

# Perspective paper

Community Learning & Development and community regeneration

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A wide range of professions and organisations are working to help regenerate Scotland's most deprived communities. Individually, and working in partnership with others, their aim is to ensure that the people living in these communities are given opportunities to develop skills, confidence and resources to take advantage of the opportunities open to them – a process that the Scottish Executive calls “closing the opportunity gap.”

As well as bringing their own skills, knowledge and experience to the task, each organisation has its own perspectives about what's important, and the best ways to make things happen.

[The Scottish Centre for Regeneration](#) is publishing this series of Perspectives papers so that these views can be shared, as well as highlighting the contribution that different professions make to the community regeneration process. The papers are also part of our aim to promote joint

working between professionals involved in community regeneration.

More information about community regeneration can be found in our [FAQs: community regeneration](#).

Each Perspective has been produced by the [Scottish Centre for Regeneration](#) in collaboration with an appropriate key agency or professional body. That does not mean that the SCR endorses the professional views expressed here.

This Perspective looks at the contribution of Community Learning and Development to community regeneration. It is published in consultation with the Community Learning and Development Managers Scotland, the [Scottish Community Development Network](#) and [YouthLink Scotland](#).

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## What is Community Learning and Development?

### Definition

The main aim of Community Learning and Development (CLD) is to help individuals and groups in communities tackle real issues in their lives through community action and community-based learning. A defining feature of CLD is that programmes and activities are developed in dialogue with communities and participants. This definition is taken from the [Scottish Executive Guidance](#) for Community Learning and Development *Working and Learning Together to Build Stronger Communities* (WALT).

The term is used both to describe:

- a profession that has this as its specialist role, which is what this paper is mainly about
- and the contributions of other professions, as one part of their roles, to similar outcomes; this is sometimes described as the adoption of a 'CLD approach'.

All professional approaches to CLD have long been based on explicit statements of values. These include promoting equality and anti-discriminatory practice, the individual right to self-determination, and encouraging participation in the decision-making processes that affect people's lives.

Two other commonly used terms are closely linked:

'Community capacity building is work to help groups to become stronger through having the right people, skills, structures, and approaches, so that they can become better at achieving their objectives, managing their activities and working with others. This is an essential part of the work done by CLD professionals, though many other professions make a contribution.'

'Community engagement' is the process of involving communities in the planning, development and management of services, and so it is the responsibility of many professions. The values and methods of CLD are important to the success of community engagement, and CLD workers often take on particular roles in it.'

### Origins

As a profession, CLD is a coming together of three strands, which correspond roughly to the three national policy priorities:

- community-based adult learning
- youth work
- community work.

Many voluntary youth organisations were formed in Victorian times. Informal adult education also dates back to two creations of that era – the University Extension (or 'Extra-mural') movement and the provision of independent working class education by bodies such as the [Workers Educational Association](#) (WEA). Voluntary and community groups have been major providers of learning opportunities for adults and young people ever since.

After World War Two local authorities increasingly provided a youth work service as part of their education provision, and gave some support to informal adult education. Training for staff as 'youth and community workers' was introduced.

The Alexander Report of 1975 led to the bringing together of these two strands, the formation of local authority Community Education services and the development of diploma and post-graduate qualifications in Community Education.

Community Development as an organised activity – actively encouraging people's participation in designing and developing approaches to meeting community needs – had become widespread in

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Scotland more recently than the other strands. The growing interest in 'public participation' and the area-based approach to tackling deprivation, from the 60s onwards were crucial influences. Increasingly specialist 'community workers' were involved.

After 1975, these worked as part of Community Education services in many parts of Scotland. Elsewhere, notably in the former Strathclyde Region, a separate community work service was established.

The idea of Community Development as a broader approach also began to be recognised. In 1978 Strathclyde declared 'every Regional employee should come to see himself (sic) as a community development worker', though this was not a national view at the time.

The 1998 report 'Communities – change through learning' wanted the profession to move from being 'on the margins' to being a 'key contributor to lifelong learning and playing a significant part in combating social exclusion'. It also stated the view that CLD is 'more a way of working than a sector of education'.

All three strands have now been brought together as CLD, which is a distinctively Scottish development. The 'WALT' Guidance in 2004 set out the Scottish Executive's 'long term framework for the development of CLD', endorsing the proposal to merge the activities of Community Education and Community Development and 'redefine the product' as Community Learning and Development.

### Who are CLD workers?

#### Roles

The [Scottish Executive 'WALT' Guidance](#) for Community Learning and Development identifies three national priorities, which relate to the three strands of work described above:

- Achievement through learning for adults: raising standards of achievement in learning for adults through community-based lifelong learning opportunities incorporating core literacy and numeracy skills.
- Achievement through learning for young people: engaging with young people to facilitate their personal, social and educational development and enable them to gain a voice, influence and a place in society.
- Achievement through building community capacity: enabling people to develop the confidence, understanding and skills required to influence decision-making and service delivery.

