Community Learning and Development Working Draft Guidance

Scottish Executive

Submission by the Scottish Museums Council

25 April 2003

The Scottish Museums Council [SMC]

SMC is the membership organisation for around 350 museums and galleries in Scotland including local authorities, universities, regimental and independent museums. Our aim is to improve museum and gallery provision in Scotland for both local people and visitors. SMC combines strategic leadership for the sector with provision of professional information, advisory and support services to members. The current Museums Association definition of a museum is:

> *Museums enable people to explore collections for inspiration, learning and enjoyment. They are institutions that collect, safeguard and make accessible artefacts and specimens, which they hold in trust for society.*

The term museum is used generically to refer to galleries as well as museums.

The Learning and Access Team at the Scottish Museums Council promotes lifelong learning and access to both museums and external organisations. Our work includes providing advice on project and policy development in relation to audiences, social inclusion, lifelong learning and access. We conduct training and project work, assess grant applications, and undertake research and policy development. Additionally, we represent the work of museums to local authorities, government and other interested parties.

Museum Learning

On 10 July 2002 SMC launched the first-ever national audit of Scotland's museums and galleries.[1] The audit establishes for the first time the full extent of museum collections, buildings and public services. It provides an authoritative picture of the museums sector and its importance to key aspects of Scottish life including tourism, learning, and community development.

While Scotland's 362 museums and galleries preserve and protect our culture and heritage, they also operate as dynamic learning environments. From face-to-face interaction with real objects to online access to digital images, and outreach work within local communities, museums and galleries provide stimulating opportunities for learning. Given the variety of organisations, the quality of work undertaken, the exceptional use of volunteer workers, and the breadth and richness of collections, the sector is also uniquely placed to appeal to Scotland's diverse learning population. Learning and access are central to the success of museums and galleries.

To summarise, museums:

- are powerful learning institutions
- contain valuable learning resources (collections)
- use innovative teaching methods
- provide staff with specialist expertise
- provide alternative pathways to learning delivery (through face-to-face and

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[1] *A Collective Focus: Scotland's National Audit (Summary Report - The Main Findings and Conclusions from the National Cultural Audit of Scotland's Museums and Galleries),* Scottish Museums Council: Edinburgh, 2002.

online interaction)
- are a flexible learning resource

Museums and Community Learning and Development [CL&D]

The use of cultural and heritage resources is extremely popular within community and adult learning, for instance through history and archaeology groups, reminiscence classes, handling and loan boxes, museum tours and visits, story telling and interpretation workshops. Additionally, digital technologies offer unparalleled opportunities for delivering these resources to learners of all ages. Despite this, the audit reveals that under-capacity is having an adverse effect on the museum sector's ability to develop and deliver more effective community learning and development programmes. Although Scotland has a remarkable heritage infrastructure, with "over 12 million objects held in trust for the people of Scotland", anecdotal evidence also suggests that the educational potential of museums and galleries is under-utilised by community education providers.[2] The working draft guidance for CL&D should provide a platform for bridging the gap between learning providers in order to bring Scotland's distributed national collections to learners of all ages and backgrounds.

The Scottish Executive's recent consultation on the development of an Action Plan for museums (www.scottishmuseums.org.uk/information_services/index.asp) set out to gather information on museums contribution to learning.[3] SMC's own response to this consultation strongly advocated further investment in museum learning activities by, for example:

- ring-fencing local authority museum budgets
- including independent museums within Community Learning and Development Partnerships [CL&DPs] and plans
- funding nine regional development posts to embed museums in the wider Community Planning Process
- providing core funding for core functions
- developing a measurable standards scheme
- establishing a minimum cultural entitlement
- investing in specialist education staff
- developing a three-year learning and access strategy

Museums currently await an announcement on the Action Plan and potential developments associated with this.

