

PEOPLE  
AND WORK UNIT



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A GWAITH

## Adroddiad Blynyddol - Annual Report

2015

@Loudoun, Plas Iona, Butetown, Caerdydd CF10 5HW



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## About the People and Work Unit

The People and Work Unit is an independent Welsh charity set up in 1984. Our core principle, through these years, is that people are healthier, happier and more resilient when they have work. Work is not a guaranteed route out of poverty – over half of the children living in poverty in Wales have at least one parent in work; but, whether paid or volunteered, work can promote wellbeing and independence.

Education and learning are, we believe, essential tools for people to develop the skills, self-confidence and support to access work, so we have focused over the years on supporting people to get the most out of school and adult learning; and on working with education and learning structures and providers to better understand and support those people whose circumstances or needs make it harder for them to achieve.

We work through a person-centred approach, that seeks to develop opportunities that people want, rather than expecting people to fit into what we do. The People and Work Unit works *with* people to make a difference to their lives, to the communities they live in and the institutions that serve them.

### A theory of change

Our work is focuses on the joint importance of the three resources that people need to enable them to use opportunities, manage risk and achieve, because they are fundamental to success in education and learning. Using this approach we have developed a tripartite framework:

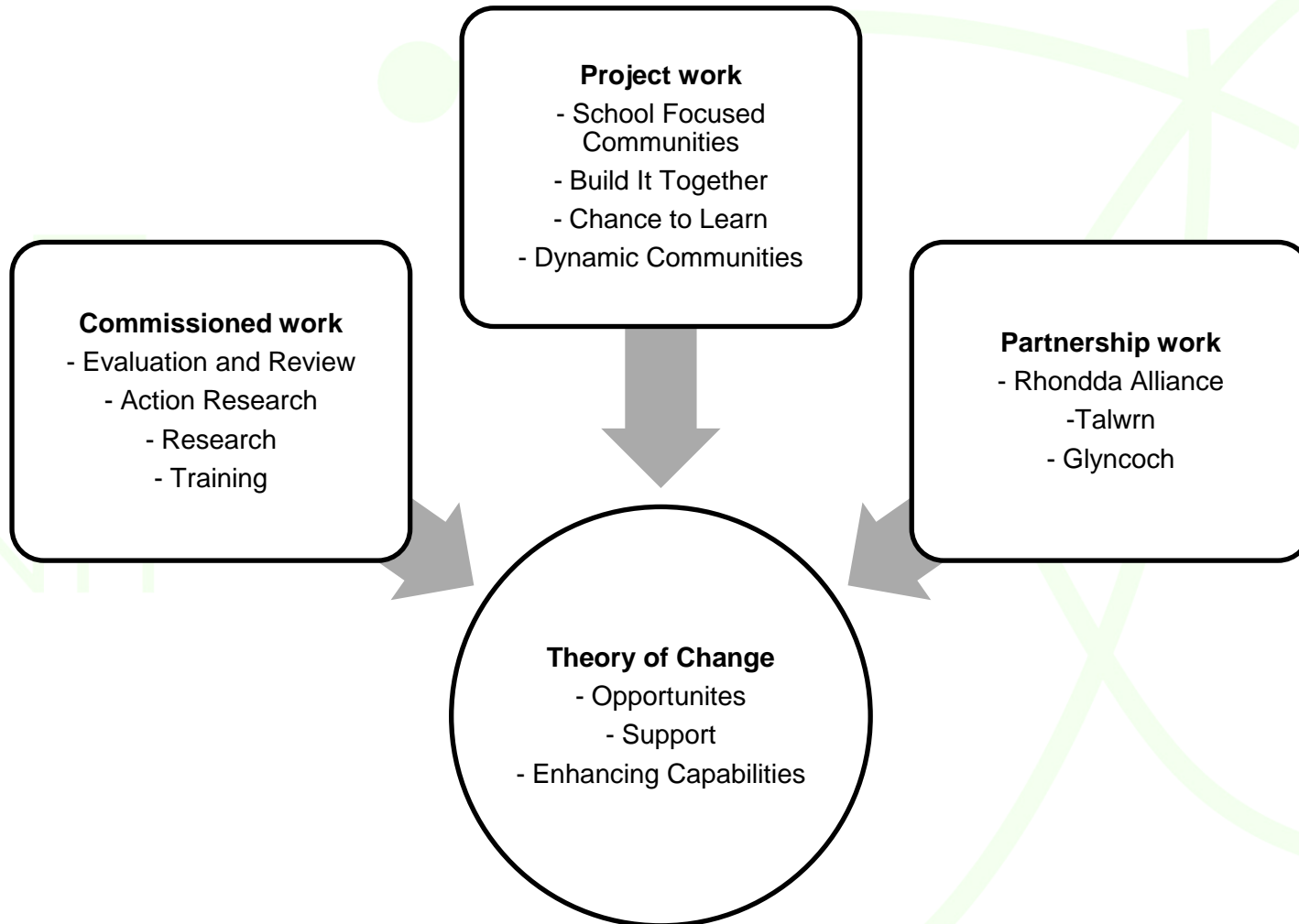
- **improving opportunities:** the Unit works with public, voluntary and community sectors to help develop opportunities. Whether it is evaluation or research to inform public sector policy developments; working with other voluntary sector

