



# North Alliance Conference 2016

## Report

### North Alliance Conference 2016 in numbers

15 workshops

2 keynote speeches

96 delegates

Aberdeen City	13%
Aberdeenshire	22%
Highland	13%
Moray	32%
Orkney	4%
Shetland	5%
Western Isles	2%
Other	9%
Statutory	63%
Third Sector	32%
Other	5%



Feedback has been very positive. On a scale of 1 to 10, (where 1 = not at all and 10 = very much) delegates rated the four conference outcomes as follows:

I have experienced a creative and stimulating learning environment:	7.9
I have built/enhanced my professional network:	6.8
I am more able to describe my personal and professional learning:	5.7
I have identified a spectrum of initiatives within the NA area:	6.8

***'Fantastic range of workshops on offer. Shame I couldn't attend more'***

***'Found the Conference interesting and it was great to hear what folk are doing across the North East'***

***'Today's Conference has been inspiring'***

***'This is the first time I've had contact with the North Alliance, however I shall implement some ideas straight away'***

***'The Conference helps you feel connected to the National picture'***

***'This was my first conference - it's increased my awareness of projects and good practice'***

## Keynote Speeches

**Alasdair McKinlay** (leader of the community planning and empowerment unit in the Scottish Government's Local Government and Communities Directorate) picked up on the relaxed atmosphere of Conference, removing jacket and tie before leading a discussion on community empowerment, local democracy and community development. **Nicola Sykes** (Education Officer, Education Scotland) kindly stepped in at the eleventh hour of Maureen Mallon to look inwards, outwards and forwards at CLD policy.



### The North Alliance meets the Northern Alliance

**Maria Walker** provided delegates with a brief overview of the work of the [Northern Alliance](#), discussing ways of linking the two groups to help address the challenges faced in all areas of education.



## Market Place

A dedicated area was available at Conference for groups to display and share information. Information was provided by the CLD Standards Council and Calemcal Ltd.

## Workshops

The 15 workshops received very positive feedback from delegates. Delegates were asked to note down what they learned, loved, will take away and use and what they didn't find useful. The majority of comments in the latter category related to time constraints and issues with technology (with a number of workshops suffering from WIFI connectivity issues).

A selection of comments from each workshop, along with information about the workshop are given below. Please click on the pictures for links to presentations where available.



Learnt



Loved



Take away and use



Didn't find useful

## Workshops

### It's your party and I'll cry if I want to: Inclusion up close and personal - Chris Aldred

A look at what we/others mean by inclusion and how these ideas are used to maintain/ share/ avoid/ manipulate power.



*Interesting look at contested terms – power – empower – include  
Made me think of inclusion in a different way*



*Real life examples from people's personal and professional lives  
Loved Chris's flexible delivery and the time to talk, explore*



*The feeling and knowledge that sometimes not everyone wants to be included – that's ok  
Review some of the literature and consider my own practice and approach*



### Peer Learning, Social Franchising and Who is following you...? - David Bryan

Sharing what we do is a strength of the third sector. Sometimes this extends to forming a community of practice, which just means like-minded individuals exchanging experiences. As the world becomes a smaller place, we are no longer bound by the limitations of geography. At Social Enterprise Academy we have turned this into a business model, both within Scotland (by facilitating peer learning) and internationally (through a social franchise approach). But we all influence others, sometimes unintentionally, sometimes without even being aware of it. 'Peer Learning, Social Franchising and Who is Following You...?' explored the concept of learning from others and challenged delegates to think about how their own actions might be influencing others.



*A better understanding of what peer learning is and need for collaboration across third and public sector*

*I learnt to be more aware of who I influence*



*Learn, un-learn and re-learn to be successful in 21<sup>st</sup> century  
Interaction with others, practice reflective listening*



*Slow down and listen more*

*The reminder of how we can influence people without realising it*



## Syrian New Scots - Katie Maclean

Between February and April 2016, the first phase of Syrian families were resettled in Aberdeenshire under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons' Relocation (VPR) Scheme. The families came directly from camps and settlements in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and Iraq and were approved for resettlement by the UN-HCR due to a number of conditions including, serious / terminal medical conditions, disability, vulnerability or victim of warfare / torture.

Aberdeenshire has embraced the families and all have begun to progress with family life, learning and in some cases employment. On the surface, resettlement appears to have given the families safety, stability and the opportunity to rebuild their lives but the reality of grieving for displaced children, mourning lost lives and living with the continuing bombardment of Syria is burdensome.