Prioritising Disadvantaged Individuals

SMC commend the emphasis given to social justice and disadvantaged learners within the working guidance. The document does not, however, provide specific information on the construction/identity of these 'disadvantaged' groups and communities. More details

[2] *A Collective Focus: Scotland's National Audit (Summary Report - The Main Findings and Conclusions from the National Cultural Audit of Scotland's Museums and Galleries)*, Scottish Museums Council: Edinburgh, 2002: 1.

[3] Resource (the Council for Museums, Libraries and Archives) has recently commissioned research to investigate the contribution museums make, or can make, to the UK government's targets for improving literacy and numeracy skills of adults with basic skills needs.

would be useful. It should also be clear how learning partners are expected to differentiate their provision to meet the needs of particular target communities.

We suggest that rather than simply adopt an approach based around dedicated funding streams for projects with particular groups, it would be more effective to ensure such communities are represented in positions of power within the CL&D infrastructure. The working guidance should specify that:

- equalities organisations and disadvantaged learners are represented within CPPs and CL&DPs
- equalities issues are instituted within standard operations rather than as a form of additional provision

Mainstreaming in this manner would ensure the interests of such groups are systematically embedded within the overall system. CL&D providers should be urged to seek advice from equalities organisations on how to embark on this mainstreaming process as well as how to increase involvement from particular communities. Progress should be assessed through review, benchmarking and target setting exercises. Policy and planning guides (such as SMC's *Museums and Social Justice* document) and evaluation toolkits could also be promoted as effective consultation and needs identification mechanisms.[4]

The Four National Priorities

We broadly support the current content and focus of the four national priorities. The emphasis given to literacy and numeracy is entirely appropriate given recent findings on the low levels of attainment among particular communities. The underlying commitment to improving personal, social and educational ability is fundamental to CL&D work. The recognition of the needs of young people is particularly important when working with disadvantaged communities.

The priority given to ICT is also understandable with regards to the current employment climate. ICT is an effective means of promoting participation and learning. The role of the National Grid for Learning Communities Working Group should be noted in this regard. SMC has also recently funded the Huntarian Museum and Art Gallery to conduct a technical and skills audit of ICT provision within museums and to produce guidelines on how museums can develop more effective e-learning programmes. These kinds of initiatives should be linked into CL&DPs in order to help improve overall learning provision and to increase capacity within the sector as a whole.

We also note the emphasis on raising standards and achievement and fully support this movement towards rigorous evaluation leading to improved performance. It would be useful to provide some guidance on how closely partnerships are expected to set targets and evaluate progress against the four priorities. Commitment to some form of nationally agreed standards would also help to ensure equality of achievement and expectation between local areas.

Again, the emphasis on organisational skills, capacity building and participation in planning and service delivery is to be applauded. SMC recognises the real challenge involved in fulfilling these aspirations in particular. As the guidance rightly points out, however, the CL&D sector has successfully managed to integrate its core values into the

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[4] *Museums and social justice: How Museums and galleries can work for their whole communities,*
Scottish Museums Council, Edinburgh, 2000.

political mainstream. As such this document represents a real opportunity to further consolidate our work.

Linking Plans Together

It is necessary to ensure clarity and coherence across the different Executive policy domains. For example, the relationship between Community Planning Partnerships [CPPs] and Social Inclusion Partnerships should be addressed. Care should also be taken to ensure recommendations within the working guidance dovetail with the Scottish Executive's (2003) *Draft Guidance for Local Authorities on Implementing the National Cultural Strategy*. The working guidance should clearly situate CL&D within this wider strategic context. It would be helpful to indicate how CPPs/CL&DPs are structured and operate -- the existing Glossary (p25) is useful but could be expanded.

A table summarising the content of relevant policy documents/initiatives and the relationship between them would be helpful. This could be complemented by a bibliography containing details on where to access documents. Although the summaries on pages 13-15 are very useful, a diagram showing how Community Planning documents relate to Community Learning and Development plans and strategies would be constructive. It is not clear, for example, what the geographical scope is of the different plans and strategies or how geography relates to thematic plans. Are the strategies city-wide/regional and/or local?

