

LEARNING CITIES NETWORKS – ROLLING WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

GLASGOW WORKSHOP MARCH 3RD 2015

Cultural Policies and Activities for Sustainable Learning Cities, Communities, and Regions

Mike Osborne, Head of Social Justice, Place and Lifelong Education, Research and Teaching Group, Glasgow University; and Director of [PASCAL Observatory](#), gave an introductory talk about how the network and the workshop is about finding the opportunities, the links between different agencies and understanding the ladders of progression. He posed two key questions to the room: “What would tell us that we are living in a learning city?” and “What is it that cultural agencies and assets can contribute to city learning?” He also highlighted the PASCAL 2016 conference on the theme of Learning Cities that will take place at the University of Glasgow, 3-5 June 2016. UNESCO have agreed to support this major event, linking it to their work within the Global Network of Learning Cities. This conference is a staging post for the [Learning Cities Networks](#) (LCN) which itself is part of [Learning Cities 2020](#).

Following Mike, **Mark O’Neill**, Director of Policy and Research, Glasgow Life, talked the city’s experience hosting the Commonwealth Games and about the challenge of finding a lasting legacy following major events. Research points to there being no automatic impact on people’s lives, that this only happens in the very long term which is a challenge to evaluate. The city’s response to this in planning the Commonwealth Games was to plan for a long-term investment in culture and sport. It also recognised that in planning major events in the past, structures for community engagement had been missing. Evaluation of the Commonwealth Games programme showed that a quarter of people tried something new, and that a number of aspects were delivered in consultation with local people, for example the Queen’s Baton relay, but are these experiences learning experiences? Glasgow Life explored a new triangulated evaluation programme for Arts productions by analysing responses from self, peer and public views.

Mark finished his presentation by offering thoughts on organisation and public learning from the Games:

- People behaved differently during the Games and took part more: there was a ‘festival effect’.
- Is it possible to evoke that intentionally on a smaller scale and motivate people to learn?
- Glasgow Life has a major event strategy for economic impact – is it as an organisation learning from that?

Yla Barrie, Volunteer and Placement Co-ordinator for Museums and **Sally Paton**, Volunteer Advisor, discussed how the Commonwealth Games was an opportunity to encourage volunteering in Glasgow through the Host City Volunteers project. They viewed the project as successful in that it was able to recruit and support a higher than average number of volunteers who were registered disabled; from an ethnic minority; or who considered themselves to come from an area of deprivation. The project supported individual needs: for example 10% of volunteers didn’t have access to email so communication had to be rethought; and training was tailored to support the needs of the volunteers. Yla and sally described how the diversity of involvement led to reports from volunteers celebrating the greater range of social connections that they had made through the experience. However, they were keen to acknowledge that it was the project’s funding that had made this

possible; the welfare pot that had supported child care, dependents' care, transport and BSL translators. Learning also took place through peer support amongst volunteers and evaluation findings indicate that outcomes were higher than initial expectations. There is now demand from the Games' Host City Volunteers for more opportunities but how do we take forward that role when it requires a high level of support and face to face contact? How can we pathway their interest for other opportunities, for example through the Museums service?

Katrina Brodin, Library Manager (Access and Schools) discussed the City's approach to a new vision for the libraries, at the same time as a national strategy is taking place supported by the Carnegie Trust. Katrina explained about the opportunities to draw on funding that supports a collaborative approach; health and social care agendas being a key link in the process and key voices missing from this workshop. Katrina suggested that learning was required within Glasgow Life to move from delivery to enabler, finishing with a series of questions to the room: "How do we know what / when we've achieved; what are our critical success factors, and how do we sustain them?"

David Gaimster, Director of the Hunterian, Glasgow University, discussed the university's involvement in a major, multi-partner project for the redevelopment of the City's [Kelvin Hall](#) and how a project can contribute to a strategy. David described the project as providing a primary hub for lifelong learning in the city; encompassing a full spectrum from community adult education, to professional and executive development. Plans for new public engagement programmes will alleviate barriers to participation with the civic learning community by being 'off campus'. Kelvin Hall will transform the university's ability to engage with the public and new audiences, embracing a civic responsibility to community engagement.

The workshop incorporated a number of round table discussions responding to the presentations and a series of questions already provided by the speakers:

Session 1:

- How would cultural organisations behave in a fully committed learning city?
- How can major events engage with and benefit Glasgow's communities?
- One of the resounding successes of Host City Volunteers and the Our Games Exhibition is the traditional engagement of face to face learning and co-production processes. Is this engagement model sustainable in our general working practice, or is it unique to one-off projects with dedicated funding?

Session 2:

- In response to the organisational challenge of moving from a team of deliverers to enablers to facilitate a dialogue between community and providers to support increased cultural engagement and learning:
 - What does a successful cultural hub look like in terms of critical success factors
 - How do we balance national interest, city goals and local need
 - How do we ensure quality is sustained as growth from pilot stage is progressed – maintaining the community dialogue
 - The role of evaluation of Cultural Hubs to support the overall vision for libraries

- How can we convince the university sector, given its other missions, to engage fully with partners in civil society to create the conditions for the learning city to thrive?

Participants (including speakers) took part in round table discussions to consider these questions in light of the presentations. At the end of the workshop each table contributed a key point for action and 'next steps' back to the room:

- 1) Suggested that Glasgow establishes an Audience Development Framework to avoid duplication of work and prevent some audiences being 'super-served' at the potential expense of others. The Framework should have equality of access for all as a central tenet. Suggested that Glasgow Life take the lead on this.
- 2) Glasgow could learn from and should link up with other cities and explore the models operated by other Learning City Networks.
- 3) It's not just individual communities. We should be exploring different user needs within those communities (for example, the barriers for women/mothers was discussed) and this kind of mapping would be of particular importance to major developments like Kelvin Hall.

Workshop participants expressed a great deal of interest in pursuing the learning city agenda for Glasgow, and future collaborative working to facilitate it. It was suggested that we require City Council backing but led by Glasgow Life as enablers. Colleagues from Glasgow Life agreed to discuss options in relation to this recommendation.

In the meantime, everyone who attended will be sent joining instructions, notes from the individual table sessions and a list of voices that participants felt should also be included in future events and discussions. A question was raised in response to this about how to engage organisations who play an important role in the learning city approach but who may not see themselves first and foremost a 'learning organisation'.