



## Engaging Communities in Learning

**A Report of research undertaken by Dysg on behalf of the National Council  
ELWa**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report presents the findings of a research project aimed at identifying good practice approaches to engaging communities in learning. Three interrelated models of successfully engaging communities in Wales are outlined and recommendations for immediate and longer-term action to implement the findings of this report are presented. The research upon which these recommendations are based was initiated with a full literature review encompassing case studies from Wales, UK and beyond. This was supported through development of specific case studies within Wales. The initial findings provided the basis for discussion at a series of workshops for key stakeholders the outcomes from these have informed this Final Report.

### **Key Issues:**

Key issues raised by the research, include:

- The central role played by skilled Intermediaries of all kinds (Intermediaries can include: professional community workers, community animators/leaders, advice/guidance practitioners, community organisations, appropriate learning providers, local authorities and many others)
- The requirement for sustainable structures and ongoing development activity for successful community engagement, and the importance of funding in promoting sustainability
- The importance of different types of partnerships (i.e. partnerships for provision – as evidence shows that no one provider or agency can meet all relevant needs in a given community - and more outward looking partnerships for support, sharing of expertise and practice)
- The need to measure success and enhance quality through evaluation, suitable accreditation where appropriate and/or quality assurance of the learning process
- The importance of non traditional means of motivating learners and identification of barriers to engagement in learning
- The management of information in community settings and the need for coherent requirements and coordinated systems
- The value and practicalities of using IT, ICT, ILT and E-learning to promote community learning engagement

- Difficulties associated with the systematic differentiation of learning into vocational and non-vocational learning
- Concerns in relation to engaging specific target groups such as bilingual learners, black and ethnic minorities (BEMs), refugees and asylum seekers, families, and those from deprived communities and Communities First areas.

### **Good Practice**

An extensive list of points of good practice in engaging communities in successful learning is provided, covering such topic areas:

- Provision being learner focused
- Embedding learning in the community through development of awareness and understanding of learning needs in both the learner and provider
- Promoting community ownership of learning, using appropriate and often non-traditional 'marketing' strategies
- Ensuring provision is appropriate to different ways of learning, negotiated with participants where appropriate developed with awareness of wider strategic priorities, etc.

A summary of strategies or practices that have not worked is also provided.

### **Models of Successful Engagement**

Three models of successful engagement of communities in learning are proposed and there is an emphasis on the importance of such models being embedded in the community, i.e. community owned and community centred. Research case studies are listed as examples, where these can be seen to clearly fit with a particular model. It must be emphasised, however, that there can be a degree of obscurity between models, with activities in communities showing similarities to more than one of the models described.

- **Development Trust Led model** – Engagement led by a community owned, development organisation working actively with interest groups in the community and drawing in all of the other partners for provision (in the best cases engaging in wider strategic partnerships and networks, regionally, nationally and internationally).
  - Amman Valley Enterprise (South West Wales)
  - Ivanhoe Civic League (Appalachia USA)
  - Upper Skeena Initiative (British Columbia, Canada)
  
- **Shared Resource Model** – An organisation with resources and contacts, often a learning provider, but possibly a networking organisation or other body, leading in pulling together a network of providers and community organisations in communities across a geographical area. All partners work on an equal basis and respect each other’s strengths, roles and limitations whilst they utilise a shared funding source and share expertise, staff and other resources. This model requires the involvement of community led organisations at the local level for its success in engaging communities in learning.
  - On Common Ground (National Museum and Galleries of Wales)
  - Gloucestershire Neighbourhood Project (England)
  - Cultural Institutions as Gateways to Learning (Stuttgart, Germany)
  - Vocational Education and Training with Communities (Tasmania)
  - Community University of the Valleys Partnership (Valleys, Wales)
  - New Learning Network (Neath Port Talbot, Wales)
  
- **Specialist intermediary initiated model** - An organisational intermediary such as a specialist community group/organisation or community aware provider intercedes to initiate engagement of learners within a community. This is most often undertaken initially on a project basis, and can have a specific interest, rather than a geographical focus. In this model skilled individuals supported by the intermediary organisation, work with targeted individuals and groups in their local community to motivate learners often for the obvious benefit of the individual principally but within a community ethos and eventual community gain.
  - Prescriptions for Learning – NIACE (North Wales)

- Ladder Project (South East Wales)
- Training for Transformation (Africa, Ireland and Wales)
- Age Concern Morgannwg (South Wales)
- Rhyl Community College (Rhyl, Wales)
- Theatr Fforwm Cymru (Wales and international)
- Young Farmers Clubs (Wales)
- XL Wales (Wales)

### **Summary of Recommendations**

Recommendations resulting from the research are wide ranging and will require to be addressed by those involved in engaging communities in learning directly in addition to ELWa and other relevant Agencies and organizations.

### **Given that it is NC-ELWa's expressed intention to undertake pilots in the area of community learning we would suggest that:**

- Pilots arising from this research should not be restricted to Communities First Areas as the evidence suggests that engagement of learners could be restricted by the small size of the wards which may not coincide with an active community
- There should be synergy with the development of Community Learning Account pilots
- One aim of pilot activity should be to identify indicative costings for the models proposed to inform wider development within the sector

### **We recommend that ELWa National Council consider:**

- **Promoting the best practice and models of successful community engagement identified through this research together with support for overall quality enhancement of community learning provision through:**
  - Dissemination of the research findings to all stakeholders for learning, economic development and community regeneration within Wales
  - Provision of awareness raising and relevant staff development for all learning providers and organisations with an interest in community learning through the establishment of regional community learning networks
  - Working with Estyn and other relevant organisations to:

- Relate the research findings and in particular the best practice to the implementation of the Common Inspection Framework within community provision
    - Enable the development of an 'audit tool' from the best practice to support self assessment
  - Development of a project with an identified network of providers exhibiting best practice, to pilot approaches to quality assurance of informal learning including use of generic units to relate learning to the Credit and Qualifications Framework and adapting techniques for identifying soft outcomes such as 'value added' or the mechanism employed within community enterprise, 'social audit'
- **Promoting a rapid increase in identifiable community engagement in learning through;**
  - Identification of organisations currently working to the development trusts model in Wales and inclusion of these organisations and their communities within community learning account pilots or other pilot activities (the majority of these are in the valleys area of South Wales and in addition to those identified in the research can be located via the Development Trusts Association web site)
  - Identification from the research and through other means, of specialist intermediary organisations with a proven record of success in engaging specific target groups or communities of interest, such that they may be included for consideration within community learning account pilots or other pilot activities and/or be enabled to develop linkages with Communities First wards.
  - Promotion of the possibility for development of the 'Shared Resources Model' in particular, through CCET community learning sub-committees where they exist
  - Promoting (within the limitations of existing resources in terms of skills and expertise) replication of European bids and successful projects identified within the research (such as New Learning Network, the Ladder Project and Prescriptions for Learning), in other appropriate areas

- Promoting all models and approaches for use by Communities First Partnerships, however the Shared Resources Model should be particularly promoted due to its synergy with the Communities First Strategy
- Promote consistency in MIS requirements and formats between agencies and in particular seek to develop a single template for learner data across all providers
- **Liaise with the HE Council, community development and youth work agencies, WDA, relevant Sector Skills Councils the National Assembly and other agencies or organizations as relevant to;**
  - In the short-term:
    - Promote rapid availability of a range of training provision to meet the need for an increased number of professional community workers
    - Ensure 'joined up' consideration of means to promote sustainability through core funding, support and capacity building for communities
    - To identify relevant and emerging groups and intermediaries in areas where community led organisations are scarce (e.g. North and Mid Wales) such that their development can be assisted
  - In the longer-term, focus on improving the skills and increasing the overall numbers of intermediaries in Wales including:
    - Support for the creation, by the community, of community led organisations and in particular development trusts, in communities where these do not currently exist
    - Focus on identification and development of individuals and organisations within communities who can support community engagement. This should be done through support for;
      - Community apprenticeship schemes
      - Provision of training for community leaders/animators and
      - Application of a community development approach to assist emerging community groups particularly in North and Mid Wales

- **Liaise with other agencies and work through the LSRC to meet the requirements for further research identified in particular;**
  - Production of evaluated case studies of successful community engagement
  - Consideration of the particular needs and issues related to;
    - Communities with a level of first language Welsh participants
    - Those with special needs or working with special needs communities
    - Engaging black and ethnic minority community members
    - Working with communities of refugees/asylum seekers

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Adult learning is an important prerequisite for the participation in economic activity and for promoting social, professional and personal enrichment. This report places special emphasis on the importance of engaging communities as well as individuals in learning through both the provision of and participation in a variety of different types of community learning. Community organisations, which provide more or less formal types of learning along with a range of informal learning opportunities for their target groups, are, of course, also potentially excellent learning environments for their employees and volunteers. How far the informal learning of working within a community organisation is supplemented and supported by more directed and formal learning/training varies widely across the sector, as the report on Community Groups as Employers shows. Of course it is not only adults who can benefit from community learning, the possibility of placements with community/voluntary organisations has been posed in the recently published consultation paper on 14-19 in Wales (W A2002b). Many community organisations work on lifelong learning principals, only separating out provision where funding and statutory requirements prevail.

The existing discourse on engaging communities in learning reveals a perceptible difference in perspective between organisations that originate from community initiatives – who tend to represent themselves as *participating* in community learning at the same time as they may be providing learning, therefore using some level of ethnographic approach to identifying needs – and those, how ever close their links with the local community may be, who must perforce represent themselves primarily as ‘providers’ of learning, external to the community itself, and catering for externally perceived needs. While there are exceptions to and overlaps within these two broad categories and efforts are made by the latter category to use the language of community involvement; these differences remain tangible. It is clear from some case studies that communities can have concerns whether the language used is being backed up by genuine understanding and organisational policy support.

Key areas which are addressed by the report, through both the literature review and the case studies, include

- The role of community learning in community regeneration,

- The strengthening of communities,
- Building social capital,
- Breaking down social barriers, and
- The empowerment of communities

To make a difference locally and also to intervene in policy making on a local and national level, as well as participating in international networks and partnerships. One of the most important issues relating to engaging communities in learning is the question of how to motivate individuals and communities. Without motivation little or nothing can be achieved. To motivate, it is necessary (by definition) to engage with the emotions, the feelings (to *move* people, in all the senses of that word). It is also important to recognise that frustrations as well as desires can be powerful motivators

There is a wide and varied range of Community Learning Providers in existence, from the smallest community-embedded voluntary organisations to large, public sector institutions. This diversity can complicate both the description of the sector (or, more accurately, sectors) and undermine generalizations. Similarly there are significant variations between different geographical communities and/or communities of interest and different types of (potential) learners within these communities. There are, however, a number of principles of good practice that can be drawn from our research that are fundamental to engaging individuals and communities in learning and these are outlined in section 6. Moreover, while community resources, opportunities and problems vary from region to region it is possible to identify a range of issues that are relevant to all. In addition to identifying the issues detailed in section 5, it became clear during this research that there are areas where there is a disabling dearth of information available. The primary aim of this project has been to ascertain which good practice approaches might be best piloted in Wales; therefore along with the list of points of good practice, three models of successful community learning are outlined and recommendations on how and where pilots might be conducted are offered.

## **2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

ELWa's rationale behind this project is to provide policy makers and practitioners with information about the needs of communities across Wales, with an emphasis on identifying successful ways to increase demand for, and engagement in learning, focusing on communities where participation is currently low. Since this remit is so extensive, work has focused on identifying issues, existing good practice and further research needs.

The objectives of the overall project are to

- Synthesise statistical evidence and the main findings of national and international reviews of best practice in community learning, noting any important research gaps
- Make recommendations on successful approaches for introduction or further development in Wales
- Conduct a focused consultation and dissemination exercise
- Assist the National Council – ELWa in establishing pilot programmes based on selected examples of best practice.

### **3 METHODOLOGY**

This study was organised in two phases:

#### **Phase A**

The first phase has incorporated a literature review and desk research, which has focused on the compilation of a series of case studies seeking to highlight existing good practice in Wales. The case studies represent a selection of the broad range of groups involved in community learning and present some of their outcomes, achievements, issues and problems.

These case studies seek to take account of evidence on the links between community learning (in all the forms described in the brief, whether 'in, with, for or through' the community) and wider strategies for community development and community capacity building. The case studies were also used to explore and clarify some of the issues not adequately documented through the literature review, for instance issues relating to the support of black and ethnic minorities, special needs learners and rural communities.

#### **Phase B**

The second phase of this project centred around a series of interactive sessions focusing on some of the successful strategies and initiatives identified which engage communities in learning. Three half-day presentations and consultation workshops with key stakeholders; county voluntary councils, further education colleges engaged in outreach work, local education authorities, other community organisations and voluntary sector groups were held. These took place in Swansea, Bedwas and St Asaph on the 22, 28 and 29 November respectively.

These workshops sought to:

- Confirm our understanding of the priority communities whose needs will be addressed in the ELWa pilot projects
- Test whether particular models are transferable to or within the Welsh context
- Extend our knowledge of 'what works' in Wales
- Refine the draft principles for successful practice

- Raise awareness of the emerging findings from the study and encourage Local 'ownership' not only of the recommendations but also the actions that will follow the research.

#### 4 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

A range of terms are used in this report to refer to groups of people, forms of learning and types of organisation. Some key definitions are given below:

**Community:** (defined by NC-ELWa)

- A shared sense of belonging among a group of people which may arise socially, geographically or from common interests or concerns. It may be characterised by complex relationships of reciprocity and conflict but will usually promote feelings of social solidarity, collective actions and a sense of cultural identity.

**Community Learning:** (defined by NC-ELWa)

- Learning that is designed to regenerate a community through developing the education and skills of its people; and
- Learning that strengthens the community.

**Forms of Community Learning** (defined by NC-ELWa)

- **Learning *in* the community** – learning which is accessible to the local community for example in a school, library, pub, community or village hall;
- **Learning *for* the community** – learning which supports community capacity building through activities designed to help social capital as well as individual competencies;
- **Learning *through* the community** – informal learning opportunities which come through the learner's voluntary participation in community activity;
- **Learning *with* the community** – learning which comes from the participation in arts, cultural, sporting and other leisure activities.

**Categories of Purposeful Learning Activity:**

(defined by European Commission in the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning)

- **Formal Learning** – takes place in education and training institutions, leading to recognised diplomas and qualifications.

- **Non-Formal Learning** – takes place alongside the mainstream systems of education and training and does not typically lead to formalised certificates. Non-formal learning may be provided in the workplace and through the activities of civil society organisations and groups (such as in youth organisations, trades unions and political parties). It can also be provided through organisations or services that have been set up to complement formal systems (such as arts, music and sports classes or private tutoring to prepare for examinations).
- **Informal Learning** – is a natural accompaniment to everyday life. Unlike formal and non-formal learning, informal learning is not necessarily intentional learning, and so may well not be recognised even by individuals themselves as contributing to their knowledge and skills.

In addition to the above definitions of forms of learning provided by the European Commission, the following terms are used in a number of sources and appear in this report:

- **Incidental Learning** – is another term for a category of Informal Learning, which is found in some of the literature reviewed. Another synonym which occurs is ‘accidental learning’.
- **Unpremeditated Learning** – occurs due to participation in an activity and may be formal, non-formal or informal.
- **Surreptitious Learning** or **Learning by Stealth** – these are close to informal learning, where the learner is not usually aware that learning is occurring, however there is some deliberate provision of learning within an informal setting.

#### **Development Trusts** (defined by the Development Trusts Association)

Development Trusts are defined as organisations which are:

- Engaged in the economic, environmental & social regeneration of a defined area or community
- Independent and aiming for self-sufficiency

- Not for private profit
- Community-based and owned
- Actively involved in partnerships between the community, voluntary, private and public sectors

**Intermediary** (our definition)

The definition of an intermediary is an individual or organisation, which can facilitate the engagement of communities or individuals in communities in learning.

## **5 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **5.1 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

This literature review explores existing literature on community learning with the aim of identifying new ways of increasing demand for and engagement in learning, with particular emphasis on communities where participation is low. The remit (ELWa 2002) is to consider best practice in Wales, other parts of the UK, Europe, and other countries that present exemplars of successful community learning.

The review concentrates therefore, as far as is practicable, on identifying actions being undertaken in communities, within the UK and elsewhere to engage those who are recognised as not normally participating in learning opportunities. The five key objectives are to identify and analyse:

- Groups and individuals who are involved in community learning;
- The actions and achievements of community learning groups
- Barriers to learning and strategies to overcome them
- Recognising and validating non-accredited and informal learning
- The appropriateness of community learning settings for the acquisition of basic skills and key skills

In doing this the review seeks to take account of a range of issues including those around: funding mechanisms, delivery methods and their effectiveness, provision for ethnic minorities, special needs requirements and provision, the role of community learning in regeneration, empowerment of individuals and communities and the implications of the Communities First programme.

## 5.2 METHODOLOGY

There is a vast quantity of literature in the area of Adult Community Education. Initial scrutiny of the initially identified sources indicated that the majority referred to traditional models of adult education, which dealt with provision possibly located within community settings, but not necessarily engaging with the community, simply offering courses at outreach from more traditional institutional settings. The policy issues surrounding this 'traditional' approach were also well represented. Through contacts with community organisations, and providers from all sectors we have sought out additional literature and case study material seeking innovative approaches. There is, however, a paucity of formally published material describing either the theory or the practice of engaging communities in learning. Those sources which deal with engaging communities tend to be focused on outcomes for the community in terms of development, regeneration etc. and whilst learning is undoubtedly a feature it may not be directly identified or is dealt with in terms of capacity building or confidence raising. We have, however, drawn on some of this literature and utilised a number of less formal sources using case studies to illustrate points and raise issues throughout the review. We have also attempted not to limit the review to Adults in the sense of focusing on post-18 learning, seeking to embrace literature which looks at the community as a whole and involving some studies where work has been principally with young people.

The range of sources utilised includes published reviews, academic studies, policy documents, published and unpublished reports, websites, news reports and case study evidence from all of these sources plus conference presentations. These have been examined from the perspective of the aims and objectives identified above.

The policy context of community learning and the background issues around the concepts of community engagement in Wales are briefly analysed below. Information from the literature studied is then organised in relation to the key objectives outlined above. Whilst some initial analysis maybe presented in each section, the key issues, recommendations and points of good practice identified are laid out in subsequent sections of the interim report.

### 5.3 THE POLICY CONTEXT

In his introduction to the National Assembly Government's strategy 'Plan for Wales' the First Minister states the commitment to "*a programme of reform based on Welsh traditions of universal and comprehensive support of services; community involvement; support for those most in need; and motivated and supported public sector workers.*" In the UK as a whole, Education, along with health, is regarded as the highest public policy priority. The commitment of the Government across the UK to 'modernise' and introduce 'new' approaches to these services has been reiterated in the recent (October 2002) Labour Party Conference. Many of the reforms are targeted specifically at the school and hospital sectors; however, it is undisputed that education in its widest sense has a key role in the achievement of economic prosperity and social inclusion. Indeed the 'Plan for Wales' defines three guiding principles for its strategy, focusing on creating a sustainable, inclusive and equal Wales where people will be given the skills they need to prosper in a modern creative economy.

These principles also underpin the National Councils strategy and would appear to be essential if we consider the issues raised in 'A Winning Wales: Economic Analysis' (W A G 2002). Whilst recognising that productivity improvements are the main driver of economic growth this analysis also recognises the need to promote employment and engage the economically inactive. Wales has relatively low economic participation of people of working age. Latest estimates from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) are that there are around 479,000 economically inactive people of working age in Wales, a rate of 27.1% of the population. In this context, engaging individuals in learning as first step towards economic activity becomes an important focus.

The Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA 2000a) reports from work focused on developments in England that the institutional infrastructure for the expansion and reorganisation of lifelong learning is now being put into place. The financial and operational activity is within the remit of the learning and skills councils, (the National Council of ELWa in Wales). This LSDA report comments, however that when considering future economic prosperity and the elimination of social exclusion it is important to include other policy areas. The creation of thriving learning communities depend upon such initiatives as neighbourhood renewal schemes, crime prevention,

early years provision and public health campaigns. Although much of the activity of workers 'on the ground' can be closely attributed to education (in its widest sense) it can be seen that there is a need for close collaboration between the various official stakeholders. In particular access to funding for projects and the inevitable 'wrangling' between agencies can lead to those who would benefit from participation in lifelong learning becoming disenchanted. In addition the report states; *'the governance structures, accountability systems and control bias of central and regional institutions too often militate against the forms of participation and community engagement which we now need'*.

The recent policy review of community regeneration undertaken by the NAW's Local Government and Housing Committee itemises the large number of policy areas which relate to the theme of their review in considering issues such as the possibilities for streamlining existing programmes; the role of partnership; and finance for policies and programmes. The review expressed the firm belief that progress could only be made if the communities themselves are totally involved and committed. However, they cited the complexity and diversity of sources in relation to funding work in communities as creating a 'constant struggle' for organisations involved. The review identified over 60 funding streams operated by the Wales Assembly Government (WAG) which impact at community level, not including those operated by Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies (ASPBs). Drawing a clear distinction between core funding and hypothecated project funding, the review recommends urgent development of a core-funding stream targeted at established community regeneration projects and organisations.

The National Council of Education and Learning Wales (NC-ELWa) has identified the creation of 'Learning Communities' as being one of its five key goals in order to promote world class learning opportunities. They comment that through the process of consultation they have received a strong message that community-led activity plays a critical role in helping to engage people in learning.

It can be seen therefore, that there is now a strong focus on enabling communities to take a lead role in regeneration with learning taking a key role within this. Methodologies to promote community ownership of activities have been developed through the NAW's Communities First Programme. Launched in June 2001, the programme is designed to

tackle poverty in the most deprived communities in Wales and is based on the principle that community renewal should meet the needs determined by the communities themselves. The progress report to the NAW Local Government and Housing Committee (May 2002) stated that 36 Communities First Partnerships have been, or were nearly formed, and that a Communities First Support Network, involving a range of organisations, has been established to provide support to partnerships. The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning's remit letter to NC-ELWa requires the Council to work closely with the Communities First Partnerships in relation to relevant aspects of learning provision.

Both the NAW and NC-ELWa recognise the role of the voluntary sector in promoting involvement for community action. In 1998 the Secretary of State for Wales launched the Compact between the Government and the Voluntary Sector in Wales. The Welsh Assembly Government has reinforced this policy initiative through the establishment of a Partnership Council between the Assembly and the Voluntary Sector and through the production of the Voluntary Sector Scheme. The Welsh Assembly Government has also requested that each of the ASPBs develop complementary compacts for working with the voluntary sector.

ELWa is in the process of developing an 'active compact' with the voluntary sector, 'Working Together for an Inclusive Learning Society'. The voluntary sector in Wales encompasses some 26,000 organisations and 1.8 million volunteers (data supplied by the Wales Council for Voluntary Action for the NC-ELWa Voluntary Sector Compact, Consultation Draft 2002) and is involved in every aspect of education and lifelong learning as a provider, an employer, a consumer and as a partner.

#### **5.4 CONTEXT OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN WALES**

It will be important to consider, for any discussion of engaging communities in Wales, the rich cultural heritage of community involvement with most civic, social and economic activities (Clarke et al 2002). Small-scale community-building exercises emerged formally with the establishment of the independent chapel movement in the seventeenth-

century. Grassroots support, usually of the self-taught variety, sustained spiritual and welfare organisations in the face of organised, institutional opposition.

