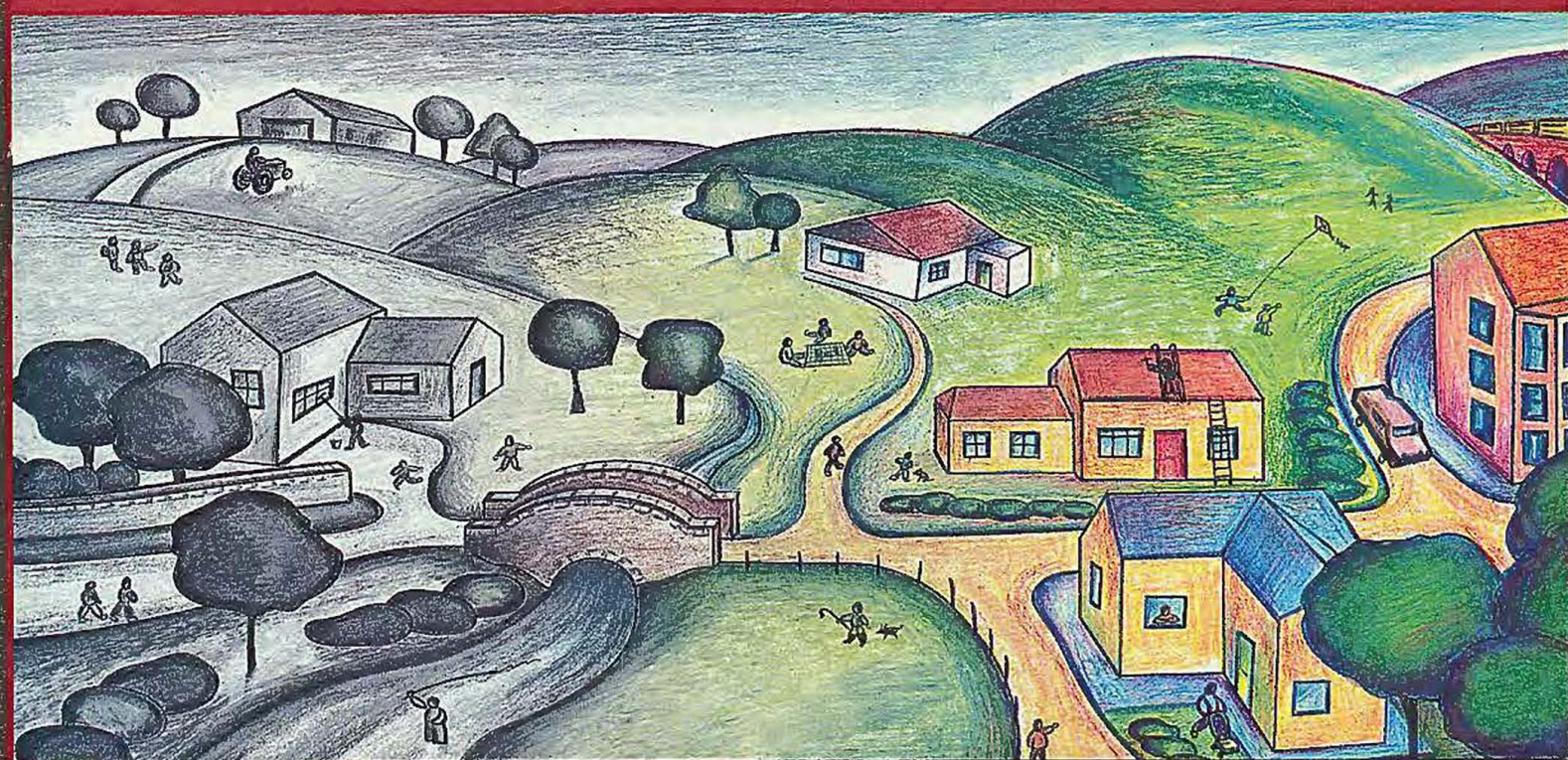


# COMMUNITIES: CHANGE THROUGH LEARNING

REPORT OF A WORKING GROUP  
ON THE FUTURE OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION





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## FOREWORD

I am pleased to present this report. The Working Group, which was convened earlier this year to consider the future of community education, has in my view taken the debate forward and rightly placed the need to promote social inclusion, active citizenship and lifelong learning at its heart.

This Government is committed to putting the needs of learners first and giving communities much greater opportunity to make their voices heard and take on new responsibilities. In the past, some have seen community education as on the margins, that must no longer be the case. There are many dedicated and professional community education workers, full and part-time, as well as those who give their time voluntarily to help learning in communities. I am unstinting in my praise for the efforts of the many dedicated and professional staff and volunteers, who give much to help learning in communities.

Too many people in Scotland have low expectations and lack the skills including literacy skills, to make the progress for themselves and their communities, which they want. People need to be empowered as stakeholders in their communities. They deserve to be empowered as stakeholders in their communities. Learning has a crucial role to play in helping them take charge of their own destiny.

This report outlines a vision for a modern Scotland that is a dynamic learning society. It envisages community learning as a key mechanism for tackling social issues. I am grateful to members of the Working Group for their patience, time and expertise. Their efforts have resulted in a step change in thinking and clarity of purpose. Their proposals are radical, but achievable, and they have my full support.

The Government's view is clear. We aim to integrate community learning into local authority planning. We shall develop national and local targets and proper quality assurance to improve accountability. The whole of the education system, other public services and the voluntary and private sectors must work together if this vision is to be realised.

The Working Group, through this report has provided vision. Change is needed if we are to make the dynamic, inclusive, learning society of tomorrow a reality. The route to achieving that vision begins here. I will do what I can, as will all of Government, but ultimately, the new Scotland will come when communities join together to build that new society.

**Foreword by the Rt Hon Mrs Helen Liddell M.P.**  
**Minister of State at the Scottish Office**  
**with responsibility for Education and Women's Issues**





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Introduction

In February 1998, Mr Brian Wilson MP, Minister of State at The Scottish Office, set up a Working Group to provide advice on the long-term future of community education. The Working Group's membership, shown in the Appendix, provided broad coverage of the fields to which community education is relevant rather than being limited to its particular interests.

Its remit was:

"To consider a national strategy for community based adult education, youth work and educational support for community development in the light of Government priorities in relation to social exclusion and lifelong learning and advise Ministers on future arrangements. The Group will work alongside the CoSLA Community Education Task Group which is considering a range of issues facing local authority community education provision."

The Working Group met on 6 occasions and considered papers from its members as well as from the Department. It did not take external evidence.