In practice it is also important to ensure the relevant strategies and agencies reflect a genuinely interlinked learning infrastructure which includes pre-school, school, further and higher education alongside CL&D. Efforts should therefore concentrate on:

1. creating a genuinely integrated learning infrastructure providing clear pathways of opportunity for different learners entering education from variety of different starting points
2. clearly articulating the relationships between the different learning providers within the context of this integrated network
3. asserting parity of status between different agencies and levels of provision

In order to promote this vision and avoid isolating CL&D, the guidance should articulate the links between it and formal learning providers. It is our contention that the working guidance does not adequately address this vision of an integrated learning network either in principle or in terms of specific recommendations made. For example:

- Section 1 of the working guidance should illustrate how CL&D relates to the overall learning network (a diagram to illustrate this would be useful)
- the pattern of opportunities laid out through the Scottish Credit Qualifications Framework [SCQF] should be reflected more clearly (examples could be given)
- the importance of informal non-accredited learning should be highlighted within the overall network and the SCQF (again it would be useful to visualise this in diagrammatic form)

More work also needs to be done on a practical and strategic level to articulate the role of individual CL&D sectors, such as museums, within the overall learning infrastructure (see below).

Sustaining Partnerships

Communities: Change through Learning (Scottish Office circular 4/99,1999) highlighted the position of CL&D within the emerging Community Planning approach and required local authorities to establish CL&DPs. We welcome the incorporation of other public service disciplines in the working guidance (p.6-7) but also suggest that a broad definition of key CL&D stakeholders needs to be more strongly asserted.

- the responsibility for delivering CL&D should be clearly recognised as extending widely across a range of different learning partners (these should be listed)
- heritage and cultural sectors should be recognised as key partners in relation to CL&DPs (P.17)[5]

Once agreed in principle, however, such partnerships cannot be assumed to materialise without active involvement and guidance from lead agencies. The publication of the CL&D guidance should therefore be backed up by further information, practical support and training targeted at specific agencies, partnerships and sectors.
Specific attention should be given to:

- actively promoting and supporting the role and place of complementary learning sectors such as museums within the overall learning network
- seeking advice from national strategic agencies such as SMC on how to involve their constituent organisations in CPPs and CL&DPs
- ensuring national and umbrella organisations from the cultural and heritage sector are represented at a national strategic level (p.17, r)
- providing opportunities for complementary learning agencies to be represented at a local level within CPPs and CL&DPs
- encouraging collaboration between providers through conferences/networking opportunities, advice and guidance, funding programmes, joint projects and so on

Ensuring Representation

The National Audit reveals that 53% of those working in the museums sector (10,885) are volunteers.[6] This finding clearly demonstrates the contribution the sector makes to active citizenship priorities. Citizens Panels, Friends Societies and Junior Boards represent other participation routes for local communities. In many senses museums provide opportunities for community participation and work-based learning on an unprecedented scale. The sector is, however, keen to further extend existing volunteering and learning provision. The Community Planning framework is an ideal mechanism through which to do this. This work is dependent upon representation within the relevant plans and partnerships, effective information and skills sharing, and networking opportunities.

See above for recommendations relating to involvement from disadvantaged

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[5] Numbers in brackets relate to pages in *Working and learning together to build stronger communities: Community learning and development working draft guidance,* Scottish Executive, Edinburgh, January 2003.

[6] *A Collective Focus: Scotland's National Audit (Summary Report - The Main Findings and Conclusions from the National Cultural Audit of Scotland's Museums and Galleries),* Scottish Museums Council, Edinburgh, 2002: 8.

communities. As stated above, the working guidance should indicate a clear commitment to ensuring all learning agencies are represented on CL&DPs.