This workshop explored the Syrian resettlement journey to Scotland, delved a little deeper into the impact of dramatic cultural and language shifts, and looked at how the families and the state measure resettlement success and discussed the realities and impacts of the families' unique journey to north east Scotland.



*Did not fully understand the many challenges families face*

*The need for more social involvement in our community*



*The honesty in the challenges and assumptions*

*I thoroughly enjoyed hearing about the progress of the families and where I can make a difference*



*Need for community links to strengthen*

*Contacts for ESOL and befriending*



*To focus more on lyrics of songs*

*How imagined the gender sexualisation is and how this is picked up by companies selling products*



*How to understand complex issues*

*Good session lots of exercises use with young people*

## Under Pressure Training - Nadine Jassat

Zero Tolerance's 'Under Pressure' training programme is a train the train initiative aiming to equip youth workers with increased skills and knowledge to help prevent sexual exploitation and abuse in young people's relationships. The training focuses on issues to do with gender, sexualisation and the media, healthy and unhealthy relationships, grooming and more. This workshop provided details about the course (which comprises one full day of training as well as a top up day) and delivered a taster of what is involved in the training.



*I will reflect on my language I use day to day*

*Interesting ways to start off open conversation with YP on this subject*

## Giving back control - Sylvia Jamieson, Morag Steward, Sandra Ross, Caroline Smith



A hands on interactive introduction to running a Participatory Budgeting (PB) project, giving delegates practical tools to help them run their own community project.



*That there is no set way – adapt and adopt*

*Groups that are not constituted can access a bank account*



*That failure isn't a bad thing  
Hearing others experiences and enthusiasm*



*That PB does not need to be 1 event, can be a series of events*

*One size does not fit all*

## Karaoke for literacies - Marc Coyne

Karaoke has been used in literacies learning worldwide. It has been used with preschool children through to adult learners, ESOL students and with the elderly for reminiscence. This workshop looked at the use of karaoke as a tool within literacies to promote reading, team work, problem solving, IT, building confidence and on and on! It shared resources, research, experiences and tools to help you get started.



*How well karaoke works for learning, young to older*

*It's not only about singing – its learning words and karaoke helps to absorb shapes of the words, brilliant workshop*



*Lots of resources provided, enthusiastic presenter with a lot of great ideas, excellent sharer*

*The ideas, a fun activity can be tried with so many groups- older learners – dyslexic learners, ESOL*



*Karaoke reminiscence to use in group*

*There are different ways of learning – literacy is everywhere. You tube free music.*



## The Big HIT project - Nic Thake



*Found this fascinating, future generation will benefit hugely*

*How to take a problem and turn it on its head to create an amazing innovative solution*



*The future of renewable energy and the endless possibilities*

*So positive and optimistic – great project*



*Inspired by it all  
Ideas for my community*



The small Orkney island of Shapinsay has responded to the challenge of maximising community income by becoming part of an EU funded project to use hydrogen produced by electrolysis using otherwise curtailed renewable electricity to supply transport, heat and power needs as part of the integrated hydrogen strategy for the isolated Orkney Islands. This project's known as BIG HIT.

This workshop explored how small communities can leverage themselves to engage in 'BIG' projects and how this engagement might then be used to bring pioneer technology to peripheral communities first, instead of them experiencing the 'long-wait' for roll-out to reach them, which has so often been the case.

Nic made hydrogen in the workshop - and used it to power a few things which explained some of the aims of the BIG HIT project.

## Digital participation and innovation - Beth Murphy & Lauren Pluss



*Positivity around trying out new social media, apps, tools. Well-presented lots of new info*

*Think more about embedding in all our projects*



*Fast pace of delivery.....felt exciting*

*Finding a tool kit that will replace clip art, I really don't like clip art*



*Lots of new tools, can't wait to try them out*

*Encourage management to use more digital tools*

## Engaging Dad's! What is it good for....? - Shona Foreman



So often in community work there is a lack of involvement from Dad's and they are often described as hard to engage. This workshop provided details of how to go about getting Dad's involved and designing activities that they want to attend with or without their children.



*Different communities have same problems, same challenges  
Although some dads don't appear to want to engage – given the opportunity they just might?*



*Sharing/networking ideas – facilitations were great  
Enthusiasm to find ways to help and engage dads and family*



*Inspired to go back and start the dad project that's sat not going anywhere  
To use the current engagement with mums to engage with dad's*

Suicide Alertness for Everyone. This brief introduction to safeTALK training explained the aim, the values and the ethos and encompassed local resources to enable participants to return to their local authority areas with the details of trainers they could contact.



