

Environmental Action and Community Cohesion



Supporting **Communities**
Creating Change

every  action counts

Resource pack for trainers

Taster Pack 14

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Introduction to taster courses

The Federation for Community Development Learning (FCDL) is the national membership body promoting and supporting community development work learning for all those involved in community development as defined in the National Occupational Standards.

Community development work aims to collectively bring about social change and justice, by working with communities to:

- Identify their needs, opportunities, rights and responsibilities
- Plan, organise and take action
- Evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the action

all in ways which challenge oppressions and tackle inequalities.

Community development is a particular way of working with communities, it has a clear set of values and ethics which include:

- Working to achieve social justice through challenging oppression, addressing power imbalances, promoting equality and valuing diversity
- The self-determination of communities, supporting communities to identify their own concerns and interests and how to resolve them
- The promotion of sustainable communities based on the empowerment of individuals and groups developing their own skills and structures for working together
- A process of working and learning together, sharing good practice and encouraging people to contribute effectively to their communities
- Supporting the participation of communities, particularly those who are most often excluded, working to tackle the barriers to their participation and to promote community empowerment

Community development work has at its centre the concept of reflective practice - of learning from what happened in the past and to other communities.

Community development is a process which starts with developing working relationships with communities and their organisations, then encourages people to work and learn from each other - determining what their common interests and concerns are. It moves into supporting them to make plans and put those plans into action. Reflection on those activities leads into evaluation and replanning. Sometimes community members decide they need to set up a new group or organisation and they may need support to do this effectively and legally.

The support that communities and community organisations need will depend on their particular situation and their stage of group development. The skill of practitioners involved in community development is to provide the appropriate support to enable the groups to achieve their aims, rather than trying to make the group fit other people's agendas.

As part of the Federation's work we produce a range of resource packs to support tutors and trainers. All of the packs contain sample session plans, handouts, trainers' guidance notes, worksheets and exercises.

This pack is one of a series being produced to support the Federation's contribution to DEFRA's Every Action Counts programme, which aims to raise awareness of environmental issues amongst voluntary and community groups and the wider community. DEFRA has been charged by our current government with taking action to tackle the bigger environmental issues of climate change and natural resource

depletion. For more information, and details of the whole programme, see the fourpage leaflet on our website and the Every Action Counts website (www.everyactioncounts.org.uk).

The Federation has become involved with this programme because it recognises that environmental justice is a key part of social justice – one of the core values of community development work. Poor and marginalised communities are on the receiving end of many social injustices, and likewise they are more likely to live in degraded environments and be adversely affected by current environmental changes.

The tasters are designed to raise awareness of particular issues within the Every Action Counts programme. They can provide progression to the National Open College Network (NOCN) unit on Community Development and Environmental Action, an optional unit at levels 2 and 3 within the national Community Development Work (CDW) awards. Details are provided in a handout at the end of this pack. The full CDW learning and qualifications framework is available on our website.

All the courses designed by the Federation within the Every Action Counts programme are informed by the values of community development work, and aim to support communities and those who work with them, by promoting an environmental justice approach.

This is a trainers' resource pack to support short, non-accredited taster programmes for activists within their communities, community development workers and those who are using a community development approach to their environmental work.

Trainer's packs, by their very nature, provide material on a particular topic, which is aimed at people involved in community development. It is not possible in packs that are being released nationally to provide material that relates to all the local situations. It is the trainer's responsibility to customise the material to their particular audience and contexts.

We would like to thank the following people for their contributions to this pack:

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Kaye Brennan
Adam Conway
Debbie Jones
Rosina McGuigan
Becky Purnell
Phillip Tala
Nick Weir

The Federation for Community Development Learning
2008



Supporting Communities
Creating Change



This publication is part of the Every Action Counts programme which is funded by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Time	Content	Exercise/ Method	Resources	Notes
00	Domestics Ground-rules Aims of taster	Tutor input	Trainers Guidance Note 1 Prepared ground-rules	
10	What do we understand by community cohesion; why are we interested in promoting the idea?	Trios to explore perceptions of, and interest in, community cohesion	Trainers Guidance Note 2 Flip chart paper and pens	
35	Government policy re community cohesion	Tutor led discussion	Trainers Guidance Note 3 Handouts 1,2,3	
55	What do people in their communities think about community cohesion; static and dynamic views	Tutor input; small group discussions; feedback whole group discussion	Trainers Guidance Note 4 Handout 4,5	
80	Environmental action and community cohesion – beginning to make the links with informal and formal organisations and networks	Small groups producing posters	Trainers Guidance Note 5 Paper, pens	
105	Mapping informal networks and community catalysts to support environmental activities to support community cohesion	Small groups working on examples using a worksheet	Trainers Guidance Note 6 Handouts 6, 7, 8 Worksheet 1	
135	Feedback from previous exercise; exploring solutions	Tutor directed feedback and discussion	Trainers Guidance Note 6 Flipchart and pen	
145	Linking informal to formal	Small group work	Trainers Guidance Note 7	
170	Evaluation	Round to get group's comments; or graffiti board for use on way out		
180	End			

Trainer Guidance Note 1

Introduction

As you welcome people to the session you need to give them information about the venue – for example

1. Fire exits and procedures; and ask if people are leaving early to let tutors know so you can amend the register
2. Toilets
3. Break times and where refreshments served

Remember to make a notice for the door so people can find you easily.

As it is a short course there will not be time to prepare ground rules as a group, so we recommend that you write out some ways of working together and have them written out on a flipchart. Talk through the proposed rules, ask for any additions and then ask people to agree to working within them.

Some examples may be:

- We will keep to the start and finish times and the times set by the trainer
- All mobile phones to be switched off during the session
- We will respect each other and our different views. We will take care not to offend others by our language and/or behaviour.
- We can challenge each other's statements but we will not do this as a personal attack
- We will listen carefully to each other and allow people to finish. We will try not to hog the conversation
- We will keep personal and organisational information confidential to the group
- People must take responsibility for their own learning – so you should ask for clarification about comments/ instructions if necessary

The aims of this session are:

- To share our understanding of community cohesion and our common interests in the topic
- To explore ways that environmental activity can generate and/ or support the building of cohesive communities
- To consider the role of informal local activities and how they may lead to engagement in more formal activities

Trainer Guidance Note 2

Participants understanding of, and interest in, community cohesion

There is no one agreed definition and understanding of community cohesion and so this session starts with an exercise to get a sense of how people are using the words and why they are interested in the topic.

Ask participants to work in trios. Give each trio a flipchart sheet and pens.

Their tasks are:

- To introduce themselves to each other quite briefly.
- To discuss what they think community cohesion is and to log key words onto their sheet of paper; they should circle the ones they all agree with and leave the others unadorned, so its easy to see what they have in common and disagreements.
- To say why they are interested in the topic – recording the main points on the flipchart.

Ask each trio to nominate a spokesperson who will introduce the members of the trio by name to the rest of the group and then to explain the key points on their flip chart .

Leave the sheets displayed, and comment on areas of commonality and areas of difference.

