

# Craigmillar Learning for Community Participation and Action report: Chapter 2 - Understanding community and participation in Craigmillar

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*Ó Craigmillar Capacity Building Project*

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## Research team:

James Henderson – lead researcher

Paul Graham – research adviser

A 'research group' of local people - to locate key issues and concerns

**Please note:** the views of individual people, groups and organisations used within this report, and those of the lead researcher in expressing his interpretations and views in this report, cannot be assumed to be those of the Craigmillar Capacity Building Project.

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A full list of those who wished to be acknowledged is found in the separate Chapter 12: 'Background information (appendices)'.

**Thanks also to the following for allowing the use of text from one of their publications:**

Craigmillar Communiversy (see chapters 7 and 9)  
The Estate of Bill Douglas (see chapter 7)

## **Chapter 2: Understanding community and participation in Craigmillar**

This chapter looks at what people said about being active in their community and in particular:

- the range of community and participation in the community (pages 4-9)
- the diversity of people and experience across this community (pages 10-20)
- communication within communities (pages 22-26)
- community organisations and services within the community (pages 27-30)
- a final comment on learning for people active in the community (page 31-32).

There are also comments from the researcher on what this could mean for the development of a learning programme for community participation in the area.

**Note:** Before reading this chapter it would be useful to look at Chapter 1a. This will give you some background information on lifelong learning, community learning and development, and participatory research.

## **Community: Craigmillar and its neighbourhoods.**

One thing that becomes clear when talking with people is that ‘the Community’ of Craigmillar or of ‘Greater Craigmillar’ is not one continuous whole but a mix of neighbourhoods. A group of active people from a several different local organisations and groups, ‘*the research group*’<sup>1</sup>, made the following point about local identity:

*We don't say we're from Greater Craigmillar ... people come from Niddrie, Bingham, Craigmillar or Magdalene. You can move but still come from, say, Niddrie. There's a pride for both older and younger people in their area.*

There was some concern within this group that these different neighbourhoods would be treated as ‘all the same’ during the planned regeneration of Craigmillar<sup>2</sup> because they had all been put under the same banner of ‘Greater Craigmillar’.

Another person made the same point about the long-standing distinctiveness of each neighbourhood:

*When I was born in Craigmillar it was a thriving area. Each part was a different village and people kept the key on a piece of string behind the door.*

There is however also a long-standing tradition of talking about Craigmillar as a wider area of connected housing estates and villages. The Craigmillar Festival Society<sup>3</sup> for instance worked across the public housing in the area including Craigmillar, Newcraighall, Niddrie, Peffermill, Niddrie Mill, Bingham, Magdalene and Greendykes<sup>4</sup> - each neighbourhood was represented within its democratic structures.

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<sup>1</sup> ‘The research group’ was a mix of local active people from different parts of the community. It involved 7 different local active people; 4 people who were volunteers or activists; 3 people who were both staff with local organisations, lived locally and were active in the community and 2 people who were staff in local organisations but did not live locally also attended 1 meeting. There were 3 meetings in all – some people attended once, some twice.

<sup>2</sup> Regeneration covers a range of changes envisaged for Craigmillar over the next decade and beyond – including changes to housing, community facilities, work and business, health ... as well as potentially the population of the area. Different organisations, services and agencies often use the word in a similar way but not necessarily the same way. Certainly visions of what regeneration for the area should be like can be very different.

<sup>3</sup> The Craigmillar Festival Society (CFS) was a community-wide organisation that developed out of local arts and community action during 1960s. It was managed, staffed and ‘volunteered’ by local people for over 3 decades until its recent closure, and was responsible for a range of community projects including community arts, community and neighbourhood care, community enterprise and business, and community development and campaigning. Many of the existing community organisations were developed by the CFS.

<sup>4</sup> See page 53 of Helen Crummy’s book ‘Let the people sing! A story of Craigmillar’ published in 1991 and available through the Craigmillar Communiversity at [www.communiversity.org.uk](http://www.communiversity.org.uk)

Likewise the Craigmillar Credit Union's common bond continues to be broad and include: Craigmillar Castle, Niddrie Mains, Niddrie Marishcal, Niddrie House, Greendykes, Niddrie Mill, Cleekim, Newcraighall, Gilberstoun, Jewel and Magdalene<sup>5</sup>.

**Comment on learning:** At least some local people active in the community and maybe many, have an understanding of community that begins with their own neighbourhood or local community. The long-standing connections and sense of common interest between different neighbourhoods mean that the area of Craigmillar or Greater Craigmillar also creates a powerful sense of community.

A learning programme can acknowledge this starting part in neighbourhood and can support people in thinking about how their neighbourhood works. Likewise, a learning programme can also support people in understanding the wider community of Craigmillar.

It can also encourage people to think about other connections with other local neighbourhoods and communities not always identified with Craigmillar. For instance the broader swathe of public housing estates in East and South-East Edinburgh.

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<sup>5</sup> For more information on Craigmillar Credit Union on the Internet go to:  
<http://www.craigmillarcreditunion.co.uk/>

**Community: active people in different roles.**

The 'research group' highlighted the differences of identity and role that people active in the community can have, and that there can be tensions between roles. Some said:

*People see themselves as volunteers, they are not interested in community activism.*

There were volunteers in the group doing 'hands on' work with local people who felt frustration at 'activists' who they saw taking a political role and making decisions that affected their work and community<sup>6</sup>. There was real anger from some of the group at 'activists'.

