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The Citizens' Curriculum

National Advisory Group on Peer Volunteering and Learning
16th March 2016

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Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
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The basic skills challenge in England ...

- The **Skills for Life Survey** (2011): 1 in 4 adults have low levels of numeracy skills; 1 in 6 have low levels of literacy skills.
- **OECD Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC)** (2013): 16.4% scored at the lowest level for literacy; 24% for numeracy.
- **Census data** (2011) records around 850,000 adults 'non-proficient' in the English language.
- **Government data** shows that from 12/13 to 13/14, adult (19+) participation in English, maths and ESOL provision fell by 7.6%, 10.7% and 4.8% respectively.

So, our response

More flexible, creative and innovative models are needed to engage and motivate learners and meet the challenge of poor basic language, literacy, numeracy and digital skills in the context of rapid social change.

“A citizens’ curriculum is learning which is locally-led, developed with the active participation of learners, and interlinks the life skills of language, literacy and numeracy with health, financial, digital and civic capabilities.”

Tom Schuller • David Watson

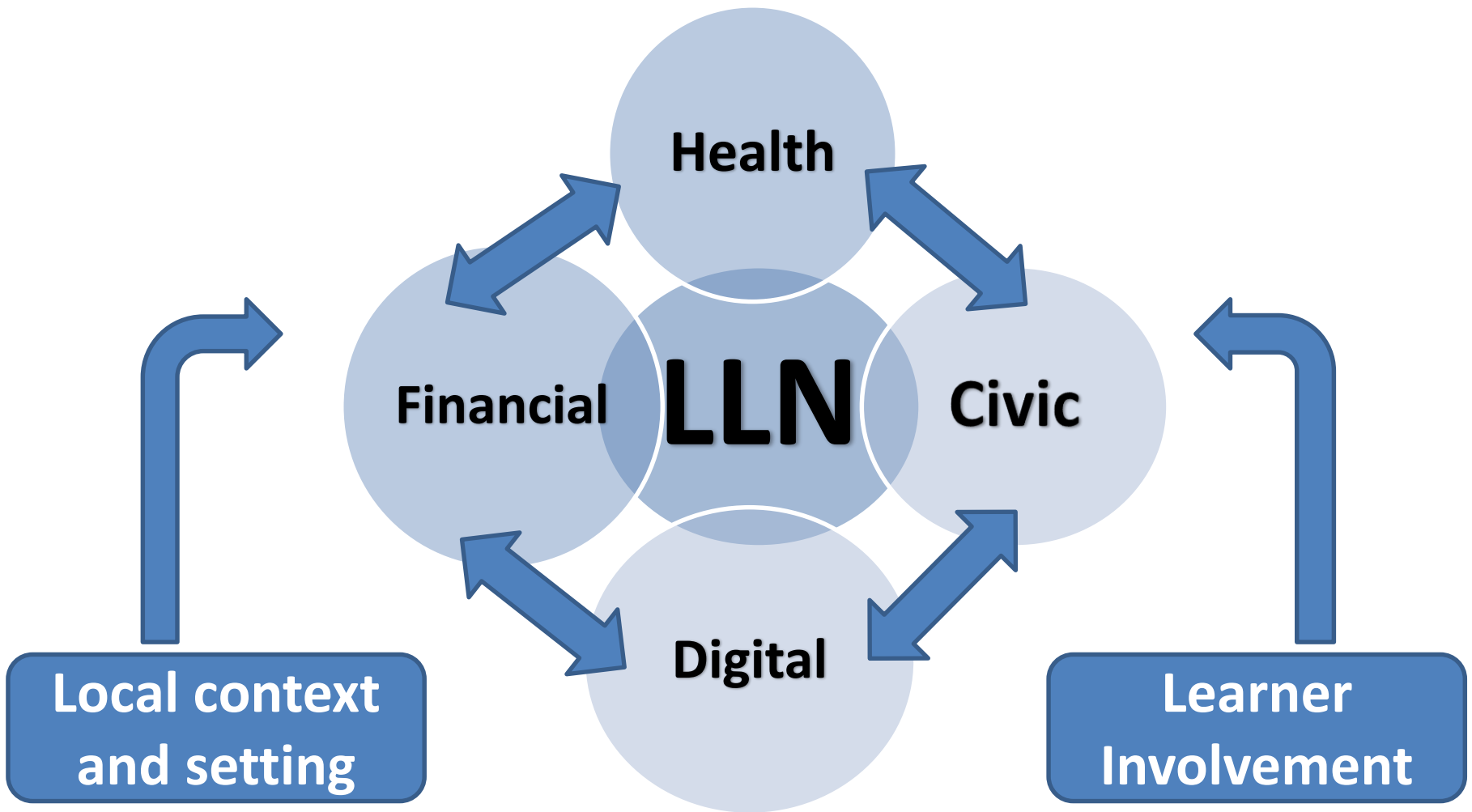
Learning Through Life

Inquiry into the Future for
Lifelong Learning

Summary



- Schuller and Watson (NIACE, 2009)
- NIACE / NRDC Evidence on impact of embedded basic skills – Eldred (2005); Casey (2006)
- Co-design of the curriculum - *A New Curriculum for Difficult Times* (Beer, 2013)



Piloting the Citizens' Curriculum

- Our **phase 1 pilots** helped us to learn more about how a Citizens' Curriculum approach can work in **different contexts**.
- We worked with **13 community learning providers** targeting disadvantaged groups – over **160 learners**.
- Supported with a '**health check**', **resources** and **community of practice**.

The Citizens' Curriculum: Impact

NIACE worked with 13 organisations to pilot the Citizens' Curriculum. Over 160 learners took part. Here's the impact they reported...



more positive about numeracy



more positive about literacy



more motivated to progress to other learning



more motivated to look for work



better able to access support and information about health



improved confidence to access public services online



improved confidence to manage money



increased self-esteem



improved ability to use local services

Key Overall Findings - Providers

- Added value to the curriculum offer, which became more engaging through the interlinking of English, maths and language skills with other capabilities
- An improved curriculum offer which, through greater learner involvement, was felt to be more responsive to the needs of learners

Key Overall Findings - Practitioners

- Improved ability to make learning relevant to adults' lives and articulate the wider benefits of participation in learning, through a focus on the interlinked capabilities of the Citizens' Curriculum approach.
- For practitioners with less experience in the creation and co-design of flexible provision tailored to the needs of individuals, a greater appreciation of the value and benefits of this approach and keenness to embed this further in their practice.

Key Overall Findings - Learners

- Improved attitudes to learning, particularly with regard to English/language and maths, leading to progression into further learning opportunities.
- Improved skills and attitudes supporting employability, including increased motivation to seek work and/or participate in voluntary work, and for some learners, progression into employment or work placements.
- Improved engagement in the wider community and improved confidence and ability to use public services

Next Steps for the Citizens' Curriculum

- More pilots in new settings – English and Maths for unemployed adults, ESA claimants, ESOL learners in prisons and plans for work with young migrants
- More detailed evaluation and impact assessment including longer term analysis
- Further practitioner support around health and civic capabilities
- A 'technical consultation', looking at how the Citizens' Curriculum might form the basis of any 'study programme for adults'

**THANK YOU
QUESTIONS**