



## QuIP evaluation of Power to Change's **Bright Ideas Programme**. Summary.

Researching the role of capacity building in the development of community businesses (CBs), using the Qualitative Impact Protocol (QuIP) and Causal Map software.





# Overview

This presentation is a **summary** of the main report, produced for P2C - to show how QuIP data can be used together with the Causal Map app. This example is based on a small number of interviews but the approach can be scaled up, and most QuIP studies include between 25-50 interviews.

Using the QuIP approach, independent researchers conducted face to face interviews with **14** representatives from **community businesses** who had taken part in Power to Change's **Bright Ideas programme** - support community groups to start, develop, and grow their enterprises.

Researchers were trained in QuIP and used very open-ended, semi-structured questionnaires to encourage respondents to share stories of how their businesses had changed over the last three years.

The **Causal Map** software was used to capture these stories and identify common features, summarising respondents' views of how change has happened and P2C's role in any changes. This approach enabled P2C to:

- Understand and visualise change from the perspective of their stakeholders
- See where causal connections are strongest, and how these intersect with other drivers of change
- Identify subgroups of respondents with different views
- Use verbatim quotes to illustrate key findings



# Bright Ideas Programme

Through their [Bright Ideas](#) (BI)\* programme, Power to Change aims to support community groups to start, develop, and grow their enterprises. In addition to **grant funding**, the programme provides community groups with **support and advice** to develop, test, and launch their community business idea.

Over the lifetime of the programme, Bright Ideas aims to support **250 community businesses**: many new organisations with a new idea, including those not yet incorporated; some existing grantees who require ongoing support; and a few established organisations that want to launch a distinctly new idea.

The intention is that these groups will have progressed from an *idea* to an *operational reality* and will have either: launched a community business; moved further along their life cycle; and/or secured investment/additional funding.

By supporting enterprising community groups to become successful and sustainable businesses, **local communities** and economies are intended to benefit from valuable products/services and employment opportunities.

## Bright Ideas provides community groups with:

- **Business development support:** 1-1 support from advisors at [Locality](#), [Plunkett Foundation](#) and [Co-operatives UK](#). The package is tailored to the group's needs, covering topics such as business planning, financial modelling, and community engagement.
- **Grant funding:** Support applying for either an ideas stage grant (£1,000-£10,000) or a pre-venture stage grant (£1,000-£15,000).
- **Peer-learning:** Opportunities to learn from other community businesses, including visits, webinars, and networking events.

\*For more information contact [brightideas@locality.org.uk](mailto:brightideas@locality.org.uk)



# Research questions

To help inform their capacity building strategy from 2020 onwards, P2C were looking for a qualitative methodology which could answer the following questions:

## Key research questions:

- **How** and in **what ways** does capacity building funded by P2C contribute to organisational development and resilience?
- How does capacity building support organisational development at **different life-stages** of a community businesses?
- What **other 'providers'** are CBs using to enhance their capacity and how is that support effective and why?
- How can we improve our capacity building offer to individual CBs?
- Does the capacity building support funded by PtC have the **expected effect** on community businesses?
- What **other interventions** (directed at community businesses) or factors (internal and external) have affected expected outcomes, and how do these interventions or factors relate to each other?
- Have the interventions had any **unanticipated effects**, positive or negative?
- What **drivers of change** or patterns can be identified that could inform future programme design?



# QuIP methodology overview

The **Qualitative Impact Protocol** (QuIP) was designed and piloted by researchers at the University of Bath 2012-2015. **Bath Social Development Research** (Bath SDR) was set up in 2016 to continue developing and applying the methodology.

QuIP studies are designed to collect credible evidence on **perceptions of change** over a set period of time and across a series of domains relevant to specific research questions or a theory of change.

This approach to impact evaluation uses **open-ended** questions focused on *outcomes*, rather than inputs, which enables respondents to discuss a wide range of changes, and their perceived drivers, providing a much richer and broader understanding of any causal mechanisms at play.