*How common suicide is, but also its ok to ask  
Don't be afraid to say the words and ask*



*Suzy's style of delivery, gentle manner about such a tough subject - good handout  
Interactive activity and sharing experiences, information on training opportunities*



*It's not just for workers, can be accessible by almost anyone  
Share with teams and find out who is trained locally*

## Safe Talk: Why talking about suicide is life or death - Suzy Hopkins





## How good is the learning and development in our community? - Karen Delany, Sue Briggs, Linda Clark & Nicola Sykes



The new self-evaluation framework was published by Education Scotland earlier this year and is the revised and refreshed "How good is our CLD2?" In this workshop participants learned about how we piloted 3 workshops for staff in Aberdeen, Inverurie and Elgin, what the learning was, and how we intend to progress this collaborative working. Participants left with a copy of the Education Scotland PowerPoint presentation, the activity sheets and frequently asked questions, so that the process can be delivered locally.



*Further knowledge and shared experience  
Learnt new frameworks*



*Colleague frankness and sharing  
Discussions*



*The paperwork  
Information to share with team/partners*

## Scottish Rural Parliament - getting CLD on to the agenda—Norman MacAskill

The second Scottish Rural Parliament takes place in Brechin on 6-8 October 2016. It is intended to be a 'bottom-up' process of involvement and debate between the people of rural Scotland and policy makers to enable better understanding, improved policy and action to address rural issues. Delegates discussed the Parliament's Action Plan and the Scottish Rural Manifesto. This workshop was an opportunity to find out more about the Rural Parliament, to look at policy issues around Community Learning and Development in remote and rural areas and to explore ways of ensuring that CLD is firmly on the Rural Parliament's agenda. It was run by Norman MacAskill of Lead Scotland, who was one of the founding organisers of the Scottish Rural Parliament.



*A much better understanding of Scottish Rural Parliament  
That there was a Rural Scottish Parliament (how did I miss that??)*



*Discussion of the parallels between rural and urban isolation  
The passion of communities in rural areas and how this is changing.*



*To continue to raise awareness and work with others  
Will investigate the Rural Parliament further*





## An Introduction to the ABCD (Asset Based Community Development) approach - Liz Howarth & Anne Marie Steehouder



*Ideas to engage with individuals/families/communities  
Positive approach can help get more out of a community*



*The enthusiasm of the trainers  
Really positive presenters who believe in their staff*



*I now know what ABCD means  
The reminder to focus on people's skills and strengths*

The ABCD approach to community development is an exciting and rapidly developing approach both internationally and across the UK and has been adopted by the Health and Social Care Partnership in Aberdeen City.

ABCD builds on the assets that are already found in the community and mobilizes individuals, associations, and institutions to come together to build on their strengths – not concentrate on their needs.

The workshop helped us look at ourselves as individuals as well as the communities we live and work in and challenged our thinking - if we are going to change practice we need to practice change!

## OPEN Peer Education Project – Mentally OPEN workshop - Wayne Leask, Rachel Juel-Beer & Mariel Leask



*The use of peer volunteers for mental health awareness and support  
That this needs to be rolled out all over*



*Good for school age children, good to be delivered by younger adults  
Enthusiasm of workshop leaders*



*Ideas for using with groups locally  
Plan to organise this at home*



The Mentally OPEN workshop created discussion and encouraged participants to think about the societal view of mental health. It introduced the common terms for illnesses and conditions. Raising awareness and providing an understanding of the difficulty in knowing when someone is not well, with the view to understanding that mental and emotional difficulties are commonplace and vary in severity and need. The needs tree exercise shows the importance of recognising and meeting physical, human, spiritual and motivational needs. Understanding the foundations on which good emotional and mental health depends and where to go for help and support, locally and nationally, signposting to services.

## Place Standards Tool: Engaging young people in place conversations -Kirsty Wylie

The interactive workshop gave an overview of using the Place Standards Tool with young people to structure conversations about place. The tool allows for conversations of both physical elements such as its buildings, spaces and transport links, as well as social aspects such as whether people feel they have a say in decision making. The tool pinpoints the assets of a place as well as areas where a place could improve giving a visual representation of the groups' views.



*The process of place standards  
How to get priorities for groups  
and communities*



*This tool kit is easy to use and understand  
Love use of emoji when asking  
young people about thoughts of  
place they live*



*Ease of use for working with young people, flexibility  
Will use this tool for starting discussions within  
groups*



### Thank you!

Thank you to all those who helped make Conference 2016 a success. We hope to see you again in 2017.



Photographs by Cecily Cromby

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