## Vision

Our vision for Scotland is of a dynamic learning society. A democratic and socially just society should enable all of its citizens, in particular those who are socially excluded, to develop their potential to the full and to have the capacity, individually and collectively, to meet the challenge of change. The learning society will provide an active and informed citizenship.

Community education is a key contributor to lifelong learning and plays a significant part in combating social exclusion. Through its commitment to learning as an agent for change, it supports the Scottish people to improve personal, community, social and economic well-being. Primarily community education is more a way of working than a sector of education. Its unique contribution is to create learning opportunities within and for communities.

Community based learning opportunities for all ages are as important to the realisation of our vision as schools, colleges and universities. The whole of the education system, other public services and the voluntary and private sectors require to collaborate to realise it.

The capacity of individuals and groups of all ages to participate in developing their own learning is crucial to improving their quality of life. Through learning, people can come to make a real contribution to their own communities and participate in local and national democratic processes. Through learning, people can build the confidence and capacity to tackle wider social and economic issues, such as health or community safety. Skills can be acquired at many levels which are applicable in any walk of life. Sometimes these are essential skills, such as literacy or basic life management, which those who have benefited most from the formal education system take for granted. Without them, social exclusion is much more likely. With them, people can increase the opportunities for moving into further and higher education and into employment. Through them, local people can develop productive partnerships with other agencies relating to a wide range of social, economic and health as well as educational needs.

For both individuals and communities, the results of community education can be tangible and lasting. That is what makes it a subject of critical national importance.

## Central Ideas

Its thorough and searching discussions led the Group to clarify 4 key ideas which shaped its overall recommendations. These were:

1. The Government is developing policies, particularly for social inclusion and lifelong learning but also more generally in support of active citizenship, which require a new dynamism in community based learning.
2. The implementation of a wide range of policies requires effective community support and Government recognition that coherence among policies and approaches which impact on communities is a pre-requisite.
3. The ways of working that community education has established and which are capable of considerable further development have a powerful relevance to key policies and their implementation.
4. A major transformation of attitudes and practice is required, both among people with a full-time commitment to community education and those for whom it is, or should be, a minor but vital consideration. There is, however, a strong enough base on which to build in order to achieve the required goals.



There has been a long-term confusion between community education as a way of working and community education as an amalgam of the 3 fields noted in the Group's remit. The way forward will be to focus on the way of working, seeing community education's purposes as being to promote personal and social development, to build community capacity and invest, and secure investment, in community learning. For both individuals and communities, the results will be tangible and lasting. That is what makes community education a subject of critical national importance.

The particular contribution of the community education approach is its primary focus on the use of educational methods to develop skills, knowledge and capacity in community contexts.

The focus is on motivation and confidence, personal and group effectiveness, widening access to formal learning institutions and involvement in civic life.

The aim is to develop the capacity of individuals and groups of all ages and, through their actions, the capacity of communities, to improve their quality of life. Central to this is their ability to participate in democratic processes.

The benefits accrue in many policy fields, such as social care or urban regeneration; community education's experience of working in partnership will help other agencies with their endeavours.

The skills and understanding which are developed by participants are transferable and the benefits to the community are tangible; both can be subject to assessment. The groundwork has been done by past practice of community education, but it is current government policy which will enable community learning to grow.

## Conclusion

The Working Group believes that Government policies for lifelong learning and social inclusion and the growing consensus on the need to promote active citizenship, call for and require a major contribution from community education, as conceived by the Group. This will require a widespread understanding of the changes the Group is proposing, and a committed effort from those responsible to develop it, deploying resources appropriately and making best use of partnerships.

The Group's recommendations focus on community education but necessarily go beyond it. In some contexts, community education will only contribute effectively to the development of community learning if the wider context is supportive.

The promotion of the Group's conception of community education should encourage the key fields of interest, at national and local authority and voluntary organisation levels, to take on the practical implications and the developmental steps required. It will be essential to convey the message that community education is not a "territorial" concept but a pervasive approach to education.

While voluntary organisations draw their support from several sources, local government remains the main single channel of funding for community education. Achieving continuity and appropriate levels of funding now demand a high priority in order to achieve the vision set out by the Group.

The Group has maintained links with the CoSLA Task Group on Community Education and believes that there is extensive common ground between its interim report and the key themes developed here. The Group believes that both documents merit close scrutiny by interested parties and that continuing co-operation between the Scottish Office and CoSLA will help to create a sound basis for development.



A much clearer view of national priorities for community education is required than has previously been available, and this has to be followed through with targets for community education's contribution to key policy areas.

National organisations must work together to create an environment in which strategic development at local levels can grow and be sustainable. Locally, it should include the democratic participation of learners. At all levels there must be continuing co-operation, good information and a shared commitment to put the learner first.

While the Group's purpose was not to deliver detailed advice on the implications of its vision, it explored these ideas in sufficient depth to be confident that its recommendations, while radical are realistic. They will be of great importance for the implementation of Government policy. A summary of the recommendations follows overleaf.

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A new Scottish Office Circular should be published which firmly promotes community education as described in this report and which requires the production of local authority community learning plans.
2. Community learning plans should be built from the bottom up; the timescale for completion of the first version – it will be continually renewed – must be realistic in this regard. Targets, target-setting procedures and monitoring should be very clear.
3. The main interests should be asked to agree on the overall approaches to be taken to evaluation and reporting, so that Ministers, councillors and voluntary sector management committees can have a clear understanding of the criteria for success.
4. Those responsible for community planning should use the skills and insights of community education to achieve effective community involvement.
5. All community education providers should adopt procedures which seek the maximum involvement of the users of their services in decisions about how they plan and operate.
6. The Scottish Office should discuss with CoSLA, SCEC, the voluntary sector and others the steps which can be taken to ensure that community education, in the terms set out in this report, is accorded high priority in delivering the Government's policies on social inclusion, lifelong learning and active citizenship.



7. Having agreed on community education's priority as a method of delivering key policies, The Scottish Office and CoSLA should agree an approach to secure and monitor all expenditure which covers the new agenda, aiming for its clear identification, transparency, continuity, priority and collaborative funding commitments.
8. The Scottish Office should consult with relevant interests, perhaps using the good offices of the appropriate umbrella organisations, to explore their needs and the best ways of continuing to meet them within community education as now defined.
9. The Scottish Office should ensure that responsibility is allocated nationally to appropriate bodies for the development of joint policy statements among the fields which already play, could play or should play a larger role in community education as now defined.
10. The Scottish Office and providers should make the maximum possible allocations to the programme of inter-disciplinary in-service training.
11. Training for community education should be reviewed in the light of this report. Initial training should contain a strong and effective commitment to inter-disciplinary work and should be relevant to a wider range of context. Approaches to quality assurance should be reviewed.
12. An enhanced concern with and a coherent approach to research should be promoted in order to produce good information and effective analysis at all levels.

