

# Craigmillar Learning for Community Participation and Action report: Chapter 7- Lifelong learning and community participation.

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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.

*Likewise*, it should not be assumed that by contributing to the research any of the people or organisations who have done so, *necessarily agree* with the lead researcher's interpretations, views and conclusions, or the proposed outcomes and actions within a learning programme.



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Final version of the Craigmillar Learning for Community Participation and Action report, Chapter 7, Jan 2006

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

## Chapter 7: Lifelong learning and community participation

### Introduction

Lifelong learning was not a phrase used regularly in discussions with people active in the community but at least three people had taken it on board through training they had done:

*Learning about participation 'on the job' – the ACT<sup>1</sup> tutors call it a process of 'lifelong learning'.*

*Lifelong learning: from the minute you're born to the minute your six feet under you are learning.*

*I'm learning everyday.*

All had invested their time learning through a considerable number of local courses and were active in the community in a number of different ways.

86% of the people the researcher met with through individual meetings spoke of doing some form of informal learning or some training either as an individual or in a group. Of those, about a third (36%) spoke of having undertaken extensive training in the community, aimed at working to improve their skills and knowledge. Only a few of those people (17%) spoke of completing an assessed qualification, which was directly linked to their community action.

However, everyone the researcher met with either individually or in groups, that is 79 people, had either undertaken some training, saw themselves as learning informally, or when asked directly understood themselves as learning skills through their participation. People often saw themselves as learning by doing rather than being learners in the classroom.

This chapter explores the different ways people see themselves as learning and how this connects to their participation in the community – how people can use both learning and activeness to support the development of the community and of themselves. It includes sections on:

- informal learning through 'doing', shadowing, groups and networking (pages 5-10)
- learning through technology – computers and film (pages 11-14)

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<sup>1</sup> The ACT course, 'A Consortium of Training', is a training course for part-time and volunteer staff in Community Learning and Development. It is aimed at local authorities and voluntary organisations and is for those involved in work with 5-12s, youth work, adult learning or community work. Current consortium members are: Midlothian Council, Moray House Institute (University of Edinburgh), Scottish Borders Council, West Lothian Council and Craigmillar Capacity Building Project. The training is accredited – that is it is recognised by colleges and university.

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- developing your learning and community participation – including 6 short stories from local people (pages 15-22)
- a final comment on a learning programme (pages 23-24).

**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.

## **Informal Learning through doing and shadowing**

Many people saw themselves as learning while doing their activities – by being purposeful.

Young people at Castlebrae Community High School spoke of learning through the EcoCommittee. The Eco Committee is a mix of students and staff, and is supported by Instep<sup>2</sup>. It works on environmental issues within the school including, at present, litter, graffiti and composting. The students spoke of what they were learning through participating in the committee:

*We're still learning even though we're not in class – through discussion*

*Learning about the eco-committee and how it can work*

One person working within local youth sports spoke of developing organising skills for tours and events:

*I've lots of contacts so learnt from other people; for example finding the cheapest flight (for organising a tour).*

One of the local film-makers recommended building-up film and editing skills through hands on practice:

*Build up experience from practice – it's hard to learn from a book ... use archive materials ... do it every week over 6 months – every 4 weeks is not enough ... editing is not an easy skill to learn, it's an art*

A volunteer with the Credit Union<sup>3</sup> spoke of the value of the 'practical style' of training there and learning directly from the manager:

*It helps not to be bombarded with information ... A lot are regular transactions so it helps to build your confidence as they occur frequently ... It's preferable to coming in and being given information as there is no practical element ... If a customer's there you can understand their need for information.*

Another informal way of learning through doing or 'almost doing' was that of shadowing – that is going along with someone who is doing the work or activity and learning through them. One person described the usefulness of this approach:

*Craigmillar Community Arts<sup>4</sup> hired professional actors and directors to put on shows and people could shadow them, and then come back and pass on their skills ... and this still happens.*

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<sup>2</sup> Instep provides support to young people to improve educational attainment, access to employment opportunities and access to higher and further education. For contact details go on to the internet at: <http://www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> For more information and contact details on the Craigmillar Credit Union go on the internet to: [www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf](http://www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf)

**Comment on learning:** People active in the community finding learning by doing a very meaningful way of learning new skills and ideas. Any learning programme for active people needs to build this into its approach.