In this case, the researchers were informed that P2C had commissioned the research but were **blindfolded** to the nature of the BI theory of change and programme activities. P2C introduced the research to respondents broadly as a joint study between P2C and Bath SDR into changes in the community business sector. This general framing sought to encourage respondents to discuss all potential drivers of change, rather than only those pertaining to the Bright Ideas programme.

This blindfolding aims to mitigate any bias in responses regarding the role of the Bright Ideas programme; spontaneous references by respondents carry more weight than if researchers had asked them about it directly.

# Causal Map coding and analysis

Data was then coded and analysed by Bath SDR using the **Causal Map** online research tool. Following QuIP's systematic and transparent coding approach, the analyst identified **stories of change** or '**causal claims**' mentioned by respondents.

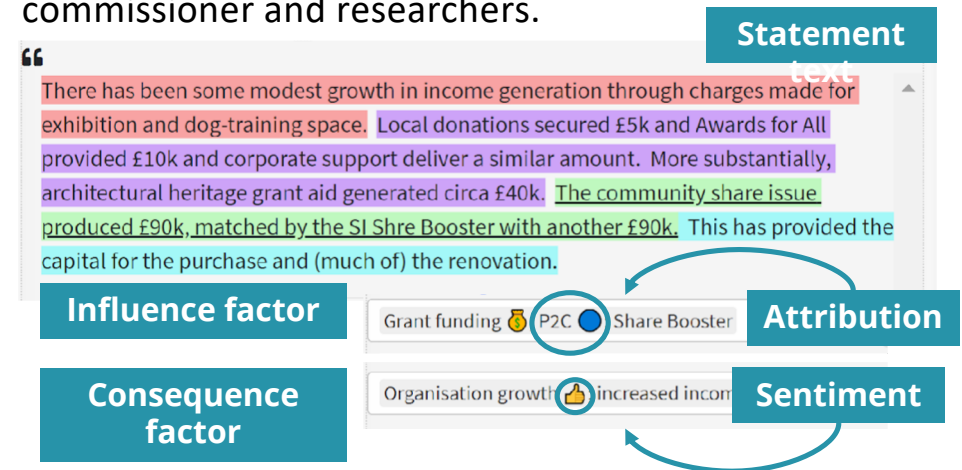
The causal claims are coded by applying labels to relevant portions of text, identifying them as links between:

- an **influence** factor (the reported cause/driver of change)
- a **consequence** factor (the reported outcome/change)

Additional flags can be applied:

- **sentiment** (whether the consequence is perceived to be positive/negative)
- **attribution** (how closely the influence aligns with the programme's theory of change)

These factors are unique to each project as they are developed iteratively by the analyst based on what the respondents have said, with feedback from the commissioner and researchers.



Once all the causal claims have been coded, the Causal Map software helps the analyst identify patterns across the dataset to understand which stories are common and which are specific to certain individuals or a particular respondent group.

# Interpreting the causal maps

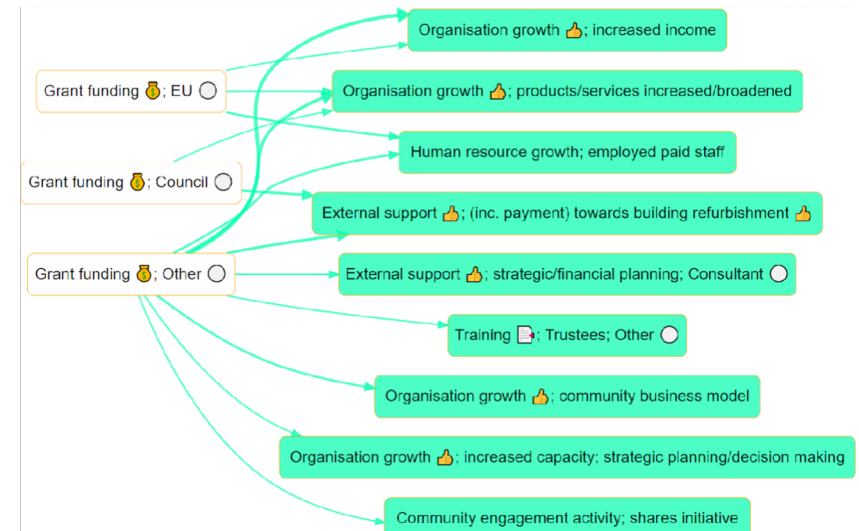
The main report contains many **causal maps** which visualise the links made between influence and consequence factors (drivers and outcomes). This report presents just three maps as an example.

