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| RACLA Meeting Wakefield 7th July 2009 |
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Present: Tony Herrmann, Mandy Wilson, Jol Miskin, Rose Ardron, Hannah Roberts, Liz Hardy, Carol Brady, Asim Munir, Ted Hartley

Apologies from Matt Livingstone, John Corbishley, Coral Gladstone, Alison Haskins

1. Colleagues updated the meeting on the various developments taking place around active citizenship learning:

a) Jol reported that the WEA had submitted a funding application to the Dep't for Industry, Universities & Skills Transformation Fund to support active citizenship activities Sept 09 - March 2010. Partners included the REP, local authorities in the Take Part Pathfinder, the Take Part Network and Parliamentary Outreach. NIACE was involved but may not be a formal partner in the bid. There are a wide range of activities in the bid, with an emphasis on building partnership and infrastructure including how we continue networking in the region.

b) Another bid had gone in to develop work with health champions around health education and action with WEA and Altogether Better

c) A tender had been submitted by WEA nationally including NAVCA for the Training programme for Take Part Trainers, a national programme.

d) A small local bid to Sheffield Council (NLDC) by WEA had gone in to develop active citizenship work around the community assemblies.

e) Rose reported that OFFER was working on making its training packages on How your 'Town/ City, Area or Neighbourhood' Works more easily available. These will be used in Sheffield in the 7 community assemblies. Also developing a Training the Trainers package.

f) Mandy reported that CLG are making additional resources available to the region via the REP. These are targeted in certain Local Authority areas with a particular focus on improving NI 4 and the involvement of 3 specific groups: Young people, disabled people and BME communities. There could be resources for additional Take Part work and expanding Take Part style activities. There will also be a strand of active citizenship work including further work with the Regional Community Panel. A further strand on workforce development could include facilitation skills development for front line workers.

g) A contract for work to update the TP Learning Framework and produce a new directory of active citizenship resources has been awarded to Ekosgen and partners and would be completed by September.

2. Take Part Pathfinders

Asim Munir reported on the Take Part pathfinder activities in **Rotherham**. These included work with REMA (Rotherham Ethnic Minority Alliance) to improve ethnic minority access to decision-making processes and develop a BME active citizenship network. Year 2 was underway with a programme of events to be confirmed at the next steering group meeting.

Carol Brady reported from the **Barnsley** TP Pathfinder who are running a 'How Your Town Works' course, possibly a second one and potentially a 'How Your Neighbourhood works' course. They are also looking at citizen involvement in the Neighbourhood's Framework. There would also be a Question Time event later and some work around women and engagement. A key issue is how 'brave' to be in challenging the 'far right'.

The Parliament Outreach Programme was also planning joint events and visits with Barnsley groups. They are keen to work with others to embed how to link the local to the national in active citizenship learning programmes. Currently piloting with Leeds Voice.

Colleagues noted the urgent need for programmes that looked beyond democratic structures and addressed issues of power - issues often not delivered in Local Authority run programmes. Jol mentioned a course run by WEA in Sheffield that touched on political 'theory', although it was a short (15 hr) course it did raise issues around power.

A discussion followed about basic political education work, local democracy campaigning and the 'guided tour' of Parliament that was often included in programmes. The meeting felt strongly that the focus in this tour (on history, Kings & Queens, England 'against' the rest of the world) needed radically changing and suggested that a different kind of tour is needed that is more relevant to people coming with an interest in getting involved in democratic processes and has some dialogue/ listening to feedback. **Hannah offered to follow this up.**

The TP Pathfinder website for the round 1 pathfinder in South Yorkshire had been launched successfully, www.takepartpathfinderyh.org and the second round of Pathfinders were about to start work in Bradford and York.

Liz would update on these and report back. On a practical note it was suggested that the second wave of Pathfinders are supported by joining part of the SY Pathfinder steering group and other meetings. There was a question

about what level of resources would be needed to do this. **Ted to raise this at the meeting on the 31st of July.**

There was a short discussion about the need to develop a framework for collecting evidence to ensure effective learning from the pathfinders. Jol suggested a key qualitative element would be the learner records which could be made available. **Jol to get WEA learner records sent to COGS.** Ted has done some initial interviews with students. There would be a need to follow up students to find out what they are doing after courses - are they doing anything new or different? Are they doing things better? Have they increased their involvement? And so on. It may be possible to work with one of the local universities to undertake some longitudinal tracking of learners. In addition the impact on Local Authorities would be important to ascertain - Asim felt that it had enhanced the value of their work in Rotherham, whereas Carol felt that just having the resources to run the courses was an improvement.

Mandy offered to send round a draft framework for people to look at.

3. Mapping Learning for Active Citizenship

The Mapping Exercise had been completed and would be made available on the website. Updating and promoting would be continued as part of this year's programme of work to ensure it was 'kept alive'. It should be possible (on the new version of YHEP website) for providers in the region to keep their sections of the Map up-to-date. A core criteria for the inclusion of activities on the map is the provision of active learning opportunities. The exercise had shown that there was a real appetite in the region for getting together to share work and ideas in practical ways. One key purpose of RACLA is to facilitate shared learning. There was a need to link to other networks that overlapped with RACLA such as the CD network and the Health network.

COGS to put on website

3. Forward Plan

It was agreed that people wanted opportunities to meet for the purpose of sharing and learning from each other. The group felt it would be good to organise 2/3 RACLA events per year centred on practitioners and practice. Events to include showcasing, market place for practice exchange and case studies. It was agreed to organise the first one in York (in partnership with York Council TP project) and provide a showcasing opportunity for Pathfinders and others to show what they were doing and exchange experience. There could also be a focus on promoting democratic involvement. It was suggested that each worker attending should bring a learner with them. This would be scheduled for early November and would be the next RACLA open meeting.

It was also agreed that there would be a RACLA planning meeting, which will be open to all interested parties, following the next REP consortium meeting on 5th October 2009.

COGS to confirm dates and arrangements.