In South Wales, the impact of the developed formal use of Welsh due to the use of the language within, and the spread across the area of, the nonconformist churches, can still be seen (Morgan, DL 1988). Industrialisation provoked a powerful social response to exploitation in the newly urban population of the South of Wales. Massive population growth meant that some communities had to be built from scratch. Self-help groups in the valleys, established as Friendly Societies, grew around the Miners' Welfare Societies and the trade union movement, providing a working model of the power of communities to pull themselves out of dire circumstances. There is a great deal of literature from the late 1980s and 90s relating to valley communities, drawing on this heritage for community led solutions and highlighting the role played by adult education in their attempts to recover from industrial decline (Francis 1989). The situation depicted for valley communities is mirrored in some areas of North East Wales where the decline of steel making, coal mining and mineral extraction during the same period had a massive impact on local communities (West Wrexham Local Action Plan). Little material could be found that was relevant to other specific areas of Wales or Wales as a whole. However, across Wales in the late 1980s and early '90s, a number of networks were established drawing together adult education practitioners from statutory and voluntary organisations to promote access to education (<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/crntwork/access>). Three such networks continue as Open College Networks often now seen for their prime purpose as credit awarding bodies, rather than as pioneers of needs based learning opportunities.

One particularly relevant example, of a cross sectoral network is the Valleys Initiative for Adult Education (VIAE) which, formed in 1988, developed strategies for adult education as a principle element in community regeneration. It involved all providing sectors and community owned groups and advocated co-operation and partnership in the face of the policy of the time to promote competition (Reynolds and Francis 1988). The concept of the 'Community University' was developed by VIAE to describe a rolling programme of events and educational experiences, negotiated with participants and planned and provided within communities. It was understood that this could not occur, or engage with individuals who traditionally did not participate in education, unless it was undertaken as part of a dynamic model for community development (VIAE 1990).

## **5.5 GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED IN COMMUNITY LEARNING**

Identification of those participating in community learning is often obscured due to the wide variety of terms used to describe learning or provision, which is delivered in, for, through or with communities. It is useful, therefore to review some existing definitions from literature relating to this area and the relationships between organisations, differing activities and 'actors' involved within communities.

### **5.5.1 Community learning - organisation and provision**

Faris and Peterson's definition of a Learning Community (reported in Yarnit 2001) is:

Any city, town or village, and surrounding area, that, using lifelong learning as an organising principal and social goal, promotes collaboration of the civic, public, economic, educational and voluntary/community sector in the process of achieving agreed upon objectives related to the twin goals of sustainable economic development and social exclusion.

In this definition the emphasis is on learning as a means to an end – the achievement of pre-negotiated social and economic objectives for a community – and suggests a formal structural approach. There is a dearth of quantitative information on learning, which can be directly linked to this type of activity.

According to the Department of Education and Skills (Callaghan et al 2001) Adult and Community Education (ACE) is a narrower category than 'adult learning' in general and takes place in a very wide range of settings; local authorities and further education colleges are major players nationally and often a strand of social action or regeneration is present. Much of the learning is non-vocational and non-accredited, although increasingly funding mechanisms and quality audit requirements are imposing a requirement to validate outcomes of non-accredited learning.

Links between community development and development of skills and learning in general are identified in some of the case studies in appendix 3 below and through

several of the papers presented in *Community Development in South Wales* (Clarke et al 2002). The language utilised within the context of community development literature is often subtly different and many contributors to the book refer to capacity building in communities, which appears to embrace learning for individuals, leaders, organisations or the community as a whole. Some contributions, however, reflect more clearly on the role of learning as in the case of 'Supporting Active, Educated and Enterprising Communities in the South Wales Valleys' (Turner 2002). This reflects the need to break down geographical and sectoral boundaries to achieve the widest benefits of education for communities. In the case presented this was achieved through the formation of horizontal and vertical partnerships. The vertical or perhaps more conventionally hierarchical, axis of the partnership represents the bringing together of all stake-holders from individuals and community Groups, up through all types and styles of statutory guidance and learning providers, and social and economic development organisations to the funding agencies and policy makers themselves. The Horizontal axis represents the geographical spread of the communities involved. The view is presented that were there is a commitment to active listening by the partners, needs can be identified and learning to the benefit of individuals and the community as a whole, achieved.

In drawing conclusions from all the contributions to the book, Clarke et al (2002), comment on the need for partnerships to be operated on an equal basis. They also identify clear needs for co-ordination of activity, partnerships of an equal nature between all organisations and agencies and community leadership, and development expertise. The importance of networks and the role of adult education as a 'broker' is highlighted by Jansen and Van der Veen (1996). Practitioners, working within networks should be able to stimulate contacts and communication between groups of community 'actors'.

Clarke et al make the point, however, that distinctions should be made between the roles of individuals in community situations. In particular they see the possibility for confusion between the roles of community activists and community development workers. These roles they feel, should be defined with the community development worker as a professional with training and skills probably from outside of the community and able to be objective. The development workers role would include identification and/or development of community activists who should be, or become, leaders and

representatives of their community. These two roles are seen as vital to the process of engagement in communities.

Arguments cited by Yarnit (2001) support some of the conclusions of Clarke et al. They make a case that no one organisation can provide the skills and resources necessary to support the development of successful learning communities. Attempts to provide a combination of resources and expertise can lead to 'partnerships (that) tend to be top heavy, dominated by large mainstream agencies such as colleges or local authorities, risking the exclusion of voluntary and community sector organisations. Financial and regulatory frameworks compound the imbalance'. The paper presents the idea of a reformed system, the fundamental feature of which is that it advocates a 'bottom up' approach. This builds on, wherever possible, the local community organisations rather than supplanting them with a new burdensome bureaucracy. The case study of NPT New Learning Network in appendix 3.4 provides example of a Partnership which includes a variety of organisations from the public, statutory and voluntary sector and which is also aware of the need to strive towards 'equality of voice' for all organisations within the partnership. This effort is crucial, since a major conclusion from Martin Yarnit's paper is that:

our organised systems of schooling and continuing education and training are like big ships floating in a sea of informal learning. If these education and training ships do not pay increased attention to the massive amount of informal learning, many of them are likely to sink into Titanic irrelevancy.

### **5.5.2 According to available information and statistics, therefore, who is learning in communities?**

Traditionally, post-16 education and training has been embedded within the Further Education sector and Adult Community Education run by LEAs. Since the Further and Higher Education Act (1992), when colleges were cut loose from local education authority control, they have been charged with becoming more entrepreneurial and imaginative. As a result many have expanded their range of provision. Recent statistics (ELWa August 2002) suggest that since 'incorporation' in 1992 student numbers in the FE sector in Wales are estimated to have increased overall by 76% with part-time student numbers increasing by more than 50%. 58,616 learners were pursuing adult

continuing education (ACE) courses (Autumn 2001 statistics). Within this group 77% were female.

Whilst statistics emanating from the FE and parts of the ACE sectors may be able to provide breakdown of engagement in learning from underrepresented groups in deprived areas (by analysis of post code), information on the wider effects of the learning and transference of acquired skills and knowledge to altered behaviours within the community are not identified.

We know from ELWa data (August 2002) that engagement in formal ACE in Wales is mainly undertaken by women and the majority of case histories cited by Gorard appear to support that view. In addition McGivney (2000) states:

most surveys of adult participation continue to show that the majority of people who engage in adult, further and higher education are those with longer schooling, higher qualifications and higher socio-economic status.

Surveys of adult learners in general within the UK (Callaghan et al 2001) reveal low participation among older learners and the economically inactive. However, within Local Education Authority (LEA) controlled provision there is an indication of increased numbers of older people, with women representing the majority of enrolments in the LEA sector.

The National Adult Learners Survey (Lavalle and Blake 2001) looked at 'learning experiences' defining this to encompass formal and some types of informal learning activity, however, incidents of unpremeditated learning or incidental learning were not included. This showed that in Wales the percentage not learning increased between 1997 and 2001 from 29% to 36%.

Analysis of Individualized Student Records (ISR) data for 2000/01 allows a comparison between the engagement of learners from Communities First areas with other areas in Wales. In each of the age categories, singly and as a whole, Under-16, 16-18, 19-20, 21-24, 25-39, a larger percentage of Community First area learners access FE (71%) compared with the whole of Wales (63%). Conversely, in each of the age categories,

40-49, 50-59, 60+singly and as a whole a smaller percentage (29%) of Community First area learners access FE compared with the whole of Wales (37%).

If we examine part-time and full-time learners separately it is in the part-time students area that the division is more pronounced. For full-time students the percentage of the college population in Community First areas for under 40s is the same percentage as in the whole of Wales. The percentage of over 40s is also the same in Community First areas and across Wales.

The data reveals the following about the male/female split of college population. For part-time learners we see the same tendencies as for all genders considered together with Community First areas having a larger percentage of females than across Wales for the Under1639 age categories and a smaller percentage of females in the over 40s age categories. (This trend holds in all categories Under16, 16-18,19-20, 21-24, 25-39, 40-49, 50-59, and 60+). For full-time learners the percentages of females in under 40s and over 40s age categories are exactly the same for Community First areas as for Wales a whole. If we break the categories down to Under16, 16-18 etc. then the pattern does not hold.

A breakdown of ILA 'episodes' is presented in a recent report (Gray, M et al 2002) from the LSDA. This considers the initial impact of the now discontinued Individual Learning Account initiative. In this context learning providers predictably include further education colleges and other training organisations. The breakdown is presented by type of provider within four study areas in the UK and shows that 11% (1535 out of a total of 14,272) are attributed to LEA Adult Education services, with 30% within FE colleges and 38% falling within a range of 'other providers'. Unfortunately the data does not record how many of the other providers belong to the voluntary sector or where provision accredited to FE or LEAs may have been delivered in partnership in the community. There is also no indication of the types of provision undertaken except to say that there had been strong demand for IT training amongst older learners.

Of a total of 689,000 accounts opened the gender balance was 58% female to 39% male (5% did not declare their gender). Of the 40% of accounts that were actually used (a low take up), 59% were used by women and 40% by men. The research indicates that the

women were seeking to re-enter the job market or looking for better paid work. The largest usage (39%) came from the 35-49 age group and significantly a further 23% of accounts had been used by people older than 49.

ILA account holders were asked to record their economic status when registering. Highest take up was from those in employment with the percentage of unemployed registering for accounts as low as 9%.

Providers varied in their views of the motivations of the new learners. However significant numbers believed that ILAs had

- Definitely been a factor in encouraging people who had been out of learning
- Encouraged people to seek employment or promotion
- Encouraged people to assist their children with computer work
- Assisted people in low paid jobs who were outside the benefit system as it provided fee remission
- Brought micro and one-person businesses into learning.

Figures from all of the above studies, taken overall, provide some contradictory information, and can only be considered as presenting raw indicators of engagement in learning over recent years. The majority of the statistics include few clear details of the characteristics (other than gender) of the participants, their motivations, employment, or socio-economic status. Where any of this information is included, there is no means to assess whether there is a common basis for the categorisations in terms of type of learning or learner characteristics. More importantly, none of the statistics presented by any of the sources above, reflect sufficiently for any analysis, how or where the learning was undertaken. For the purpose of identifying individuals engaged in community learning these figures therefore, provide little relevant information.

One clear message, however, is that informal learning does not lend its self to such convenient measures as participation and pass rates and therefore contributes to the concerns that enormous amounts of learning and expertise which are acquired outside of the system for recording escapes the attention of analysts.

Even when the existence of informal learning is acknowledged it is hard to find evaluated projects and models to quantify its effects within communities. The work of Gorard, Rees and Fevre (2002) attempts to present some information on the extent of informal learning within Wales. They have done this through analysis of case studies based in three regions of industrial South Wales, (Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot and Blaenau Gwent). Their recent work, questions the narrow definition of learning used in much of the current writing concerning lifelong learning. In contrast, they say 'much valuable and non-trivial learning already goes on, and has always gone on, outside formal programmes of instruction'. (Gorard et al 2002, p. 105). From the perspective of employment, the survey data revealed that most new jobs involved no training so learning acquired could be classified as informal learning which transfers to the continuing existence of the business organisation within its community.

Case histories cited by Gorard et al present many examples of people who have educated themselves independently of the established systems. One man had taught himself pottery, electrolysis for metallising, simple electronics, wax casting and furniture modelling. Another male respondent was a self-taught plasterer and electrician, who loved opera, but worked as a steel foundry man. The same respondent had also read about the care of the 7,000 bedding plants in his garden.

### **5.5.3 Stimulating Demand for Learning**

A report commissioned by LSDA and prepared by the Institute of Employment Studies, Hillage and Aston (2001) reviews UK and international literature about initiatives to stimulate demand for learning. They identify that participation in education and training can be analysed around a number of key variables:

- Previous educational experience – this is probably the single most important variable explaining participation in lifelong learning. There is a very strong correlation between the length of time spent in immediately post-compulsory education and the qualifications obtained to participation at a later stage in life.
- Labour market status – people in employment are much more likely to access and participate in training.

- Occupation – there is a clear correlation between type of employment and participation. Learners are more likely to belong to managerial, professional or associate professional occupations.
- Age – in general learners tend to be younger than non-learners.
- Gender – women are more likely than men to undertake training.
- Ethnicity – further and higher education statistics suggest that there may be greater variation between groups of different social and ethnic backgrounds than between sexes. A considerable higher proportion of the ethnic community continue in full-time education than the white population, for example.
- Location – participation varies by geographical location with lower participation levels recorded in deprived areas.

The research also reveals that initiatives designed to engage communities in learning tend to follow two distinct paths. Those focused on rural areas are primarily about improving access to learning provision whilst those in inner cities tend to attempt to tackle problems such as motivation.

From the perspective of identifying groups and individuals who participate in community learning this data also has limited use. However it does identify that many initiatives appear to be aimed at making it easier for those who want to learn – rather than focusing on the unmotivated who see no advantages in learning. The list of variables outlined may be useful in developing measures for assessing whether learners attracted to initiatives adhere to the profile of the “traditional learner” or are “new learners” not previously attracted to by provision on offer.

This LSDA review also highlights that there is a dearth of summative evaluative evidence on the outcomes of initiatives, in the community or elsewhere. It would be useful to develop methods to encourage policy makers to establish whether the initiatives they take to stimulate demand for learning have the desired effect. Then the evidence could then be placed within the wider education, social and economic context.

One approach which lends itself to a ‘learning community’ model is to target groups rather than individuals and involves the voluntary sector. One of the key differences between learning within a voluntary sector environment and the more formal structure of

college or training provision is the way in which people get involved. Some of the case studies outlined above exemplify this approach. Voluntary groups rarely go out to recruit learners, as a college or other learning provider would, people get involved because of the service which is being offered such as a coffee morning or a chance to play football. Focus groups from a recent Swansea CCET (Community Consortia for Education and Training) report (ELWa 2002b) shows that this approach works as a first step for people who have had negative experiences at school – they do not want to become involved with ‘learning’ or enrolling on a ‘course’. Their involvement with a voluntary organisation provided an environment where they felt safe to progress at their own pace.

Some ‘hard to reach groups’ fall into the category of ‘disaffected’ and it is with these groups that a multi-agency approach, with all its attendant administrative and strategic difficulties, becomes vital. A preventative scheme is Communities that Care (UK) (1997), which targets four of the most important problem behaviours that are damaging the lives of people and the communities in which they live.

- Youth crime – can undermine the safety and confidence of whole communities
- Drug abuse – four out of ten 15-16 years olds (CTC 1997) report using drugs at some time. The prime risk is individual health and a secondary risk is neighbourhoods becoming the haunt of drug pushers and drug related crime
- School-age pregnancy – recent reports (TES 20/09/2002, p. 20) reveal that Wales has the highest rate of teenage pregnancies in the UK 35.2 out of 1000 females under 20 get pregnant compared with 28.8 in England and 26.1 in Northern Ireland
- School failure – Nearly one in 10 school leavers are without qualification.

The Communities that Care (UK) scheme is based on an American model and is supported in the UK by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. It is a long-term programme focusing on building safer communities where children and young people are valued. The project establishes a working partnership between local people, agencies and organisations to promote healthy personal and social development among young people with a view to reducing the risks of problem behaviours appearing.

The programme involves four main stages:

- Community involvement
- Risk and resources audit
- Action planning and implementation
- Monitoring and evaluation.

Whilst 'local coalitions' are seen as pivotal in achieving a plan of action and the hidden strengths and potential of people within communities is recognised, the scheme seems on first examination to be 'top down'. Although CTC says that it realises the support of local people is needed and that they cannot 'parachute in' they go on to identify the key leaders as being the Chief Executive of the Council, Directors of Education, Headteachers, Directors of Social Services, Director of Housing and the Chief Constable! These people are then brought together for an orienteering session with the aim of securing publicly declared support and commitment.

The evaluative model used by Communities that Care is rigorous and has potential to show communities how to measure and map the major risk and protective factors for youth crime, drug abuse, school age pregnancy and school failure. However, it is clear that the manner and method of introduction require sensitive management. The scheme is ambitious and requires the commitment of the official agencies in order to gain credibility and funding. However the 'top down' methodology is an antithesis of the approaches advocated by Yarnit, the Swansea CCET and others, where building from the bottom is seen as the only effective way to tap in to reserves of goodwill, skills and community spirit at ground level.

## **5.6 THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF COMMUNITY LEARNING GROUPS**

The importance of community centred groups in terms of meeting learning needs may be hard to measure since, as Gorard et al suggest, formal recorded learning and thus the evidence which is available through official data is only the 'tip of the iceberg' (Gorard et al 2002). However, the 'bottom up' approach advocated by Yarnit (2001) emphasises the value of community learning groups. A selection of published case

studies are therefore outlined below: The Ladder Project (an initiative for 16-25 year olds from the South Wales Valleys); the work of Amman Valley Enterprise (an Adult Education and Community Revival project); the Gloucestershire Neighbourhood project; On Common Ground (a pilot project for young people in Welsh communities led by the National Museum and Galleries of Wales), transference of 'Training for Transformation' from East Africa to Ireland and Wales and the experiences of initiatives involving communities in the US, Uruguay, Germany and Tasmania.

### **5.6.1 The Ladder Project**

The Ladder Project was set up in 1997 by the People and Work Unit within a collaborative partnership with the Rank Foundation, The Prince's Trust and three local development trusts working on the regeneration of Valleys communities (Lloyd-Jones, 2002). The aim was to work with 16-25 year olds who were poorly or totally unqualified and were out of work. The project was conceived to be an action research project with the aim of developing better understanding of these young people and to pilot innovative approaches to addressing their needs. Staffing for the pilot scheme was six and the criteria for recruitment was that they had to be from the area in which they had to work and could demonstrate commitment to working in their local community. They also had to be 'hungry for qualifications'.

An approach, which is well established within youth work, whereby participants establish over a protracted period an effective relationship with a worker who cares about them (informal mentoring), was used. Conversation and personal support was seen as being fundamental to engaging the young people and early feedback from the participants supports this – they said that they valued the relationships they formed with someone they could trust and who could help them think through their needs and then encourage them to make changes.

The project was planned with no curriculum, no equipment and very broad targets. The Ladder provided the local partners with locally recruited workers. The recruits spent a third of their time on their own training and development, a third of their time on working within their community alongside other workers

and a third of their time focusing on self-employment as an option for the future.

Case studies of some of the participants provide a 'snap shot' profile of the sort of experiences common in the communities served by The Ladder Project.

- Steve – tried New Deal but it failed him, can't even find a labouring job
- Karen – spent three years as a volunteer, but found that employers did not recognise this type of work experience
- Alun – had numerous jobs but they never lasted long
- Anne – single parent with literacy problems
- Darren – whose story outlines a descent into heroin addiction and a sense of being out of control.

The report shows that none of these young people were 'disaffected' in that they were not unwilling to try new opportunities. They, like many others within disadvantaged communities, were in many ways victims of their own circumstances and insecurities. They are stuck within a revolving door of disadvantage.

Over a five year period the 'ladder' workers, worked with a total of 1361 of the hardest to reach young adults. Of these: 363 (27%) entered employment or self-employment; 672 (49%) enrolled into further education or training. Within the group 716 adults (53%) continued to take part in voluntary and community activities. The workers themselves also followed personal development activities, by the end of the project all were qualified youth workers, one had a BA in Informal Education; four were on diploma courses and one was completing a certificate in social science.

A similar ethos and some of the methods of the Ladder Project can also be seen in one of the case studies (see appendix 3.7) on Theatr Fforwm Cymru, who run 'apprenticeships'. Many of these apprentices have gone on to become practitioners in Wales.

### **5.6.2 Amman Valley Enterprise (Reynolds 1995)**

Amman Valley Enterprise was formed in 1987 by a small group of women, drawn together by a series of exhibitions organised by the council for voluntary service. Between them they had skills and knowledge, mostly uncertificated, which they wanted to share and develop to their own and the community's benefit. The local knowledge of some of the group was seen as pivotal in gaining local support and volunteer labour to refurbish premises donated by British Coal. Courses put on in partnership with various education providers began in 1988. Prior to provision being available at AVE, the nearest education and training available was at an FE college 6 – 12 miles distant. The philosophy of AVE is to act as catalyst to assist people to think in enterprising terms from a community perspective, to provide adult education and training, opportunities for personal development and to assist in the social, economic, and environmental regeneration of the Amman and Swansea Valleys. The 1999-2000 annual report reveals that the AVE now operates from three locations, has been instrumental in supporting the creation of a national movement, Community Development Wales, and has expanded into catering, business support, child care, holiday play care, after school club and a woodland management scheme.

The philosophy of Amman Valley Enterprise emphasises collective welfare rather than individual gain. As well as campaigning for reinvestment in the local economy the overarching aim is to use and revitalise redundant skills and resources to rebuild the confidence of individuals and communities.

### **5.6.3 The Gloucestershire Neighbourhood Project (LEDIS 2002)**

A similar, long established scheme is The Gloucestershire Neighbourhood Projects, which were initially started in 1979. There is a 'can do' culture aimed at responding to disadvantaged and socially excluded neighbourhoods by developing services in response to locally identified needs and supporting the development of sustainable community infrastructures. The project now claims to cover over 75% of the county's socially excluded population. Recent initiatives include:

- A network of Healthy Living Centres
- The promotion of community enterprise.

The next case study looks at the transference of an ethnographic methodology originating out of work in South America and developed in Africa and Ireland prior to being implemented in Wales

#### **5.6.4 Training for Transformation (Jones 2002)**

Training for Transformation has been developed through the experience of community workers working with people who are victims of war and oppressive regimes. The approach is to work with communities to facilitate their ownership of change and create theories of society through critical analysis and action. They become owners of knowledge. In the first instance this is done through undertaking a listening survey within the community of people and presenting back to them the issues, which most concern them and around which there is strong consensus. This creates a dynamic, generating energy and motivation for change. Through critical analysis of the issues working within the context of the personal, the community and the wider world, people develop an understanding of their own situation. A plan of action is developed, owned and undertaken by the community. Along side this a process of group development to support the development of effective teams is undertaken. These groups working with the action plan can then effect change.