Trainer Guidance Note 3

Government policy regarding community cohesion

Community cohesion became an important policy issue following the race-related disturbances in Oldham, Burnley and Bradford in 2001.

A recent report by Involve 'Everybody needs good neighbours? - A study of the link between public participation and community cohesion'¹ introduces the issues – see Handout 1.

Although many people hold a wider view of community cohesion the Government has tended to relate the term to ethnic diversity and to citizenship. It's response to its Commission on Integration and Cohesion (on the DCLG web site www.communities.gov.uk in the communities and neighbourhoods section) talks about:

- The new Migration Impacts Forum set up in June 2007
- The 'Governance of Britain' Green Paper July 2007 about the relationship between government and the citizen aimed at enhancing the rights and responsibilities of the citizen
- Aiming High for Young People: a ten-year strategy for positive activities. (July 2007. Department for Children, Schools and Families) about the role positive activities have in developing community cohesion, in bridging the gaps between young people from different ethnic and faith groups as well as improving relationships across different generations.
- Review of Policing in England and Wales September 2007, the role that community policing has to play in building cohesive communities.
- A new cross government public service agreement (PSA 21) to build cohesive, empowered and active communities. October 2007

The government commissioned some research into the predictors of community cohesion – based on the 2005 Citizenship Survey – which reported its findings early in 2008.

A very brief summary of its findings are that

- Both individual and community-level factors influence cohesion
- Ethnic diversity is, in most cases, positively associated with community cohesion while disadvantage erodes cohesion
- Crime and fear of crime strongly undermine cohesion
- Empowerment is important
- Volunteering leads to more positive views on cohesion
- Vulnerable groups have more negative perceptions of cohesion
- The predictors of cohesion vary across ethnic groups

¹ 'Everybody needs good neighbours? - A study of the link between public participation and community cohesion. 2008 by Stella Creasy, Karin Gavelin and Dominic Potter. From www.involve.org.uk or www.peopleandparticipation.net

Handout 2 gives more details on this research; the full and summary reports are available from the DCLG web site.

Handout 3 sets out the government's current position.

Basically how cohesive an area is will depend upon a series of interacting factors:

- The characteristics and history of the area
- Residents' personal characteristics
- Residents' attitudes

The story of cohesion in each local area will therefore be different, though there will be similarities between areas. The story can also be influenced by perceptions of events nationally or in other communities.

There is no single or small group of factors which can explain an area's level of cohesion, even the strongest influence – the level of deprivation, can only explain a few percentage points of difference. This complexity of influences on cohesion means that improving cohesion is about addressing multiple issues at the same time.

Using the information in this Training Guidance Note and the handouts, introduce some of the key themes which emerge from them. Hold a whole group discussion about any differences between what they thought community cohesion was about and the government's view. Record the main points of this discussion.

Looking at the flipcharts displayed from the first exercise check if any of the participants interest in community cohesion relates to this government agenda.

Handout 1

Everybody needs good neighbours?

A study of the link between public participation and community cohesion¹

This recent report by Involve starts by describing the current scene.

Over the course of the last decade there has been a growing public debate about the changing nature of Britain's social fabric. Media commentators, academic research and government reports all paint a picture of a society that is struggling to cope with a transient population and changing economic climate. The capacity of Britain's communities to adapt to economic and social change has become the subject of much concern, as some fear that the social ties and bonds that underpin national stability are becoming increasingly divided, disaffected and teeming with conflict. Tension, it appears, is everywhere: between different generations, immigrants and settled residents, Muslim and Christian populations. The effects of this perceived strain on our social fabric are not only manifested in corroding social relationships but are seen to be linked to any number of problems. Be it crime, voter apathy, school segregation or overcrowding, Britain is deemed to be fracturing into a nation of divided communities, loyalties and identities; ill at ease with itself.

Some blame these problems on a lack of shared values and sense of citizenship, some on the changing constitution of modern communities, which mean that people from all walks of life find themselves crossing paths with, but not necessarily getting on with, people from different backgrounds. Others see deprivation and inequality as the root of the problem, arguing that people who suffer sustained deprivation are likely to view with suspicion anyone who competes with them for jobs, housing and benefits. Although there may be disagreement about what causes these social divides, there is a general consensus that promoting cohesion and integration is of paramount importance if Britain's communities are to successfully face the challenges of the 21st century.

¹ 'Everybody needs good neighbours?' - A study of the link between public participation and community cohesion. 2008 by Stella Creasy, Karin Gavelin and Dominic Potter. From www.involve.org.uk or www.peopleandparticipation.net

Handout 2

Predictors of Community Cohesion

Community cohesion has become an important policy issue in recent years and so there is a need for quality research on and around the topic.

The government commissioned a study:

- To identify the individual socio-demographic and attitudinal predictors of community cohesion
- To explore how far differences between communities can be explained by the individual characteristics of their members race, cohesion and faiths
- To establish the extent to which community level factors can predict cohesion above and beyond those characteristics which operate at the individual level.

It found that:

- Both individual and community-level factors influence cohesion
- An individual's sense of cohesion comes from their individual characteristics and the characteristics of the community they live in.
- Ethnic diversity drives cohesion
- Taking other factors into account, ethnic diversity is, in most cases, positively associated with community cohesion.

The relationship between diversity and cohesion is complicated and the nature of this relationship is dependent on the type of ethnic mix in an area:

- Living in an area which has a broad mix of residents from different ethnic groups was consistently shown to be a positive predictor of cohesion.
- Having an increasing percentage of in-migrants born outside of the UK, is a negative predictor.
- Having friends from ethnic groups other than one's own is a strong positive predictor of cohesion. One of the positive effects of diversity is the increase in inter-ethnic friendships (ie bridging).

Disadvantage erodes community cohesion:

- Irrespective of the ethnic diversity in a community, disadvantage consistently undermines perceptions of cohesion and operates in a similar fashion for all communities.
- Not all deprived areas have low cohesion. Deprived, diverse areas have higher average cohesion scores than deprived, homogeneous White areas. It is deprivation that undermines cohesion, not diversity.
- Individual levels of disadvantage (ie low socio-economic status) reduce feelings of cohesion. Increasing income or improving an individual's level of qualifications, can offset the negative impact of high crime rates and high levels of community disadvantage on people's views about cohesion.

Crime and fear of crime strongly undermine cohesion:

- Increasing levels of crime and fear of crime are both strong negative predictors of community cohesion.

- Feeling unsafe after dark, fear of crime and fear of being a victim of a racist attack have a particularly negative effect on perceptions of cohesion amongst those living in areas where the population is predominately made up of White and Pakistani & Bangladeshi people.
- Crime undermines the positive effects of living in very diverse areas.

Empowerment is important:

- Feeling able to influence local decisions is a strong positive predictor of community cohesion.
- Feeling that an individual would be unfairly treated because of their race has a strong negative impact on cohesion.

Volunteering is a positive predictor of cohesion:

- Individuals who engage in formal volunteering are more positive about cohesion.
- Such people are likely to feel more empowered, have more interaction and form networks with individuals in their communities that they may not be in contact with otherwise.