In some cases, work on each of the three priorities is undertaken by distinct groups of staff, who may be in separate services or organisations. Equally teams or individual staff may undertake work crossing over two or all three of the priorities. Part of the rationale for bringing CLD together is the synergy between these closely inter-related strands. Arguably, they are united by a common approach, which has been defined as '[social groupwork](#)'.

By no means everyone involved in adult or life-long learning provides 'community-based opportunities'. These are distinctive because of a combination of the informal approaches taken, based on dialogue with individuals and groups, as well as the locations used. They are usually focused on improving individual and group achievement rather than specific levels of educational attainment.

One important group of CLD workers specialise in developing literacy, numeracy and other basic skills, because it is recognised that literacy and numeracy are not learned in the abstract but are social practices.

Nowadays many health, housing, environmental and other agencies employ community development workers, because they see this as helping them to achieve their objectives. These

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people may or may not identify themselves as part of the CLD workforce.

Finally, as we have seen, people in many other professions increasingly see the need for new skills and approaches in order to promote community engagement successfully.

### People

A recent survey to start to establish how many people work in CLD in Scotland, and the nature of the workforce, identified approximately 2,700 people employed by local authorities in full and part time posts, representing approximately 2,350 full time equivalent posts. In addition nearly 3,500 worked on a sessional basis or very limited hours. Significant numbers work in other types of organisation. 70% of full time staff, and 20% of part-time staff (excluding sessional) had relevant qualifications.

A professional committee, [CeVe](#), endorses qualifying courses. After its establishment in 1990, a BA or postgraduate Certificate or Diploma in Community Education became the standard requirement for jobs in the service. (Courses are still operating under that title pending decisions on reform).

CeVe also endorses HNCs in 'Working with Communities', which offer non-graduates a route in to work or further training in this area. CeVe has always been concerned with the need to promote varied pathways into training: a number of initiatives, such as the Linked Work and Training Trust in Central Scotland and the new Greater Glasgow CommUniversity Trust, create opportunities to allow people with voluntary experience in their communities to move on to work or qualifications in the field.

A new specialist Teaching Qualification for Adult Literacies (TQAL) is also currently being piloted.

### Regulation and professional development

There is no single professional body that CLD workers join. However, in January 2006 the Scottish Executive released a [report](#) on standards in CLD advising that a professional body should be established for the sector. This will probably eventually take over the role of endorsing courses and establish a system of practitioner registration. Greater access to continuing professional development is also planned.

At one time there was little quality control in this field. Nowadays [HM Inspectorate of Education](#) produces reports on the provision of CLD in local authority areas.

HMIE published a revised version of their framework, '[How Good is our CLD 2?](#)' in 2006. This is intended firstly as a tool for self-evaluation. It also provides the basis for the current cycle of area-based inspections. Whilst always focussing on the contribution of local authorities to CLD provision, these are also concerned with how councils work with their partners to secure improvements.

Even in sectors not covered by inspections, there has been growing interest in systematic planning and self-evaluation using 'How Good is our CLD' and other approaches like [LEAP](#) (Learning, Evaluation and Planning), which was originally developed to improve the ability of CLD practitioners to produce evidence of the changes brought about in communities as a result of their activities.

### Employers

CLD professionals work in all areas of Scotland, in a variety of organisations. In local authorities a CLD team may be located in a variety of services - education, lifelong learning; culture and leisure, regeneration and others.

In youth work this also involves longstanding organisations such as the YMCA, Barnardo's, Duke of Edinburgh Award and uniformed youth groups. More recently formed bodies include Lesbian,

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Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender (LGBT) Youth, Fairbridge and the Scottish Youth Parliament to name but a few. A vast volunteer trained workforce in this sector also contribute substantially to the community capacity (activities to help communities or organisations with their own development through, for example, improving their existing skills, confidence, leadership and ability to learn) and well being of communities.

Social Work was once a common location for community workers, but this is now rare. Some adult education staff in FE Colleges and elsewhere have a specific responsibility for community based provision.

The voluntary sector continues to play a major role in informal adult education through bodies like the WEA and in youth work through organisations ranging from traditional uniformed groups to the [Scottish Youth Parliament](#). Many community based projects such as Learning Centres or Community Forums employ community learning and/or development staff.

Many regeneration organisations, health services and others employ specialist CLD workers as well as encouraging adoption of the approach by others.