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<sup>4</sup> For contact details for Craigmillar Community Arts go on the internet to:  
[www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf](http://www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf)

## **Informal learning – through discussion within groups and networks**

Discussion within group and within networks was another powerful way of learning for people.

The East Edinburgh Older People's Forum<sup>5</sup> got itself up and running by using an event that mixed learning with entertainment and socialising:

*We started with a big conference in the Jack Kane Centre. I knew people wouldn't give up their lunch clubs for a meeting or forum so chose a Friday. We got support from the Capacity Building Project, Help the Aged, the Jewel Miners Club, the Craigmillar Social Inclusion Partnership and a City Council grant for the conference. It was a brilliant day, speakers from all over including other forums, and also entertainment, karaoke and food.*

One person from a local neighbourhood group, part of the Community Regeneration Forum<sup>6</sup>, spoke of one way the group learns:

*Our style of learning – we focus on something in particular. We bring information, there's knowledge from Craigmillar Neighbourhood Alliance<sup>7</sup>, there's knowledge from members, and we could find information from another party or source – it's like a focus group ... We can ask for an expert to come and give information.*

Women who've completed of the Active Women course run by Women onto Work<sup>8</sup> have organised their own network events:

*It ran morning to mid-afternoon, and 30-40 women came. It included: the Cod Crusaders– women who's husbands were fisherman; Margo Macdonald; Amnesty International and women's rights in Guatemala; 2<sup>nd</sup> chance to learn; Faye Milligan<sup>9</sup> – doing stand up comedy; a workshop on the media; Human rights and the oil trade in Nigeria*

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<sup>5</sup> For contact details for the East Edinburgh Older People's Forum go on the internet to: [www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf](http://www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> The Craigmillar Regeneration Forum is a consultative body for Craigmillar made up of representatives from local neighbourhood groups. For contact details go on the internet to: [www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf](http://www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> The Craigmillar Neighbourhood Alliance supports the work of Craigmillar Regeneration Forum and the local neighbourhood groups. For contact details go on the internet to: [www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf](http://www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> For more information and contacts details for Women onto Work go on the internet to: [www.womenontowork.org/](http://www.womenontowork.org/)

<sup>9</sup> Well known and loved Craigmillar actress and comedian who died recently.

**Comment on learning:** Where ever people are meeting together there is the opportunity to learn. The examples given show how people can learn informally in the many situations where they can discuss and share information and views. This process of informal learning can be supported by:

- creating space to exchanging information, views and aspirations
- bringing in people with experiences or knowledge to share
- mixing opportunities for learning with social activities.

### **Informal learning – connecting with others outside of Craigmillar.**

One member of a local neighbourhood group, Niddrie Marischal Neighbourhood Association, spoke of making contacts with other people active on housing and neighbourhood issues in Scotland:

*‘There’s people coming from Ayr on Monday. They had seen the video<sup>10</sup> produced with the Craigmillar Neighbourhood Alliance, and were wanting to know what we do as a community. It’s a good video and Kintry<sup>11</sup> give it to new tenants. It covers Greater Craigmillar not just Niddrie Mill or Niddrie.*

The Research Group<sup>12</sup> too highlighted the importance of making links with people in other areas because:

*You find same problems and different approaches ... helps if you are looking to find ways to move forward*

Likewise the Children Decide Group<sup>13</sup>, which is supported by the Venchie Children and Young People’s project, have built contacts (networked) with other children/youth projects including the Voices project in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and the Tomorrow Youth Group at the Hunters Hall Coop<sup>14</sup>.

Similarly the Craigmillar Community Reps<sup>15</sup> have been on a study visit to Amsterdam with the Craigmillar Joint Venture Company (now PARC)<sup>16</sup> in order to learn more about other approaches to housing and community development. Different community reps have different views on the present

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<sup>10</sup> Craigmillar Movin’ On up video – on regeneration in Craigmillar produced by the Craigmillar Neighbourhood Alliance, Craigmillar Partnership, the Thistle Foundation, Kintry Housing Partnership and others. Available from the Craigmillar Neighbourhood Alliance and the Craigmillar Partnership; for contact details go on the internet to: [www.craigmillarpartnership.com/](http://www.craigmillarpartnership.com/) or [www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf](http://www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> The Kintry Housing Partnership is a partnership of housing associations working in the area.