Vulnerable groups have more negative perceptions of cohesion:

- Women, disabled people and individuals with a long-term illness, individuals who lack access to services and council tenants are all less likely to think that their local area is cohesive.

The predictors of cohesion vary across ethnic groups:

- Income has no effect on cohesion for White people, but it is a strong positive driver for Pakistani & Bangladeshi and Black African people.
- For Pakistani & Bangladeshi people, participation in informal volunteering is a strong positive driver of cohesion.
- The longer Indian people have lived in a neighbourhood the more negative their views on cohesion become (for White people, there is no relationship).

The summary and full report is available on www.communities.gov.uk. Predictors of community cohesion. James Laurence and Anthony Heath. 2008

Handout 3

Governments current view of community cohesion

At the heart of government's approach to cohesion is the principle that cohesion is something that can only be understood and built locally.

Central Government's role is to set the national framework within which local authorities and their partners can deliver.

A new definition of Community Cohesion

Community Cohesion is what must happen in all communities to enable different groups of people to get on well together.

A key contributor to community cohesion is integration which is what must happen to enable new residents and existing residents to adjust to one another.

Our vision of an integrated and cohesive community is based on **three foundations:**

- People from different backgrounds having similar life opportunities
- People knowing their rights and responsibilities
- People trusting one another and trusting local institutions to act fairly

And **three key ways of living together:**

- A shared future vision and sense of belonging
- A focus on what new and existing communities have in common, alongside a recognition of the value of diversity
- Strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds.

This is different from the old definition of community cohesion in two key ways.

First, it reflects a greater emphasis on the importance of citizenship and community empowerment to building cohesion – ranging from rights and responsibility to a shared future vision.

Second, in its recognition of the increasing importance of integration to cohesion – how important a sense of having things in common is to building trust and positive relationships between new and existing residents.

This new emphasis in the definition on notions of **citizenship** and **integration** reflects the way in which our society is changing and affecting the way in which we live together. Technological change, social change, economic trends and globalisation are making individual identity more complex. In the past, when notions of how to behave were shared across divides such as class and generations, there was less need to define what we meant by citizenship or to think about how different people could interact and adjust to each other. But as new distinctions emerge – for instance between those who are technologically literate and those who are not, or between those who subscribe to the values of a faith

and those who do not – as society is becoming more individualistic, there is a greater need for us to define what needs to be shared in order for us to live together. Our highly inter-connected society makes this both necessary and possible.

So that the government can see if it is achieving its aims, a new single national public service agreement (PSA) for community cohesion has been established - **PSA 21 ' to build cohesive, empowered and active communities'**¹.

To meet the Government's national ambition to build integrated and cohesive communities, the cohesion and empowerment elements of this PSA will be measured against four indicators:

- The percentage of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area
- The percentage of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood
- The percentage of people who have meaningful interactions with people from different backgrounds
- The percentage of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality

¹ www.hm-treasury.gov.uk - PSAs determine what Local Authorities and Government departments have to achieve.

Trainer Guidance Note 4

Community perceptions of community cohesion

So far we have taken a brief look at what participants think about community cohesion and what the government's view is. In this part of the session we take a look at how individuals and communities might see it.

The first, and quite gloomy, view is recorded by JRF in its recent research into how people see social evil's today. Their findings are on Handout 4. They do stress that as this is the first part of a wider survey they have concentrated here on what is wrong, not what is good, or what can change.

In the discussion of the findings of the research into the predictors of community cohesion, there is a section (4.2) which examines whether diversity or disadvantage is the stronger driver of cohesion. It argues that disadvantage is the stronger factor and that communities can build resilience to deprivation through collective action. Social interactions improve people's perceptions of their neighbourhoods, but in poorer neighbourhoods there tends to be much less social interaction. There is no deficiency of social capital networks in diverse communities but there is a lack of social capital networks in economically disadvantaged communities.

The Involve research mentioned in Trainers Guidance Note 3 'Everybody needs good neighbours' page 42 noted that:

"Many participants in the research were adamant that whether a community is cohesive or not may be determined less by the strength of the ties that bind people together than by the perceptions they have of each other and of the area in which they live. Those perceptions may benefit from strong and explicit bonds between people of different backgrounds and generations, but they do not necessarily rely on them. Implicit ties can be sufficient to create a sense of trust and belonging. Simply being aware that there are informal and formal networks,... to which one could belong if one wished, can have a similar effect."

The research goes on to talk about "familiar strangers" - the people who we regularly encounter, for example on our way to the shop, when walking the dog or travelling to work, but who we do not know or interact with. Although familiar strangers may never acknowledge each others' existence in their normal day-to-day life, in extraordinary circumstances, such as a flood, they are more likely to come to each other's assistance. Moreover, for those living busy lives in densely populated areas, regularly seeing the same familiar faces, strangers or not, can help people feel connected to the area in which they live.

There are numerous different ways of approaching the concept of community cohesion. This diversity reflects the range of ways in which community itself is understood. It also reflects the diversity of British communities, with their varied characters, lifestyles and consequently different needs.

The Involve report has some excellent chapters on The Public Policy Context and Why Does Community Cohesion Matter, although written for Local Authorities there is much within their work to aid community development workers and others seeking to work around community cohesion.

Using this material, introduce and explain the key points and then ask people to work in small groups to discuss how they think that the communities they are involved with view community cohesion.

When you have taken the feedback on the key points from their discussions you may find it useful to introduce the two different perceptions of community cohesion, which are outlined in Handout 5. As community development practitioners we hope that they will identify more with trying to bring about the second active definition of community cohesion.

Handout 4

What are today's social evils?

This is an extract from a summary of the findings of a public consultation exploring the social evils facing Britain today. It has been undertaken by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, whose founder in 1904 identified what he believed were the worst social evils at that time. The Foundation has updated this by running a web survey of 3,500 people and holding discussions with groups whose voices are not usually heard. It reveals a strong sense of unease about some of the changes shaping British society.

It was released in April 2008 and you can get the full report and summary from: www.sociale evils.org.uk

Participants highlighted the following concerns about how we seem to live our lives:

- A decline of community: communities are weak and people are increasingly isolated from their neighbours, at considerable cost to well-being and happiness.
- Individualism: people tend to see themselves as individuals and not as part of wider society, leading to selfishness and insularity.
- Consumerism and greed: an excessive desire for money and consumer goods has eclipsed values and aspirations rooted in relationships and communities.
- A decline of values: there is no longer a set of shared values to guide behaviour. Participants emphasised a lack of tolerance, compassion and respect shown to others.