Another person at the meeting, however, saw value in volunteers learning more about community activism and the skills of activism:

*It's good to be political. It's important to have a view, find funding, raise awareness and be careful.*

The group also spoke of other people who didn't see themselves as either volunteers or activists, and who were not getting credit for their work:

*People who don't think they are volunteers but are 'just helping out' and selling themselves short*

They meant by this the many people who support the work of local groups and networks by giving their time and commitment without working for community organisations where their work would be called 'volunteering'.

In another meeting with a group of people with learning difficulties and their support worker, those present described the range of work they were involved in the community, which includes voluntary work in a café, at a charity shop, and in a garden.

One person pointed out that there could be confusion in the community as to whether people were getting paid to be volunteers:

*A lot of people about here would think we're getting paid and ask what we're getting out of it.*

The confusion seems to have arisen because others are getting paid for doing a similar role as 'sessional workers'. This highlights that the difference between volunteers and local sessional or part-time workers may not be immediately obvious to other people in the community.

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<sup>6</sup> This discussion took place at a time of particular controversy about funding decisions, when the SIP funding panel and SIP Board – both of which include the 4 community reps – were taking the decision about the best approach to handling the cut in Social Inclusion Partnership funding for 2005/6.

Final version of the Craigmillar Learning for Community Participation and Action report, Chapter 2, Jan 2006

Other people both work in the community and are active on a voluntary unpaid basis. It may not always be clear to others when they are doing one or the other.

One person who does both paid and unpaid work in the community in the same type of capacity, and so has insight into doing both, commented that:

*People never get thanked for their unpaid work. It would be good to have this, a small recognition that they feel appreciated.*

This suggests that it can be harder to get credit for voluntary work over paid work. The same person also felt that working on an unpaid basis, as a volunteer, increased your credibility within the community:

*But if you're volunteering you're the same as everyone else. People still see you as the Boss but know you're doing it as part of the community – money gets in the way.*

This was echoed by another person who works on a voluntary basis and who spoke of the respect from people in the community for the work they do:

*I'm doing it voluntarily for the community and people respect that.*

Another person working in the private sector and undertaking voluntary activities commented:

*I do it because I think it's the right thing to do – it's important to have local commitments.*

**Comment on learning:** People who are active in the community understand that there are different types of activeness within a community, and that it is valuable to explore these different roles and to understand how they fit together.

It will be important for a learning programme to increase understanding of these different roles, how they fit together and how these roles and 'the fit' between them changes over time. The learning programme should support people in thinking further about the different opportunities for working together in ways that feel positive and productive, and in 'handling' and learning from the tensions between different that are bound to arise.

## **Community: the diversity of community participation and action**

People were active in a substantial number of ways: often the same group would be active in a range of ways although it might have one particular priority. People highlighted the following areas of activeness within the community:

- Groups campaigning on local issues and/or broader issues
- Local initiatives and action groups looking to develop projects and networks
- Community arts groups
- Health groups: groups of mutual support for people with longer-term health problems
- Mutual support and advocacy groups: for people with common experiences – for example mothers of young children, women with experience of domestic violence
- Sports: people organising and teaching sports for/to others
- Working with younger people, older people and people with disabilities
- Church and other faith groups and the range of activities they do
- Local neighbourhood groups working on housing and neighbourhood issues
- Management committees and Boards of local community groups, community organisations, and community centres
- Community-wide bodies: the Community Council, the Regeneration Forum, the Social Inclusion Partnership and its sub-groups
- Volunteers with community organisations providing advice and support
- People who are ‘helping out in their neighbourhood’
- People involved in teaching and support others.

People will also be involved in local political parties and local trades union branches although this wasn't raised by the people in the course of discussions.

**Comment on learning:** There is a real breadth of community participation and action within this community. One person estimated that in the Craigmillar area there were at least 500 people involved, and certainly it was not difficult over the course of the research to form a list of almost 150 possible people to meet with. Activeness in all these different roles adds to the community and its ability to sustain and develop itself. So all these people have knowledge and skills that others can learn from and which would be relevant to the question of how the community should develop and direct the process of regeneration. In fact a successful process of regeneration could be said to depend on involving this breadth of community participation, not just in the initial planning but also in the long-term putting into action of such plans.

A learning programme needs to work with local people to understand the range of community participation and how it all should be seen as significant in:

- sustaining a healthy community
- directing a process of planning for and carrying through community regeneration.

### **Community: as a source of inspiration and support**

Everyone the researcher met with recognised the value of other people they worked with in the community. The 'research group' for instance spoke of:

*People encouraged and inspired by what others are doing*

And this was commonplace. Several people spoke for instance of the role their families have played in using or accessing computers:

*I have done computer lessons but my daughter helps as well and can show me. She says 'don't be frightened'*

And another:

*My daughter-in-law has her own equipment and anything I want I get through her.*

One community representative spoke of the value of meeting with others in the same role in their community through the Edinburgh Community Representatives Network.

