

## **E Brief Text April 2018**

### **Introduction**

This is the third edition of the monthly briefs by WEA Scotland in which we celebrate and recognise the work of WEA adult learners in Scotland and acknowledge the contribution of staff who make such a contribution to each learner's achievements.

In the February and March editions, we featured a number of successful projects and learner successes that illustrated the impacts the WEA is making across Scotland delivering learning on behalf of our partner funders and external stakeholders. The media publicity that some of these projects are generating also suggests that not only are people in the WEA interested in what we are doing, but it is also of interest to people across Scotland who recognise that we are delivering innovative, interesting and purposeful learning across Scotland communities. This month's edition again highlights more of this excellent work.

Also in this month's edition is some welcome material from our Local Associations. These Local Associations are at the centre of their local learning communities providing a huge range of learning opportunities to diverse community groups, many of whom, but for the WEA, would find it difficult to engage with learning. Beyond the formal learning that takes place these local association groups also provide socialising and networking opportunities that improve community cohesion and the local population's health and wellbeing.

If this is the first time you have read one of the WEA Scotland e briefs, you can find out more about the work of the WEA by reading the previous editions in February and March of this year via the link at the end of this article and by reading about the range of projects the WEA offers in other sections of the website.

Thank you for your interest in the WEA. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you would like more information on any of our projects, would like to volunteer or would like to work in partnership with the WEA to create more and better opportunities for learning in your local learning community.

### **Media Highlights:**

#### Action for Children, McDermott Group and WEA Scotland

WEA Scotland has again been generating more "column inches" of news copy through its successful partnership with Action for Children and the McDermott Group: a successful building contractor in Inverclyde and Glasgow. This project aims to provide young people from disadvantaged backgrounds with an "earn while you learn" training opportunity.

The young people work with the McDermott Group on a training programme that will qualify them to become Domestic Energy Assessors in around 18 months. During this training period they receive training by WEA Scotland in transferable skills such as literacy, numeracy and employability that will give them the best possible preparation for a permanent job and also lead to them gaining a recognised qualification. This project highlights the positive impact that can be made through effective partnership working and the WEA's commitment to delivering learning to improve life chances for everyone.

Craig Finnie from WEA Scotland would be delighted to provide anyone with more information on this project. He has also provided a couple of links below which highlight the interest this project has generated across the West of Scotland.

<http://www.scottishconstructionnow.com/25026/glasgow-inverclyde-trainees-get-training-boost-local-contractor/>

<https://www.inverclydenow.com/news/local-news/inverclyde-trainees-start-building-careers-thanks-to-local-contractor>

### CYPIEF and ALEC Conference

This conference took place on 15<sup>th</sup> March and was attended by WEA Scotland's Strategic Projects Implementation Manager: Kirstine Simpson. Throughout this conference photographs and video links for a range of WEA learning programmes were showcased on a continuous slide show that was shown on screens across the venue demonstrating to all delegates the quality and breadth of the WEA's education offer.

The theme of the Conference was "Evidencing Impact". The conference programme is attached at the end of this item for those who would like further information. The clear message was that [at a time of pressing budgets] it is essential that all organisations record what they do, how they do it and can clearly evidence the impact and contribution they make to national and regional policy objectives. They should also look wherever possible to work effectively in partnership as this might enable them to achieve and contribute more than they could do as a standalone organisation.

Kirstine reported that the conference provided a number of significant networking opportunities and workshops and there was an opportunity to share thoughts on "what can I help with" and "what do I need help with" that may be the catalyst for future partnership working between the WEA and other partners across the sector.



Evidencing your  
impact conference pr

## University of Aberdeen and Reach Out Project

Ross Weatherby, Education Coordinator for the Reach Out Programme in the North East, attended an Erasmus Programme event in Portugal. This event was attended by learning professionals from Austria, Greece, Germany, Holland and Scotland to consider the possible impact of mobile technologies on learning.

The delegates considered the extent to which the provision of new curriculum materials could be enhanced through the use of mobile technologies and the impacts these developments might have for widening education participation. Ross returned to Scotland with some new ideas on how he might apply what he learned in Portugal for the benefit of his Reach Out Learners.

## **Developments across Scotland**

### WEA Women's Group Boness Activity

The WEA Women's Group in Bo'ness was established in October 2016. It highlights perfectly the breadth and depth of learning provision across the WEA and the contribution to wider community development.

Their range of provision includes topics on health and wellbeing such as mindfulness, yoga, self-hypnosis and relaxation. In terms of community empowerment and engagement, they have visited the European Parliament, had presentations from the Children's Panel and are actively engaged with a number of local issues. They also have an active programme of ongoing events on topics such as local history, creative writing, culture and heritage.

The development of a discrete Women's Group within the WEA is a relatively recent development in Scotland and one which other Local Associations may also want to consider. Helen Jeffrey and Marc Sherland would I am sure, be happy to provide help and support on this for those who chose to explore this further

### WEA Highland and NessBookFest

The WEA in Highland is part of a very successful partnership and community book festival called NessBookFest. The festival runs a number of public events and a schools programme under a "no barriers policy" that aims to encourage develop and promote literacy across the Highlands. WEA tutor Margaret Henderson delivered a very successful creative writing workshop while Norman Newton, Scottish Vice Convenor and Secretary of Highland Local Association, has led a number of guided walks around Inverness. A quick search will reveal the extent of the NessBookFest activities, the number of writers involved and the scale of books and publications of those who contribute.

Pauline MacKay: the Convenor of the WEA Highland Local Association is Programme Coordinator for the NessBookFest which this year has been shortlisted for the Epic Awards. These were set up in 2010 by Voluntary Arts to promote participation in creative and cultural activities. There is also a People Choice Award and votes for NessBookFest can be cast at: <https://www.voluntaryarts.org/epic-awards-peoples-choice-voting>

### Good Shop Project

The Good Shop Project will take place between 26<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> March at Buchanan Galleries in Glasgow. The Good Shop Project is a partnership between the WEA West of Scotland Branch, Writing Community Groups from Larkfield and the Word Factory, and the Burns Community, especially the Robert Burns World Federation.

During this week the Good Shop Project aims to raise awareness of literacy and writing skills generally and Robert Burns in particular, through a range of workshops, talks, events and performances. This week long event is an excellent example of how the WEA can and does work with other partners to creatively introduce learning through a range of different methodologies and settings that might engage with people who otherwise may not have considered learning or that they had the capacity or capabilities to learn. More details on the programme is provided in the link below



The Good Shop  
Project.pdf