The concepts stem from the work of the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, who argued for an educational process which worked *with* people rather than on or for them. The Work of Freire was developed and adapted by workers in East Africa, South America and Ireland leading to the development of Training for Transformation (Hope and Timmel 1984). A small number of activists from Wales were trained in Ireland and have since utilised the techniques with communities in Wales. Presenting examples from such communities Lynn Jones comments:

*"I was lucky enough to work with a very experienced community worker on a local authority housing estate in Abergavenny. He taught me to work with*

*people, to help them find their voices, to tell their experiences of life to the people who had control over their lives – namely Doctors, Social Workers, Health Visitors, Midwives and Headteachers. I worked alongside them and included them in meetings, which discussed plans which would affect their lives. This gave them the opportunity to express their experiences directly to policy makers and practitioners who often talked about their problems but never asked them what they thought or what they wanted to do about solving those problems.”*

*“One successful experience was the work with a community regeneration organisation based in the Cynon Valley. Working alongside two other facilitators, I helped to facilitate a Vision Day for twenty two volunteers and staff based on their ideas of what they wanted to get out of the day. We developed a programme which helped them to reflect on their history and achievements, explore their relationships with one another, identify and explore the impact of their positive and negative styles of working with one another, strengthen their effectiveness as a team, create a Vision Statement for the future and develop a set of goals for five years.”*

A case study from the desk research in appendix 3.7, features the voluntary community organisation, Theatr Fforwm Cymru, and presents another example of a group working in Wales using similar principles and practices.

The following studies are based in Appalachia and depict case studies of crises within mining communities and other communities from the Deep South. From a cultural perspective there are, of course, vast differences between these communities and those in Wales. There are however interesting parallels with Wales in terms of economic restructuring, particularly the shift from a manufacturing to a predominantly service-based economy which has been the subject of extensive academic research, policy analysis and political debate on both sides of the Atlantic. If it is accepted that parts of Wales can be termed ‘communities in crisis’, some initiatives which were undertaken in the 1980s in the US are worthy of examination and are documented by Gaventa, Smith and Willingham (1990).

### 5.6.5 America – Case Studies in Appalachia

In September 1986, the people of Ivanhoe formed the Ivanhoe Civic League for one purpose: to stop the sale of an abandoned overgrown industrial park. Ivanhoe is a small rural community which had previously been dependent upon mining. From the 1960s to 1980s the gradual closure of the mines and peripheral businesses left the area economically devastated. From a starting point within a small office in an abandoned building a small group organised workshops for the local community and then expanded to providing senior citizen's programmes, youth programmes, etc. As one respondent states, 'from a initial goal of getting any development, we are now creating our own'. (Waller et al in Gaventa, et al 1990 p. 19).

In the first instance the group campaigned to get new industries into the area *'we wanted this wonderful factory and it had to have smoke coming out of it and it would employ the people' ... 'I kept trying to find a factory and there wasn't none to find'*. This realisation was seen as positive in that the community realised that their perception of the reality of their situation was far more accurate than that of the government officials.

The lack of educational achievement was a barrier when dealing with officialdom is discussed but one respondent is beginning to appreciate the worth of informal learning ...

*'Ivanhoe is what I'm working for' ... 'I have had some strikes against me because I'm a woman and because of not being educated' .... 'I don't have little papers to go with my education, but I've got an education all right. I've got a wonderful education because I read and I research and I do all these things but they are not things I can write on a piece of paper and add 'XYZ' behind my name'*. (Waller, et al in Gaventa, et al 1990 p. 27)

This next case study, reported in *Attracting New Learners International Evidence and Practice* (LSDA 2001) presents the findings of a competition organised for economic

undertakings run by women. The enterprises enabled women to generate income from their productive work. They were established by the women themselves providing opportunities for them to further their education and personal development as well as nurturing group development

#### **5.6.6 Uruguay- learning and economic development (LSDA 2001)**

The enterprises were identified and drawn together as a result of a competition. They were owned and managed by the women often employing a democratic process. As legal entities they are able to work with the state and development agencies. All provide programmes of education that enable their members to learn both the technical and business skills associated with the enterprise. They often support their members with health and personal development education, small loans etc.

Successful enterprises were seen to:

- Enable their workers to successfully manage
- Have participatory/democratic structures
- Facilitate changes in the personal identity of participants by building self esteem
- Generate income
- Serve as examples to promote wider development

The case study illustrates the importance of interrelated social and economic context in stimulating the desire to learn. The participants also indicated the importance of shared/common life experiences and needs in creating understanding and a supportive atmosphere.

The case study from the desk research on a Rhyll Community (appendix 3.5) highlights the existence of an initiative which similarly seeks to empower women socially and economically whilst supporting them in their learning by taking into account their domestic duties, although there is no ownership of the provision (initiated and run by an FE college) by the women served, in the way described above.

This study of a community in British Columbia provides an incite into the possibilities for rural communities taking hold their own initiatives in learning.

### 5.6.7 Sculpting a Learning Community on its own terms (Faris 2001)

The Upper Skeena is the 30,000 square Kilometre territory of the Gitksan First Nation in the northwest corner of British Columbia. In an area similar to Belgium there are about 6,500 persons living in 14 villages. Over 70% are Gitksan and the remainder is from families of European decent, many of whom settled over 100 years ago.

The area has historically been dependent on fisheries and forestry which is now depleted by unsound environmental practices and is jeopardized by uncertain world markets and foreign ownership of employment with no long-term commitment to the area. There is chronic, massive unemployment (40-80%) and educational attainment is below the province average. 70% of the population is under 30 and therefore the spectre of further deprivation looms large.

In 1999, following a series of locally initiated studies a group of local citizens submitted a proposal to the Office of Learning Technologies of Human Resources Development Canada to engage in the developmental stage of a Community Learning Network (CLN) initiative. The proposal made clear the value base of the communities stating:

*“Youth are our future decision makers”, “We strive for self-reliance, self sufficiency, autonomy and independence.” And “Experiential learning is how we best acquire knowledge and skills”.*

A number of strategies were sited:

- Involve community members in local planning and problem solving
- Plan for sustainable management of resources
- Buy locally, pursue value added opportunities
- Foster small businesses, organise cooperatives, encourage business clusters
- Improve community infrastructure (transport and communication) and local skills and education

The importance of doing this through building partnerships that integrate formal and informal learning opportunities, creating opportunities for community based learning, linking learning to action and using learning technologies was emphasised. Early action had to follow the priorities set by federal government, and therefore focused on two age cohorts the pre-natal to pre-school and the in and out of school youth. There have been a number of initial outcomes including the establishment of a Tech Café, a learning shop and a community shop.

Lifelong learning has served this community as an organising principle, analytical lens and social goal from the outset of the project. There has been the essential building of trust and other social capital within the communities. The project continues and more can be gleaned via links to the web page.

The next case study focuses on engagement through heritage and culture. It takes a top down approach focusing on promoting innovation and new partnerships amongst the supply side institutions.

#### **5.6.8 German Cultural Institutions as Gateways to Learning (LSDA 2001)**

In Germany cultural institutions such as libraries, art galleries, museums and archives operate separately from learning institutions such as adult education centres, colleges and university continuing education departments. Given the expectations of integration of public policy there are new expectations of collaboration between institutions in different spheres. A range of initiatives were tried in cultural institutions in Stuttgart to encourage an interest in learning. These were reported to the Attracting New Learners International Evidence and Practice (LSDA 2001) and included:

- Surveys of visitors to see if they had any learning needs.
- Readings about artists in foreign languages as a way of stimulating interest in language learning.
- Placing a line of red tape on a library floor from the travel guides to the language learning packs.
- Creating notice boards about learning opportunities in cultural institutions.

These activities varied in their success but resulted in the creation of a network of agencies able to make referrals to each other. Conclusions from the initiatives which offer an incite into engaging communities included:

- Experiences that animate learners' interest are required.
- Learning can be wrapped or hidden in motivational settings.
- Opportunities for learning can be embedded in existing social and institutional contexts.
- There is a need to be more open to the links between informal and formal learning.
- Learning needs to be presented as fun and desirable rather than dull and necessary.

Reported at the Attracting New Learners International Evidence and Practice seminar (LSDA 2001), the following case study presents conclusions from a study of vocational education and training.

#### **5.6.9 Tasmania – A Study of Collaboration in Vocational Education and Training with Communities (LSDA 2001)**

From a study of vocational education and training (VET) arrangements for adults in 10 regional sites in Australia. A number of purposes or drivers for VET collaboration were identified including:

- Community collaborative response to adversity.
- Collaboration based on cultural association – for example providers forming partnerships with indigenous cultural associations to increase take-up of VET.
- Enterprise driven collaborations.
- Natural resource management and community led multi-sectoral collaborations – often built around environmental issues and involving the voluntary sector and schools.
- Provider driven collaborations – e.g. to enable schools to deliver VET in remote areas.

- Skills development for industry – collaboration in areas of skill need in a particular industry.

A number of factors emerged as enhancing the effectiveness of collaborative arrangements, such as:

- Shared vision and trust between the partners.
- Leaders/co-ordinators to facilitate the operation of ongoing relationships.
- Networks extending outside of the community served that give access to advice, resources and specialist providers.

The small size of some communities meant that there were not enough groups and individuals with time and skills to plan and negotiate to meet needs. In addition there was a tension between competition and collaboration which was seen to reduce effectiveness. Another issue cited was the lack of continuity of programmes, often local personnel wasted resources in keeping up with changes or boosting waning enthusiasm.

Overall it was concluded that effective collaborations maximised the outcomes from scarce human resources in regional communities by identifying, articulating and negotiating to meet needs. The range of opportunities could thus be maximised in small communities. They determined that the most effective collaborations were those that included life skills such as social skills, literacy and numeracy, and personal development as well as skills for work.

All of these examples illustrate the importance of the social and economic context in stimulating the desire to learn. In addition it becomes clear that working with people with similar life experiences or needs whether within or across can create a supportive atmosphere within which to learn.

## **5.7 BARRIERS TO ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING AND STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME THEM**

An organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development study, 'Overcoming Exclusion through Adult Learning' (OECD 1999), looked at overcoming some of the factors related to social exclusion in six countries. They confirmed that informal approaches can be far more effective at promoting learning among sections of the population, particularly those in the most economically and socially deprived areas than mainstream provision in education institutions and often have a more wide-ranging impact.

Taylor and Cameron (LSDA 2002) consider barriers to participation and learning in 'Attracting New Learners: International Evidence and Practice'. They identify those who are least likely to participate in publicly funded education and training as those with few or no qualifications and whose initial education has failed to equip them with adequate literacy and numeracy skills. They are also likely to suffer absolute or relative poverty, be from working class families and some ethnic minority groups. Among these social groups men, particularly older, unemployed or manually employed men, are likely to be underrepresented among learners. Meanwhile, referring to Phillips (1993), McGivney (2000) and Meadows (2001), Taylor and Cameron note that disaffected and underachieving boys are likely to accelerate such gender trends.

On the supply side, the habits and norms of the education system work against change; there is a tendency to be more comfortable discussing issues of supply rather than the details of demand. However it is clear that unless potential participants influence initiatives, they are unlikely to achieve long-term impact or cultural change. The language used when discussing provision, despite becoming more positive when signalling initiatives to raise levels of participation, still suggests the extension of existing activity to more people – the missionary model.

A 2000 FEDA report for Fforwm, 'Widening Participation and Equal Opportunities in Further Education in Wales: A Study of Industrial South Wales Colleges', identifies issues associated with widening participation and equal opportunities experienced by FE

Colleges (FECs) with the aim of improving practice and the impact on the communities / client base involved. This report considers the role of stereotypes as barriers to learning, reporting that many colleges recognised stereotypes of gender, for example, were a problem. While it was generally felt to be harder to attract men than women into college, women faced other problems in learning, such as a “lack of family/social support or even ... opposition due to widespread negative attitudes”. A number of colleges went further to suggest that there was “a male dominated culture curtailing women’s confidence and ambition” and that there were “some strong pockets” of prejudices and values which do not support equal opportunities “the impact of which are not widely acknowledged”. One college stated that there is difficulty in accessing and attracting ethnic minorities generally, and Bangladeshi and Indian women in particular, although the building of partnerships with relevant groups could help overcome these problems.

The FEDA report also identified access issues as potential barriers to participation. The location of college sites may not be as easily accessible to all members of the community. Also highlighted was the point that although a main campus was accessible by bus and train, many Valley communities have poor transport links. Other access barriers identified, affecting groups targeted for widening participation, were such difficulties as

- Changing shift patterns,
- Longer working hours make regular attendance difficult,
- Few day release opportunities and the reluctance of some employers to release their staff for training.

Recommendations to the CETW and CCETs arising from this research on widening participation included the advice that each CCET should conduct a review of widening participation in its community, involving all the agencies concerned. The essential elements of this review should include issues and barriers identified by different agencies in the community. It was also recommended that CCETs need to consider their role in promoting education and training in their communities in ways that ensure equal opportunities and widening participation. Thus, research projects on widening participation, covering different aspects of provision or linking in with community groups were recommended, as were longitudinal studies of adult learners and specific groups to

identify their progression and destinations as a result of widening participation opportunities provided by colleges. It was recommended that the link between transport infrastructure/development (including initiatives for concessions and subsidies in public transport) be investigated, as well as access to education and training including a mapping of college outreach locations.

A more recent study undertaken by NIACE Dysgu Cymru (Aldridge and Horrocks 2002) identifies that within Wales location can impact on how likely adults are to participate in learning. They identify that over half of all adults in South West Wales have not participated in learning since leaving full-time education. In the North and South East of Wales, however, adults are much more likely to be current or recent learners.

An extensive examination of existing literature of Adult and Community Learning (Callaghan, G et al 2001) reveals that the main barriers to participation in learning are

- Pressures on time at work and home
- Location
- Finance
- Domestic and caring responsibilities
- Lack of information
- Absence of opportunity
- A belief that learning has little to offer
- Unhappy memories of school.

These findings are supported by a more local study undertaken with Wales by the Responsive College Unit in 1998. This was undertaken on behalf of a consortium of providers drawn together to seek learning solutions to recent redundancies in the upper Swansea Valley and Surrounding areas (Responsive College Unit 1998) and identified that the factors putting people off learning were in order of importance:

- Lack of time
- Cant afford it
- No Courses available
- Age/state of health

- Don't know what is available
- Employer wont pay
- To long since last took a course
- Just not interested
- Childcare cost/availability
- Got enough skills/qualifications

They concluded that local people clearly needed convincing that it is possible to study flexibly to fit in with other commitments and that providers needed to ensure flexibility and responsiveness through development of local accessible centres and use of information technology.

A recent (2001) report from Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations identifies the following barriers to community involvement:

- Low self-confidence
- Low expectations
- Poor literacy
- A loss of identity
- Poor political and civic awareness

These results highlight two distinct issues

- Cultural / Motivational barriers i.e. an attitude to learning which may have deep roots in personal experience and current situation
- Practical barriers i.e. obstacles which, given imagination and funds, are easier to address.

Focus groups from a recent Swansea CCET report (ELWa 2002b) commented: "...The most formidable barrier is overcoming entrenched negative attitudes within most socially excluded groups".

Many of the issues identified as barriers above were discussed in the Rees Report (2001), which recommended the establishment of learner grants, targeted to encourage

those with least resources to return to learning. This resulted in the establishment this year of Assembly Learning Grants.

## **5.8 RECOGNISING AND VALIDATING NON-ACCREDITED AND INFORMAL LEARNING**

Within the recently restructured post-16 sector there is a plethora of learning provision for adults and young people, some leading to qualifications and some not. Whilst recognising the values of non-accredited learning and in particular the important contribution that it can make to widening participation the Government has made clear its intention to raise standards in education and the distribution of funds will relate to strategic priorities which will require quantitative measures for all learning.

The 'Learning Outcomes Research Project' (Greenwood, M et al 2001) is supported by the National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education (NIACE) and LSDA. Its aims are to investigate methods of validation of achievement in non-accredited learning and to provide evidence on the social and economic benefits of learning in order to influence national and local policy formation and strategic planning.

In the introduction to Greenwood's case studies from seven projects around the UK, (two of which are considered here) the researchers emphasise the need for managers to ensure that the resources required for providing evidence of learning are sufficient and to recognise that the amount of time and support required to develop new systems should not be underestimated. This is especially the case in organisations which are reliant on part-time staff who may not be teacher qualified.

### **5.8.1 Kingston and Chelsea College Partnership**

Kensington and Chelsea College Partnership has devised a Learning Postcard project which is an attempt to identify learning outcomes from 3-30 hour non-accredited adult education classes in a way that is meaningful to students and lecturers and robust enough to satisfy inspectors and funding bodies. This is a minimalist approach, which does not require complex documentation. It allows students of all abilities to identify personal learning goals and requires the lecturer to validate student statements thus encouraging a dialogue between

them about the learning. From the perspective of reluctant learners and potential use of the system in informal settings the main strengths of the model appear to be:

- The procedure is not unduly intrusive on the learning process.
- The setting of targets and reviewing learning, if introduced in a supportive and positive manner, can be motivating.
- Evidence of the social and economic benefits of learning to individuals and groups can be identified, valued and celebrated.

The difficulties experienced from the perspective of the providers included:

- Communicating the positive reasons for measuring learning.
- Some lecturers tended to tell the learners what they had learnt rather than engaging them in a discussion, which would help them to identify their own progress.

At its best the model allows lecturers to work with students and help them identify and articulate their learning needs and record progress. However, some lecturers were not yet developing any meaningful dialogue with students, thereby identifying a staff development need.

### **5.8.2 The Stepping Out Programme, Park Lane College, Leeds**

The Stepping Out Programme is designed for adults with mental health needs. The curriculum includes basic skills subjects, IT, animal care, creative writing, pottery, cookery, art, aromatherapy, woodwork and sculpture. Models have been developed for both individual and group learning outcomes. The Group Learning Agreement is discussed here with reference to the development of learning communities and collaborative projects.

Group learning outcomes can be devised and monitored by the use of a Group Learning Agreement. Learners can agree to specific outcomes that they would want to meet at different points during or by the end of a course. Positive outcomes include a group of learners collaborating in the production of a high

quality full-colour calendar. A spin out from this is collaboration with a writers' group to include pieces of prose to accompany the pictures on the next calendar.

The main strengths of the group learning agreement approach are:

- To provide the individual with an opportunity to become comfortable and feel at ease in the classroom and group situation.
- To help the individual to begin to (re)discover how best they learn.
- The programme is held in high regard by the local mental health service agencies.

The major weakness was denoted as:

- Tension between the empowering experience of students having control over their own programme of study and involving them in essential paperwork.

A recent report from Swansea CCET (Swansea Council for Voluntary Service 2002) explored the issues around valuing informal learning. Amongst the key recommendations from this work were:

- The need to value informal learning in its own right not simply as a mechanism for progression
- The key role of community learning development workers in promoting informal learning and the need to fund this role in order to get to hard to reach groups
- That accreditation should be available if required but no learner should be forced to achieve accreditation and that any assessment should be appropriate and acceptable to learners as well as providers and funders
- The need to build linkages with the emerging credit and qualification framework to explore recognition of informal learning.

A recent verbal update on this work identified discussions ongoing with credit expertise available within Dysg towards identification of generic units of assessment which could serve the multi purpose of enabling informal learning to be related to outcomes and

therefore more easily quality assured; enabling the association of a credit value to informal learning for on programme funding and/or to allow accreditation to be acquired if learners should decide to undergo appropriate assessment. The CCET hopes to gain additional project funding to pilot developments of informal learning.

## **5.9 THE ACQUISITION OF BASIC AND KEY SKILLS WITHIN COMMUNITY LEARNING SETTINGS**

Encouraging people who lack basic skills to recognise their need can be difficult and a range of initiatives have been launched since the Moser Report in 1999 focused attention on the issue. Although the government established a Basic Skills strategy in 2000 it has been reported (Hillage and Aston 2001 p. 37) that it is too early for any meaningful evaluation of results.

A recent survey (Kirk and Kirk 2002) examines the take up of the newly funded three to six hour 'bite size' courses provided in the FE sector, reveals that about 10% of people enrolling appear to have basic skills needs.

The research undertaken in 2001/2002 found that short courses, especially ICT courses, attracted many people who would not have enrolled on a longer course and that such courses had a valuable role to play in introducing people to learning. The age profile of learners shows a much higher proportion of older learners than is normal on other courses. There is considerable evidence that these courses attract new learners although a lack of a consistent definition of 'newness' makes it difficult to be precise. The following case study provides an example of the attraction of appropriate IT courses in community settings:

### **5.9.1 Community University of the Valleys Partnership.**

Over 2000 students attended ESF supported Information Technology courses. The courses, which began in 1989, were organised by the University of Wales Swansea (UWS).

Originally designed as a course for women seeking a return to work following fulltime childcare responsibilities, the course was designed to be attractive to

parents, with school-hours provision and childcare support. Of the 2,024 students, 80% were female, 20% male, all students were required to be unemployed for at least six months prior to starting the course. Embedded in the Information Technology training was confidence building, educational and vocational guidance, curriculum vitae preparation and job application skills.

The courses were delivered in eight partnership community centres and on University of Wales Swansea campus. The community centres were located in isolated communities or in areas of which experienced deprivation due to the closure of the coal-mining industry. The provision of courses in local community centres has been identified as a factor in recruitment. European Regional Development Fund support provided excellent IT resources including networking to the UWS campus, which ensured equality in resources and shared curriculum development and accreditation.

The provision of courses in local community centres contributes to the development of a powerful group relationship in that community. Students appreciated the social aspects of the course and the community locality, which included “new friends around the corner” and “an amazing camaraderie”. Many students recorded that they use their new skills in helping their community through assisting voluntary groups with their administrative needs.

Following the course:

- 66% of women and 57% of men did further study.
- 41% of women did further study in IT, and 36% of men did further study in IT.
- 23% of women and 19% of men did further education in subjects other than IT
- 7% of women and men did Higher Education in IT
- 15% of women and men did Higher Education in subjects other than IT.
- 17% of women and 12% of men did training for/at work.

(James 2002)

It is reasonable to assume that there is less stigma in admitting to needing support for ICT than admitting a basic literacy and numeracy need. It is therefore useful to consider

the value of ICT courses in terms of tackling basic skill issues. Further research from the LSDA on 'Recognising and validating learners' achievement in non-accredited basic skills and ESOL' draws attention to several issues that are directly relevant to short ICT courses, these include

- The importance of dividing learning into 'bite size chunks' to provide early success and encourage progression
- Increasingly adult literacy is addressed in the context of other learning
- Courses designed to attract new learners often links basic skills learning with the learning of another skill.

It can be assumed that from the perspective of learner motivation, course design and delivery that short ICT courses are an appropriate context in which to examine a number of key skill issues. The implications for institutions fall into several broad categories

- Development in basic skills awareness for a wide range of staff
- Ensuring that learning materials and teaching methods are designed to take account of learners' basic skills needs
- Providing appropriate learner support during the course itself
- Providing clear and user friendly information about progression routes.

The issues of appropriate learner support to people with basic skill needs who choose to learn 'on-line' is a particular area of concern. Learndirect and the University for Industry are government initiatives launched in 1998 to encourage learning to take place in convenient locations using the internet. The target groups include those who have been out of the workforce for some time, those looking to upgrade skills and those who face redundancy.