13. The Scottish Office should continue to extend the development of its own arrangements for the co-ordination of action on matters of corporate concern. It should ensure that its organisation and procedures are clear and accessible to the interests covered in the report.

14. In due course the Scottish Executive may wish to consider any possible legislative requirements.





## COMMUNITIES: CHANGE THROUGH LEARNING

REPORT OF A WORKING GROUP ON THE FUTURE OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION

### 1. The Working Group

**1.1** The Working Group was established by Mr Brian Wilson MP, Minister of State at The Scottish Office, in February 1998.

The Working Group's remit was:

"To consider a national strategy for community based adult education, youth work and educational support for community development in the light of Government priorities in relation to social inclusion and lifelong learning and advise Ministers on future arrangements. The Group will work alongside the CoSLA<sup>1</sup> Community Education Task Group which is considering a range of issues facing local authority community education provision."

**1.2** The membership of the Group is shown in the Appendix. The Group's work was greatly helped by the papers written by members, a selection of which will be published by SCEC and will be made available on request.

### 2. Vision

**2.1** Our vision for Scotland is of a dynamic learning society. A democratic and socially just society should enable all of its citizens, in particular those who are socially excluded, to develop their potential to the full and to have the capacity, individually and collectively, to meet the challenge of change. The learning society will provide an active and informed citizenship.

**2.2** Community education is a key contributor to lifelong learning and plays a significant part in combating social exclusion. Through its commitment to learning as an agent for change, it supports the Scottish people to improve personal, community, social and economic well-being. Primarily community education is more a way of working than a sector of education. Its unique contribution is to create learning opportunities within and for communities.

**2.3** Community based learning opportunities for all ages are as important to the realisation of our vision as schools, colleges and universities. The whole of the education system, other public services and the voluntary and private sectors require to collaborate to realise it.

**2.4** The capacity of individuals and groups of all ages to participate in developing their own learning is crucial to improving their quality of life. Through learning, people can come to make a real contribution to their own communities and participate in local and national democratic processes. Through learning, people can build the confidence and capacity to tackle wider social and economic issues, such as health or community safety. Skills can be acquired at many levels which are applicable in any walk of life. Sometimes these are essential skills, such as literacy or basic life management, which those who have benefited most from the formal education system take for granted. Without them, social exclusion is much more likely. With them, people can increase the opportunities for moving into further and higher education and into employment. Through them, local people can develop productive partnerships with other agencies relating to a wide range of social, economic and health as well as educational needs.

**2.5** For both individuals and communities, the results of community education can be tangible and lasting. That is what makes it a subject of critical national importance.

<sup>1</sup> Convention of Scottish Local Authorities



### 3. Understanding community education

- 3.1** The phrase *community education* came into widespread use at the time of the reorganisation of local government in the mid-1970s and with the publication of *Adult Education: the challenge of change* (HMSO 1975), generally known as the *Alexander Report*. Most local authorities combined their informal adult education services with youth and community work to form Community Education Services but many voluntary organisations were less convinced that *community education* was an appropriate title for them.
- 3.2** The nature and profile of local authority services have shown a degree of variation ever since, often accounted for by shifts of emphasis being required of Community Education Services, by resource constraints and short-term funding and, for some, year on year threats of retrenchment. Since local government reorganisation in 1996, such variation has grown, with excellence and innovation in some authorities in fields of activity which are quite under-developed in others. In some authorities, community education is not now located in education departments. This can provide other valuable insights and an increasing recognition that several professional groups share common ground in their approach to work in communities.
- 3.3** In the voluntary sector there has been innovation and change. In recent years, financial pressures on local authorities have often been amplified for the voluntary sector, with many voluntary organisations suffering severe pressure. This has not stopped them from continuing to develop their practice and has, perhaps, encouraged new types of co-operation among them and between them and local authorities.
- 3.4** The general picture facing the Working Group was one of change, diversity, and the lack of a shared understanding of the strengths which community education can contribute. A Government review of the Scottish Community Education Council (SCEC), which led to

the Minister's decision to create the Working Group, specifically claimed that, while much valuable work was evident on the ground, senior levels in both local and central government needed a clearer view of where community education was and should be going. The remit of the Group was to achieve this clearer focus.

- 3.5** A functional analysis of community education was carried out in 1989 for training purposes, in which field it has had a major impact (see CeVe<sup>2</sup> Training Guidelines, published at various dates by SCEC). Despite the benefit of this focus on functions, it did not remove the confusion in many people's minds about the meaning of community education. The functional analysis has sat alongside, rather than replaced, an administrative view, which seemed to assume that adult education plus youth work plus community work equalled community education. It has left doubt about when the phrase is being used to indicate an educational process, a local authority service, an educational method or an aggregation of services. In particular, it has led to community education being regarded as a sector rather than primarily a way of working.
- 3.6** The Group believes that it is the functions of community education which matter and that the administrative confusion must be removed. It therefore defines community education primarily as an approach to education, not a sector of it. There is a body of knowledge and experience of practice which can and must be tapped by a wide range of interests, both within and beyond the education services. It is for use by the voluntary, statutory and, indeed, private sectors in pursuit of compatible goals. Liberating community education from the limitations which past interpretations have imposed is a matter of urgency as there is an opportunity now, to make a major contribution to Government policies for learning, inclusion and participation.

<sup>2</sup> Community Education Validation and Endorsement – a committee of the Scottish Community Education Council which is responsible for the development of training for community education.



**3.7** The functional analysis of 1989 started the process of re-conceptualising community education but the process could not be brought to fruition. The progressive and innovative work which it implied would have required a degree of security that was lacking when, too often, maintaining the basic operations of community education became a major objective for many organisations during the 1990s. The policies of the Government now make it essential to take the process of re-defining community education forward so that its way of working can be applied where appropriate in a wide range of disciplines to meet a wide range of needs. The functions on which the Group has concentrated are described in Section 5.

**3.8** The Group's approach requires a considerable shift in thinking. It is unhelpful to think of community education as an aggregation of adult education, youth work and community work but community education will continue to be a major contributor to these fields. The key difference is that its way of working with adults, young people and interest groups will be a coherent practice in relation to all ages and both individuals and groups; its purposes will be to implement clearly identified personal and social objectives. While the problems of target setting in this context are genuine, properly associated with good planning at both personal and programme levels, it can be achieved.

