



Empowered Communities

Conference report

Thursday 15th May 2014 10am – 3pm

North West Resource Centre

Dumfries DG2 0BX

Thanks and acknowledgements

The SCDN committee would like to acknowledge the contribution of:

- North West Resource Centre – for providing us with the excellent venue and fantastic catering
- Education Scotland – for providing us with funding which enable us to host this event
- Kirsty Peden for her inspiring opening remarks
- The Moniaive Initiative and The Hub for providing innovative and thought provoking workshops
- All participants for attending the event and for their lively input to the workshops

Introduction

This regional event brought together 25 community development practitioners, from across the Dumfries and Galloway area from a range of agencies and organisations.

Opening Remarks

Kirsty Peden, Service Manager, Nithsdale Community and Customer Services, gave the opening remarks for the conference.

“Colleagues welcome to Dumfries & Galloway, to North West Resource Centre – a shining example of what communities can achieve as highlighted in the Working and Learning Together document as an example of good practice. I noted the breadth of experience and backgrounds present e.g. Councillors, third Sector, health, Council, Education Scotland and the Standards Council and the representation from across D&G as well as nationally.

I am pleased to, to welcome Fiona and Susan of Scottish Community Development Network to deliver this SCDN Regional event.



I know how passionately we all feel about our work with our communities and it is events like this that help to keep me firmly rooted in community development, before my current role as Service Manager for Nithsdale with a responsibility for Community Learning & Development I too was a community worker – here in North West Resource Centre and so I know how much events of this nature can achieve and just how much we inspire each other. Much as I would dearly love to be able to be here throughout the day and to participate with you in the workshops sadly I cannot.

It leaves me therefore to wish you all well good luck with today's event."

Keynote Speakers

Fiona Ballantyne – Chair – SCDN

On behalf of SCDN, I thank you very much for having us here today. First of all I wish to offer a perspective on Community Development (CD) in Scotland. I would suggest that the purpose of CD is often lost within current trends of 'slicing and splicing into bit parts', the short term nature of funding for CD posts and the absence of CD strategies linking efforts across agencies. SCDN has found that many CD practitioners are often isolated and lack support.

And yet, there is a lot of activity happening globally and throughout Europe to raise the profile of CD. For example, (IACD) International Association for

Community Development's *Community is the Answer* conference which will bring an international focus on CD, with practitioners and academics from all over the world gathering in Glasgow.

In Europe, the Budapest Declaration – April 2004 has been utilised to develop common outcomes of CD practice, which should be available in June this year.

Some years ago, our sister organisation in the UK – Community Development Exchange (CDX) worked with others to produce *The Community Development Challenge 2006*. This document recognised that “CD, which specialises in encouraging and empowering people to gain control over the conditions in which they live gives us a very powerful way of turning alienation into



engagement” (Baroness Andrews)

And yet in Scotland CD continues to be overlooked and undervalued.

So what is it about community development which sends those in power scuttling to their caves?

I would suggest that it might be to do with some or all of the following aspects of CD:

- combines a broad range of creative processes
- Is difficult to box and tick
- Exposes power imbalances
- Nurtures independent community activity
- Focuses on change
- Has a unique contribution to make

Is anyone listening to CD practitioners?

SCDN is! We want to hear what it is like for you and what you would like from SCDN.

We provide opportunities for CD practitioners to:

- network with other CD practitioners
- share experience and information
- discuss and debate practice and policy developments

- learn from and support each other
- be part of a strong collective voice for CD practitioners in Scotland.

If something needs to change, then we have the skills to work together to change them.

Feedback from participants at our annual conference in Glasgow last year – “Back to the Future – Community Development – Roots, Realities and Responses” was very positive. (*Conference report can be viewed on our website*) www.scdn.org.uk

I would encourage everyone to join SCDN and to complete our practitioners’ survey.

Chris Woodness - Community Learning & Development – Dumfries and Galloway

“To each and every one of you - good morning colleagues and, especially to our guests from out-with the area; Echoing Kirsty Peden’s words – A very warm Dumfries and Galloway welcome to you from North West Resource Centre.

In the spirit of a well-planned and well-coordinated event; I of course am not the speaker you were to have before you, I am though both a locally based community development worker of some years standing and secretary to SCDN “Your Community Development Network”

I am pleased Fiona Ballantyne has provided me with my opening line from her introductory speech when referencing the SCDN national conference of 2013 “Community Development – Back to the Future” as it allows me to both Look back and move forward in time.

