

2007-2008

# Learning Link Scotland Annual Report





Learning Link Scotland is the national intermediary organisation for the voluntary adult education sector

We **develop** adult learning in the voluntary sector, **represent** the views of member organisations, **support** voluntary adult education organisations and **promote** the value and unique contribution that the voluntary adult education sector makes towards the education of adults in Scotland.

**Telephone 0131 553 7992**  
**[www.learninglinkscotland.org.uk](http://www.learninglinkscotland.org.uk)**

Charity Number: SCO25308

## Chair's Report

This is the first time as Chair I have the pleasure of introducing you to Learning Link Scotland's Annual Report. This was a challenging year for the organisation as the changing environment and uncertainty was felt across the sector. The organisation in rising to the challenge is ever more aware of its purpose:

*"To ensure voluntary sector adult education and learning creates a successful, dynamic and forward thinking Scotland."*

The small staff team have worked with great skill and ability to ensure that voluntary sector adult education is well placed in the 'learning system' of the Skills for Scotland Lifelong Learning Strategy. We embrace the challenges that the sector faces and have developed a forward thinking business plan to deliver its purpose. I look forward to working effectively with the team and it's Learning Community over the next year and reporting on future achievements and success.

**George Thomson**, *Chief Executive, Volunteer Development Scotland*

## Director's Report

As we look back over the year I am delighted with the achievements that Learning Link Scotland has made despite a turbulent year for the voluntary sector. It was a difficult time for our members, where some have had to close due to the pressures of funding. Many have demonstrated, to the public forum, that their excellent delivery and progression for learners is fit for purpose and an example of good practice. Inspired and supported by our volunteer Executive Committee we have used this year as an opportunity to learn and we now move forward in delivering the vision of our business plan;

*"That people have access and equal opportunity to strong, independent and vibrant voluntary sector adult education, where organisations work together to fulfil lifelong learning, social inclusion, and democratic aspirations."*

We have been testing our abilities and new ways of working, developing partnerships that will benefit the work of our Learning Community. We look forward to bringing these partnerships to fruition and creating a strong recognition for the voluntary adult education and learning sector.

**Jayne Stuart** *Director, Learning Link Scotland*

## Practice Development

We undertook a range of activities designed to build and develop good practice; always looking to make closer links to local and national policies. Throughout the year we worked in direct partnership with a wide range of organisations to deliver each event and supporting activities.

We were pleased to receive sponsorship and funding for many of our larger national events. Scottish Government Equalities Unit, the Home Office, and Scottish Enterprise supported one of our major events – the Welcoming New Scots conference in June. In addition we appreciated the support of Scottish Government, Learning Connections, SQA and again Scottish Enterprise in putting on the second Come All Ye learning festival in November. We established a voluntary sector working group on SCQF, supported by Learning Connections. We worked in local areas with partners to undertake: programme evaluations, preparation for reviews and the development of stronger partnerships and networks.

### **Achievements...**

We supported our membership of over 100 voluntary adult learning organisations based in 24 local authority areas, and our wider learning community; through the provision of information, events and support activities.

### 2007-2008 Practice Support and Events at a glance

May	Civicus Learning Exchange, Glasgow
June	Welcoming New Scots Conference, Glasgow
October	AGM, Edinburgh
October	Valuing Migrant Workers Workshop - Business Scotland Conference, Edinburgh
November	Come All Ye – Learning Festival, Glasgow
December	Developing Skills and Training, Edinburgh
December	Preparation for HMle Review, WEA
February	Programme Evaluation for Rosemount Lifelong Learning, Glasgow
April - March	SCQF: Voluntary Sector Working Group Putting Ourselves in the Framework Event
March	Developing a 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sector Forum, Dumfries and Galloway
November - March	Three Compact Development Events, Dumfries and Galloway

## Policy Development

Representing the views and raising awareness of the needs of our members is paramount to us. We utilise the core grant from Scottish Government and subsidise this with generated income to carry out the policy development strand of our work.

