{54}\).

Data analysis took place in waves. The first one was deductive; data was divided between the five categories identified in Crosby and Bryson’s (2010) framework: ‘initial conditions’, ‘processes and practices’, ‘structure and governance’, ‘contingencies and constraints’, and ‘outcomes and accountabilities’. The second wave of analysis was inductive, sub-themes started to emerge for each category within the interview material. Sub-categories were therefore created to represent those sub-themes. Some other sub-categories already present in the framework (e.g. ‘top down or bottom up collaboration’ is a sub-category of ‘contingencies and constraints’) that were similar were merged and renamed to allow a description that best represented their content. Finally, the third wave of data analysis rearranged the categories in order to create a flowing and coherent narrative of CDI’s leadership story exposed in Chapter 6. This section presents the two first waves of analysis, demonstrating that the data produced during interviews relates to categories identified by Crosby and Bryson (2010).

\(^{53}\) Participants from the Implementation Support Group include two members that are also actively involved in the Children Service Committee.

\(^{54}\) See Chapter 4 for more detail on the selection of interviewees and Appendix B for an outline of the interview questions pertaining to leadership.
A limited number of questions in the interview schedule related directly to leadership, but other less-direct questions about the aspects of CDI’s work were also clearly linked to leadership. In fact, most of the questions in the schedules were somehow connected to leadership, whether in relation to individual roles, the processes in place between structures, or the relationships established. Ultimately, most of the processes and all of the relationships established by CDI in order to implement its strategy correlated to indicators of leadership. As indicated in Table 20, every interview produced leadership orientated data and the amount of data gathered varied between interviews. The first wave of analysis yielded a total of 169 nodes\textsuperscript{55} from the 24 interview transcripts. The range in number of nodes generated per interview was from the minimum of nine to the maximum of 58 (with an average of 25 per interview). The number of references\textsuperscript{56} to leadership in each interview similarly varied, ranging from 22 to 112 references per interview (with an average of 46). Analysis using NVivo also allowed for the calculation of the proportion of the document where text (i.e. quotes) was coded. The proportion of interview that was coded varied from 23.8\% to 89.0\% (at an average of 47.5\%), meaning that about half of all interview content was related to leadership.

\textsuperscript{55} A ‘node’ represents a theme or sub-theme identified during the analysis.

\textsuperscript{56} A ‘reference’ symbolises a section of an interview that was coded. Each reference represents one or more quotes.
5.3.1.1 Type of data generated

The aim of this section is to demonstrate that interviews generated information pertaining to the five categories in Crosby and Bryson’s (2010) framework. For each category the number of leadership references per sub-category is noted in order to gauge the volume of data produced. Quotes are then used to illustrate the material.
Initial conditions

In the Crosby and Bryson (2010) framework ‘initial conditions’ included sub-categories such as the ‘general environment’ (turbulence, institutional and competitive forces), ‘sector failure’, and ‘direct antecedents’ (initiators, sponsors and champions, general agreement on the problem, existing relationship or network). These sub-categories represent the dimensions of a programme’s context that leaders need to embrace and act upon in order to implement a project. Table 21 shows the two sub-categories (‘general environment’ and ‘direct antecedents’) for which data was found during the first wave of interview analysis. No data was produced for the node ‘sector failure’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 21: Coding for ‘initial conditions’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct antecedents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This contextual information (i.e. about the general environment and of direct antecedents) concerns events that occurred before the evaluation started. Interviews provided access to such data through facilitating interviewees’ recollection of those events. For instance, interviews included data related to ‘direct antecedents’ when participants acknowledged how the CDI strategy aligned with goals of the Department of Education in addressing issues related to early years literacy, pointing out that there was a general agreement on the issue:

“Well I think around the same time that the CDI strategy came out, that the Department was launching its own initiative which was targeting disadvantaged schools and some of the same concerns, early literacy and so on. It would have been mirrored in the CDI strategy for example, ensuring that all kids got a good start at firstly primary, to bridge that gap between the better off schools and the disadvantaged.” (ISG member 3)
Interview analysis also produced data about the ‘general environment’ in which the project was developed. In the case of CDI for example, the funding was obtained pre-recession at a time when the government was considering new approaches to social interventions such as evidence-based practice and early years’ prevention:

“I suppose we were in a situation where there was a lot of discussion emerging at central government level about transforming public services, of looking at evidence-based practice, looking at shifting to prevention and early intervention rather than funding crisis intervention so from that point of view it was a good time for CDI.” (Funder 2)

The political and economic circumstances are important aspects of the environment surrounding the establishment of a programme and their appreciation is central to the understanding of ‘initial conditions’.

*Structure and governance*

As indicated in Crosby and Bryson’s framework (2010), knowledge of a category like ‘structure and governance’ is central to the understanding of leadership in a collaborative context. The framework also includes sub-categories such as ‘membership’, ‘structural arrangements’, and ‘governance mechanisms and structures’ which must be understood too. To reflect the nuanced content of the sub-categories better, it was decided during the second wave of analysis to divide ‘governance mechanisms’ into ‘decision-making mechanism’ and ‘structure flexibility’. Another sub-category was created on the top of those already in the framework to encompass ‘roles and responsibilities’, because it featured strongly in interviews (35 references in nine interviews) and seemed to sit appropriately alongside Crosby and Bryson’s (2010) category. Table 22 indicates the number of sources and references for each element. The categories for which the largest amount of data was produced during interview analysis were: ‘structural arrangements’ (72 references in 13 interviews) and ‘decision-making mechanisms’ (61 references in 20 interviews). Quotes representing those sub-categories are used to illustrate the type of data generated by this method.
The data relating to ‘structural arrangements’ included basic descriptions of structures, but also featured what the interviewees knew about the processes established around those structures. Therefore, the analysis of the interview data enabled the evaluators to gauge the interviewees’ knowledge of structural arrangements. For example, interview data revealed that some CDI team members were not aware of “new” structural arrangements like the Executive Subcommittee even though it was partly responsible for dealing with staff issues. An evaluation should identify such disconnections:

(Interviewer): “What about the executive subcommittee?”
(CDI team 3): “Whom? I'm only joking. I know they exist. But again, I mean… Are they the finance and risk ones? (...) I haven’t a clue. (...) The executive subcommittee... God, you see, there we go, we’re so out there [i.e. in the field] that we don’t know much about [structures]!”

Similarly, this method allowed for the assessment of participants’ understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and the various structures’ membership (40 references in 10 interviews). During interviews participants also characterised the ‘decision-making mechanisms’ taking place in various structures:

“I think we spend time trying to get a consensus, but I think ultimately it comes down to a majority. So, there would be very few situations where we make a decision where someone feels very strongly… But if they feel there is two ways, we’d viewed their perspective, and we’d debate it at length. And we’ll take as long as we need to take to debate the issue. Typically, if we have an 80% majority people, we would tend to go with that.” (Board member 4)

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57 The Executive Subcommittee was established in July 2009 and therefore did not exist when most members of the CDI team joined the organisation (September 2007).
Evaluators can draw on this type of information to better understand how decisions are taken in a group and make a judgement about whether collaborative leadership facilitated consensual decision-making, or not.

Processes and practices

Processes and practices include ‘design and use of forums’, the ‘forging of initial and subsequent agreements’, ‘planning’, ‘conflict management’, ‘building of leadership’, ‘building trust’, and ‘building legitimacy’ (Crosby and Bryson, 2010). These subcategories represent processes and practices that leaders manage (forums, agreements, and planning) or establish (leadership, trust, and legitimacy). To reflect the content of the data comprised in the category ‘processes and practices’, a sub-category called ‘processes’ was created during the second wave of analysis. For instance, some procedures were not captured by the sub-category ‘planning’, but were yet central to ‘processes and practices’. Table 23 indicates the number of sources and references for each of those sub-categories. The sub-category ‘processes’ (102 references in 19 interviews) accounted for most of the data generated during interviews for this category. ‘Design’ of structures (31 references in nine interviews) and ‘building leadership’ (23 references in nine interviews) also encompassed a significant amount of data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processes</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing conflict</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building leadership</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building legitimacy</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building trust</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interviewing provided an insight into processes established between structures, and their frequency. For instance, an interviewee suggested that processes between the CDI Team and the Board only took place on specific occasions such as when the members
of both groups gathered for a strategic planning workshop. This indicated that team members and governance structures like the Board had little direct contact:

“I’d have very little contact with the Board. So there wouldn’t be many processes I would think, unless there is a meeting between the Board and staff for a specific reason. We had a planning meeting there recently but other than that I wouldn’t have any links with the board.” (CDI team 8)

The rationale underpinning the design of forums and groups was also accessed through interviews. This data was essential to gauge if the structures were functioning the way they intended to. The following section of transcripts in an example of such data:

“I didn’t want the Board to have members to be representative of the interests. That was fine, it was more experts. But people who represented interests or agencies and had been very much leaders participating in the creation of CDI, it was important, I think, to find a way to acknowledge that, and to continue to tap their authority, and their support, and good will. So in that sense [the Implementation Support Group] was an informal extension if you see what I mean.” (Board member 1)

Subjective data such as opinion was also gathered for the category ‘processes and practices’. For instance, an interviewee mentioned how much effort the CEO had put into building relationships and networks in Tallaght West:

“I think [the CEO] has been tireless. I think she has really, really worked hard to establish CDI on the ground in Tallaght, and she’s invested heavily in the building of those local relationships and networks. So I think that is all to her credit.” (Funder 1)

Sub-categories such as ‘building leadership’, ‘building trust’ and ‘building legitimacy’ are best described by the type of opinions that could only be accessed during an interview.

Contingencies and constraints

Various sub-categories of ‘contingencies and constraints’ impacting on leadership are identified by Crosby and Bryson (2010). They include: ‘top-down or bottom-up collaboration’, ‘type or level of collaboration’, ‘power imbalances and shocks’, and ‘competing institutional logics’. These sub-categories represent potential challenges
that leaders need to overcome. For the second wave of analysis the first two sub-categories were merged (i.e. ‘top-down or bottom-up collaboration’ and ‘type or level of collaboration’) into one sub-category called ‘collaboration’. The themes emerging from the interviews were too broad to be divided between the two sub-categories proposed in the framework, but yet related to collaboration. Therefore, a large majority of the ‘contingencies and constraints’ identified in the interviews are linked to ‘collaboration’ (95 references in 23 interviews) as indicated in Table 24.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competing institutional logic</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power balance issues</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 24: Coding for ‘contingencies and constraints’

Interviews were an efficient method to capture challenges identified by participants, such as factors hindering partnership engagement. For example, an interviewee explained that due to a change in staff an important set of stakeholders were not represented on the Safe and Healthy Place Committee for a number of months:

“The Safe and Healthy Place Committee (…) has people from all the relevant agencies… although [X] were missing for about six months, but they’re back on board now. The [person] who was represented on the committee stepped down, not stepped down, he was moved out of Tallaght very suddenly and he hasn’t been replace until recently, so it’s been a bit of a problem not having [X] at the table (…)” (CDI team 2)

Interviews revealed challenges linked to power balance (32 references in 16 interviews). In one instance, an interviewee noted that in the case of CDI power imbalance related to the amount of funding received impeded to some extent collaboration with other organisations:

“I think it was a power position, because we had the money if you like. We were commissioning them to do a certain job. And yet, they had a way of working that was working up to that point. So that was a challenge. (…) I’m not sure you ever overcome that kind of imbalance, you know, because these are people who’ve wanted to improve services for decades and are frustrated at the lack of resources, and then see a very resourced group coming in.” (CDI team 7)
Finally, it can be argued that ‘power balance’ and ‘competing institutional logic’ are constraints that are also connected to collaboration. For example, the quote above illustrates how power imbalances can hinder collaboration. Therefore, all of the elements identified in the framework are challenges related to collaboration.

**Outcomes and accountabilities**

This category includes various elements encompassed in two groups: the ‘outcomes’ (public value, the effects of successful collaboration, resilience and reassessment) and ‘accountabilities’ (system tracking inputs, processes and outcomes, the results management system, relationships with political and professional constituencies). Leaders are responsible for a programme’s outcomes and they ensure its accountability. The process evaluation did not examine elements which directly related to the outcomes of the interventions since this was the remit of the evaluations focusing on a specific programme (*i.e.* service evaluations). Furthermore, all processes had already been coded under the category ‘processes and practices’\(^{58}\) and so were not recoded as part of the ‘accountabilities’ category. As indicated in Table 25 however, interviews did produce data about ‘relationships’ (44 references in 15 interviews), a sub-category significant for both ‘outcomes’ and ‘accountabilities’. Indeed, ‘relationships’ data included information about both the effects of collaboration (*i.e.* related to the category ‘outcomes’), and about relationships with various constituencies (*i.e.* related to the category ‘accountabilities’). To reflect the limited content of ‘outcomes and accountabilities’, they were merged into a new sub-category of ‘relationships’ during the second wave of analysis.

**Table 25: Coding for ‘outcomes and accountabilities’**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{58}\)Whilst some of them relate primarily to accountability (see Chapter 6), they generally appeared more relevant to the ‘processes and practices’ category than the ‘outcomes and accountabilities’ one
The data gathered during the interviews facilitated the qualification of relationships both within a structure and between structures. For instance, Board members qualified their relationship with other Board members, as well as with members of other structures or organisations. Questioning during interviews enabled the process evaluation team to verify whether lines of accountability were understood by members in governance roles. As an interviewee stated, the Board was not accountable as such to other structures in CDI, it was only accountable to the two funders:

“As a board we don't present to a higher authority. (…) Key stakeholders such as Atlantic Philanthropies and the OMCYA are obviously the key stakeholders in terms of where CDI reports. So, a lot of decisions we take would make their way to those organisations.” (Board member 4)

Moreover, one of CDI’s particularities that transpired through interviewing was its close relationship with the South Dublin Children Services Committee (CSC). Indeed, a majority of the Implementation Support Group (ISG) members also sat on the CSC. Therefore, some interviewees reported to multiple agencies, including CDI:

“So I need to see that all interagency pieces are actually working and that they don’t slack off. I report also to the County Development Board on behalf of the Children's Services Committee. (…) That’s a lot of Children's Services Committee work, around… It really is actually about establishing relationships and knowing who to contact in an agency, which is really good you know.” (ISG member 4)

Interview content helped clarify the relationship between CDI and the CSC. It also provided information about both the roles and accountability lines of professional constituencies working with CDI, such as the CSC and the County Development Board.

5.3.1.2 Challenges and lessons learnt whilst gathering data pertaining to leadership

The following section identifies the methodological challenges and lessons learnt during the evaluation study in regards to the use of interviews to assess leadership. Challenges are divided into three groups: the topic’s sensitivity, time constraints, and terminology. In every case the challenge was successfully overcome, leading to the generation of lessons for future evaluations.
Leadership’s sensitivity

Leadership can be considered as something quite personal, especially when using traditional perspectives through a focus on traits and characteristics. This statement might be true to a lesser extent when considering post-modern forms of viewing leadership (i.e. focus on collaborative leadership and boundary spanners) which are more diffuse and not limited to one person in the organisation. Nevertheless, examining leadership in an organisation is a sensitive topic. The challenging nature of this topic was evident in some interviews. For instance, a CDI team member that had been interviewed on different occasions for the various evaluation studies noted that this specific interview was harder than others. The interviewee agreed with the suggestion from the interviewer that the topic was more personal in this case:

(Interviewer): “I think I went through the list of my questions, is there anything else that we didn’t mention you would like to comment on?”

(CDI team 8): “No I don’t think so. I think it’s a pretty comprehensive… that’s kind of a hard one to do to be honest.”

(Interviewer): “It is yeah.”

(CDI team 8): “You’re probably finding that with everyone are you?”

(Interviewer): “Yeah. It’s more personal maybe.”

(CDI team 8): “Definitely more personal and it just depends where you’re coming from in terms of even your timing I think (…) and even understanding the kind of politics of a team and the dynamics, you know, that can take a lot of time.”

Another interviewee reacted by giving a more specific answer to a question about the CEO’s impact on the processes and relationships used to implement the strategy. The participant expressed surprise in relation to the question asked and probed its use. Nonetheless, the interviewee responded in detail to the question, providing an opinion on the personality of the CEO:

“That is a very unusual question and I’d have no idea why you’d ask me that, but it is a very unusual question. Look, I have to say that I found the CEO to be extremely professional (…) I think you are dealing with a very strong individual that people either can take to or won’t. But I have to be very honest and say any meetings I was at, any interventions I was at, all were positive – but then, I’m a very strong individual too.” (ISG member 2)
Another interviewee also pointed out that this particular question felt like an “appraisal” for the CEO (Funder 2). Still, the response provided by the respondent was rich and insightful; it represented 17% of the interview\(^{59}\). Hence numerous quotes used in Chapter 6 come from this particular answer, which was coded in six different nodes including:

- Contingencies and constraints\(\backslash\)Change of leadership
- Processes and practices\(\backslash\)Building leadership\(\backslash\)CEO skills
- Processes and practices\(\backslash\)Design and use of forums\(\backslash\)Board\(\backslash\)Relationships with funders
- Boundary spanners\(\backslash\)General application\(\backslash\)Political context
- Boundary spanners\(\backslash\)General application\(\backslash\)Diplomacy
- Boundary spanners\(\backslash\)General application\(\backslash\)Interpersonal relationships

The sensitivity of leadership adds to the complexity of the evaluator’s role which is already embedded in power dynamics. Those power dynamics particularly impact interviews since it is the only method requiring direct contact between the evaluator and key informants.

\textit{Time constraints}

Evaluations are conducted under a number of constraints (\textit{e.g.} time and budget) that impact the collection of data. Realistically, most key informants will not provide more than one hour of their time for an interview. This time constraint is a challenge for the integration of a new topic such as leadership in an evaluation. Indeed, the question here was not whether it is possible to assess leadership – this has been done in various forms over time - but whether it is possible to introduce a focus on leadership in evaluation methodology in the context of theory-based approaches. This implies that other explanatory factors require attention during interviews. Therefore, the challenge relates to introducing a new focus in a schedule that is already tight.

\(^{59}\) It should be noted that the responses were generally long in this particular interview
To ensure the consideration of leadership during interviews, a document presenting the roles and competencies of boundary spanners (Williams, 2010) was sent to the participants prior to the interview. For this evaluation study interviews lasted an average of 56 minutes, ranging from 25 to 160 minutes. Using NVivo’s coding system it was possible to determine that an average of six minutes was spent discussing the boundary spanners document, ranging from two to 23 minutes. This information was cross-referenced with the interviewees’ structural membership (i.e. of the Board, CDI, or ISG) in order to assess if the role of the participant in a specific structure impacted on their response. Figure 3 shows that there was no significant difference between the three categories of participants.

![Figure 14: Time spent discussing the boundary spanners document depending on respondents’ structural membership](image)

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60 See Chapter 4 for more detail and appendix C for the document presenting the roles and competencies of boundary spanners.

61 When coding in NVivo, the programme indicates the proportion of the document that is covered by the quotes selected. The time spent on the document was calculated by a proportion equation, i.e. multiplying the length of the interview by the coverage of the quotes, and dividing the amount by 100.
Yet, when looking at the different positions held by interviewees (e.g. traditional leaders, implementers, and administrative team members), a difference appeared between the administrative staff and the traditional leaders/implementers. As illustrated in Figure 15, the administrative staff spent an average of less than three minutes discussing the document whereas traditional leaders (e.g. CEO and original Project Leader) and implementers (e.g. Quality Officers and Community Engagement Coordinators) took approximately six minutes. While the difference is not “statistically significant”, due to the limited number of participants, it still likely suggests that the framework was less pertinent for administrative staff than for the rest of the team.

![Figure 15: Time spent discussing boundary spanners document by those in different positions](image)

The questions probing the boundary spanners framework elicited sufficient data to discover competencies used by interviewees (discussed in detail in Chapter 6). The depth of interviewee answer was contingent on the time spent discussing the document. For instance, when mentioning networking, some answers were very short while others provided greater detail:

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\(^{62}\) See Chapter 6 for detail on the typology of CDI key players
“Networking… definitely networking. If I was to pick one competency out of all those, probably networking.” (CDI team 3)

“I do network. I think we networked quite a lot at the beginning, and we established who we needed to then link in with, so my networking at the moment …. Well at the moment it is actually coming back to where I’m networking more in terms of if I’m at a conference or whatever. But at the beginning, we networked in terms of service providers and people in Tallaght West, and making sure we were clued in to all the players. And then, in the middle of it, I suppose we kind of did… with people we identified as key players, we kind of continued to work with them, but it wasn’t really networking at that point if you know what I mean.” (CDI team 1)

The use of the boundary spanners framework was a successful element of this research. Its major advantage was that it proposed benchmarks against which to compare competencies associated with leadership. It also brought a micro-level perspective to the evaluation study.

Terminology

While the use of the boundary spanners framework was predominately successful, with it generally being considered as an asset to the research process, its terminology was occasionally the source of problems. Terms encountered in the framework met resistance for being either expert jargon or local slang.

Boundary spanner is a term drawn from the expert literature. While the framework mostly refers to its use by Williams (2002, 2010), the term appeared in organisational literature in the 1970s and has been used by a number of scholars, as demonstrated in Chapter 3. Google Scholar displays about 16, 500 results when searching the term boundary spanner. Nevertheless, the term was opposed by a number of evaluation participants, notably some members of CDI’s Expert Advisory Committee who questioned its “usefulness” in their feedback for the evaluation study. As members of an academic research centre however, the process evaluation team rejected any change to terminology that drew on literature from academic publications (e.g. journals). Use

63 Results accessed in March 2013
of existing terminology enhances the rigor of an evaluation study. Additionally, the study was directed at CDI experts and therefore had an appropriate language style for the target audience. The term also encountered a degree of resistance during interviews. Some participants suggested a change in terminology while others embraced the new terminology:

“I suppose the first thing I would say is that I would see myself as a bridge builder. I like that metaphor better. ‘Boundary spanners’ does not do anything for me” (Board member 1)

“It’s a strange term but in a way it’s a very good term because in my work (…) so yeah I talk to a lot of people, and I do cross a lot of boundaries, so definitely spanning comes in there. (ISG member 5)

Towards the end of the fieldwork, it was brought to the process evaluation team’s attention that the terminology was a subject of amusement. Indeed, “spanner” is local slang in Dublin and means “idiot”. The interviewer was not aware of this, but the matter was clarified by an interviewee:

“Did someone explain to you what a spanner is? It’s like, it’s kind of a derogatory term going ‘You’re a spanner’, like ‘You’re an idiot’, ‘You’re a fool’. You go ‘You’re such a spanner, such an idiot’. So we’re having a great laugh X [other team member] and myself going ‘Are you a boundary spanner? What kind of a spanner are you? Are you an entrepreneur spanner?’ So it’s quite funny.” (CDI team 3)

Furthermore, the document outlining boundary spanners’ roles and competencies included other jargonistic terms. Whilst roles were presented alongside a definition, competencies were simply listed and included unusual terms such as ‘brokering’ for which a participant asked for clarification. Yet, beyond these difficulties with terminology, the framework was appreciated by all participants, most of them underlining its relevance and appeal:

“I’m very interested in these [roles and competencies], I think you know… I just had a quick look at them there, but I definitely think you would definitely talk about the first one. How do you pronounce that? [Reticulist]” (Board member 3)
Retrospectively, the process evaluation team should perhaps have adapted the language of the framework to make it more accessible to participants. By the time the issue emerged however the fieldwork was almost complete, and overall little resistance had been encountered in the process. The framework ultimately provided the process evaluation team with a good tool to capture competencies associated with collaborative leadership.

5.3.1.3 Concluding statement about the method’s effectiveness

Interviews were an efficient method to assess leadership in the context of CDI’s process evaluation. The analysis of transcripts’ content through the lens of the Crosby and Bryson (2010) framework demonstrated that this method definitively gathered data pertaining to leadership. Indeed, as summarised in Table 26, interviews were successful in producing data related to all of the categories identified in the framework.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 26: Potential of interviews to produce data pertaining to leadership</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Initial conditions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structure and governance</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Processes and practices</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contingencies and constraints</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcomes and accountabilities</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The interviews also produced a significant amount of data that contributed to the formation of the leadership narrative detailed in the following chapter. Finally, whilst incorporating a focus on leadership in evaluation interviews had its challenges, none of them hindered the progression of the study in the case of CDI’s process evaluation.
5.3.2 Documentary analysis

With over 6,000 documents provided to the process evaluation team, documentary analysis played an important role in capturing CDI’s work. The process evaluation team in collaboration with CDI determined a hierarchy for the documents that were to be examined. Documents pertinent to the study, *CDI as Organisation: Examining the Processes and Relationships to Support Implementation*, included:

- Minutes of CDI Board, Implementation Support Group (ISG), and Executive Subcommittee meetings
- Board reports
- Team meeting minutes
- CDI’s newsletters
- CDI’s strategy
- Documentation of other working groups (*e.g.* Strategic Working Group, Communication Working Group) and a human resources study commissioned by CDI

5.3.2.1 Type of data generated

This section discusses whether the type of data generated through documentary analysis relates to leadership. Similar to for interviews, it compares the data produced by this method against the five categories identified by Crosby and Bryson (2010).

*Initial conditions*

Initial conditions were not examined during the documentary analysis undertaken for the evaluation study which focused on CDI as an organisation. Indeed, the topic had been extensively covered in a previous evaluation study, *The Origins and Development of CDI and its Strategy ‘A Place for Children: Tallaght West’*. The process evaluation team consequently used the knowledge gathered from this documentary analysis.

64 See Chapter 4 for more detail.
undertaken in 2009. In order to demonstrate the potential documentary analysis has for uncovering information pertaining to ‘initial conditions’, examples from documents analysed during the first process evaluation study are presented here. For instance, CDI had commissioned a number of reports which provided great detail about the context surrounding the establishment of the organisation:

- **Audit of Services in Tallaght West** (CDI, 2005a)
- **The National Policies Paper** (CDI, 2005b)

The examination of these reports provided the process evaluation team with some contextual understanding of the area (e.g. statistics on families, extent of public housing), a list services available for children and families, the national policy context related to children and families, and some of the processes undertaken to develop the CDI strategy. This understanding in turn supported the comprehension of the ‘general environment’ and ‘sector failure’ identified by Crosby and Bryson (2010) as part of this category.

*Structure and governance*

Documents contained information related to the Crosby and Bryson (2010) category of ‘structure and governance’ including ‘membership’, ‘structural arrangements’, and ‘governance mechanisms and structures’. For instance, terms of reference, memoranda of understanding, as well as CDI’s website and newsletters indicated the purpose of governance structures described in Chapter 4. More specifically, CDI’s website stated that a function of the Board was to “provide leadership throughout the overseeing and implementation of the strategy, within its overall governance, and in relation to its accountability”.