Current research from Cardiff University reported in the Times Educational Supplement (TES 21/7/02) claims that the technological revolution is failing to reach out to new learners, despite hopes that it would widen participation. It appears that the multi-million pound initiatives such as Learndirect, UFI and UK-online have failed to have the required impact. The researchers examined data from 6000 householders from the 2002 annual

survey of adult learners, carried out by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE).

A common argument for the role of technology in learning is that virtual colleges would encourage participation but only 2% of the survey group reported using the internet to find out about learning and only 1% used the Ufl or Learndirect. ICT has been seen as a means of overcoming barriers of time, place and cost for 'hard to reach' groups. However, the Cardiff University researchers say that there is only limited support for ICT as the answer. Only 1% of respondents recorded travel and transport as a barrier to participation, 25% were not interested in further learning anyway, 13% considered themselves too old, 9% did not consider that they needed to learn and 6% said they had not got round to it. This is a total of 53% of non-participants who, if taken at their word, would be unaffected by access to learning opportunities via ICT.

The conclusion of this study, therefore, is that it is the 'usual suspects' who are attracted to technological access to learning, that is those who are younger, employed, professional, qualified people who are already learners and have access to computers at home although there is some evidence that women from lower socio-economic groups are using computers to 'dip their toes in the water', and this is corroborated by the case study from the Community University of the Valleys Partnership.

Community activity would seem the logical place for individuals to learn and utilise wider key skills. The following case study comes from a development project of the Key Skills Support Programme Cymru, and focuses on the use of heritage resources, partnership between agencies and provision which is involving of the community to promote acquisition of key skills for young people.

### **5.9.2 On Common Ground (Morgan and Reynolds 2002)**

Museums and heritage sites are not usually big draws for the technologically astute media-savvy generation of young adults. So education staff at the National Museum and Galleries of Wales, a collection of different heritage sites across the country, came up with the idea for a project, which would widen access to its research and collections and give people an experience of Welsh heritage.

The National Museum and Galleries has set up a project, called 'On Common Ground', which will take museum-based heritage education into four communities across Wales – Denbigh, Tenby, Swansea and Aberdare. The project is being supported through the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Young adults aged 16-24 from further education colleges and youth centres will be developing projects in each area. In Tenby a group are planning a survey to find out why young people don't visit museums. Another group in Denbigh are in the early stages of a leaflet for a heritage pub trail. And a third group are looking at ways of supporting community involvement in Welsh culture – using the medium of the Welsh language. The ultimate aim is to develop community archives and disseminating their work through travelling exhibitions.

What makes the project unusual is its approach is the intention is to utilise techniques of 'participatory appraisal' and 'community mapping' – a structured approach to information gathering which is widely used by organisations and researchers working in communities as stimuli to gain the opinions of local people and assess the community needs. A handbook of the techniques has been drawn together by Dysg LSDA Wales to train those involved in the projects and for wider circulation. The success of these techniques depends on going out into the community to secure the full involvement of local people in the action and outcomes with an emphasis on using different forms of communication to promote inclusion and involvement from a wide range of people with differing communication needs.

The project is also structured so that students can develop key skills portfolios (using communication, application of number, IT, problem solving, and so on) through project activities. The Key Skills Support Programme Cymru is supporting the project by providing advice and training in teaching methods and helping with portfolio building. Key skills accreditation will be included within the project 'toolkit'. Other partners are local museums, local community organisations focusing on the 16-24 age group and FE colleges.

## **6 ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS**

The project was conducted in three strands: a full literature review (including consideration of published material on a number of local and international case studies); desk research focusing on identifying and analysing case studies in Wales; three workshops for key stakeholders where the interim findings of the research were presented, discussed and supplemented. The literature review, details of case studies undertaken during the desk research and a summary of the issues raised during the workshops can be found in the Appendices. From the general themes that can be seen to some degree across all of the case studies it is possible to identify a number of key issues. These issues, together with those arising from the workshops and literature review are presented below and followed by areas in which further research or developments linked to policy may be required.

### **6.1 Funding and sustainability**

From all of the strands of this research it is clear that successful engagement of communities is not achieved overnight or through short-term strategies. It requires the development of trust and building of community ownership. The research has shown, however, that the structures currently available for resourcing this provision are not designed to promote the strategies required and that fundraising therefore takes up a disproportionate amount of the time of community learning providers. The plethora of funding streams available are complex (indeed, overly-complicated) while the insecure and often short-term nature of funding in general can be seen to be seriously undermining all sorts of community projects and services.

The issue of funding was a dominant theme in the interactive strands of the research. In many case studies and in the workshops strong and practical cases were presented by practitioners struggling to secure funding for the next twelvemonth's survival. They emphasised the need for simplification and transparency; for a clarification of eligibility for funding so as to make fundraising efforts as efficient as possible. The recent disappointment and anger of many community organisations (including some of those who cooperated with this research and are highlighted as organisations demonstrating aspects of good practice) over their failure to secure finance from the Learning Challenge Fund, even after encouragement and advice from ELWa, has affected attitudes during later contacts for this research. The experience of Learning Challenge

Fund has not helped to reassure those community organisations already frustrated with current funding mechanisms. Whilst we are aware that NC-ELWa funds learning in communities - not the totality of development or regeneration - it can be seen from some of the case studies, and is highlighted elsewhere in this report, that learning is intricately involved within these wider processes. One of the recommendations discussed in section 8, therefore, includes consideration of the urgent development of a core-funding stream targeted at established and successful community regeneration projects and organisations.

It is clear from many of the sources examined that funding structures need to be more adaptable, so that funding can be found for original, innovative projects rather than projects being designed around funding criteria. This view has been reinforced by examination of the case studies. In addition whilst there is an understanding of the need for an evidence base to develop of provision, funders need to be more willing to take risks and allow innovation, gaining evidence from evaluation, thus learning from and valuing negative as well as positive outcomes for new initiatives. There is a real need to develop a long-term perspective of funding and the achievement of results. Instant turnaround of communities and individuals is not realistic; indeed the view was clearly put in the workshops that not only can short-term funding (and hence short-term projects) be ineffectual and an inefficient, wasteful use of resources, such short-termism can actually have detrimental effects. A good example of this is in the area of youth and outreach work hampering where workers' efforts to encourage socially excluded young people into learning and employment are hampered when funding ceases just as trust is starting to be developed.

A short-term outlook and funding also undermines strategic and creative planning, while the emphasis on discrete fixed-term projects undermines the building of expertise, reputation/trust and resources which may be achieved by longer-term, ongoing efforts. Short-term funding can compound the problems of low funding. Being under-resourced in itself puts organisations at a disadvantage in obtaining funds, since community and voluntary organisations in particular are often too under-resourced to be able to adequately record their activities. They are often therefore not able to demonstrate the value and successful outcomes of their work to funders. It was also pointed out to us during the course of this research that despite the fundamental importance of obtaining funding it is, ironically, very difficult to obtain finance for Fundraising Officers, even

where organisations have a role in facilitating fundraising for a wider network of organisations. Many organisations also expressed disappointment at the continued use of bidding for funding, a process which they emphatically believe runs contrary to policy statements on partnership development and removal of nugatory competition. Furthermore, there was a clear message that adequate time needs to be made available for funding applications or bids to be developed, so as to allow smaller and less well resourced community organisations to apply.

Short term funding can cause problems for those trying to set up learning provision for the first time, where initial uptake may be low and therefore such provision will generally be considered to be economically unviable. A longer term perspective allows initially small numbers of participants to experience learning, build trust within the community that needs will be met and promote word of mouth from satisfied learners to assist with increased numbers participating in provision. One point that needs to be recognised by funders is that small groups are extremely effective for hard to reach learners, and outcomes may be much more successful where small numbers are involved, thus they can actually be a more effective use of resources. A system of evaluation - which takes into account which learners are being served and what is the success of the provision rather than just counting 'bums on seats' - could be one way forward

## **6.2 Role of Intermediaries**

The importance of intermediaries in engaging communities in learning cannot be overstated. The research has clearly indicated the importance of the role of intermediaries in engaging communities and individuals in learning. Intermediaries are crucial to the success of a range of learning provision as well as being at the centre of the Communities First programme. The DEMOS – Community Learning Accounts report also places intermediaries (Community Learning Facilitators) at the heart of one of its two models of Community Learning Accounts. The label 'intermediary' covers a great number of different professionals and volunteers and it is important to be clear about the meaning of the term. The definition of an intermediary in this context is an individual or organisation that can facilitate the engagement of communities in learning. These include those who act to engage individuals, those who work with the community as a whole and those who can mediate the partnerships required external to communities to ensure appropriate provision and support. Some examples include:

- Professionals:
  - Community development workers
  - Youth workers
  - Social workers
  - Health workers
  - Outreach workers from learning providers
  - Careers/educational guidance workers
  - Job centre staff
  - Librarians
  - Project officers
  
- Community activists/leaders
  - Active members of voluntary organisations
  - Community councillors
  - Religious leaders
  
- Community organisations or projects (includes development trusts to the ladder project) or networks
  - Development trusts such as Amman Valley Enterprise or the community organisation established in the Upper Skeena
  - Specialized projects such as the Ladder project or Theatre Forum Cymru
  - Clubs or special interest organisations which also link into learning such as the Young Farmers Clubs or MEWN Cymru
  - Special interest networks such as the Black and Ethnic Minorities Network
  - County Voluntary Councils
  - CCETS (in that they can facilitate community partnerships)
  - Communities First partnerships
  - Local and regional European partnerships (Objective 1, etc.)

At present in Wales, the availability of trained/experienced intermediaries is very patchy. In some areas, such as those identified in the case studies, the infrastructure already exists. In others there is no evidence that it does. The majority of development trust style initiatives can be seen to be located within the valleys communities of South Wales.

Intermediary organisations which have more of a target group or community of interest focus - such as Theatre Forum Cymru, Young Farmers or MEWN Cymru - are either Wales wide organisations or more localized organisations which can operate across Wales if required. Bodies such as CCETs and County Voluntary Councils exist across Wales but there is a great deal of variation in the priority given to community engagement in learning. For example only some CVSs have the resource to promote and support learning provision within the voluntary sector in their area.

Despite a variety of initiatives, and a broad recognition of the importance of the role of intermediaries, there are problems with identifying appropriate intermediaries in Wales, including in Communities First areas. Low salaries and difficulties in funding intermediaries leads to short termism and identified intermediaries disappear after only a short time. The use of inappropriate intermediaries can have devastating consequences, examples of which were identified by participants in the workshops. The examples included projects and workers funded under the Valleys Initiative in the 1980s, community workers who were parachuted in and who did not understand and were not trusted by the communities they were intended to serve, failed to develop relevant or sustainable projects. There is concern that the similar situation at present of available funding for communities alongside the lack of skilled community practitioners could lead to further instances of parachuting in workers and organisations. The workshops identified a high incidence of an open market in community work skills within Wales. One consequence of this is that workers move from one post in the community to another and poaching is widespread. There is a need to train community workers at all levels to meet the needs of Community First. It is noteworthy that in DEMOS's proposal for Community Learning Facilitators, ELWa are to train the facilitators: *"ELWa will act as the source of leadership and overall strategy, and training for Community Learning Facilitators."* (DEMOS 2002)

We see the role of intermediaries in Wales to be crucial to increased engagement in learning in communities. It is therefore vital that the shortage of both individual and certain types of organisational intermediaries with the skills and experience required is addressed. A coordinated approach, across a range of agencies, organisations and government departments, towards providing the training for new intermediaries, would ensure that what is a scarce resource in terms of those already available is nurtured and

used in the most efficient manner possible. For instance, any implementation of the proposals for Community Learning Facilitators (as put forward by DEMOS) should be planned in liaison with community organisations and other agencies such as Careers Wales as they would have a crucial and diverse role to play. Personnel or organisations may already exist who could act in this role with a small level of additional training or support. In this way Community Learning Facilitators could provide a rounded service of guidance and support for planning, doing and learning and take responsibility for monitoring learning provision and progress, feeding back to ELWa and other relevant stakeholders.

### **6.3 Partnerships**

Successful partnerships are essential for community organisations to maximise resources and provision available to the community and a multi-agency approach is crucial for certain types of provision, for example engaging the disaffected. In order to meet the full range of learning needs of a community a partnership involving a number of intermediary type organisations would need to work together. It would involve a number of individuals each undertaking an intermediary role that may be linked to single organisations or employed by the partnership. Such arrangements may be formalised and long term, such as the emerging model of Communities First Partnerships or ad hoc with one organisation utilising the specialist skills of another for a short period of time. An example of this latter arrangement would be of a development trust bringing in a group such as Theatre Forum Cymru to work with disengaged young people in their community. They would train volunteers and workers in the development trust, in their ethos and techniques such that they could continue the activity after the training period.

There is a need to consider community learning within the wider context of other social provision, involving close collaboration between the various official stakeholders in areas such as public health, early years provision, crime prevention, and community renewal schemes. It is also necessary to break down geographical and sectoral boundaries to achieve the widest benefits of education for communities.

Two principle forms of partnership have been identified during the course of this project. Firstly, partnerships may exist between two or more organisations to provide community learning, which we have termed 'Provision-Partnerships'. A second type of partnership

or network can be found which maybe less formal and exists to promote peer support and the exchange of good practice and expertise.

- **Provision-Partnerships**

The resources needed to ensure successful partnerships must not be underestimated, particularly if multiple partners are involved on an ongoing basis. Questions such as how the partnership(s) will be resourced and maintained need to be considered at an early stage. Ways of ensuring that power relationships within partnerships are addressed such that there is mutual respect and all partners have an equal voice within any partnership is vital.

- **Outward-looking Partnerships**

A number of the organisations, which feature in the case studies, have outward looking partnerships or networks that operate throughout the UK, Europe and beyond. These partnerships offer a means of identifying and sharing good practice from a wide range of communities and can also offer volunteers and learners invaluable experiences through arranged exchanges. Outcomes of such initiatives include greatly increased motivation as well as learning. Such networks, both formal and informal, ought to be supported and encouraged. Theatr Fforwm Cymru and the YFC both use such networks to great advantage.

#### **6.4 Measuring success: Evaluation and Accreditation**

International evidence suggests that some of the most valuable learning available to the community may be informal, and it appears that there are certain groups for whom informal learning is particularly appealing. There is also evidence to suggest that the easiest way to engage potential learners, especially the disaffected, or 'hard to reach', is through routes which offer incidental learning in the first instance. While there appears to be increasing recognition that learning is not only achieved on 'courses', informal learning needs to be valued in its own right not simply as a mechanism for progression. Many of the organisations featured in the case studies detailed in this report place great emphasis on 'learning by doing' and 'learning by stealth'.

While formal accreditation may not be appropriate in all circumstances, there is nevertheless an awareness that accreditation can have confidence-boosting effects and

consolidate learning. While emphasising the importance of incidental learning which is embedded in action, Foley (1999) points out that “to fully realise the value of such learning we need to expose it”. That is, there is a need to make explicit the learning that has occurred simply to make learners aware of the skills gained, to name them, so that they may ‘market’ themselves more effectively and so maximise the learning outcomes. However, any assessment used should be appropriate and acceptable to learners as well as providers and funders.

Soft outcomes are highlighted time and again as crucial learning outcomes, however, providers find obtaining funding for projects that are not formally accredited, do not demonstrate hierarchical progression or which do not produce instant employment results, very difficult. More sophisticated means of evaluating provision and tracking outcomes need to be designed and implemented, while accreditation needs to be designed around provision rather than provision conforming to accreditation. There is a need to build linkages with the emerging credit and qualification framework and a proposal to identify generic ‘units of assessment’ was endorsed by workshop participants. Through relating informal learning to learning outcomes and providing criteria for evidence of achievement the multiple purposes of supporting a framework for quality assurance could be served. This would enable the association of a credit value to informal learning for programme funding and allow accreditation to be acquired if learners should decide to undergo appropriate assessment. However, clarity is required as to what can be considered as positive outcomes for community learning i.e. are measures of success to be limited to traditional concepts of individual achievement, accreditation and progression or can they include: development of active citizens, community benefit (social, environmental, cultural or economic) or some other measure(s)?

## **6.5 Quality Assurance**

Quality Assurance is closely linked to structures of accreditation or other evaluation of learning outcomes. Informal learning and a focus on soft outcomes can make quality of provision difficult to measure and so produce concomitant problems in securing funding. While there was a strong feeling expressed in the Workshops that quality assurance was very important, few ideas on models of evaluation were forthcoming, therefore there is a clear need to action research on models to quality assure the informal learning process

and quantify effects of informal learning in the community. One important feature in the evaluation of provision is the availability of time and other resources to enable community organisations to write up their activities. Where learning is closely linked with community development and/regeneration, there may be some mileage in exploring links with the concept of 'community social audits' as developed within the community enterprise movement.

## **6.6 Motivation**

One clear message in relation to motivation for engaging communities in learning, which was born out by the responses in the workshops, comes from the case study on Training for Transformation in which they refer to Paulo Freire who wrote in his famous work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. (Freire 1970)

“Education is to be the path to permanent liberation and admits of two stages. The first stage is that by which people become aware (concretised) of their oppression and through praxis transform that state. The second stage builds upon the first and is a permanent process of liberating cultural action.”

In this sense, therefore, creating motivation means raising awareness of needs in general, and working with the community to develop an understanding of what is needed. Work with the community towards developing this awareness of need is highly skilled - a point emphasised by a number of participants in the workshops. More research into techniques of engagement and motivation together with further, detailed case studies of good practice in this area would provide insight into the different ways that this can be undertaken with groups and individuals from a diverse range of social, cultural and economic backgrounds.

## **6.7 Barriers**

Barriers to learning can be divided into cultural / motivational barriers (i.e. an attitude to learning which may have deep roots in personal experience and current situation) and practical barriers (ie obstacles which, given imagination and funds, are easier to address).

The following cultural and practical barriers were identified during the course of this study. Successful community engagement requires that these barriers be addressed:

- Lack of time to participate in learning
- Lack of motivation
- Domestic difficulties
- Lack of support network
- Lack of transport
- Lack of confidence
- Lack of aspiration
- Lack of direction
- Lack of information
- Inadequate finance
- Domestic and caring responsibilities
- Absence of opportunity
- A belief that learning has little to offer
- Unhappy memories of school.
- Poor literacy
- Special needs
- A loss of identity
- Poor political and civic awareness
- Inaccessible or unpleasant venues
- Negative stereotypes
- Inappropriate provision
- Changing shift patterns
- Longer working hours make regular attendance difficult,
- Few day release opportunities and the reluctance of some employers to release their staff for training.

There is a degree of overlap between a number of the barriers identified and this need to be consolidated. Where good practice exists some of these barriers have been overcome.

## **6.8 Management information requirements**

There were a number of issues that arose in relation to the collection of information on learners. Community groups often have multiple funding streams and most funders

make their own demands for information. This results in information having to be collected in a variety of ways. Some organisations refuse to intrude on the learners' privacy in relation to collecting information on issues of employment status, benefit entitlement or ethnicity, however, many groups report that they are used to collecting the information which is required by their funders (indeed some organisations admitted that although initially hostile to the need to collect certain data, this data had in fact proved to be useful to the organisations). There is however a clear issue of the multiple demands for information in differing formats. For community organisations that work with more than one provider of learning this can lead to large amounts of duplication to meet differing requirements often concerning the same learner. The collection of more detailed data on learners, and the establishment of categories, beyond gender and address, which might assist in the encouragement of more uniform and useful statistics/information needs to be encouraged among the voluntary, public and statutory sectors. In addition, a consistent definition of what constitutes a 'new learner' needs to be developed.

### **6.9 Use of IT, ICT, ILT and E-learning in Communities**

For clarity we define the various terms utilised in this section:

IT – Information Technology normally relates to provision in which learners acquire skills in using packages without any necessary networking or communications linkages.

ICT – Information Communication Technology implies the learning of the use of IT based communications such as web skills or email. In addition, teaching this technology may utilise some level of distance learning activity.

ILT – Information Learning Technology is a term generally used to indicate the use of technology for learning any topic or skill that may or may not involve distance learning.

E-learning, in the definition developed for the ELWa e-learning strategy, embraces any form of electronically assisted learning that may or may not imply distance learning but generally does involve this.

ICT or distance e-learning is not seen to be successful in engaging *new* learners from amongst those who do not immediately see learning as relevant to them or can be described as disengaged. However, IT courses do appear to attract new learners. There is less of a stigma in admitting the need for support to use and understand IT than admitting a basic literacy and/or numeracy need and it is therefore useful to consider the

value of IT courses in terms of tackling basic skills issues. ILT/e-learning has great potential, however, in providing progression opportunities for community learners once they engage and commit to learning. There is also potential for innovative and supported use (provision which does not of necessity isolate the learner) of ILT/e-learning in overcoming issues of small class sizes allowing individuals or small groups to learn where conventional taught provision would be unviable.

The general message is that considered use of the available technologies as a tool at various stages of engagement in communities is helpful.

### **6.10 Engaging with specific target groups**

There are a number of distinct groups for which the research has sought to identify any particular issues in relation to engagement in learning. These include those who are social excluded, young people and the disabled. In general the issues identified from the case studies are that successful engagement is through good practice, which specifically relates the general points presented below to the specific target group involved.

### **6.11 Bilingual Learning in Communities**

Whilst this is an issue which the research was keen to explore, to date little has been found in literature and it has not risen as a major concern or point in relation to practice in any of the case studies. Anecdotal evidence from the workshops suggests that even if courses are run in English the ability of the tutor to converse in Welsh informally adapting their interaction with participants to meet individual language needs, has a highly beneficial effect in motivating and retaining Welsh speakers. The Interim Report on Community Learning Accounts lists first-language Welsh speakers as one of the groups “most likely to be experiencing ... barriers to learning” although the basis of this assertion is not apparent (ELWa 2002).

### **6.12 Ethnic Minorities, Refugees and Asylum Seekers**

Most of the organisations featured in the case studies do not have specific provision, targets or records on inclusion of ethnic minorities, asylum seekers or refugees. There is a dearth of literature on this area and a clear need for further work. For the case studies, two specific groups were contacted, these were: BVSNW, which works with mainstream providers as well as specifically targeted provision, and MEWN Cymru. MEWN Cymru feels very strongly that the interests of black and ethnic minorities (BEMs)

and BEM organisations remain largely unheard in Wales. It was clear that the calls upon the time and resources of these organisations were many and diverse and unfortunately no representatives from these organisations were able to attend the workshops.

### **6.13 Family learning**

Whilst the instances of this were limited in the examples covered within the research, involving parents in learning in support of their children did appear to be a very effective incentive for some parents to take up opportunities. There are however, some difficulties in promoting this more widely. Many learning providers are limited in relation to work with under 16s, due to child protection issues. This can also present a barrier to wider adult involvement within schools. Another obstacle to this form of learning is the lack of any single agency with a remit to fund learning across the whole age spectrum from 3yrs to 93yrs plus. This appears to be an area where effective partnerships in particular involving schools could be pursued. A good example of an intermediary acting successfully in this area is XL Wales, working in partnership with schools and running a high street family centre.