<sup>12</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>13</sup> Contact details for the Venchie Children and Young People’s project are on the internet at: [www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf](http://www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> Hunters Hall is the housing cooperative for over 200 tenants at Niddrie House in Craigmillar. For contact details go on the internet to: [www.sfha.co.uk](http://www.sfha.co.uk) or [www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf](http://www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> There are 4 community reps on the Craigmillar Social Inclusion Partnership – two from the Community Council and two from the Community Regeneration Forum.

<sup>16</sup> The Craigmillar Joint Venture Company has become PARC. It is charged with developing and implementing a plan for the regeneration of the area through an Urban Development Framework.

regeneration plans for Craigmillar – see Chapter 9 for more on this– so there won't be one view about the value of such trips. However, one rep explained the sorts of things they'd learnt from the visit to Amsterdam:

*We have been through to Glasgow and seen an area with great facilities. The JVC organised a trip to Amsterdam, which was useful and let me see what they were on about. They'd put different fronts on houses so that they look different, not all the same. But we don't want high-rise buildings like there. At a meeting with the planners Louis Alan Davies at the Capacity Building Project, the planners got a shock. There is an issue about the density of housing ...*

**Comment on learning:** Making contact with networks and communities outside of the area is a powerful form of learning, both for what could be valuable to Craigmillar and for what the serious questions and dilemmas within any plan or proposal will be. A learning programme could draw from this and support making contact with other communities, learning from their experiences, and encouraging the thinking through of the costs and benefits, the hopes and dilemmas, of any plan for the future.

## Using information and communication technology (ICT) – learning through computers

Some people saw the value in learning about new technologies for community participation and work opportunities:

*For younger and older people to get employment, learning on computers about: software and hardware; moving and still images; and sound and music. This is very useful.*

*Needs someone driving IT (information technology) forward, to push the Centre, to take photos, to edit, and help the centre commit to take things forward.*

*I've just bought a laptop. My pal's trying to teach me. I use the computer at Craigmillar Ability Network<sup>17</sup> when I'm doing stuff for them – doing the minutes ... I don't use the internet but it's something I want to learn. I've got friends who are on computer who could email me and then it's done.*

Others were more wary or unconvinced:

*They have their place but they're not a pivotal part of the arts in Craigmillar. Can be a handy tool for research but I need to see their potential.*

*I got a lot of information off it e.g. recipes, the Highland Clearances, but wouldna use a computer now. The development worker wanted me to go back and learn. I got a lot of information off computers but I'm not interested.*

People of all ages already have skills:

*Younger people pick up these skills quickly but there are cyber-grannies<sup>18</sup>. I use email.*

Two people emphasised its importance for children and young people

*It provides leisure opportunities for kids- stops windows get smashed<sup>19</sup>  
...*

*I don't know what they are doing with computers (person was very keen to learn)*

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<sup>17</sup> For contact details for Craigmillar Ability Network go on the internet to:  
[www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf](http://www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> One of the projects of the Craigmillar Community Information Service – the project has since closed.

<sup>19</sup> See chapter 2 for some discussion of the relationship between different generations, and positive approaches to working with this.

Another highlighted the opportunities that exist for all ages:

*Many people are scared by computers, it's a large barrier ... Adult Learning Link<sup>20</sup> (ALL) can help out people who aren't good with computers ... one on one coaching for OAPs is provided – very simple training such as 'this is a mouse' ... There's a danger of loss of funding for ALL. It's important as people need a computer and broadband but it's costly for individuals<sup>21</sup>.*

One person spoke of completing their European Computer Driving License (ECDL). This demonstrates their ability in a range of computer skills, and is valuable in getting employment.

**Comment on learning:** Computer skills allow people who are active to:

- use email for communication and coordination;
- access the internet/web and its widespread resources;
- work creatively with film and images;
- improve their access to paid work.

