



Regenerate NPT: Project Closure Report

Project Organisation: Canolfan Maerdy

Project Name: Community Based Youth Work Training and Services Pilot

Project Start Date: 20 September 2021 Project End Date: 28 January 2022

Date of Report: 1st March 2022

Attached Documents List: Pilot Study

There is a mandatory requirement to complete this document at Project Closure. The purpose of the report is to provide a project level document evidencing how well the project has performed against the original Business Plan delivered by the Local Partnership and Local Action Group during the lifetime of the project, and how it has contributed to the aims and objectives of the Local Partnership's Local Development Strategy. Project performance against the planned/approved costs, delivery timescales and Key Performance indicators will also be detailed. **Please try and keep within the maximum word count.**

1. Background: (briefly detail the background to the Project – 250 max)	
<p>The project acted as a trial for the development of a new Youth and Community Work Apprenticeship Scheme based firmly within rural communities. The lack of qualified youth and community workers, as testified by Youth Services across Wales, is affecting the provision in these areas. The project focussed on the Upper Amman and Twrch Valleys, but its findings can be used to influence work across NPT and Wales-wide. A lack of resources and a limited pool of staff has meant that the Youth Service has not been able to provide the youth work support in the Valley areas for many years, and it has relied on local groups, such as Canolfan Maerdy, to supplement the provision through grants and fundraising.</p> <p>The project was managed by Canolfan Maerdy but with the strategic, guidance, support and overview of a Steering Group (NPT Youth Service and Employability Service, Adult Learning Wales and experienced volunteers from Canolfan Maerdy).</p> <p>The project aimed to increasing the employability of the local unemployed trainees and provide much-needed youth services. The challenges of working under Covid restrictions has inevitably impacted on the ability of the project to placement opportunities as planned to the trainees and provide all the activities and events.</p>	
2. Project Outcomes as per application	Was this achieved? What supporting evidence is there of achievement? If not achieved, why not?
Employ 1 Full Time, Level 3 qualified Youth/Community Officer,	A full time but unqualified Youth/Community Officer (the Lead Youth Worker) was employed as no candidates came forward who were qualified, so the training provision was

<p>1 Part Time Support Youth Worker (10 hours) and 1 Part Time Administrator (16 hours) to undertake a participatory pilot project to assess community work specifically in rural community settings.</p>	<p>extended to her as well. This emphasises the need for an apprenticeship programme. A Part-time Support Youth Worker was employed who has a level 2 qualification in Youth Work and a part-time administrator. The participatory pilot project was achieved with a project report completed. The work was undertaken exclusively in a rural setting.</p>
<p>Work with 4 locally identified trainees to provide First Steps training in Youth and Community Work, delivered by Adult Learning Wales.</p>	<p>The participatory pilot project assessed the benefits to trainees, young people and the community, of providing hands-on training in youth work specifically in a rural community setting. The training has led to the completion of 9 units in Stepping Stones to Youth Work by all 4 trainees who are local unemployed young people, on the Kickstart Programme. The units were delivered by Adult Learning Wales and certificates will be awarded in March 2022. At least 3 of the 4 trainees are now progressing to a Level 2 qualification in Youth Work. Training was also provided to the Administrator and to the Lead Youth Worker.</p>
<p>Strengthen our communities to make them more inclusive, supportive and sustainable, promoting and developing skills and expertise in the community, improving employability and providing training</p>	<p>The project had to restart the Maerdy Youth Club virtually from scratch following nearly two years of Covid-related restrictions. It strengthened the ability of the community to meet the need of its young people for social contact, for a safe space for young people to meet and youth work trainees who listened to their problems and concerns, after the mental health stresses of the periods of lockdown. The project put young people at its centre, both in terms of the young trainees and the youth club members. It provided skills and training to improve employability to young people who had little or no work experience. They have become a role model for others in the community. They have in turn supported other young people and resurrected youth provision which is now sustainable.</p>
<p>Explore the current lack of qualified youth and community workers in the area by trialling the development of a new Youth and Community Work Apprenticeship Scheme.</p>	<p>The project has tackled the lack of qualified youth and community workers in the area by training 6 unqualified staff or trainees in the basics of youth work in order to start the Level 2 qualification which will allow them to register as Youth Workers. The length of time of the project was insufficient for them to complete more training than the basic qualification but the level 2 training is starting in February through to July 2022 and beyond, to include placements in other rural settings. The model has been approved by the Steering Group as one to pursue and discussions are being held with NPTCBC and with Welsh Government on the potential for a Youth and Community Work Apprenticeship Scheme.</p>
<p>Pilot to trial sustainable ways of supporting individuals to overcome barriers and to reach their full potential. It will provide training and support to local unemployed young people to develop skill levels, address identified gaps and increase their employability prospects.</p>	<p>The pilot has seen a significant change in the ability of the trainees to overcome the barriers they live with or arrived with. They have progressed hugely and achieved much in a very short period of time, to be able to move into a new career pathway. The project report completed by the Lead Youth Worker outlines the achievements and the challenges faced, including testimonials from the 4 Kickstart trainees. The young people are now employable and en route to gaining new qualifications, wishing to build</p>