### **6.14 Vocational Learning**

Within the UK literature and case studies there is little consideration of community learning in the context of communities of employees with a focus on vocational education and training with a key skills core. This is an area clearly identified within the international work. Discussion within workshops would indicate that there is a reluctance around identifying learning as being 'vocational' within the community context. This may be due to the very clear differentiation of vocational learning as applying only to provision of direct vocational skills within the qualification and funding structures of the UK. Within Europe, however, consideration of vocational learning appears to incorporate any learning, which may support an individual in taking up employment and includes amongst other things a wide range of key and transferable skills. This is an area that perhaps requires more consideration in the Wales context.

### **6.15 Deprived Communities and Communities First**

There is great awareness of the need to work within deprived communities and the problems associated with engaging potential learners from disadvantaged backgrounds. While there is a general agreement that disadvantaged communities need to be

targeted, it was felt that it is not always possible to put clear geographical boundaries on deprivation and there are mixed responses over aspects of the Communities First scheme. The most significant point is that there is great variation between different Communities First areas. Where the Communities First infrastructure is strong, and working partnerships have been forged with the help of Communities First Coordinators, there is some support for the scheme within a wider network of partnerships. NPT New Learning Network includes Communities First areas and is enthusiastic about the possibilities of Communities First. However, in areas where Communities First is less developed, criticisms about the 'flooding' of small areas with new projects and resources go hand in hand with criticisms about a lack of coordination of these efforts. The lack of eligible candidates for the posts of Community First Coordinators, and in some cases for lead organisations, may be a key factor in this apparent failing. Some feel that the scheme is too new to be able to pass judgment – in some areas little or nothing has yet been initiated under the Communities First scheme although initial statistics on participation in FE in Communities First areas seem to suggest a higher uptake in these areas in comparison with the rest of Wales.

Apart from one case study that considers a pilot project, which is being run at ward level (the Communities First ward of Rhyl West), all the case studies show that organisations operate beyond Community First boundaries. Indeed, although some positive partnerships have been created, some organisations have deliberately avoided involvement with Communities First because of the localised nature of the funding, preferring to access funds which allow inclusivity through wider provision/participation. There are ideological as well as pragmatic reasons behind such decisions, for example the YFC have eschewed Communities First since they wish to avoid anything that creates barriers and inequality.

#### **6.16 Areas Where a Need for Further Research has been identified**

The project specification requires that “recommendations for further research activity” be identified, “noting any shortfalls in the best practice review.” The list below of recommendations for further research is drawn directly from the review of literature, desk research and workshops.

Further research and development needs, not listed in order of priority, include studies of:

- Learning and engaging communities, both theoretical and practical, as it occurs beyond *traditional* adult education fields. The whole area of community engagement is a growing field, of which this brief research project has only brushed the surface. In particular there will be a need to look more clearly at the 14 to 19 possibilities within community settings and to link the innovative work beginning to emerge in some community organisations into mainstream strategies.
- Special needs - with more examples of good practice in this area needing to be identified and disseminated.
- Development of practical guidelines on the motivation of learners.
- The wider effects of learning and transference of acquired skills and knowledge to altered behaviours and activities within the community.
- More detailed research identifying the *forms of learning* taking place within communities and emphasising case studies with summative evaluations that clearly identify a range of outcomes.
- Case histories that illustrate the successful transference of rhetoric to on-going successful projects.
- Barriers that might be faced by Welsh language learners in accessing community learning provision, as well as special opportunities for this group. DEMOS suggests that first language Welsh speakers face barriers to learning; while this *may* be true in some instances, our research indicates that it is not always the case and that where it may be there are a number of complex issues to be addressed including the varying level of Welsh language skills and the relationship between spoken Welsh and written Welsh. We are, therefore, concerned that further specialised research is required focusing on first language Welsh speakers which identifies realistic means of promoting engagement.
- The link between transport and childcare infrastructure/development (including initiatives for concessions and subsidies in public transport) and engaging learners.
- The different roles of (and relationships between) key workers in the community - such that these can be defined and formally recognised.

- There is a need to distinguish between and disaggregate material on the narrower category Adult Continuing Education and the broader category of 'Adult Learning', as well as Adult Community Education and Community Learning. This may assist in providing useful information whilst more research is accumulated on engaging communities that can involve all of these categories.
- More summative evaluative evidence on the outcomes of initiatives, in the community is needed. With appropriate funding systems this information could be collected by, and made available from community organisations.

## 7 GOOD PRACTICE

Good practice on engaging communities in learning exists where the following take place.

### 7.1 Provision is learner focused:

- Provision is immediately *relevant* to the needs and interests of (potential) learners ensuring that they are motivated by what is offered.
- Community members are assisted in articulating a need for learning which they have found.
- There is a focus on successfully *motivating* new learners.
- Individuals, organisations and communities are *empowered* by learning.
- Learners are encouraged and assisted to take responsibility for their own learning.
- There is ongoing and open support and access for learners.
- Mentoring exists, either informally or formally, and resources are made available to allow time for conversation and personal support.
- Time and resources are invested in fostering relationships of trust and respect. Learning activities are *fun*, varied and maintain learners interest.

### 7.2 Provision is embedded in the community:

- Communities are directly involved in designing provision.
- There is an awareness of specific issues or needs of the community, either through local, first hand knowledge or through community mapping exercises.
- Where organisations work *with* the community rather than *for* them (ie learning is community owned and led)
- Learning *in, for, with* and *through* the community is sustainable.
- Learning is linked to wider activities of benefit to the community.

### 7.3 Appropriate 'Marketing' strategies are employed:

- A variety of different techniques are utilised, e.g. open days, outreach work, taster sessions, word of mouth, development of community volunteers such as

hairdressers, postmasters and bar staff as 'living signposts' to learning, employment of community facilitators as well as poster/brochure campaigns.

- Well-trained and informed intermediaries are available to direct learners to learning provision.

#### **7.4 Provision is appropriate to different ways of learning:**

- Where there is peer-led learning and training.
- Trainers/tutors/facilitators respond to the learners' requirements in terms of learning styles.
- Where the special needs of different individuals/types of learners are understood and accommodated by necessary adaptations/innovations of provision.
- Where the different social pressures faced by learners are recognised (eg learners may come from a community where learning is undervalued or viewed negatively).
- Where the familial pressures faced by learners are recognised (eg learners may be responsible for childcare, the care of elderly or disabled relatives or may have unsupportive or obstructive relatives)

#### **7.5 Appropriate assessment and accreditation is used:**

- Accreditation is tailored to the learning/activities, not vice versa.
- Where accreditation is an option but not necessarily the sole or primary goal of learning and the assessment is appropriate to the situation and the learners.
- Learning outcomes are monitored and progression (in the widest sense) of learners is tracked where possible.
- Peer- and self-assessments are utilised and responded to.

**7.6 Quality assurance / evaluation of provision is ensured:** (this category is clearly linked to the issue of assessment and accreditation outlined above, however, assessment and accreditation should not be considered as essential to quality assured learning.

- Where evaluation of provision, including tracking the outcomes for learners, is built-in rather than tacked on at the end of courses or projects, and where there is a very quick response / adaptation to such feedback.
- Organisations have the resources to allow them to write up their work.

**7.7 Providers are learning organisations:**

- There is ongoing investment in the training of staff and volunteers.
- There is a willingness to seek out, share and to adopt good practice.
- There is a willingness to innovate and take some risks.
- Where internal appraisals and democratic structure ensure all voices are heard and staff and volunteers have a role in planning as well as implementation of provision.

**7.8 All available resources (internal and external to the community) are utilised:**

- Where organisations recognise, engage and build upon the existing skills and strengths of individuals and communities.
- Community resources such as venues and equipment are utilised to the full.
- Available IT/ICT and ILT/e-learning resources are seen as a tool to promote learning (rather than the overall answer to engagement) and are used appropriately.
- Where partnerships are developed to enable provision or to access professional expertise specialist skills or resources.
- Community Development workers, activists, community groups and networks are enabled to act as effective *intermediaries* to promote learning.

**7.9 Learning is developed with awareness of wider strategic priorities:**

- Where organisations develop activities including learning, in a strategic manner.
- Where there is participation in wider networks/activities on a regional, national and international basis.

## 8 IDENTIFYING WHAT HAS NOT WORKED

One of the requirements of the research was to identify, through looking at existing practice, what does not work to promote learning in communities. It is clear from the literature that examples of unsuccessful practice are not written up and that, in discussions with practitioners few will admit to failures. We have, however, in the course of the research identified a number of points of 'bad practice'. Examples from the case studies include an instance where a community-based group was asked to provide a particular learning experience for a group of employees. It became clear that the group had not been consulted about the learning, were resentful of being required to attend the 'training' and consequently the training providers acknowledged that the experience was unsuccessful. The second case relates to a geographically small and insular community where the members of the community group were well known. The community was surveyed on a one to one basis in relation to a set of possible learning opportunities. The courses provided as a result of the survey were not successful and further discussion in the community indicated that many of those surveyed had not wished to decline opportunities offered when face to face with a neighbour.

In addition, to these examples, the list of points of bad practice below highlights some of the most problematic areas of misguided or inappropriate practice. This list does not attempt to be a comprehensive or exhaustive catalogue of potential errors and it should be read with the points of good practice identified above in mind, since we may consider that bad practice must to a certain extent be the converse of good.

### **Bad or Inappropriate Practice exists where:**

- Intermediaries or other workers are under-skilled.
- Community workers are parachuted into communities of which they have no understanding.
- Assumptions are made about the needs of specific groups of learners.
- There is an assumed homogeneity of what are in fact heterogeneous groups (e.g. the assumption that BEMs (black and ethnic minorities) or Welsh speakers all experience the same forms of disadvantage or advantage).
- The activities and achievements of organisations are inadequately documented (not written up).

- Learners are coerced into attending a course of learning.
- Provision is irrelevant or inappropriate to the needs of learners and communities.
- The needs of learners/communities are determined by providers without consultation.
- There is no attempt to motivate learners.
- There is no ongoing support for learners.
- There is no trust and respect between provider and learners / communities.
- Provision is short-term and/or unsustainable.
- Marketing is focused on glossy brochures and posters alone.
- Teaching styles are inflexible and / or inappropriate to the needs of learners / communities.
- The special needs of learners are not addressed and catered for.
- The familial duties or pressures of learners are not addressed or supported.
- The various social pressures upon learners are not recognised or supported.
- Provision is tailored around inappropriate accreditation.
- Formal accreditation is always the primary goal of provision.
- Peer assessment and evaluation is under-employed.
- Providers fail to respond to evaluations of provision.
- Evaluation of the quality of provision is tacked-on to the end of courses and not an intrinsic part of provision.
- Staff and volunteers do not receive adequate and ongoing training.
- Partnerships are shunned.
- There is a lack of innovation and risk taking.
- There is a lack of strategic planning.
- There is a lack of democracy within the structure of provider organisations or where provision is imposed on communities from the top down.
- The progression of learners is not tracked (although it is acknowledged that this may not always be possible or desirable).
- Provision duplicates existing services.

## 9 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PILOTS

The project specification requires that “two or three best practice approaches” are identified for implementation in Wales, along with recommendations on which groups should be targeted and why.

### 9.1 Community Learning

‘Community learning’ is a term which may mean different things to different people/ organisations. It was difficult, for instance, to elucidate a single definition, and during the workshop discussions there was significant slippage from a discussion of community learning to individual learning. Does engaging communities in learning mean the community is engaged, or individuals within it, or both? Communities are, of course, made up of individuals. Nevertheless there is a need to distinguish between provision that focuses on individuals and that which emphasises communities. There is an additional complication in relation to the models for community engagement in the sense of learning that is involving the community and learning, which is enabled and led by a community owned organisation. This research suggests that we need to adopt the view that engaging communities does relate to the individual within the community and the community as a group of individuals.

At the risk of over-simplification, and bearing in mind that there will be a level of overlap, it can be said that two basic styles for engagement in community learning activity are evident from the case studies. Provision may be led from an agency (or partnership of agencies) that is mainly external to the community but which consults with and links into the community in a number of ways. There is also provision that is enabled by community-led organisations that have arisen from within the community itself, whilst the learning may be provided directly or via arrangements with external agencies. What ever the style adopted, there are a number of general themes which arise from the case studies in the literature and desk research, these include engaging individuals or groups through one or more of the following:

- Learning which links into existing interests, activities and/or needs, including:
  - Community development or regeneration activity
  - Campaigning or protest activity

- Economic/employment development opportunities
- Cultural or arts projects
- Environmental projects/activism
- Sporting activities
- Family needs and interests
- Informal learning, most often in the initial stages of engagement is expressed as learning by stealth or incidental learning
- Provision of course based learning targeted at specific groups or identified needs, in some cases this is available following an initial process of engaging the potential learners interest, which may include informal learning activity.

According to DEMOS's interim report on Community Learning Accounts (2002) Community Learning is substantively different to individual learning in the following respects:

“First, and most significantly, Community Learning is associated with ‘affective learning’. This is a holistic approach to teaching and learning that emphasises the emotional and social sides of what, for many, is an intense and not always easy experience. .... Affective learning means developing a sense of confidence, self-esteem and a range of social and communication skills. As a recent Qualifications and Curriculum Authority study of adult learning confirmed, these are the pre-requisites to more formal learning.

Second, embarking upon a task as a community – a group of people where time is taken to negotiate and agree a purposeful activity and any learning and skills that flow from this – allows for different people to take different roles. Unlike in formal class-based learning, not everyone is necessarily trying to learn the same things.

Third, Community Learning is ‘for the community’ and so has a clear and wider purpose than learning solely for individual gain. It has a set of practical outcomes that are shared and indivisible, i.e. they cannot be restricted to the benefit of any one individual. (DEMOS 2002)

This view however only links directly to the categories of 'Learning *for, through* and *with* the Community' in National Council – ELWa's definitions of Community Learning (as outlined below). It is important not to dissociate the other aspect of learning *in* the community that may bring learners into community involvement or result from developmental activity.

## 9.2 Successful Community Learning

In considering engaging communities in learning, we need to consider all of the different types of learning that can occur. For this we have returned to the areas of community learning defined following consultation with community providers and published in the National Council - ELWa's Strategic Plan, i.e.

- **Learning *in* the community** – learning which is accessible to the local community for example in a school, library, pub, community or village hall;
- **Learning *for* the community** – learning which supports community capacity building through activities designed to help social capital as well as individual competencies;
- **Learning *through* the community** – informal learning opportunities which come through the learner's voluntary participation in community activity;
- **Learning *with* the community** – learning which comes from the participation in arts, cultural, sporting and other leisure activities.

It would appear that in some of the best examples of 'learning communities', whilst there may be an emphasis on one or other of the above styles of learning, all of these 'styles' of community learning are in evidence. This means that learning meets the needs of individual progression and promotes and supports the development and progression of the community as a whole.

Initial engagement of participants with no immediate motivation to learn and for whom learning is not an obvious choice (i.e. disengaged young people, adults with few or no qualifications who may have had bad experiences of schooling, etc) appears to be achieved most successfully via learning *through or with* community activity. The activity (e.g. sport, campaigning, business development or music production) provides the motivation to participate, learning needs are identified and initially met without the participant being aware of learning and initial achievement with the desire to progress



manner most appropriate to them. In order to achieve this a whole range of types of agencies, organisations and intermediaries need to be available.

**Types of organisations involved in enabling learning communities:**

(The list below is not definitive nor are the categories identified exclusive as many organisations may fulfil different roles in differing circumstances.)

- Development Trusts e.g. Amman Valley Enterprise, Rhondda Arts Factory
- Learning Providers:
  - Colleges
  - Specialist community organisations e.g. Theatr Fforwm Cymru
  - HEIs
  - LEAs
  - Private Training Providers/consultants
  - Community Schools, etc.
- Other service providers:
  - Health service providers
  - Housing providers
  - Employment services
  - Economic development, etc
- Resource providers (making venues and equipment available but not actually providing learning)
  - Community Councils
  - Schools (primary and secondary)
  - Community trusts
  - Local businesses (e.g. pubs and clubs)
  - Libraries
  - Religious organisations, etc.
- Employers in the community or with a relationship with the community
- Voluntary groups
  - Playgroups
  - Sports clubs
  - Youth organisations
  - Choirs/bands, etc
- Umbrella organisations/networks

- County Voluntary Councils
  - VIAE
  - NLN
  - Community University of the Valleys
  - Community Development Cymru
  - NIACE
  - Community Development Foundation
  - WCVA
  - Business in the Community
  - CCETs, etc.

### **9.3 Models of successful engagement**

The core of a successful learning community is often a community owned and therefore community centred organisation. These often fit the model of development trusts and are involved in a whole range of activities, all of which may promote learning through at least three if not all four of the four definitions outlined by National Council - ELWa for community learning. Development Trusts are defined as organisations which are: engaged in the economic, environmental & social regeneration of a defined area or community; independent and aiming for self-sufficiency; not for private profit; community-based and owned.

However, their activities more normally recognised as learning i.e. courses or assessed programmes of provision, may only be a small element in the total range of activities. Around this organisation would be a whole network of other resources emanating from the list of agencies and organisations outlined above, and all working in active partnership.

Active and affective partnerships require all partners to have a clear understanding of the mission and role within the partnership of all other partners. This breeds respect and trust which is crucial to ensuring that each participant plays the required part and therefore that all possible community benefits are achieved. A clear steer from the research was that there needs to be a democratic structure for decision making. Also

that in larger partnerships, where workers are employed to work on behalf of the partnership, they should be clearly seen as answering to the partnership as a whole.

In the majority of cases, success in engaging communities in learning can be tracked in some way to the efforts of one or more committed individuals. They are often but not always a part of the community, with a degree of leadership skills and a clear vision for the community's and their own development. There is a need to identify, develop and support such community 'animateurs'. Also to recognise their skills in the same way as we seek to support and develop business entrepreneurs. Once such individuals act, however, they may be categorised as acting in partnerships, or within organisations, as intermediaries and so the roles of these individuals are subsumed into the models discussed below.

All of the above considerations have led to the expression of the following models to ensure the involvement of all of the necessary players:

#### **Development Trust Led model**

Community Development Organisations engaging actively with interest groups in the community and drawing in all of the other partners for provision (in the best cases engaging in wider strategic partnerships and networks, regionally, nationally and internationally). Examples of Development Trusts featured in case studies in this research and already working in this way, include Amman Valley Enterprise. However there are others that are known within Wales such as Rhondda Arts Factory, Valley and Vale, DOVE (Dulais Opportunities for Voluntary Enterprise) Workshop, Glyneath Training Centre and Ystalyfera Development Trust, (it should be noted that not all development trust style organisations are members of the Development Trusts Association, however for a list of registered development trusts see <http://www.dta.org.uk/>)

#### **Shared Resource Model**

An organisation with resources and contacts, often a learning provider, but possibly a networking organisation or other body, leading in pulling together a network of providers and community organisations in communities across a geographical area. All partners work on an equal basis and respect each other's

strengths, roles and limitations whilst they utilise a shared funding source and share expertise, staff and other resources. This model requires the involvement of community led organisations at the local level for its success in engaging communities in learning. The operation of the network on a wider level supports and nurtures these community led organisations, which may already be or become development trusts. The model can enable the efficient operation of a range of intermediaries, including those with a community of interest rather than a geographic focus. Examples of Shared Resource Models featured in the case studies include Neath Port Talbot New Learning Network and the Community University of the Valleys Partnerships.

#### **Specialist Intermediary initiated model**

An organisational intermediary intercedes to initiate engagement of learners within a community. This is most often undertaken initially on a project basis, and can have a specific interest rather than a geographical focus. Examples within the research would be the NIACE Project Prescriptions for Learning or the Ladder Project. In this model skilled intermediaries work with targeted individuals and groups in their local community to motivate learners often for the obvious benefit of the individual principally but within a community ethos and eventual community gain.

### **9.4 Implementation of models of successful and sustainable community engagement in learning in Wales**

We offer proposals for the implementation of the three models identified both through immediate pilots and longer term development. In the short term, there are constraints due to the relatively small number of active development trust style and specific intermediary organisations or individuals within Wales, and the clear capacity building, training and support needs for community engagement across the whole of the education and training sector. We therefore, offer recommendations to improve community engagement and overcome the lack of capacity and skills shortages in the longer term.

### **Implementation of the proposed models.**

We recommend wide dissemination of the best practice identified both to the providing sector and agencies involved, in particular Estyn to inform the implementation of the Common Inspection Framework with community learning providers. Consideration should be given to the development of the best practice into an audit tool to support self-assessment by community providers. There was a clear steer from practitioners that sharing of the costings of the various models of good practice is necessary so as to give practitioners and funders a better sense of the resources necessary to deliver.

### **Development Trust Led model**

We would suggest that although there are only a relatively small number of identified active community development trusts within Wales, their involvement in learning of all forms is significant. We propose that ELWa enter into negotiations to find the best means (including pilot applications for community learning accounts) to work with them to fund community engagement in learning.

Whilst there are a number of development trust style organisations able to promote sustainable engagement in community learning within the valleys and part of South West Wales, there would appear to be a dearth of such organisations in other areas of Wales. We would recommend working through Community Voluntary Councils, in these areas, to identify any possible genesis of such activity and the funding of other community focused intermediaries to work with these identified communities to support the emergence of sustainable community owned development trust style organisations.

Given that learning provision within these community led organisations is a part of a holistic community development strategy, we propose the initiation of discussions with other relevant agencies and organisations including; the Welsh Development Agency (WDA), Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA), Community Development Cymru (CDC), Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), Voluntary Sector Partnership Council and the Communities First Team at the National Assembly to address the wider issues around sustainability, core funding and capacity building.

### **Shared Resource Model**

We recommend the promotion of the examples of best practice in this model to CCET sub-committees with a focus on community learning, to encourage consideration of this as a method of joint working. Also replication of the European Project bid which supports the New Learning Network in other areas where some local, community led activity is already in existence.

The research indicates that this would initially be limited to the valleys area of South Wales, inclusive of the Western valleys above Llanelli and Carmarthen. Whilst the existing examples of this model were built around existing community led organisations a pilot development in an area of Wales where such organisations are few could be developed. We are aware of an emergent network of voluntary providers led by Deeside College, which could develop a shared resource model of provision.

This Model could also be of use in rural communities, where a focus on coordinating provision and making the most of available resources through building provision-partnerships could help to address the practical constraints of rural amenities.

### **Specialist Intermediary Initiated Model**

Greater use should be made of the skills and techniques of intermediary organisations or individuals such as Theatre Forum Cymru or the consultants able to deliver Training for Transformation in Wales.

Successful projects such as Prescriptions for Learning, the Ladder Project, and On Common Ground and Rhyl College's Women's Enterprise Project should be run in a limited manner in other areas, as far as the availability of skilled personnel allows

We would recommend that implementation of this model is initially focused on areas where few or no community led initiatives have been identified such as North, mid and areas of West Wales. This activity could then assist in building community engagement and community ownership of the process of learning. It is considered that this model's focus on communities of interest could make it particularly applicable to rural communities.

Whilst we see the provision of support for existing intermediaries of all kinds as an immediate priority, it is clear from the research that there is a dearth of skilled professionals available to support community engagement and assist in the development of individual and organisational intermediaries.

It is important, therefore to look towards longer-term solutions to identify and support the development of any potential individual or organizational intermediaries.

### **Longer term development of sustainable community engagement**

In the long term the focus needs to be on improving the skills and increasing the overall number of intermediaries in Wales. Interaction between intermediary organisations, towards the formation of real partnerships should be supported.