Throughout this and other chapters, people speak of the mutual support they get from each other and the networks of community groups and organisations that they work within.

## **Community diversity: people with disabilities**

One person with a disability and active within the Craigmillar Ability Network<sup>7</sup> made it clear just how important it is to consider disability when thinking about what communities are like:

*Disability is everywhere. Many people are disabled, many people will become disabled. 55% of people in Edinburgh, for instance, and often hidden e.g. asthma, wearing spectacles<sup>8</sup>*

Certainly within this research many people with disabilities were active in the community. About one third the people met with in the main stage of the research were disabled. Another 54% of people who completed survey for the development phase of this project, and who were active in the community or considering activeness, thought of themselves as disabled. So people with disabilities are crucial to the ability of the community to sustain itself.

People with disabilities often find a common bond and a shared identity with each other. One disabled person active within the Craigmillar Ability Network described their experience of feeling part of a community of people with disabilities:

*I feel more apart of the disabled political/ethnic group. It's a different culture and we share a common mentality. I've a disabled friend with a very different disability from my own yet there is a similar almost ethnic culture. We, disabled people, may come in different flavours but are the same apple.*

A campaigning group of disabled people, the Democracy, Disability and Society Group<sup>9</sup> both valued working together and the community of people they had formed. But they also felt that wider society was limiting them:

*There is a preconceived idea of disability that is not based on fact. This creates a barrier between people that is based on ignorance and fear; fear of behaviours they might find embarrassing. Society holds its hands up in horror if a disabled person get married – 'God forbid we should live in sin or have bodies'*

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<sup>7</sup> For more information on the Craigmillar Ability Network on the internet go to: [www.can-disability.org.uk](http://www.can-disability.org.uk)

<sup>8</sup> Inclusion Scotland's Manifesto for disabled people writes (see page 5) that 'There are 9.8 million disabled adults in the UK (nearly 1million in Scotland). Over 5.5 million disabled people are of working age, which represents 16% of the working population' See <http://www.inclusionscotland.org/482/enclosure/IS%20manifesto.pdf> Also, the Scottish Council on Deafness writes that 'There are 1,080,000 people with some degree of hearing loss in Scotland' ... that is over 20% of the population. See <http://www.scod.org.uk/home.htm> or contact them at SCoD offices, Central Chambers Suite 62, 93 Hope St, Glasgow, G2 6LD; telephone 0141- 248 2474; textphone 0141-248 2477; fax 0141- 248 2479; email: [admin@scod.org.uk](mailto:admin@scod.org.uk)

<sup>9</sup> For more information on the Democracy, Disability and Society Group (DDS Group) look on the internet at: [www.ddsg.org.uk](http://www.ddsg.org.uk). The group is connected with the Thistle Foundation.

*Society wants to put disabled people in a box. Equality and awareness training is getting started over the next year. We'll do our training and then provide training.*

One Deaf person, that is a person who uses British Sign Language<sup>10</sup> and is part of the Deaf Community, spoke of feeling like:

*Fighting a lost cause in Edinburgh as feels like he's the only one – it's different in London.*

There are networks of deaf and Deaf people in Edinburgh but his experience was of finding himself feeling alone in wider society.

Likewise a group of people with learning difficulties and their support staff, felt that they go at very mixed response across the City, and said that:

*Communities can give a varied response – sometimes welcoming, sometimes prejudice*

**Comment on learning:** People with disabilities are active in the community and provide a considerable range of knowledge and skills – they are a key part of the lifeblood of the community and the activeness that sustains it. It's crucial that others know how to make sure that their activities are equally open to disabled people as anyone else, so that the whole community benefits from the energies of people with disabilities.

A learning programme for people active in the community needs to draw upon the knowledge and experience of organisations of active people such as the Democracy, Disability and Society Group and Craigmillar Ability Network – if it is to support people active in the community in learning to feel confident in including the full diversity of people within the community and its activities.

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<sup>10</sup> For more information on British Sign Language go to the internet at: [www.signcommunity.org.uk/](http://www.signcommunity.org.uk/). For more information on the British Deaf Association which represents the Deaf Community in Britain go to the internet at: [www.learntosign.org.uk](http://www.learntosign.org.uk)

### **Community diversity: people from Black and Minority Ethnic groups (1)**

Many people from Black and Minority Ethnic groups live in the area and form networks and communities. A local person, originally from an African country, described a network of people from the same ethnic background who now live across Edinburgh:

*People don't know the language and it can be hard to learn. It's nice to speak the same language and share the same religion, particularly if you've had a bad week. Cooking for numbers takes time but it's nice to keep in touch.*

It was difficult for this person, arriving in the community and wanting to make contact with networks in the community concerned with neighbourhood issues, activities for children, and organisation that help you find work, and yet not finding it easy to find out who to approach.

The Pakistan Society<sup>11</sup> recognised that many 'Asian people', whose families originate from the Indian subcontinent although many people were born in the UK, live in the area, have their own network of family but are also interested in the community and community issues.

