

Case Study – Welsh in the Outdoor Activity Sector

Project Title:	RDP042		
Delivered by	Menter Brycheiniog a Maesyfed		
Start date:	April 2017	End Date:	August 2019
LEADER Theme:	1 – Adding value to local identity and natural and cultural resources		

Total Expenditure:	£58,654.08
RDP Funding:	£39,924.40
Match funding:	£18,717.68

1. Introduction

Following a report (2014) into the state of the Welsh language in the Outdoor sector in south Powys, the Menter Iaith had been looking for a suitable source of funding for a project in this field. An application for Welsh language grant funding from the Welsh Government had been unsuccessful, so in 2015 the Initiative approached Leader to explore possibilities. At the time a group of people were leading the project, including representatives from the Language Initiative, the National Park and Outdoor businesses. A trip was arranged through Leader, to visit a similar project in Conwy, where the RDP scheme and Snowdonia National Park had funded a project over a decade to encourage more Welsh-speakers to work in the Outdoor sector with extremely positive results.

2. Challenge

There is a great deal of outdoor activity in our local area, but very little activity is offered through the medium of Welsh. It is often incomers to the area who see the opportunities to work and sustain businesses in the sector. The challenge is to encourage more local young people (and especially Welsh-speakers) to consider a career in the sector, so that they can stay in the area and use their language skills.

3. Solution

The solution for us was to ensure that there were opportunities for young people who could speak the language to enjoy outdoor activities through the medium of Welsh. They will therefore see that they can use their language skills in a different field (the outdoors) and that there are job opportunities in the sector.

At the same time, we could see that there was an opportunity to work with outdoor businesses to encourage them to make more use of the Welsh language on a daily basis and to appreciate and seek out language skills when employing staff.

Ultimately, ideally, it would therefore be possible to 'link' young people looking for jobs with businesses who wanted to recruit Welsh-speakers.

4. Benefit

The Outdoor Pursuits sector would benefit from being able to bid for school business and individuals who wanted to access Welsh language activities, particularly in the valleys, who currently have to travel through the Beacons to reach other destinations in Wales.

The local community would benefit from job opportunities for local young people, and would be able to retain young local Welsh-speakers in their communities instead of them having to move away to look for work.

There would be additional opportunities for children and local communities to use their Welsh.

5. Result

In the end, it was not possible to undertake a project of the same scope as the Eryri project, due to the linguistic nature of the area and the lack of match-funding sources.

An officer with extensive experience in the field was employed, who had been a Youth officer for many years and who had undertaken many outdoor activities, with a particular interest in mountain biking. It was decided to focus on his areas of expertise. Huw, our officer, worked very hard in secondary schools adjacent to the National Park (Brecon, Crickhowell, Maesydderwen, Gwernyfed and Builth Wells.) He ran a number of pilot projects to encourage young people to enjoy the outdoors, including trips, workshops and skills sessions. Feedback from schools, parents and young people was very positive. Huw had a special way of naturally integrating the Welsh language into sessions, encouraging first and second language pupils to use it.

Huw tried to engage with businesses during his working period, but there were few opportunities to achieve the project's objectives - many of the businesses that had responded to the survey in 2014 had changed staff etc and so didn't have the same capacity to offer activities in Welsh. What was highlighted was the fragility of the Welsh language offer in the sector locally - losing one member of staff is enough to bring an activity to a halt.

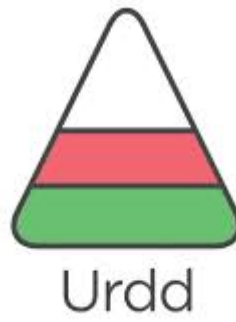
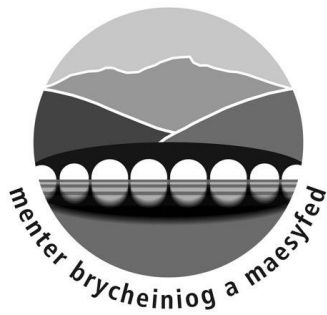
This is a risk as our project comes to an end - Huw has sparked a great deal of outdoor activity in the Welsh language in the local area. As the project comes to an end early (the officer had another job as the project came to an end), there is concern that it will be too difficult for businesses and schools to continue such activity without the officer's support. A longer project would have enabled us to formalize outdoor activities as an integral part of the schools' programme and to ensure that clubs continue with volunteers.

6. Project Contact Details

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7. Partners/Match Funders Logos



Date Case Study Completed:	19.12.2019
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