**3.9** The providers may be a range of local authority services, voluntary organisations, FE colleges, LECs, Health Boards or several others, any or all of whom may and, hopefully, will decide to use community education methodologies. However, not all education of adults will use community education methods and neither will all work with young people or communities. Equally, there are other fields, such as housing or social work, in which community education methods are and will be used when appropriate. Indeed, the Group wishes to emphasise that it is picking up a range of current, progressive methods being used in such fields, as well as within community education, and urging that they become more coherent. By the same token, community education practitioners must be able and committed to working in and with this wider range of interests and practice settings.

The particular contribution of the community education approach is its primary focus on the use of educational methods to develop skills, knowledge and capacity in community contexts.

The focus is on motivation and confidence, personal and group effectiveness, widening access to formal learning institutions and involvement in civic life.

The aim is to develop the capacity of individuals and groups of all ages and, through their actions, the capacity of communities, to improve their quality of life. Central to this is their ability to participate in democratic processes.

The benefits accrue in many policy fields, such as social care or urban regeneration; community education's experience of working in partnership will help other agencies with their endeavours.

The skills and understanding which are developed by participants are transferable and the benefits to the community are tangible; both can be subject to assessment. The groundwork has been done by past practice of community education, but it is current Government policy which will enable community learning to grow.



#### 4. The developing policy context

**4.1** The policy fields of prime importance for community education are *lifelong learning*, *social inclusion* and *active citizenship*. *Lifelong learning* provides a comprehensive framework which puts the learner at the centre of collaborative endeavour; it emphasises the need for imaginative, relevant learning experience, tailored to the learner's needs. *Social inclusion* focuses attention on giving disadvantaged individuals and communities greater capacity and ensuring that institutions are open to them. The call for *active citizenship* is now evident in the commitment of many fields to community involvement. These policies call for a new culture of learning to which community education can bring long experience of personal, social and community development.

**4.2** Radical changes in the general perception, definition, location and practice of community education are required by these policies. In broad terms, however, they are highly compatible with the principles which community education has tried to pursue through its commitment to social change. There has been a long-term recognition that individual development cannot be separated from the contexts in which individuals live. Community education has a strong concern for individual development, for example in helping people return to education and training, which is integral to its commitment to positive social change and the involvement of communities in achieving it.

**4.3** Community planning and Best Value will provide a framework for the effective, efficient and accountable provision of services by local authorities, and they will also be relevant to the voluntary sector. Local authorities are expected to lead the co-ordination of planning for all public services within their areas, linking with the voluntary and private sectors. Planning for individual policy fields will be drawn into the wider framework. The active involvement of local communities is to be promoted by community planning, giving community education a two-fold interest of helping communities to engage with the overall process and working for the establishment of integrated local learning plans.

**4.4** Community plans will have 3 aspects, namely the overall *strategic plan* for the council area, the *component plans* of the different fields, such as children's services or social work, and the involvement of *local communities* in the planning process. In 1995 SOED published Circular 6/95 which, among other things, invited Councils to produce *schemes of provision* for community education. Today such a scheme would be a component plan within the community plan, and be called a community learning plan. This report will recommend that the production of community learning plans should be a requirement on local authorities and these should specifically include the ideas associated with *schemes of provision*. (Some authorities may interpret community learning plans as having a wider coverage, for example inviting providers of post-school education to be a part of the community learning plan in which case the fields with which the group is concerned should constitute a distinct and discrete section).

**4.5** The Best Value regime will ensure that policy implementation is through routes which are the most effective and efficient. The outcomes and outputs of community education, and its relationship to policy objectives, must, therefore, be evaluated and communicated well and to a degree that will be new and challenging.

**4.6** Effective policy development, implementation and review requires efficient lines of communication within the fields in which community education works and between them and The Scottish Office. The need is to secure policy implementation in fields which are internally complex and pluralistic, and where a conventional chain of command or influence through which policy is implemented does not entirely apply. Implementation of the objectives outlined in this report call for effective coordination and support by organisations at different levels.



**4.7** Policy development and implementation should take into account the particular attributes of community education in the voluntary sector. Voluntary organisations play a range of roles in communities and with individuals and many voluntary organisations use community education methods of working. The Compact between The Scottish Office and the Voluntary Sector includes Government commitments to value role diversity, independence and community development as a form of active citizenship. The Group endorses this commitment and urges local and central government to take into account the particular attributes of community education when developing policy with the voluntary sector.

**4.8** The Compact should lead both local and central government to clarify further, through dialogue with the voluntary sector, what the latter's major roles should be in working with young people, in community based adult learning and in educational support to community development. There are issues, such as the priorities and operations of the various grant schemes, which call for consideration and which are separate from general concerns relating to inter-disciplinary working.

**4.9** The Group welcomes moves within The Scottish Office to establish a more coordinated approach which aims to achieve an integrated response to community and individual needs, which are seldom one-dimensional. Building on the excellent precedent of the Social Inclusion Network, the Group hopes that The Scottish Office will establish cross departmental strategies for lifelong learning, youth issues and community development, reflecting its own vision of community education as a way of working for many.

## 5. Vision into policy

**5.1** The Working Group was set up to consider the future of community education and given a remit which referred specifically to "a national strategy for community based adult education, youth work and educational support for community development." The Group's view of the future for community education is not wholly encompassed by these fields and the report does not, therefore, set out to provide a comprehensive statement for these fields.

**5.2** An understanding of the following principles should under-pin policy development. Community education should:

continue to be recognised as an educational process;

be seen as an instrument of social policy and positive social change, promoting group and community benefit and social cohesion, as well as inclusion via individual development;

start with the learners rather than with a subject or syllabus, making issues and inter-disciplinary work central to its operations and recognising that the foci of interest will change or evolve and that learning programmes will be negotiated not pre-determined;

help institutions and the operations of public bodies to be inclusive;

maintain the values spelled out in CeVe training documents;

have policies which are clear and open to question, and whose implementation is transparent;

have a strong emphasis on demonstrating and reporting results;

be clearly accountable and governed in ways which are open to influence by parties whose interests it aims to secure, including the community itself and a range of professional disciplines.