A Black person who had completed a race relation course and showed the researcher a resource on Scottish identity that they had found valuable, 'Who's a Real Scot?'<sup>12</sup>. This looks at Scotland as a 'multi-cultural' society where racism must be tackled, and human rights asserted

**Comment on learning:** There are a growing number of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) people living in the area, and becoming active. As a researcher it has been harder to make contact with them as 'people who are active in the community' because they aren't always part of the main networks for community action in the area. This makes them particularly crucial to a learning programme, for they have knowledge and skills about how the wider Community can work with their communities.

It also highlights a crucial question for a learning programme to begin to answer during the development phase, which is how can it be relevant to BME people who are active in the area or who want to be active.

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<sup>11</sup> For more information on the Pakistan Society and its work go to the internet at: [www.pakistansociety.co.uk/](http://www.pakistansociety.co.uk/)

<sup>12</sup> Available from the Centre for Human Ecology – see on the internet at: [www.che.ac.uk/index.php](http://www.che.ac.uk/index.php)

## **Community diversity: people from Black and Minority Ethnic groups (2)**

Discussions with local workers and organisations also highlighted other people from Black and Minority Ethnic groups in the area that it would be useful to learn from:

- **Black people and people from Eastern Europe:** Adult Learning Link<sup>13</sup> and Community Education<sup>14</sup> at Castlebrae Community High School both run courses/ groups for people for whom English is a second language including Black people and people from Eastern Europe. Adult Learning Link works with a significant number of local Polish people.
- **Gypsy Travellers:** Many Gypsy Travellers live in the Craigmillar area. The recent report by Alli Donachie into family learning for Gypsy Travellers across Edinburgh<sup>15</sup> highlights that Gypsy Travellers live at the official site in Duddingston, that there are 'Roadside' Gypsy Travellers and that 'a significant number of families have also taken local authority housing, particularly in the Craigmillar area' – Housed Gypsy Travellers. The report also highlights that there are 'occupational travellers' too for instance show/fairground and Circus communities – and there is a 'Show People's' site in the Craigmillar area. Adult Learning Link have strong informal links with the local Gypsy Traveller community.
- **Young Travellers:** The Jack Kane Community Centre has also carried out a 'needs assessment report'<sup>16</sup> with Young Gypsy Travellers in Edinburgh. The report highlights the complexity of the 'Gypsy/Traveller community'; both the different needs of individuals and the differences between different travelling cultures such as Gypsy Travellers and Irish Travellers.
- **Refugees:** The Capacity Building Project has worked with Turkish Kurdish refugees living in the area.

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<sup>13</sup> For more information on Adult Learning Link go the internet at: [www.adultlearninglink.edin.org](http://www.adultlearninglink.edin.org)

<sup>14</sup> For contacts details for City of Edinburgh Council Community Education (now part of the Children and Families Department) go on the internet at: [www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf](http://www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> Alli Donachie's report is called 'Family Learning with Gypsy Travellers in Edinburgh' and was commissioned by the City of Edinburgh's Community Education – Community Based Adult Learning (CBAL). A copy of the report is available from: Linda Gibson, Senior Community Education Worker at Towerbank Community Education Base, Towerbank Annexe, 13 Bath St, Portobello, EH15 1EZ or tel: 0131 657 2607 or email: [Linda.gibson@educ.edin.gov.uk](mailto:Linda.gibson@educ.edin.gov.uk)

<sup>16</sup> Needs Assessment Report: Young Gypsy Travellers in Edinburgh published by the Jack Kane Community Centre – the work was funded by the Edinburgh Youth Social Inclusion Partnership. A young person friendly version in the form of a 10-minute DVD has also been produced. Both available through the Jack Kane Community Centre – for contact details see the internet at: [www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf](http://www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf)

Other groups and organisations also have links with Black and Minority Ethnic groups – one neighbourhood group, part of the Community Regeneration Forum, for instance, spoke of the local Asian members.

**Comment on learning:** Minority Ethnic groups can be isolated or unrecognised within a community. They can also suffer racial abuse and discrimination. A recent Save the Children report on Gypsy Traveller children highlights the discrimination, name calling and bullying they face.<sup>17</sup> This is reflected in the experiences of all Black and Minority Ethnic people and groups including asylum seekers and refugees.

A learning programme can work with people active in the community to both use and explore their knowledge of the diversity of the community, and the strength that this brings to this community. As can be seen there is a considerable diversity and there is small but growing contact with local community organisations, community groups, and community services.

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<sup>17</sup> For details of the 'Having Our Say ' report (2001) go on to the Internet at:  
[http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/scuk\\_cache/scuk/cache/cmsattach/1132\\_CCEMInclusion.pdf](http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/scuk_cache/scuk/cache/cmsattach/1132_CCEMInclusion.pdf)

### **Community diversity: all ages**

A discussion between an older and a younger person in ‘the research group’ highlighted a sense of separateness between generations:

*Conflict between the generations: intimidation, misunderstandings and poor communication.*

There was frustration at not having the opportunity to communicate. However one person from the East Edinburgh Older People’s forum spoke of having that opportunity:

*At Liberton High School, five of us went to a ‘Safer Edinburgh’ Conference where youngsters from Liberton School met with older people. Some people are afraid of young people but I think if you’re not bothering them they’ll not bother you. Not every kid wants to go to the centre or youth group. Some kids like to hang about the streets.*

One group of younger people who worked on an ‘alternative active citizenship course’ called Revolting Youth.<sup>18</sup> The course was developed by Café K, with the support of the Jack Kane Community Centre and the Craigmillar Capacity Building Project. The group wrote up their own report of the course, at one point saying that:

*‘Young people, especially in Craigmillar are unfairly labelled and discriminated against. A lot of people think we are hooligans. This is an untrue statement. But we are just young people. Standing on the street and playing football isn’t a crime.’*

**Comment on learning:** People who are active in the community, young, old and middle-aged see the importance of communicating across the generations so that people don’t lose touch with each other and their experiences and concerns.