Against this backdrop, people identified the following, more concrete, social evils:

- The decline of the family: family breakdown and poor parenting were felt to cause many other social problems and leave young people particularly vulnerable.
- Young people as victims or perpetrators: Young people were seen as perpetrators of social evils like anti-social behaviour, or the victims of stereotypes and limited opportunities.
- Drugs and alcohol: misuse of drugs and alcohol was viewed as the consequence and cause of many other social problems, like family breakdown and poverty.
- Poverty and inequality: poverty was viewed as a corrosive social evil in an affluent society, underpinning other social problems, such as homelessness and family breakdown.
- Immigration and responses to immigration: participants felt that local residents lose out to immigrants in competition for scarce resources. Others criticised negative attitudes to, and lack of support for, immigrants and thought society should be more tolerant and inclusive.
- Crime and violence: people felt that Britain is more dangerous and violent than in the past. Child abuse and exploitation were highlighted as particularly damaging evils.

Government, media, big business and religion were believed to be responsible for these social evils. People also emphasised personal responsibility for social evils, but thought bad choices and damaging behaviour could be symptoms of underlying social problems, such as poverty. They also thought some social evils are embedded in current ways of living and thinking.

Handout 5

Two different views on community cohesion

These are taken from the Involve Report; Everybody Needs Good Neighbours? 2008

1. Static definitions of community cohesion are rooted in a belief that communities which function well do not exhibit tension or anti-social behaviour; in other words, they are communities in which people are able to live peacefully side by side.

Such definitions are “static” because they explain the contemporary status of relationships between people within a community. In these definitions it is not the existence of strong relationships or interactions between individuals and groups that define cohesion, but the absence of tension.

In other words, community cohesion at its most basic is manifested through the effective management of the pressures of modern life so that they do not interfere with the ability of individuals to co-exist. This interpretation was supported by an interviewee in this research who argued:

Saying that everyone must have a shared understanding of what the community is like, and they must have a sense of belonging and like their neighbours – I think that's quite far removed from reality. I think in the short term it's [better to aim for] a community where people aren't violent towards each other, where they aren't distrustful of each other, rather than a community where everybody likes each other.

The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham's community cohesion strategy reflects this perspective. It emphasis is on safety, fairness and having opportunities to mix, rather than the strength and frequency of those interactions. They define a cohesive community as:

- “A strong community that will get fair access to services
- A place where people respect one another and enjoy safe and peaceful lives; and
- [A place where there are] opportunities to meet together and look forward to the future.”

Another example is Leicester City Council, where community cohesion is defined as:

“Learning to live together”. Here, the emphasis is on managing and valuing ethnic diversity by supporting integration, working with young people from different backgrounds, and building confidence and a sense of belonging among residents, all with the aim of overcoming prejudice and preventing social tension.

Although this strategy acknowledges the role of intergroup interactions in achieving these objectives, its aim is not so much to develop strong relationships between groups as to create a “better understanding of our neighbours and communities [to help] lessen the tensions that ignorance brings so that we can all live with a feeling of safety and security”.

2. Active definitions place greater emphasis on the behaviours and interactions within a community, and they are centred on the activities that are seen to enable cohesion. They interpret the concept in terms of the nature and strength of the relationships and interactions between people in a locality, and the perceptions they have of each other and the local area as a result of those relationships and interactions. One research participant commented:

The way I like to think about whether there is cohesion in a community is whether there is a lot of noise, because people are trying to communicate with each other.

Active interpretations of community cohesion often refer to explicit and sustained relationships between people, which are shown by frequent interactions, participation in shared activities, mutual trust and a shared sense of belonging to the locality. They also explicitly mention the social infrastructure that makes such relationships possible, identifying the importance of social justice and equal opportunities alongside everyday interactions.

For example, the Local Government Association defines community cohesion as communities where:

- There is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities;
- The diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued;
- Those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities;
- And strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds and circumstances in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.

Trainer Guidance Note 5

Environmental action and community cohesion

So far we have spent quite a bit of the session exploring aspects of community cohesion. This is important because if people haven't thought about some of the issues and different perspectives then they may not be effective at using environmental activities to achieve their cohesion goals.

There are assumptions within community development that people working together in community groups will contribute to community cohesion, but that may not be the case. Some community groups may be in conflict with others within the community and within groups there may be many conflicts being played out.

For example - the Involve research mentioned in Trainers Guidance Note 3 'Everybody needs good neighbours' page 31. states that:

"There is an emerging recognition of the role that participation in public life can play in promoting community cohesion. Lessons from the fields of community development, conflict resolution and grass-roots campaigning have shown that one of the most effective ways of building positive relationships between people is to motivate and enable them to come together to address shared problems and build on what they have in common... there is a general presumption running through current policy and political debates that community relations benefit from people being encouraged to take part in public life within their local area."

In order to make the links between community cohesion and environmental actions ask participants to work in small groups.

Their task is to produce a poster which will demonstrate the links between the community development inspired environmental action and community cohesion, using their own practice or examples that they have seen or heard about from other people.

You may want to read, and use, some of the material within the Environmental Justice Taster Pack, as this explores in some detail the links between community development values of social justice and environmental justice, or the material in the NOCN Environmental Action resource pack about the Broken Windows theory, about how low key degradation of an environment adversely affects those who live there.

Most of the other resource packs on this series have focused on the more organised groups within communities, and supporting them to adapt their practices to be more environmentally aware and to promote sustainable development.

These groups can be seen as part of the more formal ways of organising within communities. In this part of the session it is useful to make the distinction between the formal groups organising and the more informal activities and networks that may exist within any locality.

You can do this as part of the feedback when the groups are displaying their posters. The next part of the session is going to focus on the informal aspects, and later we will consider if one can feed into the other.

Trainer Guidance Note 6

Informal networks and community catalysts

In the last exercise, hopefully, the posters will have given some examples of both informal and formal networks and groupings within communities being involved in environmental activities which might help improve community cohesion. If not, use some of the examples in Handouts 8 and 9.

In this exercise we want participants to focus on how they could find out about any informal activities taking place in the communities they live / work within. Handout 6 looks at the informal networking that respondents to the Involve research highlighted.

We also want participants to think about how could they identify community catalysts. Handout 7 gives details of this concept which is also taken from the Involve report. There are a number of Community Champions Schemes running at present – some are being organised through the Every Action Counts initiative – so people may relate the catalyst role to a champion role.

Details of Community Champions are on the Every Action Counts Web site where it explains that anyone can become a Community champions – ‘for instance - the chair of a residents’ association, a pre-school playgroup worker, a local football club leader, a WI member or a youth group organiser. Or you could be completely unconnected with any existing community group. All that’s required is a passion for promoting a sustainable future. Community Champions will be trained up over a number of special sessions. You then head out into the community and meet with groups, clubs and organisations. You introduce them to the future-friendly Easy Actions they can take. You help them decide on an action plan. You help them set it underway. That’s it’

You may want to discuss if the two roles of catalysts and champion are similar or quite different. Use the handouts to discuss the concepts and check people understand them.

For this exercise people need to think about an aspect of community cohesion that they are interested in working towards, for which some kind of environmental activity might be relevant. You can see that some of the ideas in Handout 8 reflect different aims – The Bentley Exchange, Redbricks Intranet and the People’s Kitchen are all tackling poverty, whereas the walks in the parks and forests and the community gardens are bringing people together in shared public spaces.