There is a need to focus strongly on promoting the creation of community led intermediaries, both those with specific interests - which may not focus on geographical communities - and development trust style organisations. The development of community led development trusts must be viewed as a long term goal as such bodies require to be created from within the community and some capacity building i.e. learning **for** the community needs to be undertaken to seed the growth of such organisations. There are also grave dangers in this if support is not provided for a long enough period of time, community aspirations may be built up and then dashed resulting in a loss of trust.

There are a number of approaches for such longer-term capacity building that can be used alone or in combination and have been shown to be effective:

- **Community Apprenticeships**

An example of this is seen in The Ladder Project where young people from an area are taken on as trainees to work and train in community/youth work. During this process they develop their own skills and work with other young people to develop them. We would recommend, however, that this approach is not limited to young people and that apprenticeship schemes for community activists of all ages could be developed. It is possible that linkages could be made with New Deal to support such developments.

- **Leadership training**

Community workers identify a number of community leaders/activists as potential 'Community Animators' and work with them to establish their needs and the needs of the community. This includes the negotiation of a program of training and development to support their roles in the community. (e.g. Training for Transformation)

- **Community Development Approach**

Community workers liaise with existing community activists, clubs, voluntary groups and other organisations in the community to map the community and undertake a participatory appraisal of needs and aspirations. These would then form the basis of supported development and negotiated learning activity. The intended outcomes being the identification and support of community leaders and developmental projects towards the establishment of community led economic, social or cultural activities. (Classic community development model and akin to the genesis of many existing development trusts identified in this report.)

These approaches of working to establish community led structures, although long term, can help to insure *sustainable community development and learning models*. It should be noted, however, that for any of these approaches to be successful the level of support and expertise needed from professionals in the development and training of individuals and organisations is very high. They cannot, therefore, be simply 'rolled out' across Wales since there are simply not enough professionals/organisations in existence to support such a level of work. Therefore our recommendation is that these approaches should be promoted wherever possible, but adequate skilled support *must* be ensured.

There is an immediate need to provide a range of routes for the training of professional community workers. Programmes of full-time study and a variety of flexible provision, linked to online, distance and work -based learning opportunities should be developed. Programmes once initiated could produce qualified community workers within two years to assist in alleviating the skills shortage which is currently apparent. Rapid development of such provision would necessitate liaison with other agencies, Communities First Unit,

Community Development Cymru and the Voluntary Sector and other relevant training bodies

### **9.5 Selecting Target Communities**

Suggestions as to the most appropriate locations for piloting the models outlined have been made in the section dealing with each model.

There is no doubt that it is important to focus activity on areas of the greatest deprivation. However, it is also clear that all of the successful models of engagement require the existence of skilled intermediaries. We would recommend that National Council - ELWa concentrates resources in the short term on areas where such intermediaries exist. There are many in the valleys areas of South Wales with a small number identified in other areas of Wales and some specialized intermediaries able to operate across Wales. A longer-term strategy should be activated which requires liaison with agencies and organisations involved in community regeneration and development and can link into Communities First developments. This should seek to utilise community development techniques to promote the emergence of community owned and specialist intermediary organisations.

There is great emphasis on Communities First areas at present and funds for promoting community development and regeneration have already been allocated for these areas. While recommendations and outlines of successful practice in engaging communities in learning are relevant to - and may be utilised by - the Communities First scheme, we would suggest that pilots are not confined to Community First areas. The research identifies a number of issues around Communities First that could limit development of models of community engagement in learning, these include; the very localized, wards which qualify for Communities First and the slow development of Communities First Partnerships.

We would also recommend that Community Learning Accounts could be used to resource pilots in non-Community First areas. These should be selected initially on the basis of the existence of an appropriate community intermediary or development trust style organisation. The rationale for this is simply that an established community owned organisation with the relevant expertise and resources has been shown to be most

effective in promoting engagement. The diagram of the community engagement cycle (page 81) illustrates that initial engagement within a stable community base will spin off further initiatives which promote engagement in learning. The result can be a snowball effect spreading out from the original community to engage other groups and participants. Over time it will and also reach deeper into the community, increasingly promoting engagement of profoundly disengaged individuals.

Where there is an apparent lack of established community led groups (for example in North and Mid Wales) we would recommend that work is undertaken in liaison with other agencies and utilising County Voluntary Councils (CVC) who will be the most likely organisations to be in contact with emergent groups that could form the genesis of a development trust or specialist intermediary group. The use of a community development method, which seeks to work with the community leaders/animators to establish awareness and understanding of issues and needs in order to empower the community - and establish initiatives with full engagement of participants - will require the involvement of some expertise. Successful intermediaries such as Rhyl Community College or Theatr Fforwm Cymru could be funded to work with such emergent groups alongside support from their local CVCs and umbrella bodies like Community Development Cymru.

## **APPENDIX 1: CASE STUDIES ARISING FROM DESK RESEARCH**

### **1.1 AGE CONCERN MORGANNWG: ICT PROJECT**

#### **Sketch of Provider**

Age Concern is a charity which employs, on this IT project, 3 paid staff (1 full-time, two part-time) and has approximately 20 volunteers. The IT project operates in partnership with University of Glamorgan, through a service agreement with the Centre for Lifelong Learning. Since beginning the project in October 2000 the project has seen upwards of 650 students.

#### **Partnerships**

Centre for Lifelong Learning, University of Glamorgan, RCT and Bridgend Library Service, Employment Service Disability Team, New Deal 50+, Treherbert Communities First and Adult Guidance Services.

#### **Target Group**

Those aged 50 years or over (Age Concern are considering lowering the minimum age)

#### **Learner Profile**

More men than women take part, although in the initial stages women outnumbered men. A student assessment - which includes issues such as learning histories and health issues - is conducted at the beginning of courses, and students come from very varied backgrounds. Most are retired, but some are unemployed or on Incapacity benefit and the jobcentre makes referrals. The only information stored about the learners is gender, whether under or over 65 and any disabilities.

#### **Type of Provision**

Directed 10 week tutorials offering introduction into Word Processing/Use of the Internet at local venues. Tutorial groups are small, between 3 and 7. The courses are run by qualified tutors and course material targeted at over 50s is being developed. Age concern also provides induction training to volunteers on tutor training. Training is also offered to visually impaired students, and as a result Dolphin <sup>™</sup> software has been added to library services so all age groups and individuals who are visually impaired can access computer facilities in their local libraries. The ICT project is very responsive to its

learners and the community as a whole. Students, staff and volunteers can all make suggestions as courses run and these can rapidly be incorporated into course. Requests for special training from the community are also catered for when possible. The courses are all conducted in the English language.

In addition, Age Concern also provides work experience for graduates at the University of Glamorgan (through Cymru Prosper Wales). Most recently a visually impaired student, who initially lacked confidence in his abilities, was secured full time employment after his placement by the efforts of Age Concern in partnership with RNIB (Royal National Institute for the Blind) and Disability Services.

A previous graduate also assisted in the design of the website.

### **Form of community learning**

All forms of community learning are provided. For example, learning *in* the community is achieved since ICT skills are delivered at library venues, community centres, adult education centres (but not in the formal computer suites) and at Age Concern's learning centre. Teaching is also delivered in the homes of people who have severe mobility problems. Learning *for* the community is an outcome of Age Concern's work with the local Women's Institute to train up their members to send and receive e-mails (with attachments) so circulating information is much more effective. Learners who have relatives and friends abroad now keep in more regular contact with each other using e-mail. Learning *through* the community is an aspect of the ICT project, for example students who have learned with Age Concern then use their skills to help others learn ICT skills. Age Concern train up volunteer tutors to teach people at community venues. One ex-student visits a local primary school to assist children send e-mails to pen friends in Australian schools. While learning *with* the community is evident in the way learners have used their newly acquired skills to form their own informal learning groups at libraries; researching family history is very popular and learning continues in an informal way

### **Accreditation**

A certificate of attendance is awarded to students, but there is no accreditation offered on the course and students are encouraged to work at their own pace. Age Concern is experiencing some pressure to introduce accreditation, although oral consultation with

current participants suggests strong resistance to the introduction of accreditation. However, it is felt that awarding the certificate of attendance is a confidence booster and Age Concern are currently investigating ways of introducing accreditation in a non-threatening way.

### **Venues**

It is essential the venue is non-threatening, comfortable and accessible, so teaching takes place in libraries. Age Concern Morgannwg also has it's own training centre based in Tonypandy.

### **Progression**

- 5 volunteers found work through advice and guidance offered by the project.
- 80 students went onto accredited courses
- Skills used in a variety of societies and voluntary organisations
- 50 volunteers offered tutor training/Equal Opportunities. Tutor training is to FETC 1. (Every attempt is made to recruit tutors from within; this is very important since learners express a wish to learn within own peer group and are put off by younger students.)

### **Measuring Success: Outcomes and Achievements**

- Retraining for new skills and job creation for over 50s. Adult Guidance Advisors from the Careers Service are brought in before the courses ends to give advice on progression.
- Social inclusion and participation for over 50s - the project encourages older people to engage with the community by helping clients keep in touch with family and friends via email, helping them to buy a computer, to use the internet etc.
- ICT training also facilitates important familial learning by enabling grandparents to help grandchildren use computers.
- Building self-esteem and increasing confidence – this is a major part of the course and many of the learners have been out of education for many years, even many decades.
- People become more talkative, and interact more with others, developing social skills, making friends and countering the isolation which can be such a debilitating feature of later life.

- Encourages individual enterprises, e.g. an artist now sells art over Internet.

### **Evaluating Provision**

Since there is no formal accreditation, most of the positive outcomes are 'soft' (see above) and as such are measured by the tutors themselves. All students fill in an 'exit questionnaire'. This helps to monitor, teaching standards, the quality of teaching materials, suitability of venues and equipment and to adapt the course material and content quickly.

### **Recruitment of learners**

Initially recruitment of learners was by press release and posters, but since classes started two years ago word of mouth has been more than sufficient and there are now waiting lists for the courses. This group of learners are very motivated.

### **Barriers to learning**

Class sizes and Finance are considered the most significant barriers to learning. Transport is not an issue since classes take place in local venues and tutors visit the immobile in their own homes.

### **Funding**

Service Level agreement with University of Glamorgan  
ESF

### **Basic Skills**

Course can be adapted to overcome literacy problems

### **Special Needs**

Approximately 30% of students have illnesses and/or disabilities that are provided for (e.g. special equipment for partially sighted introduced).

### **Communities First**

There are Communities First areas within Age Concern Morgannwg's area, the organisation is employing a Development officer to liaise with these communities so representation of the needs of older people will be considered.

## **1.2 BLACK VOLUNTARY SECTOR NETWORK**

### **Sketch of Provider / Facilitator**

The Black Voluntary Sector Network Wales (BVSNW) is a charity. It is the culmination of over ten years work by an initial small group of community workers dedicated to the collective aim of establishing a recognised voice within the voluntary sector to represent the views of Black and Minority Ethnic people (BEM) on issues that concern them. In 1993 the BVSNW was set up to work towards the development of a Black Voluntary Sector Strategy. It now employs seven staff.

### **Partnerships**

BVSNW works with a variety of different partners in delivering learning in Wales as well as facilitating the provision of others, including

- over 15 partners on SWITCH (including MEWN Cymru)
- the Community Justice National Training Organisation on the Reach Project which was set up to - increase the trust and confidence between both the black and minority ethnic communities and Home Office services in South Wales, and to encourage, assist and support minority ethnic people with the application process and employment in Home Office Services. These are identified as Police Forces, Probation Areas and Voluntary Community Justice Organisations. The Project covers South Wales from Llanelli to Newport.
- Cardiff Black Youth Network (CBYN)

### **Target Group**

Black and Ethnic Minorities across Wales.

### **Provision**

BVSNW aims to facilitate the work of the BEM voluntary sector, to share information etc. Advising on funding issues is a major function of BVSNW. It also has a role as a provider of community learning. BVSNW is a partner in SWITCH which delivers learning, support and advice via the internet and through local community venues. SWITCH provides short courses on IT and basic skills, as well as improving job prospects, giving advice on training as well as advice on benefits, legal issues, housing, immigration, dealing with bodies such as the Council, Health Service, gas, electricity etc.

There is an emphasis on enabling communities to help themselves, so volunteers are trained by SWITCH.

### **Aims**

Raising awareness of the needs of the Black Voluntary Sector and Communities

Building the capacity of the Black Voluntary Sector.

Improving employment prospects of BEM

Facilitating BEM's accessing of services

### **ESOL provision**

This is generally well-accessed

### **Barriers**

Economics of an area are the most significant feature in determining what barriers will be faced by learners. However, the condition of people when they arrive in this country, e.g. what skills and resources they already have, will determine the level of support needed / barriers faced.

### **Funding**

Home Office support,

National Assembly

### **Basic Skills**

Are provided through SWITCH (see above).

### **Communities First**

No discernible positive impact in Cardiff / Newport area.

### **1.3 THE MINORITY ETHNIC WOMEN'S NETWORK (MEWN) CYMRU**

#### **Sketch of Provider**

The Minority Ethnic Women's Network (MEWN) Cymru is a registered charity which has branches in Swansea, Cardiff and Vale, Newport and North Wales.

#### **Aims and Objectives / Provision**

MEWN Cymru aims to remove barriers to opportunity and enable women to participate fully in public and community life, including business and enterprise. MEWN Cymru intends to achieve its aims in different ways: through work in training and childcare, by sharing of information and networking, through helping women participate in public and community life including business and enterprise, and by informing and influencing policy makers, and by providing a number of free services:

- Support for women who want to challenge barriers to public & community life via branch supported initiatives/projects.
- Opportunities to network, inform and influence policy makers in statutory agencies, public & private sector on issues that you feel you have been excluded from.
- Sign-Posting support for black and ethnic minority women and girls.
- Outreach work aimed at empowering the most disadvantaged groups.
- Information provided via website and monthly newsletter.
- Women only 'safe' learning environment.
- Work-experience opportunities.
- Supporting young women via homework club.
- Leisure & personal development activities.
- Drop in service Monday-Friday 11-3.

The network in North Wales also addresses some regionally specific issues

- Isolation of Black women living in North Wales.
- Research into Health Issues in North Wales.
- Reaching Black women who may be part of the University of Bangor scene.

- Women returning to work and who, despite excellent educational qualifications have to take low paid work.

MEWN Cymru has also published and distributed reports and monthly newsletters. By these means, there has been greater awareness raised about the needs of ethnic minority women in Wales.

MEWN Cymru also provides into work training such as basic computer skills and office skills, and English language and mother tongue classes. Some help with childcare may be available for women accessing these courses. These classes allow women who would otherwise face cultural barriers in accessing mainstream provision access to learning.

### **Accreditation**

Both informal and accredited learning is provided.

### **Barriers to learning and accessing wider services**

#### **Background information:**

- Black and ethnic minority women are twice as likely as white women to be unemployed (in 1991 13.1% compared with 6.6% for white women) and to experience poverty and social exclusion.
- Participation of black and ethnic minority women in the labour force in Wales is lower than the average participation rate for ethnic minority women in Britain as a whole - 45.8% for Wales, compared with 57.56% for Great Britain.
- Women from minority ethnic groups have a much lower economic activity rate than white women - 65.7% compared with 48.2%.
- Where ethnic minority women are economically inactive, they are often isolated, alone, unable to participate in the training/education initiatives or in the community because of child care and/or language difficulties, lack of confidence or cultural expectations.

**Barriers include**

- Information and knowledge barriers - elders do not know what is available to them and the providers believe that 'since black elders do not appear in our services, they do not need them'.
- Communication barriers - not all groups experience this but for minorities whose first language is not English, an inability to communicate confounds the knowledge and accessibility barriers.
- Access barriers
- Appropriateness and number barrier
- Cultural Barriers
- Institutional Racism and Negative Stereotyping
- Asylum Seekers and Refugees may have specific issues to cope with, such as a history of abuse

**Funding**

Core funding from Community Fund for three years (October 2000 – September 2003).

The National Assembly for Wales has granted MEWN Cymru a 'Promoting Equality Grant' aimed at providing IT training and support for ethnic minority young girls and women via MEWN Cymru.

## **1.4 NEATH PORT TALBOT (NPT) NEW LEARNING NETWORK**

### **Sketch of Provider**

NPT New Learning Network (NLN) is a partnership between statutory, public, voluntary and community sectors.

### **Partnerships**

16 Funding Partnerships, with a further 13 Associate Partners and 5 Comprehensive Schools and 7 Primary Schools. Partners include

- Community First partnerships
- Information and Advice Services, e.g. Women's Aid and CAB
- Learning Providers and Funders
- Learning Practitioners
- Support Organisations, e.g. Housing Associations, Trade Unions
- Statutory Organisations e.g. ELWa, Job Centre Plus, Library Service.

Partnerships are vital to the project, and building and maintaining the Partnership is a continual learning process. The NLN recognises that it is important not to underestimate the time and resources needed to make a partnership work and to make sure information is shared. The NLN endeavours to ensure that all partners have an equal voice within a network where the size and contribution of different partners may vary considerably.

### **Target Group / Learner Profile**

Post-16 Residents of Neath Port Talbot County Borough. Specific targets were set for inclusion of different groups, categorised by employment status, gender, age, disability, ethnicity and socially excluded groups including homeless, lone parents and asylum seekers. For actual figures to date see the statistics below.

### **Aims of Project / Type of Provision**

NLN is a 10 year project which builds on current provision and uses established bases as springboards. Phase One of the project focuses on post-16 community education. It is aimed at equipping 6000 people with greater self-confidence, higher numeracy, literacy, information and communication skills, as well as improving their relevant employment skills. NPT County Borough is divided into 14 Locality Planning Areas

(LPAs) and in each LPA the NLN is developing a Local Action Centre (LAC). The LACs will provide focal points for the delivery of lifelong learning opportunities plus support for adult students. Ideally LACs are developed and managed by local people with the NLN providing links and support.

Each LAC will

- be equipped with state of the art ICT facilities
- offer space for support agencies' services
- offer access to child/dependant care
- have staff qualified to a minimum of Stage 1 Adult Guidance
- maintain, or have access to, a range of learning resources
- operate flexible hours including evenings, weekends and school holidays
- be resourced and equipped to deliver an outreach programme in the LPA
- be resourced and equipped as a local learning management centre
- provide areas for social interaction and refreshment
- be accessible to all regardless of ability

LACs will develop and locally manage adult learning provision in their locality according to local needs. Where necessary they will develop and manage outreach provision at satellite centres to ensure local access. LACs are working towards providing a 'one stop shop' for:

- Guidance and Signposting
- Training and Learning
- Business Advice
- Child and Dependant Care
- Health Education
- Community Based Projects

and are a management centre for:

- Developing local learning opportunities
- Raising the capacity of trainers

- Supporting community enterprise and Community development ensuring local access to learning resources

In the longer term (though outside the terms of Objective 1 funding) it is anticipated that LACs will develop other provision, appropriate to their communities, which could include:

- Out of School care and after-school learning facilities
- Links to the Older & Bolder initiative
- Health Education projects
- Community enterprise initiatives

Some family learning programmes exist. These will be further developed in phase 2.

### **Forms of Community Learning / Accreditation**

Within such a large project, all sorts of learning is achieved and accreditation routes vary. There is some clear emphasis on soft outcomes. For example the confidence building scheme 'Demon to Diva' which includes a makeover—for women alongside learning, improved presentation skills and guidance. This boosts self-confidence while improving communication skills, personal development and, critically, motivation. A 'Flat Broke to Fit Bloke' project is being piloted aimed at a similar outcomes for men.

### **Venues**

Community based venues already exist and local groups signal where provision should be. In some areas it is a struggle to find appropriate venues

### **Progression**

Whilst 91% of the beneficiaries for 2001/02 academic year are new to the Project, 401 have returned from the previous academic year. Many of the returners have achieved outcomes since first receiving support. On a sample of 100 beneficiaries from academic year 2000/01 – 2001/02 hard outcomes achieved were:

- 72 have gained a higher level of qualification
- 10 who were unemployed have gained employment
- 5 previously working part-time have secured full-time jobs

- 2 are now self employed

It is undeniable, from information received from beneficiaries themselves and LAC's, that many would not have been able to engage initially, or continue with learning were it not for the additional support they received from the Project.

11% of the returners have progressed from leisure type courses, courses that would not now meet the criteria for NLN curriculum i.e. not covering Key Skills, and are now studying on courses such as Computing, Secretarial and Office Technology and Languages.

On the first 'Demon to Diva' project, a joint venture by Action Team for Jobs, NPT LLS and the NLN (mentioned above):

- 2 clients left course with interviews booked for the next week
- 2 enrolled on NLN Training Courses
- 3 signed up for College Courses
- 3 have appointments to gain Volunteer posts
- 1 client found employment

### **Outcomes and Achievements**

- Local, accessible, affordable or free post-16 learning opportunities
- Wider curriculum for adults
- Embedding of key skills in all NLN courses and written guidance to adult tutors on how to do this.
- Training event for adult tutors attracted 123 tutors as NLN paid them to attend
- Out of school club supported by NLN and NOF runs alongside adult classes. Children and parents collected from local primary schools and bused to centre of learning
- Over 4000 new beneficiaries by July 2002, largely between 25-50, from previously under-represented wards
- Joint projects with housing and tenants associations
- NPT Grid for Learning allows for networking of all LACs and satellites

- Broadband initiative leading to further Objective 1 bid to develop infrastructure for e-learning and technical support
- Initial guidance training for community based centre workers and volunteers increases ability to offer guidance and signposting
- 10 out of 14 LACs operating by July 2002
- 14 LAC development workers/managers in post
- Strong links between Action Team for Jobs, NPT Leisure Services and NLN with 2 highly successful courses attracting Action Team clients (e.g. Flat Broke to Fit Bloke)
- Protocol developed to encourage greater use of schools for adult learning

### **Recruitment of learners**

By word of mouth, advertising, brochure, open days, tasters, 'Pints and Prospectus' sessions, within a community setting. Publicity raising ventures such as performance artists and tutors who tried to raise awareness on First Cymru buses.

### **Barriers to learning**

- Undervaluing learning (there is a culture of not understanding how learning can help people).
- Culture of dependency (high numbers claiming invalidity benefit).
- Class sizes – there is a need to be able to run small classes and pick up numbers later.
- Family commitments i.e. child/dependant care responsibilities.
- Financial constraints.
- Disabilities – physical and mental.
- Lacking basic or key skills.
- Member of excluded group i.e. drug/alcohol misuser, ex-offender.

### **Funding**

Funded by the partners with matched funding from the European Social Fund, Objective 1 and New Opportunities Fund (CALL).