### **What is the policy framework for CLD?**

#### Legislation

The Education (Scotland) Act 1945 first required local authorities to arrange for the provision of facilities for recreational, social and physical training for their residents, both adults and young people. The Education (Scotland) Act 1980, with amendments in the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992, currently gives education authorities their powers to secure provision of programmes of learning and youth and community facilities.

The [Statutory Guidance](#) on Community Planning that accompanies the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 emphasises that CLD ‘can play a central

role in supporting the engagement of communities (including young people) in the Community Planning process’.

#### Policy

The key document that sets out a long term framework for the development of CLD in Scotland is the [Scottish Executive Guidance](#) ‘Working and Learning Together to Build Stronger Communities’ (January 2004).

Between 1999 and 2004, Community Learning Partnerships, led by local authorities, developed Strategies for local authority areas and Action Plans for smaller areas, or focused on particular themes.

WALT makes it clear that [Community Planning Partnerships](#) have overall responsibility for CLD Strategies and Action Plans. These should ‘set clear and measurable targets for each of the three national priorities’, which should ‘where relevant, be related to outcomes set out in CPPs’ [Regeneration Outcome Agreements](#)’.

Introducing this policy, Ministers stated that they ‘want CLD to become a central feature of the way in which planning authorities and service providers engage with communities and citizens’.

[‘Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland’](#) (2001) confirms links between this work and CLD in general. It emphasises the importance of a lifelong learning’ rather than a ‘deficit based’ approach to adult literacy; makes it clear that Community Learning Partnerships should have a lead role; and sees ‘genuinely learner centred programmes’ as one of four ‘critical success factors’. It draws attention to the fact that being active in community groups and engaging in voluntary work can provide the opportunity to use literacy and numeracy skills to the full, and can also highlight the need to improve them.

The [National Standards for Community Engagement](#) (2005) were drawn up by a process of wide consultation and endorsed by the Scottish

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Executive. They are a practical tool to help all participants involved in community engagement to achieve the highest quality of process and results.

Many professions involved in regeneration can point to one or more of the Scottish Executive's '[Closing the Opportunity Gap](#)' targets as their main focus. CLD, however, can be seen as providing a basis for achievement of all the targets.

### Who does what?

The key public agency for CLD in Scotland is [Learning Connections](#), which is part of the Community Regeneration division of Communities Scotland. It advises Ministers on CLD issues, and works with partners to support implementation of Scottish Executive policy for CLD. It also specifically supports the development of adult literacies and community engagement in general.

Policy advice on youth issues is given by the Scottish Executive Education Department and on community based adult learning, including adult literacy, by the Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Department.

HM Inspectorate of Education supports and promotes quality improvement and ensures public accountability in the provision of CLD. It gives advice to the Scottish Executive, based on evidence from its activities.

The Scottish Executive sometimes uses 'intermediary bodies' to provide support and co-ordination to national and local bodies working within a particular policy area. [YouthLink Scotland](#) is the Scottish intermediary body for youth work. All local authorities and all of the major youth work providers are members, and universities and local projects have associate status. 'Intermediary bodies' in the field of adult education include the [Scottish Adult Learning Partnership](#) and [Learning Link](#) Scotland (for the voluntary sector).

Local authorities are responsible for a great deal of CLD provision and the CLD Managers Scotland group provides a forum for local authority managers. Other public bodies such as educational institutions and the NHS are also involved in either community based learning or capacity building activities.

Voluntary and community groups, including churches, are the providers of much CLD and especially youth work. [Councils of Voluntary Service](#) often provide capacity building support to local groups (with national support from the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations). There are also [Volunteer Centres](#) (who are supported by Volunteer Development Scotland): some would interpret their prime function as being to promote opportunities for people to learn and develop within their communities through volunteering.

The [Scottish Community Development Centre](#) promotes and supports community development through research, training, development and networking. The [Community Development Alliance Scotland](#) is a national network of organisations that have the promotion of CD as part of their goals, and the [Scottish Community Development Network](#) is a membership organisation for CD practitioners.

### What is the CLD contribution to community regeneration?

Although much youth work and community based learning goes on outwith the areas and communities that are the main targets for regeneration, Scottish Executive policy, reflected in practice in many parts of Scotland sees CLD as a fundamental aspect of regeneration work. It can help to engage communities actively in regeneration, broaden access to lifelong learning among traditional non-participants and support the personal, social and educational development of everyone, especially young people. The reasons why CLD is fundamental to regeneration include:

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- developing the capacity of communities to solve problems is essential to sustainable regeneration
- engaging individual young people and adults in developing their personal and vocational skills is vital for social inclusion
- everyone involved in regeneration needs to engage effectively with communities, and this requires CLD skills and approaches.

The combined skills, networks, expertise, resources and confidence in communities are sometimes referred to a '[social capital](#)', and, taken together, are assets that communities can bring to regeneration, but which may need CLD support to flourish.

