

Influencing Change - Community Empowerment.

People's needs are better met when they are involved in an equal and reciprocal relationship with professionals and others, working together to get things done.

Christie report June 2011

"COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE DELIVERY OF PUBLIC SERVICES"

Involving to Devolving is a development project which is based on participatory involvement with targets and outcomes based on evidence from the earlier People First Project which highlighted that many communities did not feel they were an integral part of service planning and delivery which the recently published "Christie Report" (June 2011) strongly advocates.

Within this project we are focussed on those hardest to reach and those who currently have the least influence; rural and remote communities and those of interest, identity and purpose who feel disengaged from planning processes and believe they are not heard by those who shape services and who deliver them. This was evidenced from earlier engagement with participant views of

- *'its good to have a say but it needs to happen more often'*
- *'makes me feel valued'*
- *'this is the first time anyone has asked me what I thought and what I need'*
- *'we need more of these opportunities'*

This is an ambitious project seeking to bring about real change – transformation, targeting groups and undertaking to develop and create skilled individuals, it incorporates a new approach which has not been delivered previously and has the ambition of creating increased capacity from within our communities. There is an opportunity here to build skills which can then be passed to others and enable communities to be the driving force in changing the way services are planned and delivered.

Many individuals within our communities do not have the confidence to progress the vision/ activity for their community, this project has incorporated the opportunity for individuals in this situation to participate in personal development STEPS course. This course allows individuals to acquire the knowledge, skills and self-confidence and give the ability to visualise clear goals and to plan accordingly. Although a tested model of motivation and confidence for individuals making use of the tools from this learning is in itself new and innovative and is anticipated this will assist in the creation of empowered communities able to influence and be involved in the design and delivery of services and in future planning.

We intend to mirror our engagement with our communities by instigating a journey of informing, engaging and awareness raising with public and private sector providers to change current practice from information not only to be accessible, but

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to ensure planners allow pre-emptive knowledge to inform, debate, decide and influence proposals which will enable the cultural change required to adopt new and deliberative approaches from "Involving to devolving"

Integral to our project will be close working with our partners in A&B Community Development and HIE Account Managers, to build on this and earlier work to enhance community development, the community planning process and the co-production of service delivery.

The New Economics Foundation defines co-production as "delivering public services in an equal and reciprocal relationship between professionals, people using services, their families and their neighbours. Where activities are co-produced in this way, both services and neighbourhoods become far more effective agents of change".

By giving opportunity to people within communities of place, purpose, interest and identity this project is supporting the ability of communities to become more cohesive, to establish stronger links and to come together in a deliberative and participatory process resulting in co-produced services and thus "Involving to Devolving".

Contacts for further information are as follows

Area wide and Oban Lorn & Isles area

Eleanor MacKinnon – Community Empowerment/ Training Manager

Training.ava@btconnect.com

01631 564839/07861653663

Lomond/ Cowal and Bute

Katrina Sayer – Community Empowerment Outreach

katrina@argyllvoluntaryaction.org.uk

01436 671613/ 07545695760

Mid Argyll/Kintyre/ Islay/ Jura/ Gigha

Patricia Dean – Community Empowerment Outreach

timebankabvc@tiscali.co.uk

01586 554744

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