The Past: So, we shall start by looking back to the foundation of this very building - North West Resource Centre, which for us in D&G is an historical hub of Community Development. From its very beginning, an example of good practice in Community Planning - NWRC came about some 15 years ago as THE Community Planning ‘Pilot Project’ for D&G – Kirsty Peden here today as Service Manager Nithsdale for CLD was at the time, a relatively newly qualified CLD Worker – Fiona Daubney, our Principal Officer then ‘Fiona Edwards’ a teenage service user – Sheila Campbell and Paul McGregor of ‘Building Healthy Communities’ were Community Activists. The combined actions of all partners mentioned by Kirsty, and the will of the community led to the creation of this facility, based here at the heart of North West Dumfries with the shared desire to bring about positive social change, working with communities through the identification of their needs, aspirations, opportunities, rights and responsibilities.

Who would have thought that as a country we would have moved in such a short time from Full UK Governance to Donald Dewar's' devolved Scottish Executive? And through to the Scottish government about to face the enormity of democratically asking Scotland's people to vote on their own future national identity?



We have progressed within those fifteen years both ideologically and politically from *Tony Blair's third way – moving onto to a Tory Lib Dem shared governance of the UK and the impact of the financial collapse of world markets to the implications we all face through our work of dealing with the aftermath of the 'Welfare Reform' Does it remind you of a return to the Eighties? High levels of poverty; high levels of youth unemployment; problems in Europe?? And the call for 'Community Development' as the answer to all societal ills.*

The present: As with political parties and government policies' the life cycle of this and every community changes and evolves to the point that this centre has moved from being a community led and operated building to a council managed community resource – The changing dynamics of community drivers and practice is now bringing into focus important questions from the community about the very future life and direction of this building and the services delivered from it.

The Future: Community development practitioners in many guises sit in this room, from activists - public and third sector and elected members, together we represent a diverse community of groups and organisations as well as speaking a variety of thematic languages

- Arts & Culture
- Social Housing
- Funding
- Jargon Busting
- Health & Wellbeing
- Community Asset Building
- Skills Development
- Confidence Building
- Partnership Working
- Public Sector
- Private Sector
- Third Sector
- Support
- Policy

As with this centre, this community and the many communities with whom we work and represent. Their lives, needs and aspirations are ever changing, sometimes for good and occasionally for worse but it is through discussion of our shared experiences that we grow and develop and in so doing help those same communities to become stronger, more confident and more resilient. I urge you all now to fully embrace the day before us; think on the policy changes affecting our work, from the Strategic Guidance for CPP's and the Community Empowerment Bill to the Christie Commission report and the Statutory Instrument for CLD; engage with the workshops and openly discuss your experiences. I hope you all gain from today and leave North West Resource Centre full of hope and ambition.

Thank you.

Workshops

There were 3 workshops each workshop was held in the morning and again in the afternoon.

1. Asset based Workshop – Olwen Hughes - Moniaive Initiative

The Moniaive Initiative is a community organisation dedicated to delivering legacy projects for Moniaive and the surrounding area, in partnership with the community and community groups. They can offer advice on funding, put you in touch with other groups and help you get started on your own ideas for community involvement.

This workshop focused on an asset based approach to community development and the feedback was as follows:

Workshops Feedback



The workshops highlighted some of the issues affecting communities in Dumfries and Galloway:

- Quality of Public Transport provision/connectivity and TRANSPORT TIMES
- Connection between care provision for older people and communities.
- SANCTIONING OF BENEFIT RECIPIENTS

The workshop also highlighted some of the issues affecting practitioners:

- Finance of Momentum in Long Term around CD

- Requirements of Technology to support care provisions.
- Emotive Community Reaction to SPECIFIC EVENTS example - school closure/funding or health care V's Community Need
- Community voice representing own interests rather than community.
- Retention of services no longer fit for purpose as a result of community pressure.
- Literacy/Mental health/IT literacy issues.
- Wider issues with CONTINUITY/SUSTAINABILITY
- 'Volunteers' or community leaders.
- Lack of recognition that CD is a long term process.
- Demands on practitioners in terms of engagements
- Lack of acknowledgement of divisions within
- Lack of opportunities for social interactions with communities – development of working relationships.

Some potential responses to these challenges included:

- Use of participatory appraisal approaches
- More planned and systematic approach to Community Engagement, which includes:
 - Sharing knowledge from engagements
 - Focus on need
 - Processes to involve whole community
 - Feedback to community
 - Managing Expectation / Survey Fatigue of Community Groups
 - Make Engagement Fun



2. Need Identification Workshops – Karen Lewis - The Hub

The hub – ‘Your Community Action Centre’ is a community anchor organisation based in Dumfries providing development support for organisations based at the centre. The hub provides a resource base for community groups, voluntary organisations and social innovators throughout Nithsdale. It also develops and delivers projects across Dumfries and Galloway that build resilient and sustainable communities using a community asset based approach.