There is a growing recognition of the role that CLD skills, methods and approaches can play in a wide range of settings and disciplines.

### Expertise

Community Learning and Development professionals collectively or in various specialist roles can be expected to be particularly knowledgeable on issues such as:

- involving and empowering communities
- supporting the personal, social and educational development of young people
- community capacity building
- organising and funding community groups and building networks between them
- working with communities to identify need and opportunities
- involving people in planning and delivery of services
- participatory approaches to monitoring and evaluation
- identifying individual learning needs and styles
- literacy, numeracy and basic skills.

### Key partnerships

The key partnership should be a Community Learning and Development Partnership in each local authority area. This will be working to a greater or

lesser extent as part of the Community Planning process, but may have differing names. It will bring together all the main service providers as well as community representatives. Local or theme-based partnerships produce local CLD Action Plans, which are increasingly being included within local Community Plans.

Particularly important links are those between CLD providers working for statutory organisations and those working for voluntary and community groups; and links with providers of further education, vocational training, employment and careers services.

### Social Inclusion

There is a continuing and probably perpetual debate over the extent to which CLD provision should be universally available, and how far it should be a response to specific needs created by social exclusion. But the values upon which CLD work is based always require workers to pursue social inclusion, and most resources are to some extent targeted on social inclusion.

### What are the challenges for CLD professionals?

Discussion with groups of people working in Community Learning and Development suggest that the following are some of the challenges..

Contributing effectively to community regeneration

- Regeneration may require a move towards targeting activity on more disadvantaged areas and groups, rather than delivering a service across all geographic areas – a move which is always very difficult to achieve.
- Workers need to start by building the capacity of groups and helping them to identify their overall needs and what they want to achieve, and then decide what the learning implications are, rather than simply looking at their 'learning needs'.

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- The need to choose priorities between traditional courses, such as those in leisure subjects, and more issue based, thematic work is not new. But there may need to be a further shift away from such courses and even from the recent strong focus on learning about Information Technology. The learning process may also change from traditional classes to learning through and reflecting upon action.
  - New legislation and new inspection criteria will increasingly require evidence that work is targeted on and effectively reaching 'equalities' groups such as ethnic minorities or people with disabilities.
  - Policy priorities may sometimes lead to an undue focus on certain needs to the exclusion of others. For example, some argue that literacies work is becoming more specialised and focused on preparing people for work; or that youth work is unduly focused on responding to criminal justice and anti-social behaviour problems.
  - There may also be an increasing tension over the priority to be given to grassroots level work, supporting the emergence and development of community groups, as compared to supporting people's participation in wider Community Planning and community engagement structures.
  - Are CLD workers a resource for other partners to draw upon? There is a danger of other partners sitting back and expecting them to lead community engagement. But if their role is to include advising and training other partners in community capacity building or community engagement, it is not clear that they are geared up, especially in terms of resources, to deliver this.
- and expectations. Training and continuing staff development have not always caught up with these.
- The roles of workers vary greatly according to structures in each area and organisation. Some areas have unified services based on the three priorities, others are split. The growing awareness of the value of a CLD approach has led to increasing recruitment of qualified staff to other services.
  - In general it is relatively easy to identify 'core' CLD work, based around the three priorities. But community capacity building is increasingly recognised as a broad field to which many others can make contributions.
  - Compared with most professions, a very high proportion of CLD staff are on short term funding and supported by grants from external sources. There has been an expansion of government funding relating to key priorities such as literacies, youth strategy and community engagement. But much of this has been funded only on a short term basis.
  - There has by contrast been little or no additional funding for general community based adult learning. Increasingly CLD teams act as the administrators and commissioners of adult learning services provided by others. It is not clear how far a CLD approach is specified in these contracts and delivered in practice.
  - Community Development work needs to retain its tradition of independence, even from its own funders, employers and partners, in responding to community initiatives
  - The culture of CLD used to be very 'output' focused – for example, how many learners, how many groups. There is now a great expectation that it will focus on 'outcomes' and demonstrate the positive change in communities that comes from its intervention. This raises difficult challenges about what specific outcomes to

### Wider issues and trends affecting the profession

- The profession has been through a time of constant adjustment to changing structures

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expect from and attribute to CLD, what evidence is required to demonstrate that change has taken place within communities as a result of CLD, and how to demonstrate its impact on 'high level' outcomes.

- There could also be questions about what role communities themselves should have in setting the outcomes that are to be pursued.

The Scottish Centre for Regeneration is part of Communities Scotland, the Scottish Executive's housing and regeneration agency.

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Learning Connections provides a directory of national and local CLD organisations and people at:  
[http://www.esystems.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/pls/cld/cld.show\\_home](http://www.esystems.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/pls/cld/cld.show_home)