	upon the opportunity provided by the project to train as youth workers and gain employment locally.
Provide an understanding and model for rolling out the provision in other rural communities.	The project report makes recommendations for the rolling out of the provision based on what has been learnt during the period October – January. The model is still being developed as further funding has been made available until the end of March 2022. The project has been seen as a valuable feasibility for a future model.
3. Strategic Achievements: (outline what the project has achieved in terms of alignment with LEADER Themes and Priorities and any contribution to national strategies - 300 max)	
Theme: 3	Priority: Accessible
<p>The project has explored new ways of providing non-statutory services in a rural community and fostering local developments. It has promoted social inclusion by providing skills, training and employability opportunities to 4 Kickstart trainees and 1 former Kickstart trainee, who came to the project with problems accessing opportunities, with a lack of ICT skills, confidence and work readiness. They have all benefited from accessibility to the IT suite in Canolfan Maerdy and accessing on-site and online training for them to gain level 2 units towards a Youth Work qualification. They have re-established youth provision in a community organisation where there was none and have demonstrated the potential for young unemployed people from a rural area to gain a new sense of direction and purpose and contribute to promoting social inclusion and economic opportunities in rural communities.</p>	
4. With regards to your comments at application stage, how have you managed this project in terms of sustainability? (What plans have been put in place to maintain the project once it is completed? 400 words max)	
<p>The project has been able to be extended until the end of March through additional funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner. The Kickstart trainees are funded until the middle of April. Further funding is being sought to continue to employ the Youth Workers and to employ at least one of the trainees, either within Canolfan Maerdy or through the Youth Services. They are all continuing with their training after this project finishes, in order to progress towards the Level 2 in Youth Work. Discussions are underway with Welsh Government and with NPT Youth and Employability Services to determine whether there might be further employment or funded training options.</p>	
5. Project Beneficiaries:	
<p>Prior to the pilot, all 4 trainees and the 3 staff members, were unemployed or under-employed. The trainees were lacking in confidence and self-esteem and often spoke of experiencing anxiety in relation to work and had few solid workplace skills and qualifications. The transformation in the trainees has been remarkable and the benefits of the project to all 3 staff and the trainees has been attested by them. All have learnt new skills, gained confidence, decreased workplace anxiety, gained a new direction and ambition for their futures and increased their chances of employability. The project has increased provision for young people in the community and strengthened links</p>	

with Canolfan Maerdy/Maerdy Youth and other youth-focused organisations in the area and across Wales. This provides a more solid base for continuation of the provision. The pilot has enabled Canolfan Maerdy/Maerdy Youth to address the significant negative impact of Covid on the physical and mental health of young people. A programme of targeted activities has been provided to address the issues. The community as a whole has benefited as 3 of the 4 trainees and the Youth Worker have expressed a desire to progress their training and pursue future careers in youth and community work. The “grow-your-own” principle is working.