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65 It can be argued that those documents would have been used for the evaluation study focusing on CDI as an organisation if their analysis had not been already conducted.
‘Membership’ is identified by Crosby and Bryson (2010) as a sub-category of ‘structure and governance’. Content analysis of minutes of meetings facilitated the identification of changes in membership over time. Table 27 contains a sample of the minutes from a Board meeting (with anonymity ensured). The sample illustrates the type of information contained within minutes of CDI’s meetings, such as who attended, who sent their apologies, and who was additionally in attendance (i.e. someone who is not a member of the Board, such as an evaluator). In this particular case the section on ‘introductions’ indicated that the 30th June 2009 was the first time a community representative attended a Board meeting.

Table 27: Sample of minutes of Board meeting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tallaght West Childhood Development Initiative Ltd</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Board Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30th June 2009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Minutes**

**Present:** X (Chair), X, X, X.

**Apologies:** X, X, X.

**In Attendance:** X.

**Introductions:**
- [The Chair] thanked the Board for her appointment as Chair of the CDI Board;
- [The Chair] has met [The project leader/past Chair] for a very useful discussion, and will also be meeting [The project leader/past Chair] and [the County Manager for South Dublin] next week;
- [The Chair] noted the importance of having community representatives join the Board, and welcomed [a community representative] to the Board, and looks forward to working with her, [and two other community representatives];
- Introductions were made by all Board members.

Similarly, documentary analysis of the minutes of team meetings showed membership changes within the CDI team. The CDI newsletters were also an advantageous tool in identifying membership changes. They facilitated the most rapid method to determine team changes via their printed farewells and welcomes to team members.
Furthermore, the examination of these minutes generated process data relating to attendance. Gathering this information was useful to assess the level and consistency of participation in governance structures. This data was particularly important for the evaluation study since it allowed the identification of the organisations or experts that were attending meetings. For instance, documentary analysis of meeting minutes showed that some organisations had up to three different representatives sitting on the Implementation Support Group meetings between July 2007 and December 2011, whereas other organisations were represented by the same individual during that period.

**Processes and practices**

Processes and practices include sub-cATEGORIES such as the ‘design and use of forums’, the ‘forging of initial and subsequent agreements’, ‘planning’, ‘conflict management’, the ‘building of leadership’, ‘building trust’, and ‘building legitimacy’ (Crosby and Bryson, 2010). Documents provided by CDI contained information related to some of these sub-CATEGORIES, but not all. For example, terms of reference and memorandum of understanding contained information about the aims and objectives of various ‘forums’. The Board reports were useful for identifying content related to ‘agreements’ and ‘planning’ since they had a specific section for future targets. However, minutes of meetings did not necessarily capture the context through which agreements were reached, nor did they generate information about ‘building leadership’, ‘building trust’, and ‘building legitimacy’.

Dates of important changes within an organisation can also be found in documents, which provide the order of events. For instance, minutes of a Board meeting indicated that a change of Chair occurred in June 2009. Table 27 (see page 176) shows minutes of the first meeting chaired by the person newly appointed. The content analysis of those minutes revealed the detail that communication was taking place between the previous and new Chairs. Using the same sample of document to elicit multiple pieces of data relating to leadership demonstrates that documentary analysis can be a very
effective technique in terms of its ability to generate a large volume of information even from a short section of text.

Contingencies and constraints

Documentary analysis primarily contributed to datasets associated with the category ‘structure and governance’ and ‘processes and practices’. As stated by an interviewee, minutes of meetings and other reports (e.g. annual reports) document actions, but may not explain the underlying factors in detail if the topic is sensitive:

“A particular agency might have to carry out a particular action, and generally speaking those actions would be recorded in the minutes. We’d have minutes of these particular meetings and such actions might be recorded, but if there were sensitivities around it they mightn’t necessarily be recorded in an explanatory way.” (ISG member 1)

Therefore, minutes of meetings and other documents generally provided little information pertaining to the ‘contingencies and constraints’ category identified in the Crosby and Bryson (2010) model (i.e. the type or level of collaboration, power imbalances and shocks, competing institutional logics). In a small number of cases however, documents hinted at such contingencies, providing contextual information that the evaluator could then use as guidance when formulating interview questions.

Outcomes and accountabilities

Outcomes of the different services implemented by CDI were independently examined by other evaluation teams. Those service evaluations ran in parallel to the process evaluation. Since the study, CDI as Organisation: Examining the Processes and Relationships to Support Implementation, took place half way through the course of the evaluations, service evaluations were not complete at the time. Therefore, the process evaluation team did not have access to documents capturing outcomes in the case of this particular study. It can be suggested that if the service evaluation studies had been completed at the time the reports would have contained information about outcomes that could then have been captured with documentary analysis.
Documents such as CDI’s governance chart (see page 108) captured accountabilities. For instance, the chart indicated that the CDI team and various sub-committees were accountable to the Board, which in turn was accountable to the funders. Documents, more particularly graphs, proved very useful in clarifying the lines of accountabilities for an organisation.

5.3.2.2 Challenges and lessons learnt whilst gathering data pertaining to leadership

Challenges encountered during the documentary analysis process mostly related to the depth of information recorded in minutes, or the unavailability of a document. Nevertheless, the method was also successful in providing important contextual knowledge that guided evaluative questions.

In depth and quality of minutes

Examining leadership through documents had its limits. Some dynamics and tensions were not captured in documents. In the case of CDI, while minutes of meetings were a reasonable summary of topics discussed, decisions made, and/or of actions to be taken, they were not exhaustive notes that recorded the contribution of each actor, nor the exact content of discussions. As indicated in the previous section, minutes of meetings did not detail topics considered to be sensitive. This style of minutes is functional for organisations wanting to keep track of progress and inform absent stakeholders of meeting content. They have limited value for evaluations that aim at understanding underlying mechanisms such as the building of trust. Furthermore, minutes of meetings were often produced by individuals attending the meeting and who therefore held a stake in the meeting. The result of this scenario is that minutes of meetings are subjective notes representative of a particular perspective. In the case of CDI, this effect was perhaps mitigated as minutes were circulated after each meeting and signed off by other members of the group, limiting the impact of one individual’s perspective on them.
Getting access to documents in time

Another limitation specific to this research was the fact that some documents were not accessed in a timely manner. For instance, the process evaluation team could not use data from the service evaluation studies because they had not been completed at the time. Another example is the delay experienced in receiving a copy of a human resources study commissioned by CDI. The report was only accessed after the commencement of fieldwork, whereas it could have informed interview questions if it had been available before. This resulted in a certain amount of data duplication (e.g. the human resources study examined perceptions of team building activities which were also captured during the process evaluation interviews). The degree of importance concerned with this oversight remains low however, because the process of the evaluation would have remained largely unchanged.

Contextual knowledge

Documentary analysis was successful in providing contextual knowledge. For instance, the process evaluation started after the beginning of the implementation of CDI’s services and documents were used to grasp the organisation’s story hitherto, including elements relevant to leadership (e.g. ‘initial conditions’). Documents were central to the capturing of information relating to this category in the first process evaluation, The Origins and Development of CDI and its Strategy, A Place for Children: Tallaght West. Data captured by documentary analysis during this evaluation study could then be carried forward to provide contextual information for the study examining CDI as an organisation. For this particular study contextual knowledge was therefore accumulated over more than a two year period.

In the case of the study, CDI as Organisation: Examining the Processes and Relationships to Support Implementation, documentary analysis facilitated the identification and dating of key changes that occurred in CDI and its team. It provided a strong and indispensable foundation for sections of the report, describing the role and composition of governance structures.
Beyond supporting descriptive sections of an evaluation study, the contextual knowledge gathered through documentary analysis was also used to guide the process evaluation by both identifying important aspects to be assessed, and aiding the formulation of interview questions. For instance, the team journal provided useful insights into the group’s reflexions on the implementation context. Whilst such data could not be directly used in the evaluation report due to the issue of confidentiality, it certainly supported the refinement of evaluation questions dealing with leadership.

5.3.2.3 Concluding statement about the method’s effectiveness

Overall, documentary analysis was relatively useful in gathering data pertaining to leadership. Table 28 summarises how this method generated data relevant to some, but not all, of the categories identified by Crosby and Bryson (2010). The method was not entirely appropriate for the category ‘outcomes and accountabilities’ since it did not capture ‘outcomes’ in the case of this particular process evaluation. This is why Table 28 indicates that the method was both ineffective and effective for this category.

Table 28: Potential of documents to elicit data pertaining to leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Documentary analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial conditions</td>
<td>Study 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure and governance</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processes and practices</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingencies and constraints</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes and accountabilities</td>
<td>✗ ✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The argument in favour of the use of documentary analysis to capture leadership data rests in its ability to provide contextual knowledge. Yet, documentary analysis also had limitations since all documents were not always available and the depth and quality of minutes of meetings varied, especially when sensitive topics were deliberated.
5.3.3 Observations of meetings

The process evaluation team observed approximately 80 events or meetings between the beginning of the evaluation and the study, *CDI as Organisation: Examining the Processes and Relationships to Support Implementation*. The events and meetings observed were central to the implementation of CDI’s strategy. Amongst others, they included Board meetings, Implementation Support Group meetings, Healthy Schools steering committee, team meetings, service managers meetings, speech and language therapy meetings, strategic working group, transition planning workshop, and communities of practice.

5.3.3.1 Type of data generated

This section describes the extent to which observations of events or meetings gathered information pertaining to the five categories identified by Crosby and Bryson (2010) in their framework for collaborative leadership.

*Initial conditions*

Unless an evaluation starts at the establishment of the programme, observations of meetings will not cover ‘initial conditions’. In the case of the process evaluation examined here, five years passed between the beginning of the CDI story in 2003 and the CFRC being contracted for the process evaluation in 2008. Therefore, no observational process captured initial conditions on this occasion.

*Structure and governance*

Observations did not directly capture new information about ‘structure and governance’. Elements of ‘structure and governance’ can be confirmed or otherwise by observations. They can therefore be used as a method complementing other approaches. However, observations were not a primary source of data for the category ‘structure and governance’.
Processes and practices

Crosby and Bryson (2010) argue that leadership can be examined through the type of planning that occurs, and that leadership should facilitate both emergent planning and deliberate planning\textsuperscript{66}. Observations were used to identify how planning took place during meetings and to discover whether both types were present. This method was the only one that allowed the process evaluation team to directly gauge the mechanisms underpinning the planning taking place within CDI. For example, observations of team meetings indicated that both emergent and deliberate planning occurred in that particular setting. Planning tended to be emergent when preparing for the implementation of manualised programmes (e.g. Mate-Tricks, Doodle Den), as CDI team members were constrained by the manuals and had little room to add new elements. Planning was more deliberate however for process-led programmes (e.g. Healthy Schools, Community Safety Initiative), with various members making suggestions during meetings in regards to what should be included in the programmes.

This method also captured the underpinning mechanisms of ‘forging agreements’. Annotations made during observations of a meeting flagged potential conflict in regards to a decision between members of a structure. For instance, observations of a Board meeting provided the process evaluation team with the understanding of how decision-making was facilitated in the structure. The observational notes made during the meetings indicated that all members were able to express their opinion and that disagreements did not evolve into conflict. They were discussed until a decision was taken by the majority of the group.

Observations were also essential to the capturing of other elements that make up the category of ‘processes and practices’, such as ‘trust’ and ‘legitimacy’. Indeed, the process evaluation team comprehended such elements during meetings via comments made, gestures, tone of speech, and body language. The observation of such behaviour enabled the evaluators to assess the presence or absence of trust and legitimacy. For

\textsuperscript{66}See Chapter 3 for a definition of deliberate and emergent planning.
instance, annotations made during the observation of Implementation Support Group meetings signified that the meeting atmosphere was pleasant (i.e. jokes were made), and that personal conversations took place between members before the meeting started (e.g. about family members and holidays). Those observations denoted trust between members.

Contingencies and constraints

Elements identified by Crosby and Bryson (2010) as contingencies and constraints were mostly linked to dynamics, like the type or level of collaboration, power imbalances and shock, and competing institutional logics. Dynamics were only perceptible through observations of meetings or events and therefore this method allowed access to such elements. For instance, at times power imbalances transpired in meetings. This was the case amongst Board members, where some were nationally recognised experts while others represented the community. Observations of meetings indicated that community representatives were less actively engaged during meetings than other experts. It was also noted however, through observations, that when possible the CEO or another CDI team member met with community representatives prior to the Board meeting to consider both the CEO’s report and to identify potential questions related to items on the agenda.

Furthermore, observations captured data that were not otherwise recorded. For instance, observational notes taken during a Board meeting mentioned that some members were confused about meeting dates. This was not recorded in the minutes of the meeting and never appeared in the interview transcripts, possibly because it was not considered as an important fact. Yet, some members could not attend that particular meeting because they had the wrong date on their agenda. The confusion around meeting dates had impacted the level of attendance at the meeting and this issue was only captured through observation.
Outcomes and accountabilities

Observations of meetings did not provide data pertaining to ‘outcomes or accountability’. The ‘relationships’ included by Crosby and Bryson (2010) in this category were those established with political and professional constituencies. A limitation associated with the observations undertaken for this study was that all of the meetings attended were internal to CDI. For instance, the evaluation team did not attend meetings of the Children Services Committee in which CDI is involved. Therefore, relationships with political and professional constituencies which pertained to this category of Crosby and Bryson’s (2010) model were not observed.

5.3.3.2 Challenges and lessons learnt whilst gathering data pertaining to leadership

A challenge associated with observations is the impact the presence of an evaluator tends to have on stakeholders’ behaviour, at least at the outset of the evaluation. However, this challenge was overcome and additional benefits were found to having an evaluator present. These included the capacity to better facilitate contextualisation of the programme and to support the refinement of the evaluation’s scope.

Evaluator’s presence in meetings

A challenge with using observations as a method was the impact they can have on stakeholders’ behaviour. Still, as time progresses participants generally become familiar with the presence of the evaluator. The observations used for this study took place over a period of two years, allowing sufficient time to lessen the impact of the presence of the evaluators on stakeholders’ behaviour. Furthermore, a majority of meetings were attended by the same member of the process evaluation team, providing consistency in both note-taking and presence. On several occasions it appeared that stakeholders forgot the presence of the evaluator in the room. One example of this was during a Board meeting, where the CEO was asked to leave the room so that discussions could freely take place around a sensitive topic. Confidential information was disclosed during that time. Following the meeting it was noted by the attendees that the evaluator should have been asked to leave too. The omnipresence of an
evaluator at most Board meetings created a habit to the extent that it seems Board members forgot the presence of the researcher.

*Contextualisation*

Observations were an efficient tool to contextualise CDI and its implementation. They allowed the process evaluation team to gauge dynamics without the interference of others’ interpretations. Indeed, observations did not comprise bias of note takers like is the case in documentary analysis, or personal opinions of key informants that can be expressed during interviews. Overall, observations captured primary data that was directly interpreted with the evaluation questions in mind. The method was particularly efficient in giving the process evaluation team a better sense of the power dynamics that took place in CDI.

Observation of events or meetings also allowed for a better understanding of relationships that would not have been captured otherwise. They provided a direct insight into events that impacted the implementation of the programme. In the case of the process evaluation, observations captured elements such as ‘contingencies and constraints’ that did not necessarily feature in documents or interviews, possibly because they are not considered as important by stakeholders.

*Refinement of the evaluation’s focus*

In the case of the CDI process evaluation, observations were used to refine the study’s focus. Indeed, the analysis of observation notes encouraged a more rigorous examination of particular aspects of a programme or organisation. For example, in the case of CDI the importance and intensity of network use was first noted during observations of meetings. The process evaluation team noted how the CEO used her personal network to organise CDI events like *The Story So Far* event which was attended by the former Irish President, Mary McAleese. Subsequently, the process evaluation team decided to integrate questions about the use of networks into the interview schedules, refining the evaluation’s focus in doing so.
Observations undertaken for the study were non-participative and unstructured. Extensive note taking ensured the effective recording of narrative accounts of the meetings. Complex social interventions such as CDI have multiple strands that evaluations need to examine simultaneously. This process evaluation team took a thematic study approach to address a number of CDI’s core principles. Observations needed to capture elements related to all of those themes and therefore could not afford to simply focus on one particular aspect (i.e. leadership). This however constituted a limitation in terms of evaluation focus. An alternative option such as the use of an observation grid with a specific focus on leadership might have generated more data for this study than unstructured observations.

5.3.3.3 Concluding statement about the method’s effectiveness

The extent to which observations have produced leadership data is limited. This method generated data pertaining to two categories identified by Crosby and Bryson (2010), as summarised in Table 29. Yet, this data is of high importance when thinking about the context of leadership, because it provides information that fills the gaps within the leadership story. Similar to building cement, observations can hold the different pieces of the story together.

Table 29: Potential of observations to provide data pertaining to leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Observations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial conditions</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure and governance</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processes and practices</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingencies and constraints</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes and accountabilities</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This method had two major advantages in relation to its ability to contextualise the implementation of a programme. First, it is the only method that allowed the process evaluation team to gain access to unbiased primary data. Second, it captured elements that were not accessible otherwise. Observations also have the capacity to refine an
evaluation’s scope through flagging topics of interest. Time was a critical factor for the successful use of observations as a method to capture data pertaining to leadership. The passage of time allows stakeholders to get used to the evaluator’s presence. However, not all evaluations avail of so much time. Under time pressure, the amount and depth of data produced via observations might be undermined if stakeholders do not become accustomed to the presence of the evaluator.

5.4 Chapter summary

Drawing on the fact that leadership is instrumental to programmes, this chapter answered two questions. The first one asked whether leadership was already implicitly examined in evaluations. Using the boundary spanners framework proposed by Williams (2010), the retro-analysis showed that leadership indicators were present in interview transcripts that had no explicit focus on the topic. The text search query identified between 0 and 273 references depending on the indicator, and the manual coding produced a total of 505 references to leadership indicators. Consequently, the chapter indicated that leadership was to some extent already implicitly addressed in evaluations.

The chapter then answered the second question about the feasibility of incorporating an explicit focus on leadership in an evaluation. It demonstrated that leadership can be explicitly assessed as part of an evaluation study. Three typical methods of qualitative research were used to gather data which was then analysed via the adoption and adaption of Crosby and Bryson’s (2010) framework for collaborative leadership. This framework validated the argument that the findings pertained to leadership. As summarised in Table 30, interviews were the most efficient method since they collected data related to all the categories. Documentary analysis was also a useful method, as it gathered data for most of the elements of the framework, with the exception of ‘contingencies and constraints’ and ‘outcomes’. Even then, it could be argued that the latter is specific to this study. If the service evaluation final reports had been available, data would probably have emanated from documentary analysis. Observations were more limited in regards to the breadth of content they generated.
They only captured information pertaining to ‘processes and practices’ and ‘contingencies and constraints’.

Table 30: Summary of methods’ potential to produce data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Documentary analysis</th>
<th>Observations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial conditions</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure and governance</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processes and practices</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contingencies and constraints</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>❌</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes and accountabilities</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>❌</td>
<td>❌</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The chapter then discussed the successes and challenges associated with each method. In practice, interviews were a delicate exercise because of the leadership topic’s sensitivity, time constraints, and some of the terminology used in the boundary spanners’ framework (Williams, 2010). Yet, this method was very efficient at capturing information pertaining to leadership, producing an important amount of data that was then used to illustrate CDI’s leadership story (exposed in the next chapter). Documentary analysis can be compromised by the depth and quality of notes taken by individuals involved in the meeting, and documents not always being available. However, this method produced important contextual knowledge. Finally, observations were the least successful method in producing data pertaining to the categories identified by Crosby and Bryson (2010). The evaluator’s presence can also impact on participants’ behaviour, especially initially. Still, this method was very useful for providing an unbiased insight into elements that could not be accessed otherwise (e.g. challenges not documented in minutes or mentioned in interviews). It also supported the refinement of the evaluation’s focus. Overall, all three methods have the ability to capture leadership data and complement each other well. The triangulation of the methods strengthens the data’s validity and multiplies the opportunities to gather information about collaborative leadership.
Overall, this chapter demonstrated that interviews, documentary analysis, and observations were appropriate methods for assessing leadership as part of an evaluation study. The data generated by these three methods provided information about the contexts and mechanisms impacting CDI’s implementation work. Such information is important for theory-based evaluations that consider the circumstances of an intervention and aim at explaining why a programme worked or did not work. The feasibility of assessing leadership is further demonstrated throughout Chapter 6, which depicts CDI’s leadership story.
Chapter 6
Leadership, the Story

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data gathered through the examination of leadership as part of the process evaluation of the Childhood Development Initiative (CDI). It has two roles. First, it further demonstrates the feasibility of assessing leadership in an evaluation by providing a detailed narrative of the CDI leadership story, one generated solely by the use of the evaluation methods outlined in Chapter 5 (i.e. of interviews, documentary analysis, and observations). Second, it presents a preliminary argument for bringing a focus on leadership in evaluations in order to benefit from the added value such a move generates. The chapter sets out how a focus on leadership can be advantageous through explaining what can be learnt about the reality of collaborative leadership and its challenges when this approach is taken. This chapter describes this added value, which is later discussed in Chapter 7 in the context of theory-based evaluations. To aid in the telling of CDI’s leadership story, this chapter is divided into three sections. Drawing on both Crosby and Bryson’s (2010) framework and themes that emerged from interview analysis, each section answers a question:

1. Where is collaborative leadership found?
2. What does collaborative leadership involve?
3. What were the challenges for leadership?
In section 6.2, the chapter first answers the question: “Where is collaborative leadership found?” This research argues that leadership is found in two different places. First, leadership is found within positions such as the CEO or the Quality Officers’ positions. Second, leadership is found in governance structures like the Board or the Implementation Support Group.

Secondly, the chapter answers the question: “What does leadership involve?” The research identifies four major components required in collaborative leadership: favourable initial conditions, flexible positions and structures, strong processes and relationships, and boundary spanners’ competencies. This section, 6.3, provides a detailed account of those components.

Finally, in section 6.4, the chapter identifies five key challenges related to leadership. They include: the lack of ownership, partnership engagement challenges, the blurred nature of boundaries between organisations, power balance issues, and time constraints.

The narrative presented draws on the analysis of 24 interviews, approximately 500 documents, and 80 observations of events or meetings. The analysis was undertaken in both deductive and inductive ways. At first, it involved the use of the Crosby and Bryson (2010) framework to identify dimensions of leadership. The structure of this chapter still maintains strong links with the framework through the inclusion of categories such as ‘initial conditions’ and ‘structures’. Williams’ (2010) framework was also utilised to analyse competencies employed by key informants during the implementation of the programme. However, the chapter’s structure has been devised

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67 When using the term “leadership” this research refers solely to collaborative leadership since no other type of leadership could take place in a complex social intervention such as CDI. At times, this research uses the term “leadership” to simplify matters and help the flow of the text.
to tell CDI’s leadership story in a way that reflected the themes that emerged from the data analysis.

To appreciate the leadership story of CDI, a brief contextual reminder of its governance structure and team composition is required. CDI emerged in Tallaght West (South Dublin) in 2003 when its original Project Leader, acknowledging a shift in the Atlantic Philanthropies’ funding towards early years prevention, gathered a group of community leaders, residents, and professionals to pull together ideas on how to improve the future of children in the area. Referencing research and consultations, this consortium shaped a 10 year strategy entitled, *A Place for Children: Tallaght West*. The project and two other programmes (i.e. Preparing for Life and Young Ballymun) became part of the Prevention and Early Intervention Programme (PEIP) funded by the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs and the Atlantic Philanthropies. The CDI strategy was launched in October 2005 with the CEO starting in May 2007, who recruited a team by September 2007. At that juncture CDI’s team comprised:

- A Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
- A head of Finance and Corporate Services
- A Finance and Administration Assistant
- A Quality and Services Officer
- A Community Engagement Coordinator
- A Quality Specialist in charge of Mate-Tricks (MT) and Doodle Den (DD)
- A Quality Specialist in charge of the Healthy Schools Programme (HS) and Early Childhood Care and Education service (ECCE)
- A Research and Evaluation Officer
- An Administrative Assistant

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68 A more detailed description of CDI’s programmes and structures is available in Chapter 4.
69 Changes that took place in the CDI team are outlined at a later stage in this chapter.
To support the implementation of the project, a number of governance structures were created. The governance chart in Figure 16 indicates that the CDI team received and provided advice and/or support to the Implementation Support Group and to committees. These committees included the Healthy School Steering Committee, the Safe and Healthy Place Steering Committee, and the Community Safety Initiative Subcommittee. The CDI team was accountable to the Board, while it also provided and received advice/support from the structure. Various sub-committees\(^70\) such as the Expert Advisory Sub Committee, the Finance and Risk Sub Committee, the Human Resources Sub Committee, and the Communication Sub Committee were also accountable to the Board. The chart also displays the supportive relationship with the Children’s Services Committee. Established in 2007, the South Dublin Children’s Services Committee\(^71\) (CSC) gathered a wide range of key statutory, community, and voluntary organisations with a remit for serving young people in the administrative area of South Dublin County Council. They paid particular attention to the development of interagency relationships, service integration, and the supporting of joint implementation of policy initiatives (CSC).

\(^{70}\) More detail on the Sub Committees can be found in Chapter 4.

\(^{71}\) The Children’s Services Committees are regional committees that were established in four different locations at first (in 2007), and currently (\textit{i.e.} in April 2013) have 16 different locations. CDI works with the South Dublin Children’s Services Committee as Tallaght West belongs to that geographical remit.
6.2 Where is collaborative leadership found?

In the last decade, academic and general discourses on leadership shifted focus towards the collaborative forms of leadership taking place in post-modern organisations. Building on Williams’ (2002, 2010) understanding of post-modern leadership, as well as Crosby and Bryson’s (2005) notion of a shared-power world, this research argues that leadership is not anymore held in one person alone. Indeed, it is now understood that organisational hierarchy is an out-dated concept that is not applicable to the contemporary shared-power world (Huxham and Vangen, 2000; Williams, 2002; Crosby and Bryson, 2005; Williams, 2010) and that leadership takes place at different levels and under different forms. In the case of CDI leadership was found in two places:
- In positions (e.g. CEO, Quality Officers)
- In governance structures (e.g. Board, ISG)

Post-modern organisations have diffuse leadership that can be found in various positions, as this was the case for CDI. This research argues in section 6.2.1 that CDI’s leadership was found in traditional leaders and implementers. More unusual was the finding that leadership also occurred in governance structures. Crosby and Bryson’s (2010) framework for collaborative leadership identified ‘structures and governance’ as a key component of collaborative leadership. CDI’s leadership story supports this argument well. Section 6.2.2 examines how leadership was found in the Board, the Implementation Support Group, and identifies how the nature of leadership differed between the two structures.