The workshops looked at how to carry out community engagement activities to build up an evidence base of community needs and priorities using a priority appraisal approach around community appraisal and community planning for real activities.

Workshops Feedback

The workshops offered an example of Learning needs Analysis – Nithsdale Targeted local community re: needs and stakeholders.

Service user’s participation

- Tracking people who lease?
- Communication / listening / reviewing
- Niche Services
- Identify barriers to access
- Participatory appraisal?



- Community Appraisals
- Planning for Real
- Voices at the table?
- Community champions/ Community agents
- Use other groups/ networks
- Conduits for Information?
- Representation?

There was discussion around some practice issues:

- Establishing community needs.
- Co-production
- How does CLD strategy connect to the SOA?
- How does the SOA connect to the CLD strategy?
- How inclusive are current SOA's? D&G 80% of needs are not expressed within SMID's! How good is our delivery of key processes?
- Who sets time scales?
- THE CULTURE OF CONSULTATION
- Single Outcome Agreements are inherently retrospective - Based on 'old data'
- Are we sure that the needs we are identifying are the needs of the moment

Some solutions / opportunities were explored:

- NEED TO UP OUR GAME ACROSS CLD
- THIS IS OUR OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE. (Voluntary sect / public sect)
- HMIE Inspection Quality Indicators– How well are partners improving learning, & working for community wellbeing?
- Good practice model re: NHS – Public Sector Partnership D&G.
- CLD & PLANNING SYSTEMS!!! Wisdom Circles -....
- Participating budgeting > informing & involving communities - CLD role? (Pressure of 'community reps' or activists)
- Community appraisal > SUSTAINABLE Voice!! > How do we critically appraise – community needs assessment processes.
- Community Development coordination at Senior levels in every L.A & NHS)
- Community renewable energy 400/500k per year



Tools and resources were also explored:

- Rocket Science – Community Faulty Audit
- Analysis of 'Community Asset Policy'!
- COMMUNITY AGENTS > ASSESSING NEEDS – STEPS COURSE
- CDTs – Conflict of interest – Who's need is it serving?
- Community Action Research
- SKILL SWAPS
- Planning for real

3. How could/would SCDN work for you Workshops? – SCDN

The Scottish Community Development Network (SCDN) is a member led organisation, for community workers / community development workers, paid or unpaid, full or part time, from the community, voluntary or public sectors, who support the principles and practice of community development. SCDN is open to anyone with an interest in community development in Scotland.

This workshop looked at the ways SCDN can support community development practitioners, paid and unpaid and seek the views of participants in what they would like from SCDN in line with the current SCDN survey.

Workshops Feedback

The workshop considered the context for CD at present, including:

- Aspirations for empowered communities, public service reform seeking preventative approaches, etc. Yet CD remains unrecognised and undervalued.

- Strategic Guidance for Community Planning Partnerships: Community Learning and Development states that:

“One of the two specific focus for CLD should be: “stronger, more resilient, supportive, influential and inclusive communities” where “communities are full partners in delivering practical and policy solutions” by delivering community development (building the capacity of communities to meet their own needs, engaging with and influencing decision makers)”

The workshops then discussed what it is like for CD within this context:

- Whilst there are opportunities, staff on ground finding it difficult due to funding cuts.
- Communities don't always know what's going on – Policies being decided from above.
- People who use services need to be involved in deciding where budgets are cut.
- Challenges with joint working
- Working within predominantly top down cultures
- People are not as politicised as they were and practitioners don't know how to implement CD
- Fear of the unknown
- Lack of understanding of what CD is throughout NHS and elsewhere.
- Lack of understanding of the complex skills of CD
- People / practitioners have stuck with this for decades – lots of capacity and experience to draw on
- Too many policies
- Service driven agenda
- CD is a process taking time - whilst national policy drivers expect things now

The workshops then discussed what CD practitioners could do in response:

- There needs to be a radical paradigm shift
- Pool resources together to help more people instead of being protective of own patch/funding.
- Replicate successful models of practice.