6. Cross Cutting Themes: If relevant, briefly describe how your project contributed to the following themes:

Equal Opportunities:

The project has supported 2 female trainees who came to the project as potentially vulnerable and subjects of exclusion. The youth club members include at least 4 young people who are living with ADHD or autism and the project as a whole has promoted positive measures to support women, disabled people and other disadvantages. We have embraced active promotion and support of the Welsh language as two trainees and the Youth Worker are Welsh speakers and several of the youth club members attend Welsh language schools.

Sustainable Development including Economic, Environmental and Social

As part of the youth club programme of activities, a partnership has been developed with Awel Aman Tawe to work jointly on Environmental and Community-focused Social Projects and the young people participated and benefited greatly from a session on Climate Change and how to alter one’s behaviour. The project as a whole supported Sustainable Development by using a participatory approach, involving young people and community organisations throughout, using a community development approach to empower them and enable them to recognise opportunities for creating their own solutions to the impact from Covid and to challenges facing young people; the objective being to enable communities and young people to be part of the solution to addressing the challenges facing young people in rural areas and to use the community organisations as assets and hubs for change.

Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion

The project specifically built skills amongst the trainees, the staff and the young people attending Maerdy Youth. Mentoring of the trainees and the staff was provided by volunteers on the Board of Canolfan Maerdy or acting as advisors from within the community. Peer support was an important feature of the trainee’s programme and the team grew strong over the period of the project. The project was innovative in its approach, based within a rural community organisation and enabled local people to have greater scope to access employment within the areas, offering the use of the IT suite to help tackle digital illiteracy. The trainees worked in and supported the Food Hwb which provides surplus food and balanced food boxes to those at risk of food poverty and ensured access to a vital service in these rural communities to assist in tackling poverty and exclusion. The re-establishment of the youth club provided an additional vital service for the area.

7. Conclusion Summary: Please provide a summary on the project’s performance, identifying any key issues that need to be addressed:

a) Summary

The project has exceeded targets and provided a useful model to develop a Youth Apprenticeship Scheme which is being taken forward once funding is sourced.

b) Key Issues

The first issue was the inability to appoint a level 3 qualified Youth Worker to lead the project, so the appointee had herself to act as a trainee and to learn how to support her team within the framework of their training programme and when re-establishing the youth provision. She provided excellent leadership, support and mentoring, despite this, and succeeded in delivering a project within a challenging timescale, and during the pandemic, including contracting Covid herself at the start. Support for her was provided by the Volunteer Project Managers, Adult Learning Wales and NPT Youth Service but the need to recruit and provide training for new youth and community workers was evidenced from the start of the project.

The impact of Covid on the project has been significant in restricting the placement opportunities, enforcing some working from home, reducing the numbers allowed in youth club and restricting promotional or dissemination activities and face-to-face contacts with schools/colleges etc and the ability to meet other young people from diverse backgrounds and settings.

c) What went well?

Despite the challenges of Covid and the constraints within the Canolfan Maerdy building itself which is not best suited to youth club provision, Maerdy Youth has been re-launched, with steadily increasing numbers and enthusiasm amongst the young people and the trainees. Strong connections have been developed with Cwmllynfell Hall, with Street Games and with Awel Aman Tawe to provide additional resource for Maerdy Youth and to work collaboratively. The testimonies from the youth trainees attest to the remarkable positive impact of the project on their confidence, their sense of a new direction and their attitude to employment. The opportunity for the trainees to access the IT suite supported their digital skills.

d) What didn't go well?

The impact of Covid restrictions throughout the project meant that far less opportunity for face-to-face work with young people in a school setting, in outreach or in placement opportunities was severely curtailed. The opportunity for the trainees to access wider experience and placements will be provided during February and March and beyond, however, with extension funding having been secured for this period at least. The fact that the Youth Leader had Covid at the start of her employment, meant a staggered start to the project.

e) What could have been done differently?

The opportunities for the trainees to develop team working skills and employability skills was provided by Canolfan Maerdy through offering placement periods in the Food Hwb and the kitchen and through volunteering across Canolfan Maerdy's services. A wider series of opportunities outside of the organisation would have been helpful, but Covid restrictions and its impact were a barrier to accessing these opportunities.