**5.3** In order to give structure to the development of its work, the Group believes that 3 fundamental dimensions of community education practice should be recognised universally. It is important to focus on the functions which community education fulfils, not the fields to which it may be specially relevant – that would merely reinstate the constraints of an administrative definition. Community education's functions are:

- to promote personal development
- to build community capacity
- to invest, and secure investment, in community learning

**5.4** Policy for community education should establish the aims which these 3 functions are to achieve in relation to wider social policies. For example, general expectations of community education's personal development contribution to lifelong learning should be spelled out nationally, in terms of contact, motivation, access and essential skills, leaving the particular approaches, balance of resource commitments and collaborative arrangements to be negotiated locally. While the key policies at present are lifelong learning, social inclusion and active citizenship, others such as Agenda 21 or rural development, should be encouraged to articulate their own community education requirements. Any policy which has a community involvement aspect or aim to get people to work together for the benefit of the community, will have community education requirements. Since participative governance is becoming more pervasive, the scope for community education's way of working is growing and with it the need to ensure that the skills needed are available.

**5.5** Policy for community education should be to ensure that the learning needs of communities, especially those in which many people experience social exclusion, are assessed and that priority provision is made accordingly, by whoever is locally most

appropriate. Promotion of local learning should aim to achieve maximum coordination, to minimise overlap and extend the availability of opportunity. Equally there must be sufficient and appropriate field-work resources to sustain the community education operations needed to implement government policy. These must include effective training, development, support and research services which themselves must be available, relevant and accessible to all providers. There must be effective target-setting monitoring, evaluation and reporting of results.

**5.6** The re-definition of community education and the levels of difficulty being experienced in some parts of the country in making provision, makes it imperative for the government to adopt a strong line when setting out its ambitions for community education.

## 6. Policy into practice

**6.1** The measure of community education's success must be the achievement of constructive local change, as demonstrated by the growth of individuals and communities. The past concern with process and the lack of easily counted outputs, has led to suggestions that community education is unproductive. In order to focus the thinking of providers on the new agenda, it will be essential to set clear targets and to require effective monitoring and evaluation. At national level, such targets should be stated in ways that secure local responsibility and accountability. The framework which follows applies to people of all ages, children, young people and adults.



**6.2** Policy and practice for community education must provide a framework which is easily understood and which can lead to straightforward target setting. It should address the promotion of personal development:

engaging with people of all ages who are alienated in some way or are simply not confident enough to get involved in educational or community development activities;

securing post-school provision of essential skills education where it is needed;

supporting people's participation in decision making;

promoting feelings of self-worth and encouraging participation in community activity;

helping people to progress, recognising that legitimate progression includes many options besides continuing in education and training or getting a job, critical though these are. Progression may equally be in new dimensions of family or social life or in new responsibilities;

ensuring that the quality of educational experience stimulates and supports people, helping them to achieve by listening to them and responding to what they need.

**6.3** Community education should aim to **build community capacity**, including the capacity of young people, by giving priority to learning which:

enables communities to identify and assess their own needs, plan and implement appropriate action;

develops organising skills and confidence, and measures its success in terms of the operational strength of community organisations;

helps people to establish and take on authentic and effective representational roles, developing effective participation in decision-making;

spreads interest and involvement in community affairs widely; builds community organisations which are broadly based and sustainable;

promotes self-help and mutual aid so that people and groups are able to address their own needs.

**6.4** Community education should **invest, and promote investment, in community learning**, including structures for young people, by giving priority to:

auditing learning needs in communities, including learning resources, and rigorously monitoring the effectiveness of efforts to address them, including the commitment of resources;

helping educational institutions and partnerships to extend their work among people whose educational needs are high but whose participation is low;

providing a first contact for and, where appropriate, continuing partnership with organisations from outwith the community seeking its members' involvement in beneficial programmes;

helping to achieve effective linkage between planning for local education and community planning;

supporting the use of IT in community learning.

**6.5** This constitutes a general strategy, the broad aim of which is to create an environment which is healthy for community learning, having within it the requisite physical and information resources, learning programmes and general expectations of education which promote individual and community growth and have the



capacity to generate sustainable development. The 3 functions of promoting personal development, building community capacity and investing in community learning form a template to be set against policy objectives, the main ones at present being lifelong learning, social inclusion and active citizenship.

- 6.6** Aligning functions against policies provides a way of highlighting the priority community education tasks, which would be a valuable mechanism for the development of community learning plans. From a different perspective, for example that of an adult education or youth work organisation, it would show elements of these fields in which community education's way of working can be expected to have a very high profile. With 3 functions and a present focus on 3 policy fields there are 9 cells to be considered, but illustrations of the use of this template to identify priorities for action in communities are given for just 3 of them:

**promoting personal development in relation to lifelong learning**

first line information, advice and guidance;

essential skills, detached and outreach youth work, confidence-building;

family and school-linked programmes;

**building community capacity in relation to social inclusion**

involvement of alienated individuals and groups in activities whose direction they influence and, as far as possible determine;

encouraging community groups to be inclusive;

involving people with special needs in their own advocacy programmes;

**investing in community learning in relation to active citizenship**

supporting community organisations to evaluate development programmes;

supporting agencies in their efforts to include community members in their decision-making procedures;

assisting groups to participate in the creation and monitoring of community learning plans as part of the overall community planning process.

- 6.7** Such topics are relevant to all age groups within the community but working with the different age groups will require particular skills. Examples in relation to youth work might be providing advice to young people, working with alienated youth groups or helping young people to organise in order to get their views across. Comparable specific skill requirements can be identified for any age-group. At a general level these tasks can be described in the same terms, the critical issue being the common implementation of social policy across the community in ways that best facilitate learning, inclusion and active involvement.

- 6.8** The final determinant of priorities must be the particular needs of the locality or interest group. While it is entirely predictable that topics such as those mentioned above will be important in any community with significant socio-economic needs, the particular balance of needs, and the appropriate configuration of the responses, will vary. Audits should not waste time and effort discovering what is already known but they do need to identify local circumstances.

- 6.9** The need to identify outcome measures in relation to each of the topics identified for action cannot be over-emphasised. There should be a framework of targets and quality assurance for all community education provision. The general approach should be



to establish the baseline, objectives and time-scale for development re-visiting as necessary to show that progress is being made and to adjust approaches. Clear and public targets, with success monitored and published, will go a long way towards providing the transparency and accountability that is now required. A quantitative element to evaluation is essential but it should be supplemented by qualitative assessments, and the need for quantitative data should not bias provision.

Examples of the balance which should be sought in evaluation would include:

numerical data on take up of opportunities, such as information or guidance, changes in levels of involvement in activities, numbers moving from pre-access to access courses, supplemented by case studies on long-term progression;

the amount of purposeful adult education activity, the number of young people in productive contact with detached youth workers, the level of demand for educational activities, supplemented by quality assurance of the relevant activities;

the number of local people with various degrees of direct involvement in decision-making, the amount of time given to supporting them, the number of learning activities provided to inform people about local issues, supplemented by evaluation of the effectiveness of local organisations;

monitoring the implementation of community learning plans, including those of lifelong learning partnerships and adult guidance networks, supplemented by analysis of consumer views.

