



North Alliance Conference 2014

Report

82 delegates, **12** workshops, **1** keynote speech, **1** digital learning launch, **2** dragons' den pitches and **numerous** networking opportunities made for a

'...great day, the best piece of CPD I have attended for a long time'

Under the themes of **Resilience, Local Leadership** and **Community Empowerment** the conference brought together people from all areas of Community Learning and Development from the seven North Alliance areas and beyond. Workshops were delivered and attended by colleagues from both the statutory and third sectors, from national agencies to community trusts.

Overall, feedback has been very positive with **83%** of delegates rating the conference as

highly relevant to their practice and 14% moderately so.

86% of delegates rated the conference as **highly interesting** and 7% moderately so.



How relevant did you find the conference as a whole?

Extremely relevant 5.....1 Not at all relevant

Extremely relevant	Quite relevant	Moderately relevant	Slightly relevant	Not at all relevant	Total	Average rating
15	9	4	0	1	29	4.3

How interesting did you find the conference as a whole?

Extremely interesting 5.....1 Not at all interesting

Extremely interesting	Quite interesting	Moderately interesting	Slightly interesting	Not at all interesting	Total	Average rating
15	10	2	1	1	29	4.3

Towards participatory democracy: Rethinking the role of citizens in policy and decision making

Clearly one of the highlights of the day, Oliver Escobar's key note speech struck a chord with the audience, with **96%** rating it as both **highly relevant** and **highly interesting**. It was mentioned as a **favourite aspect of the day** in 16 out of 28 survey responses:

'Dr Escobar's presentation opened my eyes giving me lots to take away to think about'

'Keynote speech - Oliver Escobar's presentation was timely given the extent of political awareness in Scotland, thought provoking and captivating'

'Loved the key note speaker, it's many years since I have felt so enthused and inspired by someone'



Thinking Digitally launch

Emma Whitelock's launch of LEAD Scotland's Thinking Digitally on-line learning opportunity was well received by delegates, **63%** of who rated it as **highly relevant** and **30% moderately** so.

Applications from Orkney, Highland Aberdeenshire, Aberdeen, Shetland and Moray have so far been received, most as a direct result of the conference launch.

The Thinking Digitally online course is being fully funded by the North Alliance. If you live/work in the Western Isles and would like to take part, or know of colleagues/volunteers who would, please get in touch with Emma before the end of November.

Workshops

With a choice of 12 workshops, most delegates were able to find topics of relevance and interest to themselves and their work. **76%** of delegates rated the selection of workshops as **highly relevant** and 17% as moderately so. **73%** of delegates rated their choice of workshops as **highly interesting** and 13% as moderately so.

How relevant did you find the selection of workshops available?

Extremely relevant 5.....1 Not at all relevant

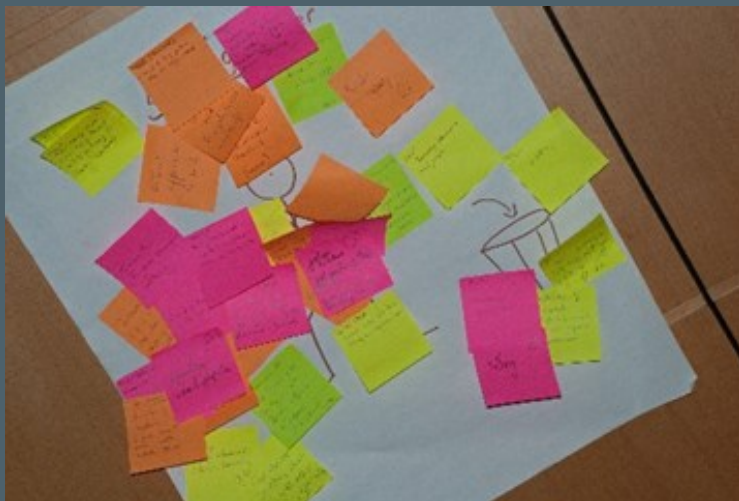
Extremely relevant	Quite relevant	Moderately relevant	Slightly relevant	Not at all relevant	Total	Average rating
13	9	5	1	1	29	4.1

How interesting did you find your workshop choices?