Although not everyone feels at ease with computers they are a powerful tool that many people use within their activism and participation and as such a learning programme needs to support their use as tools for learning.

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<sup>20</sup> Adult Learning Link provide a range of adult learning opportunities including Adult Learning Link provides free information, advice and services for people living in Greater Craigmillar who are interested in improving their job prospects and learning skills. For further information go on the internet to: [www.adultlearninglink.edin.org/index.html](http://www.adultlearninglink.edin.org/index.html)

<sup>21</sup> Other local organisations that provide computer access and/or training locally included Adult Education at Castlebrae Community High School, the Capacity Building Project, the Craigmillar Community Library, Hay-wired, the Pakistan Society and the Thistle Foundation

## **Using Information and Communication Technology - learning through film, DVD and video**

Film has been used in the Craigmillar area for many decades now. Film maker, Bill Douglas, lived in Newcraighall when he was growing up and wrote:

*'Then an incredible thing happened. A friend gave me an enormous Christmas gift. Inside the crate lay all the 8mm equipment any film-maker could wish for. There was a camera, film, projector, editor, splicer, titler – everything. I wandered the streets filming everything I could set my eyes on, zooming, tilting, panning, whizzing, rarely static and learning from my mistakes. In time I became very ambitious.'*<sup>22</sup>

He went on to produce an autobiographical series of three films (trilogy) that were filmed in Newcraighall in the 1970s and which achieved international acclaim. So film has a long-standing history of use within the area for communication and for individual lifelong learning.

Several people pointed to its continued use and potential use. Firstly to share information with people coming into the community:

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

Another person saw its potential for their own learning:

*We're going to make a video. I've got a digital camera and so we're going to do a video of what's of interest to use and put in on disc (DVD) ... the new technologies there so why not learn how to use it ...*

Likewise a group of young people, the Castlebrae Casuals, produced a video report<sup>23</sup> on young people's views about the area and what needs to improve. Two of the group explained what they learnt:

*Recording and getting the angles right for the video*

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<sup>22</sup> Many thanks to the Bill Douglas Estate and the Craigmillar Community Arts for allowing the reproduction of this quote from Bill Douglas – the copyright remains with the Bill Douglas Estate. To find out more about Bill Douglas see the Bill Douglas Centre for the History of Cinema and Popular Culture; go on the Internet to: [www.centres.ex.ac.uk/bill.douglas/menu.html](http://www.centres.ex.ac.uk/bill.douglas/menu.html)  
A copy of the article in which the text appears can be found in 'Arts: the Catalyst – Craigmillar' (p.47-49) published by Craigmillar Community Press. This publication accompanies the Arts: the catalyst exhibition and describes the experiences of Craigmillar and the Craigmillar Festival Society in using this model to support community development and regeneration. Details of how to get a copy go on the internet at: [www.communiversity.org.uk](http://www.communiversity.org.uk)

<sup>23</sup> Produced by the Castlebrae Casuals Helping with the Capacity Building Project, Instep, and the Venchie Children and Young People's Project with the support of Young People Speak Out. For contact details of these organisations go on the internet at: [www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf](http://www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf)

A fuller list of videos produced recently can be found in Chapter 2 of this report and there is still further potential to extend this use of film. One of the local film-makers who has extended their experience through voluntary work now has a vision for what could be:

*Local people could use it to express themselves. For a digital video camera, quality of equipment costs £1600<sup>24</sup>. It can be a tool, like a newsletter or newspaper, but can be more flexible and creative – it's under used and could be done without editing ... most people love being on screen. They are wanting to communicate positively; to make their lives better ... Presently there might be 5 hours of filming per week in Craigmillar. What if there were 50 hours and 100 hours of editing. You can use video to communicate anything.*

Another local film-maker had completed a course and placement, which had proved invaluable experience:

*A year's video course and a placement with a company that led to work up to being a trained cameraperson. It allowed me to understand what is needed behind the camera ... but you've got to go out and look for it.*

**Comment on learning:** Several people in the community are suggesting this is an untapped area that could support community learning and participation, and employment. If so, then it would be worth some serious investment of time and resources. Certainly any learning programme would need to encourage active people to see this as a powerful means for sharing experience and that with persistence anybody can learn how to use it.

