

Scotland's Learning Partnership

# Scotland Case Study Collection

The Impact of Adult Learning



**Forum for Adult Learning**



**ECORYS**



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**The following case studies were collected this summer from Impact Forum members and speakers. They are chosen to illustrate the impact that adult learning, in various offerings, has on the three core themes of work, health and community - sometimes separately and sometimes cumulatively.**

**We know that these are a very small sample of the excellent work that goes on in Scotland across all sectors of provision. We believe that more work needs to happen to pull together quantitative and qualitative data so that the full impact of adult learning can be understood and valued.**

**Our thanks to: Stirling Council's Learning and Employability Team, NHS Ayrshire & Arran; Paisley University, North Ayrshire Council and the three towns Healthy Living Company, Airdrie Adult Learners' Forum (AALF), The Lochside Group, South Ayrshire Council Adult Literacy Team and the Drug and Alcohol Partnership and Communitas.**

## Scotland Case Studies

### Case study 1: Developing and recognising Employability

**Theme: Work**

#### Stirling

Groups of Adult Learning with Stirling Council's Learning and Employability Team have been participating in the ASDAN Employability Award, an accredited programme offering 60 hours of learning in total.

Participants work through a range of modules at SCQF levels 3 and 4 including Exploring Job Opportunities, Learning through Work Experience, Applying for a Job, Overcoming Barriers to Work, Introduction to Customer Care, Rights and Responsibilities at Work and Tackling Number Problems.

During the programme, participants consider their skills and qualities in relation to jobs, in which they are realistically interested, and also get support in finding out how to access such opportunities. The programme includes a short, locally arranged, fully supported, work placement of one morning/afternoon per week over 6 weeks which provides a taste of employment. The programme further supports participants to develop their skills in cv writing, job applications and participate in mock interviews.

Feedback from the learners who participated, said that they felt that it had helped them to develop their employability skills as well as develop confidence to apply for work in their areas of interest. They felt they could approach interviews more positively. They also felt more able to work with others in real work situations and had developed improved communications skills; some have been successful in accessing paid employment following their participation on the course.

### Case Study 2

**Theme: Health**

#### 3TFM

#### **(3 Towns FM; Stevenson, Saltcoats and Adrossan)**

The 2001 Census data identified a significant number of people, within local communities of Stevenson, Saltcoats and Adrossan (Three Towns), who were reportedly in poor health. The Three Towns have a population of approximately 32,800, with 3,936 (12%) of the population experiencing 'not good health' and 7,872 (24%) percent having a limiting long term illness. Oral cancer, poor dental health, coronary heart disease and teenage pregnancy also feature as above average statistics, within the Scottish context, and it is against this background that the idea of a 'community radio for health' was born.

In 2004, a multidisciplinary partnership including NHS Ayrshire & Arran; Paisley University; North Ayrshire Council and the three towns Healthy Living Company came together to focus on improving community health across the three Towns area. This coalition of local government; health and education professionals, working with local volunteers created a vision for change and action, with a particular emphasis on improving health and developing healthy life styles. They identified a need to reach out to those people in the community who did not take up the offer of support from GP or health services, and sought to share information and provide educational opportunities that could help address some of the key barriers in supporting good health. They researched community needs and recognised that radio was widely listened to in the 3 communities and set about establishing a community radio station: 3TFM.

The station features programmes that support adults in learning about their health and becoming more active in looking after themselves. They deliver local learning and training which supports and complements key radio programmes, including cookery; links with GPs; relaxation; keeping fit and working with families to help promote health awareness and healthy lifestyles. The group's volunteer training includes supporting people with mental ill health and the station regularly promotes self-help groups and local learning opportunities designed to provide support and challenge.

Funding for this type of activity can be complex but the group's ability to design services to meet the needs of the local community have helped establish them as a good first port of call for information, advice and guidance on adult learning and its health benefits.

Since its inception, 3TFM has delivered local radio for health every day, 24 hours a day. It has provided a lifeline for people anxious about going to the doctor, to people needing to embrace new technologies which can help them remain active, fit and live healthier and more productive lives.

The station now works across the health and education sectors, providing adult learning opportunities, referring listeners to other types of adult education and training whilst promoting positive health and wellbeing through diverse and creative programming and programmes.