Extremely interesting 5.....1 Not at all interesting

Extremely interesting	Quite interesting	Moderately interesting	Slightly interesting	Not at all interesting	Total	Average rating
11	11	4	3	1	30	3.9

The individual workshops received a great deal of positive and often detailed feedback. With **hundreds** of **post-its** stuck to heads, hearts, bags and bins (fewer in this category) there are far too many notes to post here. Full feedback will be provided to the workshop leaders and a selection shown here. For information on workshop content and copies of presentations (where available) please click on the workshop pictures.



Learnt



Loved



Take away and use

Resilience - Karen McArdle



Relate the word resilience to my work
Resilience can be developed through the learning process



Discussion– teasing out what resilience is and how it can be developed
That 'professionals' have similar views to me 'a mere mortal'!



Diverse opinions
Other folks' stories and experiences



How Good is Our Third Sector Organisation? - Alona Murray & Emma Whitelock



Blown away some of my prejudices of HGIOTSO
Possibility of a framework that could bring a coherent Third Sector



This was made accessible via case studies and hand outs
Listening to views from different organisations



Have an open mind about using this tool
Keep an eye on progress of the pilots with the intention of using it in my work/TSI/Board roles



The CLD Standards Council - Mark Langdon



The CLD Standards Council is willing to listen to what practitioners have to say
There is a need for more conversations like this one at local level



Chance to discuss issues openly
I always enjoy Mark's style of workshop operation



Need to register with CLDSC and think more about my CPD
Think about promoting CLDSC membership



Facilitating dialogue & deliberation - Oliver Escobar



Positive ways to facilitate group meetings
How to reframe negative ways of thinking



Passionate, informed and informative session
Good demonstration by Oliver of locating theory into practice



How to embed some participation in different work settings
The importance of conversation and time to go through the processes



Building stronger, more sustainable communities in Aberdeenshire - Anne Simpson



That other areas face similar issues with their communities

What communities can achieve



Relaxed, informal and informative

Great to be given a proper opportunity to speak to other workers



If you have commitment, passion and support you can achieve anything

I'll take with me the enthusiasm of the group to make a difference to our communities



Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) - Susan Stronach & Karen Delaney



Better understanding of GIRFEC and named person and how it relates to child protection/reporting
Importance of multi-agency working



Good use of discussion as a learning tool
Flexibility of the session



Basic overview of GIRFEC
Better use of GIRFEC wheel in partner meetings

When does a manager become a leader? - Gill Dolphin



Differences between leadership and management
The need to be a leader and a manager



Opportunities to consider and reflect on how I use my time
The way the workshop was facilitated—very thought provoking



Change the balance of how my time is spent
Renewed resilience regarding managing my managers



Requirements for CLD (Scotland) Regulations 2013 - Karen Geekie



A better understanding of the regulations
That I have more to learn and that I need confidence to challenge planning partners



That this raises the profile of CLD—this should be the most positive time for the profession
The sharing of anxieties but keeping a positive message



The need to have more discussion on this
I'm going to check out our plans with my local partnership



Building resilience in young people - Thomas Fisher



To take a step back. Young people often have a better idea of what's best for them than you do
The need for coaching and not direct advice



I loved the passion of the presenting
I liked the concept of letting young people go through the process of figuring out if something will happen or not—in a sense building resilience from their own experience



To try to recognise when my contributions are helpful and knowing when to let things flow
To find out more about coaching

Statistics & stories: Delving deeper - Karen McArdle & Sue Briggs



Regard that narrative analysis has in research
The need to keep quality information—be organised



During discussions the passion and commitment of some participants was inspiring
Good opportunities to share and learn, good connection of theory and practice, good discussion of diversity in personnel