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<sup>24</sup> This is for a new camera, computer and editing software but there are other options. A second hand digital camera and computer with editing software could be bought for around £250. Equipment can also be borrowed or hired locally.

### **Developing your lifelong learning and community participation - creating your own programme of learning**

36% of the people the researcher met with as individuals (rather than groups) spoke of having undertaken *extensive*, often assessed, training in the community, aimed at working to improve their skills and knowledge. 17% of the people the researcher had met with have worked towards an assessed qualification directly relating to their type of community involvement. These people worked with one or more local organisations to develop their learning and could see it having positive affects both on how they could participate within the community and also on the quality of their own lives.

In chapter 1b the research drew on the work of Jane Thompson and her understanding of how lifelong learning might impact more effectively on the regeneration of communities. She spoke of local people using stories that explore their experiences of how they've used learning in their lives – where it's made a difference and where it's met with barriers.

What follows are six short stories<sup>25</sup> of how local people have brought together their learning and their community action. They give a flavour of what can be achieved by combining community participation and learning ... and they show how you can link up different parts of your life through story-telling to help others learn.

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<sup>25</sup> See also another local example of story-telling and learning adult literacy skills on the BBC's Skillwise website on the Internet on:  
[www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/yourstories/2004/october/story\\_four\\_print.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/yourstories/2004/october/story_four_print.shtml)

## **A qualification for developing community arts**

I met the Craigmillar Communiversity<sup>26</sup> in 1997 and became an inaugural student on the Community Arts Management HNC course, which is linked to Barnet College at Middlesex University, but done in Craigmillar. Part of the course involved finding funding for 3 arts projects and managing them. These were the:

Music Workshop – inclusive and anyone can join in<sup>27</sup>

A musical 'In Your Dreams', which included 26 cast plus crew, and helped Steve Spreadborough in establishing the Coventry Festival Society. They also did the show at Barnet College in front of an international audience. It went down a bomb.

A drumming project with young people at the Jack Kane Centre<sup>28</sup>

The course was about practical learning and gave me complete control, no deadlines. I just had to come up with 3 projects over 2 years. Steve Burgess<sup>29</sup>, an academic, helped get it off the ground. The tutor, Helen Crummy, was great support, a unique person and very fair. She helped me find my own solutions, understand my strengths, and channel my energies more effectively. It helped me recognise I'm a good communicator. I learnt from my mother to argue without falling out.

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<sup>26</sup> For more information and contact details on the Craigmillar Communiversity go on the internet at: [www.communiversity.org.uk](http://www.communiversity.org.uk)

<sup>27</sup> The Music Workshop is still running at Craigmillar Community Arts. For contact details go on the internet at: [www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf](http://www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> See Chapter 9 for more details on this drumming project.

<sup>29</sup> For more information on the work of Steve Burgess with the Craigmillar Festival Society see his article (p.55 -57) in Arts: the Catalyst – Craigmillar, published by the Craigmillar Communiversity Press. For copies of this publication go on the internet at: [www.communiversity.org.uk](http://www.communiversity.org.uk)

## **Adult Education and community participation**

I wanted to learn how to put a letter together. I got up to Adult Education at Castlebrae Community High School<sup>30</sup> and thought 'Do I really want to be here?' I stayed and went on to study social studies and computing, and got 12 SCOTVEC modules<sup>31</sup>. I learnt more than when I was at school (as a young person) and I produced the school newspaper as a volunteer for 2.5 years.

By doing this I met with CAPRO<sup>32</sup>; they came up to us to speak about what they were doing, and this has led to many other things; I teach archery there. It's down to what the individual will do. It gives you a sense of achievement, boosts your self-esteem, and makes you feel your worth something. I also work with Craigmillar Ability Network<sup>33</sup>. Volunteering is a useful tool.

I come in and do events and training with the Capacity Building Project: First Aid, Child Protection – something you have to be aware of when you're working with young people – and the ACT Foundation Course<sup>34</sup>.