Relationships between Planning at Strategic, Local and Thematic Levels

As stated above, we are concerned that learning providers such as the cultural and heritage sector should be represented on CL&DPs at both a local and national strategic level. The guidance rightly draws attention to the diversity of the voluntary sector with respect to local and national scales, it does not, however, highlight the existence of agencies such as the SMC and other national heritage agencies which undertake significant amounts of CL&D work, but which do not fit squarely with the standard definition of the voluntary sector. It is imperative that these agencies are included as active strategic partners if the learning work they undertake is to contribute effectively towards the overall CL&D effort. In addition to highlighting this role, it would also be useful to indicate how such national agencies could most effectively contribute to local agendas. SMC could, for instance, provide strategic leadership and advice to partnerships on both national and local issues.

The guidance does successfully emphasise the importance of local agendas and active involvement in shaping CL&DPs.

Quality Assurance and Evaluation

Please refer below for comments on continuing professional development and information management. The essential challenge facing attempts to develop quality assurance and evaluation schemes is how to make these coherent, meaningful and workable across a range of different types of learning provision/providers. Wary of duplicating existing schemes, SMC has commissioned research to provide a comprehensive picture of current standards schemes for museums in Scotland and abroad. This research will provide an empirical platform for developing a standards framework/guidance for learning and access among other areas. Thought should similarly be given within this guidance document to encouraging partnerships to dovetail their evaluation schemes with those already in existence. The need to benchmark should also compel partnerships to construct complementary evaluation mechanisms. Again partner agencies should be consulted to avoid duplication across findings and to make data gathering more efficient. For example, SMC is currently working with the Scottish Executive, the Council for Scottish Local Authorities, the Chartered Institute of Library & Information Professionals, SportsScotland, the Scottish Arts Council and others to develop a collective cultural statistics questionnaire.

The *UK Registration Scheme*, run by Resource [the Council for Museums Libraries and Archives], is the recognised quality scheme for museums. The scheme is administered in Scotland by SMC and is currently under development with proposals to extend the framework for assessing museums' contribution to learning and access. Resource's recently developed *Inspiring Learning* framework has been piloted in England but there is a need to assess the needs of Scottish museums against the emerging CL&D infrastructure. Evaluation toolkits for learning already exist, therefore, but these mechanisms and the subsequent dissemination of their findings need to be coordinated on a national and local level.

In addition to ensuring complementarity across evaluation schemes, it is also necessary to involve the full range of stakeholders in the evaluation process. In order to maintain

relevance and responsiveness within the overall learning network, CL&D cannot afford to simply set its own standards and evaluate its services according to potentially detached and locally generated criteria. It is important for CL&D programmes to link into the overall SCQF if, for example, disadvantaged learners are to be offered effective routes into further learning or employment. Given this, other formal education providers and employers in particular should be involved with setting targets and evaluating the success of partnership services. This should not, of course, preclude the absolute necessity to balance more directive provision alongside individualised projects and non-accredited programmes.

Continuing Professional Development

As a precursor to the *Community Education Training Review* (Scottish Executive, 2002), the McCrone Report fully acknowledged the importance of adequately training Scotland's education professionals.[7] As the Executive's recent review of community education training recognised, this argument is equally pertinent to CL&D.[8] Museums could contribute more effectively to lifelong learning if CL&D officers received more effective support and training. [9] It is our contention that training at initial and continuous professional development levels should include modules on working with cultural and heritage resources. The Community Education Validation and Endorsement committee should consult national agencies such as SMC when developing new guidelines on the core competencies for CL&D professionals.