8. TO BE COMPLETED BY LEAD BODY: Project Performance – Financial & Indicator Achievements: (detailed performance against approved timescales and budget expectation, including reasons for all variances)				
a) Performance indicator achievement against targets approved: Final position:				
PI Reference	Approved Target	Total Achieved	Justification for underachievement	How has achievement been evidenced
LD.CL.004	Number of Pilot Activities undertaken/supported			
	1	1		Project Report
LD.CL.006	Number of Information dissemination actions/promotional and/or marketing activities to raise awareness of the LDS			
	10	19	Due to Covid restrictions we were unable to promote in person within schools as we would have liked. However, we have kept up a strong social media presence and ensured promotional materials such as posters and information leaflets were disseminated throughout the community, particularly in and near to schools.	Copies of all promotional materials (leaflets, posters, banners, etc.) and screenshots of social media posts. Photographs of Maerdy Youth's presence at Canolfan Maerdy's Christmas event.
LD.CL.007	Number of stakeholders engaged			
	5	12		List of stakeholders including name, dates and details of relevant engagement activities.
LD.C.L008	Number of Participants supported			
	30	31		List of participants including dates, venues etc. of relevant engagement activities.
R.24	Number of jobs created			
	1.86	1.86		Letter of Confirmation
NPT01	Number of communities engaged			
	3	12		Postcode evidence of participants. Programme of activities within each community with details of locations. Attendance records.
NPT02	Number of groups engaged			
	4	5		Records of representatives' attendance, details of activities (dates, venues, outcomes, etc.)
NPT03	Number of young people participating in the project			
	30	31		List of participants with dates, venues of relevant engagement activities, DOB.
NPT04	Number of women participating in the project			
	18	28		List of participants with dates, venues of relevant engagement activities.
NPT05	Number of Welsh speakers participating in the project			
	10	17		List of participants with dates and venues of relevant activities.
NPT06	Number of older people participating in the project			
	5	8		List of participants with dates, venues of relevant engagement activities.
NPT07	Number of individuals with disabilities			

	4	5		A list of the number of disabled people involved and the activities they were involved in.
NPT09	Number of under employed individuals participating			
	1	7		Written record of under-employed individuals, including category of under-employment for each individual and record of activities.
NPT10	Number of participants receiving formal training			
	4	5		List of individuals receiving formal training including the qualification gained and copies of certificates.
NPT12	Number of advice/support surgeries in community facilities			
	2	2		Attendance sheets, dates/venues, copies of information given out.
b) Pilot Activities/Projects: Outlining all of the stages and activities, including the timelines. To promote externally and link to the Wales Rural Network Website. Attached <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not applicable for this project <input type="checkbox"/>				
c) Feasibility Studies: To promote externally and link to the Wales Rural Network Website. Attached <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable for this project <input type="checkbox"/>				

d) Project Closure Financial Position against original approved: (following final claim)			
Timescales	Original Approved		Adjusted Approved
	From	To	22/02/2022
	20.9.21	28.1.22	
e) Summary of Financial Performance			
		Original Approved	Adjusted Approved
			Final Claim
Total Project Costs		31,240	28,843.13
RDP Funding		24,992	22,241.09
Levered Funding		6,248	6,602.04
Intervention Rates	% RDP	80%	80%
	% Match	20%	20%
		Cost Heading	Justification for under/overspend
Underspend		Mileage	Covid restrictions prevented travel
		Wages	Recruitment of worker later than anticipated
		Publicity/recruitment	Covid restrictions prevented events/activities

9. Handover contact details: For post project monitoring and evaluation activities, Welsh Government will require contact details of staff who may be able to provide assistance.

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Document Retention Procedures: Documents (which includes all evidence relating to your project) must be retained in a suitable format for a period of 10 years following the end of the current LEADER programme – this means at least until 2031.

Signed: B E Davies

Date: 28-02-2022

(Project Lead)

Signed: *N O Bray*

Date: 01/03/2022

(RDP Manager – Lead Body)

Post Project Activities by the Local Partnerships and Local Action Group:

Define what activities need to be undertaken by the Lead Body after the project has been closed include any post project follow up actions which may need to be undertaken following project closure:

Completed PCR to be forwarded to LAG & WRN ENC 1 Pilot Study