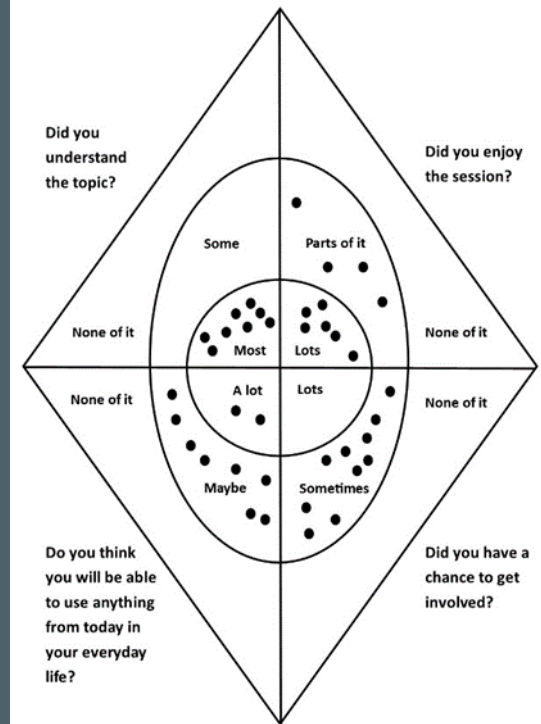


Key role of evidence in community practice
Awareness of the importance of capturing quality and quantity further heightened



Bring it on! - Kev Donald, Lorraine Young, Jane McPherson & Marie Duncan

Due to an organisational error (ie not being informed by the conference organiser!) the workshop leaders were unaware of the stick man evaluation method. Happily they did carry out their own evaluation:



Resilience in a time of austerity - Fiona Ballantyne



Unfortunately the post-it clad stick man from this workshop has wandered off! If he turns up this section will be updated!



With the exception of a handful of points relating to specific topics, the majority of post-its placed in the bins read:

- Nothing
- More time needed
- Too much noise and distraction in the main hall
- Too warm

We will try to address these when planning conference 2015.



Dragons' Den

Unfortunately many folk had disappeared to get trains and planes before the Dragons' Den was held at the end of the day and missed two great pitches from Thomas Fisher and Teresa Dufficy. We look forward to hearing how Thomas' winning project **Mentor Uist** is getting on next year.



What was your favourite aspect of the day?

Along with Oliver Escobar's key note speech, networking opportunities and workshop discussions were cited most frequently as delegates' favourite aspects of Conference 2014.

'Opportunities to meet up with folk from other areas'

'The real connection with other practitioners and sense of energy in shared values- and of course a chance to catch up with folk I hadn't seen in a year!'

'Quality of discussion in workshops'

'From the start I found people to be welcoming and friendly and I was left with a sense of a committed alliance of people who want to strive together for better - lovely to feel part of this on the day - it stimulated thought and was motivating'

'Networking opportunity with colleagues from across the North Alliance'

What could we do differently?

While some delegates seemingly had a 'perfect' conference experience, answering 'nothing' to the above question, we always feel that there is room for improvement and welcome the suggestions provided in this section of the evaluation. Here are some of your thoughts which together with the following section will be used when planning next year's conference:

'Highlight good pieces of work from the front'

'Perhaps more opportunities to chat about work and what we do same/differently'

'More time to network with colleagues'

'Run the event over two days!'

'I particularly liked the study visits we did in the past and the 2 day conference was a great chance to meet up with colleagues and network. This year's workshop choices were good but a lack of Adult Learning/Literacy ones'

'Greater promotion - many of my colleagues did not register that the Conference was on'

'Having two workshops in main area caused issues, couldn't hear facilitators clearly'

What would you like to see at Conference 2015?

Some great suggestions were given here for topics for next year. If anyone fancies delivering a workshop on any of the subjects below, please get in touch!

'Workshops on giving a presentation/ public speaking'

'How is CLD surviving/going to survive in light of CPP three year plans - comparisons across authorities'

'A focus on active democracy? As iterated in the recent COSLA report, the Scottish Youth parliament and now the Scottish Rural parliament'

'To be focused on some of the challenges that we currently face within CLD. Deeper discussion and debates around: values, ethics, and universal provision vs. targeted approaches.'

'Something around how we ensure that learners and participants know that their learning needs are being met and also about effective data sharing to grasp the bigger picture in partnership working.'

'Anything to do with literacies and ESOL work'

'More workshops with an Adult Learning emphasis'

Thank you!

Finally a huge thank you to everyone involved in making Conference 2014 a success. So thank you to the conference organisers, speakers and workshop leaders. Thank you to Dave for the great photos. Thank you to Sam and all the staff at Nairn Community Centre. And of course thank you to all the delegates.

We look forward to seeing you at Conference 2015!



All photographs by Dave Valentine
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