The delivery of this training would ensure that community educators:

- receive up-to-date information on Scotland's cultural resources
- are informed about museum collections and their educational benefits
- understand how to approach museums and undertake learning visits and projects
- gain accredited skills in interpreting objects and conducting oral history and reminiscence work
- adhere to agreed training standards
- utilise Scotland's heritage resources more effectively for the benefit of participants
- are able to ensure more equal access to Scotland's cultural resources

At present CL&D professionals do not received any formal training on working with cultural and heritage resources within a social inclusion context.[10] As a result, provision tends to be patchy, standards are inconsistent and resources are not utilised as effectively as they could be. It is likely that similar patterns exist across the country as a whole. As the Scottish Council for Research on Education report suggests, more focus should be given to "putting skills into practice", to providing "opportunity for training with others" and to embedding learning through

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[7] *A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century, Volume 1: Report, Independent Committee of Inquiry into Professional Conditions of Service*, Edinburgh, 2000.

[8] Empowered to Practice: The future of community learning and development training in Scotland, Scottish Executive, Edinburgh, 2003.

[9] *The National Debate on the Future of School Education in Scotland: Submission by the Scottish Museums Council*, Edinburgh, 12 July 2002: 8.

[10] *One-City: Edinburgh Arts for Social Inclusion Strategy*, Capital City Partnership, Edinburgh, 2002.

experience.[11]

Through our Strategic Change Fund SMC has recently funded the City of Edinburgh Council, in partnership with PAULO (the National Training Organisation for Community Education) among others, to develop initial and CPD training modules for CL&D professionals at FE and HE levels. The pilot scheme will train workers to how to work with museums and their collections as learning resources. The project, concluding with a UK-wide conference, has real potential to be rolled out on a national basis across the CL&D sector. The project illustrates the need for training agencies to use the Community Planning framework to communicate closely with each other. The new Sector Skills Councils (currently under review) for CL&D and the heritage sector should be included as partners within the CL&DPs. The councils will be responsible for CPD and will therefore be able to train staff to work more effectively together.

As is clear from the above discussion about volunteering in museums, CL&D is not an exclusively professional concern. Attention should also be given to training volunteers who are "less likely to have professional community education qualifications than paid workers", but are nevertheless involved in delivering community learning.[12] CL&D educators (paid or unpaid) should not have to rely on their own enthusiasm or be abandoned to their own intellectual devices in order to undertake such work. Further training would transform their ability to deliver excellent learning programmes while ensuring these opportunities are offered evenly across different geographical and learning communities. Training is in this sense a matter of social justice. Partnerships should be urged to include staff development standards and training as an essential part of their overall provision. Additionally, the quality of cultural and heritage tutoring should be examined and standards should be established and applied more consistently across the sector as a whole.

Information Management

We suggest that some more thought could be given to who the working guidance is aimed at. Advice is focused on assisting those already engaged with the partnership process, particularly local authorities, rather than on providing guidance to those interested in becoming involved as a participant rather than as a lead agent. A 'What you can do to be involved' section would help in this regard. As stated above, additional sector-specific training, guidance and networking opportunities should also complement the launch of the document.

Conclusion

SMC fully supports the recognition of Community Learning and Development [CL&D] as a very particular way of listening and working with people. We welcome the opportunity to contribute to the further development of this vision and to articulate the place of museum learning within this. In general the working guidance document provides a clear and comprehensive guide to CL&D. Comments in this submission are therefore intended to enhance what is essentially a very useful tool.

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[11] *Working for Democracy: Review of Community Education Training,* Scottish Council for Research in Education, Edinburgh, 2001: xi/87.

[12] *Working for Democracy: Review of Community Education Training,* Scottish Council for Research in Education, Edinburgh, 2001: vii.

We have argued that the working guidance provides us collectively, as formal and informal learning providers, with a valuable opportunity to create a more closely integrated and coherent learning network. This vision is, however, dependent upon more effective partnerships between the various agencies and other CL&D providers. Such partnerships must be based upon parity of esteem, however. SMC believes that CL&D plans should make imaginative connections between diverse learning environments in order to generate innovate learning programmes capable of meeting the increased expectations of new generations of learners. We have in our submission outlined a number of means to meet this challenge. We hope that the subsequent guidelines will prove inclusive enough to ensure this happens.