## Case study 3

### Theme: Communities

#### Airdrie Adult Learners' Forum

The core principles, of the Statement of Ambition for adult learning in Scotland, indicate that learning must be life-long, life-wide and learner-centered. In the spirit of this, Airdrie Adult Learners' Forum (AALF) was established, as a membership organisation, to develop networks and partnerships to identify and address gaps in local adult learning provision.

A range of barriers faced the group, due to its diverse nature, with many members needing to develop confidence and self-efficacy, whilst improving their English, literacy and ICT skills. The training and development programmes, created in response, addressed these issues directly by



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organising courses in: communications; group dynamics; dealing with difficult people; design/delivery of adult learning; recording and measuring impact.

This has resulted in a range of positive outcomes for individuals and for the development of local adult learning services; members are now responsible for running a Men's Group, a Syrian Integration Project; a Mental Health Engagement Programme, and an Intergenerational project with the 16+ Hub; a Young Parents' Project; Walking Groups and a Needlecraft Group.

Recent impact evaluations with AALF members evidenced an increase in confidence and self-esteem, with 2 members feeling they now had the skills to return to work after periods of long-term unemployment. Others have gone on to other volunteering, employment or education, and one has gone to University to gain Higher Education qualifications.

AALF demonstrates the benefits of combining a non-formal approach with the more formal gaining of qualifications and experience. This has led them to increase participation in local adult learning programmes, achieving a range of positive outcomes for both individuals and the communities in which they live. It highlights how following initial learning, many adult learners often assume critical roles as volunteers and advocates of learning. AALF members have developed a role in the design and delivery of adult learning services, providing tailored learning programmes which can reach excluded groups and develop a new culture of learning that can be passed on to future generations.

The Forum has been supported to achieve this by adult learning staff, from the local Community Learning and Development Team, who continue to support the ongoing development of AALF, by providing training and skills development for new members, to ensure that the programme of work becomes more sustainable.

## Case study 4

### Theme: Work

#### Lochside Learners

The Lochside Group began as a result of referrals from Job Centre Plus, Access to Employment, South Ayrshire Council Adult Literacy Team and the Drug and Alcohol Partnership. Skills for work projects often bring together participants with similar backgrounds, to train them ready to move into further training or on to work. However, this partnership meant that people from diverse backgrounds and experiences came together to learn.

The local employment market data helped to identify the need for training in office skills, and participants began by taking part in a course called Front of Office Skills at SCQF level 5. The group quickly gelled and despite personal barriers, including drug and alcohol, anxiety, negative experiences of previous learning, they soon began to enjoy the programme. This included Understanding customer relations; Communication skills; Telephone techniques; Dealing with difficult people; Conflict resolution; Handling complaints and Time Management. Success



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resulted in the development of new skills, a new sense of worth and achievement, further learning in the form of Customer Service Skills, IT for Employment, Hospitality, and Environment.

Since the course ended, 50% of the participants have new jobs, 20% moved into volunteering roles to help build practical skills and 30% have gone on to full time training courses.

The programme is integrated within a community and college setting to build up the confidence of the participants in using the college facilities to further develop their skills and create progression routes.

## **Case study 5**

### **Theme: Work**

#### **Community Development Fund project**

Community, the Union, was formed in 2004 when the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation and the Knitwear, Footwear and Apparel Trade Union joined together. Since then, other smaller Unions have joined the group and as a result they have created a dedicated workplace training organisation called Communitas. They believe that access to learning is a fundamental human right and that the key to succeeding in our changing world of work requires flexible skills development.

The objective of this Community Development Fund Project is to develop a relationship with employers around workforce development. Communitas recently established a union/management Joint Learning Committee within Whistl (formerly TNT Post) based in Tannochside, Uddingston. The Committee quickly took off, and the union and management worked together on organising courses with an initial focus on health and wellbeing, and better employee relations. This began with a short workshop-style course in September 2016 called 'Respecting Diversity in the Workplace' which was delivered as three one day sessions to over 20 learners, including senior staff members, all of whom were given release from work to attend.

Feedback from the learners taking part has been very positive and this has been a great start for the on-site Joint Learning Committee. Two further courses: Hidden Disabilities in the Workplace and a two-day Mental Health First Aid course were equally successful

The key to this success is good communication and finding out the learning needs of the workforce. They plan to develop more programmes, in consultation with members, more courses and interesting projects and aim to make these available not only to members but to their families too.