**Stories of Change from Programme Participants**

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**Veronica** would have described her feelings towards her own leadership very differently when she started the programme. Having been involved in community work more than 30 years in CNR areas, she never considered herself as a leader. Her reference frames for leadership have changed and her newfound self-belief has signalled several significant changes for her. She is being viewed within her community as someone with a considerable amount to offer, resulting in her recently being asked by her manager to take on additional management responsibility in the paid community job she currently holds. She has joined the Board of PUL women’s group in a voluntary capacity as a direct result of a collaborative project the programme supported her to develop and deliver. She was approached by this organisation because of the impact the project had on local women from the Greater Shankill area. She is currently coordinating a cross community wellbeing programme, with over 40 women who live either side of a local interface, actively engaged and loving the experience. **She plans to focus much more of her time and energy on developing cross community relationships for women from the Falls and the Shankill.**

**Latoya** is shy by nature and was uncertain whether the term “leader” applied to her when she joined the programme. Its combined various aspects helped her find a voice and to learn that her quiet way of dealing with issues can be a real asset when role modelling leadership. Latoya has developed a greater sense of self-belief, was able to challenge her own thinking in important ways, grew in confidence, strengthened her communication skills, and developed greater empathy. **She has improved her understanding and awareness to deal with conflict; she no longer avoids dealing with these situations but rather will reach out to others to gain perspective and support and deal with issues head on rather than leaving them to fester or linger.** She has developed several new projects for the multi-cultural community organisation where she volunteers. Colleagues there have commented on her improved confidence and are responding to it positively. They have told her to “*keep up with the new Latoya*”. Previously, Latoya would avoid collaboration where representatives from PUL and CNR communities were involved. She felt her lack of understanding put her in danger of offending due to naivete. Working closely with peers on the programme has enabled her to explore this. Moving forward, Latoya has plans to continue to develop this understanding and to deliver a **project that involves as much cultural diversity as possible, and which ensures PUL and CNR people can be together with those from backgrounds like hers**.

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**Alan** joined the programme as the voluntary chairperson of a PUL community group often viewed in very negative terms due to the history of the area it is associated with. His group is made up solely from local voluntary residents, most of whom are new to community work. From the start Alan identified that to change the perception of the area, achieve progressive support and engagement from external agencies to help address the needs of local people, his leadership confidence and style needed to improve. Through mentoring, Alan quickly began to see his own leadership potential and qualities. Learning gained from an ILM L5 in Leadership and Management helped reinforce his understanding of leadership and his own capabilities. Public speaking was particularly difficult for Alan. This is changing. Alan has received comments from a range of places regarding this including from activists in a local PUL network where **he is being asked to become much more involved in a range of strategic work because he has found his voice and his view**. He is delegating tasks more effectively across his own voluntary committee and is consciously endeavoring to support the development of leadership with each of its members.

**Frances** used the opportunity of the programme’s Leadership in Action project to reinforce the value of working with the elderly in rural areas, particularly isolated elderly in PUL communities where her group had little presence. Her confidence, self-esteem and self-belief have increased because of the programme. She focused her ILM L7 Leadership & Management assignment on the governance of her group and identified a gap in representation from the PUL community as a result. This has been rectified with new members now on board and a new three-year strategy in the making which will be more representative of the needs of the PUL community. **The organisation’s cross community work will be more effective and representative as a direct result.**