Ask people to call out some ideas; when you have a few written up, ask everyone to sign up for working on one of the ideas and create small working groups.

Their task is outlined on Worksheet 1. Handout 8 gives some examples which they might find useful and inspiring.

Take their feedback on their idea(s) and make a note of these.

Go round and find out how they would try and identify informal networks and record these; do the same with community catalysts.

Then make a list of the potential problems and spend some time with the group thinking about how these could be tackled and possibly resolved – for example cultural or language barriers, and how to promote acknowledging and respecting difference.

Handout 6

Informal relationships

This is another extract from the Involve report – Everybody needs good neighbours?

Most participants saw the bonds that generate community cohesion as rooted in informal relationships first and foremost, rather than created through formal mechanisms of participation. Overwhelmingly, participants were clear that such informal networks should be valued by public agencies, and that strategies to overcome social tensions or build stronger relationships should work with such relationships rather than seek to bypass them.

Some respondents argued that tapping into existing informal networks is a more effective way of securing not only community cohesion but also social change. Many participants argued that rather than seeking ways of bringing informal relationships into formal structures, the emphasis should be reversed. Statutory bodies and their workers should take the time to better understand the informal networks that exist in their localities and consider how they could tap into these to build effective working relationships.

Although a detailed and systematic examination of the range of ways in which social relationships are developed within a locality is beyond the scope of this particular research project, two strong themes emerged:

1. The role of casual everyday interactions in creating a sense of community and how these interactions are shaped by certain “life events” that open doors to different social networks.
2. The importance of particular individuals or community catalysts in bringing people together and generating social change. (see Handout 7)

Spontaneous and relaxed interaction at a local level was seen as important as a means by which social networks are shaped and cohesive communities formed. Whether around school gates, at local shops, in the post office or in local public spaces, the emphasis was on non-structured arenas in which residents regularly come together. This could be something as simple as being parents collecting children from schools, or as users of a public space such as a park. Socialising is a key ingredient of local communities, as people come together in social activities such as parties or sports. Food is a great uniter of people, different cuisines, and the act of cooking, eating or sharing allows people to have a good time whilst learning about and directly experiencing other cultures.

www.involve.org.uk

Handout 7

Community catalysts

This is another extract from the Involve Report 'Everybody needs good neighbours?'

"Community catalysts" are those people who hold either formal or informal positions within a locality and whose knowledge, social networks or enthusiasm stimulates other members of their community into action. There are many stories about particular individuals who had a skill for bringing people together and motivating others around a cause or an event. They may be the people who make the connections between people.

This is not necessarily a leadership role or formal power position. Although in some cases the people who play this role within the community are in positions of authority, such as local councillors, chairs of residents' associations or faith leaders, others are able to fulfil this role without any formal responsibilities for the locality.

Participants (in the Involve survey) reacted strongly against the notion of "community leadership" and the presumption that those who do hold a formal role within a locality can either speak for all residents or mobilise them to engage with others:

You've got to be careful; often what you get is the "movers and shakers" in the community. A lot of them are older men, and they are not necessarily representative... In fact, sometimes these "community leaders" are part of some quite dubious practices within their communities, and it can be very difficult to challenge them.

Instead the stories of community catalysts emphasised the amount of time these people gave to community affairs and their persistence. These are people with varying degrees of awareness of local political or social structures, who use their relationships with others either to drum up residents to participate in local authority activities or in some cases to bypass them completely. There is a need to recognise the power of this organisational role and the informal networks that underpin their actions.

Identifying these community catalysts is a complicated and sensitive business. The lack of substantial research into the role of community catalysts also means that it is difficult to understand what creates or motivates such people and how their influence is sustained. Furthermore, although some individuals may self-identify as a catalyst or community leader, and make themselves known as such in a locality, others who fulfil such roles sometimes explicitly reject formal recognition or may not consider their influence on the area to be substantial. Being able to uncover and distinguish those who play this role within a neighbourhood, and those who do not or whose influence could be counterproductive to community cohesion is a key issue for those working within communities

It is a matter of spending time in a locality to understand the rhythm of everyday life and how and when different individuals catalyse activities. Alongside the notion of the local resident as a community catalyst, there are individuals who may not live within an area but represent a public agency who can also become actively involved in the informal networks that exist in a community.

There are certain individuals in organisations like the police, who in our area are reaching out to certain groups and giving them a towrope to come up and encouraging them to engage. They are bearing fruit and we need a lot more people like that.

The anecdotal evidence of this community catalyst role was strong throughout the research. The role of

certain individuals in social networks has been examined in many contexts before. The social theorist Malcolm Gladwell¹ differentiates between individuals who are “connectors”, “mavens” (experts) and “salesmen” within social networks. These different roles exist within any network, where some individuals will have a bigger influence than others, whether in shaping what information members of a network are privy to or what resources they can access.

The literature around social network analysis, from Granovetter’s² strong and weak ties to Krebs’³ network mapping software, supports the way in which participants in the research identified certain people through whom community activity seems to flow. Yet formal and systematic analysis of how and why some individuals play this role in the context of community cohesion is notably absent. This is therefore an area around which the research team feels further investigation would be beneficial, not only for the community cohesion agenda but across a number of central and local government priorities.

1 Gladwell, M. (2000) *The tipping point*. London: Little, Brown and Company, pp.30–88.

2 Granovetter M. (1974) *Getting a job: a study of contacts and careers*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

3 See Krebs’ website www.orgnet.com

Worksheet 1

Environmental activities to support community cohesion

What goals or aims do you have around promoting community cohesion?

What kind of environmental activity do you have in mind to use in this goal – see Handout 8 for some examples to get you thinking

How would you go about identifying informal networks that might be already involved in some similar activities or who you could interest in this approach?

How could you identify any community catalysts or champions who might already be involved or who may be interested in this approach?

What are some of the potential issues that you need to consider – think back to the earlier part of the session about the links with disadvantage and conflicts within communities over real and perceived inequality of access to resources and facilities.

How will this planned activity contribute to building of long-term trust between members of the community? Do you need to build in other actions?

Handout 8

Examples of informal community environmental activity

Travel wisely examples

Informal walking buses where neighbours and parents with children at the same schools work in pairs to take it in turns to walk children to and from school; encouraging the children to take some time to notice and explore aspects of their local environment. As well as reducing the level of road congestion there is some evidence that the stimulation of children who walk to school carries on during the day, and they become more aware of their own area and can see changes to it.

Staff at the Blaenymaes and Penlan Development Trust share cars to get to work and meetings and they take local residents for a walk to nearby Penllergaer woods.

Informal Car share

A couple decide to set up their own informal car share and created a mutually agreed proforma for sharing their car.

'You can book the car through Carol or Nick – email or phone is best. We currently have no fixed times when we definitely use the car. We generally try and avoid using it! Mostly we use it for work trips away for many miles for several days, but not very often.