6.2.1 The positions

Collaborative leadership is diffuse; it takes place throughout an organisation. This was the case in CDI where key players could be divided between three overarching categories: the traditional leaders\(^72\), the implementers, and the administrative team. As depicted in Table 31, traditional leaders included the original Project Leader\(^73\), the CEO, and the Chairs of governance structures. The implementers were the Implementation Support Group (ISG) members, as well as the CDI team members who were directly involved in the implementation of the services (i.e. Quality Officers and

\(^72\) In this research the term traditional leaders is used as an overarching category that encompasses roles that are traditionally considered as leadership (e.g. CEO, Chair), as opposed to implementers who are also deemed leaders in this research.

\(^73\) Although the original Project Leader did not have an active role in CDI in June 2011, the role had to be included in the typology because of the importance and impact of this position on the organisation.
Community Engagement Coordinators) as opposed to those involved in the administrative work\(^7\). The latter will be referred to as the administrative team.

\[\text{Table 31: Typology of CDI key players}\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership</th>
<th>Traditional leaders</th>
<th>Implementers</th>
<th>Administrative team</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Original Project Leader</td>
<td>Implementation Support Group members</td>
<td>Finance and Administrative Assistant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>Quality Specialist Officer</td>
<td>Administrative and Communications Coordinator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chairs of governance structures</td>
<td>Quality Specialists</td>
<td>Administrative Assistant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community Engagement Coordinators</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research and Evaluation Officer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Governance and Corporate Services Coordinator</td>
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</table>

Drawing on the literature (Huxham and Vangen, 2000; Williams, 2002; Crosby and Bryson, 2005; Williams, 2010), this research argues that leadership takes place through two of the three positions identified here: the traditional leaders and the implementers. The administrative team did not fit into post-modern leadership concepts because their work was generally limited to the organisation \(i.e.\) CDI and involved minimal contact with other organisations. Therefore, while their work was of uncontested value for

\(^7\) Board members do not appear in this typology since its members are experts that do not cross organisational boundaries, and therefore do not provide collaborative leadership. This is further demonstrated at a later stage in this chapter.
CDI, it did not require nor did it generate collaborative leadership and cannot be considered as leadership in this study.

6.2.1.1 The traditional leaders

In the context of this research, the traditional leaders included the original Project Leader, the CEO, and the Chairs of governance structures such as the Board or the Implementation Support Group. They were considered traditional leaders by virtue of their role, which involved the following aspects: developing a strategic plan; implementing the strategy; setting the agendas; creating and/or maintaining a vision; reflecting on progress; ensuring good governance, accountability and transparency; ensuring the services are faithful to the overall strategy; aiming for long term goals while keeping an eye on short term achievements; and promoting CDI’s work. The role of traditional leaders, such as the CEO for instance, also included a strong focus on building relationships with stakeholders:

“I think she [the CEO] has been tireless, I think she has really, really worked hard to establish CDI on the ground in Tallaght and she has invested heavily in the building of those local relationships and networks.” (Funder 1)

Traditional leaders were usually in charge of either a structure or the CDI team. In the case of CDI, the processes that existed between traditional leaders were simple and clearly divided. The CEO managed the team and worked closely with the Chair of the Board who had overall responsibility for the Board. The CEO ensured communication between the governance structures. In other words, the CEO was the link between the various groups and committees. In the opinion of an interviewee, the relationship between the CEO and the Chair of the Board was the key to organisational efficiency:
“The chair of the Board is in charge of the Board, and the CEO is in charge of the staff. (...) Often I think the most important relationship in any organisation is the relation between the chair and the CEO and so I try to keep my team moving and [the CEO] tries to keep her team moving and then we look for ways to mix and also social events, but that is your territory and this is mine.” (Board member 1)

Traditional leaders oversaw the implementation of the strategy, holding a whole picture of the organisation. They also had managerial responsibilities that included reviewing membership, facilitating discussion, reaching consensus, keeping a focus on tasks, and ensuring decisions were made and actions undertaken. The Chair of the Board was responsible for making sure meetings ran smoothly and this required the establishment of good relationships with each Board member:

“There is a huge respect and a chair sets that tone. If you’ve the wrong chair you won’t get that but we definitely have it.” (Board member 5)

“I think one of the key ones, besides supporting the CEO, is actually to establish and find ways to build good relationships with each individual Board member, so that one of the things I’d do is every so often I kind of start a rota. I’d go out to lunch with each one of them, see how are things, ‘Do you have anything to say?’, because as you know when people come to a table they might…timing or whatever, can’t say everything.” (Board member 1)

Furthermore, leadership can also take place through organisations. For instance, the ISG was composed of individuals representing organisations. Those individuals might have changed over time but the organisations kept being represented with leadership being produced through the combined effort of those organisations. With regards to traditional leaders, the Chair of the ISG was a representative of an important organisation, the Health Services Executive (HSE). When the Chair-person resigned from the HSE, it was clearly stated that the following Chair should also be a member of the HSE. This decision was supported by ISG members who acknowledged the importance and appropriateness of their Chair being given to the HSE:
“Well, when [the ISG Chair] retired, he was very clear that he wanted the HSE to continue to chair it and we were very clear that we wanted the HSE to continue to chair it.” (CDI team 9)

“I think it’s hugely important that there is a representative of HSE there. I’m conscious that the HSE has a huge, huge work remit and it’s important that they are represented. (…) I think the HSE because it’s such an important organisation it’s appropriate that they have the chair” (ISG member 5)

Traditional leaders were individuals or organisations who played a particular role in the implementation of the programme. They had particular responsibilities and were accountable. The original Project Leader reported to the funders, the CEO reported to the governance structure and the funders, and the Chair of the Board reported to the funders. The Implementation Support Group held a supportive role and therefore its Chair was not accountable as such. However, he/she was responsible for communicating the advice and suggestions put forward by the group to the CEO.

6.2.1.2 The implementers

Leadership was not only provided through individuals that were traditional leaders. Indeed, leadership can take place at multiple levels through individuals who do not hold a position of authority per se and are not necessarily identified as conveyors of leadership instantaneously (Hutt et al., 2002, cited in Williams, 2002; Ansett, 2005; Crosby and Bryson, 2005). In relation to the concept of boundary spanners, some positions clearly present leadership characteristics. In the case of CDI they included members of a key governance structure (i.e. the ISG), as well as the CDI team involved in the implementation of the programme: the Quality Specialist Officer, Quality Specialists, Community Engagement Coordinators, the Research and Evaluation Officer, and the Governance and Corporate Services Coordinator.
These different positions had commonalities: they all included both the facilitation of interagency collaboration and the requirement to build and maintain relationships with various stakeholders (e.g. local and national agencies, school principals, service providers, front line staff, parents, children, and academics). Some, such as the Community Safety Officers were fully devoted to building bridges between agencies and the community, while others assumed networking activities alongside other responsibilities. In both cases implementers engaged in boundary spanning activities and therefore were conveyors of collaborative leadership.

6.2.2 Governance structures

The importance of structures is increasingly acknowledged in the literature related to collaborative leadership and complex initiatives (Huxham and Vangen, 2000; Crosby and Bryson, 2010; Kubisch et al., 2010; Williams and Sullivan, 2010). Comprehensive Community Initiatives are complex social interventions and require adequate governance. In the case of CDI the structures and governance of the initiative were thought through in great detail at an early stage. In consultation with the consortium and drawing on research, the funders and the original Project Leader had identified a governance structure prior to the arrival of the CEO. The inclusion of key stakeholders, such as the funders, in the establishment of CDI allowed for experts to participate in the identification of possible challenges, making sponsorship an engagement comprising more than a mere financial input. In the opinion of a funder, reflecting on governance structure at an early stage provided strong foundations for CDI and was a valuable process:

“In terms of the governance structure, I think that was well thought through from the beginning and I think it stood up then to any changes of personnel because it was quite well grounded and it had the full support of the funder at the outset and we teased out a lot of tricky issues. It wasn’t just a few things put on a page and ‘aw yeah, that’ll be grand’, we had quite a lot of discussion around the governance structures and doing that at the beginning was quite important.” (Funder 2)
CDI’s governance chart in Figure 16 (see page 195) shows the key role played by the Board and CDI team. The Board was accountable to CDI’s funders, with whom it also had a relationship of mutual advice and/or support. For instance, the funders supported CDI’s work through providing information on the policy environment and the reorganisation of government departments. They also advised on particular appointments. Acknowledging that a Board cannot oversee every detail of a complex social intervention like that of CDI, subcommittees were established in order to support the Board in its role and included: the Expert Advisory Committee, the Finance and Risk Sub Committee, the Human Resources Sub Committee (formerly the Executive Sub Committee), and the Communication Sub Committee (formerly the Communication Working Group). These committees addressed issues in specific areas. For example, the Expert Advisory Committee was composed of national and international experts in research and evaluation. Each committee was chaired by a Board member, therefore providing a strong link between the structures. Issues discussed were taken back to the Board for signing off. The Board oversaw the committees but entrusted them with their specific areas of expertise:

“I think staff and finance are two areas where we trust the administrative functions of the organisation in many ways but with appropriate oversight and with support given where needed (...) Yeah. Trust but confer!” (Board member 5)

Two structures appeared central to the governance of CDI because of their involvement in the implementation of the strategy: the Board and the Implementation Support Group. It was decided at an early stage that the former would be composed of experts whereas the latter would involve those from organisations working locally.
6.2.2.1 The Board, the experts

According to CDI’s website (CDI), the Board’s function was to provide leadership and to assume responsibility for the strategy’s implementation, overall governance, and accountability. The Board was comprised of experts from the community, community organisations, academia, and the private sector. The Board provided expertise, with membership reflecting the key areas of knowledge required to implement a complex social intervention. For instance included areas were banking, research, change management, community development, health, and education/early years. Once a need for a certain type of expertise was identified it was sought within the professional network of the original Project Leader, CEO, and funders:

“Mostly it’s been… we’ve realised we need someone from a particular sector or with particular expertise and then we think about how we can get them or do we know anybody with those? That’s kind of how that’s happened.” (CDI team 9)

It was decided at the outset that the Board would not include local organisations that would have their own specific agenda to fulfil. Organisations have their own agendas to push forward which could create a conflict of interest. Nonetheless, the Board included three community residents who provided community perspectives on the implementation of the services. Whilst this did introduce a conflict of interest, arising because recipients of services were on the Board, it was acknowledged from the very beginning that local expertise should be accessed in order to involve community members in decision-making. Issues associated with this particular conflict of interest were considered and put aside as the benefits of having community residents on the Board were seen to overweigh the challenges:

75 For more detail on the Board’s function and membership see Chapter 4.

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“From the very outset there was always the intention that there would be people living in Tallaght on the board of CDI. That was always a target.” (CDI team 9)

“[…] and we felt that that had to be in a project like this, they had to be there irrespective of the fact that it will mean that you will have conflict of interests and you will have all of that, but that’s fine, you work around that. We felt that that was very important.” (Board member 3)

The Board was the decision-making body of CDI and oversaw the implementation of the strategy. Members received the CEO report prior to the monthly meeting. The report provided an update on any progress and on challenges encountered in various aspect of CDI’s work. Key issues were flagged by the CEO and discussed during the Board meeting.

6.2.2.2 The Implementation Support Group, the local organisations

While developing the governance structures there was a desire to keep local organisations within the consortium engaged in the implementation of services. The Implementation Support Group (ISG) served that purpose. The original Project Leader and funders decided that the ISG would be a space for local organisations to get involved and provide some input. Overall, the function of the ISG was to support and advise the Board in regards to implementation issues. ISG members emphasised the difference between supporting the implementation and actually implementing services. Indeed, the ISG was not a decision-making body. It provided support and advice, and facilitated information sharing between key organisations in the locality:

“Well I suppose if we just look at the actual title for the ISG it’s an implementation support group so basically we lend our support, whatever guise that would manifest itself in and that could be advice, that could be information, it could be actual support on the ground, it could be a change of emphasis, anything like that.” (ISG member 1)

76 For more detail see Chapter 4.
The ISG was composed of representatives of the voluntary and statutory outlined in Chapter 4. As an interviewee highlighted, this group gathered together local leaders that represented either organisations based in Tallaght West or national agencies invested in the area:

“The implementation support group, which is the group that I would see as the leaders in Tallaght west - that are the agency leaders if you like, that have the expertise and the knowledge really, you know.” (Board member 3)

The main governance structures were broadly independent and their members did not meet on a regular basis. That said, they were all gathered on particular occasions. For example, a Strategic Working Group was established in 2010 to discuss mainstreaming and sustainability of CDI services. The group compromised the CDI team, as well as Board and ISG members. Therefore, the boundaries between the structures were ultimately permeable and flexible.

6.2.2.3 Distinction between leadership within the Board and the ISG

An interesting distinction arose between how leadership featured in the governance structures of the Board and the ISG. In the case of the ISG, leadership took place through the members of the structure, who were local leaders using their knowledge of the local context to help CDI implement its work in Tallaght West. The function of the ISG was not to drive the initiative, but to support the Board. Figure 17 illustrates how leadership was not found in the function of the ISG, but with its members.

Inversely, Board members had no knowledge of local issues and their expertise was limited to a defined topic. They were not considered as leaders, because leadership was only created through combining all fields of expertise. This argument is backed up by the fact that some Board members did not perceive themselves as boundary spanners,
their role being delimited to providing expertise within the Board\textsuperscript{77}. However, the Board’s function was to lead the programme implementation. As exemplified in Figure 17, leadership was not found in the members of the Board, but in its function.

![Leadership in the Board and ISG](image)

**Figure 17: Leadership in the Board and ISG**

The configuration of CDI governance structures had a major advantage. It avoided conflicts of interest through keeping local leaders away from the Board, but still availed of their local knowledge through creating the ISG in order to engage with the organisations working in Tallaght West that these local leaders were associated with. In doing so, CDI managed to utilise both local and national expertise to inform the implementation of its strategy.

\textsuperscript{77} This is further explained in section 6.3.4 of this chapter which specifically examines the concept of boundary spanners within CDI.
6.3 What does collaborative leadership involve?

To answer the above question, this section is divided into four sections, 6.3.1 to 6.3.4, which each consider key aspects of collaborative leadership featured in CDI: favourable initial conditions, flexibility in positions and structures, strong processes and relationships, and boundary spanners’ competencies. These sections illustrate the complex reality of collaborative leadership. This complexity is reflected by the fact that a number of elements are considered in each aspect:

- Favourable initial conditions encompass the presence of initiators with networks and require stakeholders to have a shared vision.
- Flexible positions and structures comprise traditional leaders that change, membership that varies, a team that is tailored, and governance structures that are adaptable.
- Strong processes and relationships involve having sound structures and clear procedures, building connections between committees both within the organisation and externally, facilitating decision-making, and fostering trust.
- Boundary spanners’ competencies reflect the various competencies that were used in the case of CDI.

6.3.1 Favourable initial conditions

The establishment of CDI as an organisation took place in a context that was favourable for such an occurrence. Initial conditions are those aspects of context which made the establishment of CDI possible. Two initial conditions, those specifically linked to leadership, are discussed here. The first sub-section states that to exist a programme needs at least one initiator with good knowledge of the policy arena and strong networks. The second sub-section outlines how a shared vision acted to gather different individuals and/or organisations around the same objectives.
6.3.1.1 Initiators with networks

For any programme to be established, it requires one or more initiator. Initiators are those individuals with strong political skills who can identify and act upon opportunities to push forward an agenda. To be able to do this, initiators need to be well established and respected in their field. This was the case for CDI. The original Project Leader was active in the statutory and voluntary sector and a grantee of Atlantic Philanthropies. For some interviewees, her role in the community made her a respected public figure:

“[The original Project Leader] had been working in Tallaght for so many years and [was] such a well-known figure, and trusted and loved figure (...)” (CDI team 6)

The work previously undertaken by the original Project Leader provided her with a significant network of key stakeholders in the policy arena. As a result of this position, the original Project Leader, amongst other grantees, was contacted by Atlantic Philanthropies with key information regarding a new direction for their funding which was its targeting towards children. This particular event was the starting point of the CDI project:

“At the time she was familiar with Atlantic Philanthropies because she had headed up the X [organisation] for a period of time and we were a grant recipient. So, when they decided to become effectively more strategic and set up their four streams of funding, children being one of them, they wrote to all the people that they had funded before to let them know that they were doing this.” (Board member 6)

Acknowledging the new funding direction, the original Project Leader gathered a consortium that was composed of statutory, voluntary, and community representatives. Together, they worked towards developing a strategy that combined aspects at the top of the Government’s agenda, such as early years’ prevention, outcome-focused and community-orientated interventions, evidence-based programmes, interagency work, and a commitment towards research and evaluation. The financial contribution of
Atlantic Philanthropies was undeniably central to the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA) agreeing to fund the other half of the project. The original Project Leader not only had the appropriate network (i.e. was in contact with the key stakeholders), but also had a general appreciation of the relevant political and policy context therefore permitting the integration of governmental targets into the project. They were subsequently in an excellent position to propose a jointly funded approach, and indeed they convinced the OMCYA to invest in the project:

“The first time I heard about CDI was when [the original Project Leader] came in to see us in the old National Children’s Office and was trying to plug it shall we say. And I suppose all you were thinking at that stage was ‘We don’t have any money. It wouldn’t be for us to fund. This isn’t in our remit’. But when it came back again to us in the context of innovative practice programme and a collaboration with Atlantic Philanthropies, that was like a different proposition and you know, you look at things in a different way then.” (Funder 2)

While leadership plays a key and possibly most important role in the establishment of an organisation, the general context also needs to be favourable. For instance, the economic context has a major impact on the establishment of programmes. CDI and the two other Prevention and Early Intervention Programme sites were established pre-recession in Ireland. Government priorities changed after the start of the recession, with funding opportunities becoming more limited:

“I think that was the reason that we were going to trial these three sites and we were going to take the learning from what was demonstrated to work, and mainstream it locally, but also longer term how it could be mainstreamed into National systems such as education, health… and the world was a different place then. It was before the recession. There was a certain level of confidence.” (Funder 1)

It is important to acknowledge that the project might not have existed if the same proposal was brought to the government during recession. The economic downturn did impact some aspects of the strategy, particularly the mainstreaming of successful services into national systems as indicated by the previous quote.
6.3.1.2 Shared vision

Another strong asset of CDI throughout its establishment was its shared vision. A shared vision is a common understanding of the raison d’être and objectives of an organisation. It is essential to collaborative work. In the case of CDI this shared vision needed to occur at different levels within the governance structures (i.e. at the levels of the Board and the ISG) and across the range of team members.

As a comprehensive community initiative CDI provided services which built holistically towards supporting children and families in Tallaght West. Consequently, a number of different expertise and backgrounds were gathered on its Board of management. A shared vision facilitated the creation of a group identity that supported participants in prioritising the organisation’s interest. One interviewee pointed out that there was a bridging connection between the concept of a shared vision and the respect shown by Board members to each other:

“There is nobody who is at that table for a reason other than the best interests of that piece of work, whether they be community representatives, organisation representatives, research representatives, it doesn’t matter. (…) I think that sort of shared goal feeds into and is fed by that sort of mutual respect that people have, because we’re all there for the same reason I think.” (Board member 5)

The CDI team presented particularities, as it was composed of a number of individuals with very different roles and responsibilities. Each person had their own line of work or programme to implement. Yet, in a similar manner to the Board members, team members described a shared vision that provided a team identity. This was in part achieved through the regular contact at the frequent team meetings arranged to examine CDI’s overall work. These meetings allowed for all team members, including the administrative team, to be seen and also to feel part of the bigger picture:
“And everyone had a common goal then, because we were kept so informed about what was happening, like the bigger picture. For me, that helped a lot with the process because you know why you were doing it and where it was heading to.” (CDI team 4)

A shared vision was therefore developed through sharing information during team meetings. Whilst a team member pointed out that the vision was actually instigated in a top-down fashion from the CEO to the team, they nevertheless stated that the vision was endorsed by the team, indicating that there was sufficient ownership for the vision to carry on independently of the CEO:

“I think in fairness it all comes from the top. It’s the vision that [the CEO] holds, that she now has imbedded in the organisation; and now everybody is actually fully invested in it. So even if [the CEO] left tomorrow, people are invested in that way of working and would continue.” (CDI team 11)

Within the ISG there were various organisations working together who had their own specific agendas. In their case, a shared vision was shaped by an awareness of mutual benefits, as well as by a common understanding of the raison d’être and the objectives of CDI. The organisations involved in the structure had to perceive the benefits of collaboration in order to engage successfully in the process. Beyond CDI’s shared vision of building a better place for children in Tallaght West, ISG members shared a common desire to coordinate their services more efficiently, partly through sharing information and avoiding duplication. While this was clearly coherent with CDI’s line of work, members were also serving their own organisation’s interest:
“So basically we are all on the same wavelength, wanting to do things better so that we were impacting very, very, positively on children’s and families’ lives. Because there were other complimentary programmes from within the agencies so… we wanted to be sure that one wasn’t carrying out a particular programme which might be running at odds with another programme within another agency. So there was that coordinating piece as well as the supporting piece that was important.” (ISG member 1)

Whether amongst members of governance structures or within the CDI team, a shared vision was vital to successful collaboration. It created a group identity that supported the commitment of each member of the team or governance structure.

6.3.2 Flexible positions and structures

This research argues that leadership in an organisation such as CDI calls for flexibility. Indeed, this characteristic was necessary in this case to implement programmes when changes needed to be made in order to respond to context. In the case of CDI, various examples illustrate how positions and structures were flexible. Each of those examples is examined in the following sub-sections 6.3.2.1 to 6.3.2.4:

- Traditional leaders changed
- Membership of governance structures varied
- The CDI team was re-tailored on numerous occasions
- Governance structures were adapted to changing circumstances

6.3.2.1 Traditional leaders that change

Between 2003 and 2012 important changes in traditional leadership took place. Such changes corresponded to cycles in the life of organisations, like CDI, intending to provide a blueprint for other similar projects. As illustrated in Figure 18 the first phase
of CDI’s lifecycle was its strategy development. It encompassed the period from 2003 and 2007 during which consultancy work was undertaken and a consortium was gathered in order to both develop the strategy and secure funding for the project. The second phase was the implementation of services that began in 2007, firstly as test sites and then as manual-based programmes involving evaluations. The third phase started in 2012 once the final evaluation reports were issued, and was of mainstreaming and ensuring sustainability for programmes. This phase involved the utilisation of evaluation findings as well as a focus on mainstreaming and sustaining some aspects of CDI’s work. In 2011, CDI started to prepare for this phase by producing consultation reports which involved numerous stakeholders discussing possibilities for 2012 onwards.

Leadership in CDI evolved throughout the three phases of the organisation’s life. The transition between the original Project Leader and the CEO was possibly the most important change in leadership that occurred. The original Project Leader provided leadership during the strategy development phase up until the establishment of CDI. The change was then both well-defined and smooth. Once the CEO was recruited the original Project Leader rapidly took another key position in the organisation as the

Figure 18: CDI’s lifecycles

This terminology is different to that used by CDI which considers the implementation period as phase one, and the mainstreaming and sustainability as phase two. However, this research argues that the strategy development was inherent to CDI’s lifecycle, and the establishment of relevant leadership features, such as the ones described in the previous section. Therefore it should be accounted for.
Chair of the Board and stayed active in CDI until June 2009. The change of leadership from the original Project Leader to the CEO was viewed positively across the spectrum of interviewees that witnessed it. Some interviewees underlined the fact that different skills were required at different stages of an organisation’s lifecycle, thereby further justifying the change. Phase one required a vision whereas phase two was more task orientated. A change within key positions resulting in different leadership styles can be beneficial when it matches different development phases of an organisation:

“I think it has worked relatively well, and as you say no one person certainly has all the skills at a particular point in time, and there has been an evolution to this process which has required different skills at different points in time.” (Funder 2)

“I think [the CEO] was a great find for the project. She was still different [leadership]. But I think [the original Project Leader] was a visionary and [the CEO] is the type of person who can come in, and really get stuck in, and implement it, and very detail oriented, and I think that was what was needed.” (CDI team 6)

The CEO started the implementation phase of the programme and oversaw the mainstreaming phase. The Board, established in the second phase, was first chaired by the original Project Leader until an existing Board member took over the position up until May 2012. Once again, the change in key leadership positions in CDI took place at a critical point in the organisation’s life cycle, at the beginning of the mainstreaming phase. The Chair who led the Board during most of the implementation phase identified the transition between phases two and three as an appropriate moment to step down. Change in leadership for the governance structures was also perceived as good practice when it synchronised with the organisation’s lifecycle:

“I think it’s good practice for the board in terms of changing the chair, like, the role of the board is going to change now again, you know, and it has to change every time the emphasis of the plan changes. So I think if I got it to the point of almost, we’re nearly at the end of the services, the direct service provision, and maybe that’s a good point then for somebody else to come in and lead it through the next transitional stage.” (Board member 3)
Yet, beyond the different skills associated with the different phases of an organisation’s life, there were also other reasons for changes in leadership. The positions held by members of the Board and ISG were on a voluntary basis. They required an important time investment that had to be endorsed by the members’ employers. This type of engagement could hardly be sustained throughout different phases, especially in the case of the Board where the members’ employers did not necessarily have a stake in the project:

“[My employers] have been very generous [with time] and it’s unrealistic actually. The amount of time I have given, no other person could give that amount of time, but it was a commitment and it was a decision. And that’s the other reason why it needs to be limited in terms of time as well you know?”
(Board member 3)

As outlined previously, the Chair of the Board is a crucial position in an organisation; therefore considerable reflection goes into the recruitment process for this position. The Chair of the Board changed twice between 2007 and 2012, and the incumbent Chairs had an important role in the selection of their successor in both cases. Research respondents described the process as challenging. The procedure involved a consultation with the Board members and the Funders. While one member suggested external candidates should also be considered, all members agreed that the member who had put her name forward suited the position:

“I think probably one of the biggest challenges was when I was moving on and selecting my successor or identifying and I met with each of the board members individually, I asked for suggestions. I started with the process of seeing did we have any internal candidates, all that was very sensitive stuff. [I] also then had discussions with the Office [of Minister for Children and Youth Affairs] and also with Atlantic [Philanthropies] about how we were moving.”
(Board member 1)

The Implementation Support Group featured a different case. The change of Chair did not require substantial reflection since it had been decided that the structure would be chaired by the HSE. Furthermore, whilst the Board members joined CDI at the
beginning of phase two, some of the ISG members were already involved in phase one through their membership of the consortium. Therefore, local organisations have been continuously engaged throughout CDI’s strategy development, implementation, and mainstreaming phases.

6.3.2.2 Membership that varies

Members of the Board and Implementation Support Group (ISG) have also changed over time. Because of the number of members involved in governance structures (i.e. 10 Board members and 12 ISG members), changes occurred too frequently to allow the identification of a pattern that is coherent with the different phases of CDI’s lifecycle.