## Statistics on Participation (supplied by NLN)

### Employment

UNEMPLOYED			
Age	Target	Actual to date	% to target
16-24	1200	323	27%
25-49	2000	1159	58%
50-60	800	665	83%

EMPLOYED			
Age	Target	Actual to date	% to target
16-24	880	277	31%
25-49	880	1496	+70%
50-60	240	365	+52%

### Age

Age	Target	Actual to date	% to target
16-24	2080	602	29%
25-49	2880	2926	+2%
50-60	1040	1432	+38%

### Disability

Gender	Target	Actual to date	% to target
Male	250	362	+45%
Female	500	445	89%

### Ethnicity

Ethnic Group	Gender	Target	Actual to date	% to target
White	Male	1400	1517	+8%
White	Female	4200	3087	73%
Asian	Male	40	26	65%
Asian	Female	100	36	36%
Black	Male	50	7	14%

Black	Female	150	4	3%
Chinese	Male	10	0	
Chinese	Female	50	3	6%

**Excluded Groups**

Group	Target	Actual to date	% to target
Ex-Offender	400	11	3%
Homeless	600	31	5%
Asylum seeker	100	1	1%
Drug/Alcohol Misusers	150	21	14%
Lone Parents	2000	390	20%

## **1.5 RHYL COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

### **Sketch of Provider**

Further Education College. Rhyl Community College (RCC) is part of Coleg Llandrillo Cymru and serves an area that is both coastal and rural.

### **Partnerships**

A variety of partnerships on different projects including various European partnerships, e.g. partnership with local CARS project (RCC moved accredited learning into their premises, such as OCN introduction to the motor vehicle, thus reaching those who may have been excluded from school) RCC also works in partnership with the local Foyer Project, MIND and NCH and many other groups/organisations. RCC has close links with the community it serves, for example it sits and votes on the Community Strategy Group for West Rhyl, which is a Communities First area. Coleg Llandrillo has provided education in its communities for approx 14 years, working on occasion out of over eighty community based venues. In the four years RCC has been open it has built on the trust and respect of the community and works in close consultation with learners and potential learners.

### **Target Group**

Although RCC is an FE College with a broad curriculum portfolio it has a commitment to Adult Learners especially the socially excluded – the catchment area includes the first and thirty fourth most deprived wards in Wales, where there are serious drug problems, teenage pregnancies, a high number of babies born underweight through malnutrition, high numbers excluded from school and low GDP.

### **Community Involvement / Consultation**

Consultation evenings are run which invite interested groups including voluntary sector, business etc to identify training needs. Local knowledge of staff utilised for planning provision. Conducting ethnographic research, mapping exercises. Membership by staff on a wide range of voluntary/community groups builds trust and provides both formal and informal opportunities for discussions on curriculum development. A College Consultative Committee comprising of representations from community groups/local

businesses/DCC Economic Development/the LEA and Town and County Councilors provides a more formal and structured input.

### **Learner Profile**

There are significantly more female than male learners, except group of 16-18 year olds who have been excluded from school or who have other problems, where men predominate. Information is collected on enrolment forms and an analysis of geographical spread is made by postcode analysis.

### **Aims**

- To engage people in lifelong learning.
- To widen participation by the establishment of a Learning Network.
- To provide a coherent curriculum which offers learners a route from the first steps back into education, to HE qualification in Community Development.
- To provide progression opportunities, sideways as well as upwards and accreditation opportunities at a variety of levels.
- Providing free learning wherever possible.
- Empowering communities – people on benefits are working for communities, they need to be provided with skills and knowledge to change things.
- Changing communities, changing lives.
- Tapping into the wealth of local knowledge and strategic knowledge available for the benefit of the wider community.

### **Type of Provision**

There is a wide variety of provision. One project is the Rhyl College Women's Enterprise which was developed from ethnographic research in Rhyl, which has a high number of economically inactive women, and also in response to a perceived niche market, that is offering a service to people who are fearful of having workmen in their home. The Women's Enterprise provides training for women in plumbing, painting and decorating, car mechanics, gardening and electronics. It provides free childcare and free transport. The women must maintain an 80% attendance rate over a 2 year period. Driving lessons are also given, as is training in enterprise and business. The aim is to encourage women to start their own businesses, businesses which can be structured around domestic responsibilities.

The HNC in Community Development Studies offers students the opportunity to acquire a recognised HE qualification and provides an academic framework for the voluntary/community work many are already engaged in. It is for many the route from unpaid into paid employment providing chance to escape from the benefit/poverty trap many community activists are caught in.

There are some purely voluntary spin-offs from RCC's provision, too, such as a male support group which runs without funding on a voluntary basis, by one of RCC's staff. Here there is no mention of education, or people wouldn't go, but there are activities such as rebuilding old computers etc.

There is some involvement of other professionals in providing support for students, for example, Shelter Cymru runs a surgery every fortnight which is open to all, Clwyd Coast Credit Union provides information and a fortnightly clinic and independent Benefit Advice is available.

All assessment is offered bilingually, but there is a predominance of English speakers along the coast

### **Forms of Community Learning and Accreditation**

To engage the fragile or non-confident learner 'Taster' sessions are offered in communities. These are often the first point of contact people may have had with education for many years. These tend to be non-accredited and the emphasis is on process not product, on 'learning by stealth'.

These tasters can be anything from "Committee Skills" to Confidence Building and often act as the hook. Progression from these is significantly high and can lead onto a variety of courses often accredited by the Open College Network (some progress onto IT courses accredited by OCR or C&G, others onto the Access to Higher Education then onto the HNC or University.)

### **Venues**

Delivery takes place where the students are whenever possible. This can include community resource centres, village halls the back room of a pub.

## **Progression**

Towards the end of any course, there is always discussion and advice and guidance offered about what the individual will be doing next. Progression is tracked where possible, however it is recognised that adult learners do not always progress immediately so monitoring outcomes in this area can be difficult. However, many students keep in contact and some sign up for courses when they become relevant.

## **Measuring Success / Evaluating Provision**

For courses of 5 hours or more, a basic skills assessment is made. On the Women's Enterprise project, participants redo the basic skills assessment to measure progress. They also measure their own outcomes by setting their own targets for improved confidence etc. and rating themselves on a termly basis.

Recently the college has been awarded

- The Beacon Award for Widening Participation (2001)
- Estyn Inspection in 2002 gave a rating of Grade 1 across provision
- Irene Norman, head of Rhyl Community College, was the Welsh Woman of the Year for Education. (Nov 2001)

## **Outcomes and Achievements**

A great number of 'soft outcomes' such as increased confidence, communication skills, etc. are achieved as a result of RCC's provision. Specific examples include: one of the Women's Enterprise learners has gone on to become an IT facilitator for this course. While, one of the Learning Network's ex-students who began with a textiles course, and progressed through other courses, has gone on to become a Communities First Co-ordinator.

Other outcomes include:

- Improvement in Basic Skills
- Employment
- Self-Employment
- Progression to other courses

### **Recruitment of learners**

Largely by word of mouth. Prospectuses, open evenings, tasters, open days. Also, groups are targeted, such as National Children's homes, and Women's Enterprise participants recruited from Women's Aid

### **Barriers to learning**

- Lack of finance
- Lack of transport
- Poor infrastructure
- Under-confidence
- Bad previous educational experiences
- Lack of support ranging to outright hostility from family / partners.
- Domestic responsibilities.

### **Funding**

ESF

ELWa

### **Basic Skills**

Basic Skills assessments are conducted on all students on courses over five hours. Students and tutors share results and action plans are put into place to provide appropriate support where needed. This can be on a one to one basis, small group or embedded into whole groups. Students can also access a drop-in facility and information is collated.

## **1.6 PRESCRIPTIONS FOR LEARNING: RHYL WEST**

### **Sketch of Provider**

This project is a pilot conducted by NIACE Dysgu Cymru, and replicates successful projects elsewhere in Britain (there is also a second pilot running in Caerphilly). Rhyl West is a Community First area and the most deprived in Wales. Prescriptions for learning investigates the impact of learning on health and well-being.

### **Target Group**

The project is aimed at engaging adults who have been excluded or absent from learning for some time, especially those on long-term sickness and welfare benefits, while testing a methodology for engaging with adults in community health settings. Thus, this project is aimed at a specific interest 'community' which happens to be coincidental with a geographical area and is not exclusively confined to those individuals who live within the Communities First ward of West Rhyl.

### **Partnership and Provision**

The success of the project is dependent on community development agency, and making use of networks that already exist – there is a longstanding community development team in the area. Individuals are referred in by health professionals and a Learning Advisor, who is based at a community health centre for three days a week, brokers for them, finding or creating 'courses' which meet specific learning requirements. For example, ICT was identified as an area of interest and the WEA set up a specific class for these learners. There are also courses such as an Introduction to Art and Holistic Days which consider health issues from a variety of perspectives. Learning is mainly non-formal and informal, with no compulsory accreditation. POP funding means that courses can be run with minimal numbers, allowing the gradual build-up of participants.

### **Aims and Objectives**

Clearly the role of the of the one Learning Advisor employed on the project is crucial. The person employed is local and already familiar with many of the issues of social exclusion in the area. She was given relevant training, especially in counselling skills, and consults with a professional councillor regularly. She also receives vital ongoing

support from the project Steering Group which includes a number of relevantly qualified professionals. Her key role is as a motivator, since without motivating the individuals referred there is no possibility of engaging them in learning. Motivating, or engaging, people can be complicated by habits of dependency, such as addiction to various drugs (prescribed or illicit). It is also recognised that the Learning Advisor needs to be available and accessible to people on an ongoing basis – consultations are not just one-off affairs.

### **Outcomes**

On this project, of the 48 people so far engaged, the predominant age-group is 31-40 years, while women make up approximately 75% of the learners. Learners' progression, or otherwise, is tracked and on the basis of projects run in England and positive results in Rhyl West, it is accepted that this approach is successful in engaging excluded communities in learning, in raising self confidence, self esteem, competence and general well-being, while encouraging adults to shift from dependence to greater self-management: to take more control of their lives.

## **1.7 THEATR FFORWM CYMRU**

### **Sketch of Provider**

Theatr Fforwm Cymru (ThFfC) is a charity, which was started up almost ten years ago by two local women who had identified a need for a worthwhile occupation for young unemployed people, even if this work would be unpaid. No funds were available, so the group began with no money, but 18 young people, in a youth hall. Since then, the group has secured funds from a variety of different sources and operates from Goodwick in Pembrokeshire, but provides a service across Wales and sometimes within the UK.

This is a small organisation that wants to remain sustainable, and prefers to work in partnership and contract in help when necessary, rather than expanding, since part of its appeal and success rest on being a small and personal unit rather than a faceless organisation. At present ThFfC have 5 full time staff, 1 freelance, 4 part-time apprentices, 1 part-time counsellor and 2 European volunteers. Other volunteers also take part. ThFfC is self-consciously a learning organisation and recognises a need to look after individuals within the organisation. ThFfC has commissioned and received training from the Breakthrough Centre.

ThFfC is highly responsive to its staff and volunteers and its working practice provides a forum for the discussion of the ideas or problems of personnel. Each Monday morning communication with the outside world is suspended and staff and apprentices split into two different 'circles' to discuss any issues, these two groups then meet and feed the main points or outcomes into the main circle. There is also a volunteer who sits on the Board of Trustees. Committee meetings are open to all.

### **Partnerships**

A variety of partnerships exist, such as Age Concern, Chwarae Teg, Cymdeithas Tai Hafan, US Network (Mental Health group), as well as many community groups. ThFfC also have partners in Europe and have recently been asked to train youth workers in Macedonia, Bulgaria and Rumania.

ThFfC are keen to work in partnerships, rather than being commissioned to work by groups, establishing equal and genuine partnerships rather than being overpowered by money-holders.

## **Target Group**

Originally the focus was on young people, but Theatr Fforwm Cymru now work with any group, which identifies itself as oppressed or marginalised. This covers geographical as well as issue groups. At present there is no special provision for family learning, although opportunities in this area are recognised.

## **Learner Profile**

ThFfC work with a wide range of learners, from excluded children and young offenders to Assembly Members. Details of participants are kept to a minimum, for example, information about employment status is only gathered if necessary for funding. Data collected on the participants in the Rehearsal for Reality Project 2001-2002 included details on ethnicity, lone parents, disability, gender and age-group. More than two thirds were female, 18 out of 190 were disabled, 31 were lone parents. There was a great number of different ethnicities (33 categories are listed). Ages ranged from a small proportion (3%) under 16, to 60+ (2%). The vast majority were from the 25-60 age-group, with 19% from the 16-25 age-group.

## **Aims of Organisation**

To provide safe, educative, energising and empowering environments where everyone can learn together.

## **Type of Provision**

ThFfC uses theatre based on real stories and real issues to promote emotional literacy and active citizenship in individuals and communities. ThFfC train others in Forum Theatre techniques and works with community groups, professionals, legislators, schools, excluded children and many others. Forum Theatre is an educative technique the value of which is being recognised world-wide. Increasingly their work highlights policies and laws that aren't working and investigates changes that are needed to make them work. ThFfC's Rehearsal for Reality brings communities into contact with decision makers, and creates spaces for them to work creatively through theatre to develop solutions. There is also a great emphasis on motivation. It is recognised that to motivate you must engage the emotions. There is also recognition that it takes time to engage people and that peer groups engage best, by setting an example – mirroring

what you are hoping for in your way of being. It is important that there are no barriers erected by 'professional masks'. ThFfC aims to provide a set of tools, which are transferable to other situations. It does not claim to provide answers, but to and work with others towards answers.

The details of exactly what training/learning is provided by ThFfC is discussed with the groups they work with. Within the local Pembrokeshire community, ThFfC are very involved in the Welsh language project and are trying to engage community in the use/fate of the community centre.

ThFfC is a bilingual organisation and provides training in English and Welsh as required.

### **Forms of community learning**

The learning opportunities are legion, examples of learning in the community include the training of 'chapters' and other training sessions held within the community. The emphasis on taking responsibility and bringing about change is an example of learning for the community. The training volunteers is an example of learning through the community, while an example of learning with the community is the way ThFfC uses drama and performance in learning and education.

### **Measuring Success / Evaluating Provision**

Most learning is non-formal and none is formalised in terms of structure. Much learning is informal. Many successes and outcomes are 'soft', and this has the usual funding drawbacks. The paperwork involved with meeting funding evaluation criteria can be a real barrier to learning. Some questions required by ELWa's funding mechanisms on the Rehearsals for Reality project on employment status, or health issues are of a highly sensitive nature. There is a great deal of oral feedback and evaluation is an intrinsic part of ThFfC's learning provision, rather than an intrusive/extrinsic exercise. There is an awareness that there is insufficient documentation, however. ThFfC is keen to have some research done into the organisation and its techniques.

### **Outcomes and Achievements include**

- Increasing confidence
- Strengthening communities

- Improving communication skills
- Learning how to take control of one's own life and make changes
- Engaging with legislators to bring about changes
- Increased self-awareness
- Increased understanding of how to manage conflict

### **Progression**

Recent research on Theatr Fforwm Cymru included contacting former core members and asking how they felt their experiences of ThFfC had been of benefit to them in later life. Past members have gone on to do a wide variety of things, and some ThFfC volunteers and apprentices have gone on to practice Forum Theatre elsewhere, others have become facilitators. Two others have been employed in Swansea on a project working with asylum seekers. There are also plans to monitor how people are using training offered by ThFfC on employing Forum Theatre methods.

### **Accreditation**

ThFfC's Training Officer is developing ThFfC's accreditation. It intends to offer OCN entry level, 1, 2, and 3. There are also discussions with University of Wales, Swansea, about offering a Diploma in Community Arts. Although the learning is mostly hands-on and accreditation is optional it is nevertheless recognised that people do want accreditation. For example, people with learning difficulties can easily achieve an OCN entry level/level 1 certificate and this can be confidence building.

### **Venues**

Chosen by partners, but ThFfC endeavours to find people-friendly, nurturing environments that are warm, flexible, welcoming; preferably with food provided. Most importantly venues must not be regimented, but safe and above all private (e.g. nobody walking through).

### **Recruitment of learners**

Word of mouth

Annual Dialogue Days to explain what ThFfC does are held regionally and various organisations, community groups etc are invited.

## **Barriers to learning**

- Attitude
- Stigmatisation, prejudice
- Transport
- Educative methodology
- Too much focus on traditional learning environments
- Medication (people with mental health problems may be on medication which hinders learning)
- Motivation
- Affordability
- Paperwork associated evaluation procedures
- Resistance to learning (e.g.. Forced into training but hostile to it)

## **Funding**

Has had lottery and European funding in past; but pinning hopes on Learning Challenge Fund for the future.

A great deal of funding comes from fees charged for attending conferences, however this is time-consuming and prevents staff from working with learners.

## **Basic Skills**

Currently looking at possibilities of expanding this provision; provision already includes improving communication skills and IT for apprentices. Apprentices also keep a reflective journal, but they are allowed to present evidence on tape if they have literacy problems. Specific learning needs are identified, but resources do not permit tackling these needs.

## **Special Needs / Learning Difficulties**

ThFfC do a lot of work with special needs learners, and highlight issues such as the building of trust, suitable venues, the provision of food which makes people feel safe and comfortable and provides an a space for socialising, potentially overcoming the effects of medication. ThFfC are especially aware of the need to share practice in this area, and comment on the desirability of flexible funding so as to allow the purchase of extra training when required.

### **Communities First**

In Pembrokeshire, Communities First areas are being flooded with funds, but approach is not very coordinated.

## **1.8 WRITE ON! PROJECT, CENTRE FOR LIFELONG LEARNING, UNIVERSITY OF GLAMORGAN**

### **Sketch of Provider**

Higher Education: The Centre for Lifelong Learning, which employs over 30 people, is part of University of Glamorgan. A team of three runs the Write On! project, (one full- and two part-time) headed by Angela Fish.

### **Partnerships**

Linked with schools: the schools provide venues and facilities, and assists with the recruitment of the young people, while the Write On! project provides other funding, recruitment of older people and staff.

### **Target Group**

Young people aged 13-18 and older people aged 45+. Residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) who are already socially excluded or at risk of social exclusion and disaffection. While families of the school pupils were encouraged to attend, it was not the intention to establish a specifically family-learning project. However, project workers were disappointed by the almost zero uptake from information sent out via schools and recruitment initiatives at parents' evenings.

### **Learner Profile**

Two thirds are female, one third male. Information is collected on where they come from and educational background is, of course, the focus of the whole project.

### **Aims of project**

To offer opportunities for personal and professional development, with special emphasis on communication skills. To widen access and increase participation in lifelong learning by breaking down barriers to learning; addressing the issue of social exclusion especially intergenerational tension and fear – strengthening communities; facilitating the development of a range of skills and involving participants in the monitoring and future development of the programme.

### **Type of Provision**

The Write On project invites participants to investigate and record school experiences, both their own and those of other group members, including memories of teachers, subjects, premises, clothing etc. This subject was chosen partly as it is a subject area that both generations have experience of, but also because unhappy school experiences are often cited as a major barrier to learning. A range of media is used during practical sessions, and skills such as interviewing (communication and listening), making notes, using libraries, using audiotape and Dictaphones, video, digital and Polaroid cameras, drawing, word processing and PowerPoint, scanners and photocopiers, internet searching, web pages etc are taught. The project allows people to meet and work with others of a different generation, to work within a team, and other valuable life and employment skills. The training includes time management, development of personal action plans and goal setting. There is also an emphasis on the potential contribution to social regeneration that older participants could offer. Participants also had some influence on how the project was run within the basic structure laid out by the project leaders, and the first few sessions focused on finding out what the participants want from the project. Some training is given on how to go about challenging and changing school or society in general. This project operates through the medium of English, although it is anticipated that posters and written materials will be translated into Welsh in the future so that the project can run in Welsh-medium schools.

### **Forms of community learning**

There is an emphasis on 'learning by doing': that is informal learning. Non-formal learning is also a major part of the project, with the introduction of formal learning as an option. However, best results tend to be found through informal and non-formal learning, or surreptitious learning, as the project manager terms it.

### **Accreditation**

A certificate of attendance has always been issued for general community education non-accredited courses, but for the Write On! project, this was changed to a certificate of participation which also outlines the activities in which learners have participated. Feedback from 16 year olds, however, indicated that they wanted HE accreditation and optional accreditation is being introduced (HE foundation level – two half modules, 10 credits each).

## **Venues**

Secondary Schools within RCT

## **Progression**

A six month follow-up was carried out after the initial pilot (2001-2002). The younger group used projects to help them in areas such as UCAS personal statements and the community aspect of Duke of Edinburgh Awards. Schools also report increased confidence. Some participants had taken up voluntary work. Members of the older group had also joined the voluntary sector and some had taken up computer courses to develop their skills.

## **Measuring Success / Evaluating Provision**

Participants are involved in monitoring own development and this forms part of learning, by encouraging them to take responsibility and helping them find ways of changing things they are unhappy with. Evaluation forms were distributed to all 123 participants at the end of the pilot project, of which 44% responded. The evaluation included issues such as whether the project had met expectations, reasons for joining, assessment of venue, access and times, as well as questions on what individuals had enjoyed/disliked about the project and what they felt they had achieved.

## **Outcomes and Achievements**

- Soft outcomes are measured and monitored throughout the projects, but there was no formal assessment during the pilot phase
- Increasing confidence
- Strengthening communities
- There are no obvious economic outcomes since most participants are not of employment age, or have no immediate employment plans.
- Raising profile of importance of social history, the importance of an individual's memories

## **Recruitment of learners**

Schools assist with the recruitment of the younger group, while the project team recruits the older generation and those between 16-19 who have left school (this last group were

very difficult to reach and to motivate). Recruitment is largely through mail-shots, leaflets and posters, but also telephone contacts, community centres etc. Individual community and voluntary groups were contacted so as to gain invitations to explain the project to members. This approach, together with word-of-mouth recommendations, proved to be the most effective recruitment tool, but is time-consuming.

### **Barriers to learning**

- Transport is often an issue for older participants. Moreover, the venues (schools) are often not situated close to public transport. An application for funding for transport was sought but was unsuccessful.
- Age – it is very difficult to secure funding for adults over 60; need to move beyond community centres, schools etc. For example, there are nearly 20 sheltered homes in RCT, the same number as secondary schools. In an increasingly ageing society, need to make lifelong learning mean lifelong.
- Motivation

### **Funding**

Partially funded by ESF Objective 1 during pilot phase (2001-2002)

Fully supported by University of Glamorgan (2002-2003), together with partnership schools

### **Basic Skills**

Those with poor literacy, for example, can participate through alternative media such as audio-visual recordings. Other basic skills needs are referred on.

### **Special Needs**

There is no special provision.

## **1.9 YOUNG FARMERS CLUBS (YFC) WALES**

### **Sketch of Provider**

The YFC is a voluntary youth organization (charity) with about 30 employees and a large number of volunteers (approximately 1200). These volunteers tend to be past members and there is a strong tradition of giving back 'in kind' to the organization, but other older members of community are also involved.

### **Partnerships**

Partnerships exist with various organisations, often according to individual projects and activities. For example, there are partnerships with other voluntary youth organisations: the WDA, Menter Business, the Countryside Council for Wales; there are also links with some colleges. The YFC in Wales is also part of an international network of YFCs which facilitates the exchange of information, good practice etc. (e.g. tapping into agricultural and political expertise in Ireland, see below) and allows members themselves the valuable experience of participating in exchanges organized with YFC in Europe, Australia, Canada etc.

The Welsh language predominates in some regions, e.g. Ceredigion and Meirionnydd; both languages used in areas such as Clwyd and Pembrokeshire, some areas predominantly English. A bilingual policy exists within the YFC and both languages used centrally.

### **Target Group**

Young people aged 10-26; very often in rural areas. Traditionally the YFC have targeted those with an agricultural background, but it is open to all.