There are many examples in the different chapters of this report of the positive work that both younger and older people are doing in the area. One example from this Community is ‘The Timeline Project’, a community drama project – see more detail later in this chapter in the section on Communication - where younger people and older people worked together to produce a drama telling stories from local people’s lives, both past and present. People who’ve already done work between generations are a valuable resource for

<sup>18</sup> Revolting Youth is a pilot training course for young people developed with young people by Café K, the Jack Kane Community Centre, the Capacity Building Project, City of Edinburgh Council Community Education and the Craigmillar Partnership, which “aimed to provide ‘alternative active citizenship’ and explore the responsibilities of society, the government and those in local community structures to young people”. The two Revolting Youth reports, one by staff and one by the young people are available from Café K and the Jack Kane Community Centre – for contact details see on the internet at: [www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf](http://www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf)

others in the community to learn from, and so their experiences are valuable to a learning programme. Organisations such as local churches, local community centres and community arts also have experience of working with different generations and could provide valuable experience.

## **Community diversity: women and men**

**Women:** A meeting with some members of 'Womanzone'<sup>19</sup>, the women's community health project, highlighted the importance of networks of women within the community.

*Womanzone was started by local women in 1988/89. It was initially set-up to help women (suffering) Domestic Violence or Sexual Abuse ... not all women (using Womanzone) have had this experience. Some use it for companionship, or access to the internet, some use it to get health information e.g. on the menopause, sexual health ... they can pick-up information privately.*

One member spoke of the network at Womanzone being:

*A glue, a catalyst, it allowed me to come and live here otherwise it would have been too scary with teenagers in the stair*

A majority of people who were met during the research were women; 53% through meetings in this research phase, and 76% through the survey work for the development. This highlights that women are very active in the community and also illustrates the crucial importance of women's networks, groups and more generally their community roles in sustaining the health of the community.

**Men:** There is a Men's health group in the area with support from the local community healthy organisation, Be Well<sup>20</sup>, and the group meets regularly and demonstrates that men too value the opportunity to meet together, discuss and learn about their health as men:

*We play Scrabble, sometimes go out socialising for a night in the town, also swimming, sauna and keep-fit. Used to go to the Thistle Foundation and did training exercises and swimming with disabled men – stopped this a year ago. Leant to do t-shirt printing ... Also do talks for example: adult learning link on opportunities, drugs, alcohol, stress - mostly linked with health ... It gives men a chance to talk about 'men's things' – like sport, how they feel. ... We also organise men's health week – funding by Health Board – providing reflexology and massage*

**Comment on learning:** There are people in the community who understand the different identities and networks of support that women and men have and need. Again, these are important resources for a learning programme to draw upon, so that others can learn from and to bring a deeper understanding of the differences as well as the common experiences that women and men

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<sup>19</sup> For contact details for Womanzone go on the internet to:  
[www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf](http://www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> For more information and contact details of Be Well go on the internet to: [www.be-well.org.uk](http://www.be-well.org.uk)

Final version of the Craigmillar Learning for Community Participation and Action report, Chapter 2, Jan 2006

have, both within their community participation and their broader life in the community.

## **Community diversity: other differences between people**

**Health and personal experience:** There are a significant number of networks of health groups, for instance Be Well<sup>21</sup> and groups such as the Heart to Heart group that Be Well work with, Womanzone<sup>22</sup>, and Richmond's Hope<sup>23</sup>, a range of groups developed with that mean that people develop networks of mutual support and communication through their experiences of good health, ill-health, hardship and personal change.

Other networks and groups of people not directly related to health also help people with health and personal issues:

*It gives a focus to stay off the drink (a motivating force). The Centre was the first step, but I've now a wider network of friends. I've got a debt of gratitude and can see it helping others.*

**Faith:** A significant number of people are active within church groups including within networks of support and religious activity, youth clubs and groups, a food co-op and partnerships with other local community organisations. Other people work within community groups as well as being active in the local church or are active in another faith group – for example Muslim and Hindu.

**Political:** Some people are members of local political parties, trades unions and campaigning groups. There are then political differences between people too – different cultures of political knowledge, values and approach.

There is also presently a 'community divide' of a political nature between organisations and networks connected with the leadership of the community council and, organisations and networks connected with the leadership of the community regeneration forum. There is more detail in chapters 1,8,9, 10 and 11 about this divide but it is important in this chapter to recognise that it presently exists. Furthermore it is important for those who are active in the community to understand this divide and to work with it and around it.

