

Community Learning and Development Standards Council for Scotland

Response to Call for Written Evidence to the Scottish Parliament's Education and Culture Committee inquiry into Scotland's Educational and Cultural Future

The Standards Council for Community Learning and Development for Scotland is the body responsible for the registration of CLD practitioners, the approval of training courses, and the continuing professional development of the sector workforce.

We recognise that in looking at as broad a topic as Scotland's Educational and Cultural future, the Committee has had to focus on particular themes. However, we suggest that there are other issues that it would be valuable for the committee to consider, both because of their importance in their own right and because considering them could assist the Committee in reaching overall conclusions that inform future policy and practice in a positive way.

These issues are:

- Consideration of lifelong learning in a broader sense; in particular as it relates to people who are less likely to benefit from F&HE delivered in an institutional context, and also in terms of creating a learning society that informs both education in a more formal sense and our wider individual, collective and cultural development.
- Consideration of culture as a reflection of the varied ways of life of diverse communities across Scotland, as well as the activities of the "creative sector", and how the development of culture in this sense can best be supported.
- Related to both the points above, a stronger focus on inclusion and equality.

Learning outside institutions can take a wide variety of forms, such as: informal programmes with a strong focus on building the confidence of participants while enabling them to improve literacy, numeracy or IT skills; learning through and stimulated by involvement in community activities; or learning through involvement in arts-related activities in a community setting. The brief list starts to suggest the particular relevance of these types of learning to an inquiry seeking to explore Scotland's cultural as well as educational future and to a focus within the inquiry on increasing inclusion.

We believe that giving consideration to the issues outlined above would enable the Committee to investigate Scotland's Educational and Cultural Future in a much more balanced and inclusive way.

We offer the following comments in relation to the themes identified by the committee with the same issues in mind.

Theme 1: Further and Higher Education

The issues identified under this theme relate entirely to potential students in FE and (more particularly) HE, and to research funding. We recognise the

importance of these issues; we suggest that that it would be valuable for the committee also to consider issues relating to people who have or will arrive in Scotland as migrants, for whatever reason, and who have more basic educational needs.

Theme 2: Early Years, Childcare and Employability

We welcome the consideration being given to the idea of a "Youth Guarantee". Our view based on the experience of the CLD field is that the practical impact of such a guarantee will depend on addressing the range of inequalities faced by the young people whose opportunities for education, training or employment are limited, and on the types of opportunity to be offered.

In the light of this, we suggest that it would be useful for the committee to consider ways of addressing these inequalities, and the types of opportunity most likely to benefit young people whose previous opportunities have been most limited, including the roles of informal learning, youth work and community-based provision in this context.

Theme 3: Broadcasting and Culture

In relation to the first aspect of this theme, we suggest that the Committee consider the potential for broadcasting to give greater support to lifelong learning and community development, including the potential for community-based broadcasting; in particular in relation to regulation, either in the event of independence or in the context of devolved government.

In relation to culture, we believe that the conversation should consider and recognise our own local cultures that reflect life across the country rather than assuming a central core culture reflects "Scottish life". This conversation itself requires to be creative and responsive to specific demands, both to new Scots communities and to the needs of existing communities that consider themselves to be on the margins of policy application.

We suggest that the committee considers how cultural and creative output could be made more widely relevant to communities across Scotland and how areas and groups within the population who experience deprivation and exclusion could be offered greater opportunities to be involved in cultural activity. We suggest that consideration should be given to introducing, as a standard part of policy development, a process of 'proofing' broadcasting and cultural policies, in which communities would be given the opportunity to consider what impact the application of proposed policies would have on them.