We have arranged fully comprehensive insurance for any driver so long as they are aged over 25 and have had a full licence for more than 1 year (Hurrah!) We always want to know who is driving our car. The deal is that the driver gets the car back to us in roughly the state it was in when it left – so if you have an accident, it would be good if you could do the admin, paperwork and other legwork to make the claim (as much as is possible). The excesses which you would need to pay are:

£200 fire & theft; £75 windscreen; £200 voluntary excess for all other claims.

The policy includes legal expenses and also protection of Carol's enormous No Claims Bonus (so long as we only claim once in 1 year or twice in 3 years)!

We have ETA breakdown cover on the car (any driver) – just the basics of getting you to nearest garage etc – will not help you within 1 mile of our home.

The costs. To be as transparent as possible, I have calculated the costs of the car according to the ETA's car cost calculator. This shows that the car costs us 38p per mile at the moment (because we use the car so little). We suggest that car sharers log their miles in a book and we will charge you 38p per mile. If you buy petrol, write that in the book too and we will deduct it from your bill. [NB there are no fixed costs and Carol & Nick always have first call on the car – is this fair!?!] If the annual mileage goes up significantly, the mileage rate may go down; similarly, if petrol prices go up, the rate may go up! If we find that we have made a profit at the end of the year, we will share it out pro rata by mileage use.

[Sometimes we do car swaps with people – we get your car – you get ours. We think this is a different arrangement whereby no money changes hands and we both bring back the cars in roughly the state they went in.]

Hope this system works for everyone. Let us know any improvements that you can think of. Or if you know of anyone else who might like to join (names and contact details of current 'members' overleaf):

More details from nick.weir@localfood.org.uk

Saving resources

The Bentley Exchange is a bring and take table - you bring things you don't want, and take things you do. There's a few tables situated under a walk-through under flats, giving some shelter for when it rains. It used to run daily for over 5 years, but in response to neighbours and with the extra work of keeping it tidy, it now runs for a whole weekend, once a month. It's run by volunteers who set it up, and at the end of the weekend clear-up and sort through anything left over, taking it to charity shops or recycling as much as possible.

The Redbricks Intranet Collective seeks to give people living on an inner housing estate access to cheap internet (£5 a month), that is not dependent on them having a land-line or good credit rating. It encourages sharing of information and resources through the intranet - just like in an office, but with wires strung up across streets! It's volunteer-run, aims to encourage participation from users through co-operative principles, and has existed for almost 10 years. There's an email list that people can subscribe to and send out 'shouts' about relevant local events.

Bradford Council use wheelie bins to collect different kinds of household waste, the bins are quite large and take up a lot of room as there is a green one for household waste, a blue one for tins and glass, grey for paper, and green bags for garden waste. In the areas with back-to-back houses there is little space to put these bins. To encourage people to agree to have the bins and recycle, people in the houses on each side of a ginnel (which is the passage through to the back houses), decided to share these wheelie bins and had one of each of the recycling bins delivered, and then they could use the rest of the space for their bikes and wheelbarrows as before.

In a small town within the Bradford district there was on an estate with many older people who found it hard to move their bins up the slopes of their drives, and who didn't have very many cans and bottles to recycle. So neighbours got together to share the recycling bins and people could take their contributions round the night before the bins were to be collected, and those who were around at the start of 'bin' day helped to pull up the household waste bins and put them back for people. In return some of the older people created some plant troughs for their neighbours and kept them watered and full of flowers.

Tenants in Hackney had complained about the old waste disposal system as it was smelly and a cause of the rat infestation problems. People shoved things down the chutes causing mess and stress.

A composting system was set up where each household could compost a good deal of their waste. There was a reduction of smells, and people noticed that the rat problem also went away. People thought that where they lived was more pleasant and began to feel more positive about their area.

A school governor and a parent in Basingstoke set up a very local composting scheme amongst the five

houses in the close where he lived. Every week he would call and ask the children for their degradable house waste for composting which they would take to a bin at the entrance to the local allotments. This weekly collection helped the children to remember to recycle their families' waste and it provided opportunities to explain the need for reducing waste.

A local supermarket offered to collect old Christmas cards that could not be recycled through the normal paper recycling system. A local resident offered to collect up cards from her neighbours and to take them over to the supermarket on her next trip, She also collected the stamps off the envelopes and sent them to a national charity to help them to fund raise.

The Green Triangle is a group of people living in roads that form a triangle in Heeley, Sheffield, who want to do something locally about climate change at the same time as enjoying working together as a community.

- We share ideas on practical, achievable ways to make our homes more energy efficient eg draught proofing and insulation.
- We run a community composting scheme.
- We have a list of tools and other things we can lend and borrow.
- We help each other with food growing in gardens and allotments.
- We develop ideas for what we can do ourselves as households and for the Green Triangle and what we need to lobby our politicians about.
- We get together for various activities, such as a Picnic for a Cool Planet in the Millennium Park, a harvest supper in October with food, games, an apple press to produce our own delicious juice, a raffle and a bonfire, an evening checking our individual carbon footprints, from which emerged ideas about local food and sharing more meals together, a bike ride in to gain confidence in cycling as well as enjoying a picnic amidst the bluebells

Shopping ethically

The People's Kitchen takes place once a week in the back room and yard of a local pub in an inner city area of social housing. It's been serving cheap healthy food for over 10 years now, with special events such as the 4-course Christmas Banquet. It is volunteer-run, and any money made in excess of food costs goes to a good cause, chosen by that week's cooks. The food is vegan so everyone can eat it, and also helps link social justice locally with our global impact. Meals currently cost £1.50, with cheaper prices for children. Most people come to it from the local housing estate.

A shared triple communal allotment that provides vegetables for the families who work it and, during summer months, additional boxes of vegetable which are sold for LETS (a local exchange trading system). In 1980 a group of LETS members took on an allotment in Summer Street, Stroud and in 1989 took on a second, adjoining allotment. By 1991 there was a significant surplus of vegetables during the summer months so the group started to sell the surplus for cash or LETS at Stroud Farmers' Market. However due to an increase in the cost of a market stall, new trading standards restrictions on weighing machines and concerns from the allotment committee about selling vegetables, the group decided not to sell on the market. As an alternative, the group set up a small box scheme. This provides 3 families with a box of vegetables every week between June and September. A 3rd allotment was taken on in 2003.

There are four regular allotment workers who meet every Friday morning for 3 hours to work the allotments. There are another five workers who join us occasionally.

We have an annual meeting to plan our crop list for the following year. We grow vegetables to our own taste and sell the surplus, rather than planning to grow vegetables for sale.

We do not use any pesticides or artificial fertilisers and grow organically. Those who have space at home, start seedlings. Others take the onion crop for drying or the seed potatoes for chitting.

We hope to attract new workers including people from disadvantaged groups. We already work with people with mental health problems on the allotment.

Several people got together to develop a food co-op to be able to bulk buy vegetarian and vegan food from the Suma whole food collective, which has a minimum order. Every 2 months people either go to a meeting at someone's house or drop off their order before the meeting. The order is put together at the meeting and we take it in turns to take the delivery 10 days later and to sort out everyone's order. A person's turn to deal with the delivery comes round about every 18 months. People come to collect their order and often people take another person's order round to them to save car usage. Over the years people have joined and left the group and it's been a good way for people to meet others that they wouldn't normally have come across.