**Residents and 'incomers':** One person raised the value of 'incomers' to the community.

*There's a whole host of people living in Craigmillar area, 'crash-landed' here. Many active people come from outside Craigmillar*

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<sup>21</sup> For more information and contact details of Be Well go to the internet at: [www.be-well.org.uk](http://www.be-well.org.uk)

<sup>22</sup> For contact details for Womanzone go on the internet to: [www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf](http://www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> For more information and contact details of Richmond's Hope go on the Internet at: [www.richmondshope.org.uk/](http://www.richmondshope.org.uk/). Richmond Hope provides support to bereaved children and their families and is part of the work Richmond Craigmillar Church does in the community.

There are people who've lived here all or most of their lives, people who've arrived in the last decade, people who've arrived recently, those who will arrive through the regeneration process, and people who live here temporarily – say some asylum seekers and refugees– who later move on.

Understanding how this diverse mix of people both do and can come to understand and respect each other is a crucial area for further thinking within a learning programme for people who are active in the community – this includes the tensions and difficulties that a diverse community faces.

**Comment on learning:** these other areas of difference highlight that there are people in the community who are thinking widely about how difference matters, and how common understandings can be developed. They are a valuable source of knowledge for others active in the community to draw upon.

### **Community communication: 'the connectors'**

Amongst the 22 people who had individual interviews as people who are active in the community:

- 78% spoke of being active in 2 or more local groups or community organisations
- 57% spoke of being or having been active in 2 or more different areas of community participation e.g. arts, sports, healthcare, community representation
- 74% spoke of being or having been active in 2 or more different roles e.g. board member, group leader, member, organiser, supporter or teacher

Some examples of those who are active in a variety of organisations, different areas of participation, and roles include:

- one person who is active on neighbourhood issues, working with young people and who works within both local representative bodies
- one person who is active in teaching a sport, on the Board of several local organisations, in community arts, doing volunteer driving, on the community council and who is working with older and younger people
- one person who has been active doing local action research, working on one of the City-wide equality forums and who helped set up and is on the Board of one local organisation.

**Comment on learning:** There are significant number of people who are active in a number of groups, areas and roles and who can act as 'community connectors' bringing their knowledge and skills from one group or organisation into another. They have a crucial role in communicating between organisations so that groups in the community learn from one another. Their community activeness is complex and the skills and knowledge they have will likewise be complex.

A learning programme can increase understanding of the value of such complex roles and the skills and knowledge that allow you to undertake such a role.

## **Community communication: through and between networks**

**‘Word of mouth’:** several people spoke of the power of local networks. Following a tough local decision-making process within 30 minutes of the decision being made one person was hearing about themselves through the ‘Craig-vine’. Another person spoke humorously of being very well known in the area and so in a position to share information:

*I could never commit a crime in Craigmillar.*

The Women onto Work<sup>24</sup> organisation spoke of the value of such an approach, sending women, who had completed the course, leaflets to give to women they know. Women onto Work have found that leaflets in schools can be effective in making contact with women who might be interested in the course.

**Leaflets, posters and newsletters:** These are used extensively by organisations and groups within the area. The area also has its own newspaper, the Craigmillar Chronicle, originally founded by the Craigmillar Festival Society, which promotes activities, shares knowledge and increases discussion. And many community organisations and services publish their own newsletters.

Three different people pointed out, importantly, that many people have difficulty with reading and writing<sup>25</sup>:

*In 1998 I learnt to read and write*

*We thought about writing a letter but then no some people can’t read—so we did a video*

*There are literacy ads on TV as people can’t read*

They cannot be assumed to be effective in communicating with everybody in the community.

**Technology - video:** There are many examples of new technology is supporting communication between active people and within the community.

Several community projects have used film to produce video reports and stories:

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<sup>24</sup> For more information on and contact details for Women onto Work go on the Internet to: [www.womenontowork.org/](http://www.womenontowork.org/)

<sup>25</sup> Research in 1996 estimated that about 23% of adults in Scotland had difficulties with reading, writing and/or numeracy. For details see Changing Lives: Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland. A Report by HM Inspectorate of Education CHANGING LIVES: ADULT LITERACY AND NUMERACY IN SCOTLAND: A REPORT BY HM INSPECTORATE OF EDUCATION which is on the Internet at: [www.hmie.gov.uk/documents/publication/clalns.html](http://www.hmie.gov.uk/documents/publication/clalns.html)

- ‘Over the Rainbow’ and ‘Pot of Gold’<sup>26</sup> - on young people’s hopes and expectations of regeneration for Craigmillar;
- ‘Craigmillar Movin’ On up’<sup>27</sup> – on regeneration in Craigmillar and positive change in the area;
- ‘That wee word MON£Y (and other things) in adult learning’<sup>28</sup> – real stories of adult learning;
- ‘Castlebrae Casuals’ report<sup>29</sup> – on young people views about the area and what needs to improve;
- A promotional video on 30 local groups<sup>30</sup> that is being shown in local post offices.

There are many other examples – this is not a full list. Video has and is being used for campaigning, sharing information and promoting groups. It can be particularly helpful for people arriving in the area, one person commenting that:

*Davie Smith did a lot of videoing of community events and gave incomers a chance to acclimatise to Craigmillar.*

One of the local film-makers saw the potential to expand the use of film and video within Craigmillar because:

*Most people love being on camera. They are wanting to communicate positively to make their lives better.*

This person saw opportunities to use video and DVD:

- like a community newsletter
- to explore issues like community regeneration
- with TV as an alternative or replacement to the Web
- to promote positive images and perception of life in Craigmillar..