From the minute you're born to the minute your 6 feet under, you're learning. For instance, you don't ken everything about driving even after 8 years. There's things to keep up with, the Highway Code or road signs.

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<sup>30</sup> For contact details for Adult Education at Castlebrae Community High School go on the internet to: [www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf](http://www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf)

<sup>31</sup> For more information on SCOTVEC's go to the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) on the internet at: [www.sqa.org.uk/](http://www.sqa.org.uk/)

<sup>32</sup> CAPRO, the Craigmillar Adventure Project, provides support and training in personal and social development through social, cultural and recreational activities. For contact details go on the internet to: [www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf](http://www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/pdf/directory%202004.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> For more information on the Craigmillar Ability Network, a self-advocacy organisation for people with disabilities, and their contact details go on the Internet at: <http://can-disability.org.uk/>

<sup>34</sup> The ACT course, 'A Consortium of Training', is a training course for part-time and volunteer staff in Community Learning and Development. It is aimed at local authorities and voluntary organisations and is for those involved in work with 5-12s, youth work, adult learning or community work. Current consortium members are: Midlothian Council, Moray House Institute (University of Edinburgh), Scottish Borders Council, West Lothian Council and Craigmillar Capacity Building Project. The training is accredited – that is it is recognised by colleges and university.

## **Making the connections between sport, housing and health**

I've knowledge and skills from playing football when younger and I've done two 6-hour training courses – for up to 12 year olds, and up to 18 year olds. I'm looking to do the 18+ course. I've also done first aid at the Capacity Building Project and the Disclosure Scotland form through a Management Committee.

I used to be on a Board and I've been to conferences and seminars which have been useful in building my knowledge of:

- tenants rights
- coops rights
- what to do with tenants in debt (how to help)
- what to do with tenants causing a nuisance
- the law
- working with Scottish Homes (how to keep their support)
- minority ethnic groups and equal opportunities
- entitlements of homeless people.

I have enjoyed these conferences working with a small group of 4 people, going to different workshops and writing a report at the end. It builds up a complex knowledge (of issues and responsibilities). Interesting and good to have when you're working with Scottish Homes<sup>35</sup>.

Be Well started 15 years ago as the Craigmillar Health Project, the Men's Group started 14 years ago and I've been involved for 13 years. The Group meets once a week and gives men a chance to talk about 'men's things' like sport, how they feel. Presently up to 5 men attend ... it's an open group. And I organise Men's Health Week, which is funded by the Health Board, which provides reflexology and massage etc.

Now I've got some work at the school at dinner times and after school doing activities with the young people.

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<sup>35</sup> Now part of Communities Scotland, a Scottish Executive agency that works on community regeneration. For more information go on the internet at: [www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk](http://www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk)

### **Keep on learning for a range of community action**

I completed an ABC literacy and numeracy course and then went onto '2<sup>nd</sup> Chance to learn' based at Castlebrae High School. Where I took courses in English, HIV<sup>36</sup>, Children's Behaviour, Special Needs and Children Protection, and gained credits for SCOTVEC and then a Nursing Grade 1 qualification. I now work as a nurse.

Through the Open University and Jewel and Esk Valley College I'm doing a home course in health care, as I don't like college.

I've also done an assertiveness class, which is useful because there were people who are domineering, who know everything and will belittle you – you won't shift it. So now I say it's your problem – assertiveness training comes in here.

On the 'We have the power' campaign<sup>37</sup> we were learning as well. Now I can video and I can edit; everyone did – we all did our own wee pieces. And I learnt how to be a facilitator and can work with big groups and small groups.

I've done First Aid and also Kinesiology, which is like Reiki and brings together touch and health. I've passed 4 exams and could have gone on to be a teacher but cost it too much.

And I've done the Women onto Work course<sup>38</sup>. I did my placement at the Royal Infirmary so that gave me a taste for whether I wanted to do nursing – which I did.

I'm working at Craigmillar Ability Network<sup>39</sup>, answering the phones, meeting people, giving advice - answering the phone it's a communication skill, and I'm working on the Board. I've had training in being a Director, about going to meetings and what it involves, which was useful.