- Work with groups re: Values, principles social justice etc. and have people who would be interested in being involved in SCDN – regional wide
- Sharing good practice in forums such as SCDN.
- Work with rather than talk to communities
- All of these priorities are achievable through working practice with the support of SCDN.
- Links with priorities through SOA.
- Need to bring people on board in a positive way.
- Strategy within a strategy of how we bring about this change.
- New ways of working with health – empowering patients to take control of their ways
- Community Development co-ordinator pulling all the strands together
- Localised network of practitioners that feeds into SCDN
- Influencing / cultural change – values
- Promote CD as positive practice

The workshops then considered what could be done to locate CD more firmly within policy contexts?

All participants agreed that there is a need for CD to be more firmly placed within Policy.

- SCDN has a role to promote CD to professionals out with CD.
- Need to educate the decision makers.



- Introduce CD to Schools – fits in with Active Citizenship.

- Raising awareness with senior management – Chief Exec.
- Breaking CD down into lay – person's terms and how people can contribute.
- Making policy more explicit re CD.
- Promoting CD as the way forward.
- Real opportunity for CD to reposition itself.
- Could be shift toward CD re resources being more evenly distributed.



Key observations

- We need a shift of power – communities realising the power they hold
- CD needs to be more firmly located in policy re: what it really is – true definition
- We need a CD policy written by Communities and CD Practitioners.

KEY ACTIONS

- Influence funders and OSCR
- Develop local network
- Promote (radical) approaches – CD
- Target other events e.g. PHIS
- Keep connections going

Evaluation

Ten evaluation forms were received and responses were requested on a scale of 1 being very negative to 5 being very positive.

Q 1 – Overall value to you:

6 rated @ 5 and 4 rated @ 4

Q 2 – Quality of delivery:

5 rated @ 5, 4 rated @ 4 and 1 rated @ 3

Q 3 – Relevance and quality of the information supplied:

7 rated @ 5 and 3 rated @ 4

Q 4 – What aspects of the conference do you think were most beneficial?

“Sharing ideas”

“Workshops were very good”

“Networking. Discussing professional practice and ethics versus resource driven agenda”

“Networking. Sharing good practice. Finding out new ideas and initiatives”

“Linking policy to practice”

“All aspects very good”

“All – presentations, workshops, discussions. It provided me with a context and perspective of community development”

“Strategic priorities. Really influenced local authority staff and made a difference”

“Bringing specialists together to share professional insights on one topic – community development – with reference to Health, Education, Arts and Leisure etc.”

Q 5 – What aspects of the conference do you think were least beneficial and why?

“We needed more time to address key issues, ideas and to make recommendations”

“The workshops/discussions”

“None” x two

“Nothing”

“Shame about the low numbers”

“All was useful”

“All aspects excellent”

“N/A”

Q 6 – Did you feel you had enough opportunity to participate in discussions and share your experience with others?

“Yes” x 7 responses

“Yes lots of opportunities”

“Yes very much”

“Yes but would like a longer session e.g. weekend or seminar over several days”

Q 7 – Are there any other comments you would like to make?

“Thank you”

“Thanks SCDN for coming to Dumfries”

“Thanks for an informative and interesting day”

“Just a big thank you to everyone for the invite”

“Good luck with the Dumfries SCDN Network”

“Have a local SCDN group to keep it going”

“A quick turn around on seminar report and follow up actions from event. Mid July for follow up event”

“Very informative”

Delegate List

First Name	Last Name	Street Address
Paul	McGregor	
Chris	Woodness	North West Resource Centre
Fiona	Daubney	C/o North West Resource Centre
Mark	Langdon	CLD Standards Council
Mike	Staples	Leighpark
Ingrid	Gemmell	Annan Town Hall
Fiona	Ballantyne	Scottish Refugee Council
Jean	Nelson	North West Resource Centre
Violet	Wark	Sanquhar Community Centre
Viv	Smith	
Amanda	Dunsmuir	Upper Nithsdale Family Project Kirkfield
john	galt	Education Scotland, The optima building,
Belle	Doyle	
Thomesena	Lochhead	
Jo	McCaig	Independent Living Support
Vicky	Freeman	Strategic Planning, NHS Dumfries & Galloway
Christine	Clarke	Third Sector First
Cate	Ross	
Joy	Cherkaoui	St Teresa's Education Centre
John	Tierney	Municipal Buildings
Moir	Charters	Third Sector First Dumfries and Galloway
Karen	Ward Boyd	The Holywood Trust, Hestan House
sheila	campbell	Building Healthy Communities. C/O NWRC
Irene	Campbell	Ayrshire Central Hospital
Kirsty	Peden	Nithsdale Community and Customer Services
Olwen	Hughes	Monaive Innitiative
Susan	Campbell	SCDN