### **Learner Profile**

The genders are approximately equally represented among the members of the YFC. Members are 10-26 year olds, but also older volunteers are also involved and continue to learn in their leading and facilitating roles. Members come from a wide variety of learning backgrounds – many do continue to further and higher education and YFC is exploring adapting membership, e.g. keeping student members informed/in contact via emails. Families encouraged to support children (members), e.g. Families are

encouraged to attend and support the Entertainment Nights put on by the YFC. The skills of parents are also drawn upon by sometimes asking them to contribute to training run by YFC and this has confidence boosting effects such participants.

It is perceived that not many members are unemployed, however members are sensitive over this issue. Members stay in contact over long periods, often extending their association with YFC beyond 26 year old cut off point by taking on different, voluntary roles within clubs. Interest has also been expressed in a post 26 old-members social clubs.

### **Aims of organisation**

- To support, in as many areas as possible, young people (10-26 year olds) from childhood to young adulthood.
- Generally to improve confidence and skills of young people,
- to generate and enhance a sense of community, networks etc.
- To identify and provide training in relevant fields.
- To provide a space for socializing.
- To promote informal learning.
- To encourage members to participate in wider community.
- All these areas contribute to community development, economic regeneration, lifelong learning, social commitment and political engagement.

### **Type of Provision**

A wide range of activities are provided by the YFC for its members - opportunities include travel scholarships and enterprise support. There are creative opportunities and families are encouraged to get involved.

The motivation of individuals also a key aspect – the importance of combating isolation is recognized by YFC – and the structure of the clubs which empowers members through membership of club committees and other means of direct influence within clubs and the wider YFC organisation ensures the continued involvement and motivation of members. For older age groups there are also opportunities to form groups on pressing issues such as rural housing. Many live at home, partly due to increased housing costs, and as well as offering a forum for the political aspect of this issue, and consulting with

the wider community and with councils and the Assembly, the YFC tries to provide support in what can often be tense and difficult situations for members and their families.

The YFC also encourages and supports entrepreneurial activity and links with entrepreneurs in the wider community. It is currently considering how to set up a mentoring scheme, particularly with respect to advice on self-employment and enterprise, but nothing is in place as yet.

The YFC offers members the opportunity to gain Certificates of Achievement that are accredited by the WJEC through their participation in YFC events. The aim of the Scheme is to recognise members achievements and complement their formal learning.

Provision is designed and planned at club level by committees that are made up of members elected by other members for a twelve month period. Power, therefore, rests with individual members who gain valuable informal learning experiences whilst serving as committee members. This also means that members are directly involved with establishing their own agenda of social and training events. An intimate knowledge of the local community from which members and volunteers originate allows training to be targeted and structured according to need. General training, e.g.. IT skills (website design etc) is available across the YFC. International exchanges have provided valuable experience, as noted above. The central offices, YFC-Wales, provide support and advice to the clubs, but cannot dictate to them. Generally the clubs follow the YFC-Wales lead, but not always.

The YFC's international connections provide the opportunity for a variety of learning activities, such as visits to Ireland to see how successful, engaged and informed the Irish YFCs and agricultural community in general are, with a resultant boost in motivation for Welsh members, directly encouraging learning and also increased politicisation, i.e. engagement with the local community and wider society, with the recognition of the relevance of politics to the life of the individual and community.

### **Forms of community learning**

The YFC can demonstrate examples of all types of community learning. Learning in the community is fundamental to the structure of the YFC which has 172 Clubs that meet

weekly or every fortnight in village halls, schools or in another building within the community. Activities along with training are held at these locations within the local community. There are examples of County Federations working with the Prince's Trust and DofE to enhance the provision and support for young people. Learning for the community is also firmly embedded in the YFC's aims and it provides a wide range of training including vocational training that develops members and encourages them to take an active role in their community. Members from an early age are encouraged to take responsibility and to take an active role in their locality. Learning through the community occurs in instances such as a Scheme offered by the YFC that encourages members to work on projects in the community with the support of the community. The scheme is supported by the CCW (a booklet listing examples of such projects is available from the YFC Office). Learning for the community is a clear outcome of some of the above examples and the YFC in Wales puts great emphasis on encouraging members to participate within their community. The diverse range of activities and events that the organisation offers members ensures that young people are able to participate in a variety of activities to develop skills and build their confidence.

### **Accreditation**

Some formal accreditation offered, see above.

### **Venues**

A variety of venues, some of which are not ideal. All are within communities, and members travel, on average no more than 15 minutes to get to clubs.

### **Progression**

The foundations of social responsibility, engagement with the community and an interest in volunteering is laid by involvement with the YFC. Members often go on to work with other voluntary organisations, community councils, youth clubs, charities etc. They may become school governors or set up their own social clubs. Having enjoyed and worked well within the structure of the YFC they often wish to continue to be a part of a similar organisation which offers similar rewards and opportunities.

## **Recruitment**

Recruitment is largely determined by local efforts, there are some open days but largely recruitment is achieved by word of mouth and friendships. However, clubs may make lists of target individuals since the clubs are very much a part of and in touch with local community, and invite individuals to participate.

## **Outcomes and Achievements**

See above.

## **Barriers to learning**

- Lack of motivation
- Isolation

## **Funding**

Some from Local Authorities, Local Trusts, local level funding bids, much of own fundraising. Also, YFCs encouraged to fund raise for other charities.

On a national level, Wales Youth Agency and National Assembly contribute.

Funding is also arranged for specific projects, e.g.. Prince's Trust, HSBC, Lloyds TSB, other business sponsorship, National Lottery funded project to set up intranet.

Problems arise from discrepancies between what provision members request and meeting funding criteria.

## **Communities First**

The YFC tend to avoid anything that creates barriers and inequality within communities and across Wales – there are similar concerns over Objective One funding – and try to find money through another source so as to be inclusive.

### **1.10 YSGOL DYFFRYN CONWY**

This secondary school provides a venue for a variety of evening classes run by independent providers. It hires out its ICT suites during the day and immediately after school; during the daytime classes the school's own technician is on call to problem-solve during these classes. These ICT suites were refurbished and upgraded by means of a European Grant from the Rural Regeneration scheme. To qualify for this scheme it was necessary to make these facilities available to a wider public. Ysgol Dyffryn Conwy has partnerships with local FE colleges, WEA, CWYSI, Hafod and the Agricultural Advice Board. These learning providers recruit learners.

This partnership offers an example of maximising ICT facilities for the benefit of the wider rural community.

## **APPENDIX 2: WORKSHOPS**

As part of the second stage of this research project, three workshops were held across Wales. Those organisations which had already expressed an interest in this research were invited to participate and additional letters of invitation were also sent to the heads of FE colleges in Wales, CCETs, LEAs and to ELWa. The response to these invitations was very positive and the uptake was high (details of organisations represented at these workshops are available in Appendix 5). Delegates were provided with a summary of the Interim Report before the event, and presentations were given by some of the organisations featured in some of the case studies in the report (namely by Theatr Fforwm Cymru and NPT New Learning Network in the Swansea workshop, The Ladder Project in the Bedwas workshop and Rhyl Community College (focusing on the Women's Enterprise scheme) in St. Asaph. The primary aim of the workshops was to obtain feedback on the work outlined in the interim report, and the overwhelming response was one of approbation and support. Lively discussions also led to the identification of some important additions to and elaboration of the initial findings and these points are outlined below. The issues arising have been listed under a series of subject headings for clarity, however it is clear that many of these areas are interrelated and often interdependent and one of the findings arising from the workshops was the need to consider points of good practice holistically rather than in isolation.

### **THEMES AND ISSUES ARISING FROM WORKSHOPS**

#### **Feedback on points of Good Practice as listed in Interim Report**

These were comprehensively agreed with, however it was felt that some points of good practice needed further elaboration, for example the itemisation various familial pressures faced by learners such as childcare, the care of the elderly or disabled. It was also felt that the cost of each point of good practice should be considered and highlighted.

#### **Sustainability**

The sustainability of provision was regarded as a key issue in the successful engagement of communities in learning. This is highlighted elsewhere in detail, however some points raised and reiterated during the workshops are listed below.

- Engaging communities and individuals in learning and regeneration is not a 'start and finish' process, but rather an ongoing and progressive one. Therefore sustainable models are essential..
- Funding and related assessment of provision needs to reflect a commitment to sustainability.

### **Intermediaries**

Intermediaries were considered to play a vital role in engaging individuals and communities in learning.

- There are many different categories of intermediary - voluntary, informal and professional.
- Mentors are needed to support individuals once they have started more formal learning
- The acute skills shortage in this area urgently needs to be addressed.
- There is a need to consider ways of incentivising intermediaries.
- It is essential that intermediaries (for example Community First Coordinators) are trusted by the community they serve.

### **Careers Guidance**

Careers Advisors were identified as a specialised kind of intermediary.

- There is a perceived need for *independent* careers guidance to facilitate appropriate provision.
- Impartiality is essential.
- It is important for careers advisors to keep up to date with what is available.
- There is a dearth of qualified careers advisors, with the result that those in post are overworked and demoralised.
- There is, therefore, a pressing need for the Welsh Assembly Government to provide funding to recruit and train careers advisers and Community based Careers Advisors.

## **Identification of Needs and Motivation of Learners**

- It may be helpful to target specific groups e.g. disadvantaged young people, disabled, etc. as it is easier to motivate a coherent group, however one must ensure that such groups are not isolated as a consequence.
- Learners have different reasons for learning, and these include soft skills or future goals. Often they do not know what their learning needs or future needs are and these need to be teased out by a skilled advisor.
- Should not seek to work through surveys etc to identify needs as individuals and groups may not consciously be aware of learning needs. It is better to work with a community to establish an awareness of needs and design a plan to meet them.
- Appropriate accreditation can motivate – inappropriate accreditation will definitely de-motivate.
- The best tutors are needed to motivate and engage the hardest to reach.
- Small groups are often the best for engaging with and motivating the disaffected or simply under-confident.
- There is a need to identify ‘hooks’ within communities on which to catch individuals interest. The Frerian model put forward directly in the Training for Transformation but also referred to in the Ladder Project (and is the basis of many other models such as that for classic Community Development as used to promote development trusts) may be particularly successful in this area.
- Basic skills provision frequently provides a route to progression into accredited learning but is generally badly funded.
- Questions were raised about the need to identify good practice in the area of motivating and/or justifying the value and purpose of learning to those who may have been coerced into learning situations against their will, e.g. by the Benefits Agency/Job Centre.

## **Accreditation**

- Funding bodies tend to insist on accreditation since this is perceived to be a reliable method of measuring successful outcomes. However this creates barriers to those who are disaffected by formal learning.
- Provision of non-accredited learning is harder to measure and carries a risk, but funders should be prepared to accept managed risks.

- Quality assurance should not be seen as a reason for insisting on accreditation since quality is assured by the fact that all providers funded by ELWa are required to meet Estyn standards.

With reference to accreditation there is a need to identify different types of learning requirements, especially where there are funding issues. These would include:

- Individuals who need specific work-related accreditation,
- Individuals who simply want to achieve accreditation to mark their learning achievements,
- Individuals who want informal, non-accredited learning.

### **Quality Assurance / Evaluation of Provision**

- It was recognised that inadequate or inappropriate provision can have a long-lasting and far-reaching negative effect. Therefore quality is essential in community learning.
- The measurement of outcomes and target achievement needs to include a recognition collective achievements and not simply individual qualifications gained. Thus an outcome from community learning may be that a small group of mothers have registered and are successfully running a playgroup.
- Models of assessment of the quality of provision, which are not solely dependent on formal accreditation are needed.
  - Monitoring the 'distance traveled' by learners was suggested as one model of evaluating quality of provision / benefits to learners. For example, Voluntary Arts Wales does not offer accredited training but tracks learners after three and six months to identify the benefits of the training they have received. This form of evaluation can be a significant burden on resources.

### **Marketing / Engaging New Learners**

The best methods of reaching learners were mooted but it was generally felt that a scattergun approach works best; with word-of-mouth being the most common method of spreading the message. Frequently poster or leaflet campaigns do not reach a potential learner directly, but learners hear of provision through a friend or relative who has seen the marketing. It was generally agreed that glossy brochures DO NOT WORK in terms of

engaging learners, especially the disaffected or disadvantaged, although they do provide useful information for those who have made a decision to engage in learning. There needs to be links with independent guidance provision and ways of building the capacity of key community figures to assist in promoting interest through word of mouth.

### **Funding**

- Funders need to take risks and accept that some schemes will be unsuccessful, but that useful lessons can be learned from failures.
- It can be highly beneficial in the medium to long term to continue a course with a small number of people, both in the value of the learning outcomes for the individuals initially involved and in terms of encouraging new learners into established provision.

### **Partnership**

- Partnerships were considered to be very important, although issues of equality and exclusion must be recognised.
- Objective One has been positive in forging partnerships.

### **Role of Schools**

Schools are an important resource and it is essential that their role in working with the community is not lost. However, schools must embrace the values of community learning and there is anecdotal evidence that some schools only become involved in community action as a means of avoiding closure. There are examples of good practice available, but many schools do not know how to become community schools and need guidance. Funding should be structured to encourage schools to become community schools.

### **Continuum of Learning**

It was pointed out that there is a tendency for community learning to stop at Foundation Level / Level One, with an assumption that those who wish to progress beyond this ('serious' learners) should move on to formal provision such as provided that provided in colleges. It was generally agreed, however, that many community learners feel uncomfortable with moving out of familiar territory and may be disincentivised if they were required to attend courses on college campuses and whilst an important aspect of learning is that it should bestow confidence upon the learner, there are other reasons

why having to leave the community to learn may not be easy. There was a general view that learning at all levels should be available where the learner needs it.

### **Professional Skills**

It was generally agreed that community learning needs to be recognized as requiring specific additional skills which should not be assumed to be present in any teacher, lecturer, volunteer, etc. These are high level skills whether for community learning or community development of any kind. The need for these skills in the professionals involved are often ignored and can result in loss of confidence on the part of learners and/or the community in general.

- There is an acute shortage of workers with the appropriate skills for undertaking community work.

### **The Role of IT and ICT**

- There is a difference between IT and ICT which is not always recognised.
- IT is an effective 'hook' since most people recognize and are not shy of admitting the need to learn IT skills.
- e-learning may not be appropriate to use in isolation as disengaged individuals will not have the equipment or be motivated to do e-learning in their own homes. **But** e-learning can be very effective in overcoming the viability problems of offering learning to small groups or individuals as it can be offered in a supportive community setting enabling engagement with others who may be studying other topics but using the same methodology and generic learning support structures.
- Currently e-learning is frequently only used to teach IT.
- Good technical support in the community is vital to ensure success of e-learning.
- It was felt by some that IT training is often promoted where it is inappropriate. Local employers in a survey had listed a number of soft skills they required, stating that their workforce did not need IT skills in their business, yet this was what was offered.

### **Bilingual Issue**

Anecdotal evidence was given regarding the importance of Welsh in engaging with disaffected Welsh speakers. Even if the course is run through the medium of English,

the ability to communicate on a personal level in the language of their choice with a tutor, puts learners at ease and helps with motivation and retention.

### **Links with Community Development and Regeneration**

- Those attempting to promote interventions in deprived areas should recognize the black economy and use it to identify needs and motivate learning.
- There is a clear link between issues of motivation and regeneration. Most people want a better life whether that means more cultural facilities/opportunities, better transport, putting a stop to open cast mining or promoting the development of local industry. People will learn without recognising learning when involved in campaigning or developmental activities to regenerate their community.
- Community Learning is part of the continuum of community development/regeneration and should not be actively dissociated from it.

### **Communities First**

- Whilst all groups recognised the potential benefits of Communities First, the geographical communities created by Communities First was seen as an obstacle to learning provision since funding for learners was dependent on their residence within an invisible boundary which does not necessarily reflect community boundaries or the spheres in which individuals and communities operate.
- Although Communities First is a ten-year programme, the insistence on annual targets has a limiting effect on development planning. Whilst it is acknowledged that people lose motivation unless they see early demonstrable benefits, these need to be underpinned by a long-term vision.
- Community involvement in partnerships is important but problematic. It is often difficult to recruit a small number of people onto a partnership who are truly representative of their community, rather than those who are most vocal.
- There is a problem with recruiting local, skilled Community First Coordinators and workers in general. There is also a lack of organizations able to lead Communities First developments within the identified areas.

### **Further work**

Points such as the need to enrich the skills base in community work have been made in the relevant sections above. Additional areas where further work was identified during the workshops are:

- The development of more case studies in learning communities.
- Costing the various models of good practice is necessary so as to give funders a better sense of the resources necessary to deliver.

### **Prioritising Good Practice**

In accordance with the Project specification the participants of each workshop were requested to prioritise three or four points of good practice. With the exception of one sub-group (who felt that 'Partnerships', 'Marketing' (including intermediaries, identification of needs and communication), 'Training and Support' and 'Quality Assurance', along with the principal of provision being embedded in the community, were broad key areas) it was generally agreed that such a prioritisation of individual points of good practice was inappropriate and would not assist the development of community learning activity.

An alternative to the prioritisation of points of good practice i.e. the identification of successful *models* of community learning which can be piloted across Wales by ELWa is discussed in Section 8.

## **APPENDIX 3: LIST OF ORGANISATIONS REPRESENTED AT WORKSHOPS**

### **Swansea, 22 November 2002**

Aberdare College
Camarthenshire County Council
CATS
Coleg Glan Hafren
Coleg Sir Gar
Community University of the Valleys Partnership
Dynamix Limited
Estyn
Gorseinon College
Llanharan Community Development Project
National Assembly For Wales
Neath and Port Talbot New Learning Network
Neath Port Talbot College
Newid Community Development Project
Ogmore Centre Trust
Pembrokeshire College
Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC
SCVS
Swansea Council for Voluntary Action
Theatr Fforwm Cymru
TRAC
University of Wales Swansea-Department Adult Continuing Education (DACE)

### **Bedwas, 28 November 2002**

Big Issue Cymru
Blaenllechau Community Regeneration
Caerphilly Council Community Education
Capital learning
Cardiff Community Housing Association
Cardiff Council Schools Service
Coleg Gwent
ELWa
GAVO
Gilfach Goch Community Organisation
Merthyr Tydfil CCETS
Monmouthshire Youth Service
Oasis Youth Project
Penarth Youth Project
People and Work Unit
Pontypridd College
Telecentre and Business School

Torfaen CCET
University of Glamorgan
University of Wales College Newport College
YM College Communities First Training Officer

**St Asaph, 29 November 2002**

AVOW
Coleg Meirion Dwyfor
Coleg Menai
Coleg Powys
Community Matters
Conwy County Borough Council
Deeside College
Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council
ELWa
Flintshire Local Voluntary Council
Gwasanaeth Llyfyrgell Caernarfon
Isle of Anglesey County Council
Llandrillo College
Mantell Gwynedd
Medrwn Mon
Ncompass Training
NIACE Dysgu Cymru
Peulwys Community House
Rhyl College
SCOVO
Sylfaen Cymunedol
Voluntary Arts Wales
West Wreccsam Urban 2 Programmes
Yale College

**APPENDIX 4: LIST OF MATERIALS IDENTIFIED / SUPPLIED BY PARTICIPANTS**

<b>Document</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Author/Publisher</b>
A Community Economic Enterprise Strategy for South East Wales	2001	ELWa
Adult and Community Learning Alliances - A new role for Local Authorities	2000	Adults Learning
Adult and Community Learning: what? Why? Who? Where? A literature review on adult and community learning	2001	DfES
Adult Continuing Learning	2001	www.cesi.org.uk
Amman Valley Enterprise: Adult Education and Community Revival in the Welsh Valleys		NIACE publication
Attracting New Learners	2001	LSDA
Banking on their flexible friends	1999	SLL - Scottish Lifelong Learning
Bottom up approach to learning	1999	SLL - Scottish Lifelong Learning
Building the Capacity of the Voluntary Sector in North Wales to provide learning		WCVA
Community Education Training Review	2001	Community Education Training Review Committee
Community Learning in Bristol - In practice		Journal of Lifelong Learning Initiatives
Competitiveness and social Inclusion: investing in third Sector skills development - a report on the third sector Skills project		LBG
Corporate Community programmes - why do they work	2002	Charity Week
Discipline of Garden Centre Revolution	1999	SLL - Scottish Lifelong Learning
Education's Millennium Dome	2002	EDUCA

Evaluation of 3 -and 6-hour Courses	2002	LSDA
Evaluation of the Adult and Community Learning Fund	2001	DfES
Five years On - has the Kennedy report worked	2002	Adults Learning News
Further Education, training and Adult Continuing Education 2001/2002	2002	ELWa
Get on the right track	2000	Volunteering Number 59
Gloucestershire Neighbourhood Projects Network	2002	LEDIS
Glyneath Limited - Annual report	2002	VIEW
How to teach regeneration	2002	Local Gov News
I'm a volunteer...get me out of here	2002	Charity Wales
Incorporating the learning game		VSF
Individual Learning Accounts: Government response to the committee's Third Report	2001	House of Commons
Leading the way to change	2002	Charity Week
Learning Communities Strengthening lifelong learning through practice	2000	
Learning for Active Citizenship: a study of the experiences of members of two branches of the WEA based in socially disadvantaged areas of South Wales	2002	University of Wales College Newport
Literature Review on Community Learning	2002	Planning Exchange
Management Matters - Research Project on Management development Needs in the Voluntary Sector in Wales		NTO
Mutual advantage: Working with Voluntary and Community organisations on learning and Skills		DFEE

Next Step for the Valleys	1990	VIAE
Profile of a phenomenon	2002	EDUCA
Progress with Community Learning Plans	2002	Scottish Further Education Unit
Putting People in the Picture: identifying and meeting learning needs in Voluntary Organisations	2001	SCVO
Recognising and Validating Outcomes of Non Accredited Learning	2002	LSDA
Regional Analysis of Participation in FE and training in Wales 1998/99, /99/2000	1998	ELWa
Review of Literature on Good and Current Practice	2002	Planning Exchange
Skills for Life - The National strategy for Improving Adult Literacy and Numeracy Skills	2002	DFEE
Social relationship and friendship among young people with Down's syndrome in secondary schools	2002	BJSE - British journal of Special Education
Supportive Skills Community Access Provision South East Wales	2001	ELWa
Swansea Valley and Surrounding Areas Skills Audit 1998	1998	RCU - Responsive College Unit
The Impact of Individual Learning Accounts	2002	LSDA
The Level of Soft Skills support which training providers offer in South East Wales	2002	Education Learning Wales
The Universities in the Valleys	1992	Reynolds
The Use of workforce development resources to build capacity of the Community and Voluntary Sector in North Wales		Structured Outlooks
Towards Sustainability a briefing note for Colleges	1999	FEDA
Training in the Voluntary Sector and how this contributes to combating Social Exclusion	2001	PAVO

Training in the voluntary Sector and how this contributes to Combating Social Exclusion	2001	People and work Unit
Training Needs Analysis North Wales	2002	ELWa
Training Needs in the Voluntary Sector in South East Wales	2001	People and Work Unit
Understanding and Developing the Social Economy within North Wales	2002	Respect Wales
Workforce Development Plan	2001	NTO
Working for a better World		National Training Organisation

## APPENDIX 5: SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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