**6.10** The Group has not reviewed the international dimensions of community education but recognises their value, not least in terms of the key policy priorities. Exchange programmes and relevant training and information provision should remain a significant part of community education's concerns.

## 7. Support structures

**7.1** Turning national policy into local action calls for an alignment of structures and operations at intermediate levels. Action is required by those with a primary interest in community education but also by those for whom community education is either a minor but significant concern or who need to use its methods to achieve their objectives.

**7.2** As an approach, community education should be increasingly evident in many fields, most of which, like libraries and the arts, sports development or economic development, already make commitments which the Group would recognise as having a community education approach. There will be a mutual gain from encouraging them to take further advantage of the practical experience available to them from current community education providers and by encouraging the latter to work with a wider range of partners. In maximising good practice with all age groups, the re-defined community education will continue to give priority to working with organisations which identify with adult education, youth work and community work, but will not have an over-arching role. A balance should be struck between the coherent promotion of good practice across these fields and avoiding the old confusion of seeing them as the constituent parts of community education.

### National organisation

**7.3** The aims which the Group has set out imply extensive collaboration at local level among agencies working in communities. This prompts the question of how structures at wider levels can best work to encourage such mutual support as well as



the extension of community education's way of working. While this can be asked of any field with an interest in the local community, it is particularly significant for those which have traditionally been closest to community education.

**7.4** The 3 functions (promoting personal development, building community capacity and investing in community learning) now defined by the Group as the core of community education might imply that a national agency for community education should work in ways that would be quite different from the support of forums for adult education, youth work and community work which SCEC has provided in the past. Alternative versions of some or all such groups might be appropriate if they were constituted to facilitate the coherent promotion of community education practice as one, albeit a key, element of the field in question, and were not accountable in the same way as at present to the national agency. The agency's continuation of a different but no less active role through forums might maintain existing relationships and provide a blueprint for further developments.

**7.5** Continuing policy development and implementation depend on effective communication, a challenge for a field which is undoubtedly complicated. There may be a need for a new configuration of support for the voluntary sector, new ways of working by SCEC and organisations representing interested sectors, short life groups dealing with particular developmental concerns. SCEC should forge significant relationships with fields, such as FE, libraries, community arts, the police or health education, with which it shares common concerns.

#### Partners

**7.6** The Working Group's remit did not include fields which have, in the past, not seen themselves as "part of community education", but its re-definition of community education means that community education should now be seen as "part of them". Examples would include sports development, community arts or


economic development. Key interests should be invited to consider this perspective and to work out the most useful positions they can adopt to secure the benefit of the individual learner and of learning in communities.

**7.7** Many further education colleges are deeply involved in community education, either as individual providers or in partnership in the delivery of education programmes in community locations. Whether these programmes carry certification or not, it may be hard, and it is probably pointless, to say that what is being provided is further or community education. What is required is clear understanding of the roles of the college and the other community education provider or providers. There are several good models in operation. With the advent of the Scottish Further Education Funding Council and with consideration being given to overall strategies for further education, this is a good time for further education policy on community education to be developed.

**7.8** There is extensive common ground between the interests of community education and social work with the latter, for example, carrying out community work as part of its responsibility to promote social welfare and working with young people leaving care. There are local examples of good collaborative work and social work representatives have taken an active role in community education developments, for example in relation to professional training. There is, however, room for a concerted effort at national level to clarify the common ground, some of which may be obscured by terminology. More could be done to maximise the use of scarce resources, achieve a shared focus on priorities and secure inter-disciplinary co-operation at all levels.

**7.9** Two separate fields in which admirable levels of co-operation have been achieved by community education at national level and in a range of local areas have been with the police on community safety and with various agencies in relation to health interests. The Group notes that the Green Paper on Health advocates a





community development approach and recognises that the lead in this may not be taken by health workers, an openness that is fully in tune with the Group's own thinking. It would be valuable to compile statements of good practice in both fields, involving appropriate partners, in order to promote further development and widespread implementation.

**7.10** Relationships between community education providers and schools differ widely. Some voluntary organisations and some statutory services work closely with schools while others have limited useful contact. While it is the school's responsibility to be a good school, community education should be able to offer significant opportunities to parents and pupils, helping school staff to promote a culture of learning. The Group looks to the development of New Deal Schools and community schools to promote an integrated educational approach.

**7.11** Since local government reorganisation, several local authorities have put community education and recreation services together and in the voluntary sector there are extensive common interests. Recreational interests already use approaches which are compatible with or the same as community education to develop programmes which contribute greatly to local and individual development. There is a strong case for joint national statements which clarify the role of community education within recreation and which help the latter to develop their community based activities.

**7.12** The work of several library services is likely to increase the adoption of community education approaches over the coming years. Such work includes the development of IT as a community resource, increasing local access to information and the development of libraries as local learning centres. There would be value in drawing together information on such developments so that both libraries and community education providers have a full picture of the possibilities for collaborative effort.

**7.13** Higher education has a variety of links with community education but in most colleges and universities these do not constitute an overall strategy. The main foci of interest are the work of continuing education departments, training of professional staff and research. There are several topics in which, from a community education perspective, development would be helpful. These include the status of non-award bearing courses, the funding of work-based degree courses in community education, and access to research capacity. An appropriately backed clarification for HEIs of what would constitute a strong institutional stance on community education, with good exemplification, would be useful. It would then be for individual institutions to respond to this with explicit statements setting out the form of their commitment.

**7.14** In different parts of the country, and nationally, a variety of good relationships have grown between community education providers and the private sector. These include direct involvement in relevant activities, such as those supported through Scottish Business in the Community. There is, however, no easily accessible record of this relationship and it is too easily assumed that the private sector link only means sponsorship in one form or another. It would be in the interests of both sides to see this rectified.

### Training

**7.15** The shift to a definition of community education as primarily an approach rather than a sector does not suggest the lack of a set of competences which comprise a discrete professional discipline. For the foreseeable future, a core group of staff will be required to provide key local support for the development of community learning, for a variety of employing organisations. Since the 1977 report, *Professional Education and Training for Community Education* (the *Carnegie Report* published by HMSO) and the establishment in 1990 of CeVe, a distinct pattern of training in community education up to degree level has emerged. Trained workers are now finding employment in an expanding range of agencies, many of which may not see themselves as specialising in community education. The professional discipline can expect to have both a central focus and pervasive influence.