The ISG was composed of representatives of organisations. When a representative resigned from an organisation, another representative from the same organisation generally replaced him/her on the ISG. The organisation was therefore constantly represented on the structure. As illustrated in Figure 19, one organisation had up to three different representatives between 2007 and 2011. On average, representatives attended about half of the ISG meetings (52%), ranging from organisations attending a quarter of the meetings (e.g. organisation 13) to others attending over 80% of the meetings (e.g. organisations one and two). Some representatives appeared to attend meetings sporadically, such as the representatives of organisations eight and 12 who never attended more than two meetings in a row. Also, it can be noted that attendance became more regular for some organisations after a change of representative, such as for organisations six and nine.
It is worth noting that organisations represented during the early stages of the ISG (i.e. in summer 2007) were almost all still members of the structure more than four years on (i.e. by December 2011) and in only two cases was membership discontinued. The first case was the Chair of the Board who resigned in December 2010. However, the representation of the HSE was not compromised since the second Chair represented the same organisation. The second membership discontinued was the Department of Education which went through restructuration between 2009 and 2010, and reassessed its priorities. The representative of the Department was allocated different tasks and could no longer participate in the ISG:
“[The Department of Education] was on the ISG then up to last year [i.e. 2010] when the original office structure was closed down and we were reassigned to other work, although that in fact had been happening since 2009. There was a gradual process of review and so on and reassignment to other work.” (ISG member 3)

The ISG went through changes towards the end of 2011. From December 2011 two school representatives joined the group. At this stage, it was also highlighted that the membership status of organisation 13, which was represented at only 25% of the meetings, should be clarified by the CEO. Simultaneously discussions were taking place between CDI and organisation 10 in relation to them having a representative on the structure.

The Board went through more changes in regards to the number of experts joining and leaving the structure. As illustrated in Figure 20, between early 2007 and the end of 2011, the Board had ten new members joining the structure and five members resigning. Key changes occurred during the summer 2009, with the original Project Leader/Chair and two other members resigning, and three community representatives joining. An expert in community development also joined in October 2009. Membership was again reviewed in early 2010, and two new areas of expertise introduced in March 2010 (change management and education). Two of the community representatives that resigned in summer 2011 were replaced by September of the same year. The experts working on the Board attended on average 72% of the meetings, with a spread from 35% to 100%.

79 The percentage of meetings attended is based on the number of meetings that occurred while the expert was a member; this number varies from three meetings for the experts who joined the Board in 2011 to 39 meetings for those who were members since its establishment.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expertise</th>
<th>Attendance in %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Leader/Chair</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme Development /Chair</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Enterprise/Education</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDI CEO</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Representative</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Representative</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Representative</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Development</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change Management</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Representative</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Representative</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Present: Blue
1st meeting attended: Red
Official resignation of member: Black

**Figure 20: Attendance data for Board members**
6.3.2.3 A team that is tailored

Figure 21 illustrates the changes that took place in the CDI team between 2005 and June 2011. The CDI experience started with the original Project Leader back in 2003, before she was joined by a Community Engagement Coordinator in 2004 and a Development Officer in 2005. The majority of team was gathered by the CEO in 2007. The Development Officer left in October 2007 but conducted a research project with CDI between March and June 2008. As in any organisation staff turnover took place over time. CDI used it as an opportunity to readjust positions to fit the changing needs of the organisation. For instance, in March 2010, the Head of Finance and Corporate Services resigned and CDI contracted out its financial function to external accountants. The position description and title were modified to involve less financial duties and more coordination of governance issues. A Corporate Services and Governance Coordinator was employed in June 2010 and resigned in May 2011. At the time of the study, CDI was advertising for a Strategy and Corporate Services Manager. In other cases, position titles were changed to reflect a shift in responsibilities. For example, the Research and Evaluation Officer became the Research and Evaluation Manager in June 2011.

80 The report for the process evaluation study CDI as Organisation: Examining the Processes and Relationships to Support Implementation was first submitted in July 2011.
Figure 21: Changes in CDI team between 2005 and 2011 (Process evaluation report)
Furthermore, roles and responsibilities of more stable positions have also changed over time in order to adapt to organisational needs. Most of CDI’s team was recruited at the beginning of the implementation phase. At first, an important part of their role was related to the implementation of the services. This included tasks such as completing the manuals, engaging with school principals, coordinating training for front line staff, and running the tendering process in the case of some services:

“I think my role has evolved, just in terms of the work. So for example, at the beginning obviously it was completing actual manuals. The manuals had to be completed and sections of the manuals had to be written. Then we designed initial training for staff, coordinating initial training, the initial site visits, meetings with principles, you know, the tendering process. So, all the kind of getting things up and running process.” (CDI team 1)

As the mainstreaming phase commenced, the roles changed slightly. Albeit delivery was still taking place, the implementation phase of the programmes was technically over. Some CDI staff members described their role as becoming more “strategic” as the move towards phase three took place with a focus emerging on both the sustainability of the services and the identification of ways to increase capacity:

“I suppose it’s changed, it’s developed in the sense that it’s developed as the programme has developed, because other things are emerging and we’ve moved onto different stages. (...) Well I would say that it has become more strategic and looking at mainstreaming the support, looking at other avenues of where agencies can link in with services more.” (CDI team 3)

Additionally, staff turnover also constituted an occasion for some employees to take greater ownership of the programmes they were implementing. This was especially the case when the position that was unfilled was one of a line manager, such as the Quality and Services Officer. The Quality Officers were required to take more responsibilities during the gap, while still being line managed by the CEO. This was viewed positively by an interviewee, who identified this juncture as a perspective opening rather than as a challenge:
“I think possibly when [the Quality and Services Officer] left it probably allowed me to take greater ownership of the two programmes I worked on, so for me that wasn’t necessarily a stressful thing. It was kind of an opportunity for me to kind of develop my skills in terms of working on those two programmes.” (CDI team 1)

Nevertheless, staff turnover sometimes created confusion. Indeed, boundaries can sometimes become blurry when positions change. This was the case for one of the CDI employees, who developed an unclear picture of her exact roles and responsibilities after a position was modified:

“I can’t remember whether we got a job description to all of it, but I know I was never told where our roles kind of… like we had a lot of problems (…) She thought it wasn’t her job and I didn’t know if it was mine or not. So there was a lot of confusion around that side of it.” (CDI team 4)

Although this only represented a minority of opinion, it is important to underline that staff turnover was also a challenging aspect of the organisation’s work. Overall however, roles were created, adapted, or even outsourced to allow for better management.

6.3.2.4 Governance structures that are adaptable

Between 2007 and 2012 CDI’s governance structures changed. Some structures were dismantled and others created. For instance, between 2008 and 2009, CDI had a Services Subcommittee that oversaw the implementation of the services and also provided a forum to discuss delivery. The role of this committee was to advise the Board on the development and implementation of the CDI services81. However, it was dismantled in 2009 because the structure was no longer deemed needed. Memories

81 The Terms of Reference of the Services Subcommittee indicate that its functions were to advise on the development of and implementation of the CDI services; to ensure that CDI services reflected National Policy and Government thinking, and to make recommendations to the CDI Board.
diverged on the exact reason for its dismantlement, but in the opinion of some the
structure had lost its relevance after the South Dublin Children’s Services Committee
was established. The new structure played a similar supporting role for CDI than the
one that had been expected of the Services Subcommittee:

“I’m sure that was in place when I took up the post and we actually decided to
disband it about four or five months later because the Children’s Services
Committee had been established and it wasn’t required anymore.” (CDI team
9)

In the opinion of others the structure was discontinued because it was duplicating the
work of the ISG. Furthermore, an interviewee noted that the Services Subcommittee
was only relevant during the early stages of the programme while engaging with
various services. Once the implementation of the services began the ISG took a
stronger role in advising the Board and the Services Subcommittee lost its
meaningfulness:

“This was the services subcommittee; it was no longer needed (…) because
what happened was the implementation support group replaced it in terms of
functioning. (…) When you had the planning stages, the board really was there
to give sort of an oversight to getting say the CEO in place, and getting the
team on board, getting the services. That’s why the services subcommittee was
very important at one point, but then that no longer was important. But then
when you were coming to the implementation stage what was happening was
the implementation support group was very key.” (Board member 3)

CDI also reviewed the function of structures such as the Implementation Support
Group (ISG). In September 2011 the Terms of Reference of the ISG were amended to
suit CDI’s new line of work as they moved towards phase three. The new functions of
the ISG included a new role: “To support the learning, implementation and
dissemination of the CDI strategy in order to deliver sustainable responses to identified
needs which promote positive outcomes for children and families, and the community”
(ISG terms of reference, 2011). Other changes were the emphasis of a stronger focus
on CDI’s learning from independent evaluations and a remit to disseminate its strategy
in Tallaght West and beyond.
Another important change in CDI’s governance structure was the establishment of an Executive Subcommittee in July 2009. This adjustment occurred soon after the Board changed its Chair. The new Chair, as good practice when taking up new functions, reviewed the existing gaps in both the expertise present on the Board and in the governance structures of CDI. It was subsequently decided to form a subcommittee where staffing issues could be discussed. As noted by an interviewee, such structure was not required at the early stages of CDI, but became necessary when staff turnover became more frequent. The Executive Subcommittee\(^2\) was created to reduce workload of Board members and increase efficiency whilst addressing issues:

“We didn’t have [the executive subcommittee] and probably didn’t really need it up to that time (…) I had thought that taking on a role as a chair I need to look at what are the gaps, and what are the gaps in terms of membership functions and then subcommittees and structures and stuff you know? So I made a few shifts around that and one of them was… I felt that there needed to be a structure whereby the CEO could work with the board but not the whole board around staff issues. It would be mainly staff issues, but if say there was an issue that had to be looked at in between the board meeting, that you should have access to a sub group that could come together very quickly. (Board member 3)

Other structures were established to suit CDI organisational needs and the changing context. For instance, a Strategic Working Group\(^3\) was established as a temporary structure in 2010 following a recommendation from a consultant report produced by the Institute of Public Administration (2010). Its function was to discuss both mainstreaming and sustainability issues and possibilities. An output of the Strategic Working Group was a planning document that was sent to the funders and used to put together a funding proposal in April 2011. A board member noted that the creation of this group was an “important process” for CDI. Similarly, a Communications Working

\(^2\) Subsequently, the structure was renamed the Human Resources Committee.

\(^3\) The Strategic Working Group gathered members from the CDI team, the Board and the ISG, as well as a member of the Vocational Education Committee. The group met on four occasions between October 2010 and January 2011, including once with the funders.
Group was established in July 2010 to respond to new needs of CDI that emerged whilst entering the mainstreaming phase. For instance, the service evaluation reports were finalised and findings needed to be disseminated. Overall, it was responsible for CDI’s communications strategy and events. It subsequently became a subcommittee to the Board and was renamed the Communications Subcommittee\textsuperscript{84}.

6.3.3 Strong processes and relationships

Flexible positions and structures are characteristic of collaborative leadership. Yet, to implement a programme, an organisation also requires strong processes and relationships. This research identifies four examples of strong processes and relationships that coexisted in the case of CDI. They will be examined in the following subsections and include:

- Having sound structures and clear procedures
- Building connections within CDI and externally
- Facilitating decision-making
- Fostering trust

6.3.3.1 Having sound structures and clear procedures

In the case of CDI a number of processes were established to ensure an operational efficiency. For instance, governance structures were developed in a way that guaranteed a reliable liaison between the Board and the subcommittees by means of a Board member chairing each of the subcommittees. Such structure facilitated the reporting process and ensured seamless governance:

\textsuperscript{84} See Chapter 4 for more detail.
“Effectively, all board members (...) performed dual functions. They were on a subcommittee (...) to bring their expertise and support the executive to implement the programmes at that level, as well as they sat at board meetings in order to provide advice or make decisions about maybe a little bit more higher level things that the Chief Executive brought” (Board member 1)

Other processes set up by CDI included the carrying out of reports like the CEO report sent to all Board members before the meeting. The report provided an update on activities and identified future targets in advance of meetings. It provided an overview of CDI’s programmes and relationships with key stakeholders (e.g. funders, ISG, Expert Advisory Committee, and general interagency work). Other sections of the report examined the evaluations, financial procedures, appropriate governance, premises, and capacity building. Team members completed sections of the report that were relevant to their role and responsibilities. Prior to the meeting the Chair met with the CEO to discuss the agenda and decide on issues to bring to the Board. The CEO also sent a quarterly report to the funders in advance of payment and a review meeting she held with them. This report provided an update on CDI’s activity and followed a similar structure to the one sent to the Board.

Clear processes were also established for CDI’s team and included regular team meetings, supervisory meetings, and action sheets completed on a monthly basis by team members. Team meetings occurred on a weekly basis until November 2009 before it was then decided to decrease their frequency to a monthly basis, with team members chairing the meeting alternatively. Team meetings allowed for members to update each other on progress made in particular areas of work, providing an overall picture of CDI’s work and allowing any duplication of work to be identified. In general, team members were satisfied with the supervisory context and reported a number of benefits to supervision. Supervisory meetings were perceived as a way to structure their work through the actions sheets. Other benefits identified in the interviews included the opportunity to discuss issues and to get a second opinion on choices made:
“Really it provides a context for me to highlight particular issues of my work. Probably a lot of the time it’s just to get reassurance that ‘yeah that’s an ok approach’ or ‘yeah that makes sense’. And it is also a kind of method of accountability for me, so it helps… structures my work” (CDI team 1).

In the case of CDI the reporting processes and the seamless governance provided by sound structures had two advantages. First, it ensured that progress was made. Second, it held the governance structures and the CDI team accountable.

6.3.3.2 Building connections within CDI and externally

Collaborative leadership entails building connections with other organisations as well as with the programme’s stakeholders. CDI’s leadership story illustrates how those external connections were built, notably through having a number of ISG or team members active on various local committees. It also brings an emphasis on the importance of developing and maintaining good working relationships at an individual level within the organisation.

CDI had a strong connection with another key organisation that was established in South Dublin: the Children’s Services Committee (CSC). The relationship between CDI and the CSC was strong, to the extent that the CSC was included in CDI’s governance chart (see Figure 16, page 195). The chart indicated a supportive relationship between the two organisations. It also displayed the relationship of accountability that the CSC held with the County Development Board, itself accountable to the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. Therefore, CDI and the CSC had a common funder. Although not included in the governance chart, the CSC additionally held a strong relationship with the Implementation Support Group (ISG). Indeed, the majority of the ISG members also sat on the CSC which covered a larger geographical area than CDI. This reality created a specific link between the two structures, allowing both information to flow easily between the bodies and issues to be raised in the most appropriate setting:
“It might be a situation where we might decide ‘oh, we’ll raise that at the CSC’, because it might have been a more fruitful platform rather than the restrictive - for want of a better term - a smaller ISG. And such action might entirely be appropriate with the CSC to take on.” (ISG member 1)

The link between CDI and the CSC was not limited to ISG members. The CEO of CDI and some team members also sat on some of the CSC’s subgroups, such as the Parenting working group, the Communication, Data and Planning subgroup, and the Safe and Secure subgroup. Therefore, through attending CSC subgroup meetings and events, CDI team members also linked with other organisations like the South Dublin Childcare Committee. CDI team members attending the meetings received updated information about training events and services provided in the area. This allowed the team members to serve as those who connected CDI’s commissioned services with offers and opportunities available in the area through other organisations:

“It’s good that I’m on the services committee, because you do get quite a good link with the South Dublin Childcare Committee and would have kind of informed their implementation plan and vice versa. So it’s been a good relationship to have. (…) So having that link with South Dublin Childcare Committee, I would know for example that there is a training on autism, or there’s a training on managing challenging behaviour, or that kind of stuff. So, I’d be able to link services in with the Childcare Committee saying ‘this is coming up so maybe you should look at that.’” (CDI team 3)

This connection between committees was not specific to the relationship between CDI’s ISG and the CSC, but was characteristic of all interagency work that took place in South Dublin. One representative could be active in different organisations that shared common objectives, such as the County Childcare Committee which provided information on childcare to parents and offered training and support to service providers, the CSC, and CDI:
“Well I have to say in all fairness around this community you tend to meet the same people anyway. I’m also the Chairperson of the County Childcare Committee and I was put there because, I suppose, I am the Children’s Services Committee Coordinator as well. So the fit is good because the County Childcare committee also belongs to the Children's Services Committee and I meet people who (…) also belong on the Implementation Support Group of CDI.” (ISG member 4)

Representatives of local organisations in Tallaght West often convened at meetings organised by different committees addressing social issues in the area. Some interviewees felt that meeting the same representatives in different contexts allowed members to build stronger working relationships, and clarified the roles and responsibilities of each. A better understanding of roles made working relationships more efficient, and was beneficial to the work of some members:

“[The] ISG is the second place where I meet people. I feel it has helped my job because I understand where people are coming from, you know, their role and what they’re involved in and that helps me in my job.” (ISG member 5)

Furthermore, the connections were not limited to organisations in the area, nor organisations specialised in children and families. CDI also connected more widely with organisation such as the Centre for Effective Services (CES), the two other PEIP sites, and various research networks. Indeed, the CES had a representative sitting on CDI’s Communications Subcommittee. Building connections with other organisations appeared to have many benefits, such as information sharing, the possibility to identify duplication, better coordination of services, and better use of resources.

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85 The Centre for Effective Services was established in 2008 and is co-funded by Atlantic Philanthropies, the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, and the Department of Community, Equality, and Gaeltacht (Irish speaking region) Affairs (CES, 2011). The Centre “aims to promote and support the application of an evidence-informed approach to policy and practice in child, family and community services; to promote the development of collaborative, joined-up working, which is outcomes-focused across research policy and service-providing organisations; [and] to build capacity within Ireland and Northern Ireland to take this work forward in the longer term by developing knowledge, skills and competencies” (CES, 2011: 5).
Building connections did not only entail working in collaboration with other organisations, but also required developing individual working relationships. As noted by a team member in the next quote, collaboration is also about knowing who to contact in the organisation, depending on the request. Establishing efficient working relationships can be challenging at first and in the case of CDI it did indeed require the identification of a contact person, and also their general understanding of the roles and responsibilities of different members of the organisation. The individual is at the centre of the process:

“Again it’s about linking in with the right people and that can be sometimes difficult. Just trying to find out: ‘OK, who do we need to link in to? Who is the main decision maker? Who can we get a quick response from? Who do we need to talk to? Who is that key person in there? Who is the policy maker, the decision maker?’” (CDI team12)

CDI organised a number of events that allowed individuals who were involved in the project to meet in an informal settings such as summer BBQs or Christmas parties. A volleyball league also took place in 2010 and 2011 to “support and encourage collaboration, relationship building and creating links between service providers and residents” (CDI’s Newsletter, May 2011). As highlighted by an interviewee, informal activities were valuable and supported the establishment of good working relationships between stakeholders:

“I know they have an informal, a volleyball thing or something going on, but I haven’t been able to participate in anything like that, but I think they’re important and I think it’s good,(…) It helps other people relate in a different way and it’s very good to have that kind of informal thing going on, as well as the formal meetings.” (ISG member 5)

Relationships are crucial because they impact on collaboration and general work processes. Overall, there was an agreement amongst the CDI team that good relationships were essential for engaging with the community, services, funders, and co-workers. Good working relationships eased processes as people who know each other became more inclined to collaborate or help each other:
“You can’t have any processes at all without relationships between people, in terms of the work here, in terms of the CSI [Community Safety Initiative]. You can’t! Like, the community engagement is about building relationships, getting people to trust each other, and get to know each other and be able to work together and stuff, like, you can’t do community engagement without good working relationships with people in statutory agencies and with people who live in the area.” (CDI team 2)

“Well it makes it much easier, I mean if you’ve got a good relationship with somebody or with an agency or with a service and there’s something you want to try or do, it certainly makes that a hundred times easier (...) You can do anything if you’ve got the right relationship. It’s all about relationships” (CDI team 3)

The CEO had a key role in building good working relationships. For instance, a Board member acknowledged the warm welcome received from the CEO when joining the Board, underlining its importance and impact on attendance. Indeed, good working relationships are especially important in a setting where participation is voluntary:

“[The CEO]’s energy and enthusiasm is second to none. Just her personality drives things along. I think she is remarkable in the way that she relates to people. I mean, I remember from my very first meeting it was as if… she greeted me so warmly. And at the second meeting, I was like an old friend. And I know that’s very anecdotal, but you can’t quantify the value of that, because even to get out and go to meetings, it’s hard, because you’re taking time away from other stuff. (Board member 2)

As mentioned previously, the CEO acted like a bridge between different governance structures, but also between different organisations. Overall, it was noted in interviews with members of the Board, ISG, and team that the CEO had successfully paid particular attention to building relationships with members of CDI.

6.3.3.3 Facilitating decision-making

Collaborative leadership is also about decision-making and reaching consensus. In the case of CDI, the decision-making processes in place generally aimed to reach consensus, whether in the team or in governance structures. Yet, interviewees did not always agree about the extent to which this process was successful.
As indicated previously, there was a hierarchy in the CDI team with clear lines of management being applied, notably through supervisory meetings. Yet, there was a general consensus amongst CDI team members that the organisation was egalitarian and some interviewees described it as a horizontal structure despite its hierarchy. In the opinion of an interviewee, the fact that team members had responsibilities towards different services contributed to the flattening of the hierarchical structure:

“\(\text{I suppose that’s one of the things I really like about CDI, is that it’s not hierarchical at all. (…) So I really like that here it’s a flat structure and, pretty flat anyway (…). And I think given the fact that people have very distinct roles in terms of their projects, so that kind of helps as well. So yeah, there is, I mean I suppose there is some kind of hierarchy in terms of (…) there being an executive if you like. Yeah, but I mean it’s pretty flat really apart from that which is great.}\) (CDI team 10)

The Implementation Support Group (ISG) was not a decision taking body as such; it provided support in the implementation of CDI’s strategy. However, discussions took place in the structure and required general agreement on the actions to be undertaken to support CDI. Overall, ISG members described the decision-making process as consensual. One member highlighted that consensus was usually reached despite strong opinions being present around the table:

“\(\text{Information will be put out there. If there is a decision to be made, there’ll be a discussion about it. So everybody… you are looking at some very strong minded people who have lots of opinions. So that’ll be discussed. And then based on the discussion piece we make a decision and see how people are generally feeling about it}\) (ISG member 2)

In the case of the Board there was a general agreement that the decision-making process was directed towards reaching consensus. Members were experts in their field, and most of them felt comfortable voicing their opinion. Board members noted that there were no major disagreements around decisions being made. Some also highlighted the efficiency of a decision-making process that was being eased through the flagging of issues in the CEO report:
“You can have a good discussion and it’s not a talking shop. It doesn’t go on for hours and hours. Decisions are made and people can voice their opinions and it works well (...) We’d always, we’d get consensus and you know, if somebody voices an opinion it’s heard and it’s listened to and it’s raised again if we have to, but it works well.” (Board member 2)

Whilst the decision-making process in CDI aimed to reach consensus, interviewees did not always agree about the extent to which this process was successful. For instance some Board members indicated that at times decisions were taken by a majority, or through compromises made to reach consensus. Still, in general, Board members felt that their expertise was respected and their opinions heard.

The Board was also used to sign off or inform decisions that were made in subcommittees. In this case the Board’s expertise was used to facilitate decision-making in other governance structures:

“There are times we bring something to the Board that we just want people’s views on to inform a decision” (Board member 9)

Similarly, team members indicated that the decision-making process was inclusive of their opinions, including those of the administrative team. Yet, while the team structure was rather horizontal and team members felt they could inform the decision-making process, decisions were ultimately taken by the CEO:

“The team meetings were totally different to anywhere I’d worked before because the admin in other places, they really wouldn’t have a say in what goes on in the company. Your opinion wouldn’t have been valued as much as it would be in CDI, like they really looked for, and want you to contribute to the team meetings.” (CDI team 4)

Whilst the decision-making process in CDI generally aimed to reach consensus, it was not always successful. Nevertheless, members of the team and governance structures were supported in expressing their opinion which was taken into consideration.
6.3.3.4 Fostering trust

Interviewees highlighted the importance of trust in their working relationship with other members of their team or structure, as well as with individuals outside their group such as funders, members of other structures, and other organisations. With trust, working relationships grew stronger and members of a group (i.e. a governance structure or team) became more at ease with each other. This allowed for discussions to be less restricted and possibly more meaningful than at the first meetings. Time was therefore a key factor in the formation of trust:

“I think the conversations would have got deeper as time progressed, purely and simply because the relationships had grown and the trust had gone deeper and everyone could speak more or less freely and openly” (ISG member 1)

Trust also built through people meeting each other at different committees and during informal events such as those organised by CDI. Trust appeared to be a pre-requisite to good working relationships. A team member argued that working relationships comprising trust provided a strong structure for collaboration. Conversely, they saw a lack of trust as a factor that would impede on working relationships:

“Any job I’ve been in it’s often informal connections augment the formal connections in terms of getting things done, getting decisions made, building the trust, the foundations for a good project and the team and I think if that informal connections aren’t there, if there is a lack of trust, it’s going to make the more formal negotiations that much more difficult” (CDI team 6)

Furthermore, the size, remit, and formal or informal style of a structure impacts on the trust building capacity. A setting such as the ISG, which was relatively small and informal, enables members to freely express their opinions and concerns. In a bigger and more formal structure individuals have to represent their organisation and possibly have agendas. The dynamics of the ISG appeared to be more appropriate for open discussion than other larger and more official structures. An interviewee noted that ISG members were able to speak honestly to each other, offering a context suitable for collaboration:
“The ISG would have been quite open in terms of getting to the heart of something and I think that probably was one of the things about it, there was no hidden agenda as it were. People could say what they felt, and it was what needed to be looked at that was discussed. At other… I suppose certainly the County Development Board, you are into a more formal structure where you’re sort of representing your own area and you’re sort of putting your best foot forward. You are not going to… whereas with the ISG certainly you could discuss things in more detail and without hesitation as it were.” (ISG member, 3)

Members of both the ISG and Board emphasised the presence of trust amongst individuals involved on their structures. In the case of the Board, members trusted and respected each other’s expertise. As illustrated in the following quote, trust and respect were intertwined:

“I think so yeah. I suppose there is a trust and a, yeah, there is a trust that, and a respect for the expertise that people are bringing, you know?” (Board member 3)

In the case of CDI, the fostering of trust was essential to the establishment of good working relationships and collaboration. This was particularly the case in a setting where participation was voluntary. Building trust in such a context required the boundary spanner competencies that are captured in the following section.