The maps typically flow from **left to right**, with the influence factors on the left leading to the consequence factors on the right. The **thickness** of the arrows relates to the number of times that particular **influence to consequence** relationship was cited. In some of the causal maps, numbers have been added to the arrows to show the exact frequency count.

In this study the following icons were used to flag certain attribution and sentiment types in the causal maps:

- 👍 – **Positive** outcomes
- 🔵 – **Explicit** reference to P2C
- ⬜ – **Implicit** reference to BI's theory of change

## Example causal map: direct consequences of non- P2C Grant Funding

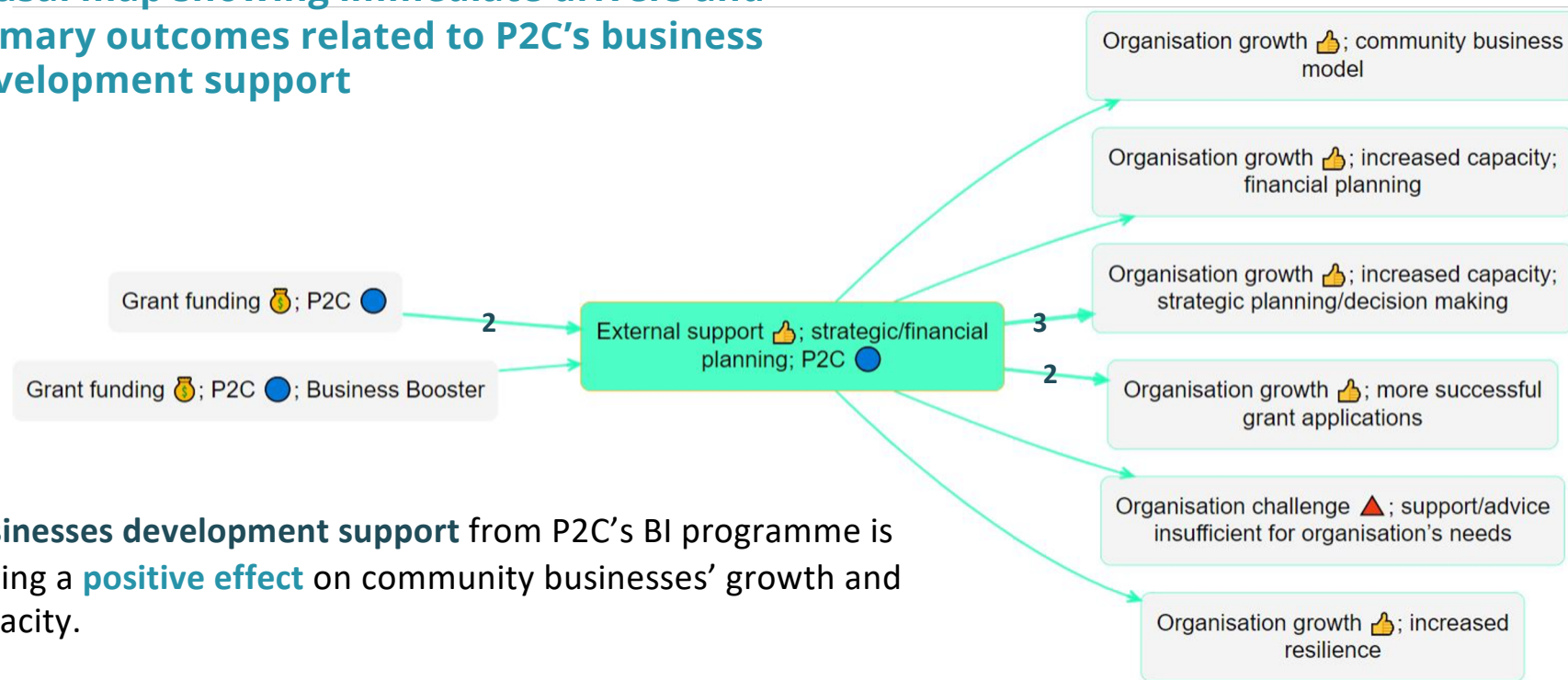






# Business development support explicitly attributed to P2C

Causal map showing immediate drivers and primary outcomes related to P2C's business development support