**Technology – The Web:** Craigmillar also has a long-standing web portal, Craignet<sup>31</sup>, with its own internet communication forum for local people to use.

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<sup>26</sup> Produced by the ‘Children Decide Group’ at the Venchie Children and Young People’s Project - working with Young People Speak Out; for contact details go to the internet at: [www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf](http://www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> Produced by the Craigmillar Neighbourhood Alliance, Craigmillar Social Inclusion Partnership, the Thistle Foundation, Kintry Housing Partnership and others; for contact details go to the internet at: [www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf](http://www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> Produced by the ‘We’ve Got the Power Campaign Group with CALNET (Craigmillar Adult Learning Network) and the Capacity Building Project; for contact details go to the internet at: [www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf](http://www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf)

<sup>29</sup> Produced by the Castlebrae Casuals group with Capacity Building Project, Instep and The Venchie Children and Young People’s Project – working with Young People Speak Out; for contact details go to the internet at: [www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf](http://www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> Produced by a local film-maker and funded by the Craigmillar Social Inclusion Partnership

Several organisations have their own website. Two people commented on the value of having more information available on the Web:

*Every organisation needs a comprehensive website with links with other organisations in Craigmillar*

*Maybe not enough information about what's on across Craigmillar ... a database of what's going on, information on where to go would be useful*

Another person who has more mixed feelings about it as a medium but:

*Load of opinion against it but it's there so should be used ... it has to be polished and needs to look better than anyone else's - make something really impressive, beautiful*

**Surveys:** Two local community groups had done their own neighbourhood surveys and this helped them both find out more about people's views and increased communication within the area. Lismore Parents Action Group for instance:

*We did survey of everyone in Bingham – 550 people – asking about: Food Co-op, Job Clubs, Help with Addiction, Children's Club, Care in the Community, Adult and Youth workshops and others*

See also Chapter 8 on 'participation and partnership', which gives other examples of research and survey work.

**Using Community Arts:** Community arts are being used widely to support people in sharing experiences – in this case younger and older people – and to share this experience more widely through drama, internet and video.

*We did the 'Timeline project' with young people at Jack Kane Centre in 2000. It involved COOSP<sup>32</sup> and included kids from primary and secondary – different schools and all different ages ... We told the kids about what the world was like when we were growing-up. I went to school during the war when food was rationed, my sister had never seen a banana till after the war. My brothers and dad were in the forces. We spoke about the dance halls and the picture houses and the kids did a sketch of a silent movie. They made a play about Craigmillar at Castlebrae High School. One person set up a website. Two others made a video.*

There are many other examples in this report of using the arts as a form of supporting communication between people and across the community. To

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<sup>31</sup> See the internet at: [www.craignet.org.uk](http://www.craignet.org.uk)

<sup>32</sup> Part of Craigmillar Child Care Services, for contact details go on the internet at: [www.ccsltd.org.uk](http://www.ccsltd.org.uk)

Final version of the Craigmillar Learning for Community Participation and Action report, Chapter 2, Jan 2006

see others go in particular to Chapter 9 on community regeneration and also to Chapter 8 on participation and Chapter 3 on campaigning.

**Comment on learning:** There is a considerable experience within Craigmillar of using word of mouth, leaflets etc, the Web, video, research and the arts as ways of increasing communication and opening-up communication. A wealth of knowledge and experience for a learning programme to learn from, and to encourage people to access these opportunities and get the information they need.

## **Community and Services: Community Organisations, Community Services and Local Services and Businesses**

There is a complex network of organisations and services in the area that work with local people, some of which provide support and training for people who are active in the community.

- Small community organisations with 1-3 staff, who often live locally, and have strong community connections and networks
- Larger community organisations and social enterprises with more staff, again many of whom who live locally, with strong community connections and networks
- Community services that include council services, health services and larger voluntary organisations and social enterprises that work city-wide or nationally.
- Business both local and national can also provide community support through funding, training, services-in kind.

For people who are active much of their support and training comes from community organisations, and also Community Services, and they spoke of:

- support for developing groups such as setting up a constitution, advice on working in groups, support with funding applications, general advice about the area
- training and learning opportunities that are provided and supported, and advice that goes with this
- support for Management committees and Boards
- support for the Community Representatives
- support for local participation
- support and induction for volunteers

People also spoke of practical support that organisations provided:

- vehicles, transport and sometimes drivers
- administration of funding grants
- computers, and other Information Communication Technology e.g. video-editing
- childcare
- finding office space
- an induction pack
- opportunities for administrative support and phone calls

Resources from outside the area were also valued:

- Edinburgh wide-forums such as the Older People's Forum and the Disability Forum
- websites, information packs and publications
- development workers from within the City Council

**Comment on learning:** People active in the community generally spoke of valuing the support they received from community organisations and services. Their knowledge of how to work with local organisations and services is a valuable resource in itself, one that a learning programme needs to draw upon.