I work on the Disability Equality Forum, which covers all Edinburgh and links with the Equality Unit at City of Edinburgh Council. We look at education and transport, and have a funding panel for distributing funds. I've learnt to be more tolerant and patient with people. I've got more understanding of disabilities than at any other time in my life.

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<sup>36</sup> Human immunodeficiency virus – the cause of the condition AIDS

<sup>37</sup> The group worked with Craigmillar Adult Learning network (CAINET) and the Capacity Building Project to produce a video-report and report, 'That wee word MON£Y (and other things) in Adult Learning', and these are available through Adult Learning Link and the Capacity Building Project. For contact details go on the internet to: [www.adultlearninglink.edin.org](http://www.adultlearninglink.edin.org) or [www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/](http://www.craigmillarcapacitybuilding.org/)

<sup>38</sup> For more information and contact details on Women Onto Work and their courses go on the internet at: [www.womenontowork.org](http://www.womenontowork.org)

<sup>39</sup> For more information on the Craigmillar Ability Network, a self-advocacy organisation for people with disabilities, and their contact details go on the Internet at: <http://can-disability.org.uk/>

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Everybody learns something, whether they like it or not, and all of a sudden it comes back to you. If we were perfect all the time, no one would learn. I'm learning everyday.

### **The Active Women course and local action.**

The course is run by Women onto Work<sup>40</sup> and prepares women to be active in the community. I did it when I moved up here 3 years ago and was out of work. It includes personal development like confidence-building, assertion, talking in public, using your voice, and work in groups.

It includes community activism with one off sessions, for example: from the World Development Movement on Globalisation and Fair Trade, on Community Councils, and the role of the Volunteer Exchange in Edinburgh. We looked at the Scottish Parliament and looked at the role of the media, and used newspaper articles to get discussion going.

It's 3 full days per week over 6 weeks of learning with space for discussion, to talk about things that are important, and do activities such as 'mind-mapping'.

Then there's 4 weeks of placement. You plan and set up your own placement, for example with Amnesty International, Friends of the Earth, Adult Learning Project, Capability Scotland, the Asthma Society, and the Social Work department. Most people got something that they were interested in and not just filling in bits for somebody else. When we'd finished placements we did presentations – some had really positive experiences, some didn't.

We learnt that if you feel strongly about something, there are ways to do something about it, and realised that doing one thing, even writing letters, was really important. Being in a group, talking with other women about a range of things, made me realise how much I have in common with other women, despite our different backgrounds.

Since completing the course I've worked with people on human rights including sessional work through the Scottish Refugee Council with asylum-seekers. Now I work in Craigmillar. The course has strengthened my own personal beliefs: my commitment to the voluntary and community sectors, and the importance of having a say in things – at Books For Babies we're now developing a volunteer programme for parents. And the importance of meeting the needs of people who don't speak English, like having Turkish language resources

I've learnt to question things and that certain things need to be there in order for women to take part. Like in a volunteer programme - travel expenses and childcare or childcare expenses; organisations need to give commitment to this because you never know how many women on the course are going to need childcare. I'm also now a member of the Board at Women onto Work and can represent the trainees' perspective as I've been on one of the courses.

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<sup>40</sup> For more information and contact details on Women Onto Work and their courses go on the internet at: [www.womenontowork.org/](http://www.womenontowork.org/)

## **Learning from the ACT.**

I went on the ACT Foundation course<sup>41</sup> when I was still working down the pit. It was organised by Community Development<sup>42</sup> at the Craigmillar Festival Society. I wasn't sure what it was about and the tutor was dead posh which was intimidating. The course looked at the values of community development work and working with people in groups. I didn't feel sure of myself and sat in the background - but I handed in the assignment and got through.

At the time I was doing football coaching voluntary, coaching youth teams and preparing for the matches. And I'd done a couple of presentations to the Jack Kane Management Committee to get their support for youth football. Coaching was a lot of work and now I and was beginning to think there was a career in working with young people. Then I got offered some part-time youth work.

I must have liked something about the ACT cos after that I did three more ACT courses – youth work level 1, youth work level 2 and interpersonal skills. We looked at specific skills like boundaries, group work and group dynamics, and how you perform in groups – looking at tasks and processes. I started youth work level 3 but it was very in-depth like a university course. I also did a counselling course for a year. All this was building up my knowledge for youth work. And I was seeing the bigger 'youth development' agenda as a football coach.