**7.16** Training is also being established for staff in related fields and other professional bodies are now approaching CeVe to have relevant elements of their training endorsed. While the Group believes that further development of training will be called for by this report, it acknowledges the strong and growing base which training currently provides. A key question for the future of professional training is whether the expectation that competence will be demonstrated in different settings should continue to refer only to adult education, community work or youth work. The logic of this report is that settings in other fields could be of equal relevance. Furthermore, training for other fields which can, or could, include community education competences, should be considered for joint recognition. The present understanding of *generic and specialist* training may need to be reviewed.

**7.17** With regard to qualifications, the Group wishes to see an extension of inclusive and flexible routes into training and recognition. Training should emphasise strongly the fact that there is common ground with related professional groups, reflecting a more collaborative approach to the provision of lifelong learning, and give practical demonstration of this in course structures. This should include fields such as social work and libraries as well as the established references to adult education, community work and youth work. Any consideration of proposals for joint training of school and college staff should be extended to include community education workers.

**7.18** Volunteers and part-time staff, whose training needs may or may not coincide, carry much of the responsibility for face-to-face work and the support which they receive will also require review. These are also full-time but unqualified staff whose needs require attention. Given the continuing development of the voluntary sector and volunteering, the impetus given by such innovations as lottery funding and Millennium Volunteers, as well as the changes proposed in this report, there is a strong case for a review of the national support available for training in those parts of the voluntary sector which use community education methods.

## 8. Recommendations

**8.1** A new Scottish Office Circular should be published which firmly promotes community education as described in this report and which requires the production of local authority community learning plans (see below).

A strong statement on community education is required at national level and this should be in the form of a Scottish Office Circular to local authorities, representing a shared agreement. At present the only formal statement is SOED Circular 6/95 and this should be replaced. The new guidance should, however, clearly apply to all fields which are relevant to community education; a statement which only seemed relevant to local authority education departments would not suffice. Commitment to and involvement in community education should be clear in such fields as health, planning or social work. The new statement should emphasise that, through its concentration on promoting personal development, building community capacity and investing in community learning, community education will contribute to the achievement of Government objectives in lifelong learning, social inclusion and the promotion of active citizenship. Local government responsibilities should include their own contributions to community education and their creation of the circumstances which yield effective community learning plans.

**8.2** Community learning plans should be built from the bottom up; the timescale for completion of the first version – it will be continually renewed – must be realistic in this regard. Targets, target-setting procedures and monitoring should be very clear.

Within the understanding described at paragraph 4.4 of this report, the precise nature of individual community learning plans should be determined in the light of local interpretations of community planning and the operation of the Best Value regime. They should represent a process of continuing dialogue among providers and between them and participants, and not deteriorate into a chore for annual completion. They should refer to the contributions of all providers, and



the plans should have a clear and practical reality for those who benefit from them. Their key purposes should be:

to identify where the main responsibilities for using and developing community education approaches lie, especially with regard to the authority's development of its corporate and community based operations, and its relationship with other public and voluntary bodies;

to involve communities in a continuing process of planning, implementing and reviewing provision for community learning, drawing in all relevant agencies in order to maximise their complementary contributions and responsiveness to need;

through this process, to provide an analysis of learning needs and resources in communities, particularly in disadvantaged areas, and baseline data on key topics for the purposes of target-setting;

to maximise the contribution of community education to lifelong learning, social inclusion programmes and the promotion of active citizenship, ensuring mutual support with key institutions and partnerships and giving particular attention to practical developments, such as local learning centres;

to ensure that FE colleges, schools, HEIs, other appropriate bodies and partnerships such as adult guidance networks and local learning partnerships, are fully consulted in the creation, implementation and monitoring of plans;

to ensure that voluntary organisations are fully consulted in the creation, implementation and monitoring of plans for community education and to that the resource implications of that involvement are recognised;

to ensure that targets are set for community education against clear baseline data and that these are reviewed regularly;

to ensure that there is effective monitoring, evaluation and reporting, and that this takes full account of Best Value.

**8.3** The main interests should be asked to agree on the overall approaches to be taken to evaluation and reporting, so that Ministers, councillors and voluntary sector management committees can have a clear understanding of the criteria for success.

A very high priority is required for the evaluation of, and reporting on community education, and this should include assessment of interdisciplinary operations. There should be a commitment to involving communities in the processes of monitoring and evaluation. Attention should be given to longer-term evaluation of community education strategies for combating social inclusion, developing lifelong learning and promoting active citizenship.


**8.4** Those responsible for community planning should use the skills and insights of community education to achieve effective community involvement.

The SO/CoSLA report on community planning recommended that a serious commitment be given to community involvement. Within community learning plans, the voice of the communities should be clear and well developed. Specifically, communities should have a key role in formulating plans for community education contributions to social inclusion, lifelong learning and active citizenship. The commitment of resources to enable people to be effective participants in the affairs of their communities is of the greatest importance.

**8.5** All community education providers should adopt procedures which seek the maximum involvement of the users of their services in decisions about how they plan and operate.

Although it is not possible to legislate for attitude, it is possible to create structures which reflect particular beliefs and approaches. It is the Group's belief that the learners and communities should be seen





as the starting point for planning rather than just the end users of services. This should be reflected in structures and funding arrangements.

**8.6** The Scottish Office should discuss with CoSLA, SCEC, the voluntary sector and others the steps which can be taken to ensure that community education, in the terms set out in this report, is accorded high priority in delivering the Government's policies on social inclusion, lifelong learning and active citizenship.

The problems created by the current lack of continuity of funding for both statutory and voluntary providers of community education require attention. Research is needed to establish the extent and characteristics of central and local government and other funding of the voluntary sector in community education as defined by the Group. The process of review should draw in representatives of other providers of community education, such as further education and health education, as appropriate.

**8.7** Having agreed on community education's priority as a method of delivering key policies, The Scottish Office and CoSLA should agree an approach to secure and monitor all expenditure which covers the new agenda, aiming for its clear identification, transparency, continuity, priority and collaborative funding commitments.

The Group's proposals call for a new approach to funding and financial monitoring which does not rely solely on the current GAE<sup>3</sup> allocation for community education, as this will not reflect expenditure on the range of activities which should grow as part of community education in the future. All of the fields and agencies contributing to community learning should identify their commitments and doing so should be accorded a high priority by Government. The total will represent the shared priority which the Government and local authorities give to community education's contribution to social inclusion, lifelong learning and active citizenship. There is a need to track this expenditure as, unless this is done, there will be no monitoring of the

<sup>3</sup> Grant Aided Expenditure – the amount that the Government think that local authorities need to spend in total on the provision of services

new community education agenda. At the same time, acknowledgement by Ministers and by CoSLA is required of the priority for community education as proposed by the Group in order that appropriate commitments from the fields and agencies concerned can be drawn together, through the community learning plans, into a coherent and significant endeavour. Achieving continuity will be as important as appropriate levels and sources of funding. Priority is now acknowledged for social inclusion, lifelong learning and active citizenship, which have long been the concern of community education, but without shared priorities and joint commitments, the community education approach will not achieve the momentum that is required.