6.3.4 Boundary spanners’ competencies

Collaborative leadership requires a number of specific competencies. This section explores the boundary spanners competencies (see Table 32) used by members of

86 Similar to in Williams (2002, 2010), competencies in this research encompassed both competencies and skills.
The different positions considered here are traditional leaders (*i.e.* the original Project Leader, the CEO, and the Chairs), implementers (*i.e.* the ISG and team members responsible for the implementation of CDI’s services), administrative team members, and Board members. Overall, general trends were identified across specific positions, but most groups did not agree unanimously in regards to the competencies they used.

Table 32: Competencies associated with boundary spanners’ roles
(Adapted from Williams, 2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reticulist</th>
<th>Entrepreneur</th>
<th>Interpreter/Communicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Networking</td>
<td>• Brokering</td>
<td>• Inter-personal relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Managing accountabilities</td>
<td>• Entrepreneurial</td>
<td>• Communication,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Appreciate different</td>
<td>• Innovative and</td>
<td>• listening, empathising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>modes of governance</td>
<td>creative</td>
<td>• Framing and sense making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Political skills and</td>
<td>• Tolerates risk</td>
<td>• Building trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diplomacy</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Tolerance of diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>and culture</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The traditional leaders used competencies across the three boundary spanners roles. While their personality might make them more likely to use certain competencies more than others, there was a general agreement amongst traditional leaders that they were capable of using all the competencies outlined in the framework. In practice, the three roles were integrated in the leadership style deployed by traditional leaders:

“...Definitely the political skills and diplomacy, networking....all of the entrepreneurial stuff, all of the communication and interpretation so, all the roles, yeah.” (Board member 3)

87 As indicated in Chapter 3, prior to the interview participants received a document containing an outline of the boundary spanners’ framework proposed by Williams (2010). The aim was to provide a clear and understandable framework through which to discuss roles and competencies during the interview. Funders were not asked about the framework as they were not considered as potential boundary spanners since their leadership takes place vertically rather than horizontally. However, they were asked to comment on competencies required for the CEO.
The implementers used different elements across the framework. Whilst general trends could be seen for both groups of implementers (i.e. for ISG and team members), there was little agreement about which role aligned best with their work. For instance, ISG members mostly used competencies found within the roles of both ‘reticulist’ and ‘interpreter/communicator’. Differences appeared however amongst the group in relation to the competencies associated with the role of entrepreneur: an interviewee identified with the entrepreneur role, whereas another member specifically stated that she does not use the competencies associated with that role:

“I’d see myself more in 1 [i.e. reticulist] and 3 [i.e. interpreter communicator], I’m not particularly entrepreneurial. Definitely, especially 3 as an interpreter and communicator (…) So 1 and 3 more than 2 [i.e. entrepreneur], the one in the middle is not really my style particularly.” (ISG member 5)

The team members involved in the implementation of CDI’s strategy used various boundary spanners competencies. Most team members indicated employing competencies across the three roles due to the fact that part of their work was about engaging with external organisations or service providers and necessitated adoption of all of the roles. Yet, team members were generally less confident than the traditional leaders about the amount of competencies they used. Indeed, team members usually stated that they possessed some of the competencies outlined in the table, rather than all of them:

“That all [the framework] definitely fits in to what I do. In terms of picking out, I would say there’re probably elements of each part …” (CDI team 1)

“I’m not sure. I think there’re elements in all of the points. I wouldn’t put myself in any one of them. (…) So I’d say I have bits of them all, but not all of any of them.” (CDI team 5)

Moreover, some interviewees claimed that a particular role reflected their own work, but did not necessarily encompass all the competencies associated with that role. For instance, for the role of reticulist a team member affirmed understanding the different modes of governance whilst not using the competency of diplomacy:
“I suppose part of me might be a reticulist, but it’s a very young seed, it wouldn’t be me mostly. (…) Both political skills and diplomacy, those last two I kind of froze on because while I understand the modes of governance I’m not always diplomatic in how I approach it.” (CDI team 3)

Nevertheless, there was a tendency amongst team members to assert that they used competencies associated with the role of the interpreter/communicator. Indeed, whereas some felt that the role of reticulist captured their work, or declared not using competencies associated with the role of entrepreneur, all team members acknowledged using interpreter/communicator competencies:

“I have a star marked beside the interpretive/communicator one and that would be very much (...) a lot of the skills that I use. I think some of the reticulist would be skills as well that I would identify with. (...) Funny enough, the entrepreneurial skills are not screaming at me. (...) All of the ones in the interpretive and communicate I would identify with.” (CDI team 7)

“Well, the one I could identify most with was probably the interpreter/communicator. It’s probably bits of the other ones as well, but in terms of the one that I was probably closest to, of what I’d associate my own kind of competencies.” (CDI team 8)

While the administrative team used to some extent boundary spanners competencies associated with the interpreter/communicator role, there was no consensus among members. One interviewee indicated for instance that she also employed competencies associated with the entrepreneur role. Yet, another clearly stated that she did not have, nor was interested in, competencies connected to the reticulist and entrepreneur roles:

“I think that’s the [interpreter/communicator] one. That’s what I would find most important and the only way I can work. (…) So that one would suit me better, and it’s the only one that would matter to me. Doing all that [reticulist and entrepreneur roles] wouldn’t matter to me. It wouldn’t motivate me. And it wouldn’t make me want to work.” (CDI team 11)

Overall, Board members declared not using boundary spanners competencies. While acknowledging the importance of such competencies in collaborative work, some members indicated that they did not engage in such work since their input in CDI was generally restricted to their field of expertise and solely internal to the Board.
Therefore, the majority of Board members did not take part in boundary spanning activities, and as a consequence did not need to use competencies associated with this type of work:

“You have here networking, managing accountability, appreciating different modes of governance, political skills and diplomacy…like, I think they are very high ranking competencies. You know what I mean? And that is fine and that is important but I don’t personally interact with any of our fund providers. I don’t interact with our service providers. You know what I mean? I interact with the Board.” (Board member 2)

“It is funny though! I had a look at this and I suppose I see myself. I pigeonhole myself as being a X [field of expertise] and as you see I associate a lot of my involvement with CDI as being about X rather than any practice. I looked at this and I thought ‘I’m not any of them’.” (Board member 5)

Still, one Board member declared employing competencies associated with the roles of both entrepreneur and interpreter/communicator. Sharing the general understanding that her role on the Board was internal rather than external, the interviewee indicated that she used interpreter/communicator competencies during Board meetings and entrepreneur competencies in terms of her expertise:

“I would say probably the interpersonal awareness and facilitating discussion. My focus on the board is very internal. It’s not external. It wouldn’t be brokering relationships between CDI and their stakeholders, so it would be more driving task focus, interpersonal relationships, facilitating decisions within the Board. (…) If I was to pick one I’d probably say the entrepreneur. In terms of my particular… how I play out on the board is more about how do we move forward, finding new ways of doing things… the last one [the interpreter/communicator]. I would definitely be bridged between both” (Board member 4)

The issues expressed by an interviewee indicated that not all members of an organisation need to employ all of the boundary spanner competencies. Indeed, as indicated previously, the combination of those competencies characterises traditional leaders. The participant also pointed out that competencies associated with the role of interpreter/communicator are crucial for a governance structure to work efficiently:
“Everybody doesn't have to have everything there, and in fact that would be too much, because if you have many of these or most of those I think you really are a leader. You don’t need all leaders sitting at your table that way. What do they… what do you need though? I would say it is probably the most important thing there… is the interpreter and communicator in terms of the different members.” (Board member 1)

Interestingly, funders who were not exposed to the boundary spanners framework outlined similar competencies when asked to identify skills a CEO needs to implement a complex intervention like CDI. The list of skills identified by the funders is presented in Table 33. They mostly mirrored competencies associated with the role of interpreter/communicator (i.e. communication, understand the perspective of the other one), but also included competencies similar to those of a reticulist (i.e. transparency, commitment to network building, being politically aware), as well as managerial abilities (i.e. ability to anticipate barriers, strategic thinking, planning skills, general management skills, good operational management skills).
Table 33: Skills required to implement a complex social intervention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persistence</th>
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<tr>
<td>Patience</td>
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<td>Communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transparency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understand the perspective of the other one</td>
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<tr>
<td>Persuasion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to anticipate barriers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to receive criticisms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commitment to network building</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategic thinking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Planning skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>General management skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good operational management skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Being politically aware</td>
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<tr>
<td>Being upfront</td>
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<td>Being open</td>
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6.4 What were the challenges for leadership?

The implementation of a complex social intervention is not without challenges. This section identifies the main challenges encountered by CDI in relation to leadership. They can be categorised in five different forms, each of which were overcome through collaborative leadership:
6.4.1 Lack of ownership

Leadership calls for flexibility and adapting to a change of traditional leaders is part of that. The handover from the original Project Leader to the CEO in the case of CDI was positively perceived by those who witnessed it. A change in leadership allowed for a fresh perspective and facilitated the introduction of a new set of skills that were relevant to a new phase of the organisation’s life. However, changes were also challenging. In the case of CDI, the CEO was recruited at the beginning of the implementation phase after the strategy had been developed and the funding secured. Therefore, the CEO had no role in the development of the project or in negotiations that went on before she started. A key challenge identified by the funders in the case of CDI is that the CEO had to implement a programme she did not design, meaning that she might not agree with all she was implementing. Nevertheless, despite the complexity that underpins Comprehensive Community Initiatives, a funder noted that the CEO successfully overcame the challenge and managed to implement the strategy, including its evaluation component, with fidelity:

“I would say that [the CEO] was presented with the plan to implement, she didn’t actually have a role in the development of the plan. And I’d say some of the challenges that she’s probably had is you know: ‘Gosh, if I had been involved I don’t know if I would have done it this way’. So I think at the start she probably had to struggle with some of that. But nevertheless, she has been very faithful to the plan, and she has been very faithful to the evaluation plan and I would be very impressed because that is a hugely complex piece of work. (….) so I respect her and admire her for that.” (Funder 1)
The lack of engagement in the strategy development phase can create a lack of ownership which generates a situation where the programme’s theory is not fully comprehended. This was the case for CDI in relation to the Community Safety Initiative. The CEO was not engaged in the articulation of the programme’s theory, which created a gap of knowledge that impeded her understanding of the theory of change underpinning that particular programme. Indeed, the CEO noted that the function of a forum established for the Community Safety Initiative was difficult to grasp at first. In order to better understand the rationale underpinning this particular aspect of the programme, the CEO organised a meeting with someone who had been involved in the development of its governance structures:

“When I started in CDI on our governance chart was something called… something like The Integration Committee [for the Community Safety Initiative] or something like that. I can’t remember, but it was intended… Now this took me a long time to understand this. And I actually went and met somebody who’d been involved in doing the governance section of the strategy, who I’ve never met since and didn’t know before, but I went and met her because I just didn’t understand the thinking behind it.” (CDI team 9)

Both funders identified the change of leadership as a challenge in relation to ownership of the project. The change of leadership created a transitional period as the CEO became acquainted with the programmes and stakeholders. Continuity of leadership would have prevented this transitional period and made the implementation task easier in the early stages. A new leader however brings a new and objective perspective since he or she was not personally involved in the development of the programme. Therefore, although acknowledging the extensive challenge that a change of leadership created, a funder noted that this challenge was possibly outweighed by its positive effects. It may be better for the project implementer not to be the initiator of the programme:
“Yeah, I mean, I think it has been a very complex environment and a very complex project and also you have somebody coming into a job that wasn’t there from the very beginning, so they have [a] particular transition to manage that if they had been there from the beginning that they may not have had to manage. On the other hand, they came at a time that maybe brought a bit of fresh perspective which maybe wasn’t a bad thing, because you can get in to sort of an almost…what would you say religious… zealous view of what it is you are trying to do and almost not see the wood for the trees.” (Funder 2)

A change in leadership did not only occur at the level of the traditional leaders, with most of the implementers also not being involved in the development of CDI’s strategy. The majority of the CDI team started at the beginning of the implementation phase that followed the strategy development, a point at which some manuals needed to be completed and services finalised. The CDI team were therefore involved in the finalisation of the programmes, but not their whole development and this was explicitly identified as a challenge by some interviewees:

“In fact the manuals hadn’t been developed and the services hadn’t been designed, so we ended up working from the stage where the design of the services was at. So if you like we came in on to something that wasn’t complete but had already been started. So that was difficult enough I suppose for us all.” (CDI team 7)

“I suppose a challenge… Just part of the process, but initially trying to engage with the services. If you’re taking it in a chronological order, trying to engage services and trying to sell a particular programme without fully… not understanding what was involved with it (…)” (CDI team 3)

As indicated in the previous quotes, engaging with local partners and convincing them to enrol in the programme was particularly challenging at the early stages when the implementers were not yet completely familiar with the content. Not being involved in the early stages of the programme development made its implementation more demanding.
6.4.2 Partnership engagement challenges

Collaboration is known to have its challenges. In the case of CDI it was noted across interviews that engaging the school principals was one of the main challenges faced by both traditional leaders and implementers. Numerous meetings took place to explain CDI’s strategy and convince the principals that there were benefits to be had for their school from participating in the programme. At first, school principals were reticent as they did not perceive advantages to working with CDI. A strong strategy and secured funding does not necessarily mean that key stakeholders will want to engage in the project:

“I couldn’t tell you how many meetings I had with school principals, trying to find a way to present what we were doing as being of benefit to them. But most of the school principals… when I came on board and the team came on board… most of the school principals struggled to see any benefit for them in anything we were doing.” (CDI team 9)

In the opinion of a team member, a factor that contributed to the challenge of forming engaging and lasting partnerships was the perceived delay between the strategy development phase in 2003 and the start of the implementation of the services, which technically started in 2008. Whilst processes were moving forward to secure the funding, recruit the team, establish test sites, and complete manuals, there were no visible outputs to the community for a number of years. Keeping stakeholders engaged during that time was a challenge:

“Maybe there was a perceived delay between the consultation with the community back in 2002, 2003, 2004, and then getting the services up and running, which was 2008. So that was challenging because it was slow and the community weren’t seeing any kind of tangible outputs from CDI. So that was challenging. And keeping people on board, you know, making sure that you were involving everybody” (CDI team 12)

Once the school principals were on board, the working relationship between them and CDI remained challenging. Collaboration was not simply about engaging with stakeholders but also entailed developing and maintaining working relationships. As described in the section examining competencies, negotiation was an important aspect
of boundary spanners’ work. Maintaining a good working relationship with stakeholders who prove difficult to engage necessitates negotiation and communication. Schools were not necessarily used to working in collaboration with external organisations, and therefore, the working relationship was new and challenging to both parties. An interviewee expressed how finding the balance between satisfying school principals and implementing the programme within the timeframe was a challenge:

“Schools have always been a big challenge in terms of, I suppose, developing a partnership where it’s not just the school that gets to call what is happening. So we have to say ‘Well look, we have to start those dates, because we have a whole year programme to fill in. And I know you’d rather us wait three weeks until everyone has settled down, but if we do that then we are out three weeks’. It’s trying to just develop, kind of just negotiate those… that you are not putting peoples back up but you are still trying to get what you want.” (CDI team 1)

Time was a key factor in successfully engaging with partners. In the case of schools, a Board member stated that the engagement process took about a year and a half. Nevertheless, CDI succeeded in engaging with parents and teachers:

“So they went about it [the implementation] in a very organised way. But again, because it was new it took a long time to get buy in from parents and teachers so it wasn’t ad hoc in any way. It would have taken the guts of 18 months to get it all on board.” (Board member 2)

Community engagement and partnership development are known to be challenging work and therefore persistence was vital to engaging with stakeholders, as CDI demonstrated through the efforts they put into engaging with school principals. Even with such effort, every so often partnerships will not be established:

“I mean sometimes you just have to realise you are just never going to get somebody on board. And you just have to let that go. And concentrate on the people and organisations that are on board in the hope eventually [that] the kind of reluctant partner will start to get curious and start to take an interest.” (Funder 1)
As noted in the previous quote, it is important to accept that some stakeholders might not engage with the organisation. In such a situation the best course is to continue with the programme and foster the working relationships that have been established with the hope that the reluctant partner might join at a later stage.

6.4.3 Blurred nature of boundaries between organisations

CDI, being a Comprehensive Community Initiative, had multiple strands and connections. The ISG and Children’s Services Committee (CSC) held a strong and intertwined relationship that created interdependencies. This strong link between local organisations was not always positively perceived. An ISG member expressed a sceptical point of view in relation to the consequences of regularly meeting the same representatives at various South Dublin committees. The interviewee did not criticise this occurrence, rather questioned whether it was beneficial or indeed potentially detrimental to regularly come across the same individuals on different committees:

“And since I started what I’m quite surprised at is, I mean, I sit on a number of different committees or I’m at the table at different meetings, and you’ll find - is it a good or a bad thing I’m not sure? - that you’re meeting a lot of the same senior people at these meetings to do with issues in South Dublin, all the time.” (ISG member 2)

Whilst the close connection between the two bodies had advantages, it also introduced challenges related to defining boundaries between the two structures, as well as possible duplication of work. Boundaries had already been an issue in the early stages of the development of the collaboration between CDI and the CSC. For example, CDI was asked not to provide a piece of interagency training by members of the ISG that also sit on the CSC. This created conflict between the two structures for two reasons. Firstly, because interagency work was part of CDI’s agenda, and secondly because some members perceived it as an inappropriate request:
“But we were asked not to deliver interagency induction training (...) by a few members of ISG who are also members of the CSC on the basis of a piece of work that was happening. And they wanted us to wait, and somebody else was doing something, and de de de de de... and I suppose I was very uncomfortable about that because nobody else is told not to do something.” (CDI team 9)

Furthermore, the fact that both structures had comparable agendas implied that similar topics were relevant to them. With the majority of ISG members also sitting on the CSC this meant that work was duplicated to some extent. The same discussions (e.g. restructuration of the HSE) could take place twice, once during an ISG meeting and another time during a CSC meeting. This was counterproductive in terms of time management. Since members of such structures attended the meetings on a voluntary basis, time was an important factor:

“I think if there’s an overlap it is in relation to the membership of the ISG and the CSC. Sometimes we might end up having the same conversation that we might have had the previous Friday, you know that kind of a way? Which is a good sign in a way, in as much as that’s greater cohesiveness coming through. And maybe that needs to be reviewed as regards everyone is under such pressure and time limitations.” (ISG member 1)

The strong relationship between the ISG and the CSC allowed for discussions to take place in the most appropriate setting. At times it was decided to discuss a topic in the other structure, or a discussion that occurred in one structure was continued in the other. This represented a challenge for the ISG members that were not involved in the CSC. They could be excluded from conversations that were still relevant to CDI and/or not have access to information given during CSC meetings:

“It’s been complicated by the fact that so many of us on the ISG, also sit at the CSC. So sometimes you end up having conversations that should really be happening at the CSC, or we have conversations at the ISG about the CSC, which is very difficult for the people who don’t go to the CSC.” (CDI team 9)
Overall, a strong relationship between structures such as the ISG and CSC led to challenges related being thrown up that boundaries being blurred at times. Nevertheless, both ISG members and CSC members\textsuperscript{88} were satisfied with the relationship between the two structures at the time of the interviews. The interviewees noted that challenges in relation to the exact role of each structure were clarified.

\textbf{6.4.4 Power balance issues}

Power imbalance can occur in various ways when organisations work together. In the case of CDI, some of the challenges identified related to funding rivalry. CDI was established in Tallaght West in recent years, after receiving a significant amount of funding from the Atlantic Philanthropies and the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. Two aspects of this reality created tensions. Firstly, CDI was a new organisation. Secondly, the organisation was well funded compared to other local organisations. Therefore, there was a power imbalance between CDI and other local organisations which ended up impacting relationships. This was pointed out by both members of the team and the governance structures. Although not always explicit, some organisations resented the fact such an important investment were made towards a new entity whilst some of their work was underfunded:

“I think sometimes, the fact that they’ve got so much money to do these projects, and you can see other people saying ‘I wish we had a bit of that…’. But that’s only a sense really, just my feeling about it sometimes, rather than we’ll say directly.” (ISG member 4)

“There was this figure being mentioned a lot in terms of investment, and with organisations who are well established for a number of years, who might have felt that the money might have gone to a better cause. So I think that was a challenge. But that was always going to be the case.” (CDI team 7)

\textsuperscript{88} Two of the ISG members were effectively the CSC coordinator and the CSC Chair, and therefore also provided a perspective from the CSC.
Another challenge related to power balance was the introduction of new ways of working. CDI commissioned a number of services to deliver new manual-based programmes. The contracts existing between CDI and its commissioned services stated that manuals should be followed to implement the programme with fidelity. Even with such clear guidance, introducing new ways of working was a challenge. For instance, a team member pointed out that change often encounters some opposition. An important part of boundary spanners’ work, and more specifically the interpreter/communicator role, is to engage partners through framing and sense-making. The CDI team therefore worked towards introducing new ways of working with partners or commissioned services. Despite team members stating that anxiety over change was a barrier to CDI’s work, change was proven possible and the barrier was overcome:

“There’s reluctance or resistance to trying new things or people doing things their own way. Especially with the Early Years programme, it can be a different way of doing things than ordinarily done in a preschool setting. So trying to get people around to that way of thinking… a challenge but I mean it’s a manageable challenge for sure.” (CDI team 3)

“(…) also the struggles we’ve had to put up with, that people are territorial, people are very threatened by change. And I think that has been managed really, really, well. You know, when you look at the resistance we have been up against from day one, and how that has been progressed.” (CDI team 5)

Finally, achieving a balance of power when there are different agendas can be difficult. For instance, in the case of CDI, the organisation and funders did not put the same emphasis on outcomes. CDI was very focused on the programme’s outcomes for the community whereas the funders’ agenda pointed towards learning lessons for future projects. Consequently, the concept of success could be defined in two different ways. For CDI, success encompassed further funding. For the funders, success meant the possibility of replicating the programme elsewhere. It is therefore important that both parties are satisfied with anticipated outcomes:
“The sites’ idea of success might be that they get funded forever. That might not necessarily be our idea of success. Our idea of success is “We’ve really learned a lot from this, we’ve made some impact on a particular community, and we can see a path forward as to how we want to reorganise services or change policy”. So, obviously we want to make sure those two agendas ultimately can both be fulfilled, but at the very least they don’t begin to cut across one another you know.” (Funder 2)

Boundary spanners’ competencies were fundamental to the resolution of challenges such as a lack of ownership, difficult partnership engagement, blurred boundaries, and power balance issues. Competencies such as communication, diplomacy, and good interpersonal skills are particularly central here.

6.4.5 Time constraints

Time has already been identified in this chapter as a limiting factor when it comes to partnership engagement, and it was also a major challenge identified across the membership of CDI. Traditional leaders and implementers both commented on how time-consuming a project such as CDI is. A team member noted that in the case of CDI financial resources were not an issue. However, time constrains were a significant challenge in implementing a complex social intervention. This was especially the case in regards to community engagement that was and is an inherently slow process:

“Oh the challenges yeah. It’s just about doing as much as you can with as little time as possible. It’s not that the resources are an issue. Time is an issue.” (CDI team 2)

“I think the short timeframes within which the work needed to be done was a huge challenge, because community development by its nature is a process that takes time even into generations!” (CDI team 7)

Board members also commented on time constraints. As noted previously, the time investment required from the Chairs of the Board was only sustainable over a limited period of time. While members did not need to invest as much time, reading the CEO’s report and participating on Board meetings was still time consuming. Therefore, a key challenge identified by Board members was related to time:
“Time, yeah. I mean, I work full time as well. Sometimes I feel I would like to be able to give it more time than I do. I don’t have the capacity to give it more. But in fairness I don’t miss any meetings, I attend everything, unless I’m on holidays or something like that, but time is what I would say.” (Board member 2)

Time constraints weighed on the implementation of CDI services to such an extent that some interviewees questioned the feasibility of such a project. CDI encompassed five services (i.e. ECCE, Doodle Den, Mate Tricks, Healthy Schools, and CSI) as well as a Quality Enhancement Programme. Recognising the ambition of an initiative such as CDI, some interviewees questioned the remit of the project. Indeed, some participants suggested that a smaller number of services might have eased the implementation process and avoided some challenges associated with workload:

“I think it was a very adventurous… it was a huge brief, a huge project to try and do. And I think it was very broad and I suppose that’s a challenge that there were so many parts to it. And I wonder if we’d concentrated on one or two, or maybe even three pieces, would it have felt that we were more effective? (CDI team 7)

“I suppose the other thing about implementing the strategy, I mean the big thing, is it’s so big. (…) Is it a realistic workload for one person to manage? And I do wonder is it too big really? Because things get lost. (…) I wonder if we needed to have fewer programmes yeah. Would that have been better?” (CDI team 9)

However, down scaling the number of services would have made the programme less comprehensive. This is not compatible with the principles underpinning Comprehensive Community Initiatives that aim at providing a holistic approach to tackle social issues.

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89 See chapter 4 for more detail.
6.5 Chapter summary

This chapter provided an overview of the leadership story that took place in CDI. First, the chapter illustrated different ways leadership took place through positions and structures. While there was no surprise that leadership took place through traditional leaders, it was also argued that leadership took place through implementers too. Both positions engaged in boundary spanning activities such as facilitating interagency collaboration, building and maintaining relationships with stakeholders, and building bridges between organisations. Moreover, it was demonstrated that leadership was not only conducted by those in positions, but was also carried out through governance structures. The Crosby and Bryson (2010) framework resonates here. Leadership resided in the function of the structure in the case of the Board, or in its members in the case of the ISG. Overall, this chapter has demonstrated that leadership was diffuse.

The Chapter then outlined various components of leadership as they appeared in the case of CDI. For leadership to occur an organisation needs a number of initial conditions, which include initiators with strong networks and a good understanding of the political context in which they are securing funding, as well as a shared vision that contributes to the creation of an organisational identity.

Once leadership is established it entails flexibility, as demonstrated through the changes that took place in CDI with regards to positions and structures. Those changes highlighted the different needs required at different stages of CDI’s lifecycle. The development phase, implementation phase, and mainstreaming phase, constituted contextual changes that CDI adapted to in terms of its function and membership of structures, as well as its team composition.

Beyond flexibility, leadership required strong processes and sound structures to allow for efficiency and accountability. It also entailed building connections, within and beyond CDI, facilitating the decision-making process towards reaching consensus, and fostering trust. To achieve such things leadership also entailed demonstrating particular
competencies that were in tune with those described by Williams’ (2010) in his framework on boundary spanners.

Finally, the chapter identified a number of challenges pertaining to leadership. Most of them were related to collaborative work and appeared to be diminished by boundary spanners’ competencies. Challenges relating to the lack of ownership were overcome with time. It was demonstrated that time was a considerable factor in complex social interventions, whether as a solution or a constraint.