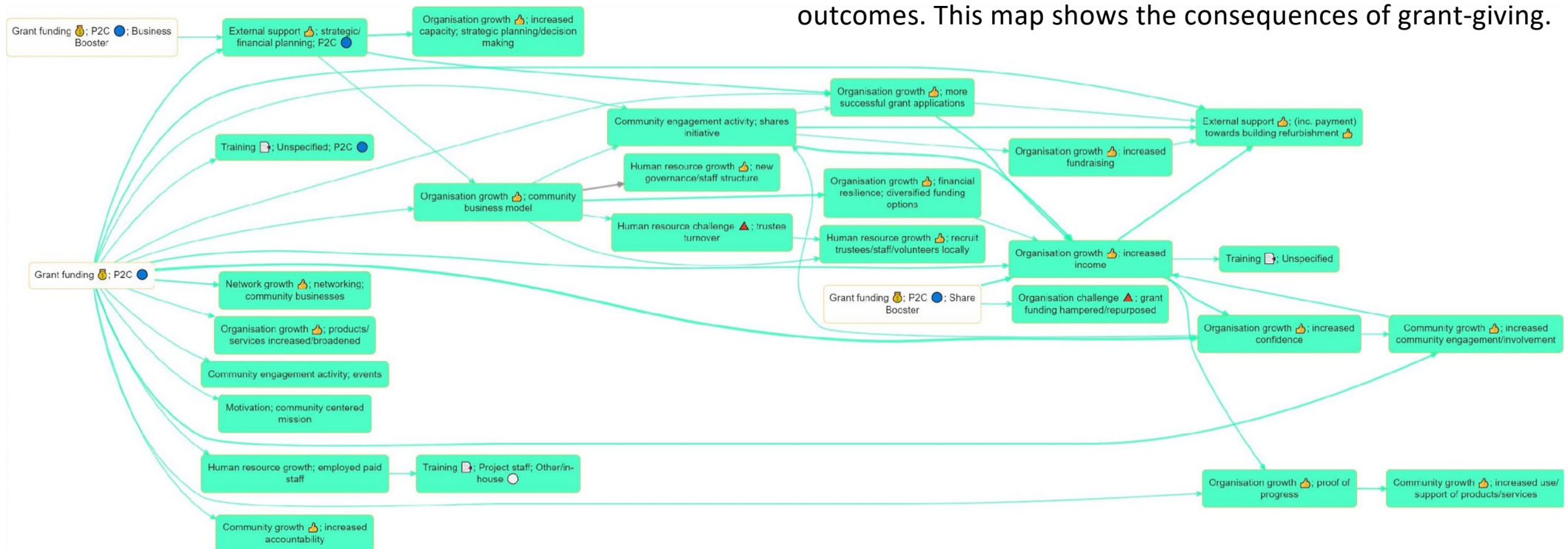
**Businesses development support** from P2C's BI programme is having a **positive effect** on community businesses' growth and capacity.





# All outcome paths driven by P2C grants

Respondents gave many examples of some quite long causal chains initiated by P2C activities, most of which led to positive outcomes. This map shows the consequences of grant-giving.





## Some key findings

- P2C **business advice** enabled organisations to **strengthen their capacity** to plan ahead and make strategic decisions for the future;
- P2C **grant funding** increased both **income** and **confidence**;
- P2C **networking support** encouraged organisations to learn from each other, **inspiring new ideas**.

Many **other** actors and factors contributed to the development of these community businesses.

- Respondents received valuable business support, grant funding, and training from other organisations.
- These businesses also attributed some of their growing capacity to their own **hard-work** and **community focused mission**.
- Many of these organisations faced internal and external **challenges** related to resources and capacity.



**The full report is available on request from P2C.**

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