

Summary of the Work of the 'Active Communities' project advisory group from June 2005 to August 2006:

Membership of the advisory group:

- Maxine Beahan (Craigmillar Childcare Services)
- Norma Chalmers
- Evelyn Freeman (Craigmillar Social Inclusion Partnership support team) – until March 2006
- Ibrahim Abdul Malik/ Andy Dick (Democracy, Disability and Society Group)
- Paul Graham (Craigmillar Capacity Building Project)
- Brooke McGee
- Mark Robertson (Adult Learning Link)
- Val O'Rourke
- Owen Thomas
- Derek Welsh (City of Edinburgh Council).

Project Research and Development worker: James Henderson (Craigmillar Capacity Building Project);

Focus of the group: The group met every 2 months to discuss and advise on the progress of the Craigmillar Learning for Community Participation and Action programme – 8 meetings in total.

Acknowledgements: the Craigmillar Capacity Building Project gives many thanks to all of the Advisory Group members for their hard work, time and efforts – without which it would not have been possible to develop the learning programme.

Establishing a direction:

‘A checklist for learning’: practical things the advisory group wanted to see included within the learning programme – from first 2 meetings.

- Learning through discussion
- Participatory
- Support from tutor is essential
- Materials should be accessible
- Tutors should be accessible/supportive
- Be aware that the students learn in different ways/ have different styles of learning
- Be mindful of language
- Inclusive
- Exercises – visits – encouragement – make it exciting, fun, relevant
- Start at where people are at
- Learn from each other/ each other’s experiences
- Formal methods/non formal methods of teaching – both appropriate
- Evaluation – ongoing
- Accreditation – important for some students
- Opportunity to fail and try again in a safe learning environment
- Course should enable students to develop practical tools for participation and enjoyment
- Acknowledge different levels of skill and knowledge of students

Broader themes the group wanted to lead the develop of the learning programme – established at first 2 meetings:

1. Flexible learning
2. Commitment to people to and their lifelong learning:
3. Giving people a clear focus
4. Ongoing lifelong learning and participation
5. The challenge of engaging with the community
6. A learning partnership
7. Sustaining a learning programme beyond the first year
8. Supporting the community in its regeneration
9. Working with Diversity and Inclusion

August 2006: Advisory Group's (initial) thinking at the end of the development process.

1. Areas from 'the themes' and 'checklist for learning' that still need to be worked on (bullet points are areas that need working on):

1. Flexible learning:

- *openness to everyone's opinion within a training course – may need more work?*

2. Commitment to people to and their lifelong learning:

- *(need to) support people in trying, and trying again*

3. Giving people a clear focus:

4. Ongoing lifelong learning and participation:

- *accreditation*
- *links with a college*
- *certificates for 'taking part'*
- *exit guidance – future learning*
- *exit guidance – practical involvement and participation*

5. The challenge of engaging with the community

- *good start, hard work ... and more work needed*

6. A learning partnership

7. Sustaining a learning programme beyond the first year

8. Supporting the community in its regeneration

9. Working with Diversity and Inclusion:

- *importance of building people's confidence (inclusion) – trainers would need support to take this further*
- *'buddy system' - to support inclusion of people on the course*

2. Potential future work for an advisory group and a learning programme:

- completing the review of what's been learnt over the last 12 months;
- supporting ongoing work - 'hate it to be lost';

- bring new people into the advisory group;
- visit Community Scotland/ Learning Connections - Derek Welsh is following-up a contact;
- further piloting work of the 4 courses in Craigmillar and Edinburgh – if CBP can establish more funding;
- further developing links with the Scottish Qualifications Authority
- further developing links with a local college
- ‘training for co-trainers’ people who’ve been on the courses and now want to learn to be a trainer
- adding further learning to the ‘shared learning’ part of the web, and make further revision to the training guides.