In order to provide an account of leadership, this chapter included a substantial amount of data gathered during the process evaluation study, *CDI as Organisation: Examining the Processes and Relationships to Support Implementation*. The material exposed in this chapter became the basis of the conclusions drawn in the final process evaluation study about the importance of organisational processes and relationships, and more specifically leadership, in the implementation of a programme.
Chapter 7
Discussion

7.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the feasibility and added value of bringing a focus upon leadership in theory-based evaluations. It brings together elements from previous chapters in order to make an argument that leadership analysis should be incorporated as standard part of evaluation methodology. It was argued here that theory-based approaches, like that documented for the case study evaluation of the Tallaght West Childhood Development Initiative, are the best suited for incorporating such a focus on leadership since they attempt to understand what works, for whom, and under what circumstances. Additionally, they make causal inferences about a programme’s success or failure. In the context of a theory-based evaluation, leadership can therefore be examined as one of several causal mechanisms impacting on programme.

This penultimate chapter first returns to evaluation theory and demonstrates how a focus on leadership can be introduced in theory-based evaluations. It then examines various elements of leadership, supporting the argument that it can be understood as a causal mechanism. The chapter proposes an enhanced framework for effective leadership that draws on the literature and findings previously discussed. Ethical issues surrounding the assessment of leadership are then discussed. Finally, findings are considered in light of the challenges associated with evaluation practice, such as the assessment of accountability in a shared-power world and time constraints.
7.2 Theory-based evaluations: context matters… people too

Theory-based evaluation theorists have established that context matters (Rossi and Wright, 1984; Chen, 1989; Weiss, 1995; Pawson and Tilley, 1997; Connell and Kubisch, 1998; Stame, 2004; Blamey and Mackenzie, 2007; Donaldson, 2007; Rogers, 2007; Coryn et al., 2011). Indeed, this evaluation approach pays particular attention to context, recognising its impact on a programme’s effectiveness (Blamey and Mackenzie, 2007). Theory-based evaluations aspire to open the black box in order to uncover explanations about why a programme worked or did not work, and to help differentiate between implementation failure and programme failure (Harachi et al., 1999; Donaldson and Lipsey, 2006; Astbury and Leeuw, 2010; Funnell and Rogers, 2011).

Increasingly, evaluation theorists assert that people also impact on programmes and evaluations. For instance, the quote appearing at the start of Chapter 1 was from Patton (2008), which acknowledged that people affect programmes. Funnell and Rogers (2011) identified specific programme facets that were influenced by people and Dyson and Todd (2010) referred to human resources as a programme’s input. Furthermore, writing about evaluation utilisation, Patton (2013:47) stated that “people matter”. Without the right people in the right place (i.e. individuals who care about evaluation findings) evaluations will not be utilised. This research similarly argued that without the right people in the right place programmes will not be implemented efficiently. Leadership is one of the many dimensions where people impact programmes, but it is a central one. This centrality is demonstrated through the finding that leadership indicators were discussed during interviews that did not focus on the topic.

Returning to evaluation theory, the case made here is that leadership can be considered as part of both Chen’s (2005) action and change models. It features most strongly in the action model, which is the “systematic plan for arranging staff, resources, settings, and support organisations in order to reach a target population and deliver intervention of services” (Chen, 2005a: 23). This model includes elements such as the programme
implementers and associate organisations (Chen, 2005b: 341) that speak directly to collaborative leadership. Yet, leadership can also be understood as part of his change model, which instead looks at what actions must be taken for a programme to work (Chen, 2005a).

Bringing a focus on leadership as a causal mechanism is compatible with both of the two prominent types of theory-based evaluation: the theory of change approach and realist evaluation. The results of the fieldwork undertaken for this research demonstrated that in practice interviews, documentary analysis, and observations are efficient methods with which to gather data pertaining to leadership. Theoretically however, the way that leadership can be considered in the theory of change approach and in realist evaluation differs.

Incorporating a focus on leadership as a causal mechanism in realist evaluation is fairly straightforward. Realist evaluations draw on the idea that the black box is inhabited by people (Stame, 2004: 62). They focus on generative causation through the examination of CMO configurations, configurations that are the links between context (C), mechanism (M), and outcome (O) (Pawson and Tilley, 1997, 2005). Any programme that is considered by realist evaluations contains numerous CMO configurations. The argument made here is that leadership can be introduced as a mechanism in a CMO configuration, as is illustrated in Figure 22. Consequently, leadership is part of one of the many CMO configurations that realist evaluations examine in order to make causal inferences about a programme’s success or failure.
Introducing a focus on leadership in a theory of change approach can appear a bit less intuitive at first. Indeed, some theory of change approaches can be limited to describing the occurrence of elements of the logic model (Weiss, 1997; Rogers et al., 2000; Mackenzie and Blamey, 2005; Rogers, 2007). If no causal inferences are made about a programme, a focus on leadership has little, if any, added value since such a focus is designed to primarily contribute to understanding the reasons behind a programme’s success or failure. However, some theory of change approaches do aim to make causal inferences and consider “the links between activities, outcomes and contexts of the initiative” (Connell and Kubisch, 1998: 18). In such cases, leadership can be introduced as a causal mechanism that activates the links between activities, outcomes, and contexts as illustrated in Figure 23. Leadership can explain the relationship between activities, contexts, and outcomes.
In both cases, it is argued that leadership is a causal mechanism that triggers the relationship between the treatment variables (i.e. activities) of a programme and its outcomes. Without efficient leadership a programme with a sound theory cannot be implemented effectively and will not generate the anticipated change. Furthermore, it also contributes to the assessment of the programme’s worth. Worth, for instance, is difficult to judge without having information on the contextual factors that help to make a programme a success or failure (Chen, 1989). Such information is crucial for informing programme improvement and potential replication. It can also be combined with the policy transfer literature in order to support understanding of how programmes can be assimilated in new policy environments, such as a new country (Brady and Curtin, 2012).

It is therefore vital to learn both more about leadership features in the context of programmes which tackle wicked issues, and also about how evaluations can assess them. The following section, 7.3, brings together key findings from this research with the literature reviewed in order to propose an enhanced framework for effective leadership that provides benchmarks for future evaluations.

Figure 23: Leadership in theory of change approaches
7.3 Leadership, a causal mechanism

This section discusses the key findings of the research in relation to collaborative leadership. They are the consideration of structures as a component of leadership, the examination of relevant actors through the boundary spanners’ framework, and the understanding of leadership within implementation phases. The last section reviews the use of the leadership frameworks proposed in Chapter 3 and used in Chapter 5 and 6, to propose a set of five features that can be examined as part of evaluations.

7.3.1 Considering structures as a component of leadership

Huxham and Vangen (2000) note that classical approaches to leadership put the leader at the heart of their studies. Contrastingly, contemporary approaches argue that leadership takes place in a shared-power world and no single person is in charge (Crosby and Bryson, 2005). Therefore, the consideration of leadership cannot be limited to solely examining traditional leaders, it needs to adapt to new ways of governance. This research demonstrated that in post-modern organisations such as CDI leadership took place not only through positions but also through governance structures. Crosby and Bryson’s (2010) framework for collaborative leadership (introduced in Chapter 3) presented an interesting approach for the examination of structures. Indeed, structure and governance are one of five categories whose analysis allows the understanding of leadership in their view. The central position given to structures within the framework generated a key section regarding the importance of governance structures in Chapter 6’s leadership story.

In the case of CDI two governance structures were important for collaborative leadership: the Board, which had the function to lead the implementation, and the ISG, of which its members were composed of local leaders. Returning to the literature on collaborative governance structures, CDI structures can be characterised as self-governing structure since decisions were taken during regular meetings. This type of structure does not have the same characteristics as those of a lead agency that provides
the decision-making or those of a network administrative organisation that oversees affairs relating to the collaboration (Provan and Kenis, 2005, cited in Crosby and Bryson, 2010). The setting up of CDI structures was done in a top-down approach as described in Chapter 6, with strong initiators deciding the remit of various structures and the CEO embedding a shared vision in the team. Whilst a bottom-up approach is more inclusive, a top-down settlement allows structures and mechanisms to be promptly established and operational (Crosby and Bryson, 2010).

Another key difference appearing between the Board and the ISG was the level of attendance at meetings and the extent to which membership changed. Indeed, the ISG’s membership did not change much between 2007 and 2011 whilst the Board went through a greater number of changes over the same period of time. Still, the level of attendance at Board meetings was higher than that of ISG meetings. These variations suggest that attendance level is greater when determined by individual motivation rather than organisational constraint. Indeed, Board members had individually chosen to join the structure and had the option to resign while ISG members were mandated by their organisation. This echoes the contemporary literature which indicates that in collaborations the source of motivation (i.e. mandated or not) impacts on the type of relationship established (Alexander et al., 2001).

Finally, the research brought to light the way the organisation adapted to different phases of a lifecycle. Figure 24 summarises the changes in leadership that occurred during the three phases of CDI’s lifecycle (i.e. strategy development, implementation, and mainstreaming). Crosby and Bryson (2010) state that governance structures should be flexible and adapt to the context, possibly by the means of integrating new members and through the act of seeking leadership succession. Chapter 6 revealed that the Board was a flexible structure because a smooth transition between phase one and two was possible thanks to the original Project Leader chairing the structure at first. Traditional leaders (i.e. chairs) actively sought their replacement and the membership adapted to circumstances. The Chair of the Board again changed for a second time at the end of
the implementation phase, as shown in Figure 24. Such developments prove that in the case of the Board members have changed in a way that suited the structure’s evolving needs as CDI moved through its lifecycle phases. On the other hand, the function of the structure remained unchanged. Returning to key findings in chapter 6 it can be seen that in the case of the Board leadership was found in its function, not within its expert members. The function of the structure was therefore remaining stable in order to guarantee leadership whereas membership was changing to enable its flexibility. This combination produced a balanced governance structure.

Precisely the opposite was the case of the ISG, that provided leadership through not greatly changing its membership (members of the consortium sustained their engagement by becoming part of the ISG, creating a transition between phase one and two). In order gain its flexibility its function adapted to the mainstreaming phase through the modifications made to its terms of reference (e.g. including a focus on dissemination). Balance was subsequently also achieved for this governance structure.

Figure 24: CDI’s leadership throughout its lifecycles
As indicated in Chapter 3, collaborative settings required both continuity (i.e. stability) and change (i.e. fresh ideas) in leadership (Alexander et al., 2001). CDI’s model of governance appeared to have successfully found a balance between continuity and flexibility in both the Board and ISG.

7.3.2 Examining actors through the framework of boundary spanners

The boundary spanners’ framework proposed by Williams (2002, 2010) was used to set benchmarks against which to seek leadership indicators in interview transcripts, and also as a framework with which to stimulate discussion during the interviews. Both approaches demonstrated the applicability and pertinence of the framework in the context of this research.

Furthermore, Williams’ (2010) framework helped overcome a criticism made towards Crosby and Bryson’s (2010) model, which was that although “they involve multi-actor complexity, they focus on single leaders using a variety of methods to facilitate interactions between mutually dependent actors” (Nooteboom and Termeer, 2013: 2). Through also deploying Williams’ (2010) framework, this research considered that both traditional leaders and implementers are leaders.

The retro-analysis used key words from the framework as indicators of leadership. Both methods used (i.e. text search query and manual coding) facilitated the identification of a significant number of indicators in the transcripts. Overall, the retro-analysis revealed that leadership is implicitly captured by evaluations. Furthermore, the references found throughout the analysis related to the three roles of boundary spanners, confirming the validity of Williams’ typology.

‘Communication’ and ‘relationships’, competencies associated with the role of interpreter/communicator (Williams, 2010), were prominent in both the text search query and the manual coding. This prominence in the retro-analysis correlates with the similar centrality of the role of interpreter/communicator the interviews documented in...
Chapter 6. Indeed, except for Board members for whom the framework was not so pertinent as internal experts rather than boundary spanners, all the other interviewees declared using competencies associated with the role of interpreter/communicator. The competencies associated with the roles of reticulist and entrepreneur were used more specifically. ISG members for instance were more inclined towards using reticulist and interpreter/communicator competencies. Most team members presented some of the competencies associated with at least two of the three roles. However, there was no distinctive pattern amongst team members in relation to which role best represented their work. Generally, implementers employed some of the competencies from all three of the roles, but they did not declare as traditional leaders did that they were able to use all competencies presented in the framework.

The literature indicates that the role of interpreter/communicator is particularly important in collaborative settings (Williams, 2012). The role is becoming essential in structures such as Boards where community representatives are more and more involved. Indeed, communication needs to be clarified (i.e. jargon needs to be translated) to allow participation of community members in decision-making and to build consensus. Therefore, Williams (2012) suggests that the Chair of such structures should be an interpreter/communicator. This was the case in CDI, where traditional leaders such as the Board Chairs confirmed they had all of the competencies identified in the framework, including those associated with the role of interpreter/communicator. Yet, Board members did not identify with such roles. Hence, this research concludes that a governance structure providing leadership as part of its function does not necessarily need to be composed of boundary spanners, but requires a good Chair with multiple competencies ranging across the roles of reticulist, entrepreneur, and interpreter/communicator.

The boundary spanner framework did not appear to be fully adequate for the administration team. As indicated in Chapter 5, most interviewees spent on average six minutes discussing the boundary spanners framework whereas members of the
administration team took on average three minutes doing the same. Furthermore, one of the two administrative team members interviewed indicated that the roles of reticulist and entrepreneur were not representative of the work undertaken. Chapter 6 concluded that the administrative team did not fit the conception of post-modern leadership since the work was limited to intra-organisational aspects.

Nevertheless, Williams’ framework has been updated and refined over time. As outlined in Chapter 3, the roles of reticulist and entrepreneur were identified first (Williams, 2002), and the role of interpreter/communicator was added at a later stage (Williams, 2010). The framework, comprising the three different roles, was used for this research in 2011. Since then, the model was further developed to include the role of coordinator (Williams, 2012). This role encompasses the aspect of a boundary spanners’ work which relates to the organisation of collaborations. Planning and coordinating collaboration with multiple actors who work for different organisations is a complex and time-consuming task. Therefore, Williams (2012) identifies the role of coordinator as one of the facets of boundary spanners’ work. The role\textsuperscript{30} entails the logistical management required to organise the process of collaboration, such as maintaining efficient and current contact lists, arranging mutually convenient meetings, collecting, organising and disseminating information, producing minutes of meetings, assembling and monitoring work programmes, progress chasing, and producing publicity (Williams, 2012: 52). This role is similar to the positions of those on the administrative team in CDI\textsuperscript{91}. To some extent, the fourth category proposed by Williams (2012) covers tasks and competencies performed by a section of CDI’s key players for whom the framework was not pertinent. Yet, members of the administrative

\textsuperscript{30} Competencies associated with the role include: being able to develop good working relationships with various stakeholders, effective communication, and well developed networking skills.

\textsuperscript{91} If the framework had been available at the time of the fieldwork, it would have been interesting to get the view of CDI’s administrative team on how well this role describes with their work.
team cannot be considered as boundary spanners because of their lack of responsibility towards outcomes. The administrative team supported the work of the boundary spanners more than it took part in boundary spanning activities.\(^\text{92}\)

Williams (2012) states that some boundary spanners have positions dedicated to the coordination of a partnership, but that often little resources are given such administrative support. A lack of administrative support impacts on the work of boundary spanners in terms of time management. Time was identified in Chapter 3 as a requirement for building collaboration and partnership (Ranade and Hudson, 2003; Kubisch et al., 2010), and in Chapter 6 as both a pre-requisite for enabling trust and as something, that if deficient, escalated the challenges when implementing complex initiatives. Therefore, this research illustrates how an administrative team with competencies close to those of the roles of coordinator and communicator/interpreter was an asset for an organisation.

To conclude, Williams framework has proven useful to identify competencies used in CDI. However, the framework was not pertinent for every stakeholder. Figure 25, drawing on the findings of this research, shows that CDI’s key players can be organised in four categories: the leaders, the implementers, the experts (i.e. Board members) and the administrative team. The administrative team and experts provided support to both traditional leaders and implementers. Indeed, the administrative team worked closely with the CDI team as well as with the CEO and Chairs, and the experts provided input for both the Chair of the Board and in some cases other governance sub-committees. However, their support was solely internal to CDI. Contrasting, traditional leaders and implementers crossed organisational boundaries and expended their work and support in various directions.

\(^{92}\) For instance, the administrative team organised the meetings and facilitated the room booking and provision of snacks, but the responsibility of identifying a schedule that was convenient for a wide range of different actors fell to the chair of the structure.
7.3.3 Understanding leadership within implementation phases

The manner in which changes in leadership in CDI were parallel to the organisation’s lifecycle phases brought to light the importance of such stages in a programme. Different leadership was required at different moments. For instance, the original Project Leader established the organisation, which required a vision, and the programme of work was implemented by the CEO, whom was more task orientated. Similar stages are identified in the management literature (Volkoff et al., 1999). Yet, the nature of the transition period that took place when the original Project Leader became the Chair of the Board introduces further considerations about the implementation phase. Indeed, the Chair of the Board changed at a key point between the implementation and mainstreaming phase. This suggests that the change of Chair within the implementation phase could indicate a shift in the organisation’s focus during that period.
Whilst the general evaluation literature does not provide much indication about different phases of implementation, the implementation science literature does. When considering the possibility of an organisational shift during CDI’s implementation phase in the context of some of the implementation literature, it became clear that phase two contains distinctive stages. The consolidated framework for implementation research identifies the process of implementation as one of five domains (Damschroder et al., 2009). The framework identifies four key activities within the implementation process that often occur in organisational change models:

- **Planning** involves deciding what actions should be undertaken to implement the programme, possibly through building local capacity. The framework indicates that planning steps can draw on existing theories used to promote change. The change model described by Chen (2005a) and outlined in Chapter 3 resonates here. It can be further argued that the planning stage could also encompass the articulation of the programme theory, if it was not clearly delineated during the strategy development.

- **Engaging** encompasses the activities aimed at involving suitable individuals in both the implementation and use of the intervention. This entails finding implementation leaders whose influence can be assessed through their presence or absence, how they got engaged (e.g. appointed or volunteer), and their role in the organisation and implementation (Damschroder et al., 2009). It also echoes the findings related to leadership in post-modern organisations.

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93 Implementation science is not considered in Chapter 2 alongside with the evaluation literature in order to emphasise the disconnection between the two disciplines. It also allows a better representation of the process of reflection during this research since I came across implementation science and realised how central it is to programme evaluation whilst discussing the findings.

94 The CFIR proposes a comprehensive model embracing common concepts from various publications related to 19 implementation theories. As a starting point, it uses Greenhalgh et al.’s (2004) conceptual model that synthesises approximately 500 published sources. It therefore provides an overview of implementation science.
outlined earlier in this chapter. Furthermore, some evaluation theorists (Funnell and Rogers, 2011) consider the engagement of beneficiaries and their adherence to the programme as an element of the causal chain between implementation and final outcomes. A lack of engagement by beneficiaries causes engagement or adherence failure that can explain a programme’s failure, in a similar way to both implementation failure and theory failure (Funnell and Rogers, 2011).

- **Executing** entails putting the plan into action. The quality of execution can be assessed through the fidelity with which the programme was implemented, the intensity of implementation (quality and depth), the timeframe, and the degree of engagement of key implementation leaders in the process (Damschroder et al., 2009). Such elements are usually examined in process evaluations through the three domains (i.e. fidelity, organisation, and utility).

- **Reflecting and evaluating the implementation** involves qualitative and quantitative feedback related to the quality and progress of implementation, possibly through team meetings, reports, and anecdotes. This, as with the other activities of the implementation process that are mentioned in the framework, can take place at any time since the activities proposed are non-linear and not necessarily sequential (Damschroder et al., 2009).

In the case of CDI, it appears that the change of leader during the implementation phase did indicate a shift in the process of implementation. Drawing on the material in Chapter 6 and elements of the consolidated framework for implementation research, it is argued here that CDI’s implementation phase was divided into two stages which correspond with the change of the Chair of the Board. The first stage (i.e. Stage A) was where the original Project Leader took this role, planning the implementation, as well as engaging various stakeholders (e.g. CEO, team, members of governance structures) and beneficiaries. As illustrated in Figure 26, the second period (i.e. Stage B) of implementation started in 2009 with the appointment of a new Board Chair (see Figure
24) following the roll out of the first year’s services. The new Chair was responsible for the execution of the implementation. Whilst most of the planning and engagement took place in stage A, it does not imply that none happened in stage B. Indeed, new team and board members were recruited. Yet, most of the engagement and planning took place in the first stage of the implementation phase. Reflection is the fourth activity identified in the framework (Damschroder et al., 2009) and took place throughout the implementation phase with strong processes established early on.

![CDI's different stages of the implementation phase](image)

**Figure 26: CDI's different stages of the implementation phase**

The way in which the change of the Chair of the Board indicated a shift in implementation processes supports the argument that leadership adapts to different phases of an organisation’s lifecycle. Furthermore, some elements of the consolidated framework for implementation research (Damschroder et al., 2009) reflect the findings of this research. For instance:

- Structural characteristics mentioned in implementation science show a parallel with various elements discussed in Chapter 6 such as adaptable governance structures.
- Networks and communications echo this research findings related to boundary spanners competencies.
Characteristics of individuals such as knowledge and beliefs about the intervention can be linked to a possible lack of ownership.

Individual identification with an organisation suggests that leaders have established a shared vision.

7.3.4 Enhanced framework for effective leadership in post-modern organisations

Crosby and Bryson’s framework was used as a lens to analyse the data generated through interviews, documentary analysis, and observations. As demonstrated in Chapter 5, findings related to leadership could be classified through the various categories identified by Crosby and Bryson. This supported the argument that the data generated provided information that allowed the understanding of leadership in a collaborative context. In that respect, the use of the framework was successful.

Yet, the use of Crosby and Bryson’s framework also presented some challenges. During the interview analysis it was at times difficult to decide which category was best suited to the data. More specifically, it was particularly difficult to make a distinction between two of the categories: ‘processes and practices’, and ‘structure and governance’. Indeed the two categories are intertwined. For instance, data related to how decision-making was facilitated could have been coded under a number of their sub-categories (i.e. ‘governance mechanism and structures’, or ‘forging agreements’, or ‘building trust’). Of course, categories of a framework are not entirely impermeable; they are to be taken as guidelines supporting an approach rather than strict instructions on how to undertake the analysis. For example, Crosby and Bryson place ‘existing relationships’ and ‘networks’ in the category of ‘initial conditions’. The findings of this research are in agreement with the categorisation, since it was demonstrated that CDI’s ‘initial conditions’ comprised strong initiators with a good network. However, it is argued here that ‘relationships’ and ‘networks’ can be considered as an organic process that evolves with time and over the various phases of an organisation’s work. Therefore, they have a central role in a framework designed to examine leadership.
To overcome these challenges, data was reorganised in Chapter 6 to provide a coherent and complete picture of the leadership story. The Crosby and Bryson framework informed both the structuring of the data generated in Chapter 5 and the first wave of analysis in Chapter 6. A second wave of analysis, that was inductive (i.e. data led), then informed the final structure of Chapter 6. Hence, although original in its own right, the structure of Chapter 6 exhibits strong links with the Crosby and Bryson framework.

Based on the experience of using the framework proposed by Crosby and Bryson (2010), the research findings, and the relevant literature, it is argued here that leadership in post-modern organisations comprises the five essential features listed below. The enhanced framework proposed integrates three key changes. First, it positions ‘relationships’ as an important feature in the centre of the framework, because they are essential to collaborative leadership. Second, it incorporates the boundary spanner competencies identified by Williams (2010) as they are critical to the efficient implementation of complex social interventions. Third, it makes ‘contingencies and constraints’ a flexible and permeable category that incorporates context-dependent challenges. For each feature the sections of this thesis and the literature which support the existence of that feature are noted in Table 34.

- **Favourable initial conditions:** This feature comprises aspects that were examined in the first process evaluation for CDI such as the context, origins of the programme and strategy development. Favourable initial conditions also entail having one or more initiators that have political appreciation, networking skills, and the capacity to establish a shared vision that will facilitate collaboration and contribute to creating a common identity.
- **Flexible leadership:** The traditional leaders, implementers, and structures of an organisation need to demonstrate flexibility and adapt to the different phases of the organisation’s lifecycle (i.e. development, implementation, and mainstreaming) and its changing needs. Membership ought to be reviewed on
a regular basis, and staff turnover can be an occasion to redesign positions if needed.

- **Sound structures and strong working relationships:** Clear and strong procedures such as Board reports, team meetings, and action sheets also need to be established to ensure accountability. Governance structures must be connected, possibly through Board members chairing other sub-committees and the CEO acting as a connector as it was the case for CDI. Connections also have to be built outside of the organisation through being active in other committees to allow information sharing, identification of duplicated work, greater coordination of services, and better use of resources. This is not feasible without trust and good interpersonal relationships which can be fostered through formal events (e.g. The Story So Far event, trainings) as well as informal ones (e.g. volleyball league, BBQs). In the case of post-modern organisations this also entails that decision-making takes place through a facilitative process and aims at reaching consensus.

- **Identified challenges:** Challenges pertaining to leadership which were identified in this research were very much linked to collaboration (i.e. lack of ownership, partnership engagement, blurriness of boundaries, power balance, and time). This list can constitute a starting point of reference. However, a limitation of the Crosby and Bryson model was the restriction associated with the list of typical contingencies and constraints. Therefore, here it is argued that challenges are context-dependent and have to remain open to be identified inductively.