Care for your area

The Park Rangers organised some short walks around different bits of their park to show people what plants there were in the park and how to identify them. Local people could just turn up and join in, and as they ambled along there was opportunity for people to talk to each other about their views on their local park and surrounding areas and what they would like to see change.

Leaf Street is a volunteer-run community garden on an inner-city council housing estate. It began with volunteers asking permission from the local Council, and much to the surprise of the Council, through door-knocking we got a majority of the tenants to agree. It's set on an old grassed-over street, and now contains vegetables, flowers and fruit. There are children's play areas and other themed areas, such as the old varieties orchard. There used to be a fire-pit and seating but this was removed due to the noise from people gathering there into the night disturbing neighbours. There are communal compost bins there and scattered through other parts of the estate. People have taken it on themselves to do guerrilla gardening on other parts of the estate, generally prettifying our environment making it a small oasis from the nearby busy roads. Since Leaf Street has existed, there has been a huge increase in biodiversity, with many animals visiting or living here that weren't here for many years before.

Green Up events in Tarner brought together residents of all ages along with the police, housing officers, our neighbourhood management team, and local councillors. They formed teams that went out and litter picked and then planted bulbs and flower plugs, then back for lunch, goodie bags and certificates. One of the time we had a superhero theme where people came in fancy dress and there was a prize for the best one. We had good press coverage for this one and it was great fun and a good way to get to know people. One of our Spring events will be combined with information stalls at the school, along with activities for all the family as we are finding that this is the best way to bring people in.

Between two streets of large terraced housing there are some smaller houses at right angles, which creates a number of quiet streets that join each other but are not busy with traffic. Lots of children play out in these back streets. Some parents are getting together to organise a day in the summer when all cars will be banned and the roads made safe with wheelie bins at each end. Activities for children will take place during the day with evening barbeques for the adults and young people – different ones will be held in different back yards to cater for different eating tastes. The parents are door knocking everyone in the area to make sure they are happy with the idea and to ask them to park on other streets for that day. If the idea works then more DIY street days may follow.

Trainer Guidance Note 7

Informal to formal community organising

As the session begins to come to a close we will take a brief look at how such informal activities could be used as a bridge to more formal engagement to support cohesive communities.

In Handout 8 there were a number of informal ideas, some of which could be developed into more formal organisations and projects. Handout 9 has some examples of projects that could have followed on from these kinds of initial, informal developments. The small scale local composting could develop into bigger project; the cheap food project could develop into a community café; the food coop turns into a social enterprise.

For this exercise you can draw upon the examples that participants came up with for their last exercise which were recorded on a flipchart, and use both Handouts 8 and 9 for ideas.

Split the participants into 3 groups and give each group one of the following categories.

Ask them to decide upon an example of an informal environmental activity or an area of concern that has been expressed to them. Their task is to think about how they could link these activities or concerns into the more formal community organising that takes place; so how could they encourage either:

- a. People to get involved in community groups that are involved in environmental activities
- b. People already involved in community groups to take up some environmental activities
- c. People who work in VCS organisations to take green ideas into work

Take feedback on the ideas that people have come up with. If you have time you can discuss whether it is a good idea to try and move from the informal to the formal and some of the difficulties this might create.

Handout 9

More formal activities developing from informal ideas

Street champions scheme

In the scheme people adopt or are allocated a street to keep an eye on. They make monthly reports on anything that needs sorting out in their street or they can report urgent problems immediately to council. They report on any of these topics:

- Refuse or cleaning
- Roads and pavements
- Street care
- Parking and abandoned vehicles
- Parks and green space
- Lighting
- Graffiti
- Overhanging trees

The scheme's co-ordinator ensures their monthly reports are made and collated together and sent to the council.

As an addition to this the local children's centre involves their children in regular walk abouts around the centre and adjoining streets. Each child has scrapbook that they take home in which they have recorded what they have seen. They look out for graffiti, waste dumped by builders, dog owners, broken fences.... This raises and keeps some of the issues in the minds of parents.

The children's centre runs a number of activities which highlight some of the problems and how they have been dealt with and how the area has improved over time because of what parents and residents have done.

A door to door waste food collection

In January 2004, East London Community Recycling Project began a door-to-door collection of food waste from the Nightingale Estate in Hackney, the first of its kind in the country. Initially a pilot project, ELCRP recently received £299,999 in funding from the Community Recycling and Economic Development (CRED) Programme to roll it out to 5000 households on high rise estates in Hackney. Over fifty per cent of the residents of Nightingale Estate have been involved with the pilot – and the benefits to the estate have been clear – no rats have been seen for 3 months. The scheme now covers 3 estates, 2000 households, and is rolling out to a further 3,000 households in the next few months.

Stroud Food Hub

A social enterprise for local food producers and community which aims to

- Provide locally-produced food to people in Stroud
- Provide a reasonable return for work to producer members

- Build supportive and understanding links between producers and consumers
- Develop food culture and community strength

The food club has producer members who commit to:

- Supply food for sale at better than retail prices
- Provide a service to the community members such as farm open day, camping, host a bring and share meal, etc
- Provide a service to other producer members such as shared deliveries, loan of equipment, loan of labour, etc. Offers to have a roughly equivalent financial value.
- Give 8% of what they sell through the club to the club for running costs

There will be 200 consumer members who

- Pay membership of £24 per year
- Build up to buying an average of £25 of food per month through the club within 2 years.
- Contribute at least 2 hours of voluntary work per year such as farm labour, administration, packing food.

Producers do minimal marketing. They get up-front ordering and payment and a single delivery point. Producers control their own market without supermarket contracts.

Consumer members have relationships with producers, community activity, access to farm life, no need to pay 'middlemen' so affordable food at slightly less than retail prices, short supply chain so fresh food. The enterprise is a co-op controlled by consumer and producer members. Anyone can join as a community member. Producers can join by permission of existing members. The board comprises of consumer and producer members.

A worker is employed by the club to organise running systems, maintain a catalogue of products available from producers, manage finances, encourage co-operation and organise events.

Food drops will happen initially once a month. Eventually we hope to build up to a weekly drop. The co-op will have access to the hall at Parliament School. All produce is delivered to this venue. The consumer members take it in turns to turn up once a month to sort out the food into piles for each consumer member. The co-op worker pre-prepares paperwork to make the sorting job as simple as possible. Stroud Valleys Wholefood Co-op has a tried and tested system for this. Consumer members collect from the school hall. Consumers are encouraged to collect for other consumers local to them.

A Green Group in a voluntary organisation

Nottingham Council for Voluntary Service (NCVS) set up their 'Green Group' in 2002 to try to minimise the environmental impact of the charity's work. Staff and volunteers worked outside their normal roles to look objectively at and raise awareness of green and related ethical issues within NCVS. Their aim was a cleaner, more energy-efficient and environmentally aware organisation.