When I finished at the pit I was now 'in the loop' and did youth work and volunteering before getting a job with the Capacity Building Project. I've been doing voluntary work as a member of various management committees. I started with the advisory group at CAPRO<sup>43</sup> and became a Board member when it became an independent organisation. My other committees including the Boxing Club advisory group, the Jack Kane Management Committee, Café K, Oot N'about, Castleview Community Centre and Craigmillar Childcare Services. And I'm still learning: I got an HND in 'Working with Communities' over a 2 year period, and I've just completed a degree from the George Williams College – Diploma in Higher Education and BA in informal and community education.

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<sup>41</sup> The ACT course, 'A Consortium of Training', is a training system for part-time and volunteer staff in Community Learning and Development. It is aimed at local authorities and voluntary organisations and is for those involved in work with 5-12s, youth work, adult learning or community work. Current consortium members are: Midlothian Council, Moray House Institute (University of Edinburgh), Scottish Borders Council, West Lothian Council and Craigmillar Capacity Building Project. The training is accredited.

<sup>42</sup> Community Development became the Capacity Building Project and is now, since the closing down of the Craigmillar Festival Society, an independent organisation.

<sup>43</sup> Craigmillar Adventure Project, go to the internet at: [www.outdooredinburgh.org.uk/capro.htm](http://www.outdooredinburgh.org.uk/capro.htm) for their details

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

No surprise, perhaps, but people learn in a variety of ways both informally, as they get involved in the community, and more formally through training sessions and courses.

What is particularly interesting is the way people can combine their activeness with learning, sometimes to get a qualification, in order to develop their knowledge and skills and to become a more confident and effective activist or volunteer. Sometimes people use it to gain employment. It is the creativity and diversity of individual learning and involvement that is so striking and exciting.

Can a learning programme model this flexibility, creativity and diversity?  
Giving people a chance to:

- value and feel valued in their community participation
- develop or consolidate knowledge and skills for a variety of community purposes
- make the contacts and networks that can help them extend their participation and learn more
- get a qualification and good references that allow them to get paid work if that is their aim
- think about their development as part of a process of both lifelong and community learning which can enrich their lives and that of the community.

This is a real challenge in developing a learning programme for people who are active in the community.

On a cooler note, Fiona Aldridge and Peter Lavender, in their report on 'The impact of learning on health'<sup>44</sup> highlight the many benefits of lifelong learning for emotional and physical health, but they also see its 'dis-benefits' such as stress, anxiety and relationship difficulties. Both lifelong learning and community action involve people in change and these stresses that can be painful. It's important, then, that people can build and adapt their networks of support so that they don't have to 'travel this road alone' and can work towards their aspirations. This 'building of a network of support' therefore has to be a crucial part too of any learning programme.

Related to this is the need to provide flexible support for both lifelong learning and community participation to a diversity of people in the community. In this chapter, both men and women, and people with disabilities have been represented. It has not been so easy to *knowingly* make connections on the issue of lifelong learning with Black and Minority Ethnic people including Gypsy Travellers, with LGBT<sup>45</sup> people and with people of faith and belief.

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<sup>44</sup> Published in 2000 by the National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education. For more information go to their website at [www.niace.org.uk](http://www.niace.org.uk)

<sup>45</sup> LGBT stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people.

There is scope for more work on increasing the understanding of how to support a fuller diversity of people in using lifelong learning, some of which can be done in the next phase of the project – that is developing and piloting a learning programme.

Finally, returning to the idea of a ‘committed dialogue’ put forward by Jane Thompson<sup>46</sup> and discussed in Chapter 1b, this chapter suggests that that lifelong learning can be an integral part of such a dialogue. It provides skills, knowledge and insight that people can bring into their community participation. It also helps to create and sustain motivation for community participation. These will be invaluable for communities in taking part in such a committed dialogue.

What lifelong learning for communities cannot create by itself is such a dialogue, for this takes commitment from all stakeholders in particular services, agencies and government.

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<sup>46</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/>.