**Community and services: Learning from people about the support and learning they find valuable.**

Naturally there are also areas of frustration that people active in the community raised in connection with the support and learning that is available.

**Expenses:** One person spoke of the importance of volunteer expenses and the importance of flexibility with them – within the law:

*Expenses – lay reps get half ‘per mile’ rate of the professionals. Can create benefits problems for lay reps so hard to say what expenses can be claimed.*

**Childcare:** The issue of childcare was raised by several different active people. It can be provided in many situations but is an ongoing problem for many women, in particular, who are seeking to be active, and organisations and services need to keep thinking this through – see Chapter 5 for more on this.

**Opportunities to ‘network’:** One person spoke of the importance of space and opportunity to meet up and network with other active people:

*Place for a blether – volunteers, activists need a space, make phone calls.*

**Local information:** Several people spoke of the value of local information about local organisations and services being on the web – see earlier in this chapter. At two meetings people raised difficulties they had experienced in getting hold of publications:

*Receiving the Chronicle – not everyone is getting it; they should have a pile in the Post Office. Likewise we’ve not got CBP calendar/ newsletter.*

**Commitment and celebration:** Two different people valued a sense of commitment from workers:

*He ‘keeps me right’.*

*Workshops – (one staff member) used to chase you up*

And they can lose faith over time if they see things happening that don’t make sense to them e.g. cancellation of events and training without knowing why. If these accumulate people get very frustrated.

Celebration of people’s roles is also important. Womanzone run an annual Craigmillar Women of Achievement event to celebrate the contribution of women in community life. Local active people felt it strongly if they didn’t feel their contribution was being recognised:

*Celebrating what we've done as a group – it doesn't happen any more.*

**Comment on learning:**

There is clearly much that is going right in the relationship between active people and community organisations and community services. There is always the need to change or simply 'keep on the ball'.

It is valuable for both people active in the community, and the organisations they work with and are supported by, to return at regular intervals to the questions of 'Are we getting it right?' and 'How can we do this better?' This is a way to keep communication open between people and organisations, so that frustrations don't fester and solutions are found.

A learning programme can encourage a culture of learning where both people active in the community and community organisations and services continue to talk about their experiences and learn from them.

See also Chapter 5 on organising events and the '*We've have the power' group's report*<sup>33</sup> on accessible lifelong learning which contains a range of valuable themes and questions for both active local people and community organisations and services to use in thinking about how to improve support and training.

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<sup>33</sup> The 'We've have the power' group worked with Craigmillar Adult Learning network (CALNET) and the Capacity Building Project to produce a video-report and report and these are available through Adult Learning Link and the Capacity Building Project. For contact details on the internet go to: [www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf](http://www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf)

## Final comment on learning for people who are active in the community

**Building on the knowledge and connections of local people:** John McKnight, writing about communities in his book, 'The Careless Society: community and its counterfeits'<sup>34</sup>, is sceptical about the value of 'professionals' and 'services' in working effectively with communities. He looks to increase the exchange of information, knowledge and skills by people in the community and their networks, local groups and organisations, and the local staff who in the main live locally. He sees it as crucial to recognise and support a community's strengths, rather than bringing in services to provide these.

This chapter has demonstrated that there is a depth of knowledge about how this community works, and skills for using this knowledge, that is held within the community itself: the ways people communicate, the common experiences and the differences, the common interests and purposes, and the diversity of experiences and identities.

A learning programme for active local people therefore needs to:

- tap into and use the different knowledge that local active people hold about their community
- support the informal sharing of knowledge as well as more structured training and learning activities
- support the increasing of connections across the community and amongst active people and those who aspire to be active
- support active people in taking the lead in making those connections.

Active people hold crucial knowledge for the effective working of local organisations and services. For instance, the Democracy, Disability and Society Group<sup>35</sup> have done an '*accessibility audit*' for the Scottish Parliament. Likewise the '*We've got the Power*' group's report<sup>36</sup> raises key issues for making lifelong learning accessible. There has been talk locally of involving young people in auditing local services.

Why not then initiate a more extensive 'community audit', run by local active people, that local services and organisations and other organisations and services outside the area can also use? Can a learning programme support local people in building their confidence to undertake such work?

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<sup>34</sup> Book published in 1995 by Basic Books (New York).

<sup>35</sup> For more information on the Democracy, Disability and Society Group (DDS Group) look on the internet at: [www.ddsg.org.uk](http://www.ddsg.org.uk). The group is connected with the Thistle Foundation.

<sup>36</sup> The group worked with Craigmillar Adult Learning network (CALNET) and the Capacity Building Project to produce a video-report and report and these are available through Adult Learning Link and the Capacity Building Project. For contact details go on the internet to: [www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf](http://www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf)

This sort of thinking links strongly with the key idea from Chapter 1b, raised by Jane Thompson, of a 'committed dialogue'<sup>37</sup>, both within local communities and between local communities and decision-makers. A community's strengths and connections are crucial for a learning programme to work with and for any regeneration of a community to take seriously and work alongside.

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<sup>37</sup> See Chapter 1b pages 12-13 and 17, and also Jane Thompson's (2001) report, 'Rerooting lifelong learning: resourcing neighbourhood renewal.' Details from the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education on the Internet at: <http://www.niace.org.uk/>.