The Green Group introduced measures such as using local suppliers, separating the office's rubbish, recycling unused IT equipment, providing a secure cycle store and showers to encourage people to cycle to work, and using a renewable and cheaper energy supply. They were amazed (and horrified!) to receive an electricity bill showing that 20% of the energy consumption was overnight and at weekends – when the building was empty! A new idea was needed to try and help people remember to save energy, mainly wasted by keeping lights and PC monitors on. So the group introduced a virtual helper in the offices to

pass on tips and advice. The Green Fairy is a token system that 'visits' desks to remind people to turn off monitors and lights. Monitors were often left on even if the computer has been shut down. If someone notices a monitor is on and that the owner is not in the office, they switch it off and leave a token on the desk to remind people to get in the habit of switching off. The Green Fairy returns to say 'thank you' if the message has got through.

The building's courtyard, known as the 'Lightwell', was a dark, gloomy, concrete square, and has been transformed into an oasis of calm in the middle of the city with revamped furniture and space for plants, herbs and vegetables. The new-look space was opened at a celebration event to which all tenants in the building were invited. The space is now used for meetings, as an eating area, and for games like skittles and giant Jenga.

'Dr Green' - a 'Questions and Suggestions' box, is used for busting climate change myths, answering questions on 'green' issues and taking on suggestions from staff and volunteers for improvements. One suggestion made to 'Dr Green' has helped save on heating bills by regulating water temperature used in the building, and NCVS now reuse large envelopes for all internal mail. A little research has found great value for money on recycled copier paper and envelopes; letterheads are always printed on recycled paper and the office central printer is now set to economy-mode, which has saved significantly on printer cartridges.

A dedicated noticeboard for green/ethical updates and news is in the communal area and Green Fairy posters are dotted around the office to encourage recycling and energy saving. They have also added 'green' elements to staff and volunteer inductions, and also communicate the message widely. The monthly e-bulletin for staff and volunteers includes green tips of the month, as well as a 'Flog It' section, to encourage recycling items.

Every six months NCVS has a Chuck It Away Day, to have a general tidy up and clear out paperwork. It's really a Recycling Day as they recycle everyone's unwanted items. We make up notepads with scrap paper and our recycled stationary is now held in our central store cupboard."

Tenants are starting to show more of an interest in green issues, and will all soon receive a CD full of tips, information, recycling posters and a model environmental policy to help them 'bring a little green' into their own offices. The Green Group is working to achieve an Environmental Management System for NCVS and the charity has developed Environmental and Sustainability policies.

Fairtrade products have been introduced to the building, and Fairtrade sugar, coffee and tea are now standard in the offices and all meeting rooms. There's a 'Green Snack Box' filled with healthy, organic and ethical snacks, instead of a traditional vending machine - the proceeds of which go to a local environmental charity.

The members of the group rotate their roles so that the workload gets shared out. The Green Group have agreed terms of references for their activities in the organisation.

Every Action Counts Resources from FCDL

All available from www.fcdl.org.uk

Tasters

- Care For Your Area
- Community Buildings and Environmental Action
- Climate Change Communications
- Food and Communities
- Community Development and Environmental Action
- Strategies and Policies to Support Environmental Action
- Local Actions on Travel and Transport
- Impact of Travel/ Transport on Communities
- Climate Justice, Environmental Justice and Community Action
- Policies for Environmental Action
- Environmental Justice
- What Planet Are You On?
- Training Techniques For Environmental Action
- Community Cohesion and Environmental Action



NOCN Unit	Community Development and Environmental Action level 2/3
HE Unit	Sustainable Communities: Integrating Sustainable Development and Community Development
Informal Learning	We have also produced material to support the day-to-day work of community development workers - there is an informal learning pack and a new Community Work Skills Manual will be coming out in 2007

Other good resources

All available from www.everyactioncounts.org.uk



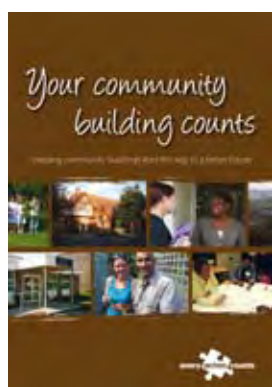
For champions who have done the course you can download the handbook here.

This guide is to help you to put into context some of the actions in the game and understand some of the wider issues of this very large subject area.



This guide shows why and how your organisation should change how you work in ways that will benefit your environment and save you money.

The guide is specifically for organisations working in the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and you'll find a range of examples showing how VCS groups are already making a difference.



All community buildings are at the heart of their local communities, reaching out, inspiring people, providing useful space and acting as catalysts for change.

This guide looks at helping you make your community building even more of an asset by minimising its impact on the environment and maximising its role as a place to inspire, inform and strengthen your community.



Inspirational examples of good practice from the Third Sector.

Case studies in this publication illustrate each of the five themes - Save Energy, Travel Wisely, Shop Ethically, Save Our Resources and Care for Your Area - and demonstrate that imagination, commitment and energy can make a difference.

Other resources available from FCDL

Taster Packs from FCDL

Designed to be used as an introduction to key aspects of community development work, this series of 14 packs support three-hour sessions that can be used as a first step to further learning, or as a method for trainers to increase their confidence in this area. The tasters are:

1. What is community development work?
2. How groups work
3. Problems within groups
4. Involving people
5. Understanding and getting involved in partnerships
6. Skills for representing your community
7. Common issues in partnerships
8. Making meetings effective
9. Contributing effectively to meetings
10. Assertiveness/ confidence building
11. Feedback and listening skills
12. Report writing skills
13. Presentation skills – giving a short presentation
14. Presentation skills - Creating effective presentation materials

NOCN Packs

FCDL has produced a series of resource packs which complement the National Open College Network (NOCN) Community Development Work Programme. Each pack is designed to support the teaching of the module of the same name (or similar name), which can be built together to enable participants to gain qualifications at levels 1, 2 and 3. The resource pack are:

1. Understanding Community Development Work
2. Community Development Work Skills
3. Group work skills
4. Involving people
5. Representing your Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual community
6. Monitoring and evaluation
7. Developing community organisations
8. Reflective Community Development Work Practice
9. Effective partnership working
10. Practice and Principles in Community Development Work
11. Social Justice
12. Planning for community groups
13. Publicity skills for community organisations
14. Identifying needs in communities
15. Funding and resources for community groups
16. Neighbourhood regeneration
17. Community Development and Environmental Action
18. Sustainable Communities

Community Work Skills Manual

Community worker's practice guide, written by community workers, covering everything from the values and principles underlying community work, to roles and responsibilities, working with groups, community surveys etc.

Learning and Qualifications Framework

This leaflet aims to enable people who come into community development from varied backgrounds, with different levels of expertise in community work, to work out what their learning needs are and how best to meet them.

To find out more about these resources and others FCDL offers visit www.fcdl.org.uk

Further Information

For more information and to order taster packs, resource packs, or other publications please contact the Federation for Community Development Learning or visit our website:

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