### **Achievements...**

We shaped policy on 14 external committees and task groups, representing the interests of the voluntary adult learning sector

At the forefront of Scottish policy is the Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy and many of the other policy initiatives that we have engaged with sit naturally within this. We have also been delighted to work closely this year with the Home Office Advisory Board on Naturalisation and Integration (ABNI) Scotland. The purpose of this work was to bring organisations from across the sectors, working with new Scots, closer together – assisting with translating policy into practice.

### **2007 -2008: Learning Link Scotland's Representation on National Groupings at a glance...**

Lifelong Learning Forum

Community Learning and Development Advisory Group LLUK

Interim National Occupational Standards Council for CLD

SCVO Policy Committee

Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework National Forum

Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework CLD Forum

Voluntary Sector Intermediaries Group

Scottish Guidance Network

Scottish Advisory Group: Leonardo, Grundtvig & Transversal

Board of learndirect Scotland

HMle Journey to Excellence in CLD Advisory Group

Board of ACOSVO

National ESOL panel

SFEU Easing Transitions Reference Group

### **Achievements...**

We met with the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, Fiona Hyslop and two other MSPs, seven meetings with Scottish Government and six meetings with other national agencies and NDPBs to raise the profile of the voluntary adult learning sector. Through presentations at six external conferences and through five media articles and one national publication, we continued to raise the sector's profile.

## Business Development

At the beginning of 2007/2008 we had confirmed half of our annual budget and by the end of the financial year we had made a small surplus towards its reserves. Successful grant application to the Scottish Government contributes to our core work, representing and influencing policy at national level along with keeping a membership base and running the organisation.

It was a year to test further our abilities and capacity to generate income and to develop the funding portfolio to carry out our charitable activities. Examining the capabilities of staff and systems we sharpened up on our negotiation skills and looked at research methods to develop our evaluative and investigative services. We also upgraded our IT system and software ensuring our operating system was up to the task and we were kindly supported in part by Scottish Government in these two areas.

Of the ten funding applications submitted to various funders over the year, a successful application helped to evidence the need for a five year project submitted to the Big Lottery. The outcome of this will be known midway through the next financial year. To develop the funding portfolio we invested time and worked in collaboration with partners and members; submitting proposals to them and delivered on short contracts as well as raising sponsorship towards two national events held in June and November. These areas of work have informed and also subsidised the policy work of the organisation.

### **Achievements...**

Reported on four successful projects, evaluation report of a community based learning and skills programme, and co-ordinated two national events.

This year has fixed our attention on our operating model for the future; a dynamic one focused on: staying small, thinking big, reaching far, being sharp and sustainable, and engaging specialists from the asset based community of learning organisations. Our business plan for the next five years will put into practice this dynamic model.



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## **We can facilitate dialogue, assist with consultations, organise focus groups**

Our facilitation work is a development of our European project work on Participatory Active Citizenship Tools:

**methods ▶ ideas ▶ techniques**

drawn from across Europe and beyond, for involving people in learning and decision making.

Our successful PACT project was a Learning Partnership in collaboration with Lisbon University Foundation and Oslo Adult Education Centre.

**Telephone 0131 553 7992**  
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Charity Number: SC025308

The PACT Project is supported by the European Commission, Directorate General Education and Culture, Socrates-Grundtvig programme.





## Finance 2007 - 2008

INCOME	£
Grants Received	96,898
Other Income	31,293
TOTAL INCOME	128,191
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	164,215
Net Outgoing Resources	(36,024)
Balance Brought Forward	89,088
TOTAL FUNDS at 31 March 2008	53,064

*Auditors: Cowan & Partners CA*  
*Full audited accounts are available from Learning Link Scotland*

Executive Committee	
Chair	George Thomson
Vice-Chair	Fiona Craig
Treasurer	Joyce Connon
Member	Asma Abdalla
Member	Stephen Fernand
Member	Mary Hamilton

Fundors	
	

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