- **Boundary spanners’ competencies:** Competencies required for successful leadership are best described by the boundary spanner framework, except for the case of the administrative team and the experts involved within the Board. Communication and relationship-building skills are important competencies as they appear to be dominant in the literature as well as both findings chapters.
Table 34: Sections of the thesis and literature supporting the argument

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Section of the thesis</th>
<th>Literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Favourable initial conditions</td>
<td>5.4 Conclusion 6.3.1 Favourable initial conditions 6.3.1.1 Initiators with networks 6.3.1.2 Shared vision</td>
<td>Political appreciation Williams, 2002, 2010, 2012 Crosby and Bryson, 2005 Kubisch et al., 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible leadership</td>
<td>6.3.2 Flexible positions and structures 6.3.2.1 Traditional leaders that change 6.3.2.2 Membership that varies 6.3.2.4 Governance structures that are adaptable</td>
<td>Networking Williams, 2002, 2010, 2012 Cross and Prusak, 2002; Ranade and Hudson, 2003 Crosby and Bryson, 2005, 2010 McGuire, 2006 Silvia and McGuire, 2010 Brion et al., 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound structures and strong working relationships</td>
<td>5.3.1.1 Type of data generated (interviews) 5.3.2.1 Type of data generated (documentary analysis) 6.2.2 Governance structures 6.2.2.1 The Board, the experts 6.2.2.2 The Implementation Support Group, the local organisations 6.3.2.4 Governance structures that are adaptable 6.3.3 Strong processes and relationships 6.3.3.1 Having sound structures and clear procedures 6.3.3.2 Building connections within CDI and externally 6.3.3.4 Fostering trust</td>
<td>Shared vision Crosby and Bryson, 2005 Alexander et al., 2001 Kubisch et al., 2010 Silvia and McGuire, 2010 Williams and Sullivan, 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Flexibility Crosby and Bryson, 2010 Williams, 2010, 2012 Pinkerton et al., 2000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The five features identified can be used for future evaluations as a framework to assess collaborative leadership in post-modern organisations. Table 35 proposes five general evaluative questions that would allow for the assessment of leadership. For each question a set of sub-questions is also identified.
Table 35: Evaluative questions to assess leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General questions</th>
<th>Sub-questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.</strong> Were there favourable initial conditions for the establishment and</td>
<td>● Did the initiators of the programme have political appreciation and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>implementation of the programme?</td>
<td>networking skills?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Was a shared vision established amongst stakeholders?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.</strong> Does leadership (i.e. structures and positions) demonstrate sufficient</td>
<td>● Are the governance structures adapting to the organisation’s changing needs?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flexibility to allow efficient implementation?</td>
<td>● Is the membership of governance structures reviewed on a regular basis?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Are traditional leaders changing appropriately to suit the different</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>phases of an organisation’s lifecycle without creating discontinuity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.</strong> Does the organisation hold sound structures and has it successfully</td>
<td>● Does the organisation have clear and strong procedures?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>established good working relationships, both internally and externally?</td>
<td>● Are the governance structures well connected internally?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Is the organisation establishing and maintaining good working relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>externally?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.</strong> What challenges impacted on the implementation?</td>
<td>● Did stakeholders identify challenges to the programme’s implementation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● What are they?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Were they overcome?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5.</strong> Are the relevant competencies present amongst leaders and implementers?</td>
<td>● Do leaders and implementers have boundary spanner competencies?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● What other competencies are they using?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Whilst this is not an exhaustive approach to leadership, it provides a guideline to the key features that support effective leadership. This is particularly relevant for evaluations that consider the context of a programme and seek to make causal inferences about its success or failure. It is less relevant for evaluations seeking to assess a leadership programme\(^{95}\), or an evaluation solely focusing on leadership. For instance, Tilley (2010) examines the possibility of evaluating public leadership using a realistic approach. In this case, the premise is that public leadership is introduced as a programme to counteract issues such as interagency conflict. Tilley (2010) argues that leadership is best evaluated in the light of mechanisms, context, and outcomes – the three core elements of realist evaluations – in order to understand what type of leadership works, in what ways, and for whom. In this case, leadership was the sole focus of the evaluation. The argument of this research is different. While Tilley (2010) demonstrates that it is possible to assess leadership through a realistic approach, this research examines leadership as a causal mechanism in theory-based evaluations. Accordingly, leadership is not understood in the light of mechanisms, context, and outcomes, but as a mechanism in one of many CMO configurations. Furthermore, leadership is explored through a macro level perspective establishing a theory of change based on organisational dynamics rather than on individual skills or personality features. This counteracts the criticisms usually made about leadership frameworks often focusing on the micro level and strengthens the theoretical claims being made for “collaborative leadership” and “boundary spanners” frameworks.

### 7.4 Ethical issues surrounding the assessment of leadership

It is important for a research to identify ethical issues, analyse them, and discuss their implications. Globally, evaluation associations have acknowledged this need for ethicality (Patton, 2008). Stufflebeam (2007, cited in Patton, 2008: 546) states that

\(^{95}\) In this case, the features to be examined in the context of a theory-based evaluation would be identified in the programme’s theory.
“ethicality requires the studies to be morally upright, honest, fair, respectful, honourable, professionally responsible, and accountable; to be free of graft, fraud, and abuse; and to manifest due regard to the welfare of those involved in or affected by the evaluation”. In the case of this research, a key issue is linked to ethics: the topic’s sensitivity and its impact on evaluation. It was established that leadership is a sensitive topic in Chapter 5. Indeed, a team member indicated that an interview, which included questions about leadership, was particularly difficult compared to other interviews undertaken with the same interviewer. A specific question concerning the CEO’s impact on processes and relationships generated surprise and possibly discomfort amongst participants.

This research argues against the examination of personal attributes when incorporating a focus on leadership in evaluation methodology. There are two reasons underpinning this argument. The first one is theoretical and draws on the leadership literature. The second one is practical and considers the impact it would have on an evaluation. Practical solutions to overcome this challenge are proposed in section 7.4.3 after both arguments are exposed in sections 7.4.1 and 7.4.2.

### 7.4.1 Theoretical argument

Describing personal attributes was part of the prevalent trait-spotting approach used during the early stage of modern studies of leadership in the 1940s. Researchers were trying to identify attributes (traits and characteristics) that could be linked to effective leadership (Silvia and McGuire, 2010). As described in Chapter 3 however, leadership studies then moved away from trait approaches for various reasons. For instance, Stogdill (1948, cited in Wren et al., 2004) argued that traits alone are insufficient to explain good leadership. Others have deemed the correlation between traits and effective leadership to be often weak (Yulk, 2002, cited in Fernandez, 2005; Bass, 2008; Thompson and McHugh, 2009). Additionally, the list of traits identified was becoming too large to be meaningful (Silvia and McGuire, 2010). The approach was
also criticised by feminists for focusing on stereotypically male traits such as dominance, aggressiveness, and rationality (Buchanan and Huczynski, 2007; Thompson and McHugh, 2009). Whilst trait-spotting is still used in contemporary studies (Buchanan and Huczynski, 2007), approaches considering personal attributes are no longer compatible with the type of leadership taking place in post-modern organisations. Indeed, as demonstrated in Chapter 5 and discussed previously in this chapter, leadership and accountability are diffused across a number of positions and structures (Crosby and Bryson, 2010; Williams, 2012) so making the examination of an individual’s personal attributes is irrelevant in this context. Finally, some authors such as Stogdill (1948, cited in Wren et al., 2004) consider that leadership is a role rather than a set of characteristics.

7.4.2 Practical argument

Chapter 2 introduced the description of evaluations being at times a “culturally violent activity” (Dahler-Larsen, 2012) that entails “evaluation anxiety” (Donaldson, 2005). Relationships between evaluators and stakeholders are asymmetrical and affected by power dynamics (Kushner, 2005; Canavan, 2006). This is particularly the case in theory-based approaches since they require stronger interfaces with stakeholders than other types of evaluation (Rossi et al., 2004; Donaldson and Lipsey, 2006). Evaluation anxiety can become problematic when it attains a level where it impedes stakeholders’ collaboration (Donaldson, 2005). Whilst this research did not prompt such a level of anxiety, the challenges outlined in Chapter 5 in relation to the topic’s sensitivity do resonate. A sensitive topic such as leadership, especially if approached through considering personal attributes, has the potential to increase anxiety to a level that could hinder the evaluation. In other words, if individuals involved in the

\[96\]

96 The researcher’s observations and the depth of responses gathered throughout the 24 interviews indicate that the evaluation anxiety level did not reach an intensity impeding the research process.
establishment and implementation of a programme are worried about being personally evaluated because leadership is examined amongst other mechanisms, they could potentially refuse to engage with the evaluation. If their participation is compulsory because the evaluation is mandated by funders, it can be assumed that their reluctance will negatively impact data collection, especially interviews. As demonstrated in Chapter 5, interviews are the most efficient method for collecting data pertaining to leadership. Therefore, introducing a focus on a topic that raises evaluation anxiety amongst key informants could be counterproductive, creating a context that is incompatible with the completion of an evaluation.

Another reflection arose during this research, related to the use of possible negative findings regarding leadership. Negative findings are at times very difficult to deal with and in the context of evaluations they can entail the termination of a programme. If leadership is examined at an individual level, negative findings could have negative consequences such as dismissals. The Programme Evaluation Standards (Patton, 2008) include ethical guidance on how to protect human subjects’ rights and the Guiding Principles for Evaluators (American Evaluation Association, 2004) indicate that evaluators should respect the security, dignity, and self-worth of respondents. The protection of participants is a priority for evaluators and concerns around the promise of confidentiality when it cannot be guaranteed is considered to be one of the most serious violation of ethics (Morris, 2005). This is consistent with MacDonald’s (1976, cited in Greene, 2006) approach to democratic evaluation that underlines the need for evaluators to act democratically (i.e. with fairness, relevance, and accuracy), especially when using a case study methodology since the information gathered can impact the participants. Incorporating a focus on leadership in theory-based evaluations aims at providing more information on causal mechanisms without harming or putting participants at risk. Whilst this research produced positive findings regarding

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97 A democratic evaluator considers the public’s interest as well as the commissioners and experts (Greene, 2006)
leadership in the case of CDI, it is important to consider what may happen in the opposite case and propose solutions.

### 7.4.3 Solutions

First and foremost, the integration of a focus on leadership in an evaluation study requires the evaluation to start with an evaluability assessment. It is vital to determine whether stakeholders are open and interested in such a focus or whether it might encounter resistance and increase evaluation anxiety. In the case the organisation does not show resistance, two potential solutions are available for the challenges identified in sections 7.4.1 and 7.4.2: the clustering of individuals to ensure anonymity, and indirect examination of leadership.

This research recommends that interviewees are not examined individually but as part of a group. The clustering of participants ensures that individuals are not identifiable. Anonymity is essential, both to lessen evaluation anxiety and to ensure that evaluators act democratically with the participants’ best interests in mind. Because of its potential negative impact on key informants, bringing a focus on leadership requires a stronger emphasis on anonymity than other topics being evaluated. The clustering of individuals avoids the risk of negative findings being used against individuals. When leadership is examined through groups of actors and structures negative findings can be managed without difficulty. The literature stresses that evaluators can provide suggestions to overcome issues identified during a study (Chen, 1989, 2004; Stufflebeam and Shinkfield, 2007). Hypothetically, in the case of weak leadership recommendations could include the reorganisation of governance structures or the delivery of training with a focus on governance or interagency work.

This reflection reinforces the argument that evaluations incorporating a focus on leadership do not need to consider personal attributes. Indeed, diffused leadership means that decision-making and accountability are shared. Hence, the sole way to capture such leadership is to consider groups of individuals involved in the
implementation of a programme. Throughout this research, leadership was examined through structures and clusters of positions (e.g. traditional leaders / implementers, or CDI team / Board members / ISG members). In this context, personal attributes are not the concern.

Another solution to overcome challenges relating to the topic’s sensitivity is to address leadership indirectly. General leadership dimensions (e.g. flexible leadership, favourable initial conditions) could be uncovered through asking more general questions that would not increase evaluation anxiety. Table 36 proposes an example of how data that was generated by a sensitive question could potentially be reached through the proxy of the five leadership features presented in the enhanced framework for effective leadership in post-modern organisations. For instance, data about a change of leadership can emerge through the examination of flexible leadership.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of data generated by a sensitive question</th>
<th>Leadership feature capturing the data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Change of leadership</td>
<td>Flexible leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board relationships with funders</td>
<td>Sound structures and strong relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political context</td>
<td>Favourable initial conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplomacy</td>
<td>Boundary spanners competencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal relationships</td>
<td>Sound structures and strong relationships</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Therefore, leadership can possibly be assessed without asking questions that might make interviewees feel uncomfortable. The overall evaluative questions associated with the five features identified in the enhanced framework for effective leadership

98 The question presented as an example here is the one pertaining to the CEO’s impact on the processes and relationships used to implement the strategy (outlined in Chapter 5 and mentioned previously in this chapter). Although it is the question that created the most discomfort amongst interviewees, it also generated rich and insightful data.
were identified previously. Evaluators can adapt those questions to the context of their work and/or decide to refine them and target specific aspects of each feature. Table 37 identifies more targeted interview questions that have the potential to capture the type of data generated by the sensitive question discussed here. Some of the questions marked by an asterisk were asked as part of the process evaluation study, *CDI as Organisation: Examining the Processes and Relationships to Support Implementation*.

Table 37: Interview questions that have the potential to cover leadership dimensions indirectly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of data to be reached</th>
<th>Question to ask</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Change of leadership</td>
<td>Has membership of your team/structure changed since you joined? If so, how?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board relationships with funders</td>
<td>What processes are in place between your team/structure and the funders? How would you describe relationships between your team/structure and the funders*?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political context</td>
<td>Can you tell me a bit about the political context surrounding the establishment of the initiative?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplomacy</td>
<td>Looking at the boundary spanners document, what competencies do you use?*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal relationships</td>
<td>How would you describe relationships amongst the team in general?*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Drawing on the *Guiding Principles for Evaluators* (American Evaluation Association, 2004), this research worked towards maximising the benefits of incorporating a focus on leadership in theory-based evaluation approaches whilst reducing any unnecessary harm that might be generated by an evaluation. The guidelines also indicate that evaluators should judiciously ascertain whether the benefits of an evaluation should be sacrificed because of potential risks. This research concluded that despite the sensitivity of the topic of leadership, such sacrifices are not needed as there are no serious risks for respondents.
7.5 Challenges for evaluation in the real world

Whilst this research has demonstrated that incorporating a focus on leadership was feasible, it does not suggest that it was a straightforward process. This section discusses key points relevant to how a focus on leadership was introduced in the real world of evaluation, with considerations covering the assessment of accountability in a shared-power world and time constraints. The difficult task of assessing accountability in post-modern organisations was identified deductively through a reflexive process whilst time constraints issues emerged inductively from the interviews.

7.5.1 Assessing accountability in a shared-power world

Accountability underpins the expansion of the evaluation field. It constitutes one of the roots of the evaluation theory tree proposed by Alkin and Christie (2004) and described in Chapter 2. As noted by Donaldson and Lipsey (2006) accountability is a value endorsed by societies around the world which contributed to the second boom of evaluations. Evaluations of the current evidence-based wave can be comprehended as a mechanism to ensure and measure accountability (Vedung, 2010). As stated by Rossi et al. (2004: 180), “no social program that receives outside funding, whether public or private, can expect to avoid scrutiny and escape demand for accountability”.

Yet, a characteristic of collaborative leadership introduced in Chapter 3 and illustrated in Chapter 6 is that many stakeholders share power and, therefore, accountability. As argued by Agranoff and McGuire (2001: 309-310), “with no single authority, everyone is somewhat in charge, thus everyone is somewhat responsible; all network participants appear to be accountable, but none is absolutely accountable”. This is a challenge for evaluators.

CDI’s lines of accountability were identified in Chapter 6, with the Board being accountable to the funders, and the CDI team and various subcommittees being accountable to the Board. Accountability was identified as one of the aspects which are
specific to leaders’ roles. Yet, the CDI team being held accountable corroborates the literature arguing that roles of leaders and managers overlap and that leadership is a distributed phenomenon which can take place at different levels in an organisation (Crosby and Bryson, 2005; Buchanan and Huczynski, 2007). Furthermore, Crosby and Bryson (2010) indicate that formal agreements support accountability. This research identified strong processes (e.g. meetings, reports, supervision, Board members chairing other structures) holding governance structures and the CDI team accountable.

Finally, it is important to underline that accountability goes beyond reporting to funders or structures within an organisation. Post-modern organisations are also accountable to collaborative partners such as the Children Services Committee in the case of CDI, and to the public (Bardach and Lesser, 1996; Williams, 2012).

This research acknowledges the challenge of assessing accountability in a shared-power world and argues that incorporating a focus on leadership in evaluation methodology is a means to overcoming this challenge. Indeed, the evaluative questions identified in Table 35 can be used as an instrument with which to assess the accountability of both traditional leaders and implementers of a programme. This could be particularly pertinent in the US where a shift of authority, and therefore accountability, took place from the legislature to the executive and from the top levels of agencies to their lower levels and to their staff (Bardach and Lesser, 1996). Furthermore, the difference of involvement of stakeholders when developing the theory of change in the UK and the USA could generate different reactions to the introduction of a new topic such as leadership. As mentioned previously, evaluators in the UK and in the USA are not implicated to the same extent in the development of the theory of change (Mason and Barnes, 2007). It can be argued that Ireland is closer to the UK in terms of practice since evaluations tend to start after the implementation of a programme has begun. Figure 27 puts the process of developing a theory of change on a scale that goes from being a retrospective process to being a progressive one, and from being research-led to being stakeholder-led. The development of the theory of
change in the UK tends to be retrospective and research-led whereas it is progressive and stakeholder-led in the USA (Mason and Barnes, 2007).

Figure 27: Different ways to generate a theory of change (based on Mason and Barnes, 2007)

In the USA stakeholders are involved in the development, monitoring, and evaluation of the programme; they develop ownership of both the programme and the evaluation (Blamey and Mackenzie, 2007). Drawing on this, it is suggested that a focus on leadership will be easier to introduce in the USA since stakeholders have greater ownership and staff are accountable in the same way as leaders. Nevertheless such a focus was introduced within a process evaluation taking place in Ireland without encountering any major resistance.

7.5.2 Time constraints in evaluations

Evaluations, more so than social research, are undertaken with specific time frames (Rossi et al., 2004). Time pressures and limited budget have an important impact on data collection in evaluations. For instance, evaluators are under pressure to reduce the
amount of data collection in order to reduce cost and to meet deadlines (Bamberger et al., 2006). Furthermore, time is identified as a challenge for theory-based approaches since an important amount of it is required to unravel programme theory (Blamey and Mackenzie, 2007; Stufflebeam and Shinkfield, 2007; Dyson and Todd, 2010; Ridde et al., 2012). Therefore, the introduction of leadership as a causal mechanism in an evaluation using a theory-based approach is particularly challenging. Indeed, theory-based evaluations do not solely focus on a unique mechanism but examine a number of them to provide a comprehensive narrative of the programme’s implementation. Hence, leadership needs to be assessed in a time efficient way, because it is introduced as a new focus in an evaluation schedule that is already tight.

As indicated in Chapter 5, interviewing is the only method out of the three examined that has the potential to produce data related to all the categories identified by Crosby and Bryson (2010). Yet, time constraints have a great impact on interviews. The length of an interview can vary widely depending on the participants’ demographical characteristics (e.g. age, education) and the required depth. Patton (2002) conducted in-depth interviews that lasted up to 16 hours over a few days. However, he acknowledges that the depth of the research and therefore the length of the interview depends on various factors including purpose, time available, and interest of those involved (Patton, 2002: 228).

Chapter 5 argued for the use of a focused framework to assess leadership competencies, such as the one proposed by Williams for boundary spanners, which was discussed in approximately six minutes in the case of this research. Chapter 6 established that the amount of data collected in relation to the boundary spanners framework was sufficient to draw conclusions. The leadership story (Chapter 6) also derived from data gathered through documentary analysis, observations, and interview questions that would normally take place in a process study (e.g. questions related to structures and membership) as demonstrated in Chapter 5. Furthermore, it is acknowledged that whilst this research dedicated an entire chapter to the leadership
story, evaluation reports do not have the same room to dedicate so much time and space to one single causal mechanism. It was important for this research to demonstrate that a focus on leadership as a causal mechanism was also feasible in the context of the real world evaluation. Therefore, the discussion surrounding this particular mechanism or surrounding how leadership enabled the connection between activities, context, and outcomes needs to be concise.

7.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the feasibility and added value of incorporating a focus on leadership in theory-based evaluations. Firstly, it demonstrated how leadership could be theoretically incorporated in both theory of change approaches and realist evaluations. It then argued that leadership is a causal mechanism that can explain why a programme worked, or did not work. Various elements of leadership were examined such as governance structures and actors, as well as implementation phases. Drawing on the experience of using the frameworks proposed by Crosby and Bryson (2010) and Williams (2010), the research findings, and the literature, the chapter proposed an enhanced framework for effective leadership in post-modern organisations. The chapter reflected on ethical issues surrounding the assessment of leadership. Acknowledging that leadership is a sensitive topic, theoretical and practical arguments were given against the examination of personal attributes whilst assessing leadership in evaluations. Two solutions were also proposed to overcome the challenges identified: the clustering of individuals into groups to ensure anonymity and the possibility to examine leadership indirectly. Finally, the chapter discussed two key challenges relative to evaluation in the real-world. The first one is the difficulty of assessing accountability in a shared-power world. This research proposed an approach that reinforces accountability across a range of actors implementing a programme. The second challenge discussed relates to time constraints. This research argued that incorporating a focus on leadership is possible despite the numerous time constraints identified.
Chapter 8
Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

In March 2009, I became part of a team conducting the process evaluation of the Tallaght West Childhood Development Initiative. In my role as a PhD fellow I started to reflect on the impact which factors such as human input have on a programme and also on how evaluations address such phenomena. This research attempted to uncover one of the many dimensions of human input, that of leadership. Leadership had clearly been identified as a pre-requisite to a programme’s success, but remains under-considered in evaluation methodology. To explore the potential of leadership as a focus in evaluation methodology, two research questions were identified and are answered in this chapter:

- Is it feasible to incorporate a focus on leadership in evaluations?
- Is there an added-value to incorporating a focus on leadership in theory-based evaluations?

First, this chapter summarises the key conclusions of this research in regards to the two research questions. Second, it examines how this work contributes to various fields of knowledge development. It proposes a trans-disciplinary feedback loop framework to illustrate how knowledge contributing to different fields was produced in the case of this research. Finally, the chapter considers the limitations of this study and suggests potential future research.
8.2 Key conclusions

The feasibility of assessing leadership through the use of three classical qualitative methods (i.e. interviews, documentary analysis, and observations) was largely demonstrated in Chapter 5 and further illustrated in Chapter 6. Throughout this research, the Crosby and Bryson (2010) framework proved to be a valuable theoretical model which captured diffused leadership and the Williams (2010) framework brought a focus on leadership competencies and day to day activities. The retro-analysis conducted in Chapter 5 verified the significance of leadership in a programme’s implementation through establishing that leadership features are already discussed during interviews even when the focus is on another topic. Hitherto, the process evaluation studies implicitly captured an important amount of data pertaining to leadership. This research argued that theory-based approaches are suitable to incorporate a focus on leadership as they offer frameworks where leadership can be considered as a causal mechanism. This research also provided insight into how to incorporate a focus on leadership whilst at the same time avoiding challenges like time constraints and ethical issues. It proposed an enhanced framework for effective leadership in post-modern organisations that draws on the experience of using the framework proposed by Crosby and Bryson (2010), the research findings, and the relevant literature. It also integrated the boundary spanners framework proposed by Williams (2010) in order to provide a focus on the micro-level. The framework comprises five features: favourable initial conditions, flexible leadership, sound structures and strong relationships, identified challenges, and boundary spanner competencies.

The added-value of incorporating a focus on leadership in evaluation methodology mostly rests in its contribution to causal inferences about the programme’s success or failure. A greater understanding of a programme’s leadership story also contributes to the assessment of the programme’s worth. Leadership is understood as a causal mechanism which encompasses structures and positions and provides information about how they trigger the links between inputs and outcomes at different stages of an
organisation’s lifecycle. This type of knowledge contributes towards illuminating the black box of a programme and is central to theory-based evaluations. The framework proposed here is compatible with the two main approaches to theory-based evaluation: it can be considered as one of the mechanisms examined in CMO (Context-Mechanism-Outcomes) configurations in realist evaluations, or as a causal mechanism that activates the links between contexts, activities, and outcomes in theory of change approaches.

8.3 Contribution to the field of evaluation and others

Key findings of this research contribute in different ways to different fields. This section outlines how the knowledge developed during the course of this research contributes to the general field of evaluation, as well as towards leadership research within the social sciences, and implementation science. A conceptual framework for trans-disciplinary feedback loops is proposed.

8.3.1 Evaluations

Theory-based evaluations aim to unpack the black box of programmes, facilitating the understanding of what happens during a programme between the input and the anticipated outcomes. Considering context as a key factor, theory-based evaluations seek to identify the causal mechanisms underpinning a programme’s success or failure (Donaldson, 2005; Mackenzie and Blamey, 2005). Yet, some theorists (Scriven, Stufflebeam) are critical of the need for theory in evaluation (Donaldson and Lipsey, 2006; Coryn et al., 2011). This research contributes to the general argument in favour of theory-based evaluations through illustrating in detail the significance of a causal mechanism (leadership) that is vital to the success of a programme. Chapter 7 demonstrated that the two prominent approaches to theory-based evaluations (i.e. theory of change and realist evaluation) can be used to integrate a focus on leadership.
This research contributes to evaluation theory through proposing a method with which to open a new aspect of the black box that is collaborative leadership. In Chapters 6 and 7 this research unpicked leadership features and in doing so illustrated what happens between the activities and outcomes of a programme. Using the case of CDI, it exemplified what type of leadership worked *(i.e. collaborative leadership)*, for whom *(i.e. traditional leaders and implementers)*, and in what circumstances *(i.e. post-modern organisations)*. This research therefore contributes to the knowledge base for both evaluation theory and programme theory* and allows “social betterment by way of knowledge development”, which is one of the most important benefits of using theory-based approaches (Donaldson and Lipsey, 2006). It is hoped that a focus on leadership will contribute to reaching the point described by Weiss (2004) where the existing programme theories will have uncovered the restricted number of mechanisms that underpin a programme. This research argues that since leadership is one of those mechanisms, it should be incorporated in future programme theories and tested.

On a practical level, the leadership findings exposed in Chapter 6 were particularly central to the analysis conducted for the overall study. In terms of outputs, the process evaluation study examining leadership fed considerably into the overall process evaluation report. The final report states that organisational processes and relationships are important factors for the implementation of a programme and identifies leadership as a critical aspect of this work. Furthermore, incorporating a focus on leadership enriched the process evaluation through improving contextual understanding and providing causal inferences. It clarified significantly how and why CDI works as it does. The information provided in the organisational study of CDI could inform decision-making related to the adequacy of governance structures and relationships established internally and externally. Regrettably, the timing of the process evaluation and the PhD research does not provide sufficient distance to judge the added value for

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99 Programme theory examines the causal links between input and outcomes whereas evaluation theory is the theory about how to practice evaluation (see Chapter 2 for more detail)
CDI. The overall process evaluation is still a work in progress and although completion is close, the schedule will not allow the gauging of the extent to which the evaluation report will be utilised.

8.3.2 Social sciences

This research produced new knowledge on the nature of leadership in post-modern organisations trying to tackle wicked social issues. This knowledge can feed directly into the more general field of leadership research within the social sciences, and more specifically into the research of the sociology of organisations and public administration. The fact evaluations produce knowledge feeding into the social sciences is not surprising since both disciplines are strongly interconnected. Social science theory can be used by evaluators to articulate a programme’s theory (Coryn et al., 2011) or to estimate if a programme is likely to work or not (Donaldson and Lipsey, 2006). Furthermore, the knowledge produced by theory-based evaluation contributes to general social learning that enables the development of better programmes (Rossi and Wright, 1984; Connell and Kubisch, 1998).