partners to develop insights into delivering support; or testing out approaches ourselves through our own project work, the aim is to ensure people can access opportunities that make a difference to them.

- **strengthening support:** the Unit also focuses on the support people need to get the best out of opportunities. This may involve helping a school explore how they can support families; working with a community organisation to identify how local learners can support each other; or developing and testing our own support models, the objective is to understand and promote what works.
- **enhancing personal capabilities:** the Unit's action-research project work focuses on how we can help people develop their own capabilities, and helping organisations understand how to best to recognise and enhance these.

Using this tripartite approach, the People and Work Unit works with policy makers, with those who manage and deliver policies, and with the people that policies are intended to help.

## The Model: the People and Work Unit



**Our current work includes:**

**Self-generated project work** using action-research to develop approaches that make a difference to people:-

- **School Focused Communities Glyncoch** –for the last six years we have been working with a cohort of 42 children from one community as they go through their secondary school education and on to post-16 learning. Andrea Williams, our project worker, has been supporting them through GCSEs, A Levels and college, and planning the next steps onto university, apprenticeships, training and work. The project monitors their attendance, behaviour, and attainment, and in the early years worked a lot with families. This year a group developed their own research project with Andrea, exploring attitudes to learning amongst pupils in year 9 in their school. (supported by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation)
- **Dynamic Communities** – this project is working in a communities in the Rhondda and Cynon Valleys and using sports and fitness activities as a tool to develop involvement in the community. In the last year there have been some really significant developments linked to rugby with young people’s teams being developed in the Rhondda<sup>1</sup> and team members supporting other community activity, including an ‘armchair fitness’ dvd for older people, supported by the Community Voice project in the Cynon Valley. (supported by Comic Relief to March 2015 and developing to its next phase with support from the Rank Foundation)
- **Chance to Learn** – this project has worked with local community partners and people living in Glyncoch to develop an infrastructure for community learning, focused on moving provision from being ‘seller-led’ – that is providers who come into the community with a course and seek to fill places on it; to being ‘buyer-led’ – where the community identifies needs and seeks a provider that can offer a suitable course to meet it. The result has been a significant increase in the number of

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aicn6DEUFdo>

people learning. The project has worked with 117 learners in the last year on over 25 courses ranging from pottery, to basic skills, to forensic psychology level 3. (with support from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation)

- **Build It Together** – using the learning from a construction skills project run between 2008-2013, and the skills of a volunteer from that project, this project provides training to young people who are not in education, training or employment on a practical building activity. This year the Unit has worked with a partner organisation to ‘mainstream’ this activity.

## **Glyncoch**

For the last seven years the major focus of the People and Work unit’s project work has been the community of Glyncoch, in Rhondda Cynon Taf. When the People and Work Unit first starting working in Glyncoch over half the population had no qualifications and there was not one young person from the community in the sixth form of the local school. Over the last seven years organisations working in Glyncoch have come together with the local community take a coherent approach to try and improve these statistics and the deprivation status of the community. The People and Work Unit’s core focus in this work was to develop the value given to education and learning across the community. This year we have been exploring whether we are making a difference.

## **Impact Assessment Survey**

During the summer of 2014 the People and Work Unit, Glyncoch Regeneration and the Glyncoch Communities First team undertook an impact assessment survey with the population of Glyncoch. The survey was available online, via facebook and the teams went to every house during the course of a week with a paper survey that was filled in on the door step (or sometimes over a cup of tea in the house). About a third of the population (around 500 people) completed a questionnaire. It asked them what Glyncoch was like in the past, and what it is like now.

- **Safety**

30% of people thought Glyncoch had become safer in the last ten years. All age groups feel it is safer but the biggest change was in the over 61 years age group, which saw an increase from 41% who thought that Glyncoch was safe 10 years ago, to 84% who think it is safe now.

- **Friendly**

60% said that Glyncoch had become a friendlier place. Those aged over 25 years were most likely to say it was a friendlier place.