**8.8** The Scottish Office should consult with relevant interests, perhaps using the good offices of the appropriate umbrella organisations, to explore their needs and the best ways of continuing to meet them within community education as now defined.

The new configuration of community education proposed by the Group may raise concerns among some organisations, such as those in the voluntary sector which regard their work in adult education, youth work or community work as coming under the community education banner.

**8.9** The Scottish Office should ensure that responsibility is allocated nationally to appropriate bodies for the development of joint policy statements among the fields which already play, could play or should play a larger role in community education as now defined.

The new agenda for community education emphasises that its approach is the concern of many. It will take time and effort to achieve understanding of this, and the subsequent commitments to joint action. Relevant fields should be actively encouraged to recognise their place in the new approach and to have recognised the work that they already do.



**8.10** The Scottish Office and providers should make the maximum possible allocations to the programme of inter-disciplinary in-service training.

There is an immediate and considerable in-service training requirement, the response to which should be inter-disciplinary in nature, to reflect the integration and values which are to be achieved at local level and give immediacy to learning about working in partnership. The creation of a programme of a sufficient scale, which may have implications for staff cover, will require a high level of co-operation among the main interests. It should involve the professional community education training organisations, assisted by staff from selected organisations acknowledged as demonstrating good practice. Senior staff from all authorities, the major voluntary organisations and interested FE colleges should be invited to attend, with the expectation that they would follow-up with in-house courses covering the same ground. The programmes should cover government policy, community planning and Best Value, inter-disciplinary work and the roles of community education in promoting personal development, community capacity building and investment in community learning.

**8.11** Training for community education should be reviewed in the light of this report. Initial training should contain a strong and effective commitment to inter-disciplinary work and should be relevant to a wider range of context. Approaches to quality assurance should be reviewed.

The longer-term implications of this report for pre-service training for community education are considerable. They will not just be the concern of the NTO which is expected to be created for community education but will also be of direct interest to other NTOs e.g. for the voluntary sector, social work and libraries and to training for schools and further education. The development of inter-disciplinary training is an increasingly common theme and one which should not in any way undermine the needs of particular interests, such as those of the voluntary sector. Training should encompass the wider range of contexts to which the report refers and be accessible to other professions needing to extend their skills. It is also essential that

training adapts to changing circumstances, requiring quality assurance procedures which reflect the realities of the work which graduates will do. Consideration should be given to the inspection of training for community education.


**8.12** An enhanced concern with and a coherent approach to research should be promoted in order to produce good information and effective analysis at all levels.

The need for good research to inform practice and the presentation of well-founded argument within policy development has received insufficient attention in community education local projects, providing organisations and policy-makers should expect research information to be available to them but there is too little done and too little access to the resources which exist.

**8.13** The Scottish Office should continue to extend the development of its own arrangements for the co-ordination of action on matters of corporate concern. It should ensure that its organisation and procedures are clear and accessible to the interests covered in the report.

The Working Group strongly welcomes the Government's commitment, through the New Deal for Communities, to a general strategy of support for community involvement and cross sectoral working. The commitment to the inter-disciplinary working necessary to support such approaches has been shown by the Scottish Office in its work on social inclusion and related topics. Such a commitment is also required in other fields of direct relevance to community education, such as youth issues. The group recognises that community involvement and inter-disciplinary working can present administrative difficulty but believes that solutions must be found to meet the multi-dimensional needs of communities.





8.14 In due course the Scottish Executive may wish to consider any possible legislative requirements.

The new agenda for community education will be of signal importance to the new Scottish Parliament for it provides a mechanism for supporting democratic renewal at the level of local communities. Its effectiveness will depend on serious commitment by the fields and agencies referred to in this report and this, and their effectiveness, will require to be monitored. Given the importance of the issues, continuing dependence on discretion any provision may merit review.

## Conclusion

1. The Working Group believes that Government policies for lifelong learning and social inclusion and the growing consensus on the need to promote active citizenship, call for and require a major contribution from community education, as conceived by the Group. This will require a widespread understanding of the changes the Group is proposing, and a committed effort from those responsible to develop it, deploying resources appropriately and making best use of partnerships. While radical, the proposals are realistic for there is much already in existence on which to build.
2. The Group's recommendations focus on community education but necessarily go beyond it. In some contexts, community education will only contribute effectively to the development of community learning if the wider context is supportive. The recommendations are geared to achieving objectives which derive from Government policy and, in particular, are intended to link with policies for lifelong learning and social inclusion and to promote active citizenship. They assume that a main overall purpose, of community education and much Government policy, is to bring services and opportunities together to maximise their accessibility and responsiveness to communities.
3. The promotion of the Group's concept of community education should encourage the key fields of interest, at national and local authority and voluntary organisation levels, to take on the practical implications and the developmental steps required. It will be essential to convey the message that community education is not a "territorial" concept but a pervasive approach to education. The timing and approach to promotion will require careful consideration in order to ensure that it does not run ahead of the field's ability to deliver. Too much promotion too early will lead to disillusion.



4. Significant reductions in core funding have weakened the essential infrastructure of many providers and limited their capacity to deliver community education as presently defined. The Group has taken a new view of community education and a wider range of contribution, but this does not alter the need to establish appropriate and sufficient funding. Achieving continuity and adequate levels of funding now demand a high priority in order to achieve the vision set out by the Group.
5. The Group has maintained links with the CoSLA Task Group on Community Education and believes that there is extensive common ground between its interim report and the key themes developed here. The Group believes that both documents merit close scrutiny by interested parties and that continuing co-operation between the Scottish Office and CoSLA will help to create a sound basis for development.
6. A much clearer view of shared priorities for community education is required than has previously been available, and this has to be followed through with targets for community education's contribution to key policy areas. An inter-disciplinary contribution will be needed to the generation of targets and national guidance on setting local targets for learning plans. This may reduce the scope for local variation but that will be a small price to pay for the benefit to priority communities, groups and individuals.
7. National organisations must work together to create an environment in which strategic development at local levels can grow and be sustainable. Locally, it should include the democratic participation of learners. At all levels there must be continuing co-operation, good information and a shared commitment to put the learner first.

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