The findings also corroborate the general approach taken by policy-makers towards working collaboratively to tackle wicked issues. As outlined in Chapter 1, whilst evaluation and leadership are two disconnected fields of study, they share a common influence exerted by the new policy approach to wicked issues. The policy shift started with the recognition that social issues are complex and imbricated (National Economic and Social Council, 2005). As part of the policy shift new types of programme such as Comprehensive Community Initiatives emerged. This created the need for evaluations to adapt and find new ways to assess complex social interventions, notably through theory-based approaches (Connell and Kubisch, 1998). The policy shift also generated changes in public governance and management, and new forms of leadership such as collaborative leadership appeared. This research brings the two fields together,
proposing a comprehensive approach to evaluations which is grounded in the contemporary policy context.

8.3.3 Implementation science

During this research, significant links emerged between leadership findings and implementation science. Implementation science is a trans-disciplinary field that “is growing in importance among funders, researchers, and practitioners as an approach to bridging the gap between science and practice” (Meyers et al., 2012: 462). This is especially the case in the context of evidence-based practice, because without effective implementation an established effective programme might not provide the anticipated outcomes (Mildon and Shlonsky, 2011; Meyers et al., 2012; Cook and Odom, 2013). Therefore, the delivery of complex social interventions requires a comprehensive implementation strategy (Mildon and Shlonsky, 2011).

Implementation science and evaluation are clearly interconnected. For example, some theories produced by theory-based evaluations pertain to implementation science (e.g. what context is required for the programme to work) and both disciplines share the desire to go beyond explaining what works by undertaking more research to determine where and why things work (Damschroder et al., 2009). Yet, whilst implementation holds an important place in the evaluation literature - an entire chapter in Patton’s (2008) book for instance - it is often in terms of fidelity, differentiating implementation failure from theory failure, or informing decision-making for stakeholders (as outlined in Chapter 3). Both fields also yield different experts putting forward different but parallel theories. For instance, the process theories (i.e. guidelines for planning, organising and providing a timeframe for the implementation of a programme) discussed by Damschroder et al. (2009) are similar to Chen’s (2005a) change model and Weiss’ (1995) implementation theory. Similarly, the impact theories (i.e. hypothesis underpinning how activities are going to bring change) proposed by
Damschroder et al. (2009) parallel Chen’s (2005a) action model and Weiss’(1995) programmatic theory\textsuperscript{100}.

This research calls for a better integration of implementation science in evaluation theory and practice. Implementation theories should be used to inform evaluation design. For instance, a process evaluation could anticipate possible changes in structures and/or leaders and direct some questioning towards assessing the extent to which an organisation adapts to the different stages of implementation. It is also suggested that the consolidated framework for implementation research can be used to evaluate implementation progress (Damschroder et al., 2009), and inform programme theories. Moreover, evaluation findings, such as the features of effective leadership, should be taken up by implementation science in order to inform implementation prerequisites. Finally, stronger links with implementation science would bring evaluations and programme design closer. Through linking closer with implementation science, evaluations could benefit programme developers by contributing knowledge which they could use as evidence upon which to plan their design.

\textbf{8.4 Trans-disciplinary feedback loops for knowledge produced in this research}

The use and production of knowledge is a fundamental aspect of theory-based evaluations. This section outlines a conceptualisation of how the knowledge produced as a result of this research contributes to the fields already mentioned in this chapter. Figure 28 illustrates the knowledge feedback loops present in the theory-based evaluation at the centre of this research, an evaluation that had an explicit focus on leadership. It builds on Figure 5 (exhibited in Chapter 2, p.44) which illustrated the feedback loops present within theory-based evaluations in general. In blue are the fields and actors identified in sections of the literature as those that benefit from the

\textsuperscript{100} See Chapter 2 for more detail on the concepts of Chen and Weiss.
knowledge produced by theory-based evaluations (Rossi and Wright, 1984; Chen, 1989; Weiss, 1995; Connell and Kubisch, 1998; Chen, 2004; Mackenzie and Blamey, 2005; Donaldson and Lipsey, 2006; Coryn et al., 2011). They include actors (funders, policy makers, programme developers, programme directors, practitioners and other stakeholders), and fields (social sciences and programme theory). Programme theory, which builds on social science theory, is also constructed from the knowledge of programme developers and generally contributes to the development of evaluation theory.

From the findings of this research, two new elements are introduced to the feedback loops. Highlighted in red, they are ‘leadership’ and ‘implementation science’. It can be seen that the leadership story told in Chapter 6 contains a significant amount of knowledge relevant to leadership research within the social sciences, as well as to implementation science. The figure also indicates that implementation science is produced and used by programme developers.

The integration of these two elements impacts the general feedback loops in various ways. In the case of this research the knowledge produced about collaborative leadership contributes directly to the social sciences and to programme theory, and therefore also indirectly impacts on evaluation theory. For instance, demonstrating that leadership is a causal mechanism that has its place in programme theory then influences evaluation theory. This is because it provides a solid argument for the incorporation of a focus on leadership in future evaluations. The contribution of this research to the field of social sciences also has the potential to indirectly improve programme theory since it needs to build on up-to-date knowledge about leadership in post-modern organisations.

The knowledge produced by this research in relation to implementation science could be integrated into programme theory in order to construct better theories of change and provide stronger guidance about how implementation should take place. This
knowledge could also inform evaluation theory and the work of programme developers, as argued in section 8.3.1 and 8.3.3.

**Figure 28: Trans-disciplinary feedback loops**

Whilst some might argue that case studies have limited potential for generalisation, this research takes the position that they generate lessons applicable elsewhere. They are particularly pertinent in the context of theory-based evaluations since they allow analytic generalisation, as indicated in Chapter 4. The enhanced framework for effective leadership in post-modern organisations presented in Chapter 7 drew on research findings as well as literature, generalising them for other programmes presenting similar characteristics (*i.e.* complex social interventions). The aspiration of this research was to propose a framework to be used by other evaluators and also to
provide a framework that remains permeable and open to findings generated by future research.

8.5 Limitations of the research

This research contains a number of limitations which are discussed in the following sub-sections. They are categorised in three groups: contextual limitations, methodological limitations, and ethical limitations.

8.5.1 Contextual limitations

This research examined how to incorporate a focus on leadership within evaluation methodology. It argued that post-modern forms of leadership and theory-based approaches were best suited for this task. Indeed, incorporating a focus on leadership is not necessarily feasible in any context. Since evaluations should not examine leadership at an individual level in order to avoid increasing evaluation anxiety or the causation of dismissals because of negative findings, the incorporation of a focus on leadership in traditional organisations where power is held by a restricted number of individuals might not be possible. Therefore, the applicability of the findings of this research is limited to post-modern organisations.

8.5.2 Methodological limitations

This research engaged with both quantitative and qualitative methods to consider the incorporation of a focus on leadership in evaluations. However, the quantitative methods were solely used in the retro-analysis of interview transcripts. Quantitative methods were also used in the process evaluation, including surveys into which questions on leadership were incorporated. However, the surveys had a low response rate despite numerous reminders so that no significant conclusion could be drawn from the data generated. Therefore, this survey’s results were not included in this research. It
can be suggested that robust quantitative data might have confirmed findings gathered through qualitative methods.

Another limitation of this study was driven by the timeframe for the process evaluation. CDI’s evaluations were designed to take place during the implementation phase and inform their mainstreaming phase on an evidence-based basis. Therefore, the data collected here does not consider the mainstreaming phase as such. Since leadership needs to be flexible and adapt to the different phases of an organisation’s lifecycle, it is possible that different leadership features would emerge during the mainstreaming phase. Those features could either complement the ones identified to date for the strategy development and implementation phases or instead indicate that the leadership features required during the mainstreaming phase vary to an extent where a new framework would be required.

8.5.3 Ethical limitations

Questions remain in relation to the utilisation of this new approach for evaluations. Whilst incorporating a focus on leadership certainly provides an important insight into the black box of a programme, there are ethical considerations involved. As argued throughout this thesis, evaluating leadership within the context of the implementation of a programme does not require the examination of personal attributes. It can only be hoped that evaluators work ethically and do not use this new focus on leadership as an excuse to shift evaluative work towards human resources management. This would not be beneficial for either field.

Introducing a sensitive topic such as leadership into evaluations could encounter resistance, depending on the political and organisational culture of a given country. This research indicated that both favourable conditions and openness towards the evaluation of leadership were required for an effective assessment to take place. It is the opinion of the researcher that if resistance is encountered either from the funders or
project managers, leadership should not be incorporated in the study because it could generate a level of evaluation anxiety that would impede the entire evaluation.

8.6 Potential future research

Drawing on the methodological limitations identified in section 8.5.2, three aspects of this research could be further developed. First, the enhanced framework for effective leadership should be tested and possibly refined. Second, quantitative methods should be used to assess leadership in order to test other methods’ (e.g. surveys) ability to capture leadership data. Third, it would be beneficial to examine leadership throughout the mainstreaming phase of a programme in order to provide a more holistic picture of leadership at different stages of an organisation’s lifecycle.

Furthermore, beyond the immediate context of this research, future study could investigate the further use of retro-analysis in evaluations. The retro-analysis used here identified an important number of leadership indicators in the transcripts of interview undertaken for different evaluation studies. This suggests that it might be possible to use old transcripts to gauge whether leadership hindered or facilitated the programme’s outcomes. More generally, it implies that a retro-analysis could be used to go back to interviews and analyse them retrospectively with new questions in mind. This represents interesting ground for future research on evaluation methodology.

Finally, evaluation approaches other than theory-based evaluation could be considered for the incorporation of a focus on leadership. Indeed, leadership could be incorporated in any type of evaluation that pays particular attention to context. For instance, developmental evaluation emerged as an alternative to formative and summative evaluation as it “supports social innovation and adaptive management” (Patton, 2008: 278). This approach suits programmes where goals are not pre-defined, but rather developing. This type of evaluation focuses on dimensions such as supporting decision-making (Patton, 2008) and could possibly benefit from a focus on
collaborative leadership. The feasibility and added value of incorporating a focus on leadership in developmental evaluation should be assessed if possible.

8.7 Concluding comments

Collaborative leadership is vital for the efficient implementation of a programme and ought to be considered in evaluation methodology as a causal mechanism. However, as a new approach to opening the black box, incorporating a focus on leadership might take time before it becomes potentially mainstreamed in evaluation practice and theory. More research is required to refine and strengthen the leadership framework proposed here by testing it within other case studies and through investigating the use of other methods that could capture leadership data as part of evaluation methodology. Yet, incorporating leadership as a causal mechanism in theory-based programmes can clearly improve evaluation practice and theory, and contribute to the development of knowledge surrounding the relatively new topic of leadership in a shared-power world. It is hoped that future resources will be invested to further research this approach to theory-based evaluations, one that is particularly pertinent in the contemporary context of post-modern organisations tackling wicked issues.
Bibliography


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Appendix A

Interview schedules

Interview schedule - CDI team

1. What is your role in CDI?
   a. When did you join CDI’s team? Has your role changed since you started?
   b. To what extent did you use formal and informal networks in your work? Can you give me an example for each case?
   c. Are there other resources useful for your role? (e.g., evaluation team)
   d. Is there a hierarchy in place amongst staff?
   e. What is the supervisory context of your position?
   f. Who do you report to? How often? Did this change over time?
   g. In your opinion, are there benefits to supervision? Are there disadvantages?
   h. Are there challenges in your position/in your role?

2. How often do you meet with other members of the team?
   a. In a formal context such as team meetings? In an informal context?
   b. How would you describe relationships amongst the team in general?
   c. How are decisions taken amongst team members? What decisions are opened to the team to make?
   d. How is power balanced during the team meetings? Outside of meetings? How does this compare to your previous experiences?
   e. As team members come and go, does it have an impact on your work/position?

3. What processes are in place between you and the Board?
   a. Between you and The ISG?
   b. Between you and Executive Sub Committee?
   c. Between you and Steering Committees?
4. In your opinion, what helps create working relationships? What challenges were encountered in establishing working relationships? How were they overcome?
   a. Amongst the team?
   b. Between the team and commissioned services?
   c. Between the team and members of wider organisations?

5. What skills are required to establish relationships? How do relationships facilitate processes?

6. Looking at the roles and competencies of boundary spanners presented in the attached document, what competencies do you mostly use? Can you think about any other relevant competency not mentioned on that list?

7. Is there anything else you would like to comment on?
Interview schedule - CDI past team

1. What was your role in CDI?
   a. When did you join CDI’s team? Has your role changed between when you started and when you left?
   b. To what extent did you use formal and informal networks in your work? Can you give me an example for each case?
   c. Were there other resources useful for your role? (e.g. evaluation team)
   d. Was there a hierarchy in place amongst staff?
   e. What was the supervisory context of your position?
   f. Who did you report to? How often? Did this change over time?
   g. In your opinion, were there benefits to supervision? Were there disadvantages?
   h. Were there challenges in your position/in your role?

2. How often did you meet with other members of the team?
   a. In a formal context such as team meetings? In an informal context?
   b. How would you describe relationships amongst the team in general?
   c. How were decisions taken amongst team members? What decisions are opened to the team to make?
   d. How was power balanced during the team meetings? Outside of meetings? How does this compare to your other experiences?
   e. As team members come and go, does it have an impact on your work/position?

3. What processes were in place between you and the Board?
   a. Between you and The ISG?
   b. Between you and Executive Sub Committee?
   c. Between you and Steering Committees?
   d. Between you and the Risk and Finance Committee?
   e. Between you and the Expert Advisory Committee?
4. In your opinion, what helps create working relationships? What challenges were encountered in establishing working relationships? Were they overcome?
   a. Amongst the team?
   b. Between the team and commissioned services?
   c. Between the team and members of wider organisations?

5. What personal skills are required to establish relationships? How do relationships facilitate processes?

6. Looking at the roles and competencies of boundary spanners presented in the attached document, what competencies do you mostly use? Can you think about any other relevant competency not mentioned on that list?

7. Is there anything else you would like to comment on?
Interview schedule - CEO

1. What is the CEO’s role in CDI? What does it involve?
   a. Can you tell me about when you started? Who was there? How did you become involved as a CEO?
   b. To what extent were formal networks already established when you started? How did you use them during the implementation?
   c. To what extent were informal networks already established when you started? How did you use them during the implementation?
   d. To what extent did you use your personal network in the context of CDI?
   e. What challenges were encountered in leading CDI?

2. When you got the strategy for the first time, what did you think about it?
   a. In regards to the strategy, what did you look at? What was your priority?
   b. How were general activities translated into actions?
   c. How were the programmatic developments conceived?
   d. What processes were put in place for their development? (e.g. tendering processes)
   e. How were participants identified?
   f. What processes worked well in driving the implementation of the strategy? In your opinion, why was it so?
   g. What factors were critical to them “working well”? What didn’t?
   h. How was the social and political context taken in consideration?

3. For each of governance structures (Board, ISG, Executive Sub Committee, Healthy Schools Steering Committee, CSI Steering Committee, Safe and Healthy Place Steering Committee), can you tell me who was invited to participate?
   a. How were they chosen?
   b. Who has left?
   c. Who has joined?
   d. Can you tell me about the level of attendance for each structure? Are they any issues with members not attending?
e. Are they any key organisations that are not represented? Can you think what additional expertise could be required? Why are they not involved?

f. How are decisions made?
g. How is power balanced?

4. Besides being funding bodies, what role do representatives of the OMCYA and AP play? How would you describe your relationships with them now and over time?

5. How were team positions and roles identified?
   a. How is the team process managed?
   b. How is supervision undertaken? By whom? Has it changed over time?
   c. How are decisions made? What decisions are opened to the team to make?
   d. What processes are in place between the team and governance structures?
   e. What were the barriers in establishing the processes?

6. What challenges were encountered in developing processes? How were they overcome?

7. How were working relationships developed? How would you describe them? What facilitated them? What impeded them?
   a. Amongst the team?
   b. Amongst the governance structures?
   c. With the services?
   d. With other organisations?

8. What skills are required to establish working relationships? How do these working relationships facilitate processes (e.g. communication, collaboration, etc.)?
9. How did the change of individuals in key positions impact on relationships and implementation? Why did they leave?
   
   a. In the case of the chair of the Board or ISG? (e.g. impact on your relationship with those structures, impact on relationships amongst members)
   
   b. In the case of the Quality and Services Officer (name of the person)? (e.g. impact on relationships with organisations, with community members, within CDI team)
   
   c. In the case of the Head of Finance and Corporate Services (name of the person)?
   
   d. In the case of the Finance and Administration Assistant (name of the person)?

10. Looking at the roles and competencies of boundary spanners presented in the attached document, what competencies do you mostly use?
   
   e. What competencies are required for the Quality Officers and Coordinators?
   
   f. What competencies are required for governance structures?
   
   g. Can you think about any other relevant competency?

11. Is there anything else you would like to comment on?
Interview schedule - Chairs

1. Could you tell me a little about yourself, your professional role and how you came to be involved in CDI?

2. Why was the structure you are involved in established? What are its functions?

3. How does the structure work in practice?

4. How is your structure connected to other structures/elements of CDI (CEO, Team, Board/ISG/Executive Sub-Committee/Services/Community)?

5. As Chair of the structure, what are your particular responsibilities?

6. Have you encountered any challenges in your role? Could you discuss some examples?

7. Regarding membership of the structure, why are those particular individuals around the table?

8. Could you outline how these individuals were brought onto the structure? How were these connections established?

9. How have these connections been maintained (thinking about for e.g. whether there have been changes in personnel around the table, whether there have been changing needs of CDI)?
   a. Were there challenges, were there barriers?
   b. Were they overcome?
   c. How?
10. Could you outline and characterise the decision-making process of the structure?
   a. How was this developed?
   b. Did they alter over time?
   c. If so, how?

11. What role did you/the structure play in initiating/further developing CDI and its programme of work?
   a. Could you give examples of both?
   b. What processes underlined developments in both areas?

12. Has this role changed in both areas? If so, how? Could you give examples?

13. Have there been challenges in fulfilling this role?

14. Were there particular successes, or strategies/mechanisms which worked well in fulfilling this role?

15. Looking at the roles and competencies of boundary spanners presented in the attached document, what competencies do you mostly use?
Interview schedule - ISG members

1. Could you tell me a bit about your role in CDI?

2. When you got CDI’s strategy for the first time, what did you think about it?

3. How did you get involved in the ISG?

4. What processes are in place between CDI team and the ISG?

5. During the ISG meetings, how are decisions made?

6. What processes were used to drive elements of the strategy?

7. What relationships were established to support the implementation of CDI’s strategy and principles?

8. To what extent do you use formal / informal mechanisms in the context of CDI? Can you give me an example for each case?

9. In your opinion, how did CDI’s CEO impact on the processes and relationships used to implement the strategy?

10. Looking at the roles and competencies of boundary spanners presented in the attached document, what competencies do you mostly use?
Interview schedule - Board members

1. Could you tell me a little about yourself - your role in your organisation, and its connection with CDI?

2. What exactly is your role regarding CDI? What does it involve? How long are you in this role?

3. What are the functions of the board? Have these evolved, enlarged, reduced overtime?

4. Does the board work well? Why? What makes it work/not work well?

5. Are there challenges in performing the tasks of a board member? If so, what are they? Are there any mechanisms to overcome such challenges?

6. Is the Board accountable to any higher authority? If so, to whom, and through what mechanisms is it accountable?

7. How does the Board link with other aspects of CDI (ISG, Team, Services, Wider Community)?

8. What is your perception of the leadership style of the board? And of the Chair of the Board?

9. Looking at the roles and competencies of boundary spanners presented in the attached document, what competencies do you mostly use?

10. Could you characterise the decision-making processes adopted by the Board? How are Board decisions made?
11. One of the key aspects of the board’s role is to support ‘implementation’. Could you describe how this is and was done?
   a. Translating strategy into actions?
   b. Developing infrastructure of CDI (governance, team, services, wider organisational community)
   c. Picking the specific set of activities?
   d. Supporting ongoing implementation?
   e. Fulfilling its monitoring role (services)?
   f. Fulfilling its monitoring role (evaluation)?

12. Were there processes established to implement the CDI strategy?
   a. What were they?
   b. Did they/do they work?
   c. If so, why? If not, why?

13. Were there particular relationships established to support implementation (whether within the Board or further afield)?
   a. With whom/what were they established?
   b. Did/do they work? If so, why? If not, why?

14. Have these relationships been maintained? If so, how? If not, why not? What has facilitated/impeded their maintenance?

15. The Board is also responsible for other things in theory. What is its role in relation to:
   a. Staff. Could you discuss and give examples of how this function has been operationalised?
   b. Finance. Could you discuss and give examples of how this function has been operationalised?

16. Is there anything else you would like to ask that we have not spoken about, you have not mentioned or I have not asked you about and which you feel is important to mention?
Interview schedule - Children Services Committee

1. Could you tell me a bit about your role in Children Services Committee (CSC)?

2. What is your understanding of CDI?
   a. What does it do?
   b. Why is CDI on the CSC? How was it selected?
   c. How does CDI’s strategy align with the CSC goals?
   d. Does CDI support the CSC? If so, how?
   e. Does the CSC support CDI in the implementation of their strategy? If so, how?

3. How is the CSC linked to CDI?
   a. Are they CDI members involved in the CSC structures? Who? Why?
   b. Are there CSC members involved in the CDI structures? Who? Why?
   c. How would you describe the relationship between the CSC and CDI? Has this changes over time? Could you discuss?
   d. Are there benefits to this relationship between the CSC and CDI? If so, what are they?
   e. Are there challenges in this relationship, in maintaining this relationship? If so, what are they? Are they overcome?

4. What processes are in place between the CSC and CDI?
   a. When did they start?
   b. Are they formal mechanisms in place (meetings, reports etc.)?
   c. Are they informal mechanisms in place (on the edge of meetings?)
   d. Have these processes been maintained or changed over time? Could you discuss?
   e. Are they benefits to these processes (past or present)?
   f. Are there challenges to these processes (past or present)?
5. In your opinion, what is the role of CDI representative(s) regarding processes and relationships?
   a. How did it impact on the CSC?
   b. How do CDI representative(s) contribute to the CSC?

6. Looking at the roles and competencies of boundary spanners presented in the attached document, what competencies do you mostly use?
   a. What competencies are required for governance structures?
   b. Can you think about any other relevant competency that is not presented in the table?

7. Is there anything else you would like to comment on?
Interview schedule - Funders

1. Could you tell me a bit about your role in relation to CDI?
   a. What is the role of the OMCYA / AP?
   b. How was CDI selected to receive funding?

2. Could you describe the local and national environment (policy and service) at the time you began funding CDI?

3. What were your views regarding the CDI strategy when you first read it? Did anything particular strike you about it?
   a. How was the social and political context taken in consideration?

4. What reporting and monitoring processes are in place between you and CDI? Could you elaborate on this relationship?
   a. Do you receive reports from CDI? How often? Do you meet CDI Team members? Who do you meet? Frequency of meetings?
   b. Do you have any contact/working relationship with other elements of CDI’s structure (Governance, Services, Community). If so, what is the extent of this contact?
   c. More broadly, have these relationships altered over time? Could you discuss?

5. At the macro level, were there specific processes established or developed to support the implementation of the CDI strategy?
   a. What were they?
   b. Did they work well? If so/not, why?
   c. Have these processes altered over time or been maintained? If altered, why?
   d. What challenges were experienced in this process (implementation)? How were they overcome?

6. Were particular factors relevant to them working well/not working well? Were there specific relationships established or developed to support the implementation of the CDI strategy?
   a. With what organisations/individuals?
   b. Were these good working relationships If so/not, why? What factors supported/inhibited them?
   c. Do they still exist? If so, what has maintained them?
7. Were particular factors relevant to them working well/not working well? Are there barriers to establishing strong working relationships? What are they?

8. What skills are required to establish working relationships?

9. How did the change of leadership impact on your relationships with CDI?
   a. How would you describe your relationship with CDI?
   b. How does that compare to your other experiences?

10. In your opinion, how did CDI’s CEO impact on the processes and relationships used to implement the strategy?
    a. What skills are required for such a position?
    b. How did it impact on the governance structures (Board / ISG)
    c. How did it impact on the commissioned services?
    d. How did it impact on the wider organisations?

11. Is there anything else you would like to comment on?
## Appendix B

### Interview questions directly focussed on leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Interview questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CDI team</td>
<td>6. Looking at the roles and competencies of boundary spanners presented in the attached document, what competencies do you mostly use? Can you think about any other relevant competency not mentioned on that list?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Board        | 8. What is your perception of the leadership style of the board? And of the Chair of the Board? 
9. Looking at the roles and competencies of boundary spanners presented in the attached document, what competencies do you mostly use? |
| ISG          | 9. In your opinion, how did CDI’s CEO impact on the processes and relationships used to implement the strategy? 
10. Looking at the roles and competencies of boundary spanners presented in the attached document, what competencies do you mostly use? |
| Chairs       | 5. As Chair of the structure, what are your particular responsibilities? 
6. Have you encountered any challenges in your role? Could you discuss some examples? 
15. Looking at the roles and competencies of boundary spanners presented in the attached document, what competencies do you mostly use? |
| Funders      | 9. How did the change of leadership impact on your relationships with CDI? 
   a. How would you describe your relationship with CDI? 
   b. How does that compare to your other experiences? 
10. In your opinion, how did CDI’s CEO impact on the processes and relationships used to implement the strategy? 
   a. What skills are required for such a position? 
   b. How did it impact on the governance structures (Board / ISG) 
   c. How did it impact on the commissioned services? 
   d. How did it impact on the wider organisations? |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children Services Committee</td>
<td>6. Looking at the roles and competencies of boundary spanners presented in the attached document, what competencies do you mostly use? a. What competencies are required for governance structures? b. Can you think about any other relevant competency that is not presented in the table?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C

Document presenting the boundary spanners’ framework

**Boundary spanners:** Boundary spanners are “actors whose primary job responsibilities involve managing within multi-organisational and multi-sectorial arenas” (Williams, 2010: 2). They are organisational representatives that are “intimately involved in the day-to-day relationship building activities and operations within the developing partnership” (Noble and Jones, 2006: 897). Boundary spanners can work across traditional divides and make the most of the opportunities that are presented to develop partnership working (Frost, 2005).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Competencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reticulist</td>
<td>● Networking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Managing accountabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Appreciate different modes of governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Political skills and diplomacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“individuals who are especially sensitive and skilled in bridging interests, professions and organisations”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneur</td>
<td>● Brokering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Entrepreneurial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Innovative and creative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Tolerates risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“people that are committed to find new ways forward on specific concerns”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreter / communicator</td>
<td>● Inter-personal relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Communication, listening, empathising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Framing and sense making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Building trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Tolerance of diversity and culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“people that invest time to forge an effective working relationship and a readiness to visualise “reality” from the perspective of others”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Roles and Competencies for Boundary Spanners (Williams, 2010)