- **Appearance**

All age groups thought that Glyncoch has improved its appearance. There has been a great investment by RCT Homes in the housing stock in Glyncoch and by Communities First in providing open green areas for the community to use.

- **Local Schools**

All age groups valued local schools more than they had ten years ago, with the percentage that value schools rising by 60% or more. People commented that local schools had raised their standards generally but also that the teachers and school engage more with parents and the community.

- **How important is learning/education**

People in Glyncoch say that learning and education is twice as important to them now as it was 10 years ago, across all age groups.

## **My Local School Data**

My local school data can be used to analyse the performance of any school in Wales over the last few years on a range of indicators from attendance to attainment. This shows that although the profile of children going into school has not changed much in recent years, the outcomes have improved:

- Attendance in both primary schools in Glyncoch has increased by nearly 5% in the last 7 years.
- Attainment in the foundation phase for both primary schools in Glyncoch has risen significantly in the last 3 years.
- Attainment in the key stage 2 core subject indicator has increased on average around 40% in the last 7 years.
- Special educational needs have stayed fairly stable in both primary schools in Glyncoch over the last 7 years.
- Free school meal entitlements in both Glyncoch primary schools have also remained fairly consistent in the last 7 years.

In addition to the project work evaluations, the impact assessment survey, and the many statistics collected in Glyncoch over the years, in order to capture what difference the work has made we will, in the spring/summer of 2015, be undertaking semi structured interviews with a range of individuals from the community. This will provide further in depth qualitative evidence of the impact we have had with numerous individuals in Glyncoch over the last seven years from adults involved in the Chance to Learn project to young people involved in the School Focussed Communities project.

## **Work with the voluntary sector**

With support from the Tudor Trust the Unit has been working with a number of community and voluntary sector organisations to support them to develop new ideas, adopt an action-research methodology and use data to inform their work. We have worked with



groups in Blaenau Gwent, Cardiff and Rhondda Cynon Taf, supporting them to develop their work. This year this has resulted in over £200,000 being secured from charitable trusts for work these partner organisations are doing.

In addition the Unit has convened a group of voluntary organisations from all over Wales which has developed into Talwrn, an alliance of voluntary sector organisations in Wales that is focused on developing a new way of working collaboratively. The 15 or so members meet every other month in mid Wales to focus on our own development as leaders within organisations working with communities across Wales; as critical friends to help each other improve the work we do; and as a developing network to create new work. The Rank Foundation have provided support for the meetings and to encourage the groups development.

**Commissioned work for the public and third sectors:**

- Evaluation and review
- Action-research
- Research
- Training

The Unit has continued to focus on inclusion and equalities in education and society, undertaking work research and evaluation work on special educational needs, autism, minority ethnic groups and looked after children in the last year. We have also worked with community organisations to develop effective approaches to using data in their work, and collecting data on their impact.

Information on all aspects of the People and Work Unit's work can be found on our website [www.peopleandworkunit.org.uk](http://www.peopleandworkunit.org.uk) and our Facebook site provides up to date information on project work – [www.facebook.com/pawu1984](https://www.facebook.com/pawu1984)

## Rhondda Alliance

Having learned a great deal about the value of taking a community-based approach in Glyncoch the Unit starting this year to work with partners in the two Rhondda Valleys on the potential for developing an area-based approach to improving outcomes for young people aged 14-25 years old. The idea is to develop a voluntary sector collaboration that will draw on common aims, common information sources, common evaluation approaches and supportive joint working to help each of us hone the work we do with young people. The Rank Foundation has funded an internship which was taken up by Rhiannon Bowen and she has worked on developing a baseline of data around young people in the Rhondda, which is already being used by partners to inform their work. Funding has been secured from the Moondance Foundation for a three party project involving the Unit and the Big Click, a Penrhys Partnership project, and the Arts Factory. This project, called 'Appening Rhondda, will work with young people to develop apps that can support the work of local organisations and build IT and marketing skills. The Rank Foundation is funding the development of Dynamic Young Communities to work with rugby clubs and schools across the Rhondda, using team activities to develop individual and group skills.

## Trustees

The People and Work Unit has eight Trustees who volunteer their time and support, providing strong governance and guidance.

They are:

Judith Jones – Chairperson

Phillip Watkins – Treasurer

Gordon Davies

Catryn Grundy (resigned April 2014)

Chris Johnes –(resigned June 2015)

Archie McCaffer – Vice-Chairperson

Hugh Edney

Denzil Jones - (resigned June 2015)

Lee McPherson

## Financial Information for 2014

Total Income - £ 368,387

*Of which, grants for project work* - £ 180,538

Total Expenditure - £318,584

*Of which, costs of action research project work* - £137,451

**Fund Balance at 31.12.2014** - **£209,929**

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